



Archdeacon and Deacon Director's Conference Spring 2015 Open Space Notes

Open Space: Recruiting Younger Deacons

Facilitator: Cookie Clark (NO. CA)

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Scribe: Geri Swanson (NY)

- I. If younger folks discern a call to the diaconate, they are often encouraged to be priests and will drop out in frustration. Some priests and discernment committees push them towards priesthood.
- Younger 20's-30's are often afraid to move forward or challenge authority when it comes to call.
 - Discernment often succeeds if two or more young aspirants are in the group.
 - Issues around discernment should be around life; you are called to a particular vocation, local discernment committees' should be sensitive to that.
 - No one becomes a plumber without knowing a plumber. No one can understand the call of the diaconate without knowing a deacon. Missional communities can be led by a deacon.

II. Where do we meet 20's-30's aspirants?

- Often in disaster work
- Episcopal Service Corps
- EYE
- Intentional communities: often connections remain over time thanks to social media.

Everyone is telling them that they have to be economically successful; they often feel unnecessary stress related to this. Many have young families with challenges to time restraints, so distance learning makes sense for many of them.

III. What have we learned from "The Seven" (Kyle Peterson/Suzanne Watson-Epting leaders)

- There are significant impediments to young adult ministry.
 - Education in understanding Episcopal polity
 - Understand young adulthood form developmental level
 - This is the "technology" generation who often lack understanding of ritual.
 - They need spiritual guidance and support
 - They need long term mentors
- AED is encouraged to identify deacons under the age of 40, and ask Kyle for a written report on his experiences with "The Seven".

IV. When should discernment start? Younger than previous thought.

- In some parishes discernment for acolytes includes working with deacons
- Deacons need to be visible at EYE events
- Deacons at General Convention are encouraged to meet and talk to young folks there.

We need to encourage courageous conversations in diocesan discernment committees, with priests, and standing committees around how we can improve the process for younger people discerning a call to the diaconate.

Note: Cookie asked us to review a brochure intended to attract younger aspirants. (See pages 2 and 3)

A deacon in every congregation...that is my goal as Bishop. I have set this goal because I believe the diaconate to be a necessary part of a complete and healthy church. If we are really going to make disciples, raise up saints, and transform communities for Christ in Northern California, we must have effective diaconal ministry in all our congregations.

The Rt. Rev. Barry L Beisner, Bishop of the Diocese of Northern California



“Making Disciples, Raising Up Saints & Transforming Communities for Christ”

The Episcopal Diocese of
Northern California

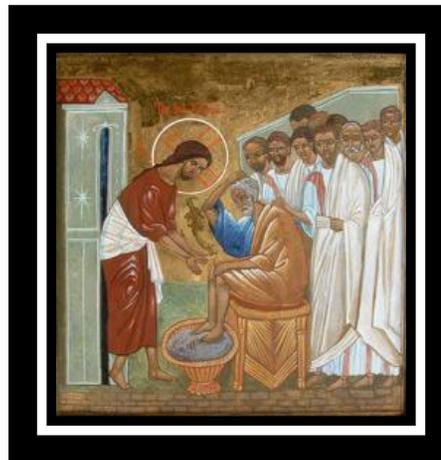
350 University Ave. Suite 280, Sacramento,
California 95825

Tel 916.442.6918 Fax 916.442.6927

Web www.norcalepiscopal.org/deacon



Diakonia is a Greek word which means caring for those in need, carrying out God's vision in word, action, and in attending to all of God's creation. In today's world where power can be determined by wealth, but resources only available to some, healing and transformation are possible if we examine that call to diakonia. Join us in thinking, praying, and forming a plan of action in working toward that transformation.



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Contact:

Archdeacons for the Diaconate

Email: Cookie.clark@sbcglobal.net

Garybrown6@yahoo.com

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Cost: \$350 per semester (covers conference calls, guest lecturers, retreat, etc.) plus cost of online or classroom courses and books.

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For more information contact one of the Archdeacons.

An Individual Strategy for Ordination

Work and learn where you live—with the exception of one year Field Education in a nearby congregation during candidacy.

Have an individual learning plan that evaluates competency and provides the COM with an understanding of your readiness for ordination.

Begin by checking out the Ordination Manual on norcalepiscopal.org. Talk to your priest. Talk to the Bishop.

With the bishop's permission, formation can start before postulancy. Spend 3 or 4 years in discernment. Then apply for ordination. This program does not guarantee ordination. You will, however, develop a heart for diakonia and servant ministry.



Postulants Beth Gaines, Pam Gossard, Mary Taggart and Don Callison