



2021 Archdeacon & Deacon Directors Conference

Open Space Report: AED Membership

A3D 2021 Conference – Open Space Technology Session #1 – Re: AED

Host: The Rev. Carole Maddux

Are most of the deacons in your diocese members, or not? Why or why not?

Spirit of “rugged individualism” keeps some of our deacons from joining anything. (Carter Hawley)

AED feels a bit East-Coast centric... (Carter Hawley)

Even though I haven’t done this yet, I do have a budget, and at least initially, could give an annual membership to all the deacons. Most of our deacons are members, some are lifetime members. I continually preach it, and have done so since before NAAD became AED. Our deacon newsletter includes a button to click on AED. (Gen Grewell)

AED could advertise more: What is it that AED has that could enhance our ministry?

Resource page; many resources that are available to those who are in formation and those who are newly ordained.

Especially now, while we’re still on-line and having virtual gatherings, the cost of attending conferences is quite minimal. This is a way people can gather, gain knowledge, get education, and have a community. That, also, is one of the things I do as Archdeacon: gather the deacons monthly to check in.

This is the organization that speaks for our order, works hard for our order.

Communication is very important.

I don’t recall seeing a lot of input from members themselves about the “why be a member?” issue,.

During training, during postulancy and throughout – we were encouraged to join. As archdeacons, we need to continue to encourage membership.

AED keeps us from being “domesticated,” and from becoming isolated. Community. Connection.

I went through seminary and felt that I had a special opportunity to educate priests in training. I had really, really good mentorship from my Archdeacons. No matter what you think being a deacon will be, it’s not going to be that! (Ari Wolfe)

This is our “professional” education.

I’d like to know more about how I can get involved and participate. (Ari Wolfe)

Maybe a member of the Board of AED could attend these regularly scheduled meetings of deacons in the dioceses, especially while they’re still virtual. (Divide up the country and take assignments). Also, the Fund for the Diaconate is trying to get its message out.

I’d guess (though I don’t know) that most of our deacons are not members. So part of my duties should be to encourage my deacons – and also the students I teach – to join. I do use the resources from AED. It resonates with my newer deacons. But we have deacons from all different waves of the diaconate, including a lot who still see themselves as appropriately serving just in their parishes and belonging to a little club. So, since AED’s website and its resources are very good, focus on that; stay away from being just another club to belong to. (Betsy Bennett)

I’d really like to model connections between formation organizations – various schools for deacon – and AED. There is rarely a gathering of deacons when AED doesn’t come up. We direct people to AED’s website. Cross-pollination between AED and any/all of us out here doing formation will be great. (Lynda Tyson)

The competencies help provide an overarching view of what deacons need to know – guideline, pulling everything together. (Ari Wolfe)

We use the competencies as the foundation for our individuals going through the process to put together portfolios which they will submit to the Board of Examining Chaplains. (Gen Grewell)

Does “Deacons Moving Forward” connect with AED helping to form the next wave? Yes. We’re trying to figure this all out together. I can’t tell you how many ideas I have gotten that I have taken back to Montana that have been really useful, that have gotten us out of a bind, have done wonders for our school. And then there are the ideas we create together. (Roxy)

Where AED has really shined for me has been in my role as an Archdeacon; the gifts that it has given to me and our diocese. AED has opened up the A3D conference to anyone who’s really committed to the diaconate. We’re making this order stronger, to what it can be / should be. I had to build this from the ground up and *could not* have done this without AED. (Roxy)

One of the key things that has come from AED, out of everything over the years, is the networking. The connections you make that result in the ability to share, to get inspired and build on others’ ideas and examples. For example, the Diocese of San Diego drew on our job description for an Archdeacon, and now they have an Archdeacon. Sharing our newsletter. (Gen Grewell)

Has anyone used AED for continuing education credits?

I certainly report the conferences as my continuing education to my diocese each year. (In our diocese, for example, we are required to do at least 18 hours each year.) (Roxy)

More ideas?

One idea that came out of AED (from Roxy) is to have a vocational deacon serve as a mentor to every single transitional deacon. (“The Transitional Diaconal Experience” – Roxy) They have to come up with a diaconal project during their time as a transitional deacon. I’ve been able to work with them so they don’t see this as just another hoop to go through, but rather as building the relationships that endure over time. This ensures that every priest understands fully the theology and unique role of deacons. The transitional deacons who become priests have become my biggest recruiters of deacons!

Maybe someone should talk with Bp. Mary Gray-Reeves, to introduce Roxy’s idea (about the transitional diaconal experience) at the School for Bishops so all new bishops will be in on this creative idea. Also, perhaps the Bishop on AED’s Board could make the connection to the House of Bishops, for currently serving bishops.