



diakoneo

GREEK: TO BE A SERVANT; TO SERVE

May, 2014

Dear friends,

Every year, the Association for Episcopal Deacons sends one issue of Diakoneo to all deacons in The Episcopal Church to encourage them to become a member. Please review this snapshot of what's happening in the larger deacon community and consider it. This issue is focused on deacons serving in prison ministries, and we anticipate future themed issues on deacon formation and other topics of interest.

Many deacons are unaware that all deacons benefit from AED's work. We respond to continuing requests for information, publications and speakers. We are the "go-to" source for information on how to form deacons. AED is also the only organization keeping track of all Episcopal deacons, since their ordinations are not uniformly recorded in all dioceses. And AED convenes the only national gatherings of deacons, and supports provincial diaconal gatherings all over the United States and Canada.

As we look toward 2015, we're excited about both new initiatives and ongoing ones. Members can take pride that they've helped support:

- **Development of best practices in diaconal formation.** Our Archdeacons/Deacon Directors Conference convenes annually with over 50 dioceses represented. In 2013 we examined Community Organizing, now required by an increasing number of dioceses for Diaconal Formation. In 2014, 58 persons gathered to address best practices in Deacons' Councils.
- **Our Vocational Development and Lifelong Learning Advisory Council.** This standing group is developing resources on competency-based learning and assessment.
- **The professionalization of AED's communications.** Our new Communications Director is hard at work expanding and updating Diakoneo, the AED website, and Deacon Update, adding more and more interactive features that will help you publicize your diaconal events, and render more searchable the vast wealth of formation information our conferences develop.
- **Quality online diaconal continuing ed courses at a discount.** Church Divinity School of the Pacific works with AED to provide tailored offerings, and this year AED is exploring relationships with several other seminaries.
- **Our initiative known as "The Seven."** For three years, AED has supported a diaconal ministry immersion experience for adults aged 18-30. Next, we will be developing a curriculum for you to implement the program in your own diocese.
- **A continually more visible presence at General Convention.** Deacons were participants in the liturgies, the Exhibit Hall, and in the legislative efforts. We are already hard at work preparing for Salt Lake City in 2015.
- **Our Triennial Gathering of all members, most recently in Williamsburg VA.** We delved deep into the history of the area by Weaving a New World View with Eric Law (author and multicultural ministries leader), Sarah Eagle Heart (Indigenous Ministry), and Katrina Browne (Traces of the Trade).

AED is called to promote the diaconate and the diakonia of all the baptized. Please partner with us in this essential work by becoming a member.

Faithfully,

Lori Mills-Curran
Deacon and AED Executive Director

Tina Campbell
Deacon and AED President

ASSOCIATION FOR EPISCOPAL DEACONS

AED is an association of persons and dioceses working for the diaconate and servant ministry within the Episcopal Church, USA, and Anglican Church of Canada. Our mission is to increase participation and involvement of all baptized persons in Christ's diaconal ministry, especially by promoting and supporting the diaconate as a full and equal order.

AED's Objectives are:

- To promote the servant ministry of all the baptized
- To lead the Church in seeking justice and peace for all people
- To support and represent deacons within the Church

Current AED activities include:

- Facilitating communications among deacons and all ministers
- Diakoneo - a quarterly journal with articles by and for deacons
- Monthly Deacon Update emails, an AED Facebook Page and Facebook group
- Sharing information on diocesan diaconate programs
- An annual conference for archdeacons and program directors responsible for the formation and supervision of deacons
- Providing leadership and resources for workshops and conferences on the diaconate
- Representation of the diaconal voice in the leadership structures of the Episcopal Church

As a member you'll receive **Diakoneo** magazine 4 times per year. Additional benefits of membership include:

- Support for the ministry of deacons in the US and around the world
- Enable the growth of AED and the sharing of resources
- Make possible financial support for provincial deacon events

CANADIAN DEACONS can join AED by purchasing a "Blended Membership" through the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada. Visit www.anglicandeacons.ca or contact Deacon Jacqueline Bouthéon at aadc.members@sympatico.ca.

MEMBERSHIP IN AED

Mail this form to:

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Los Gatos, CA 95031-1160

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I am a:

- deacon
- presbyter
- bishop

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- deacon presbyter

I want to be a deacon

I am a friend

YES!

Please send me **Diakoneo**, AED's quarterly magazine, as a **color** pdf via email, instead of by postal mail.

Diakoneo is available to all members. To help reduce printing and mailing costs, please consider the pdf option. If no selection is made, Diakoneo will be mailed.

Canadian deacons are asked to purchase a "Blended Membership" through the Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada, which provides full member benefits in AED.

Visit www.anglicandeacons.ca or contact Dn. Jacqueline Bouthéon at aadc.members@sympatico.ca.



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GREEK: TO BE A SERVANT; TO SERVE

THE ASSOCIATION FOR EPISCOPAL DEACONS | ENGAGING THE DIAKONIA OF ALL BELIEVERS

MAY 2014

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Visit AED online at www.episcopaldeacons.org

Like AED's facebook page!



I'm Still a Mom: A Grace and Grief Workshop for Incarcerated Mothers

BY DEACON MARY LEE WILE

A group of us sit around a table sharing stories, pictures, memories, dreams, and plans. Women have done this forever: gathered at the well, or while quilting, or for coffee after work.

This gathering just happens to be in Maine's only prison for women. The women are there for various reasons and differing time frames, some for only 18 months, others for the next dozen years, some for life. But they gather at this particular table because they are mothers who miss their kids.

"I'm Still a Mom" is a workshop that deacon

Christine Bennett and I designed five years ago in an attempt to create a safe space for incarcerated women to talk about being mothers and not just numbers, to talk about their children, to talk about how their faith is woven into their journey along this hard road.

It's not a "how-to" workshop, and only in the final session is there any "advice" (in this case, suggestions about how to bless their children). But by getting to know who else is a grieving mother, participants find safe companions with whom they can continue to share the agonizing

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“Walk in Beauty” New edges of engagement

BY DEACON TINA CAMPBELL



The song we are meant to sing does not come to us whole. It grows in us – louder, stronger, clearer, more fully over the years...

This line from Joan Chittister (*Following the Path*) struck me as I thought again about the changes AED has undergone over the last year. For the first time, the Association did not pick an Executive Director from within, but conducted a church-wide search, with résumés, references, and interviews. We did the same in hiring a new Communications Director. I believe this marked a real turning point for the Association. It has brought new eyes and perspectives to our practices and the events we have planned. Our new staff members have invited us into a new level of professionalism. We have gone from gatherings where it was enough to simply provide an environment where our participants were happy to be someplace where they didn't have to explain what a deacon was, to an environment where we can think creatively about how to engage “the diakonia of all believers” or how to build healthy relationships with seminaries. Our Association looks forward to the new edges of engagement and ministry that we will meet in the coming year and we will continue to embrace the adaptable nature of the Diaconate.

