AED Archdeacon and Deacon Directors' Conference, 2016

Deacon leadership Formation In Small Congregations
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- Task force for clergy leadership formation in small congregations
- Maureen serves on task force
- Task force was created as a result of resolution to General Convention from the Standing Committee on Small Churches
- Small church defined by size and full/part time clergy leadership (usually under 100 ASA)
- We have become a truly eucharistically centered church
- Morning Prayer is not considered adequate by most now
- Communion served by deacons in congregations is controversial and can be confusing
- In different congregations, deacons have different roles
- East Carolina: small churches, rural, bishop is proponent of total ministry and asks how deacons can be utilized / Hispanic church has had a deacon who has effectively been running the church
- Rio Grande: very large geographic area, small churches scattered at a distance. Challenge to deacons - much work that in which they are not able to live into their ministries
- Northern California: geographically dispersed small congregations / question of deacons role when there is transition in ministry: deacon is put "in charge" then there is confusion when new leadership comes in; suggestion of taking a three month sabbatical
- Central PA: fairly large geographic area, small churches, only in cities are there more than one parish per, many churches are moving to part time; some deacons are called from the midst of the congregation and stay in place, others move, there are deacons working effectively in small congregations

Question: how do you avoid being exploited as a deacon? Issue: "cheap labor" / not able to live in to diaconate

Deacons in small churches bring vitality when they are able to live into their ministry; relationship between the priest (usually part time) and deacon is very significant

Issue: building community in small churches can become exclusive and insular; deacons can open that up - building community through outreach