

STANDING COMMISSION ON FORMATION AND MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

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| The Rev. Shannon Kelly, Staff | Massachusetts, I | 2024 |

Representation at General Convention

Chair Elfring-Roberts and Vice-Chair Karr-Cornejo will represent the SCFMD at General Convention.

Mandate

2022 - Canon I.1.2.n.4

4. A Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development. The Commission shall coordinate and encourage the development of all orders of ministry, encouraging and engaging all the baptized in the work of building up the church and developing best practices to ensure all churches benefit from the diversity of leadership gifts God has given us. It shall be the duty of the Commission to:

- i. Recommend policies and strategies to the General Convention for the affirmation, development, and exercise of ministry by all baptized persons (lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons).
- ii. Support Diocesan Commissions on Ministry in their support of the ministry of all the baptized, as set forth in Canon III.1 and Canon III.2.
- iii. Encourage the recognition of daily life ministries by Diocesan Commissions on Ministry, congregations, and dioceses, so that those ministries are celebrated as expressions of the ministry of all the baptized, worthy of equal respect with ordained vocations.
- iv. In collaboration with the churchwide office overseeing formation, develop and recommend to the General Convention comprehensive and coordinated policies for people across all ages and stages of life for lifelong formation as seekers and followers of Jesus.
- v. Recommend strategies to General Convention for the development and support of networks of individuals, diocesan committees and commissions, agencies and institutions engaged in recruitment, gifts of discernment, education and training for ministry, leadership development, hiring, and appointments.
- vi. Study the needs and trends of discernment and vocational opportunities for ordained leaders and lay professionals within the Church and the appropriate formation required to live into those opportunities.
- vii. Collaborate with those developing lay pathways grid and the Association of Episcopal Deacons to raise awareness of the competencies promulgated by those groups as guidelines for formation for those orders of ministry.
- viii. Recommend policies and strategies to the General Convention to ensure the fair hiring and compensation of lay and ordained employees in all ministry settings, with special attention to parity across those lines which have historically divided us, including but not limited to race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, order of ministry, disabilities, or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons.

Summary of Work

The Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development (SCFMD) convened for the first time when TEC interim bodies gathered at the Maritime Conference Center, Linthicum Heights, Maryland, November 13-17, 2022. This report documents the first year of a newly reconstituted interim body focused on formation.

As befits a report from a group of formation folks, this report does not shy away from offering insights about **how** we learned alongside reporting on what we learned and what we achieved. Pedagogical comments offered here are not incidental asides: in formation work, the **how** (and the **with whom**) matters alongside the **what**: method, community, content. We are pleased to “show our work,” offering outcomes and being transparent about how we came to them.

Two points:

One, we seek to offer a **Blue Book report that asks good questions / makes questions visible**.

Two, **the Blue Book deadline is only one point in time, and that the SC and its work continues beyond that deadline**. The bluebook timeline demands focused, time-realistic goals; our continuing work invites more expansive proposals.

The profile for the next Presiding Bishop, published as SC worked, lists catechesis/formation as one of the challenges meriting particular attention during the next PB’s term. We are accordingly aware of timely import of this report, and celebrate the anticipated prominence of formation in the life of the Episcopal Church in the coming decade.

In its report to the 80th General Convention, the Task Force on Formation and the Ministry of the Baptized (this Standing Commission’s de facto predecessor body) called the church to the work of “re-orienting from ecclesio-centric ministries to missio-centric practices for parishes and worshiping communities; shifting from the vocation of the professionally trained “few” to the vocation of the locally trained “all.” This work of *reorientation* requires us to rethink the role of leadership in the church as well as how leaders are being formed to face the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades. We believe the current structures and institutions are not adequately preparing leaders to navigate the rapidly changing religious and ecclesiastical landscapes of our contemporary society.

The Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development is committed to the work outlined in our mandate, which includes evaluating current practices related to leadership development and discerning new pathways for leadership formation and training.

SCFMD was established in 2022 through Canon I.1.2.n.4. We acknowledge several particular challenges arising from being a newly-created body, and were determined not to be daunted by them: being a standing committee re-constituted after a hiatus, including re-claiming corporate/historical knowledge of work achieved and proposals explored by predecessor teams; the scope of mandate; and the

unusually short amount of time to work and report (about 13 months to our first Blue Book report deadline). We acknowledge as well the high proportion of members new to interim-body-level governance, learning the “how” of governance alongside doing the work itself, with the support, guidance, accompaniment of members more versed in this work.

