Commission on Ministry Report to the 2026 Annual Convention

In the Diocese of Virginia, the Commission on Ministry serves as an "umbrella" for ministry planning and oversight which encompasses several working committees and affiliated programs. Title III ("Ministry") of the Canons list the work of the COM to include the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons; the design and oversight of the ongoing processes for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry; and the assessment of readiness for those preparing for Holy Orders as Deacons and Priests.

Commission on Ministry:

During 2026, the Commission on Ministry met on February 28 and October 3, focusing on three identified cross-cutting areas: 1) enhanced advisement for parochial clergy who are guiding parishioners through discernment and (if relevant) entry into a formal vocational discernment process for holy orders; 2) enhancing discernment and pre-postulancy preparation for those newer to The Episcopal Church; and 3) collaborating with our diocesan ministries of Discipleship to deepen ministry opportunities for all the baptized. In addition, the COM has considered terms of service and leadership among Committees and affiliated COM Programs and, in its Fall and Spring general meetings, exchanged information across programs and committees to strengthen and support these working groups.

Committee on Discernment:

Vocational discernment in the Diocese of Virginia is a communal practice that seeks the Spirit's leading. During 2026, we have held three filled-to-capacity Diocesan Discernment Retreat Weekends and staffed 14 Parish Discernment Committees and 3 Regional Discernment Committees with a trained diocesan discernment facilitator, supporting seekers across all orders of ministry. Our discernment retreat weekends are attended by inquirers all around the diocese seeking to discern their call to deeper ministry, whether lay or ordained; each retreat has a facilitator team with a mix of lay leaders, deacons and priests. In January 2026, committee co-chair Tom Hahn, Archdeacon Frederico Garza and diocesan Canon for Vocations Sarah Kye Price participated in the national church's structured workshop on Reimagining Discernment; the vision from that experience strengthened our resolve to share the "Good News" of discernment for all the Baptized throughout the Diocese of Virginia. The Committee on Discernment also hosted an initial training for Diocesan Discernment Facilitators and conducted times of continuing education and formation on discernment during two in person meetings of the committee. We are recruiting additional facilitators and look forward to another training retreat at Richmond Hill for new discernment facilitators in early 2027.

Committee on Priesthood:

The Committee on Priesthood is charged by the COM and Bishop to thoughtfully evaluate those applying for Postulancy for the Sacred Order of Priests before beginning formation, and to evaluate the formation of those engaging seminary studies for advancement to Candidacy. Since last Convention, the COP conducted 12 Postulancy interviews over four days. In addition, three Postulants were interviewed and advanced to Candidacy. Each interview reflects a thorough preparation and review of materials, shepherded by a member of the COP before each interview, and a full committee interview following up on written materials. The COP also supported the preparation of new postulants to the priesthood through a Postulancy Formation Retreat for 11 new postulants, 10 of whom began seminary studies this fall across four different seminaries. In addition to these marker points of ministry, members of the COP serve faithfully, inquire earnestly and prayerfully support Postulants and Candidates throughout their vocational process.

Committee on the Diaconate:

The Committee on the Diaconate is charged by the COM and Bishop to thoughtfully evaluate those applying for Postulancy for the Sacred Order of Deacons before beginning formation, and to evaluate the formation for those applying for Candidacy. This year's committee thoughtfully engaged with those forming for the diaconate through Candidacy interviews; we also supported one Deacon for Ordination. We are in the process of making some changes to the postulancy application process for those being formed for the diaconate, including integration of shadowing a deacon as a planned experience during Aspirancy. This will allow both practical and theological reflection on that experience to be a part of the written postulancy application and interview. Due to these changes as well as natural timing, we did not support the starting of a class with St. Phoebe School during summer 2026 but will hold postulancy interviews again during Spring 2027 for a hopeful new deacon formation cohort start up in Summer 2027.

Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains (DBEC)

Those who serve on the DBEC prepare, read, evaluate and offer feedback to those preparing for ordination as Deacons and Priests who sit for General Ordination Exams (priesthood) and Canonical Exams (diaconate) to evaluate in the areas identified in the Canons of The Episcopal Church their academic preparation for ministry. Since the last Convention, the DBEC administered and evaluated Canonical exams for two deacons-in-formation (these exams are locally prepared) and reviewed five General Ordination Exams for those preparing for priesthood. Each member of the DBEC reads all exam responses and offers feedback on areas of particular strength and areas for ongoing

formation. This feedback provides guidance for those whose exams are reviewed, and also for the other COM Committees, Bishops, and Standing Committee regarding test takers' overall preparation for ministry. This year we are preparing since the General Ordination exams as administered nationally through the General Board of Examining Chaplains are changing; exams will move away from being open resources to allowing only specified, limited resources. We are also adding exam readers and committee members in preparation for larger cohorts of priesthood formation in the coming years. We welcomed several new members to the DBEC as well.

