

Community of Deacons Report to the 232nd Annual Diocesan Convention

The Community of Deacons includes 54 deacons who are active in ministry, deacons on sabbatical or medical leave, and retired deacons. On June 6, 2026, we celebrated the ordination of the Rev. Melissa Carter.

Deacons in our Diocese participate in a wide range of ministries, encouraging, equipping, and supporting the laity to live into their baptismal promises. In response to the needs and hopes in their communities, deacons develop relationships with immigrants, incarcerated individuals, people who are unhoused or hungry. Some diaconal ministries include public witness and policy advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels. This year, deacons initiated new relationships with Episcopal churches in Navajoland and participated in establishing an area ministry in a rural part of our Diocese.

To support ministries among the unhoused in three areas of our diocese, we invite you to collect new men's and women's underwear (size L and XL) and bring them to the Community of Deacons' table in the Convention Exhibit Hall.

Our Community experienced a significant transition this year when the Ven. Holly Hanback stepped down from her role as Archdeacon. The Ven. Hanback offered her wisdom and service to the Community even before her appointment as Archdeacon. For many years she served the wider Diocese by chairing the Committee on the Diaconate and serving on the Commission on Ministry. The Rev. Hanback continues to serve as deacon at St. Gabriel's/San Gabriel. We are deeply grateful for the Rev. Hanback's ministry among us. She exemplifies the image of deacon as icon of Christ—serving the servants who share the love of God in the world and invite others to embody justice as disciples.

Bishop Stevenson appointed two new Archdeacons to serve with the Ven. Frederico Garza. The Ven. Susie Harding and the Ven. Theresa Lewallen began their new ministries on July 1, 2026. The Ven. Harding continues to serve at St. Andrew's, Burke, as a leader of The Triangle of Hope Youth Pilgrimage and the Ministry of Racial Justice and Healing. As archdeacon the Ven. Harding works alongside the Rev. Dr. Sarah Kye Price to support formation for diaconal ministry. The Ven. Lewallen works with the Ven. Garza for diaconal placement, ministry support, and overall support for the diaconate from discernment through retirement. The Ven. Lewallen chairs the Committee on the Diaconate. The Archdeacon team serves with the Bishop and with other deacons to ensure that the canonical requirements for mentoring of new deacons and ongoing formation are met by the Diocese.

Deacons report to Bishop Stevenson. Active deacons are required to communicate with the Bishop annually and meet with him at least once a year. Bishop Stevenson met with the deacons during this year's Community of Deacons' annual retreat which was held October 16-18 at Roslyn. The Rev. Hannah Anderson facilitated the retreat.

We encourage you to contact us as you identify people in your midst who have a deacon's heart and as you explore a vision of the diaconate in your community.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Ven. Frederico Garza, The Ven. Susie Harding, and the Ven. Theresa Lewallen