



Diaconal Youth Work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway

by Deacon Hans Eskil Vigdel

Introduction

In the summer of 2010, a diaconal youth project was started in the Bærum Deanery in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway. During the first two years, the project has become an established part of the caring services for teenagers living in Bærum. The project is called 13-20 and refers to the target group, which is youth between the ages of 13 and 20 years, living in Bærum. This article describes the background and initiation of the project. We will illustrate

the design of the project, the experiences drawn after the first two years and finally the specific diaconal aspect of the project.

Preliminary Steps

Prior to establishment of the diaconal youth project 13-20, Sigrid Hurum Flaata, the Deacon in Bærum's Haslum Parish, became the main promoter for raising funds for diaconal youth work in Bærum. Inspired by a diaconal project in a shopping center in Bergen, she had the idea of establishing a similar project to serve teenagers hanging out at "Sandvika Storsenter", the largest shopping center in the Nordic countries.

At this time, meetings were arranged with various local authorities in Bærum, where the Deacon talked favorably about the diaconal profile of the Church. She was also present at a strategic session with representatives from several other parishes in Bærum and the Municipal Council, which focused on the Church's diaconal work for teenagers, amongst others.

A concrete idea about diaconal work at "Sandvika Storsenter" was proposed. However, the preparation period took place in a difficult economic time for the Church, including proposed financial cuts from public authorities. Despite the financial situation, the Deacon and other Church staff members, showed their tenacity by refusing to accept the current state of affairs, but on the contrary, continued their efforts by emphasizing the good and socially beneficial work performed by the Church.

Bærum Deanery took steps to raise funds for diaconal youth work, one of which was to work out concrete action plans for diaconal work.

Through their cultural department, Bærum Municipality requested a more visible Church presence in the town of Sandvika. Deacon Sigrid Hurum Flaata used this



Mariann Solberg Lindtjorn, Project Director, currently studying for a graduate degree in diakonia.

opportunity to work closely with a representative from the Municipality's cultural department to make definite plans for diaconal services in Bærum.

We don't have the evidence to state that this preparatory work resulted in the disbursement of funds from Bærum Municipality to the 13-20 Project, but it probably had a positive influence on the final decisions. The preliminary steps also played an important role in forming the 13-20 Project.

Background for the Project

When the project was established, the Church in Bærum didn't need to apply for operational funds. The funds were provided by public authorities before knowing how the money would be spent. However, an important condition was that the municipal funds were to be spent on socially preventative work and not on evangelization. The order linked to the funds, was: *To contribute to preventative youth work wherever needed.*

(See "13-20" on Page Three)

2012 volume 34 # 4

In this Issue

Diaconal Youth Work in Norway

Hans Eskil Vigdel

AED Executive Director Search

Diaconal Lens - Part II

John Cumming

Deacon Doings in St. Ives

Keith McCoy

2013 AED Conference Brochure

Through The Dust

Ormonde Plater

The Only Gospel

Pam Nesbit

2013 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION INFO - PAGES 9, 11, 12, 13, 14

Association for Episcopal Deacons Seeks New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the Association for Episcopal Deacons announces a search for a new Executive Director to begin work in this leadership ministry by June 1, 2013. The Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) is the only organization in The Episcopal Church whose total focus is on the preparation and support of deacons and in engaging the diakonia of all believers. Now 27 years old, AED is a dynamic organization with more than 1,000 members worldwide. Membership is open to all who are interested in diaconal ministry.

The Executive Director provides administrative and programmatic oversight and planning for AED including major events such as the triennial Deacon Assembly, General Convention, and the annual Arch-deacon and Formation Director meetings. In addition, the Director oversees and coordinates four part-time contractual personnel who are

in locations elsewhere in the United States. The Executive Director will, on average, work 20 hours per week with flexible scheduling of hours; some travel is required. The Executive Director reports to the AED board of directors.

It is expected that the Executive Director be a deacon with experience in 'big picture' thinking, administration and fundraising, with knowledge and relationships in the wider deacon community and who understands The Episcopal Church's organizations and structure. Most important, the Director should have a passion for the diaconate and see her/his work as a ministry.

This is a contract position and provides a monthly stipend plus reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses including travel on behalf of the organization; payment of self-employment taxes is the responsibility of the Director. The Director must establish an office in his/

her home or other available venue – church, diocesan office or diocesan ministry, etc. AED will provide support for business equipment and supplies (computer, printer, telephone, etc.)

For more information about the Association for Episcopal Deacons go to www.episcopaldeacons.org. For questions about the Executive Director position contact The Rev. Canon Tina Campbell, president-elect of the Association for Episcopal Deacons, at tincampbell@comcast.net. To apply for this position send a resume and cover letter via email to The Rev. Canon Campbell. Your resume should include activities and leadership experiences in professional as well as volunteer roles including the Church and especially diaconal ministry. The deadline for applying is December 1, 2012.

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“13-20” from Page One

In other words, the Church was given a considerable amount of freedom as to how the funds should be used. The Church in Bærum could have chosen to distribute the funds to the already existing youth work in the Deanery. They could establish a youth club in cooperation with local authorities or engage in teamwork with “Arena Bekkestua”, a skating hall run by Bærum Municipality. The funds could also be used to finance a position in one of the parishes and focus on the youth work there. Instead, Bærum Church Council chose to spend the funds on hiring a diaconal youth worker who could map the needs for preventative youth efforts in the community. The Church Council agreed that it should be a diaconal project, that the leader of the project should be a Deacon or one who would be willing to take a Master’s degree in Diakonia. (In Norway, it is required to have a Master’s degree in Diakonia in order to become a Deacon of the Church.)

It was quickly determined that the position as diaconal youth worker should not be linked to one particular parish, but be available to all the parishes and to youth in the general public.

Mariann Solberg Lindtjørn, who is studying for a graduate degree in Diakonia, was employed as Project Leader in June of 2010. She started mapping the possibilities for a diaconal youth project in Bærum. The main question raised from the beginning, was: “What do teenagers in Bærum need?” Some of the subsequent questions were: Should we offer a place where teenagers can hang out, a coffee-shop where we offer courses, concerts and shows? Should we develop educational programs at schools relating to sexuality? Should we engage in youth outreach at “Sandvika Storsenter” or in the whole of Bærum?

Mariann’s experience from working in the public health- and social services for youth, was that the social care system was successful in seeing and acknowledging boys, but has a challenge when it comes to reaching out to girls. Another experience was that a lot of teenagers don’t have enough evident or visible problems to be caught up by the health- and social services, even though they need help. She had the feeling that many of these ‘invisible’ teenagers needed to be acknowledged and met by mature adults. From her own experience, Mariann saw the need to strengthen the work between general preventative efforts on one side and specific treatment on the other, with a special focus on girls.

An important consideration in this initial phase was to avoid interference with other providers of caring services, especially the Public Health- and Social Services, which also engage in preventative youth work. It was important to emphasize that there was no competition between the Church’s youth work and the already established services provided by the public authorities.