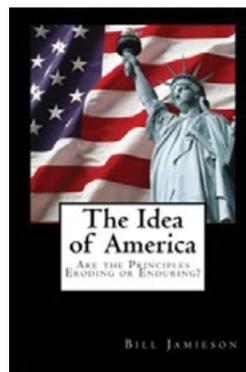
New verses of our song continue to be written!

Tina Campbell, *President*

New Book

The Idea of America: Are the Principles Eroding or Enduring?

By Deacon Bill Jamieson



The Idea of America offers a message of hope from a granddaddy to his grandchildren. It expresses both pride and frustration in the work of his generation, and challenges all of us to stand resolute in our daily efforts to improve upon our successes and transform our failures. This work opens a channel for creative and collaborative conversation about the pressing needs of the USA at home and in our relations with neighbors around the world.

Deacon Bill Jamieson currently serves in the Diocese of Western North Carolina. His book can be purchase through Amazon.

Review from amazon.com

Shared wisdom News from the recent conference

BY DEACON LORI MILLS-CURRAN



What a great time we all had in Maryland! This year's Archdeacons and Deacon Directors conference was my first, and I can tell you that there is a rare assemblage of talent and intention attending this event. Fifty-eight deacons and others with supervisory or formation responsibility for deacons gathered to discuss best practices concerning Deacons' Councils and share discussion of common challenges.

We plunged right in with a sample session of a classic technique of community organizing: personal narrative. Deacons paired up for half-hour sessions with someone they didn't know to practice this technique of structured conversation, as taught by our President, Tina Campbell. We then delved into Deacons' Councils, and heard from several dioceses with varying models.

A large part of our time together was spent using Open Space Technology, a method of allowing people to bring the issues on their hearts and minds to this community of deacon formation peers. In the past, this wisdom has been distilled in very informal Open Space Notes posted on our website. We have made an effort to spruce up the notes, and give you contact information concerning the group conveners. Check out the AED website soon for some interesting summaries from this year's Open Space discussion topics, including, among others:

- What might a healthy relationship look like between a seminary and diaconal formation?
 - The role of the deacon in the 21st century
 - Non-Parochial diaconal ministry
 - Alternatives to CPE in diaconal formation
 - Bishop search: How can the deacons' voice be heard?
 - Diaconal spiritual practices and disciplines
- We are already at work finding a location for next year's Archdeacons and Deacon Directors' event – we are looking west this year, and hope to have it in a warm location to draw in the northerners, as always.

My work these last few months has been centered on preparing for the recent conference, but the Board is also beginning to think about General Convention in 2016. AED always staffs all the Eucharists and writes the daily prayers of the people. We also have had a legislative role (the Deacons' Resolved last year was our most public effort), have an interest in planning an act of public diakonia (like a service project), sometimes have had a festive reception for our friends, and try to staff a meet-and-greet table. Many of these roles cannot be filled by deacon deputies, so if you are planning on being at General Convention, drop me a line (lmcii@aol.com) and we will, I am certain, put you to work somehow!



Did you know?

You can receive Diakoneo as a pdf by email!

We've heard that some members weren't aware of this option. AED members can choose to receive Diakoneo as a pdf instead of by mail. Just send an email to membership@episcopaldeacons.org.

Let AED publicize your deacon events

We'll include your event in our print and electronic materials. Send an email with the event name, date, location and contact person to communications@episcopaldeacons.org.

Don't forget to send photos & news of the event afterwards, too!

calendar what's coming

PROVINCIAL EVENTS

Prov. VIII Regional Gathering

June 27-June 29, 2014
Vancouver, Washington

For more information contact Gen Grewell at ggrewell21@comcast.net.
More info at www.facebook.com/events/1398209957062354/

ASSOCIATION OF ANGLICAN DEACONS IN CANADA

Tri-Annual Conference

August 14-17, 2014

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Keynoter: The Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, Primate Anglican Church of Canada

Theme: *Servants by the Sea* - reflecting on Christ's Ministry near, on and with water.

Register: www.anglicandeacons.ca

New England Deacons Network, Prov. I Deacons Conference

October 3-5, 2014

Location: The Sheraton Framingham, MA

For more information contact: kyle.pedersen@sbcglobal.net or check the Province I website: www.province1.org.

78TH GEN'L CONVENTION

June 25 – July 3, 2015

Salt Lake City, Utah

www.generalconvention.org

DOTAC

Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean

October 21-27, 2015

Brazil

dotac.diakonia-world.org

2016 DIACONAL ASSEMBLY

June 16-19, 2016

[Oak Ridge Hotel & Conference Center](http://OakRidgeHotel.com), Minneapolis, MN

experience of being separated from children because of their own poor choices. It gives them a chance to show photos of their children and to recount favorite stories about them, to name their shame and sorrow without being judged, and to recognize how their faith in God can give them grounding, strength, comfort, courage, and hope.

HOW IT'S SET UP

The workshop meets one day a week for four weeks. We begin the sessions by writing a communal prayer, with each participant contributing a petition or thanksgiving. During the first session, we invite the women to trace their family tree through the maternal line, and make lists of characteristics of both "ideal" and "negative"

patterns of mothering that they experienced growing up – and then of their own patterns of mothering. (Many admit that they are better mothers in prison than they were in person because they are clean and sober and so are able to be fully present to their kids on visiting days.)

In Session Two, the moms share photos and stories of their children, before wrestling with such questions as, "If you could turn back the clock, what would you do differently?" and "What do you most regret as a mother?" During Session Three, they shape clay containers to hold those negative thoughts and behaviors that weigh them down as mothers. In the final session, they write prayers for themselves to put into their clay containers, an



The women aren't allowed to keep their containers, so I float them down the Androscoggin River. This photo was taken on the riverbank.

attempt to help overcome the negativity by asking for God's blessings. Then we offer suggestions for ways they can bless their children, even those they are no longer in contact with or may never see again.

"I'm Still a Mom" doesn't solve problems or offer counseling, but it does give these women permission to grieve the loss of time with their children, to acknowledge their dependence on God's grace, and to find solace in knowing that they are not alone in their grief.

