

TASK FORCE TO STUDY DUAL CALL COUPLES

Membership

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher, <i>Chair</i>	Western Massachusetts, I	2018
The Rev. Dr. Diane E. Vie, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Southwestern Virginia, III	2018
The Rev. Canon Joseph M.C. Chambers	Missouri, V	2018
Canon Catherine Massey	North Carolina, IV	2018
Canon Karen Olson	Minnesota, VI	2018
The Rt. Rev. Brian Seage	Mississippi, IV	2018
The Rev. Kammy Young	Florida, IV	2018
The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry, <i>Ex-Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	2018
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex-Officio</i>	Ohio, V	2018

Representation at General Convention

Bishop Doug Fisher is authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report at General Convention.

Mandate

Resolution 2015-B022:

Resolved, The House of Bishops concurring, that the 78th General Convention calls for a study on the issues of deployment, equality and justice for dual call couples, including the specific issues for bishop-priest couples, for the benefit of this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That a task force be appointed by the Presiding Officers, consisting of no more than seven (7) members that such task force include dual call couples, people currently doing research on this reality and the Office of Pastoral Development; and be it further

Resolved, That this task force be supported by the Office of Pastoral Development and report its findings back to the 79th General Convention.

Summary of Work

MEETINGS

Meetings were held via teleconference, Skype or Zoom on March 17th 2016, May 12th 2016, Oct. 18th 2016, Jan. 25th 2017, March 21, 2017, and Oct. 24, 2017.

WORK COMPLETED

During our initial meeting on March 17th 2016 we agreed we would review the Doctoral Thesis entitled “Double Vows Double Blessing: A Study of Dually Ordained Couples in the Episcopal Church” written by The Rev. Dr. Diane E. Vie and submitted to the faculty of The Virginia Theological Seminary on January 6 2016. We also reviewed statistics on Clergy Couples in the Episcopal Church. The findings below are from Derik Darvis from the Church Pension Fund from October of 2013.

Married Clergy Analysis: Key Findings

Population

- 428 Episcopal priest couples [EPC]¹
 - 400 opposite gender EPC's
 - 28 same-sex EPC's

Statistics for Opposite-Gender EPC's

- Age:
 - EPC females' mean age is 57.2 years old
 - EPC males' mean age is 60.4 years old
 - On average, EPC males are 4.5 years older than EPC females
- Salary:
 - \$136,122 mean household salary for EPC's paying two assessments (N=137)
 - \$77,529 mean salary for male priest married to a female priest (N=225)
 - \$62,389 mean salary for female priest married to a male priest (N=216)
 - Controlling for gender, the difference between EPC and population salaries is not statistically significant.²
- Assessable Compensation:
 - 67% of EPC women under sixty-five (65) are paying assessments (population = 66%)
 - 74% of EPC men under sixty-five (65) are paying assessments (population = 67%)
- Credited Service:
 - The average EPC female has 12.6 years of CPG Credited Service
 - The average EPC male has 15.9 years of CPG Credited Service
- Parish Size
 - The mean ASA for EPC females is 161
 - The mean ASA for EPC males is 174
 - The male/female ASA difference is not statistically significant
- Position Type:
 - 63% of EPC females under sixty-five (65) are rectors or solo priests, and 24% are assistants (N=201)³
 - 73% of EPC males under sixty-five (65) are rectors or solo priests, and 13% are assistants (N=191)⁴

- Among EPCs where both individuals are under sixty-five (65), 20% are both employed as the rector or solo priest of their congregation (N=283)
- In summary, there are *no substantial differences* between the EPC population and the population of all priests in terms of standard indices such as income, labor force participation, and position type.

Statistics for Same-Gender EPC's

- 12 female same-gender EPC's, 16 male same-gender EPC's
- \$155,130 mean *household* salary for same-gender EPC's earning two salaries with a CPG assessment (N=9)
- The mean salary for a TEC male cleric married to another TEC male cleric is \$78,590 (N=12)
- The mean salary for a TEC female cleric married to another TEC female cleric is \$74,484 (N=14)
- There are too few same-gender EPC's to make useful comparisons against the population.

The task force is engaged extensively with The Board for Transition Ministry (where Bishop Doug Fisher also serves). In their widely circulated "An Invitation to the Church: to wonder and ponder with The Board for Transitional Ministry" the Board includes this as their second of ten (10) points:

Dual Call Couples. Episcopal Clergy include four hundred and twenty-eight (428) dual call couples (both partners are ordained). Approximately fourteen (14) percent of active priests are married to another Episcopal clergy person. (This figure does not include Episcopal clergy married to clergy in other traditions). It is reasonable to expect that this number will continue to grow. In some search processes, dual call couples have been seen as a burden. We see a need for a culture change in which dual call couples are considered a blessing.

