

## CHAPTER OF DEACONS

The Chapter of Deacons is the collegial association to which all the active deacons of our diocese belong. It exists to provide a community of support, learning and advocacy, as well as to assist in the revitalization of the diaconate as a robust and equal order of ministry in our Church.

One of the distinguishing features of the English Reformation was the retention of three orders of ministry – bishops, priests, and deacons. Sadly, however, the Church has been much clearer about the distinctive nature of the ministry of bishops and priests, than it has about that of deacons. For the most part, the diaconate has been treated as a sort of internship leading to ordination as a priest; and in fact, the vast majority of deacons have seen the priesthood as their ultimate goal and calling.

Consequently, the church itself has learned to see priestly ministry as normative. This has made it difficult to claim back the special role of deacons, whose ministry is often seen as inferior, and defined primarily by all the things a deacon “can’t do” – such as, absolve, bless, or consecrate. In part, the Chapter of Deacons exists to help the Church broaden its understanding of ministry to include the things at which deacons excel.

Set in terms of our diocesan vision, deacons are called to “engage with world,” and assist the church to do the same. To quote our Vision materials, this means “taking concrete action to advance economic and social justice, the fair and equitable distribution of resources, and responsible custodianship of the environment.” Further, again quoting the Vision materials, it is to “recommit ourselves to an ongoing shared journey with First Nations and people of all nations and cultures, especially those who feel hurt or abandoned by the church.” These are things which seldom rise to the top of a parish council’s agenda without the prodding of a champion. Deacons are the people we give authority to poke us.

Our goal is to revivify and enhance the diaconate in our diocese. To this end, we recently invited the Reverend Deacon Bruce Morris, recently retired as the “Archdeacon of Deacons” in the Diocese of New Westminster (Vancouver), to address our clergy. We hope to generate further conversation about how deacons can help us fully embrace our calling to “mend the world.” We are grateful to Bishop Anna for including the vocation of deacon in two diocesan Vocation Days.

Current members of the Chapter include: Deacons Lynn Cawthra, Wally Eamer, Marion Edmondson (ordained in 2021), David Fitzsimmons, SuSan Jensen (on leave), Gil Shoesmith, and Trish Vollmann-Stock (ordained in 2022). The Chapter notes with sadness the death of Deacon Heather Cutten in 2022. We currently have two inquirers attending our meetings.

Since the last Synod, Deacon Marg Misener has retired, as has Deacon Canon Nancy E. Ford. The Chapter and Diocese are indebted to Nancy for her leadership over a period of some 10 years as the diocesan Director of Deacons. The Very Reverend M. Ansley Tucker assumed this role in 2022.

Respectfully submitted,  
(The Very Reverend) M. Ansley Tucker  
Director of Deacons