

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY: 2021

One of the unexpected gifts of the pandemic has been a surge in interest in discernment for ministry. 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.

This past year saw significant growth in one of the most important parts of the Commission’s work: being of assistance to those who are pursuing a call to lay ministry, rather than ordination. We facilitate discernment through “Loving the Questions” (or “LTQ”), a learning community process under the leadership of diocesan staff member the Reverend Jenny Gregg and diocesan evangelist Craig Hammond. In 2020-21 an astounding 28 inquirers explored God’s call. Seven of those individuals are currently in the application process of postulancy, possibly leading to ordination; that means that three quarters of those in Loving the Questions in the last program year were equipped to better serve God’s people and the church in lay roles! For more information about last year and this year, please see The Rev. Jenny Gregg’s report for more information.

The last year saw one new vocational deacon for our diocese: The Rev. Rachael (Jac) Essing was ordained to the diaconate on April 10, 2021. Margot Sanger 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. Joel Martinez and The Rev. Phillip Shearin were ordained to the diaconate on November 14, 2020, and subsequently ordained to the priesthood on May 22, 2021. Joel continues his service at our Cathedral in Springfield, now serving as a Canon. Phillip has been called as priest for a new cluster ministry, service several parishes in the Williamsburg, VA area, and his pursuing a degree in medical ethics at Penn State University. The Rev. Peter Feltman Mahan was ordained to the diaconate on March 19, 2021, and subsequently ordained to the priesthood on September 25, 2021; he continues to work as an elementary school principal in Greenville, NY, and at the Episcopal congregations in Lenox. The Rev. Anna Woofenden was ordained to the diaconate on April 17, 2021 and subsequently to the priesthood on October 17, 2021; she has been called to be the rector at St. John’s Church in Northampton. There are four others currently engaged in formation for Ordination to the Priesthood: The Reverend Deacon Eric Elley, Jaqueline Galvinhill, Jimmy Pickett, and Linda (Elle) Morgan. Isabella Leo has withdrawn from the ordination process.

Many others are exploring the possibility of ordination within our diocese: on October 16, the Commission on Ministry interviewed two persons pursuing the vocational diaconate, and five pursuing priesthood. God is working among us!

Finally, we are proud to support the commissioning of another diocesan evangelist. Ellen Lincourt has already service the diocese in many astounding ways: at St. Michaels-on-the-Heights in Worcester; with the Revival in 2018; and especially during the pandemic, providing valuable technical support and advice to parishes as they moved worship and work online when in-person meeting was not possible. (She has also been an invaluable help to the Commission when we needed to interview aspirants to postulancy via Zoom.) We know she will continue to serve God’s people well in this new role.

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

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

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. Meredyth Ward  
Ms. Amanda Watroba