The project’s second employee

The Church Council managed to inspire three of the parishes in Bærum to share the cost of a second position in the diaconal youth project. The parishes offered 50 percent of the funds required, and the Municipalities provided the rest. In this way, two full positions were dedicated to the project.



Deacon Hans Eskil Vigdel. The poster says: “Would you like to talk to a grown up?”

Hans Eskil Vigdel was employed as diaconal youth worker in the second position in October of 2010. After that, a project description was created in order to clarify both to ourselves and to our partners what the project was all about.

Description of the 13-20 Project and experiences with meeting the needs of the teenagers

There were two main considerations to be made in determining the profile of the Project. On one hand, it should be clearly based on the diaconal profession, and on the other, it should avoid language that could be considered exclusive to our external partners. One example was a choice we made to not only refer to a Christian view of humanity but to both a Christian and a humanistic view as a basis for the 13-20 Project.

The advantage of writing a clear and detailed project description from the beginning, was that it created an awareness from day one as to what the 13-20 Project should be. As time has gone by, we find that some of the things we had predicted in the project have changed, but the basic philosophy is the same, even two years after it was written.

The first edition of the project description had a tentative character, since we didn’t know how the project would develop. When we revised the project description two years later only minor changes needed to be made to the original manuscript.

One of the things we have learned is that teenagers need someone to talk to, rather than a place to hang out. They are clear as to what their needs are, and many of them ask for regular weekly appointments.

We have included parts of the project description in this article, so the reader can get an insight into the vision and values of the 13-20 Project.

The **13-20 Project** is a conversation offer for young people between the ages of 13 and 20 years old in Bærum. The focus on 13-20 is to give support to young people and their families at a challenging period in their lives. Our aim is to recognize and to accept these youths for who and what they are so they can feel secure about themselves in encounters with others and make wise choices.

The 13-20 Project is based on a Christian and humanistic view of humanity. That implies that we believe teenagers have unique value, that they are created for relationships and that they belong in a larger context. For that reason, the project has a holistic approach, seeking to maintain the physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions in the lives of the teenagers. The 13-20 Project recognizes the teenagers’ diversity of gender, functional abilities, social status, sexual preferences, race or political or religious conviction. Basically, this implies that each teenager is valuable the way he or she is, independent of how good or clever one perceives oneself

(See “13-20” on Page Four)

“13-20” from Page Three)

to be or thinks that others perceive them.

Vision:

We wish, by spending time and giving recognition, to help teenagers in Bærum become both visible and valued for what they are and to feel secure in relation to themselves and others.

Core values of the 13-20 Project:

- Recognition
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Hope

We believe teenagers are experts in their own lives, but that they want and need guidance from mature adults.

We believe teenagers are able to make wise choices, but that they need to be made aware of their opportunities.

We believe teenagers need recognition and social connections, especially during changing times.

13-20 meets teenagers on their own terms and conversations take place in offices, cars, coffee-shops, at home or by phone.

13-20 is resource oriented and looks for hidden gems in each individual. As adult discussion partners, we can walk with each individual and focus on the abilities and interests which create joy and enthusiasm in the life of the teenager.

This treasure hunt is not about cleverness, but about what it is that creates joy of living and makes each person feel alive and significant in everyday life.

13-20 focuses on the positive in youth encounters. At the same time we recognize the fact that many of the teenagers we meet, are in the midst of painful and difficult situations which can disturb and destroy their quality of life.

The aim of the project is to strengthen teenagers' abilities to orient themselves in their own life, by creating awareness of self worth, values and attitudes. We believe this will create a basis for increased personal development, and a sense of meaning and achievement.

Our services are voluntary, and there is no need for referral from the Health- and Social Services. The 13-20 Project makes contact with teenagers either by their own initiative or through recommendation from others. Some of the teenagers are already enrolled in the public care services, while others make contact with the 13-20 Project with no such previous contact.

Promoting

During the first year of the project, it was important to make the 13-20 Project known, within the Church, in relation to potential partners and towards the public. A great deal of time was spent on networking towards the parishes, “Sandvika Storsenter”, schools, youth clubs and various parts of the public health- and social care system. This networking opened doors into various cooperative meetings where the 13-20 Project is now represented.

The first year, some time was also spent on outreach activities at the “Storsenter” and



Mariann in 13-20's Smart car. Many of the conversations with youth take place in this car.

in the town of Sandvika. We handed out pocket sized flyers to teenagers with information about the 13-20 Project.

Methods of approach

The primary focus of the work with the 13-20 Project is to have individual talks with teenagers, but efforts are being made in other areas as well.

The role of the 13-20 Project related to the parishes in the Deanery

In the Bærum parishes, the diaconal youth workers in the 13-20 project are professionals to whom the parishioners can refer teenagers for talks. The diaconal youth workers also have a guidance role towards the youth staff working in the parishes.

“Limits Which Create” courses

Limits Which Create – How to meet exposed and vulnerable teenagers in the Christian Education Plan, is a concrete effort from the 13-20 Project in cooperation with the Church Resource Center Against Violence and Sexual Abuse. The course is offered once a year to youth leaders in the parishes and aims to give them teaching competence so they can teach their confirmation- and other

youth leaders in this topic. The same course is arranged at schools in cooperation with school nurses.

Stealing Project

The Stealing Project is a cooperation between the 13-20 Project, “Sandvika Storsenter”, the security company “Nokas” and the Police Department. Teenagers who are caught stealing for the first time, are offered three conversation sessions with the 13-20 Project. In these sessions, the theft is discussed and the teenager is given a chance to present his or her own version of what happened. A future without stealing is discussed, and in the final session, the teenager asks the store manager for forgiveness and receives a signature from the security company “Nokas” to verify that the three months suspension from the shopping center is terminated.

Internet

The 13-20 Project has a website, www.13-20.no where teenagers can receive answers to anonymous questions. On the Facebook-page “Ungdom i Bærum”, there are relevant articles about youth issues, in addition to information about arrangements and activities for teenagers in Bærum.

Experiences from the first two years of the project

From our two years experience working with the 13-20 Project we have realized that the greatest need among teenagers we meet are talks. The topics of the talks relate to daily life, such as friendship, conflicts, school and sexuality. However, from our experience, we see that there are underlying themes beneath the surface, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, suicidal tendencies, severe bullying and eating disorders. The tendency is that in their first contact with the 13-20 Project, teenagers reveal “lighter” topics, but that weightier problems are uncovered in subsequent sessions.

The diaconal profile of the project – and how that is recognized in youth encounters

Since there was already an established public service working preventative with teenagers in Bærum when the 13-20 Project started, it is a legitimate question to ask whether it was necessary and needed to provide a diaconal service in addition. A timely question in this context is: What qualities in diakonia are different from those of public social work?

