

From start to finish, the process spanned nine months. The final step—the meeting with the COM—took place on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. It was a Friday, two days before Palm Sunday. I had felt from the very beginning that, if God wanted me to be a deacon, then God would see it through, so I entered the conference room at the Cathedral that morning trusting that whatever decision the COM made would be a validation of what God wanted for me. It was a “question and answer” meeting: serious, but not somber, and with a sense of the Holy Spirit being present in the room. When the meeting was over, I headed back to Prescott, praying once again, “Thy will be done, not mine.” Several hours later, my phone rang; it was Deacon Scott Deasy (my COM “shepherd,” who had guided me through the application process), telling me that the COM had given me a “green light” to proceed to the Deacon Formation Program! I was thrilled, and, at the same time, humbled and awed by the news. I still am.

Several days later, I received a letter from the Bishop, formally naming me as “a Postulant for Ordination to the Diaconate.” His letter arrived on the same day that Archdeacon Sarah Getts contacted me via email to welcome me to the diaconal formation program, and to share with me the names and contact information of the two other postulants who had also received a “green light” from the Commission on Ministry. One is Amy Bryan (Leanne Bryan’s daughter!), from Phoenix, and the other is Susan Erickson, from Tucson. It’s a small class, but over the years I have learned that, whenever an experience is shared by just a few people, deeper relationships tend to form between them, so I’m looking forward to having two wonderful friends by 2020!

Given the high-tech age in which we live, the first meeting of the postulants with Archdeacon Sarah Getts, and Deacon Robin Hollis, Director of the Deacon Formation Academy, took place on May 8<sup>th</sup>, via “Zoom,” a video conferencing platform. It was an opportunity to connect faces with names, and to begin to get to know each other. Our first “face to face” encounter will be June 22-24, when the five of us will gather at the Franciscan Renewal Center in Phoenix for a retreat and official commencement of the deacon formation program. I know that I speak for both Amy and Susan in asking for your prayers for the three of us during the next two years. God willing, we will be ordained in June, 2020, and will join the long list of devoted deacons, including Kimball and Chris here at St. Luke’s, who, over the years, have served God and God’s people in the Episcopal Diocese

of Arizona. Please pray for us. It is a shared journey, and there will be comfort and strength in knowing that we're all walking together! God bless us all! -Keehna Sture