Guided by several SCFMD members versed in the skills, models, and techniques of the College for Congregational Development, the key outcome of our April 2023 meeting was to generate a suite of “FROM/TO” statements about both our **deadline-based work leading up to BB deadline and GC 81**, and our **work relevant to SCFMD’s ongoing purpose**.

These statements encapsulate the knowledge of the “what-is” (clear eyed, reality based, on the ground perception of formation workers) and a vision of a better way. We offer this section of this report both as a **diagnosis**, grounded in observation and practice, of the current landscape of formation in TEC, and a **vision** of fruitful pathways and practices. While we have placed the full list of TO/FROM statements in an appendix, several to highlight include:

- FROM youth, camp, campus, and young adult ministry being widely underappreciated in TEC as locations of formation TO wide visibility, legibility, and integration of the formation work accomplished by YACM, ESC, ECCC
- FROM Scattered resource across dioceses and church groups TO a formation hub for all
- FROM uncertainty about the availability of Spanish-language formation and theological educational resources for mainland US Episcopalians and affiliated learners TO wider promotion and so awareness of such resources.
- FROM disconnected, isolated Commissions on Ministry (COMs), Divergent ways COMs think about competencies, uncertainty about how COMs address bias, gender, and diversity TO networked, connected, and resource-sharing COMS , greater collaboration while honoring diocesan differences, awareness of need and increased work by COMs around bias, gender, and diversity
- FROM lack of info about lack of information about domestic violence, gender violence, and suicide TEC-wide (all countries) TO such statistics gathered and shared
- FROM no plan to change the ordination process medical and psychological evaluation forms TO a plan for updating those forms
- FROM no plan to addressing continuing education on mental and physical health TO a plan for this

The appendix includes other instances of us “showing our work,” including our norms for our work together, and an inventory of “things we are excited about.” We invite readers of this report, as well as future members of the SCFMD, to find in the list a reflection of the areas of passion and attention which motivated the group as it first gathered in the fall of 2022.

A visioning document that emerged from our final session in November, facilitated by Bishop Betsey Monot, transcribed by Beverly Hurley Hill, and discerned by a small group of SCFMD members whose

travel arrangements made it possible to participate in the final morning of the residency. This list records insights shared insights/observations about the qualities which TRANSFORMATIONAL FORMATION EXPERIENCES have had (in our direct experience) in common.

The group also noted this common fact about “formation that transforms”: An encounter with “something different” was often a catalyst: Notably, transformation was not necessarily linked to the content of an encounter/practice **but to the contrast itself**; for example, the experience of informal camp-style worship for someone previously only familiar with Anglo-Catholic practice, or vice versa.

Crucially, this session, which tapped the profound “wisdom in the room” which we had named as an asset in our earliest conversations as a group brought us to the awareness that, having spent a large portion of the meeting time in sub-groups, and those being relatively task-focused, we had likely shortchanged “blue sky” work and whole-group imagining time that the assembly might have afforded us. **We offer this insight to later iterations of the SCFMD: even when the scope of the work seems enormous, do not rush into it, at the cost of not appreciating and benefiting from the company and wisdom of your gathered colleagues.**

Other things we learned along the way:

Time zones matter: By February 2023, there was a growing awareness of how our ability to work together was being impacted by a membership of being dispersed across five time zones. Though acknowledging the gift of our geographic diversity, subgroups were finding it difficult to meet and collaborate in real time. We realized that while our home locations were an invisible difference while gathered onsite, it is a difference that ideally could be considered as a factor among others when small working groups are constituted. This in itself seems like a vital learning as both governance and formation work happens increasingly online: the need for awareness and intentionality about the impact of time zones on groups’ ability to work together cohesively.

Physical location matters: Onsite formation, including residential seminaries, is impacted by the laws and policies of local and state governments. This observation was rooted in discussion of geographic location of the current number and location of residential Episcopal seminaries in the US, and raised pastoral concerns related to the political/social geography of our remaining residential seminaries: Are none are now located in states that are fully LGBTQ+ supportive, including around legal rights and access to health care? Members noted that this was the first time we had heard that specific impact of the closure of residential programs explicitly named. The governmental/legislative context of the state where a residential seminary is located can’t be ignored, and we risk excluding impacted folks from the possibility of residential formation. It’s worth noting in the context of this attention to residential MDiv-granting institutions that local formation programs are well-represented on the SC, by members who are program Deans: S Stonesifer-Boylan (Stevenson School), Y Gonzalez Hernandez (Diocese of Washington Latino Deacons’ School), and K Sundberg Seaman (NH School for Ministry).

