

Report to the Diocesan Convention 2010
from
The Commission on Ministry
Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan

In accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, USA, the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Western Michigan is made up of priests, deacons and laity. Membership on the Commission in our diocese is generally obtained by invitation of the Bishop from persons nominated by others for available seats. In the selection process for membership, the Bishop uses the diocesan Mission Statement to inform his choices.

The purpose of the Commission is canonically clear. We “shall advise and assist the Bishop” in the implementation of canon, in the search for and determination of “opportunities and needs” for ministry of all baptized persons. Furthermore, the Commission is charged to advise and assist the Bishop in the practical matters surrounding the oversight of processes of discernment, ministry formation and recruitment, and will ultimately, if the path to ordination is taken, assess and attest to the readiness for ordained ministry.

Over the past year, the Commission in this diocese has been working hard to develop discernment and process documents to be used as tools in our parishes for determining how the call of the Holy Spirit is leading our people into their unique ministry to the church. Our diocese has been in transition from the Vocational Discernment Program model, by which persons were recommended for nomination [or not] to Holy Orders to the Bishop and Commission after having attended the VDP. After consultation with rectors and with the agreement of the Bishop, this was the “first step” in the discernment process for priesthood or the diaconate.

We have developed a new protocol for discernment which will return the initial discernment process back to the parishes, and we report that two congregations in the diocese are piloting that protocol even now.

In addition to developing this new protocol, we have been exploring with the Bishop and others, alternative paths to ordination for those persons who bring life-skills, scholastic achievement and pastoral gifts to the church that can be applied for consideration towards the standards of proficiency for ordained ministry. For example, these might be persons from other denominations or professions who feel the call to ministry and have demonstrable skill-sets and experience within ministry, but whose formation for ministry in the Episcopal church is incomplete. We currently have at least two persons in process with whom we are working to close gaps in canonical standards. We can report that our initial steps have been taken with care because of our canonical imperative to support the concept of “one priesthood.”

We report that during the past year, we have interviewed aspirants and candidates, recommending movement forward where we believe it appropriate, and we have kept up with our various aspirants. All of our considerations, ruminations and conversations begin and end in prayer.

In that spirit, we pray for you and ask that you pray for us.

Submitted respectfully,

The Rev. James Croom, Chair of the Commission
Rector, Holy Trinity, Wyoming

Members of the Commission

Members Ex Officio

The Rev. Canon William J. Spaid	Canon to the Ordinary
Mrs. Judy Fleener, St. Paul's, Muskegon	Liaison from Diocesan Standing Committee

Members Completing Terms

Mrs. Musette El-Mohammad	St Martin of Tours, Kalamazoo
The Rev. William Whiting	Rector, Good Shepherd, Allegan
Stuart Smith, M.D.	St. Gregory's, Muskegon

Members

The Rev. Wayne Nicholson	Rector, St. John's, Mt. Pleasant
The Rev. Deacon Beth Drew	St. Mark's, Coldwater
Mr. John Bosserman	St. Mark's, Grand Rapids
Mrs. Janet Klumpp	Holy Trinity, Wyoming
The Rev. Jen Adams	Rector, Grace Church, Holland
Mrs. Lynne Perrin	Grace Church, Grand Rapids
The Rev. James Croom	Rector, Holy Trinity, Wyoming
	Parish Associate, Grace Church, Grand Rapids