I'll close with one of the communal prayers from the moms themselves:

Dearest Father, my Helper, my Strength, my Guide, my Savior, Loving God who surrounds me: Help me understand why this happened. I need you to be my strength, to help me to continue on with my head held high and to stay positive. I pray with all that's in me that I continue on the same path as I'm on now. I pray that my family has the strength and willingness to see that I've made mistakes and fix them. I pray that my kids and husband can forgive my absence and we can move on. I pray that my family stays well and my child grows well. Thank you for the guidance and strength you've shown me this week. Guide me down the red road. Please help me remember to accept those things I cannot change. Thank you for protecting and loving my children for at this time I cannot be there with them. Thank you for loving me when I couldn't love myself! Please watch over my children and keep them happy and safe. Please keep your arms around my family as you guide me home to them. Amen.

Note: The sentence mentioning to "the red road" came from a Native American inmate; it refers to the right path in life, a way of balance and harmony.

Mary Lee Wile is a deacon serving in the Diocese of Maine and visits at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

Province VIII deacon gathering June 27-29, 2014

BY DEACON MAUREEN-ELIZABETH HAGEN

The Deacons of Province VIII will host a conference in Vancouver, WA, from June 27-29. Entitled **Poverty on the Homefront: Service and Solidarity on the Frontline**, the conference focuses on poverty in several populations – veterans, indigenous peoples, and immigrants. The beautiful Pacific Northwest offers an ideal location to learn and network with others committed to eradicating poverty and alleviating its effects.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

What does an anti-poverty movement led by the poor look like? What role can churches play in building up this movement across a wide range of issues and communities? Keynoters Colleen and John Wessel-McCoy, from Union Theological Seminary's Poverty Initiative, will engage attendees with these timely questions.

Workshop breakout group leaders include The Rev. Gary and Page Brown (Veterans), The Rev. Dorothy Saucedo and Elsie Dennis (Indigenous People), Colleen and John



Wessel-McCoy (The Poverty Initiative), and The Rev. Chris Hoeberrmann and Dianne Aid, TSSF (Immigrants).

The conference is held at the Heathman Lodge where participants will eat and worship together. The Rt. Rev. Greg Rickel will preside at the Eucharist.

To register for the conference please go to <http://www.ecww.org/events-calendar/province-viii-deacons-conference-2014>

Face the world with love: an ordination sermon

PREACHED BY THE REV. DAVID BRYANT AT THE ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE OF MARK STEPHEN
OCTOBER 6, 2013, DIOCESE OF TORONTO, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer.

I believe it is customary on occasions such as this - to thank the bishop, and the deacon-to-be and you the congregation - for extending an invitation to me - to travel here today - to be your preacher.

As an ordination is planned, the deacon-to-be and the bishop consider several candidates and *try* to find someone who might deliver a meaningful and somewhat inspiring message. Such preachers are often a welcomed relief from the parish's regular priest - but please do not tell him I said so. And so it is with great humility and pleasure that I accepted the invitation and to be with you here this afternoon at St. Joseph of Nazareth, Bramalea. I have heard a great deal about this parish - and a great deal more about your rector - who I understand to be very nice fellow. He often reminds me of how much he loves you. And so I hope that I can live up to the standard of preaching he provides you on a regular Sunday morning. (Note - Fr. David is himself the incumbent of St. Joseph of Nazareth!)

Today is a wonderful day of celebration for us at St. Joseph's and our hearts are full of joy and thanksgiving. Gathered here are friends and family, co-workers and colleagues, who have walked with Mark on his journey to ordination. We here at St. Joseph's take particular delight in

this moment, because we have sensed Mark's call to be a deacon and witnessed his answer to that calling. Through a period of discernment and prayer, we are now

ready to make a covenant with Mark that reflects our understanding of who we are as a congregation and our commitment to the community we live in - expressed in a unique way through the life and witness of a deacon.

I know that Mark comes to this point in his life prepared and ready.

To be sure there have been a few ups and downs along the way - but all were guided and given direction by God's loving hand.

As you might have noticed - by one of the opening collects - today we are honouring the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi. And what many of you may *not* know - is that Mark is a member of the Society of Saint Francis. A society that takes seriously a commitment to observe a holy life style and that requires a discipline of religious practice.

When I first came to St. Joseph's, I learned that Mark had already begun the process of seeking ordination to become a deacon. Fr. Geoff Sangwine, who is with us today, started the process with Mark. And he left a file for me with some correspondence and information about Mark's progress. I was intrigued with one piece of paper that was neatly filed amongst the letters. Mark, I'm not sure if you will remember this or not - but when you became a member of the Society of St. Francis, you had to state a personal rule for your religious life. And this is what you wrote:

"I will love my God with all my heart, soul, mind and body.

I will see Christ in every face and be a servant to all of God's creation.

I will take the lowest place, knowing that Christ is always before me."

That is a powerful statement and I believe it embodies the person you are - what your relationship is with God - what makes you want to come forward today to be ordained a deacon. It is a statement that all deacons should proclaim - in their own way - in their congregations as they journey together.

I was particularly caught by the middle

sentence: ***I will see Christ in every face and be a servant to all of God's creation.***

It was St. Francis who embraced all of God's creation in a very particular way and those who follow him try to honour that.

We all know a little bit about St. Francis, his prayers and some of the legends that surround him. And there is one story that I wanted to share with all of you this afternoon. Once while Francis was staying in the small town of

Gubbio, he learned of a wolf who was terrorizing the towns folk - killing and eating animals, and reportedly people as well. The villagers became afraid to go outside the great walls that

surrounded their ancient town. At some point, Francis decided he had heard enough. And so he took it upon himself to venture out and meet the wolf - insisting to all that cautioned him - that God would take care of him.

As he approached the wooded area, suddenly the wolf - jaws agape - charged out from behind the trees. Immediately Francis made the sign of the cross and the power of God caused the wolf to slow down and to close its mouth. St. Francis called to the creature *"come to me, brother wolf. In the name of Christ, I order you not to hurt anyone."*

And at that moment the wolf laid down at St. Francis' feet, meek as a lamb. *"I want you to make peace between you and the people of Gubbio"*, he said. *"They will harm you no more and you must no longer harm them. The past is forgiven."* Francis and the wolf returned to the town square.

There he gathered the town's people and gave them a sermon on the wondrous and fearful love of God - calling them to repent from all their sins - offering peace on behalf of the wolf. And so the villagers and the wolf lived together in harmony - until the wolf died years later. But even in death the wolf would always be a reminder to them of the power and providence of the living God. St. Francis could see all of creation embodied in that wolf. Where others could see only see an angry beast, he could marvel at God's creation and even see the face of Christ.

I will see Christ in every face and be a servant to all of God's creation.

Sometimes the world may appear to be full of wolves - if that is how we want to see them. People who look different than we do, who act differently than we do, maybe who have made



Fr. David Bryant

Continued on page 14

Reviewing and looking ahead

BY DEACON TINA CAMPBELL, PRESIDENT

The AED Board meets face-to-face only once a year, after the completion of our Archdeacons/Deacon Directors Conference. It is always wonderful to see everyone and this year we spent a significant time in activities and sharing to help us get to know each other better. A board in which members are so far flung and unknown to each other can be challenging and time in each other's presence is especially valuable.