Our experiences with the 13-20 Project and our youth encounters are that the

diaconal profile of the project makes a difference in relation to how the teenagers perceive they are met compared to the public caring system.

As previously mentioned, a main philosophy from the beginning of the project, was that it had to differ from the already existing public services.

Diakonia doesn't represent anything *else*, but something *more* than public social work. This is our experience after two years of project work.

The most significant evidence of the diaconal addition in the youth encounters is the opening up of avenues of discussion during our talks. Working on the teenagers' terms is something we have in common with public services, but an important difference is the scope of the subjects related to existential issues that develops during the sessions: Topics like faith, grief, guilt, shame, spirituality and religiosity. The diaconal aspect and attitude in the youth encounter opens up a natural door and give the teenagers an opportunity to talk about these topics with the diaconal youth workers in the 13-20 Project.

This effect has become evident through talks with teenagers who have previously experienced counseling in the public health- and social services. When the teenager learns that we represent the Church, he or she has expressed that they feel able to talk about issues they have not felt comfortable with or have been unable to talk about previously. Themes can evolve around struggling with personal faith, feeling like an outsider in Church activities, loss of loved ones and a need to react. Some of the teenagers may have a personal faith that they have kept to themselves, but they feel it is such an important part of life that they want to discuss it with someone.

The view of humanity in the 13-20 Project does not differ from the official viewpoint. However, theory and practice are often in conflict, and unfortunately, some teenagers feel reduced to being patients with a diagnosis and a problem to be fixed in encounters with the public health- and social system. Being met as a whole indi-

vidual is an important aspect in diakonia. It implies being taken seriously as an individual, as humans with their own history, thoughts, words and feelings which deserve to be seen and acknowledged by mature adults. In the 13-20 Project, we experience that discussions with teenagers, without rigid time schedules, allow teenagers to feel they can be present with their whole being: physically, mentally and spiritually, without hiding anything. We know several cases where teenagers chose the 13-20 Project instead of other public services. We have no clear answers as to why this happens, and we state it with humility. Examples



From the left: Human resources manager Kristin Anskaug, project developer Sigrid H. Flaata and the regional administrative manager Svein Erik T. Andersen

of these are teenagers who have already been in contact with a psychologist. We experience that teenagers who have been to psychological counseling for a shorter or longer time, still want additional talks with

the 13-20 Project. Some choose to end their psychological counseling sessions and only meet up with 13-20.

Teenagers express that it feels different to talk with the representatives from the 13-20 Project, because it is more personal and more natural to talk about things they are concerned with, in a different way than in the psychological counseling sessions.

On those occasions, we usually explain to the teenager that our role as diaconal youth workers is different from that of a psychologist.

We are convinced that the reason why the 13-20 Project is perceived differently has to do with a basic diaconal attitude and respect in the youth encounters. It has to do with being a companion. This is a diaconal ideal and relates to how Jesus met the disciples on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). The essence is walking patiently at the pace of the teenagers, raising open questions, and thus showing interest in what he or she is experiencing. The way the 13-20 Project meets teenagers, has to do with voluntarism, flexibility and the teenager's own terms – it has to do with their view

of humanity. We are aware that the project's profile also implies a different power relation between the teenagers and us. The other social care services, such as child welfare and police have, by their role and mandate, a different type of power than the volunteerism that the 13-20 Project represents.

Feedback from our partners

The 13-20 Project has received positive feedback, both orally and written, from our cooperative partners. After the first two years of the project, it seems like this service will be a permanent offer to teenagers in Bærum. The need for talks is increasing, and feedback from the public health- and social services for youth, is that the demand for help in this area is as great as ever. This makes us believe that the 13-20 Project has come to stay.



Looking for a Diaconal Lens, Part II

by John Cumming, Diocese of California, Lay Member of AED Board

I don't think anyone was counting, but there must have been 100 or more deacons from all over The Episcopal Church present at the 2012 General Convention in Indianapolis. (This number does not include the "once a deacon, always a deacon" variety, which of course would vastly inflate the estimate.) Many were part of AED's effort to move beyond just the care and feeding of deacons to being a diaconal presence in this churchwide event. We (meaning the AED convention committee) bit off more than we could chew, ensuring that there would be things we failed to do right or failed to do at all. But we were seen and heard and sometimes even listened to, which is what diaconal ministry inside the Church is about, right?

How to be a diaconal presence beyond just waving the deacon flag animated our planning from the start. Our planning was divided into three general areas – what we might do outside the convention facility, having a booth in the exhibit hall, and some way to speak diaconally to or through the convention. There was also a fourth piece of getting deacons into the daily liturgy and writing Prayers of the People that was handled separately from our committee by AED's Executive Director Susanne Watson Epting and Alabama Archdeacon Louise Thibodaux.

Outside

The outside ideas and plans pretty much fell through. We were intrigued by speculation over a possible "Occupy General Convention," but that never materialized. We talked about having our own presence somewhere outside, but the location and layout of the convention center persuaded us to drop that idea, and that was without knowing that Indianapolis would enjoy daytime temperatures in the 100s the entire first week of convention. We hoped to have a breakfast gathering of deacons at Indianapolis' food rescue and culinary training program Second Helpings. That gathering did happen, with nearly three dozen deacons and friends in attendance, but due to timing difficulties it was held at a café near the convention center. I wanted to help inaugurate an Ecclesia-style street church in Indianapolis during convention; and I thought I came close by finding an interested deacon and diaconal candidate as well as an amenable congregation in the right location (the Cathedral). Ultimately, though, our Indianapolis hosts and deacon community were

stretched too thin to take on the start-up of a new ministry at this particular time.

The AED Booth

As I think I mentioned in my prior article (Diakoneo Vol. 34, # 2), what we hoped to emulate from our 2009 convention presence was finding a way to stimulate discussion about the diaconate among passers-by. We solicited ideas through a posting on Anglo-deacons last fall, but I'm pretty sure it was Susanne Watson Epting who proposed the theme "Looking through a Diaconal Lens"



and also suggested the possibility of illustrating that theme with View-Masters. An internet search quickly disclosed that the toys were still in production and led us to custom View-Master reel-maker Image3d. Coming up with suitable images that would enable booth visitors to look through a diaconal lens was more difficult, likely due to the difficulty I had articulating what we were looking for. We received some good deacon "action shots" but not story sequences that took an opening image and looked further to see and think about what was behind the image. But we finally came up with five reels covering the themes of Hunger, Poverty, Street Crime, Natural Disaster, and "Coming to Convention" (which looked behind the hotel room to the service workers who maintain that room).

The View-Masters were an unmitigated success in terms of drawing people to our booth. The typical passer-by did not find the c'mon "Would you like to look through a diaconal lens?" particularly appealing. However, when we held up a View-Master and said "Do you remember these?" it almost invariably elicited a smile and enough

curiosity to take a look. That experience in turn was disconcerting for some – while the fondly-remembered childhood toy suggested that they might be looking at something fun, the image sequences were designed to provoke rather than entertain. But many lingered to talk about what deacons do, about our resolution, or about AED programs like The Seven.

