

Discerning Mission Priorities



How we got here and what we have done so far:

Some time ago, the Executive Council and Finance Committees of the Diocese expressed shaping our decision making regarding the best use of the resources God given us by tying them to the mission priorities of the diocese. This called for an examination process to discern just how we are feeling called by God at this time.

The discernment process was launched with *Journey Through East Carolina* in November 2020. Together we committed to certain spiritual disciplines – to MOVE, STUDY, PRAY, & GIVE. Then, in the season of Easter 2021, together we studied and prayed about how to live more fully into our Baptismal Covenant, and we invited input from both individuals and congregations regarding Mission Priorities for our Diocese. In June 2021, at the Executive Council retreat, the abundant input was considered and prioritized. After further distillation, the first draft of proposed Mission Priorities was reviewed by the Executive Council in October and then by the clergy of the diocese at their October conference.

Now they are being shared with you – the whole of the Diocese – for additional reflection and feedback. The hope is the development of a final draft of proposed Diocesan Mission Priorities, to be presented to Executive Council in January, for adoption at Diocesan Convention in February 2022.

You are invited to pray about and reflect on the statement of who we are, why we are called and to what we are called, the four proposed Mission Priorities. You are invited to watch and share the presentation videos and to use them to spur

conversation. In particular, you are invited to prayerfully consider the ways the mission priorities capture your imagination. What questions or concerns are raised for you by the mission priorities? And what suggestions you might have for how the mission priorities could be better stated?

Prayer for this time of Discernment

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless all our clergy and people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Welcome – Intro

Over the last year we have worked together to determine where God is next calling us. To that end, let us look at this proposed Mission Priority.

Prayer for this time of Discernment

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless all our clergy and people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

We are children of God, called to follow Jesus
and to continue in the ways of The Episcopal Church.
God blesses us in the beauty and bounty of the land where we live
and through the diversity of the people with whom we share life.
As Church, we are called to be good stewards of all of God's gifts,
and to use them to restore all people to unity with God and each other in
Christ.

In this time, we have discerned that God's Holy Spirit is leading us to:

- support each of our worshiping communities to identify and equip lay and clergy leadership who will engage them in more fully living into the promises of our Baptismal Covenant
- develop and host collaborative opportunities for life-long formation for faith and ministry for all the baptized, to be offered in person and online across the diocese

- encourage every congregation to strengthen or build local networks with ecumenical, interfaith, and other community partners for the purpose of serving the needs of the most vulnerable in their midst
- advocate for justice and peace for all of God's children, working together to remove obstacles that prevent some from accessing resources available to others while building bridges and working for reconciliation and healing between those who have for too long been separated from one another

Video One – Introduction

Welcome: Mission Priority 1

Over the last year we have worked together to determine where God is next calling us. To that end, let us look at this proposed Mission Priority.

Prayer for this time of Discernment

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless all our clergy and people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

First Mission Priority

In this time, we have discerned that God's Holy Spirit is leading us to:

- **support each of our worshiping communities to identify and equip lay and clergy leadership who will engage them in more fully living into the promises of our Baptismal Covenant**

Remembering that the below possible implementations steps are NOT all inclusive, nor are they necessarily required to support this first mission priority; so, focusing mostly on the mission priority statement, please consider:

-In what ways does this mission priority capture your imagination?

-What questions or concerns are raised for you regarding this mission priority?

-What suggestions do you have for how this mission priority could be better stated?

We will do this in a variety of ways, perhaps including but not limited to ...

- ❖ structured diocesan process to ensure clergy support for smaller congregations
- ❖ training for lay worship leaders
- ❖ support for bi-vocational priestly ministry
- ❖ continuing options for lay and clergy leadership development
- ❖ build robust School for Ministry
- ❖ diocesan wide stewardship initiatives,
 - understanding stewardship in the broadest way
- ❖ support for congregations to engage new populations
- ❖ initiatives to support congregational vitality and growth
- ❖ strengthen Deanery relationships to help congregations avoid isolation

Video Two – First Mission Priority

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to help in this discernment process. Please send all feedback to: missionpriorities@diocese-eastcarolina.org

Welcome: Mission Priority 2

Over the last year we have worked together to determine where God is next calling us. To that end, let us look at this proposed Mission Priority.

