



E8 Commission on Ministry Report

This past year has been a productive time for the Commission on Ministry. As outlined in last year's Diocesan report, the Commission on Ministry (COM) has been engaged in revising our discernment process in alignment with Bishop Phil's vision and our canonical responsibilities. This entailed changes to the curriculum and launching a new process of discernment that includes a period of Exploring Vocations and then a year of Diocesan Discernment. This has been formalized in the Exploring Vocations Manual, published in February 2026 and the Diocesan Discernment Manual, with its last version published September 2026. For those familiar with the previous program, these processes and course material have replaced what had been known as "Phase 1" and "Phase 2" of the Diocesan Discernment process. The differences between the two programs are significant and all are encouraged to review the manuals.

The first cohort of 20 (!) discerners have now completed the new Diocesan Discernment process. The Diocesan Discernment Committees consist of a grouping of 2 to 4 discerners with roughly twice the number of committee members, who serve as discernment partners. A facilitator assists the discerners and committee members as they work through the 9-module curriculum. The sessions are held online.

After soliciting feedback from all participants, we have made some modifications to the structure of the committees and curriculum and have begun our second discernment cohort of 18 individuals.

In April and September of this year, the diocese offered a one-day, in-person Exploring Discernment Retreat led by the Rev. Danae Ashley and the Rev. Jonathan Weldon. Bishop Phil and members of the COM were in attendance to provide support and guidance to the attendees. These retreats are designed to assist individuals who are in the early stages of discerning a life-changing question – such as call to lay ministry or holy orders as well as issues such as retirement, school and job changes.

In December of 2025, Michael Seewer, the Executive Assistant to the Bishop, was named the Secretary for Vocations for the diocese. His work at organizing the records and ensuring compliance with the Canons of the church and diocesan policies has greatly enhanced the work of the COM.

Another new member of the diocesan staff has also been instrumental in the work of the Commission on Ministry. The Rev. Courtney Jones, the Dean of the Iona School, has been of great assistance in coordinating our curriculums.

On 18 July 2026, five individuals were ordained to the priesthood. They are Gabriel L. Oakes, Alison Lynn Leary, Elizabeth A Holland, Tina Elizabeth Francis and Vincent J Booth. Eric Stroo is scheduled for ordination to the priesthood on the 3rd of October. Stephanie Butler and Emily Meeks have also been named candidates for ordination to the transitional diaconate.

Three individuals were named candidates and are scheduled for ordination as vocational deacons on October 3rd. They are Nathan Michael Clark, Tamara Grace Lamb, and Sue Maureen Mings.

Named postulants for the priesthood are Laura Myers, Lynnette Poulton Kamakura, Ari Wolfe, and Laurel Tallent.

The COM owes a great deal to the many who have so generously contributed their time and talent to this process. We are very grateful for the vulnerable, soul searching, spirit filled work of the Diocesan Discernment Committees and want to recognize the discerners, committee members and facilitators. Their work is foundational to the work of the Commission on Ministry, and the next generation of priests, vocational deacons and lay leaders.

We wish to acknowledge the leadership and pastoral care of the many priests who have walked with and supported our community of discerners on their journey. Doing so in the first year of a new process can be challenging and we appreciate the grace and faithfulness of those involved.

The work of the Commission on Ministry is dependent upon the assistance, coordination and guidance of many individuals and ministries of the diocese. While we would like to thank everyone publicly, please know how much we appreciate you all.

The Co-Chairs of the Commission on Ministry are grateful for the diligence, faithfulness and hard work from the members of the COM. The COM is a team of dedicated individuals who work well together and are always willing to contribute to the process. The members of the COM are June Cook, Michael Perera, Tina Polf, Barbara Potgieter, Maria Weber, the Rev. Jennifer King Daugherty, the Rev. Scott Deasy, the Rev. Ruth Ann Garcia, the Rev. Pat Grodt, and the Rev. Hillary Kimsey.

Faithfully,
The Rev. Jennifer King Daugherty
The Rev. Scott Deasy
Co-Chairs, Commission on Ministry