THE HUB: A point of consensus among all four working groups is the creation, support, and ongoing maintenance of a digital formation hub for the whole church. There exists—published physically and online— a tremendous abundance of formation resources, curriculums and programs, resources curated by various independent entities (seminaries, Forma, TEC partners like ECF) and by authors contracted to commercial publishers. But what practitioner hasn't googled to find material? And googled with no guarantee that what comes up is coherent or aligned with how TEC teaches. And yet even as the SCFMD strongly asserts that a formation hub will address the “what” (the content) of formation— the work is not complete without continuing to attend to the trajectory of spiritual growth and lifelong learning captured in documents like the AED's “Competencies for Deacons” and the General Convention-endorsed document “A Christian Life of Faith: Signs and Thresholds Along the Way,”

[oo_A_ChristianLifeOfFaith_Booklet_FINAL.pdf](#)

The proposed resolutions as well as in the individual reports of the SCFMD's four working groups provided below document the SCFMD's work completed and further work envisioned as of December 2023. We invite the wider Episcopal Church to engage in the life of discipleship they offer.

Meetings

- November 2022, Maritime Center.
- 2 February 2023 over zoom
- April 24-26, 2023, Maritime Center
- 15 May 2023
- 21 June 2023
- 30 August 2023

Minuted Votes

SCFMD's onsite meeting, held April 24-26, 2023, at the Maritime Conference Center, Linthicum Heights, Maryland, included the following actions **voted on by the SCFMD:**

Related to A082: Molly James called the group's attention to A082, newly referred to the SC. Because of the wording of the resolution, it's necessary that the SCFMD vote and record in our minutes that until the new medical and psychological forms envisioned by A082 are created, the existing forms may continue to be used. Brian moved, Jess seconded, unanimous vote in favor of that motion. (4/24/2023)

Related to Do87: SCFMD moves to fund a taskforce of the SCFMC and/or engage a consultant to gather accurate information about how the GOE is being used (or not) by the dioceses, to understand what

other means are being used to assess preparation for ordination, all being work preliminary to proposing changes to the nature of the GOE. J Elfring-Roberts moved; J Lytle seconded; approved unanimously. (4/25/2023)

Related to A082 – SCFMD moves to fund a taskforce of the SCFMC and/or engage consultants to review and revise the medical and psychological evaluation forms used in the ordination process. C Partridge moved; J Lytle seconded; approved unanimously. (4/25/2023)

Related to C047: SCFMD moves to fund a taskforce of the SCFMC to address compensation and/or benefits for deacons and non-stipendiary priests. J Elfring-Roberts moved, B Denton seconded, approved unanimously. (4/25/2023)

Related to D030: SCFMD moves to form a taskforce of the SCFMC to explore options for the curriculum envisioned by D030, considering needs expressed by trans/non-binary Episcopal communities. SCFMD will collaborate with this taskforce in drafting our Blue Book report and resolutions. W Herron moved; C Partridge seconded; approved unanimously (4/25/2023)

Related to A085: Because the budgeting process is already underway, D Scharf requested that the SCFMD vote to support a budget request to fund and lay the groundwork for the creation, governance, and continuing maintenance of an Episcopal Formation Hub, in anticipation of the SCFMD writing and proposing such a resolution.

Reports from Working Groups and Subcommittees

Lifelong Formation

In response to the mandate of 2022-A019, the Lifelong Formation subcommittee devised several strategies to address the availability of materials for theological education in languages other than English. The subcommittee understands theological education broadly, that is, theological education serves folks called into ordained ministry as well as the many who minister as laypersons. Therefore, the subcommittee is interested in formal programs for theological education as well as resources available outside of degree-granting programs.

The subcommittee identified the need to focus on Spanish language resources for Episcopal churches and communities in the mainland US. An audit of the website catalogs for both Forward Movement and Church Publishing was conducted, focusing on language-of-composition of materials as well as materials available in translation. This audit shows that materials are published in English, and that materials available in languages other than English are translated from an English original. Much of what is published in Spanish are resources for forming disciples (including materials for personal devotion), and as such, can prove deeply useful to ministers (lay and ordained) as they carry out their work of discipleship. Generally, there are few Spanish-language resources available from either of these publishers that are suitable for the formation of ordained and lay leaders who will serve as

teachers of the faith. As a result of this work, in the next triennium the subcommittee will collaborate with organizations publishing material for theological education to discuss language and acquisitions policies. While translations of works in English are valuable, they come from a particular cultural perspective. Texts originally written in Spanish for Spanish-speakers, or written in Spanish and translated to English, would broaden the perspectives available within theological education for all.

