Discerning Our Common Call Steering Committee

The Discerning Our Common Call Steering Committee was formed in 2017 to lead the diocese in discernment around our mission and budget which led into the Special Convention that year. Since then, we have continued to work as a strategic vision and mission team to assist the diocese in clarifying and focusing on our distinctive call to join in God's mission as the Episcopal Church in this region. Over the last several years, through discernment conversations, workshops, and practical exercises across the diocese, we have identified our core mission and call as:

Our purpose is to form people as disciples of Jesus Christ who participate in God's mission of reconciliation in the world.

We do so as an interconnected community of schools of discipleship.

The Discerning our Common Call Steering Committee works with leaders, congregations, committees, commissions, and task forces across the diocese to help coordinate our work together around this focus on discipleship and formation in all that we do.

In early 2020, the DOCC Steering Committee prepared some planning tools for congregations to evaluate our strengths as schools of discipleship and take action to grow in that work. This tool was based on the work done in the Fall 2019 Convocation meetings which focused on discerning a shared understanding of schools for discipleship in the Diocese. That tool can be found in the DOCC section of the diocesan website.

During the pandemic in 2020, the face-to-face discernment and coordination work of DOCC was put on hold as members of the Steering Committee worked with the Re-entering, Re-opening, and Re-imagining, and Learnings and Breakthroughs COVID Task Forces of the diocese.

As Bishop Stokes has reminded us (quoting Bishop Skelton of the Diocese of New Westminster, ACC), the context has changed, but the mission is the same. Although that observation is provoked by the COVID pandemic, it is particularly true for the work of Discerning Our Common Call. The diocese, led in this work by the Steering Committee, must continually adapt our work so that as the context around us changes, our focus on discipleship and formation will remain constant and central.

To that end, the Steering Committee has expanded, engaging new leaders, and are re-forming for ongoing rather than ad hoc work, evaluating the context each year and choosing areas of focus within our overall mission and purpose to form disciples of Jesus. For those focus areas, we will work to provide plans and tools to enable the diocese to live into this mission, and we coordinate with other diocesan bodies whose work aligns with this mission.

Members of the Discerning our Common Call Steering Committee
Annette Buchanan St. Augustine's, Asbury Park

Caroline Carson Holy Innocents, Beach Haven
Amy Cornell Grace St. Paul's, Mercerville

Nina Dixon St. John's-on-the-Mountain, Bernardsville

Joanna Hollis Christ Church, New Brunswick
Deborah Kirk St. Stephen's, Waretown
Philip Lewis Trinity Cathedral, Trenton
Phyllis Long Christ Church, Toms River

Jorge Martinez

Emily Mellott, Chair

Juan Monge Santiago

Karen Moore

Jenni Ovenstone-Smith

Ron Pollock

Sue Shubeck

St. John's, Elizabeth

Trinity, Moorestown

All Saints, Lakewood

Grace, Plainfield

Grace, Haddonfield

St. John's, Somerville

St. John's, Linden

Allan Wakabayashi The Episcopal Church at Princeton