Resolution B008 – the "Deacons Resolved"

Many approached General Convention greatly concerned over where The Episcopal Church is headed with membership declining and a draft budget that inevitably seemed to prioritize maintenance over mission. Resolution B008 was an attempt by AED to change the conversation, an effort that continues post-convention. The idea of starting church meetings with a discussion about how our actions involve or affect people living in poverty had been kicking around for a long time, at least since the late Roman Catholic Bishop Kenneth Untener tried it in Saginaw, Michigan, in the 1990's. It had only recently gained traction in The Episcopal Church through resolutions in the Dioceses of Atlanta and Indianapolis. And had we been thinking strictly in political terms, it was probably premature to seek churchwide adoption in 2012. But it became a way for AED to engage in that other debate about where The Episcopal Church is headed and to suggest that we return to the gospel and our own ordination and baptismal vows as a way to reframe the discussion.

We saw our challenge, as deacons so often do, just in being heard and, if we were lucky, maybe even being listened to. It's not that the audience of bishops and deputies was callous or uncaring; but we knew we were competing with hundreds of other resolutions and issues like the budget, the Anglican Covenant, and the same-sex blessing rite that threatened to push other items off the agenda if the debates became protracted. Our first revelation, confirmed by deputies visiting our booth, is that our preconvention communications had connected -- they were familiar with the resolution, and many were inclined to support it. Second, we found ourselves scheduled for an early committee hearing, albeit on the evening of the fourth of July, so we would be heard.

I wish I could report that it went well after that; but we embarked on an strange little odyssey that kept us from getting what we sought, while giving us the chance repeatedly to tell the committee and the convention what our resolution was about and to urge its use as a “diaconal lens” through which to see the church and engage those living around us. A convention subcommittee conflated our resolution into several others that addressed the alleviation of poverty, and they changed the language into something else that missed our point. But at the same time, as we tried to redirect the focus back from contemplating economic justice issues to drawing ourselves into relationship with people living in poverty, the fact that “the deacons” were taking this stand took hold and attracted more attention and support. We intended to put our original language back in the resolution on the floor of convention, but ultimately made the fundamental blunder of not having our amendment ready in the House of Bishops, where the resolution came up first, inasmuch as we were expecting it to be debated first in the House of Deputies. Still it provided one more opportunity for Deacon Stan Baker, a deputy from the Diocese of Vermont who had heard our message at the committee

hearings, to speak prophetically about what had come to be known as the “Deacon’s Resolved.” (See Page Twelve.)

The Takeaway

Our takeaway from General Convention was what it should have been. General Convention was a way, one way, to speak diaconally to and within our Church. The resolution provided a focus, and the fact that it did not come out as we had hoped gave us both a lesson and a task – that passing a resolution was not an end unto itself, and that we now have the opportunity and responsibility to start the conversation about our relationships with those living in poverty in our local dioceses. With the resolution that was adopted by convention (A135) asking the church to “cultivate mindfulness about poverty”, we thought – why not *implement* that objective locally by starting the conversation that we had intended to start through B008. I have introduced a resolution to do just that in my home Diocese of California, and several of my AED colleagues with upcoming conventions have done so in their home dioceses.

In addition, rather than consigning our View-Masters to someone’s attic, we decided to send them out on the road, so that more people will have an opportunity to “look through a diaconal lens.” Some will also have

an opportunity to see our special six foot display disk, with a dozen deacon “action shots,” that due to misrouting didn’t arrive in Indianapolis until the day before the exhibit hall closed. We plan to keep these items in circulation at local events until they come back to us for display at next year’s Diaconal Assembly in Williamsburg, Virginia. (See sidebar below for information on how to obtain a set of View-Masters or the large View-Master disk for a diocesan convention or other local gathering.)

Finally, as the foregoing suggests, interjecting a diaconal voice into leadership gatherings and discussions over how The Episcopal Church will govern itself or carry forth its mission may not be just a once every three years undertaking. Encouraged by General Convention’s adoption of Resolution C095 calling upon The Episcopal Church to reimagine itself and establishing a task force to come up with a plan for reforming the Church’s structures, governance, and administration, we not only feel moved to participate but know that there needs to be a diaconal voice in that discussion. At our Fall AED board meeting we will talk about how to insure that this is an ongoing conversation and part of our regular business, as well as additional ways to keep the conversation before the church.

Resources Available to AED Members – Looking Through a Diaconal Lens

The Association for Episcopal Deacons is making the materials used to illustrate the theme “Looking Through a Diaconal Lens” available to AED members for display at diocesan conventions and other regional or local gatherings. Sets of View-Masters and reels (two View-Masters and one each of the five reels illustrating Convention Hotel, Poverty, Hunger, Natural Disaster, and Gun Violence) will be in circulation through next June’s Diaconal Assembly in Williamsburg. The large prop View-Master reel with deacon “action shots” will also be in circulation. In addition, we will provide a supply of our “Looking Through a Diaconal Lens” postcard.

The View-Masters and reel sets are available for the cost of shipping (approximately \$6), and you will be responsible for shipping them to the next destination (in the same or similar box to what they arrive in). The large prop reel is available on the same basis but the shipping cost will be closer to \$75. Postcards are available at cost and will be yours to keep or distribute.

The View-Masters and reel sets and large prop reel are available on a first-come first-served basis, so you should submit a reserva-

tion request as soon as possible to have the best chance of having the items for your convention or other gathering.

To schedule a set of View-Masters, request postcards, or for more information, contact AED Board member John Cumming at jcumming@northcoast.com. Postcards are also available through the AED website at www.episcopaldeacons.org/shop.

Text of AED’s original resolution - B008

Resolved that the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church call upon its members to begin every meeting in calendar year 2013, whether at the parish, diocesan or church-wide level and no matter what the purpose, with this agenda item: “How will what we are doing here affect or involve people living in poverty?”

Deacon Doings in The Diocese Of St. Ives

by The Ven. W. Keith McCoy, Archdeacon, Diocese of New Jersey

Welcome back to the seventeenth chapter of a regular interactive feature which continues in Diakoneo.

What this series is about is the life of deacons, and the situations we find ourselves in. Over the years, I have had my share of “problem moments,” or had friends tell me about their problems. Some of these situations could have been handled better with some knowledge or experience, and many others were cases where any number of solutions would have worked, except the one I chose. The voice of experience was needed, but it wasn't always at hand. This will be an opportunity to share our experiences, and perhaps help others when the question comes up in their lives.

Thus, these stories. They are set in the fictional Diocese of St. Ives, somewhere on the East Coast (no, it is not modeled on New Jersey). No one is real, but the situations are true. The names have been changed to protect the innocent, and the guilty as well. In each issue of Diakoneo -- for the foreseeable future -- there will be a new story.

