# COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

*Report to the 143rd Convention of the Diocese of East Carolina*

## Charge of the Commission

It is the responsibility and charge of the Commission on Ministry (COM) to advise and assist the bishop in the implementation of The Episcopal Church canons related to Lay and Ordained Ministry in the diocese; the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons; and the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness. (Title III.2.2)

In the past year, the COM has had the privilege and joy of working together to support those who are discerning their call to serve Christ and the Episcopal church in both Lay and Ordained Ministry, and to make recommendations to the bishop on behalf of those who seeking to take steps to serve in particular ministries.

## Postulancy, Candidacy and Ordination

The COM monitors the process and progress of those who are discerning and being formed for a call to ordained ministry, making recommendations to the bishop along the way. This usually includes Postulancy Interviews held in the fall at Trinity Center, but as there were no nominees this year, we used the time for an extended working session with Bishop Fisher and the Rev. Canon Stephanie Allen. During this time the COM grew closer together as a cohort while also gaining an understanding of Bishop Fisher's priorities for discernment of all orders of ministry: Laity, Priests and Deacons. The COM looks forward to partnering with the bishop and canon to support the reimagined discernment process for calls to licensed lay ministries as well as to Holy Orders.

Currently there are eight individuals in process seeking ordained ministry in the Diocese of East Carolina, all of whom are discerning a call to the priesthood. In addition to those currently in the process, three individuals - Gary Fetter, Nick Kohlman, and Stephen Thomas - were ordained as transitional deacons at St. Mary's Kinston in May, and God willing, they will be ordained as priests at St. Mary's Kinston on December 12. All are welcome!

## Formation

All eight of those in process now are actively involved in formation and education.

- Two Candidates have completed their coursework in the "Alternative Clergy Training at Sewanee" (called ACTS). This is a "low residency" formation program using online/virtual courses, and on campus intensives. They are now in the midst of their field placement and/or Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).
- One Candidate has already graduated from seminary and is working through the remainder of the canonical requirements.
- Two Candidates are pursuing MDiv's through residential or hybrid low-residency programs through legacy seminaries/divinity schools.
- There are three Postulants. One is attending a hybrid low-residency program, one is being locally-formed under the guidance of the diocesan School of Ministry using the Iona curriculum, and one completed seminary in the Roman Catholic tradition and is finalizing Episcopal formation and other canonical requirements.

**Gratitude**

This is an exciting time to be on the Commission on Ministry. The COM is eager to continue to explore ways to be present and helpful in the formation of those who respond "Here I am" to God's call to myriad forms of ministry – lay and ordained. May we continue to be open to where the Holy Spirit is leading them and leading us!

Though not on the COM, I would like to thank Rev. Canon Stephanie Allen for her work not only with the School of Ministry, helping with the formation of those in process, but also a listening ear and sounding-board to me over the past year. I also am grateful for the faithful work of the current members of COM:

The Rev. Anne Abdy
The Rev. Deacon Rebecca Bean
The Rev. Josiah Daniels
Ms. Hannah Hutchens
Ms. Dionne Johnson
The Rev. Copeland Johnston
The Rev. Caleb Lee
The Rev. Matt Overturf
The Rev. Melody Perdue
Mrs. Carla Richardson
The Rev. Deacon Mary-Mac Shields
The Rev. Ashley Simpson

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Jody Greenwood
Chair of the Commission on Ministry