

# Strategic Plan 2018-2020



ASSOCIATION FOR  
EPISCOPAL DEACONS  
ENGAGING THE DIAKONIA OF ALL BELIEVERS

Service to others is at the heart of our baptismal identity. The Church's deacons are ordained to lead and equip God's people in this work. Our call is to interpret the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world to the Church, so that both those serving and those served may be transformed in the light of Christ's redemptive love. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, deacons are also being called to promote social justice in the Church and in the world, and to organize the people of God for effective action to make God's justice a reality.

The Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) is an association of persons and dioceses within The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.<sup>1</sup> It was formed almost 30 years ago. One of its main historical purposes was to promote a renewed diaconate to a Church unfamiliar with it. That task is now nearly complete. This Strategic Plan builds on the accomplishments of the past 30 years, and is designed to extend support to deacons doing today's and tomorrow's work.

Today, we believe AED's mission is to increase participation of all baptized persons in Christ's diaconal ministry, with a primary focus on equipping those ordained to lead them in it. Over 3,500 deacons in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada stand ready to lead this work in the name of God. This is our call, and in this Plan we make a claim on the Church for the support needed to do it well.

The first step is to increase AED's reach and relevance to current members, potential members, and beyond, so that we can make our claim effectively. To that end, the AED Board and staff have worked together for over a year using a professional consultant, small group reflection, and a process for public comment. The Plan includes three areas of focus: Program, Organization, and Finance & Fundraising. Each area has broad goals; each goal has related objectives.<sup>2</sup>

The Plan will guide our action for the years 2018-2020 and beyond. Our hope is that it will help us achieve a renewed identity for our organization and develop new resources for the deacons of our Church as they lead us in *diakonia*. Of necessity, this Plan is by no means comprehensive. It reflects only those tasks which we believe we have a realistic chance of accomplishing. The Plan extends an invitation for every deacon and friend of *diakonia* to assist us to meet these goals.

The Plan also extends an invitation to help us identify tasks and resources for the future. In this, we depend on the Spirit, who "helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."<sup>3</sup> Our ultimate goal is indeed to usher in a newly transformed world more completely reflective of God's dream for all creation, especially where that dream is now compromised by injustices related to deportation, discrimination and disenfranchisement.

We invite you. Listen to what we believe the Spirit is saying to God's people.

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<sup>1</sup> The unique partnership of AED and the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada (AADC) recognizes the autonomy and distinctiveness of Canadian deacons, yet maximizes the sharing of resources between the two organizations.

<sup>2</sup> Also available on the AED website ([episcopaldeacons.org](http://episcopaldeacons.org)) is an overview timeline that presents the objectives in a single chart, sorted by date and by actor responsible.

<sup>3</sup> Romans 8:26-27 (NRSV).

## **PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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### **Goal 1: Deacons will be connected effectively with other deacons, the wider Church and world, and their community.**

- 1.1** Deacons will gather regularly for learning, refreshment, and networking.
  - 1.1.1** At the June 2019 AED Triennial Assembly, AED's Triennial Assembly Committee will double the number of attendees, for a total of 280 participants.
  - 1.1.2** By January 2020, AED will annually provide technical assistance, financial support, and promotion of at least three provincial/regional gatherings of deacons.
- 1.2** Attendees at our annual Archdeacon and Deacon Directors' Conference (A3D) will more broadly reflect the varied community of leaders in deacon formation and ministry.
  - 1.2.1** By January 2019, AED will complete a survey of every diocese's ability to fund their diaconal leaders' attendance.
  - 1.2.2** By March 2019, 35% or more of dioceses will send at least one representative to A3D.
  - 1.2.3** By March 2020, 45% or more of dioceses will send at least one representative to A3D.

