

Historic Deacons | Association for Episcopal Deacons 2022

Yazzie Mason, first Navajo deacon, died 2 April 1997.

Yazzie Mason was born 18 July 1927 and ordained deacon 21 December 1977. He served at St. Michael's at Upper Fruitland, New Mexico, in the Navajo Nation. He was fluent in Navajo (both the Navajo people and their language are known as Diné) but limited in English.

There was resistance to his ordination because he could neither read nor write. Every week his wife Alice read the gospel to him in Navajo, and on Sunday he recited it from memory to the congregation. His daughter Cornelia Eaton recalls: "My dad was a very sacred person, and he had such a profound passion for the gospel. Daily sunrise and sunset prayers and meditation were always spent in St. Michael's Chapel. I remember him today in that way."

From Deacon Gene Bourquin, May 2021 via Facebook.