Prayer for this time of Discernment

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless all our clergy and people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Second Mission Priority

In this time, we have discerned that God's Holy Spirit is leading us to:

- **develop and host collaborative opportunities for life-long formation for faith and ministry for all the baptized, to be offered in person and online across the diocese**

Remembering that the below possible implementations steps are NOT all inclusive, nor are they necessarily required to support this second mission priority; so, focusing mostly on the mission priority statement please consider:

-In what ways does this mission priority capture your imagination?

-What questions or concerns are raised for you regarding this mission priority?

-What suggestions do you have for how this mission priority could be better stated?

We will do this in a variety of ways, perhaps including but not limited to ...

- ❖ equip congregations with resources that better support members to express faith as Christians & Episcopalians
- ❖ leverage and build on communications systems established during pandemic
- ❖ share faith formation experiences between congregations and across diocese, strengthening capacity of congregations with fewer resources
- ❖ offer “hybrid” experiences, with some sessions online and some in person
- ❖ use Trinity Center as a base for in person sessions
- ❖ ensure that School for Ministry includes formation for lay ministry as well as for ordained ministries
- ❖ offer online &/or video training for licensed worship ministries
- ❖ offer formation opportunities in areas like creation care, welcoming, church growth, mental health, etc.
- ❖ empower lay leadership
- ❖ engage people of all ages

Video Three – Second Mission Priority

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to help in this discernment process. Please send all feedback to: missionpriorities@diocese-eastcarolina.org

Welcome: Mission Priority 3

Over the last year we have worked together to determine where God is next calling us. To that end, let us look at this proposed Mission Priority.

Prayer for this time of Discernment

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless all our clergy and people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Mission Priority

In this time, we have discerned that God's Holy Spirit is leading us to:

- **encourage every congregation to strengthen or build local networks with ecumenical, interfaith, and other community partners for the purpose of serving the needs of the most vulnerable in their midst**

Remembering that the below possible implementations steps are NOT all inclusive, nor are they necessarily required to support this third mission priority; so, focusing mostly on the mission priority statement please consider:

-In what ways does this mission priority capture your imagination?

-What questions or concerns are raised for you regarding this mission priority?

-What suggestions do you have for how this mission priority could be better stated?

We will do this in a variety of ways, perhaps including but not limited to ...

- ❖ a Diocesan wide strategy, with resources to support local initiatives
- ❖ encourage local determination of opportunities for service
- ❖ build functional networks that will last
- ❖ leverage all our resources including buildings and property
- ❖ look to meet community needs that have been more fully revealed during pandemic
- ❖ empower lay leadership to organize and implement this work locally
- ❖ enable mission by connecting communities and individuals for mutual support
- ❖ focused disaster relief and recovery work

Video Four – Third Mission Priority

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to help in this discernment process. Please send all feedback to: missionpriorities@diocese-eastcarolina.org

Welcome: Mission Priority 4

Over the last year we have worked together to determine where God is next calling us. To that end, let us look at this proposed Mission Priority.

Prayer for this time of Discernment

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless all our clergy and people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Fourth Mission Priority

In this time, we have discerned that God's Holy Spirit is leading us to:

- **advocate for justice and peace for all of God's children, working together to remove obstacles that prevent some from accessing resources available to others while building bridges and working for reconciliation and healing between those who have for too long been separated from one another**

Remembering that the below possible implementations steps are NOT all inclusive, nor are they necessarily required to support this fourth mission priority; so, focusing mostly on the mission priority statement please consider:

-In what ways does this mission priority capture your imagination?

-What questions or concerns are raised for you regarding this mission priority?

-What suggestions do you have for how this mission priority could be better stated?

We will do this in a variety of ways, perhaps including but not limited to ...

- ❖ attention to social justice for African Americans, Hispanics, and all people

- ❖ expand offerings of any programs or ministries that help to build bridges across major divides of race, immigration, refugee settlement, or access to resources such as education, healthcare, and internet
- ❖ stand up against systemic racism and abuse
- ❖ dismantle racism in our diocese, calling out institutions and persons of power who promote racism
- ❖ continued support of the Farmworker ministry, perhaps in new and expanded forms to engage new populations
- ❖ understand Creation Care as a ministry of justice
- ❖ work together to take on challenges that are too big for any one of us
- ❖ promote opportunities that allow us to come together despite our differences
- ❖ serve as “ambassadors of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20) and commit to working at reconciliation

Video Five – Fourth Mission Priority

Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to help in this discernment process. Please send all feedback to: missionpriorities@diocese-eastcarolina.org