Our agenda was full and the meeting was well attended. We were also glad to be joined by our new Communications Director, Anne Pillot.

Among the issues covered were the 2015 elections. Nominations chair, Lauren Welch, described the election process, which is explained elsewhere in this issue of *Diakoneo*. We have accepted the resignation of Rachel Heath, who served just one year. A replacement to fill out her unfinished term will be named later.

Tim Spannaus, convener of the Vocational Development and Lifelong Learning Advisory Council, joined us to review the document submitted by the group. There was a lively

discussion of education that is competency based and which uses non-traditional ways of assessing learning. An example of such assessment would be building a portfolio rather than writing an exam. All of the Board is in agreement that we value the flexibility that has been a hallmark of diaconal formation and that a "one size fits all" approach would be impossible.

In the absence of the Treasurer, Executive Director, Lori Mills-Curran reviewed the budget with us. The Board also discussed ways to strengthen the Finance Committee.

The Board looked ahead to General Convention in 2015 as we reviewed the various roles that AED has had in the past. The Board agreed that it wanted to continue scheduling the deacons who will serve in the convention liturgies, to draft the Prayers of the People for each Eucharist, and to staff an information booth in the Exhibit Hall. Additionally, AED might support a service action at Convention and arrange a reception of sorts for the diaconal community. Legislative action by the Association is possible as we see what issues emerge.

DIACONAL ASSEMBLY 2016

The Board of AED has accepted a proposal from the Bishop and Deacons of the Diocese of Minnesota!

Our next Assembly will be June 16-19, 2016 at the Oak Ridge Hotel and Conference Center outside of Minneapolis. Details to come.

The Board also accepted the Proposal from the Episcopal Church in Minnesota to host the 2016 Diaconal Assembly. It will be held June 16-19, 2016 at the Oak Ridge Hotel & Conference Center just outside Minneapolis. Vice President/President Elect Lauren Welch and Board member Geri Swanson will co-chair the Design Team which will work with the deacons of Minnesota to plan the Assembly.

These are only some of the highlights of the meeting. The Board also received several other committee reports and explored Best Practices; we planned for the future of *The Seven* program and for bylaw revision. We calendared our future phone meetings and looked ahead to putting together a membership campaign, a planned giving campaign and some Board Development activities. It was a busy two days.

NEWLY ORDAINED

Recent Ordinations

We celebrate the following Deacon ordinations that have been reported to AED. Ordination notices are published as we receive them, and may not be in chronological order. If you know of others, please contact our membership office at membership@episcopaldeacons.org.

June 2, 2012
Diocese of Maryland
Diane Fadely

Feb. 2, 2013
Diocese of Chicago
Barbara Louise Sinclair

June 29, 2013
Diocese of Southern Ohio
Mary Raysa

Nov. 3, 2013
Diocese of Rupert's Land, Canada
Tanis Kolisnyk
Alison Ward Westervelt

Jan. 10, 2014
Diocese of Rochester
Georgia Martyn Carney

Jan. 11, 2014
Diocese of Pennsylvania
Philip Geliebter
Jeffrey Moretzohn
Robin Robb
Pat Rubenstein
Joan Wiley

Jan. 25, 2014
Diocese of Tennessee
Betty Carpenter
Charles Grimes
Bonnie Lloyd
Burns Rogers

Jan. 25, 2014
Diocese of North Carolina
Frances Browne
Sallie Simpson

Feb. 4, 2014
Diocese of Florida
Marsha Holmes

Feb. 22, 2014
Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast
Laura Kelson
Terry Goff

March 2, 2014
Anglican Diocese of Ontario, Canada
Lisa Chisholm-Smith

A prison book study on forgiveness

BY DEACON GERALD BUTCHER



Inmates that I know come in all kinds. They can be young or old, tall or short, quiet or loud, happy or sad. But most of them have one thing in common: they are in prison and they want to get out. Most of them will be released! However, it is a sad fact that most of them will return to prison. Recidivism rate is very high especially in the USA. Prison officials have told me that very little is done to reform inmates in prison and help them deal with the outside world. As a prison volunteer for several years, I wanted to do more than take communion to the inmates. What could I do?

Gary was an inmate, who was more intelligent than most of the inmates at the prison I visit. It was no surprise to me when I found out that he has a degree in industrial engineering and had been plant manager of a large manufacturing facility. Obviously, he had some leadership characteristics that were easy to spot even before I knew him well. What was also obvious was the anger that he held on to. As I began to get to know him, he explained that he had been incorrectly convicted. This is not an unusual story to hear from inmates. Over the next few months Gary told me how he was wronged. I believed him but, more importantly, I saw anger in him that was eating him up. He recognized that and was afraid that it would prevent him from being paroled, as he had been in too many fights.

All I knew to do was listen to Gary, pray for him and encourage him. His mind was stuck on the injustice that hit him. There had

to be more that I could do. Prayer does get answered and in this case it came in the form of great book, “Forgive and Get Your Life Back” by Dennis Maynard. My priest taught a Sunday school class from this book. Most people, if they are honest with themselves, will get something from the book. It occurred to me that Gary and other inmates might benefit from studying this book.

During my next visit to the prison I asked if anyone would be interested in studying a book on forgiveness and dealing with anger in their life. Gary raised his hand quickly and then

“[Gary] had read the entire book from cover to cover. He’d looked up all of the scripture references in the book and he couldn’t wait to talk to me about it.”

hands went up everywhere in the room. Most were interested and my guess is that the only people who didn’t raise their hands were the ones that couldn’t read.

After getting permission from my supervisor, at my next visit

I told them the class would follow our normal worship hour. Because this extra hour would conflict with medication time some of the inmates did not sign up. Of course Gary was on the list to participate. I told the inmates that I would bring the books on my next visit and the class would start on the following visit.

After having the books for one week, I was pleasantly surprised to learn Gary’s response. He had read the entire book from cover to cover. He’d looked up all of the scripture references in the book and he couldn’t wait to talk to me about it. It was cold but he was waiting for me outside our meeting room.

Our conversation about the book could have occurred after worship during our class time but Gary could not wait. He had to tell me,

“This is the best thing that has happened to me in years. This book is fantastic! It has already helped me realize what I have been caught up in and [provided] guidance on how to change.” He had recognized that he was caught in a loop where his anger kept him from releasing that anger, making it worse and worse over the years.