Each “case study” will be an opportunity for comment. Before I make my observations (based on twenty plus years as a deacon and as a manager of public agencies) in the subsequent issue, I would appreciate your input.

I invite you to drop me a line or more at kmccoy1@optonline.net, or write to me at 14 Second Street, Edison NJ 08837, to give me your take on how to rectify the matter described. If you get back to me within a month of receiving the latest issue of Diakoneo, I'll take your comments into consideration when writing the analysis of that story, and quite possibly even quote from your solution.

The goal is to help us all deal with the craziness that crops up in our lives and ministries. By sharing our experiences, I believe we can make those crazy moments more understandable and manageable. I hope you enjoy the stories, as well.

Dn. Keith McCoy

Response to Chapter 16

I believe it was Jeff Lee (now Bishop of Chicago) who some years ago coined the phrase: “the omnivorous presbyterate.” It was used to describe how the priesthood, over the last millennium, has assumed many of the responsibilities which once were attached to bishops and deacons. The reason for that change was that, as the church grew, bishops retreated into administration, and deacons were diminished in numbers and actions. What was left for the church to function, and for the laity to see, was the priest acting in all roles of the church, instead of allowing the four-fold orders of ministry to live and act.

The arrival of a deacon at St. Margaret's in Paris, which has just lost its elderly and volunteer priest, must seem like a prayer has been answered. The congregation has no financial resources to call a full time priest, so they are dependent on God's grace (and circumstance) for an ordained minister to be with them.

In a small, isolated community such as Paris, it's a natural setting for do-it-all priests. Bishops visit infrequently, usually as a confirmation machine or for a review of the troops. When a bishop does show up, with the exception of the laying on of hands, they do exactly what the priest does every Sunday.

Plus, we all know why they haven't had a deacon before: there are still too few of us to show what our order really does. So, to the people of St. Margaret's, a pastor is someone with a collar: the titles don't make a difference.

If Deacon Holly Pollock gets involved at St. Margaret's, she will need to do two things. First: set some boundaries. Despite all the importuning and sighing she will receive from the congregants, she will need to stick to her guns and only take on diaconal roles (with the consent of the bishop, of course). And because the most obvious form of ordained leadership is public worship, Holly will need to be very clear why she can do a funeral but can't do a wedding, or why she can lead Morning Prayer but not do a Mass of the pre-Sanctified.

While on the topic of boundaries, the deacon will also need to place limits on her hours. Work expands to fill the time available (Parkinson's Law): Holly is retired for her benefit, not necessarily to take on another full time responsibility, one which is probably unremunerative and is always potentially life-consuming. Deacons love the church, but we are not called to hand over our daily lives

completely – especially in retirement. She will need to be clear which hours she will give to the congregation, and when it is permissible to contact her outside of those hours. Heart attacks fall inside that definition; lost cats do not.

The second task will be for Holly to educate the good folk of her new faith community about the varied roles of ministry. This corner of the Episcopal Church has probably heard little if anything about the diaconate. Moreover, while they are aware of bishops, I'll bet the parishioners can tell you not much more about the role of the bishop aside from: he works at the Cathedral; he runs the diocese; he shows up once in a while to do confirmation; and he wears a pointy hat. The deacon should lead the people of St. Margaret's to a deeper understanding of her role in the church, and the roles of others, and in that way, give them a true meaning of their baptismal call and how it is best lived out.

St. Margaret's has had a limited view of the church up until now. It can be expanded. Deacon Holly cannot give in to the “we've always done it this way” sentiment. She needs to show the parish a new and better way. It will take some time, but it will be a very fruitful ministry, and not just for her, but ultimately for all of St. Margaret's, and for Paris. And a deacon can do that.

Chapter XVII – Like Sheepdogs Without a Shepherd

Despite the short notice and the Sunday evening time slot, it was a good turnout, albeit a glum one, of deacons at St. James in East Riverside. Melanie Spunk, the Archdeacon, counted 24 of the deacons of the Diocese of St. Ives, nearly everyone that still lived and functioned within the diocesan borders. Mike Bamberger, deacon at St. James, had put on a variety of coffees and teas, and laid out an array of pastries from a local bakery for his colleagues.

After some socializing, the archdeacon called the group to order a little after 7 pm.

“It's so good to see you all here. Why, I think this is a better turnout than we even get at convention.” She aimed her remark at the few who never attended that event, but just got uncomprehending looks back. “It's too bad that we have to come together under these terms, but I believe that if we work

(See “St. Ives” on Page Ten)



ASSOCIATION FOR EPISCOPAL DEACONS



Jamestown: A Mere 400 Years – Weaving a New World View

DIACONAL ASSEMBLY
of the
ASSOCIATION for EPISCOPAL DEACONS

JUNE 13-16, 2013
WOODLANDS CONFERENCE CENTER

Williamsburg, Virginia

2013 AED Conference Brochure, continued on Page Eleven

“St. Ives” from Page Eight

together, we can have a positive effect on the future of this diocese.”

Everyone there knew the terms. It had been barely two weeks ago that the Right Reverend Anson Snopes DeGranite, VI Bishop of the Diocese of St. Ives, has announced his imminent resignation. After almost 16 years as the diocesan, he was leaving to become the interim bishop back in the diocese where he had grown up and started his ministry. Most surprising was the alacrity of his departure: he would be at his office in the Bishop Holmes Center only until the middle of next month.

What panicked the deacons was that all of them had been ordained by DeGranite. The only “real” deacon the diocese had seen before the bishop started the School for Diaconal Education was Eleanora Prescott, a retired professor from California, who had moved into the diocese in the mid-80’s. It was she and DeGranite who raised up the St. Ives diaconal community and had given it direction and leadership. Archdeacon Prescott had been in a nursing home the last few years, and now the other founder was leaving.

Ed Toowhit, one of the older deacons, was the first to speak up. “I think we need to be quiet about this. We don’t want to scare the priests into thinking that we’re organizing.” The archdeacon noticed the snort on the face of Angie Sharkey, but chose to recognize Marta Hamancavage instead.

“I met a lot of deacons at the last AED conference”, she reported [ignoring someone’s whispered “What’s AED?”], and they told me that they organized to get deacons on the search committee, and planted questions about servant ministry in the walk-about. They told me they were happy with the people who got elected as their new bishops.”

Joe Birdcall didn’t even wait to be recognized. “You don’t understand diocesan politics. The priests run everything. They tell the laity who to vote for, and they’ll tell us the same thing. If they think we’re organizing just to promote deacons, or if we publicly back some candidate who doesn’t win, we’ll get some guy who will never ordain another deacon as long as he’s here.” Melanie responded that she thought most of the priests had more respect for the laity and for their deacons than that. Joe sat down with a shrug.

Several more opinions were voiced. The conversation seemed to go back and forth between those who felt that deacons needed to push for the election of a bishop who would promote the diaconate further, and those who felt that it either would make no difference if the deacons spoke as one, or that it would be dangerous to speak as one.

