

## Chapter of Deacons Report

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. The Chapter generally meets monthly by Zoom.

In October 2023, the Chapter was able to resume its pattern of an annual in-person conference for the first time since the COVID pandemic. Highlights included an introduction to the use of a case study method for learning and reflection; a workshop on leading prayers of the people; some buffing up of liturgical practices related to “vesture, gesture and posture;” an opportunity to engage with Bishop Anna; an opportunity to comment on a proposal for the training, education and formation of deacons; and a conversation about how best raise deacons’ profile in our diocese. Most important, however, was the opportunity to build relationships and friendships.

In June 2024, most of the Chapter was able to attend the triennial national conference of Anglican (and this year, Lutheran) deacons sponsored by Anglican Deacons Canada, and held at the Sorrento Centre in the BC interior. This year’s conference was entitled “Beacons of Hope in a Messy World,” and featured Dr Sylvia Keesmaat, a biblical scholar, who invited a radical re-reading of two Old Testament narratives from a justice perspective – namely, the rape of Tamara and the story of Ruth. Deacon Christian Harvey, an engaging, slightly snarky, and very funny poverty and housing activist from Peterborough, Ontario introduced attendees to the principles and practices of non-violence as taught by Dr Martin Luther King. The evolving importance of the diaconate in the Canadian Church was evidenced by the participation of our Primate, Linda Nicholls, and the National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Susan Johnson, and our National Indigenous Archbishop, Chris Harper.

Our attendance at both these conferences was made possible by a generous grant from the Educational Trusts Board, for which we are grateful.

As the Church has begun to emerge from the shadow cast by COVID, we have been able to turn our attention once again to highlighting the role of deacons and encouraging congregations to identify parishioners who could be ordained to exemplify servant-leadership in their midst. To this end, we have done substantial work to revise our protocols for the discernment of vocation, and for the preparation of candidates for diaconal ministry. Our goal is now to increase our complement of deacons in the diocese, and to continue to educate parishes about how the ministry of deacons differs from that of a parish priest.

Current members of the Chapter include: Deacons Lynn Cawthra, Marion Edmondson, Norah Fisher (returned to active duty after a hiatus), Helen Lingham (received from the Diocese of New Westminster),

Gil Shoesmith, and Trish Vollmann-Stock. We also have two applicants in active discernment and one inquirer attending our meetings.

Since the last Synod, Deacons Wally Eamer, David Fitzsimmons, and SuSan Jensen have retired. Each brought a particular lens and gift to the diaconal leadership of our Church, and we are the better for their contributions.

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