There were amazing discussions in the class each time. Inmates told about the anger they had held on to from childhood. This anger had to be released from their life and they knew it. Some had already realized this and had begun to change even before reading the book. Their testimony was very encouraging to others in the room. They talked about how they wanted to be forgiven for what they had done to people. There were some not so helpful comments from the more fundamentalist inmates that some crimes can never be forgiven because the inmate cannot be rehabilitated. Inmates are very straight forward with each other so the discussion got pointed at times. My job seem to be as referee to keep pointing everyone back to the book, back to Christ, and back to forgiveness. It was not always easy.

The class was a challenge at times but I was blessed to see God work in some of the inmates like Gary. His story was a success as he was paroled and moved back to New York. Gary has a job as an engineer in a factory again, he lives close to his elderly mother and he volunteers with a Canadian Christian ministry.

Deacon Gerald Butcher serves at St. Paul’s Cathedral, Oklahoma City, OK. His ministry is at Joseph Harp Correctional Facility near Lexington.

in memoriam

Deacon deaths received by AED, listed by name, date of death, diocese, (age) and ordination date.

- Deacon Kenneth L. Arnold, Jan. 24, 2014, Mass., (69) 1998
- Deacon William E. Bart, Feb. 6, 2013, Northern MI, (89) 1990
- Deacon Margaret Blackett, Feb. 20, 2014, Long Island, (61) 2003
- Deacon Napoleon Bryant, Jr., Mar. 4, 2014, S. Ohio, (85) 1985
- Deacon Robert J. Carsner, Jan. 6, 2014, Eastern OR, (75) 1999

- Deacon Eric Detchon, Dec. 25, 2013, Br. Columbia, CA, (72) 1998
- Deacon Shedrick E. Gilbert, Jan. 8, 2014, Southeast FL, (91) 1984
- Deacon Shepherd Jenks, Mar. 25, 2014, Northern CA, (87) 1981
- Deacon Andrew Klatte, Mar. 15, 2014, Indianapolis, (56) 2003
- Deacon David P. Longwood, Feb. 17, 2014, Oregon, (64) 1991
- Deacon Marilyn Snodgrass, Feb. 23, 2011, Olympia, (79) 1971
- Deacon Terry Star, Mar. 4, 2014, North Dakota, (40) 2007

Every effort has been made to provide accurate information and we regret any errors. We appreciate being notified when a deacon has died. Please send notifications, including diocese, date of ordination, age and date of death to membership@episcopaldeacons.org.

AED Board nominations being accepted

BY DEACON LAUREN WELCH

The Association for Episcopal Deacons Board of Directors elects new board members every two years. This year we have 7 positions to fill. We invite passionate, enthusiastic individuals who desire to offer their gifts and leadership skills for Engaging the Diakonia of All Believers as a missional church in the 21st century to

work with us. Please read the Board of Directors Responsibility and Covenants and fill out the Board of Directors Nominee Profile, below. Send the Nominee Profile to Lauren Welch, 7 Overpark Ct., Baltimore MD 21234 by June 11, 2014. If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Welch at LMWelch16@verizon.net.

AED Board Open Positions:

- Vice President/President Elect
- Bishop – we will be electing one bishop
- Priest – we will be electing one priest
- Deacons – we will be electing three deacons
- Lay Person – we will be electing one lay person

Timeline for Election Process:

- June 11, 2014 – Board Nominee Profile due to Lauren Welch
- August 1, 2014 – Nominee profiles to be published in Diakonia
- September 15, 2014 – Ballots mailed to membership
- Oct 1, 2014 – Ballots returned to Lauren Welch
- November 1, 2014 – New Board Members announced in Diakonia

Please read the Responsibilities and Covenants on page 11.



ASSOCIATION FOR EPISCOPAL DEACONS

ENGAGING THE DIAKONIA OF ALL BELIEVERS

AED Board of Directors Nominee Profile

Print, complete and scan this document for submittal or download a fillable form at www.episcopaldeacons.org **Forms due June 11, 2014**

Submit to: Lauren Welch at lmwelch16@verizon.net

Subject Line: AED Board Nomination

I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Order: Deacon Lay Presbyter Bishop If Deacon, office desired: Board member Vice-President/President-Elect

Home Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home: _____ Cell: _____ Office: _____

Diocese of Canonical Residence: _____ Email: _____

Present Employment: _____

Current Ministries: _____

Current Church Assignment: _____

Previous Positions: _____

Educational Background: _____

Prior Board Experience: _____

Foreign Language Competence (please list): _____

II. PERSONAL STATEMENT: *Please respond to these questions on a separate sheet:*

[*Note: Your responses may be circulated on the AED website or online newsletter Deacon Update. Lengthy personal statements may be edited.*]

1. How do you envision contributing to the AED Board? What are your special talents and gifts? (125 words)
2. What is your vision for the future of the Association for Episcopal Deacons? (250 words)

It is essential for the Nominee to have a thorough understanding of Board responsibilities before submitting a Nomination Form. *I have read and, if elected, agree to conscientiously perform the duties of a working member of the Association of Episcopal Deacons Board of Directors as referenced in the AED Board of Directors Responsibilities and Covenants.*

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Electronic signature is acceptable with accompanying email.

AED Board of Directors Responsibilities and Covenants

Please read this prior to completing the nomination form.

Purpose of Form

This document provides basic information about what AED requires from its Board members. Doubts about ability to commit the required time or comply with these requirements should be resolved in consultation with the Nominating Committee.

Term of Office

The term of office is four years. Directors may serve a maximum of 8 years.

Election Process

Directors are elected by the general membership ballot. Nominees' Profiles are presented to AED's full membership in various media. The President, with the approval of the Board, may appoint Directors to fill vacancies until the next election. In addition, up to three additional Board members may be appointed in this way to maximize diversity of talents and representation.

Time Commitment

A primary time commitment is attendance at a three-day board meeting in the latter half of March each year. There are also quarterly conference call meetings lasting approximately 1.5 hours, additional budget-related conference calls in the fall, committee conference calls, and occasional special events, such as our Triennial Assembly and General Convention (which Board members are strongly encouraged to attend). Executive Committee members (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) make an additional commitment to attending an annual in-person meeting in late summer/fall. Service on a Committee or Task Force will also require a commitment of time, the amount of which will be determined by the task.

Committee, Task Force and Council Meetings

AED has task forces to meet time-limited needs. It also has one standing committee (Finance), which serves long-term needs, and one standing advisory council (Vocational Development and Lifelong Learning). These groups include both Board members and non-Board members. They meet at the pleasure of their members in order to accomplish certain tasks by established deadlines. Attendance is essential.

Orientation Sessions

New Board members will be contacted shortly after their election to arrange a Board orientation session. This orientation will be done by phone. Participation is essential.

