

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY: 2020

Despite the disruption of the pandemic, the Commission on Ministry (or “COM”) has continued strong in its work of shepherding and equipping those who feel a call to ministry in the church.

An important component of the Commission’s work is to help all God’s people discern their call to ministry, whether as deacons, priests, or lay people. We facilitate that exploration through “Loving the Questions” (or “LTQ”), a learning community process under the leadership of the Reverend Jenny Gregg. In this the sixth year for this ongoing program, a new group is now meeting with an amazing 28 inquirers (seven times the number participating last year)! Participants include members of our Spanish-speaking congregations, as well as a few individuals from other dioceses, fueled by their interest in our landmark program. Please see The Rev. Jenny Gregg’s report for more information.

The last year saw two new vocational deacons for our diocese. The Rev. Dianne Wilson was ordained the diaconate on November 2, 2019, and The Rev. Jason Burns was ordained to the diaconate on March 7, 2020. Rachael (Jac) Essing continues in the formation process through the Province 1 School for Deacons. We are grateful to The Reverend Deacon S. Jane Griesbach, Coordinator for Deacons Formation Commission on Ministry, who provides able leadership and support for our postulants and candidates to the diaconate.

The Rev. Kevin Antonio Smallwood was also ordained to the diaconate on March 7, 2020, and was subsequently ordained to the priesthood on September 22, 2020 on behalf of our diocese by The Rt. Rev. Mariann Budde, Bishop of Washington. He currently serves as the Associate Rector for Families and Youth at Grace Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. There are seven others currently engaged in formation for Ordination to the Priesthood: the Reverend Deacon Eric Elley, Peter Feltman-Mahan, Jaqueline Galvinhill, Isabella Leo, Joel Martinez, Jimmy Pickett, and Phillip Shearin. It is noteworthy that, bucking the trends of the last several decades, most of these in formation are under the age of 30!

Many others are exploring the possibility of ordination within our diocese; it is a fertile time! This work of raising up ordained leadership is a vital part of the work of the COM, but we are mindful that our church canons call for us to assist the Bishop in the “determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of *all baptized persons.*” (emphasis added) To that end, the Commission is beginning to put in place processes to better support lay ministries. Your continued prayers for this work, as well as your ideas and enthusiasm, are appreciated.

For we who serve on the Commission on Ministry, it is a privilege to labor on behalf of God’s Mission and the people of this Diocese toward the future of the church. Please pray for all those who offer their lives to God in service, and also for those (including the COM) who support their call.

- The Rev. Samuel J. Smith, Chair, Commission on Ministry

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MEMBERS

The Rev. Samuel J. Smith, *Chair*

The Rt. Rev. Douglas J. Fisher, *IX Bishop of Western Massachusetts*

Mr. Milton Barnes

Ms. Amanda Fillio

The Rev. Deacon S. Jane Griesbach, *(ex officio) Deacon Formation Director*

Ms. Nancy Lowry

Ms. Christina Loy, *Liaison from Standing Committee*

The Rev. Megan McDermott

Ms. Tina Page

The Rev. José Reyes

The Rev. Ann Scannell

The Rev. Molly C. Scherm, *(ex officio) Board of Examining Chaplains*

The Rev. Dr. Richard M. Simpson *(ex officio) Canon to the Ordinary*

The Rev. Tanya Wallace, *Liaison from Standing Committee*

The Rev. Meredith Ward