### **Goal 2: AED will be a major resource portal for all aspects of diaconal ministry and formation.**

- 2.1** AED's Diaconal Competencies will be posted in final form on our website by January 1, 2018.
- 2.2** AED will assess the most pressing resource needs of deacons.
  - 2.2.1** By March 1, 2018, AED's A3D Planning Committee will, with the help of volunteers, survey demographically diverse diaconal leaders (with a response rate of at least 50% from A3D attendees).
  - 2.2.2** By June 1, 2018 AED's Executive Committee will, with the help of volunteers, survey its broader membership, with responses received from at least 100 demographically diverse deacons.
  - 2.2.3** AED's Executive Director will, with the help of volunteers, host quarterly on-line listening opportunities for the diaconal community in 2018, getting input from a minimum of 50 demographically diverse deacons.
  - 2.2.4** AED's Executive Director will formulate a report concerning pressing resource needs, and promulgate it at A3D 2019.
- 2.3** AED will serve as a central communications portal, in both English and Spanish, for deacons and all those interested in diaconal formation and ministry.

- 2.3.1 By February 2018, AED's Board will identify persons responsible to design and implement by December 2018 a process for curation of formation and educational resources posted on AED's website.
- 2.3.2 By April 2018, AED staff will complete a communications assessment detailing how, why, and for whom our varied communications platforms function, and draft a renewed communications plan to be adopted at the June 2018 board meeting.
- 2.3.3 By June 2018, AED's Board will develop a process for assembling, posting and updating on our website a list of seminaries, formation programs, and other organizations which offer quality on-line, hybrid, or local programs for deacon formation and lifelong learning, including identification of three community organizing training possibilities.
- 2.3.4 In consultation with the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada (AADC), AED's Board will, by July 2019, identify twenty organizations within The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the broader community, and devise a plan to take advantage of resource-sharing for diaconal ministry with such organizations.

**Goal 3: AED will provide structure for advocacy, both for deacon support and for social justice.**

- 3.1 AED will assist deacons to prepare to advocate for themselves and others.
  - 3.1.1 The A3D Planning Committee will ensure that the February 2018 A3D Conference will focus on equipping deacons for advocacy within the structures of the church and government.
  - 3.1.2 By March 2018, the AED Board will design and identify members of a Social Justice Committee.
  - 3.1.3 By June 2019, the Social Justice Committee will create promotional materials to encourage deacons to represent *diakonia* through their participation in diocesan and regional gatherings, and in their work with social justice and service organizations.
- 3.2 Deacons will have an effective presence at the General Convention (GC) of the Episcopal Church.
  - 3.2.1 By June 2018, the AED GC Planning Committee will organize or identify a minimum of 300 deacons to participate in a formal General Convention role (as deputy, page, volunteer, etc.), or in one of AED's several activities (liturgical service; a diaconal service action; a diaconal celebration; exhibit booth staff; legislative advocacy).
  - 3.2.2 By June 2018, the Social Justice Committee will propose for adoption by the AED Board five social justice issues for AED to support at GC 2018, and by July 2018, create materials to support this diaconal legislative work.
  - 3.2.3 By January 2019, the AED GC Committee will formally assess AED's legislative efficacy at GC, identify learning needs, and devise a plan to prepare for GC 2021.
  - 3.2.4 By June 2019, the Social Justice Committee will identify at least one pressing diaconal support issue requiring advocacy at General Convention 2021, and propose plans for such advocacy.
  - 3.2.5 By June 2019, the Triennial Assembly Planning Committee will ensure that preparation for General Convention 2021 has been included in Triennial activities.

## **ORGANIZATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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### **Goal 4. AED will establish, maintain, and grow connections with allies in diaconal service, diaconal support, and social justice work.**

- 4.1** AED will strengthen its relationships with ally organizations:
  - 4.1.1** AED will strengthen its relationship with the Fund for the Diaconate by having our liaison send a written report to the AED board after each Fund board meeting, beginning in October 2017.
  - 4.1.2** AED will strengthen its relationship with The Church Pension Group (CPG) and by June 2019, the AED Executive Director will design a plan to systematically inform deacons about those of CPG's resources available to them, and to regularly inform CPG about diaconal concerns.
  - 4.1.3** AED will strengthen its relationship with AADC, and by June 2019 the Executive Director and President will identify three specific opportunities to collaborate.
  - 4.1.4** By February 2018, AED's Executive Committee will report to the Board on current efforts to formulate a proposal for the House of Bishops for how deacons might regularly be present in their liturgy, and how issues of diaconal concern might most effectively be brought to their attention.
- 4.2** AED's Board will discuss and approve a list of other likely ally organizations at its February 2018 meeting, identify liaisons to them, and design a process of regular reporting.
- 4.3** The A3D Planning Committee will invite participants at A3D 2018 to identify likely ally organizations, and work with the Board to gather information and identify contacts within those organizations for posting on the AED website.

