



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FLORIDA

THE RIGHT REVEREND SAMUEL JOHNSON HOWARD, D.D.

BISHOP OF FLORIDA

November 29, 2017

Dear Brother and Sister Bishops of Province IV:

Wisdom Calling: A Conference on Local Formation

I am writing to share information with you on an important upcoming conference on the future shape of the ministry that will take place here in the Diocese of Florida February 8-10, 2018, hosted by *The Living Church* and the Bishop's Institute for Ministry and Leadership. There is a strong line-up of speakers for this conference including Bishop Neil Alexander from Sewanee, Bishop George Sumner from the Diocese of Dallas, Dr. Dan Aleshire, former Executive Director of the Association for Theological Schools and Dr. Jane Williams, Assistant Dean at St. Mellitus College, London (the local theological college that has been instrumental in spurring growth in the Diocese of London). The conference will take place at Camp Weed and the Cerveny Conference Center, our Diocesan camp and conference center. There is good, comfortable accommodations and excellent food.

As the attached information sheet on the conference states: *'More and more, Episcopal dioceses are relying on local formation to train up leaders for parish ministry. In many dioceses, the majority of clergy are now part-time, and 13% of clergy across our church are volunteers. As these ministry models become more common, the importance of local theological formation will only increase.'*

The Diocese of Florida (with our Bishop's Institute for Ministry and Leadership, founded in 2015) has committed itself, like so many other dioceses, to establishing stronger programs for local formation. As we make progress, I think we might all agree that there is a considerable benefit for us to discuss together as to what practical tools, what best practices, and collaborative partnerships are available to strengthen local formation across our church. I see this February conference as potentially a vital element in advancing that discussion.

Please share this information with your key clergy and lay leaders involved with you in your diocese in the selection, training and examining of the ministers—ordained and lay—who serve your diocese. I am planning to attend this conference and I hope many of you, my fellow Province IV bishops, will also seriously consider joining me.

I send this wishing each of you a very good Advent.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard
Bishop

Wisdom Calling: A Conference on Local Formation

Wisdom Calling: A Conference on Local Formation

Sponsored by The Living Church and the Bishop's Institute for Ministry and Leadership

Dates: Thursday, February 08, 2018 - Saturday, February 10, 2018

Location: Young Conference Room

Time: 4:00pm Thursday - 1:00pm Saturday

Cost: Single Occupancy - \$364.00, Double Occupancy - \$289.00

Wisdom Calling: A Conference on Local Formation

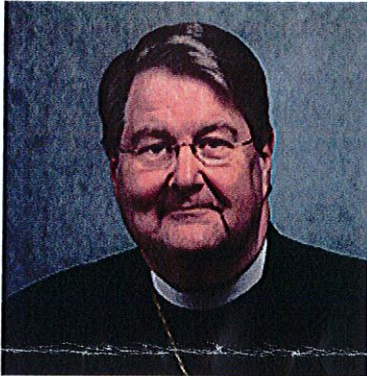
More and more, Episcopal dioceses are relying on local formation to train up leaders for parish ministry. In many dioceses, the majority of clergy are now part-time, and 13% of clergy across our church are volunteers. As these ministry models become more common, the importance of local theological formation will only increase. Today, it is time for the Episcopal Church to think as carefully and invest as intentionally in local formation as we long have for residential seminary training, as a vital seedbed for the leaders of tomorrow's church. Should we endeavor to make local formation as much like residential seminary as possible? What can be gained by immersion in local ministry contexts that the traditional seminary model can't give? And what practical tools, best practices, and collaborative partnerships are available to strengthen local formation across our church?

In this conference for theological educators and diocesan leaders, we will explore these questions with theologians, educators, and practitioners from across our church, and build relationships with peers and potential collaborative partners. We will consider questions like:

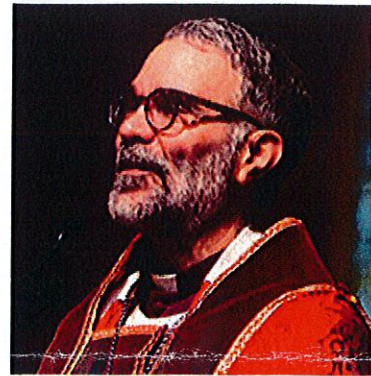
- What is a theological education for?
- How does answering that question help us formulate a vision for excellence in local formation?
- What best practices and fruitful ideas can be learned from experienced hands in local formation from around our church?
- What are the most pressing educational needs of locally-trained priests and deacons whose vocation will likely not include full-time paid employment by the church?
- How can we best train and authorize the work of licensed lay ministers, in addition to ordained leaders?
- What practical tools and resources (e.g., online classes) can be added to a local formation toolbox?
- What partnerships (e.g., with seminaries, parishes, and other dioceses) are to hand to build up local formation programs?

This conference includes presentations from respected leaders, as well as ample time for open discussion of topics of interest among the gathered attendees. Our invited speakers will help guide our discussions.

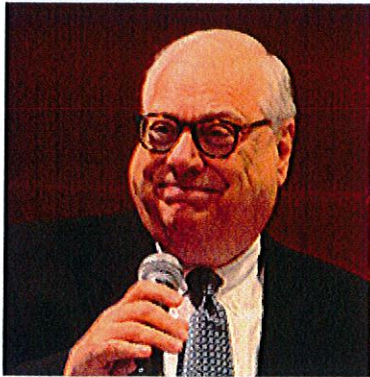
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



The Rt. Rev. J. Neil Alexander
Dean, School of Theology, Sewanee



The Rt. Rev. George Sumner
Bishop of Dallas



Dr. Dan Aleshire
Retired Executive Director
Association for Theological Schools



Dr. Jane Williams
Assistant Dean
St. Mellitus College

Travel info may be found on Camp Weed's [homepage](#), by clicking the "Getting Here" menu tab to the right of the page. Convenient flights are available into Jacksonville, Tallahassee, and Gainesville. Camp Weed is located at 11057 Camp Weed Place, near Live Oak, Florida. Please call camp staff at 386 364-5250 for further information. A full schedule of events may be found by [clicking here](#). Our time begins with a welcome reception at 4:30pm on Thursday, and concludes with noon lunch on Saturday.

Registration for the conference is set at \$100, with comfortable hotel-style accommodations and meals at Camp Weed for your two-night stay available at \$264 for a single-occupancy room or double-occupancy for \$189. You may register and pay online on this website, or by calling Camp Weed.

<http://www.campweed.org/calendar/calendar-of-events/wisdom-calling-a-conference-on-local-formation.aspx>

Questions? Contact Jordan Hylden (jlhylden@livingchurch.org) or Douglas Dupree (Ddupree@diocesefl.org).