



**ASSOCIATION FOR
EPISCOPAL DEACONS**

ENGAGING THE DIAKONIA OF ALL BELIEVERS

From: Douglas Argue

May 5, 2020

Dear AED siblings,

I know we have all struggled with our reactions to the new reality we are in and finding balance has been tricky. Before I left the March board meeting in Jacksonville, I was already facing demands from work that made me quickly realize I was being called upon to assist Ohio deal with this pandemic. Upon my return, I jumped in and haven't stopped since. I continue to work 12-14-hour days without sufficient time off since this all started in March. I am finishing week 6 of this pace -- I say that not for pity or compassion but rather to lay the ground work for what I am dealing with.

I have realized that this is not ending soon and, with the pending federal funds coming in the next 45 days, my life will not slow down at all. COHHIO (Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio) is at the forefront of the homeless response work in the state and I am the designated project lead for our COVID work. Everyone is doing the best they can but this severe of a disaster is new and, in some cases, we are making things up only having to change course when new information comes out a day or two later. It is the most challenging thing I have ever done in my life.

After spending some time in discerning prayer on Easter day (I am grateful for my faith during this time), I understood clearly what God is requiring of me -- lead with a single focus. So, to that end I have resigned from all my leadership roles effective April 23rd -- including AED. I have communicated all of this to the executive committee and a plan has been devised to keep God's work through AED moving forward. To that end, Tracie Middleton has agreed to step up as President and will proceed with implementing a plan for filling vacancies that now exist as a result of my departure.

I know that I am fulfilling God's will --this has been communicated clearly to me in our daily conversations. My soul is clear, my heart is balanced, my head is focused.

I wish you peace and health on each of your journeys. May God bless you and keep you.

"All shall be well...and all manner of thing shall be well."



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From: Tracie Middleton

May 5, 2020

Dear AED siblings,

I am grateful to Douglas for his leadership at this time, and for the clarity of his decision, grounded in his primary calling as a deacon. It has been a privilege to work with and learn from him over the past few years on the board and especially this last year. Both in making his decision and in sharing how he came to it, Douglas is offering us a gift by demonstrating how to focus. He's very clear that, among all his various commitments, his priority is first to those who are most vulnerable. In the examination at the ordination of a deacon, we hear this:

At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

Our focus is always on serving Christ, and for deacons, that's "all people," but particularly "the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely." If any of us is feeling stretched thin right now, Douglas's example invites us to consider that it's wise, and maybe necessary, to let go of some things in order to be more fully available to higher priorities, which may be your family, your work, a particular ministry, or something else. Take time to pray about it rather than trying to just keep juggling. The challenges ahead will take time; many of us may need to adjust in order not to burn ourselves out.

The board and staff of AED are a great group of talented folks, well-equipped to maintain the continuity of our work. I look forward to collaborating with them and with all of you as we adapt to new circumstances in both the church and the world and create new links between the two.

Peace,