

Becoming A Deacon CONT.

Now most of us are not like Isaiah who heard the voice of the Lord saying, *“Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”* Then I said, *“Here am I. Send me!”* Nor do most of us respond so quickly. Very often the first idea that you might have a call, comes from someone else. Also, it's very common for anyone having a call to have doubts. Thankfully the Episcopal Church provides a method of discernment to any calling.

In the canons of the Episcopal Church, we are reminded *“All baptized persons are called to minister in Christ’s name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church and to serve Christ’s mission at all times and in all places.”* (Title III, Canon I, Section 1).

If someone has expressed to you that you have a calling or you yourself feel in your heart that you can do more, one of the first steps is to attend a Ministry Exploration Day (MED).

The Diocese of Florida will be offering a ministry exploration day on Saturday March 4, 2023, at Christ Church Episcopal, Ponta Vedra, Florida.

At the Ministry Exploration Day, you'll have a chance to meet others, who are discerning a call. You will hear clergy and their spouses talk about their discernment process, and what their calling was like. They will also discuss the discernment process, how long it takes, and the steps along the way. Some of the steps include meeting with your local priest, attending a church discernment committee, and if you're calling is to priesthood, attending seminary. If you're calling is to become a deacon, your training will be within the Diocese.

So why be a Deacon? The diaconate is the first ordination in the Episcopal Church. All priests and bishops are deacons first. The diaconate follows the spirit of Jesus who told us *“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...”* and the word deacon means servant. Deacons are considered to be both in the world and in the church; in, that they bring the needs and concerns of the world to the church, that Christ ministry may enter in.

Deacons work at the direction of the Bishop, who assigns them to churches and priests. Deacons assist their priest and the Bishop, and are therefore, servants to the servants of our Lord. We deacons assist at the altar, serve on committees, teach, and so much more.

On Saturday January 7, 2023 the concluding class of the 22-23 Deacons School took place. All of those completing the school will soon be attending the Commission on Ministry for their Candidate interviews. Please pray for them and congratulate them as they have each worked very hard to prepare themselves to serve our Church and our Lord.

I love the Diaconate; it has given me great joy to serve the Lord in a way I never expected.

By choosing to attend MED you will have already taken that first big step in a call of discernment. If you are hearing a call, remember what our Lord Jesus said *“These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”*

Praying that our Lord finds you and yours well.

The Ven. Mark Richardson,
Archdeacon

If you are interested in attending the Ministry Exploration Day (MED), please visit the Diocesan Website for more information or call their office (904) 356-1328.