The task force put together a spreadsheet of over eight hundred and ninety (890) names (four hundred and forty-five (445) couples) with contact information of persons who are a part of a clergy couple in The Episcopal Church.

In March of 2017, Diane Vie attended the Transition Ministry Conference at the Duncan Center in Delray Beach Florida wherein she presented topics relating to transition for dual called couples based on work from her thesis, bringing awareness to the Transition Ministers. At the same time Diane collected data from the Transition Ministers on placing dual called couples.

On July 26, 2017 a press release was published introducing a video that the task force presented titled "Dual Call Couples: Gifts and Challenges for the Church."

Task Force to Study Dual Call Couples issues video

Posted July 26, 2017

[Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs] The Task Force to Study Dual Call Couples has issued the following update on its progress including a video titled “Dual Call Couples: Gifts & Challenges for the Church.”

The Task Force to Study Dual Call Couples

The Task Force to Study Dual Call Couples, created by [Resolution 2015-B022](#) at the 78th General Convention in 2015 has released a video titled, “Dual Call Couples: Gifts & Challenges for the Church,” available [here](#). The members hope that this will be a useful tool for vestries, search committees and congregations.

The Task Force was appointed by [Episcopal Church](#) Presiding Bishop and Primate Michael B. Curry and [House of Deputies](#) President the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings. They appointed Bishop Douglas Fisher to chair the group.

“This is an important time for clergy couples in the life of the church,” reported the Rev. Dr. Diane Vie of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, vice-chair of the Task Force. “The resolution raises the issue to a system wide level of awareness and legitimizes the issue at a systematic level and promises some action moving forward.”

The Church Pension Group [CPG] estimated in 2013 that The Episcopal Church is home to approximately four hundred and twenty-eight (428) dual call couples. Approximately fourteen (14) percent of active priests are married to other Episcopal clergy.

As part of its work, the Task Force initiated a listening process. “A big part of what we do is getting the wider Church talking about dual call—the challenges and the opportunities,” Fisher said. “We have not made definitive statements—we have invited dialog.”

The Task Force reached out to couples in the dioceses of its members and crafted questions for each couple to answer. In the video, couples discuss the real-life challenges faced by priests who are married to other priests: a couple from the Diocese of East Tennessee talks about their joint discernment process and about sharing life together at Sewanee; another from the Diocese of San Diego address sharing a call as co-vicars.

The Task Force hopes these honest reflections from dual call couples will open conversation on the congregational level. The Task Force will make its full report to the 79th General Convention in 2018.

The members of the Task Force to Study Dual Call Couples and their dioceses are: Bishop Douglas Fisher, Western Massachusetts; the Rev. Canon Joseph Chambers, Missouri; Canon Catherine Massey, North Carolina; Canon Karen Olsen, Minnesota; Bishop Brian Seage, Mississippi; the Rev. Dr. Diane Vie, Southwestern Virginia; the Rev.

Kammy Young, Florida; Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, *ex-officio*; President of the House of Deputies the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, *ex-officio*.

Throughout its time together the task force has discussed the possibility of a conference for dual called couples in the near future. We had been in contact with Credo to see if there was a possibility of the task force and Credo working together on a conference. Credo is offering a conference for Married Clergy Couples September 25 – October 1, 2018. The task force has helped in getting word out about this upcoming conference. It will be the first conference held by Credo for married clergy couples. The Rev.'s Diane and Todd Vie will be attending the Credo conference.

The task force is just now getting to the priest/bishop spouse dimension of our work. We were focusing on the large number of dual call couples before this and that was our priority. We have arranged to have Peggy Treadwell interview priest/bishop spouse couples and to publish their stories in narrative form for reflection by the wider Church in May, 2018.

Budget

Although we have not spent the entire budget yet, we will after the work of Peggy Treadwell and we ask for the same amount for the new triennium.

Continuance Recommendation

Our work needs to continue because the number of dual call couples is so vast and continues to grow at a rapid pace. We have begun the work of telling the stories of dual call couples and delving into the statistics but there is more to learn and tell. And we have only just begun the work needed concerning priest/bishop couples.

Endnotes

¹ Does not include TEC clerics married to a clergy-person in another tradition.

² Specifically, the mean salary for all TEC female clerics is \$60,342, and the mean salary for TEC male clerics is \$78,121.

³ For the population, the figures are also 63% and 24%, respectively, for females.

⁴ For the population, the figures are 74% and 13%, respectively, for males.