

Report of the Commission on Ministry 2009

The Commission on Ministry continues its essential work on behalf of the diocese and the larger Church with prayer, diligence, good spirit, and a healthy dash of humor. Members note that the work is the most satisfying and faith-affirming activity we participate in at the diocesan level. COM members well represent the diversity of our diocese. We are diverse in race, gender, liturgical style, economic status, geography, age, politics, and theological conviction. We trust that this diversity can itself encourage the congregations and clergy of the diocese to present an increasingly diverse group of nominees for ordination.

Thanks to the hard work of many and the arrival of the Rt. Rev. Rodney Michel as assisting Bishop, the Standing Committee was able to end the moratorium on accepting new people into the ordination process. The COM wishes to thank the clergy and people of the diocese for their understanding and support of the decision to establish the year-long moratorium.

Since the end of the moratorium the Rt. Rev. Edward Lee, Western Michigan, retired, has been doing yeoman's duty interviewing and advising literally dozens of lay people at all stages of the ordination process as well as maintaining contact with their sponsoring clergy. Heartfelt thanks are extended to Bishop Lee who has also continued to provide wisdom and oversight for our work as well as the necessary episcopal signatures required by canon. Thanks too to Ms. Arlene McGurk and the Rev. Joy Segal who serve as the Ecclesiastical Authority's liaisons to the COM.

There are currently twenty people at various stages of the process: two candidates and eight postulants for priesthood and ten people who are preparing for "nomination" (the formal invitation to participate in the pre-postulancy conference). We hope that four men will complete their preparation and be ordained to the transitional diaconate in June. Given the large number of potential nominees, the COM will hold two conferences in 2010, one in January and one in February. Note: Many of us continue to use the traditional term "aspirant" to describe those people in the earliest stages of the process. In the revision of the ordination canons in 2003 "aspirant" was dropped in favor of "nominee". The term reminds us that a call to ordained ministry is not primarily a private decision but is discerned in and by the Church. An individual "aspires", but the Church must "nominate".

Thanks to the excellent work and keen energy of the Rev. Dr. Pamela Nesbit, COM member and vocational deacon, and the Taskforce for Diaconal Formation which included Archdeacon Rev. James Ley, we crafted a proposal for the revitalization of the vocational diaconate in the Diocese. The proposal has been forwarded to the Standing Committee for its approval and implementation

Members of the COM are prepared to talk with congregations about the ministry of all the baptized as well the specifics of the ordination process. There are quite a few essential steps that must be completed more or less in order. Please call Jill Mathis at Church House or any member of the COM for details.

The Ecclesiastical Authority has nominated the Rev. Whitney Altopp, the Rev. Thomas Eoyang, Mr. Andrew Kellner, the Very Rev. Renee McKenzie-Hayward, and Ms. Francis Wilson to begin five year terms. Their nominations must be approved by this Diocesan Convention. Note: To maintain the canonically required minimum of fifteen members, three people must be nominated each year. A large number of members will complete their terms next summer. The COM asked that additional members be added this year to help prepare for that transition.

I know I speak for all the members of the COM when I say we are honored to serve the diocese and the Church as members of the Commission on Ministry. It is holy work, tremendously moving, and often very hard. But there is deep satisfaction and joy in seeing so many clear signs of the movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those whom God is calling to various ministries in the church.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Rodger Broadley, Chair

Ms. Elizabeth Crowell, Vice Chair, The Rev. Samuel Adu-Andoh, the Rev. Mark Ainsworth, the Rev. Whitney Altopp, the Rev. Kenneth Bullock, the Rev. Jane Cornman, the Rev. Thomas Eoyang, Mr. Andrew Kellner, the Rev. Robin Martin, the Rev. Koshy Mathews, Mr. Norman (Mac) McCausland, the Very Rev. Renee McKenzie-Hayward, the Rev. Dr. Pamela Nesbit, the Rev. Judith Rhodes, Ms. Amanda Smoot, Dr. John Tuton, Ms. Francis Wilson, and Ms. Nokomis Wood