Fundraising and Membership Development

All Board members are expected to support fundraising efforts and planned giving campaigns. Board members are also expected to encourage their dioceses to become diocesan members, and to make an annual diocesan gift to AED. Board members are expected to encourage their diocesan diaconal community to become members.

Other Requirements

Board members are expected to be members of AED. Clerical members must be in good standing in their diocese of canonical residency. Bishop nominees must represent an AED member diocese.

Nomination Process

Nominees are sought broadly throughout the organization's

membership, through newsletter, journal and website solicitations. The general membership, Board members and Staff may invite prospective nominees to submit a Nominee Profile. Self-nomination is also appropriate. Prospects should receive and review this statement of Board Responsibilities and Covenants before accepting nomination. They are also invited to be in contact (by telephone, email, or in person) with a member of the Nominating Committee, if desired. The Nominee's name then is placed on the ballot for election by the general membership at the next election. The Board may appoint up to three Board members to maximize diversity of talents and representation.

Approach to Governance

The Board's role is to ensure that AED establishes and maintains the trust of the community by being clear in its mission, prudent and ethical in its activities, and accountable for its actions. Meetings focus on planning, policy-making, and assessing progress.

Mission

AED is an association of persons and dioceses within The Episcopal Church whose mission is to increase participation and involvement of all baptized persons in Christ's diaconal ministry, especially by promoting and supporting the diaconate.

Directors' Covenants

Our Board of Directors members affirm on their Nominee Profile that they will fulfill the following responsibilities and abide by the following code of conduct. Board Members will:

1. Pray for and promote the diaconate.
2. Pray for AED's contractual staff, board members, and full membership.
3. Pray for the Episcopal Church and its ecumenical relationships.
4. Set policies and formulate plans in accordance with the Mission Statement of AED.
5. Attend or participate in all Board meetings, including conference call meetings. (Participate in e-mail or other social networking options in a timely manner.)
6. Select and support the contractual staff.
7. Consult with the President, the Executive Director and other Board members with regard to the overall operations of committees.
8. Fulfill committee responsibilities assumed. If circumstances preclude fulfilling responsibilities assumed, inform the President or Executive Director.
9. Support AED through financial contributions (as one is able).
10. Encourage their diocese to become a diocesan member of AED, and encourage their deacon community members to join,
11. Avoid conflicts of interest, or the appearance of them, between the position as board member and the member's personal and professional life.
12. Maintain the highest standards of financial responsibility in all money matters.
13. Maintain confidentiality as appropriate.
14. Be accountable to the membership and the community for competent, conscientious and effective accomplishment of the obligations of the Board.

Singing the Exsultet in jail

BY DEACON BRUCE NICKERSON

“*Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels...*”

Ancient words, ancient tune in a jail. How did an Episcopal deacon get from leading a “12 Step Group” in a state prison to singing the Exsultet at a Catholic Easter Mass there?

That Monday Father Frank, the Catholic chaplain, walked us through the locked gates, through the squeaky clean, echoing institutional hallways to the chapel building. We waited in the vestibule’s dim light for inmates who would attend a Bible study, Islamic prayers, or my 12 step group.

“You deaconing this week?” asked Father Frank. “Yeah, Ash Wednesday stuff, Thursday foot washing, Good Friday Stations, singing the Exsultet at the Vigil,” I rattled off.

“So you’re singing the Exsultet?”

“It is the deacon’s job,” I grinned.

“What are you doing Saturday night?” he asked. “Why?”

“Want to sing the Exsultet at the Saturday night Vigil here?” he asked.

Cool.

“It’d be nice to have you participate.”

“You mean you let Episcopalians in too?” I grinned.

That’s how I got into the middle of the Exsultet.

I got there on time, carrying my alb and stole, and was escorted to the chapel area by Father Frank.



I vested in his office.

In the foyer guys were already checking in. Felt like old home week- “Hey Wally, howya doin?” I asked over the hubbub. A Monday meeting guy, he was surprised to see me in alb and stole.

“Geez, you here tonight too?” he asked.

“Hey Deacon Bruce, howya doin?” came a voice over the chatter.

“Not bad Angel, and you?”

Felt good.

I stood near the chapel entry, greeting guys I knew. Some guys sat down; others knelt, praying.

“Frank, what’s the big bathtub thing?” I asked pointing to a big bathtub-like thing.

“Oh, didn’t I mention we’re doing a baptism?” he answered.

“Yeah, but I thought you just drizzled like we do. You dunk like Baptists?”

“Sometimes,” he said.

“Where’d you get it?”

“Protestant chapel. Driving the Protestant chaplain crazy.”

The candles were lit by Danny and Ken, Frank’s in house “Altar Guild.” Contemporary gospel music blared from the PA system. The chapel was filled.

Frank looked at me and said “Let’s do it.” We walked to the front of the chapel; Frank made a few remarks, pointed me to a seat, introduced me and said “You’re on.”

“Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels...” I began, lighting the Paschal candle. Looking up, I saw 200 “guests of the Commonwealth” many of whom I knew personally by now, wearing blue denim jackets with DOC stenciled on the back. My voice shook a bit, throat tightened, but I got through it, carried by the liturgy, the candlelight, and knowing that if he were around now, Jesus would be here too. I walked back to my seat, words from the Book of Common Prayer echoing through my mind:

“Lord Jesus, for our sake you were condemned as a criminal...”

Frank crept behind me and whispered “Read the Gospel?”

“Where is it?” I asked.

“On the lectern.”

“The Holy Gospel of our Lord

Jesus Christ...”

Later Kevin, an inmate, in a white alb, walked to the big bathtub thing, mounted a small step stool by its side, and awkwardly slide into the water. Frank bunched the edges of his chasuble out of the way, rolled up his sleeves, leaned forward, and helped Kevin immerse himself three times, “in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.” Kevin came up coughing and spluttering, clambered out, and slogged out of the chapel to get into dry clothes.

After Frank consecrated the elements, he motioned me behind the altar, and gave me communion. He gave me a chalice, and while he distributed the bread to the prisoners, I

Continued on page 15



INTRO TO JAIL:101

BY DEACON BRUCE NICKERSON

“But aren’t you scared?” she asked with a doubtful face, her eyes wide.

“Nah,” I answered hoping I seemed nonchalant.

“But you said there are 20 of them?” with again the doubtful face, wide eyes.

“Yeah,” I answered with another monosyllabic response.

“And what are they there for?” she probed.

“Could be anything. I don’t ask.” I gave her more syllables and I hoped at least as much nonchalance as before.

Aghast she trembled, “Murder?”

“Maybe.” Ok, so now I used two syllables.

With real concern and apprehension she asked “And you’re not scared? Is there anyone else in the room there with you?”