In addition to publishers, the subcommittee seeks to gather and disseminate information about the work done in seminaries and formation programs to provide Spanish language material to facilitate networking and resourcing across the church.

Finally, connected to the issue of language access and lifelong formation, the subcommittee was made aware of the need for the catechism in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer to be translated into a wide range of languages as a tool both for formation and evangelism. Resolution proposes to fund this endeavor.

In response to the mandate of 2022-D030, in April 2023 this subcommittee moved to form a task force to discuss the status of the D030 curriculum and the needs of our trans and non-binary Episcopal communities. Initial conversations took place, convened by members of the task force members J Lytle and C Partridge convened a series of conversations, which included Weston Morris, M. E. Eccles, Laura Jackson, Heather Barta. These conversation partners represented supportive institutions and groups, including TransEpiscopal, The Partners' Path, Province V, and Bexley Seabury, as well as people with personal experience in the topic, including trans and non-binary individuals, and family of trans and non-binary individuals. The task force affirms the need to develop resources and training despite the lack of funding associated with 2022-D030. As discussions continued as to the materials already available, the following was observed:

- A. There are already bibliographies, materials, and approaches that engage theologically and that need to be highlighted to the church. These include material curated by the Rev. Dr. Cameron Partridge, pedagogical resources on “Embracing Gender Complexity” from Dr. Julie Lytle, resources developed by and for the organization *Welcoming Every Body*, and the embodied approach taken by theologian Susan Cornwall.
- B. There are many strong resources for a “Trans 101” type of education that should be compiled as a reference resource.
- C. Formation and transformation does not stop with “Trans 101.” There is a desire and need to deepen conversations and widen the circle, however, there are particular audience with different needs. There is a desire to provide resources that speak to particular demographics, such as Trans/non-binary/gender-variant adults; Trans/non-binary/gender-variant children; parents, grandparents, siblings and other family members of trans/non-binary/gender variant kids seeking support and guidance about parenting well; cis partners of trans people; faith community leaders of all stripes - lay leaders, those preparing for ordained ministry, current clergy (deacons, priests, and bishops); and people who are not aware of any particular relation

they may have to this subject but are open and want to learn more as well as those who are closed and don't think they have a reason to think about the subject

- D. Resources need to include ways to respond to fear and hostility when trans and non-binary people are present and/or topics discussed.

The task force identified a range of possible offerings: print and video resources, course/s, symposia, targeted conversations, and the creation of affinity groups. Further discussion focused on a coordinated approach in conversation with existing collaborative initiatives in Province V. Grant funding is being pursued to support the development and implementation of courses and training for conversations and facilitation. As part of the broader work of the Standing Commission, we envision these resources being made available to the church through a digital resource hub and church leadership.

Commissions on Ministry

This subgroup sought to connect with all the COMs, initially to facilitate province-wide conversations. In practice, this proved challenging, even at the level of how to find out who chairs a diocese's COM.

The subgroup prepared a set of questions for the provincial gatherings of chairs of diocesan Commissions on Ministry that they convened:

1. What do you see in the mandate of the SCFMD that affirms your work? What do you see in the mandate that challenges it?
2. How do you measure competencies within the canonical areas? Do you use the GOE? If so, how? What other tools, practices, or processes do you use?
3. Do you have areas of strategic focus particular to your diocese/context that govern the way you do your work as a COM? (For example: young vocations)
4. How does your COM relate to your bishops? How does your COM relate to your Standing Committee? Are there particular practices you use in those relationships? (e.g. regular meetings with the bishop / bishop attending COM meetings; meetings with Standing Comm) Canon 3 section 4 "support for ordination processes... either lay or ordained" - how are COMS supporting the laity in discerning their vocations?
5. How do you talk with applicants and people in discernment about confronting and engaging bias in themselves, in their communities, and in the wider country-especially with regard to racism, sexism, heterosexism, cissexism, and classism.
6. How do you seek ongoing training for your work as a COM? Anti-bias training especially.
7. Psych evaluations - what do you look for in those who do psychological evaluations, and how do you assess potential bias in those conducting psych evaluations?

8. How are people going through the discernment process engaging theological education? Are they going to residential seminaries? Local formation contexts?
9. How do COMs support and assist those who discern/are discerned not to move into orders that they feel called to?

