

**Discerning Our Common Call Steering Committee  
Report to the 235<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention, 2019**

The Discerning Our Common Call Steering Committee was formed in 2017 and led the work of listening and discernment throughout the diocese around our mission and budget which led into the Special Convention that year.

Following that Convention, the Discerning Our Common Call Steering Committee has continued to work as a strategic vision and mission body to assist the diocesan community in clarifying and focusing on our distinctive call to join in God's mission as the Episcopal Church in this region.

In the first half of 2018, we used the Five Marks of Mission as a tool to help the diocesan community understand our share in God's mission as we worked to clarify our particular diocesan sense of common call. The DOCC Steering Committee worked with Congregational Development and other staff and leaders to identify stories of mission being lived out across the diocese and shared these in a series of missional conversations at the 234<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese in March 2018. Those conversations engaged members of Convention in facilitated conversation about how we can build on the Marks of Mission in our congregations and ministries.

Later in the spring, we supported a second series of "Bishop's Forums" for conversation throughout the diocese, exploring how we live out Mark of Mission 4: "Seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation."

Drawing on the variety of listening and data gathering work in 2017, the work of the task forces created by the Special Convention, a clear statement of the common missional call of the Diocese of New Jersey came into focus at the June 2 Leadership Day when our Bishop articulated our shared call *to form people as disciples of Jesus Christ so that they participate in God's mission of reconciliation in the world.*

In support of that understanding of our common call, and our ongoing discernment as a diocesan community of how we live out this call, the DOCC Steering Committee has identified two priorities in our ongoing work:

- \* to coordinate the work of the various task forces and bodies working to renew the mission, resources, structure, and finances of the diocese; keeping our common focus on the call to form disciples for Christ's reconciling mission, and

- \* to extend the understanding of our common call of discipleship and mission throughout the diocesan community, supporting the work of disciple formation in congregations and the governing bodies of our diocese.

In September, we initiated a series of quarterly "Coordination Days", bringing together the Task Force on Mission, Structure, and Budget; the Task Force on Resource and Revenue; the Board of Consultation; Project Resource; the Marks of Mission Giving Task Force; and the Lifelong Christian Formation Committee to share updates on their priorities, find areas of overlap and shared resource, receive coaching, and renew our focus on mission and disciple-formation in the specific work of each group.

We continue to seek out examples and resources for discipleship and formation from congregations and ministries of the diocese and are working to share those resources for the benefit of the whole diocesan community, to support all members and bodies of the Diocese of New Jersey in living into this common call. One such resource is an adapted “Dwelling in the Word” resource for scripture study focused on deepening our understanding of discipleship. This is available in the Discerning Our Common Call portion of the diocesan website and will be updated quarterly. We encourage all members of the diocesan community to use this resource together, so that each month vestries, ECWs, and other congregational groups will read and reflect on the same scripture being read in the diocesan leadership bodies.

We are also supporting a new series of Bishop’s Forums across the diocese this winter, inviting everyone to join the conversation and engage with Bishop Stokes and others in the exploring what we mean when we talk about discipleship.

It is a privilege to be invited to work with you all in deepening and expanding our opportunities to share in God’s mission in New Jersey, and to support one another in the work and grace we are called to share.

The Rev. Emily A. Mellott, Convener  
Discerning Our Common Call Steering Committee

DOCC Steering Committee Members:

Mr. James Clements, Trinity, Asbury Park  
The Rev. Amy Cornell, Grace-St. Paul’s, Mercerville  
Mr. Thomas Esposito, St. George’s by the River, Rumson  
Ms. Deborah Kirk, St. Stephen’s, Waretown  
The Rev. Emily Mellott, Trinity, Moorestown  
Ms. Karen Moore, Grace, Plainfield  
The Rev. Juan Monge-Santiago, All Saints’, Lakewood  
The Rev. Allen Wakabayashi, The Episcopal Church at Princeton

Liaisons:

The Rev. Valerie Balling, Standing Committee  
The Rev. Barbara Briggs, Lifelong Christian Formation  
The Rev. Canon Dr. Rob Droste, Congregational Development and Mission  
Canon Phyllis Jones, Diocesan Staff