“No.” So I like monosyllables in this context. Sort of film noir atmosphere.

Surprised she asked “No one?”

“Well, there’s a CO - Corrections Officer-down the hallway from the chapel,” I said.

Mindy and I were sitting across the table from each other waiting for the rest of the group to arrive. The room’s bright lighting provided comforting warmth after the bracing chill of January temperatures, and the floor gave wet feet a non skid surface after the uneven crunchy snow and black ice of the neighborhood sidewalks. Through the window I could see the last vagrant snow flakes fluttering against the blackness of a deepening frigid night.

But inside the cheery room, Mindy and I sat incongruously talking about my efforts to start a 12 step group for recovering addicted and alcoholic inmates at a local jail.

“Well, even so...” Mindy’s voice trailed off.

“Well, even so they are people” I responded, hoping, while the words were still coming out of my mouth and couldn’t be tamed or revised, that I didn’t sound sarcastic.

“And I hope you write about them.”

The fictional Diocese of St. Ives is a recurring column in Diakoneo, dedicated to exploring solutions to “problem moments” in diaconal ministry. The situations are true, but the names have been changed to protect the innocent and guilty. Each issue features responses to the prior chapter situation, plus a new “case study” with an opportunity for comment.

Chapter XIX - response

A Bench of Deacons

BY DEACON KEITH MCCOY

Deacons should take responsibility for the health of our order. No one will stand up for us better than we will.

When the number of deacons in a diocese reaches a critical mass (more than seven?), some sort of supervision and connectivity is needed. A few people, or a class, can keep in touch with one another, but once the number grows beyond that of a functioning board or committee, there tends to be an “in” group and “the rest of us”. It’s not intentional, it’s just how humans organize themselves. So a growing group of deacons, being spread out over a diocese and with other interests, needs to be intentional about maintaining a sense of community and watching out for one another.

The difficulty in doing this is perhaps inherent in our bifurcated status, having one foot in the world and one foot in the church. All of us were called to a ministry to some part of the broken world around us. A ministry to ourselves is, at best, something to be squeezed in after family, employment, and our call to a specific ministry. At worst, it seems selfish, something to be treated as an intrusion into our “real” interests.

Yet, just as self-care is necessary for each deacon, it is also necessary for each deacon

community. We need to look after each other: few people who are not deacons understand the pressures of jumping back and forth between the secular and the holy (well, perhaps our spouses do). Expecting someone who isn’t a deacon to look out for us is naïve, as others have their own interests. It is also somewhat self-centered, if we believe that our ministry is so important that someone else should take on the drudgery of caring about the strayed or broken deacon, mentoring new recruits, or even helping ourselves maintain our focus, our energy, and our spiritual life.

It seems to me that a healthy diaconal community should do these things:

- Worship together regularly;
- Eat, play and laugh together regularly;
- Look after those of its community who are hurt, bent or just worn out;
- Maintain the zeal of our calling by introducing new ways to think about our faith and our work;
- Help raise up new servant ministers;
- Speak out on matters affecting the integrity and the work of our order.

All these things require someone to take responsibility. If it is “everyone’s”, it ends up

being no one’s. Rather than feel that taking on an oversight role is a distraction from our call to minister or an additional obligation, deacons should see it as a time of stewardship for the order, a moment to nurture one’s own community. Because deacons are at their best when they enable others, organizing the deacons of a diocese should be the responsibility of a group, rather than an individual; this ministry needs to be shared, as an example of how we always minister. This period of leadership means that any on-going ministry should be put on hold for the duration; as I have written before, none of us is called to burnout on God’s behalf. And any service for the group should also be seen as a term which has a beginning and an end. We share the ministry, remember?

As our numbers grow and the church’s understanding of our order evolves, there needs to be careful thought put forward as to how we nurture deacons. If our ministries and our presence are a gift to the church, it needs to be taken care of. That care should start by taking it upon ourselves, as a group, to keep everyone healthy and holy.

Chapter XX

The Two Deacons of Kilkenny

BY DEACON KEITH MCCOY

The Rector of St. John’s Episcopal Church in West Riverside had been waiting for this moment for a long time. Ever since Helen Huffer arrived at the parish over eight years ago, she had had to work around the deacon, Ed Toowhit. Ed was third generation in the parish, a sometime warden (not to mention the son and grandson of former wardens), and was as much a piece of the parish fabric as the memorials on the walls, and just about as

immovable. But things were about to change, Helen was sure.

The call had come on Monday, but the rector bided her time until Sunday. It was just as the coffee hour was starting to disperse that she saw Ed amble towards the parish office to pick up his coat. Helen excused herself from a conversation, and headed thence.

“Ed, do you have a minute? I need to brief you on something.”

The elderly deacon turned, coat half on. “Can you make it quick? Missy is already in the car so we can go to brunch.” Helen, knowing that nearly nothing stopped the Toowhits from their weekly review of the worship service with some friends at the diner, just smiled.

“I had a call this week, from the Diocese.” The priest paused. “We’ll be getting another deacon here at St. John’s.”

Continued on page 14

“Another deacon?” responded St. John’s original deacon. “There’s barely enough work here for the two of us. What would we do with another?” Ed squinted, and added “I’m not being ‘retired’, am I? People around here wouldn’t like that.”

But Helen was prepared for that response. “There are loads of ministries this parish could get into, if we had some help. And Becky Rowboat has a background in Christian Education. She’ll be working with the church school and other things. You can still do the hospital and the shut-ins.”

“Rowboat? I thought she renounced the ministry a few years ago?” Ed seemed to recall that the young deacon had left her parish to spend more time with her family.

“No, she was a bit overloaded at St. Michael’s, and took a few years off. But her kids are older now, and she feels she can start contributing again to a congregation. She’ll be a great asset,” Huffer responded, waiting for the deacon’s next attempt to maintain the status quo.

The old deacon pondered this information for a bit. “I still don’t see what you need another deacon for, especially if she’s going to be in school during the service. Besides,

Addie Wendell has been doing fine as the superintendent for quite some time.”

The priest volleyed back. “Oh, didn’t Addie tell you? She’s going to be moving to the new assisted living campus as soon as it opens, so she’s stepping down. I think Becky will be just fine helping to lead our Christian Education – which is more than just the children, you know.” And to put some spin on the ball, she added, “Becky will just need to set the curriculum and train the teachers; she won’t actually have to be in church school every week. I expect she’ll be able to take her share of the preaching and serving at table.”

“Maybe she could sit in the pews for a few months and learn how we do things here at St. John’s”, offered Ed. “Get to know the people first, before she starts trying to change things.”