COM Programs: In addition to working committees, the Commission on Ministry also staffs three specific formation programs: the **Young Priest Initiative** which supports people age 30 and under who are exploring calls to ordained ministry through group discernment and mentored internships; the **Mid-Atlantic Parish Training Program** which offers a colloquy-based and full time summer immersion experience to rising Diocese of Virginia Senior Seminarians to more deeply engage in specialized areas of ministry development and the **St. Phoebe School for Deacons** which prepares those called to the vocation of Deacon through local formation encompassing academic, spiritual and practical formation (St. Phoebe School also prepares those supported for the diaconate from the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia). Each of these programs was reviewed and will have staffing updates for 2027.

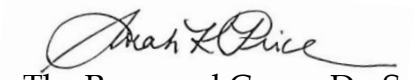
At this year's Convention, we thank those who have served faithfully as members of committees and leaders of programs for the past several years including Mr. Tom Hahn, the Rev. Andrew Moore, the Rev. Amanda Kotval, the Rev. Christine Love Mendoza, the Rev. Lee Gandiya and the Rev. Jennifer Lazzuri. We also welcome new members and thank those members of the Commission who are stepping into programmatic leadership in the coming year. A full list of the 2026-2027 Commission on Ministry elections, appointments, committee composition and programmatic leadership is included following this report to inform the Convention of all who engage in the many roles which support a robust discernment and formation process across orders of ministry.

A closing note from the Canon for Vocations and Clergy Wellness:

I close this report by giving thanks for the ministry of the Commission on Ministry members who are my front line collaborators and conversation partners doing the work of ministry across the depth and breadth of COM committees and programs. I would like to especially thank the former COM co-chairs who are rotating off this year: Mr. Tom Hahn, who has served faithfully with the committee on discernment for over 25 years and as COM co-chair for the last four years and the Rev. Andrew Moore who has directed the Mid-Atlantic Training Program for the past six years and served as COM co-chair for the past three years.

I lift up for the Convention the prayerful effort and dedicated work that it takes to engage this ministry of presence and formation. We have a depth of discernment and formation and a thriving vocational pipeline in the Diocese of Virginia, one which is present across all of our Episcopal seminaries and that draws many other dioceses to consider the work we are doing and how it might inspire their own. That work is possible with exceptional colleagues like those listed here, and I am grateful for each one of them.

Faithfully,



The Reverend Canon Dr. Sarah Kye Price
Canon for Vocations and Clergy Wellness
On behalf of (and with review by) the Commission on Ministry

Commission on Ministry – 2026 Annual Convention – Proposed Elections and Appointments

Election Slate for 2026 Annual Convention:
3 in the clergy order; 3 in the lay order; 3 additional to fill non-expired terms (2 clergy, 1 lay)

The Rev. Lachlan Hassman: 2026 – 2029
The Rev. Will Packard: 2026 – 2029
The Rev. Kelly Moughty: 2026 – 2029 (Incoming COM Chair)
Dr. Barbara Allison-Bryan: 2026 – 2029
Ms. Lisa Richard 2026 – 2029
Ms. Rosemary H. Arneson 2026 – 2029
*The Rev. Emily Krudys: 2026 – 2028 [filling two year non-expired term; eligible for renewal]
*Ms. Karen Franklin: 2026 – 2027 [filling one year non-expired term; eligible for renewal]
*The Rev. Peter Fraser-Morris: 2026 – 2027 [filling one year non-expired term; eligible for renewal]

Previously Elected/Continuing Members of the Commission on Ministry (3 year terms)

The Rev. Bambi Willis: 2025 - 2028
The Rev. Salli Hartman, Deacon: 2025 - 2028
Ms. Mary Williams Montague: 2025 – 2028
Mr. Tom Torrence: 2025 – 2028
Ms. Alda White: 2025 - 2028
Dr. Craig Anderson: 2024 – 2027
Ms. Sylvia Booth: 2024 – 2027
The Rev. Kevin Newell: 2024 – 2027
The Rev. Benjamin Robertson: 2024 – 2027

Commission on Ministry – Additional 1 Year Bishop-Appointed Terms for 2026-2027:
[Bishop may appoint up to 10 additional members of the COM]
The Ven. Theresa Lewallen
The Rev. Becki Casey
The Rev. Martin Geiger
The Rev. Suzanne Hood
The Rev. Mary Cushing, Deacon
The Rev. Sarah Spurlock-Biggs
The Rev. Caroline Carolin
The Rev. Grant Mansfield