The archdeacon moderated the conversation for a while, and when the discussion petered out, then she added her viewpoint.

“Friends, it is clear that change is coming. A new bishop will do things differently than Bp. De Granite did. And it is clear from tonight’s discussion that we are not of one mind about the level of our involvement in the selection of a new diocesan bishop. But I do think we need to come together again, and discuss these questions: What kind of a diocese do we want for everyone, and how do deacons fit into that vision? Furthermore, how do we listen for the Holy Spirit, and how do we let others know what we have heard?”

And with that, she dismissed the deacons, with a promise to reconvene the group back at St. James’ four Sundays from that inconclusive gathering.

through the dust by Ormonde Plater

It’s time to talk about two words often used within and about our small corner of the holy catholic church: liberal and conservative. Which is good and which is bad? Do we think we are one and not the other? Give me liberal or give me conservative!

This summer, when General Convention approved the blessing of same-sex unions, the terms became part of the national news coverage of the Episcopal Church. Immediately, several conservative writers accused the church of adopting liberal theologies and practices. The most prominent was Ross Douthat, an op-ed columnist for the New York Times. On July 15, the Sunday after the close of the convention, Douthat wrote that the Episcopal Church “is flexible to the point of indifference on dogma, friendly to sexual liberation in almost every form, willing to blend Christianity with other faiths, and eager to downplay theology entirely in favor of secular political causes.” Episcopal liberalism, he said, is symptomatic of “the post-1960s decline of liberal Christianity,” which has repelled the youth it desperately seeks and has led to increasingly empty pews and inevitably to financial distress. Douthat followed up the next day with another column decrying “liberal Christianity,” and other writers joined the negative outcry. These included a strident

and largely ignorant opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal.

It appears, at least to commentators such as these, that the Republican Party at prayer has become the Democratic Party at socialism.

Rebuttals from the liberal side soon followed. They included two Episcopalians, Diana Butler Bass, whose most recent book, *Christianity After Religion*, is about the decline of organized religion in a new age of spiritual revival, and Jon Meacham, an executive editor at Random House, who writes a column for Time magazine, where his comments on the church appeared on July 30. Bass, whose comments appeared on her blog on July 15, said: “The real question is: Can Christianity be saved?” Both articles make excellent points and are worth looking up on the Internet.

Refusing to be labeled at either extreme, Jay Emerson Johnson, an Episcopal priest who writes a blog called *Peculiar Faith*, said: “I am socially and politically liberal because I am theologically and religiously conservative.” He even extended an invitation: “If what lots of people are seeking (as Mr. Douthat hints at in his piece) are ways to embrace the historical traditions of Christianity while also adopting socially progressive postures toward cultural issues, well, come on over to the Episcopal Church!”

What Johnson says seems to me a sensible answer to extremist attacks. He also resonates with my own position: because I am conservative about God and his church, I am liberal about the world. Because the Trinity is one God in three persons, we who are many and diverse are one people of God. Because Christ humbled himself to share in our humanity, we who are human can share in his divinity, just as we who are many share in one bread and one cup.

Because Jesus was born of a virgin, God brought a new holiness into an old and tired world. Because Christ died and rose from the dead, God gave new life to all human beings in a new creation. The mottled beauty of God is the harmony and rhythm of the universe.

The new world of the risen Christ embraces immigrants, gays and lesbians, the sick and the suffering, the hungry, homeless, and oppressed, prisoners and captives, all who seem strange and alien. In this new world, we welcome strangers to our homes and tables. The new world is not some time and place in the future, it is here and now. Here I stand with scripture and tradition, with the church.

But still we label liberal or conservative as good or bad. Is the goodness or badness we dimly perceive dependent solely on our social, political, and religious limitations? I very much doubt it. If I recognize value in both the conservatism with which we approach

(See “Plater” on Page Twelve)



Weaving a New World View

- **Opening Liturgy and Reception** – Welcome to Jamestown, where the first Anglican liturgy was held in 1607. We'll have an opening liturgy, followed by a reception and dinner back at the Williamsburg complex.
- **Keynote Speaker and Assembly Facilitator:** The Rev. Eric H.F. Law, founder and executive director of the Kaleidoscope Institute, which provides leadership, resources, and training for building inclusive community, intercultural competency, and community transformation
- **Intensive workshop – “Holy Currency, Inclusivity, and Worldview”** – The Rev. Eric H.F. Law
- **Intensive workshop – “Doctrine of Discovery”** – Ms. Sarah Eagle Heart, Indigenous Ministries Missioner, Episcopal Church
- **Intensive workshop -- “A View from The Tracing Center”** – Ms. Katrina Browne, Producer and Director of “Traces of the Trade”
- **Stephen's Recognition Liturgy**
- **Ministry Fair** – Come see the justice ministries of deacons from around the church – a chance to learn new ideas and share your own.
- **Eucharist at the historic Bruton Parish** – Bishop Hollerith presiding
- **Banquet** – featuring Mr. James Cameron in a living history re-enactment of the life of John Rollison, a Revolutionary War era African American
- **Open Space** – a time to collaborate with other deacons about issues of importance to deacons and your own ministry concerns
- Plus many opportunities to collaborate, brainstorm, network and schmooze...

More about the workshops...

Our location in historic Williamsburg invites us to reflect on the world views (Colonial, African, and Indigenous) that have shaped our nation and our church. Presenters Eric Law, Sarah Eagle Heart, and Katrina Browne will help us understand our past and weave our experiences into a vision of diaconal ministry in the 21st century.

All workshops will be available for all participants.

“Holy Currency, Inclusivity, and Worldview”

As a well-known consultant who provides leadership, resources, and training for building inclusive community, intercultural competency, and community transformation, Eric Law will take us through the challenges of time and history as we examine place, culture, and the realities of the world today. Eric has been actively involved in the planning of our Assembly and has listened to the hopes and concerns of deacons on the design team. We are excited that he'll be an active part of helping us weave this worldview.

Presenter: The Rev. Eric H.F. Law



Eric H. F. Law is the founder and executive director of the Kaleidoscope Institute, which provides leadership resource and training for building inclusive community, intercultural competency, community transformation, congregation vitality and stewardship. He has been a consultant and trainer for building inclusive community for over 20 years working with the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, United Methodist, Presbyterian, American Baptist, United Church of Christ and Lutheran Churches in the United States, Canada, Asia, Australia and Europe. He is the author of 7 books: *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (also available in Spanish); *The Bush Was Blazing But Not Consumed*; *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace*; *Sacred Acts, Holy Change*; *The Word at the Crossing*; *Finding Intimacy in a World of Fears and Holy Currencies*. He is an Episcopal priest, a composer of church music, a photographer and a playwright. He writes a weekly blog called *The Sustainist: Spirituality for Sustainable Communities in a Networked World*. <http://ehflaw.typepad.com/blog/>

“Doctrine of Discovery”

Jesus told us to love our enemies and do good to them. What if he really meant it? And how do we do it? In this workshop on active non-violence, participants will learn to recognize their own power for making personal and social changes without violence and will improve their ability to respectfully engage with opponents instead of confronting them in ways that polarize and demonize. Deacons and others who care about social issues will learn how to advocate powerfully for those issues while continuing to love and do good to those who disagree.



