

**DIOCESE OF CALIFORNIA  
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY  
2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT**

According to the Episcopal Church Canons (III.2.1) diocesan Commissions on Ministry (COMs) advise the bishop on licensing and ordination of ministers, identify opportunities and needs for ministry of all baptized people, and coordinate “design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness therefore.”

Sixteen people currently are in the formal process of discerning calls to holy orders within the Diocese of California, one for the diaconate and fifteen for priesthood. In 2015, Bishop Marc approved five postulants for priesthood and one for the diaconate. Six deacons and five priests have been ordained this past year.

Bishop Marc also has assigned to the COM responsibility for reviewing and recommending grants in financial aid. This year, the COM awarded over \$115,000 in eight diocesan clergy for debt relief and nine grants for theological education.

This past year, the COM and the Vocations Officer together have addressed long-term structural, process, and organizational goals. The work at times has been arduous and has required long hours and remarkable dedication by all involved. The COM concluded 2015 by adopting its first comprehensive set of *Operational Guidelines*. This year it has adopted Guidelines for distributing financial aid and a job description for COM liaisons to people in process. The C7 form was revised to include the comprehensive written report that DioCal Canons (XIV.14.04) require of the COM with recommendations for candidacy. The COM strengthened requirements for sexual misconduct prevention training to stipulate completion of a program “mandated and certified for clergy by The Episcopal Church.”

Two of the most critical areas addressed this past year have related to process. The Rev. Canon Stephanie Schatz facilitated discussions between the Standing Committee and the COM that will improve communication, processing, and decision making between the two bodies. In addition, the Board of Examining Chaplains (BOEC) has been reconstituted to even more effectively assist and evaluate the educational preparedness of candidates for ordination. The BOEC now consists of Rebecca Goldberg (chair), Leonard Johnson, Rebecca Lyman, Pamela Clare Magers, Kenneth Schmidt, Stephen Shaver, and Travis Stevens.

Finally, discerning the call to any ministry begins in the most local communities of Christians. After four years of work, the COM approved *Guidelines for Local Discernment Committees* to assist congregations in fulfilling their critical discernment responsibilities. These *Guidelines* stress the role of discernment in life decisions and lay ministry, as well as the call to holy orders. The *Guidelines* are available online and from the Vocations Officer. An LDC workshop is being planned for the February 2017 *Equipping the Beloved Community* program at Grace Cathedral.

On behalf all Commission members, thank you for the opportunity to serve the Diocese of California over the past year.

David Crosson, Chair  
Commission on Ministry