The longer term vision is that COMs would network with each other steadily. The COM chairs who were able to take part in the provincial gatherings convened by the SCFMD subgroup embraced that hope. The invitation to gather for discussion was an enormous plus in their books. They liked that they could hear how others navigate the process. Many remarked that it was the first time they had ever been brought together. They gathered information from each other and planned to meet again on their own.

In these provincial conversations, it became clear that the culture and dynamics of each diocese heavily influenced how they carried out formation and discernment. Smaller dioceses often partner with other dioceses to create a process to collectively carry out the work. Dioceses that cover large and/or remote geographic areas noted the accompanying challenges of bringing together an practical number of people for training, which has discouraged getting together in person for training of lay people who have a calling to licensed ministry.

In dioceses where COM members perceived that they were operating within a familiar and functioning system, there seemed to be less immediate interest in innovation.

Generally speaking, COMs reported strong relationships with others in authority about discernment/ordination process, with their diocese's Standing Committee and its Bishop.

Many noted that in practice, even as they were aware of the expectation to discern and support ministry by all the baptized, they focused primarily on the discernment process towards ordination, at the cost of supporting discernment for the laity.

Many COMs said that they needed more resources to carry out their work.

Salient responses to the subgroups' questions, with data supplied from Provinces 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8, include:

Bias: questions touched on this directly (regarding addressing bias in COMs, in discerners, and in the professionals who administer the canonically required psych evaluation) and indirectly— in the context of ordination exams, for example.

Within COMs: dioceses who are able to convene a diverse COM find that helps address bias. But none of the participating COMs reported regular attention to combating bias (including implicit bias), either in onboarding/initial training or in COM continuing education. Numerous COMs affirmed that such training would be valuable.

Within discerners: It is common to rely on CPE to surface and address bias; evidence of bias in a discerner can be a prompt for a “go slow” in the discernment/formation process. There is some frustration with the availability of programs to satisfy canonical anti-racism training. There is clear traction in anti-racism training for all as well as Becoming Beloved Community initiatives (especially Sacred Ground), but there is little presence of anti-bias training for ministers and COM. Diversity on the CoM helps.

In those conducting psych evaluations: apparent pattern of a diocese relying on one practitioner, and for a long time. Report vetted by bishop only, or bishop and designate. Psychological evaluations were largely a “black box” in the bishop’s office with a few exceptions where the CoM chair is engaged and sees the report outside of red flags from bishop to CoM.

GOE: some correlation exists between how/where a person was formed and what form their ordination exam takes. Generally speaking, dioceses with more priests preparing through a residential / MDiv/ CAS program are more likely to use the GOE; when a diocese has more preparing for ordination through local formation, the use of a diocesan exam is more likely. However, this pattern is by no means absolute or predictive.

Bias in the GOE was cited by several dioceses as a factor in choosing not to use it.

Dioceses that do use the GOE, regardless of how their ordinands are formed, generally assert: that it is used as a tool for evaluation, not as a tool to obstruct or eliminate a candidate, that it helps identify gaps in training, education, thought process; it is a tool to create remediation program to fill holes and to support the people; folks are counseled to lower stress because they won’t be dismissed from the ordination process solely on GOE results. Several dioceses noted that the exam fee is high.

There were several hopes expressed by multiple COMs: to increase Licensed Lay Ministry, to widen the culture of discernment – for example, at parish level, to support discernment for people generally. On both these things, there is deep desire but not a clear path forward. And there was a great awareness of the need to expand the invitation to discernment to folks of non-white culture/heritage.

With regard to working with candidates who were not given the "green light" to move forward in the process, many did not have a formal process to work with those folks. One Diocese did remark that they always end with "yes", and if they were to not move forward in the process, they were referred back to the parish to work with them on an appropriate vocation discussion. Too often, “We lose people who come with beautiful gifts because we do not shepherd them after that.”

SUMMARY: Group was struck by how varied the formation process looked across dioceses. Some Dioceses require formal seminary training; allowing for some hybrid education as well. Many COMs mentioned that they do local formation almost exclusively. Going in to this survey under the assumption that there was more consistency church-wide than the provincial conversations revealed.

Mental Health

This subcommittee of the Standing Commission collaborated with the Task Force for Ministry to Individuals with Mental Illness in supporting formation resources regarding mental health first aid, destigmatizing mental health problems, and providing appropriate training in the different linguistic and cultural communities of which the church is composed.

