

AED's Archdeacon & Deacon Directors' Conference – February 2018

CALL TO ACTION: Mobilizing Deacons

Why is there a need to mobilize Deacons? Deacons can live into their call through social action.

When events happen such as gun violence, there is need for both witness and to help people process through positive action. (Minneapolis shooting - immediate reaction to lead a protest

How do we motivate Deacons to lead action and form responses through leadership?

Discussion on how various diocese are acting or can act and the Deacons place in that action:

Carol: Charlottesville VA. Clergy formed a line between the two groups of angry protesters which was very powerful.

Sally: Wilmington NC has many advocacy activities that are through existing groups.

Diane Newark NJ: Lutheran Episcopal Advocacy Ministry (LEAM) is a new ministry encouraged by the National Church a few years back that is organizing policy action on state and federal issues. Prior to that there was an informal interreligious structure in NJ and also a diocesan justice board who sponsored issue education activities.

Jenny – Central PA – Just started leading when things happened by offering prayerful opportunities and activities. They just started doing it.

Deacons in L.A. were asked by Bishops to come to the mudslide areas to provide laundry love.

Jan – www.province1.org “Deacons Talking on the Road to Emmaus” video talks. Stories of action

L.A. Sacred Resistance - Go to court with those that are being deported. Marches on city hall. Former archdeacon (Joann) has been arrested in the past. Two young priests were given responsibilities for Sacred Resistance at general convention.

Steven - Hawaii - Go to state capital on the first day of the month protests nuclear war and the increase in possibility. This started with 6 people and grows weekly. Steven is Jubilee officer. Native Hawaiians over represented in prison population. He is on task force for prison reform. They are advocating to cut down on building new prisons and put it into prevention such as education.

Newark NJ other actions: Episcopalians have been present at weekly protests at Republican leadership offices (healthcare etc.). This has led to very positive actions such as protecting healthcare and new leadership running for office. Other activities including women's march (a bus was organized through one Episcopal church in diocese.

Jersey City churches are coming together to walk, witness, and pray at sites of violence in Jersey City lead by churches

Immigration – Large group of clergy have walked with deportee to courthouse - city hall. To date he has not been deported.

Deacons have led two new ministries for refugees and immigrants through First Friends and “Lighthouse” repurpose of a rectory for families of refugees

Denise from Olympia - Hispanics working and taking the ferry have been targeted by ICE and were being picked up. Churches and clergy show up at the same time ICE does to witness

Rosemary - Gateway of Grace in Dallas - Episcopal priest was a refugee from Iran - immigration ministry in North TX. Deacons have been involved in that. It is ecumenical ministry.

Pat - Mass. Several churches have opened doors and resources to families in jeopardy of being deported.

Sally suggested there are things going on with sanctuary churches

Steve from Hawaii - FACE - faith, action, community, etc. Ecumenical group helping people become legal citizens or permanent residence.

Georgia – Tapping into and working with “Georgia Women and those who stand with us”.

Janet works with them in leading letter writing campaigns and visits with elected officials

Concerns, Challenges and Resources

How do you bridge differences on issues? Within congregations, and with deacons and clergy

- 1- Tie the platform back to diocesan and national church resolutions
- 2- EPPN (Episcopal Policy Network) – sends notices on national church issues that have an action that can be taken in the short term (call, write etc.)
There were a small percentage present who currently respond and fewer who forward or encourage others to act. We can and should do more.
- 3- EPPN has new resources available to help with “Civil Discourse”. This is something sorely needed and Deacons can help lead in this area.
- 4- When engaging with elected officials we should remember to engage both parties.
Liberal congressional representatives should be asked to do more such as sponsor legislation. We should also thank them for their support.
- 5- A big challenge is choosing which issues to fight for. As Deacons we care about so many
Justice issues. Those who are very involved should lead their given issue.
- 6- AED does not have advocacy as part of their mission. Should this be included?
- 7- Communication through AED – Blasts on certain upcoming national events such as the upcoming March 24th “March for our Lives” in DC, March 14 student walk out, and other resources such as liturgies for vigils (Anne Pillet)

Other Effective National Groups:

Human Rights Campaign - Most effective lobby group in DC not just LGBTQ

Southern Poverty Law Center

Bread for the World

Equal Justice Initiative

Recommended Books on Justice Issues

Brian Stevenson - Just Mercy

Michele Alexander - The New Jim Crow

Susan Scott- Fierce Conversations