Helen could see that the idea of another deacon was as popular with Ed as a toothache, but, having experienced his politicking before, she had prepped her allies on the vestry beforehand. “I had Becky and her husband over for dinner a few weeks ago, and the wardens both stopped by to meet her. Carla and Austin are very excited to be growing our staff and our parish in this way.”

The deacon stiffened. “So this is a done deal? I’ve given my whole life to St. John’s, Helen.

What are people going to think if I’m sitting in the pew while some stranger is taking my place up at the altar?”

The rector made one last attempt to placate her irascible associate. “I don’t see it as forcing you out at all, Ed. Besides, you and Missy have that new great-grandchild down in Atlanta. This would give you the freedom to take a few more Sundays off.”

The old deacon headed for the door. “I’m in charge of my schedule, not you, Helen.”

She responded, “Ed, when you’re one of the ordained, it’s never about us, it’s always about what’s best for the parish.”

To which Ed answered, “Fifty years of service to this parish deserves better than being hit over the head with all these changes.” And the deacon closed the door on it all and headed off to his brunch.

What would you do? Please send responses with your take on rectifying the matter to kmccoy1@optonline.net or 14 Second St., Edison, NJ 08837. Comments received within a month will be taken into consideration when writing the response.

Deacon Keith McCoy has twenty plus years as a deacon and manager of public agencies.

Ordination Sermon, from page 7

different choices in their lives.

If I know anything about Mark, it is that he lives his life and approaches his ministry not seeing wolves, but seeing the face of Christ in all God’s creation.

In every work of art – which is what St. Francis called all creation – St. Francis would praise the artist, the creator – he would praise God fearlessly. And that is a lesson for all of us. We have a choice - to live in fear – to see only wolves – to hide behind our ancient city walls. Or we can face the world with love – looking at the face of Christ – seeing not as others see.

That is what we ask Mark to remind us of as he becomes our deacon.

It is Mark’s job as deacon – as it is with all deacons – to be out in that community - to help us knock down some of those walls. To be the bridge between the needs of the world and our call to serve that same world. To accept the role of deacon is most definitely a serious commitment. But we must also remind Mark of his need to enjoy his new ministry.

I found this quote that I thought was



Rt. Rev. Philip Poole, Area Bishop of York-Credit Valley and newly ordained Deacon Mark Stephen

appropriate for this afternoon. It is from Richard Cardinal Cushing - who was the Archbishop of Boston in the mid 40’s – he said: “The bishops will govern the Church, the priests will do all the work and the deacons will have all the fun.”

Now while I prefer not to accept his view of

the life of a priest, I do think his message to a deacon is an important one. We are not a religion of fear but one of joy. Joy in the news of the risen Christ – joy in the good news he brought. Mark, you are to feel joy in being called to the order of deacon. Joy in knowing that we all are praying for you and commit ourselves to journey with you. Joy in knowing that when you are weary and heavy laden - Jesus will give you rest – and you will find rest for your soul. Mark above all, you need to enjoy the life of a deacon and have some fun serving the Lord. Let there be joy in your heart as you enter into this new ministry and may it be so for a very long time!

Amen.

Mark’s principal diaconal work is in the field of prison ministry, and it was a special joy that a good number of ex-offenders were present in the congregation at his ordination.

Serving at a jail: it's all a blessing

BY DEACON BARBARA J. HARRIMAN

Why do I serve at a jail? I've been asked many times, sometimes asked in an incredulous voice. I visit inmates at a jail because there are so few of us who do. As a chaplain, when I visit people in a hospital or nursing home, sometimes I wait in line with other people offering social services. In 13 yrs. at the jail, I have not encountered one line of volunteers. And...the inmates are so grateful. Their gratitude is humbling.

I began taking children to visit their incarcerated mothers in 2000. We picked them up at their caregivers homes, visited with mom and returned them safely. We visited mom not through a thick Plexiglas window speaking on a telephone. Instead, there was a small room set aside in the jail for this purpose. The children could get right up on mom's lap and visit. Mom could be brought up to date on school activities or could braid her child's hair. The jail provided a simple meal for them to share. Very often, these families have no male head of household so when mom is incarcerated, there is a tear in this fragile family unit. If over the years, I was able to connect with just one young person and

suggest to them that they could make different choices in their lives, my ministry with the children was not wasted. I hope I did this. I remember well the first time I realized that this is what these children saw as their future. It was a sobering moment.



FACING DIFFICULT DECISIONS

In 2010, I was offered an opportunity to visit the pods of inmates, both male and female, for the purpose of offering a service of Evening Prayer and Holy Communion. I began to do this in addition to taking the children and did so for about one year. It became obvious that I could not do both ministries; I am not a young woman. I had a decision to make and it

was not easy. I did a lot of praying over this. Paul tells us to pray constantly and I pretty much did this. It was very hard for me to give up the evenings with the

mothers but I realized that I was nourished by going directly into the pods to visit inmates. So...it was a selfish decision. Now, I use my energy spreading the good news of Christ's love for all to people yearning to hear good news. When we come together we speak of love, forgiveness, second chances and God's amazing Grace in our lives. I am fed.

I am blessed in that I have six friends, all members of the congregation where I serve, who accompany me for the evening at the jail. One person goes with me each evening. They are nervous about going the first night, it's a new experience and most folks have a vision of what an evening in a jail might include. I am happy to say that each and every friend, upon leaving the jail, takes a deep breath and tells me they will be happy to come again. Like I say, it's all a blessing.

"The children could get right up on mom's lap and visit."



Barbara J. Harriman is a deacon serving in the Diocese of Newark, New Jersey.

Exsultet, from page 12

offered them a chalice of grape juice. Giving communion to a bunch of men aged maybe 18 through late 60's, in prison for anything: DUIs, manslaughter, murder.

"Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, alleluia, alleluia," I cried out to end the service.

The response returned "Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia."

We stood at the door as they left. "Mark, good to see ya."

"Hey, Deacon Bruce, 'sup?"

A small slightly built Hispanic guy said "Hey,

Bruce."

"Yeah, that's me."

"Me too," he grinned. "You do that Monday night group?"

"Yeah. Come join us."

"I think I will. Anything done by a Bruce gotta be all right, yeah?" He hugged me, walked away throwing a "Later bro," over his shoulder to me.

"Have a good week bro," I replied.

Frank walked me out of the chapel, over the starlit worn grass of the yard, down echoing corridors, through groaning and slamming

barred gates and doors. Then a short drive home.

"Hi honey, I'm home."

"Did you have a good time?" my wife asked.

"Tell you about it when I've recovered."

Bruce Nickerson is a deacon serving at St. Peter's, Cambridge, MA. He convenes a weekly peer support group for men in recovery at Massachusetts Correctional Institute, Concord, MA. He sang the Exsultet for a congregation of 200 inmates.

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