Sarah Eagle Heart is the Missioner for the Office of Native American/Indigenous Ministries with The Episcopal Church. Ms. Eagle Heart is a member of the Oglala (Lakota) Sioux Tribe of Pine Ridge, South Dakota and a life-long member of The Episcopal Church. Ms. Eagle Heart’s ministry work also includes all aspects of advocacy, networking, resource development, congregational and ministry development. She is also the Team Leader for the Diversity, Social and Environmental Ministries Team of the Episcopal Church Center. Ms. Eagle Heart has been selected as a TEC delegate twice to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2008 and 2009. She was the convener for the 2008 Indigenous Women’s Gathering, which re-organized the Anglican Council of Indigenous Women. Ms. Eagle Heart has been involved in justice issues since high school when she began a protest against a racist, sexist and spiritually derogatory homecoming event. She joined the staff of The Episcopal Church in 2009.

“A View from The Tracing Center”

In the feature documentary ‘Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North,’ filmmaker Katrina Browne discovers that her New England ancestors were the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. She and nine cousins retrace the Triangle Trade and gain a powerful new perspective on the black/white divide. The issues the DeWolf descendants are confronted with dramatize questions that apply to the nation as a whole: What, concretely, is the legacy of slavery – for diverse whites, for diverse blacks, for diverse others? Who owes who what for the sins of the fathers of this country? What history do we inherit as individuals and as citizens? How does Northern complicity change the equation? What would repair – spiritual and material – really look like and what would it take?



Katrina Browne was the producer/director of *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North*, a first-person documentary film about her slave-trading ancestors from Rhode Island, the hidden history of New England’s complicity in slavery, and questions of repair and reconciliation today. With Katrina’s leadership over the course of nine years, over 500 people and institutions were involved in the making of the film and the dialogue process surrounding it. While it was still in rough-cut form, the film contributed to the Episcopal Church’s decision to atone for its role in slavery. *Traces of the Trade* premiered in 2008 at the Sundance Film Festival, and aired on PBS later that year, reaching over 1.5 million Americans. Katrina also co-founded Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program, which operates in twenty-one cities to recruit more young people and people of color into the public interest sector. She has an M.A. in theology from the Pacific School of Religion, where she wrote a thesis comparing the role that Greek tragedies played in civic life in ancient Greece to the untapped potential of film to catalyze civic dialogue.

“Plater” from Page Ten

God and his church and the liberalism with which we approach the world, then both are good.

They are good despite their shifting definitions. In the religious sphere, in our culture, liberal commonly means trendy and even unfaithfulness to scripture and tradition. That’s the sense in which Douthat and other critics

write, but it’s not the sense in which Diana Butler Bass, Jon Meacham, and Jay Emerson Johnson understand the church. For them, liberal means a serious engagement with scripture and tradition, in which the best of the past is retained and renewed and the church engages the world, our time and place, with a commitment to the God of love, the God of mercy, justice, and peace.

Similarly, in our culture, conservative commonly means people who are rigid about God and his church and heartless and selfish in dealings with other people, especially those who are poor and oppressed. Instead, I believe, conservative means conserving what is best, in our dialogue with God and in our relationships with others in the Church and in the world. Here too I stand with the church.

Floor Speech by Dn. Stan Baker, Deputy from Vermont

“In supporting the entirety of this resolution, I wish to highlight Resolve three, the vestige of B008 that some have called “The Deacons’ Amendment.” A wise priest told me, in commenting on the original resolution: We certainly don’t want to “bleep” off our deacons! While we deacons appreciate that sentiment, it is not the reason to support this resolve and the entire resolution; the opportunity to expand our conversation about poverty is the reason. Our understanding, as a church, of the diaconate is growing and deepening. Each year I discover new levels in my comprehension of what it means to be a deacon, and

I learn more about how to keep one foot in the streets and one foot in the sanctuary.

“This resolve is a softer version of the language of the resolution brought to this convention with the strong support of the Association of Episcopal Deacons. I honor the good work of the subcommittee of our wonderful Social and Urban Affairs Committee that labored so hard to conflate many resolutions into this one, and though I strongly believe the original language would have been better for resolve three, I still support this resolution.

“This is an important resolve; this is a simple but powerful idea. Poverty is a core issue that cuts across all we do here, and permeates every action we take. It lies at the core of our mission and our ministry as God’s church. It is our sacred and bounden duty as Christians to walk with those living in poverty, whether black, white, Latino, First Nation Peoples, gay, bisexual, straight, trans, disabled or abled. The poor are massed outside the doors of our churches and – thanks be to God – they are finding their way inside. The simple but profound practice involves reflecting on the ques-

(See “Baker” on Page Fifteen)

Housing and Registration

The conference is being held at the Woodlands Conference Center in historic Williamsburg, Virginia. Colonial Williamsburg is about a 15 minute walk, and shuttle service is available to all Colonial Williamsburg attractions. Tickets to the historic area will also be provided.

Please note: The registration process consists of two parts. The registration form below includes the conference/assembly itself. With it comes admittance to the meetings and workshops, lunches, receptions, Thursday and Saturday dinners and meeting materials.

Accommodations must be made with the conference center separately. Information on how to do that follows this registration form. Overnight accommodations include breakfast each day.

Registration

Please print clearly – this is what will appear on your badge and registration packet.

Name(last)_____ (first)_____

Gender M F

Address_____

City_____ State/Prov_____ Zip/Postal Code_____

Telephone_____ Cell Phone_____

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Diocese_____

FEES **AED member non-member**

Assembly (includes everything but housing)

AED member \$375_____ Non-member \$425_____

Extra banquet tickets \$55_____ ** (for spouses, partners, friends)

** **The Assembly maximum is 200.** Banquet tickets will be awarded to full paying participants first. After that, they will be allocated in the order in which requests are received.

Contribution to the Scholarship Fund to bring deacons from Province IX \$_____

TOTAL \$_____ \$_____

Refunds are available minus a \$75 service fee until May 1, 2013 when registration ends.

Registration is available online at www.episcopaldeacons.org

If paying by check:

Check enclosed for \$_____ payable to the Association for Episcopal Deacons

If paying by credit card:

Visa_____ Mastercard_____ American Express_____ Discover_____

Please charge my card the following amount \$_____

Card # _____ Expiration _____

Name on Card _____

Signature _____

If not registering online, send this form and payment to:

The Rev. Sherry Munday, Deacon
1732 Early Settlers Road
North Chesterfield, VA 23235
804-323-4136
sbmunday@verizon.net

**TO REGISTER FOR YOUR ACCOMMODATIONS
AT THE WOODLANDS CONFERENCE CENTER**

The overnight room rate for the Woodlands is \$112 plus tax, whether single or double occupancy. Up to four people are allowed in a room (two beds). The room rate will be extended for several days on each side of the conference.