### **Goal 5. AED will develop clear and comprehensive structures to implement AED's mission.**

- 5.1** By February 1, 2018, AED's Board will develop a common summary format for each committee and task force meeting, which will include a listing of action steps to be taken (what will be done, by whom, by when), and post it online for other Board and committee members to consult.
- 5.3** By January 1, 2018, all AED staff and committee leaders will develop and post an online timeline, on which the status of all their projects is noted, for consultation by other Board and committee members.

### **Goal 6. AED will provide adequate people resources to carry out AED's programs.**

- 6.1** By January 2018, AED's Executive Committee will create an Event Oversight Committee to oversee the planning of all AED gatherings and, and to provide for adequate event team staffing.
  - 6.1.1** By June 1 2018, the Event Oversight Committee, after consulting with professional event planners, will have created a written protocol for the planning of all AED events.
- 6.2** By November 1, 2018, the AED Board will reformulate the position description for the Executive Director to reflect a more accurate description of tasks and level of responsibility, and create a plan to provide resources to fund the position.

## **FINANCE & FUNDRAISING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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### **Goal 7: AED will have a transparent financial system, functioning in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, which effectively informs program planning and fundraising.**

- 7.1 By November 1, 2017, AED's Treasurer and Executive Director will have evaluated its current bookkeeping and accounting practices with appropriate professional assistance.
- 7.2 By November 1, 2017, AED's Treasurer, Executive Director, and Finance Committee will have collaboratively formulated a 2018 budget for consideration at the November 2017 Board meeting.
- 7.3 By February, 2018, AED's Treasurer and Executive Director will formulate a detailed written statement of financial protocols for approval by the Board.

### **Goal 8: AED will have a comprehensive plan that guides all fundraising efforts and creates increased revenue from diverse revenue streams.**

- 8.1 By June 1, 2018, AED's Executive Director, with appropriate professional assistance, will complete all research needed to confirm that AED can legally solicit charitable funds in all states.
- 8.2 By June 1, 2018, the AED Board will have recruited (with due regard for racial, ethnic, age, provincial, geographic, and economic diversity) a Fundraising Design Committee with a minimum of six members. The Fundraising Design Committee will include two co-chairs from the board, two persons with successful fundraising expertise, and three bishops.
  - 8.2.1 By March 1, 2019, the Committee will design a comprehensive multi-year fundraising plan that includes a written assessment of the efforts needed to move from a membership-based model of funding to a fundraising-based model, with the goal of raising revenue sufficient to support one-half of AED's operating funds by January 1, 2022. The plan will include:
    - A draft case statement including detailed information for members and others as to why they should support AED's efforts and how the money will be used;
    - Specific fundraising strategies including: formats for an annual campaign and planned giving; a goal and a gift range chart; a variety of methods of identifying, cultivating, and soliciting prospective donors; a plan for recruiting and training an AED fundraising ambassador in 75 dioceses; suggested donor recognition and appreciation strategies; and a calendar of activities and interim milestones.
  - 8.2.2 By March 1, 2019, the Committee will also assess:
    - Steps needed to effectively partner in this work with the Fund for the Diaconate;
    - The desirability and feasibility of requesting financial support for AED's programs or member participation in them, from the Church as a whole or from individual dioceses.
    - The training and research required for AED to apply for a minimum of four grants annually beginning in 2019.
  - 8.2.3 At a special meeting in May 2019, AED's Board will formally review and approve the fundraising plan with an estimated launch in June 2019 at the Triennial Assembly.