



# The PeliDeacon



*a newsletter about deacons  
in The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana*

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## **New Video Answers Question: “Who Is Called to Be a Deacon?”**



Deacon Joyce Jackson of St. Anna's New Orleans is featured in  
a new video on deacons

A new educational video about deacons was produced early this year and will be used to train discernment committees about what and who deacons are. “This video gives us a single and effective tool to teach folks about deacons,” according to Archdeacon Charles deGravelles. “There is still a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about the role of deacons in the church. How can someone who may have a call to the diaconate recognize that call if he or she doesn’t really understand what a deacon is.”

The video is titled “Who Is Called to Be a Deacon?” It features Bishop Shannon Duckworth, Archdeacon deGravelles and four Louisiana deacons: Deacon Carol

Spencer, Trinity New Orleans; Deacon Cindy Obier, former Archdeacon and Chaplain to the Bishop; Deacon Joyce Jackson of St. Anna’s New Orleans; and Deacon Lester Mut of St. Margaret’s Baton Rouge. The video was requested by Canon Morgan MacIntyre to help discernment committees understand the role of a deacon.

The video was made possible by the Kevin Lyle and Renee Chatelain Family Foundation to honor Kevin Lyle’s mother, Deacon Pat Lyle (1934 – 2024) who ministered for many years in the diocese, serving the elderly and as a spiritual director. Deacon Lyle served at different times at St. Margaret’s and St. James in Baton Rouge and was active in many diocesan-wide ministries such as Cursillo and Kairos.

“For us deacons, Pat Lyle was the consummate deacon—compassionate, tough and funny,” said  
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# Louisiana Deacons Issue Statement Against Death Penalty

Louisiana's Episcopal Community of Deacons has recently issued a statement against the death penalty: *From Death to Life—A Statement on Capital Punishment*. “With the first execution in our state in fifteen years scheduled for March, the issue is urgent,” said Deacon Charles deGravelles, Archdeacon of the Diocese.

Governor Jeff Landry and the state legislature earlier approved the resumption of capital punishment in our state using a nitrogen gas protocol. “Claims have been made that this method is painless,” deGravelles said, “but it was clearly painful and prolonged in a recent use of this method to execute a man in Alabama.”

“Any way you look at it, it’s a difficult issue that involves the most heinous of crimes and some of the most painful outcomes imaginable for all involved,” deGravelles continued. “And while we acknowledge that Christians of good will can have a range of opinions on the death penalty, we nonetheless feel strongly, after study and prayer, that there are better, more humane methods of insuring public safety and administering justice for the victims of the violent crimes perpetrated by the men and women on death row.”

“Exacting justice for a terrible crime is paramount in society and can be accomplished without the inhumane brutality of an execution while still allowing for justice and the possibility and hope of healing and forgiveness for all.”

## **From Death to Life:**

### **A Statement on Capital Punishment**

While we acknowledge that Christians of good conscience can hold a variety of opinions about capital punishment, and while we recognize the depth and difficulty of this subject, the Community of Deacons of the Diocese of Louisiana speaks out now on the issue because of its importance and timeliness.

We believe that capital punishment should be abolished for the following reasons:

- It is unnecessary for public safety and civil order.
- It has unsubstantiated and dubious value as a deterrent.
- It is less effective than life-imprisonment, which addresses the legitimate need of society to punish the worst kinds of criminal behavior.
- It is applied in an inconsistent, unfair, and discriminatory manner.
- It involves the possibility of execution of innocent persons.
- It perpetuates violence and destruction.
- It deprives the criminal of the opportunity of reform, rehabilitation, and restitution.
- It deprives the survivors of the opportunity for forgiveness.
- It is at odds with the teaching and example of Jesus Christ to fight evil with good and to forgive injury.

While abolition of the death penalty is not a simple solution for the complex problems of crime and violence, it can and should be a part of an overall approach that supports human life and dignity, spiritual healing, and restoration. We invite all Christians and others of good will to join us in calling for abolition to capital punishment.

Community of Deacons  
Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana  
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(Continued from Page 1) deGravelles. “She was among the first female clergy to be ordained in Louisiana which was, in those days, an uphill battle. But knew she was called and in spite of many obstacles, she never gave up.”

“We are deeply grateful to Kevin and Renee for their help in funding this educational video,” deGravelles said. “The diocese is blessed this year that a number of individuals have started the discernment process, and this short film will be a significant tool to help to educate discernment committees.”

DeGravelles also thanked the two churches and their clergy where the video was filmed: Christ Cathedral New Orleans, The Very Rev. David Duplantier, Dean, and Trinity Episcopal Church, Baton Rouge, The Rev. Peter Wong, Rector.

## **The A B C (D)s of Community Engagement**



***How to connect your church and community  
in the Spirit of Christ***

+ + +

Learn

### **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)**

an invaluable organizing tool to:

- Know your congregation better!
- Engage your congregation in sustainable community ministry!
- Identify hidden talents and interests in your congregation!
- Prepare your congregation for disaster response!

*A one-day seminar for all clergy and lay leaders*

*Led by Deacon Elaine Clements and Community of Deacons*

**Saturday, June 14, 9am to 4pm**

Solomon Episcopal Conference Center

Free and open to all—lunch included

Register @ [https://seccla.org/secc\\_events/](https://seccla.org/secc_events/) or at 985-748-6634

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Deacons to Host**  
**Educational Opportunity**  
**for Diocese on**  
**Community Engagement**

# AED's Triennial 2025

## Set for San Antonio June 5-8

Registration is now open for the Association of Episcopal (AED) Triennial Conference for deacons, the first in six years. It will be held on Pentecost weekend – June 5-8, 2025, in San Antonio, Texas. This churchwide gathering of deacons happens every three years, but was skipped 2022 due to Covid. You may register at this link:

<https://www.episcopaldeacons.org/aeds-triennial.html>

Newly ordained deacons may not know what a powerful experience it is to be surrounded by hundreds of deacons for three days. So, come and find out. In addition to inspiring plenary presentations, empowering workshops, and an award dinner that honors some of your fellow deacons for their unique contributions, the conference will offer time for deacons to meet each other, learn from each other, create new support networks, and hang out together with a chance to visit sites in San Antonio.

Workshops will be held in the following six areas:

**Formation: Growing the Diaconate.** Workshops will focus on ways to train new deacons and to develop new skills for yourself.

**Deployment: Deacons in a Changing Church.** Explore new ways you might express your diaconal vocation, be the future face of the church, and encourage others to claim their own diaconal gifts.

**Social Justice: The Diaconal Heart.** Listen to creative and inspiring stories of deacons bringing healing and justice through their diaconal ministries in the world where the need is great and the response is diaconal. Their stories might spark ideas for your own ministry.

**Diaconal Preaching Voice: Episcopal Preaching Foundation.** More and more frequently deacons are being asked to preach. Discover and develop your preaching voice to offer a uniquely diaconal message for the church.

**Governance: Deacons in the World.** How can we create structures and organize to ignite change in the church and in the world? Meet some who work in this important aspect of deacon ministry and find your own place.

**Resources for Ministry: the “tools of the trade.”** There are more resources than any one of us can know. Learn about new tools to retool your ministry to be even more capable of igniting change.



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Walking in Love. Making Jesus Known. Transforming Lives.