Our contact for housing is Ms. Pam Crew. Her instructions for reserving your room are as follows. Remember that you must register for both the conference and your room by May 1, 2013.

For Online Reservations

Attendees can make reservations through a customized website created specifically for your event. They will be able to access the website to make, change or modify their reservations. The URL for your event is <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/16957>

The URL can be posted to your website, or it can be e-mailed to your event attendees.

For Call in Reservations

Attendees may call our toll-free number 800-261-9530 to make reservations. Please use the Booking ID 16957 when calling.

("Baker" from Page Twelve)

tion - in each of our meetings at some point during the proceedings - How will what we are doing here affect or involve people living in poverty? This will lead to a renewed focus on the mission and ministry of our church. It is a small but powerful seed that can grow into an enormous bush big enough to provide nests in its shade for those in need.

"We deacons are an ancient order; we are also a newly emerging order finding fresh life for the diaconate in our prophetic ministry proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom, responding to human need by loving service, and seeking to transform unjust structures of society. I ask you to pass this resolution in its entirety and take home with you our hope that you will engage poverty in all your meetings. I speak for your servant leaders as I ask you to walk with us in this journey from the chancel into the streets! Vote for this resolution - **Listen to your deacons!**"



("Nesbit" from Page Sixteen)

and are not yet a member of the Association for Episcopal Deacons group, please request to be included and you will be.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the people whose hard work and dedication made possible the effectiveness of our diaconal presence at the General Convention. And thanks to our members and supporters who have allowed us to expand and deepen our diaconal presence in The Episcopal Church.

**Pam Nesbit
President**

AIRPORT SHUTTLE SERVICES

We have arranged a discount for transportation from area airports with Tidewater Shuttle service. www.tidewatercoach.com/AED

We'll remind you about this in your pre-conference materials, but this web site will give you information about the rates they are offering. You may wish to coordinate with other attendees from your area in order to share costs.

Newport News (PHF)
\$45 - Single Rider // \$25 Ea - 2 Riders
\$15 Ea - 3 or More Riders
=====

Richmond (RIC)
\$90 - Single Rider // \$50 Ea - 2 Riders
\$30 -Ea - 3 or More Riders

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- Dues are:
- Annual Sustaining: \$75
 - Annual Regular: \$50
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 - Annual Supporting: \$150
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 - Life Membership \$1,000
- (24-month Extended Payment Life Membership available; please inquire.)

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City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

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- Check for US \$ _____ (US bank or US money order)
- VISA/MasterCard

Card Number _____

Name on Card _____

Exp. Date _____

- I am:
- deacon
 - in formation for deacon
 - want to be a deacon
 - bishop
 - presbyter
 - other friend

Birth date: (if deacon or in formation) ___/___/___

Ordination date: (if deacon) ___/___/___

My diocese: _____

Mail this form to: AED, PO Box 1324, Paso Robles, CA 93447-1324

Calendar of Diaconate Events

- 14-16 March 2013** *Archdeacons and Formation Directors Conference, Maritime Institute, Baltimore, MD*
13-16 June 2013 *AED Diaconal Assembly, Woodlands Hotel and Suites, Colonial Williamsburg, VA*

“... the only gospel”

By pam nesbit

“you may be the only gospel your neighbor ever reads.” st. francis of assisi

As your president I was privileged to be present at the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Indianapolis, to read the gospel at the principal service and to witness and participate in the diaconal presence at that convention. It was exciting and deeply inspiring to see the impact of our ministry there where the church was gathered.

In the daily Eucharist, deacons were responsible for many aspects of the liturgy. In addition to serving as deacons up at the altar, setting the table and reading the gospel and the prayers of the people, we wrote the prayers of the people for all services. With the help of folks whom we recruited every day, we saw to it that the elements were brought to the table to be consecrated and then out to where the people would come to be fed. We saw to it that the Eucharistic ministers were where they needed to be and were well-supplied with bread and wine to feed hundreds of people quickly and reverently.

At our Association for Episcopal Deacons booth we invited people to look at the world through a diaconal lens. Using our View-Masters to entice people in, we were able to have informative and challenging conversations with deputies, bishops, Episcopal Church Women delegates and visitors, all of whom took the opportunity to browse among the exhibitions. Our booth also became the meeting place for deacons from all over the church.

However, for me, the most exciting of the deacons' ministries at this convention was the

resolution we brought inviting the convention to ask that all meetings in the church in 2013, at whatever level and for whatever reason, begin with the question “How does what we are doing here impact and/or involve people living in poverty.” This resolution was brought to the Committee on Social and Urban Affairs. We had an opportunity to learn how the legislative process works when, despite our concerns, our resolution was rewritten and made a part of a much larger resolution on the alleviation of poverty. Our resolution became a “Resolved”, that is, a part of a larger resolution. The language of this new “Resolved” was to call the church “... to cultivate mindfulness about poverty in our community and world as well as the poverty into which Christ calls us by including in our prayer and in every meeting agenda, time for reflection on how our work engages issues of poverty and economic and racial justice;”

Our concerns about this new Resolved were two. One was that this language was much less specific than our resolution and therefore less likely to be effective. Our second concern was that our resolution was not about the alleviation of poverty, but rather was about raising awareness of the relationship between the churches and people living in poverty in an ongoing manner. Many deacons took the opportunity to speak to our resolution at the subcommittee meeting. So much so, that it became known as “The Deacon’s Resolved”. As we spoke about it in individual conversation and in testimony

before both houses, I think we entered into a new phase of the ministry of deacons in the church. For years we have been the ones speaking up in our parishes for the poor and marginalized and the need to see the world with a “diaconal lens”. Often we have done so in our dioceses as well. This July we were able, as members of our order, to speak to the whole church about the needs, concerns and hopes of the world and to invite the church to become aware of the impact of all of our actions on people living in poverty.

And now it’s time to take it to our dioceses. The resolution passed at General Convention calls for us to “cultivate mindfulness” about those living in poverty. Let us use the language of our original resolution to tell them how to do this. Let us bring our call to awareness to our diocesan conventions, asking that we include in the agenda of every meeting in 2013 the question, “How does what we do here impact or involve people living in poverty?” As of this writing this resolution has been offered in the dioceses of California, and Oregon. There are plans to introduce it in Olympia and Maine and I plan to bring it to our convention here in Pennsylvania this November. I have posted the language of the California diocesan resolution at the AED Facebook group as a resource. It might be helpful if those of you from other dioceses could post your own resolutions as you write and submit them. If you are on Facebook

(See “Nesbit” on Page Fifteen)