In the coming Triennium, this subcommittee intends to continue collaboration with the Task Force for Ministry to Individuals with Mental Illness as well as church staff working in this area. There is a desire to collaborate and energy to support the resolutions put forward by that task force which regard the completion and translation / cultural adaptation of curriculum, the operationalization of training clergy and postulants, the deployment (and increase via further training) of Mental Health First Aid instructors, and the establishment of a Standing Commission for Human Health and Wellness.

In addition, the subcommittee plans to pursue additional resources and connections related to suicide prevention in at-risk populations such as veterans; and to work with existing groups and materials to provide resources to address gender-based violence in the LGBT2SQIA+ community.

Leadership Development

The key discernment of Leadership Development subgroup is the intention to partner with the Society for the Increase of Ministry (SIM), which has been awarded a project grant from Trinity Church, Wall Street to fund a two-year grassroots engagement with Commissions on Ministry to lead local dioceses through a process of listening, learning, supporting, and visioning possible futures of the discernment process for ministry in The Episcopal Church. In collaboration with SIM and other church-wide groups and organizations, we plan to conduct a church-wide assessment of current discernment and formation practices, including local Schools for Ministry.

In addition to the general nature of our work described above, we have been specifically tasked with making recommendations in the following areas:

I. Development and Support of Ministry Networks

The work of leadership development across all orders of ministry requires efficient and convenient access to formation resources for lay and ordained vocations. We are proposing a resolution that supports the recommendation made to the 80th General Convention calling for the creation of a digital hub for Episcopalians to access these formation resources. This digital hub would also serve as an online forum for ongoing communication between various church-wide groups and organizations that are focused on the work of formation and leadership development. We have explored possible URLs for a website to house this digital hub and developed tentative plans for the ongoing maintenance of such a website.

II. Core Competencies for Lay and Diaconal Ministry

Our mandate calls us to collaborate with those developing the lay pathways grid and the Association of Episcopal Deacons to develop core competencies for lay and diaconal ministry. Although we have

initiated these church-wide conversations, the shortened period between conventions did not afford us sufficient time to fully explore these possibilities. We intend to devote more time to this effort in the next triennium in order to present a more fulsome report with recommendations to the 82nd General Convention in 2027.

III. Fair Hiring and Compensation Practices

Our Standing Commission was tasked with reviewing resolution 2022-Co47, which calls for the establishment of minimum compensation standards for deacons. We evaluated this resolution in light of our broader mandate to “recommend policies and strategies to ensure fair hiring and compensation.” Consequently, we are proposing a resolution calling for the creation of a task force “to conduct a comprehensive study and analysis of existing hiring practices, identify areas for improvement, and propose recommendations for implementing fair hiring policies across all levels of the Church's structure.” In addition, we are proposing a resolution specifically calling for the creation of a task force “to study the compensation and benefits for deacons and non-stipendiary priests,” as we believe this topic needs separate attention. Together, these two task forces will provide guidance and recommendations concerning future policies and strategies related to fair hiring and compensation for all those who work in the church, lay and ordained.

Proposed Resolutions emerging from this subgroup’s work are presented at the end of this document.

Raising awareness of the pathways grid titled ““A Christian Life of Faith: Signs and Thresholds Along The Way” and the work of the Association of Episcopal Deacons

The Association for Episcopal Deacons is the preeminent diaconal association of the Episcopal Church. It exists to enable the diakonia (diaconal service and action) of all the baptized. To this end, it encourages every diocese to develop programs to ordain deacons, and provides resources to recruit and select, form, deploy, supervise and support deacons. Their [website](#) makes these resources available.

AED updated their [competency recommendations in 2018](#). Their competencies are based on CANON III.6.5 (f)

The Canons of the Episcopal Church provide: Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas:

1. Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.
2. Diakonia and the diaconate.
3. Human awareness and understanding.
4. Spiritual development and discipline.
5. Practical training and experience.

Their intent in developing this document is not that these competencies and examples become rigid standards across The Episcopal Church. These competencies are to guide formation, self-assessment, discernment and evaluation of those preparing to be deacons, and ordained deacons. As a guide, the competencies and examples should be adapted to the context and specific call of the individual. It is likely that no individual will master all of the competencies as stated nor demonstrate all of the examples. They are set forth to assist formation directors, bishops, archdeacons, nominees, postulants, candidates, ordained deacons and Commissions on Ministry, among others.

We recommend that each diocese have a liaison on their commission that is focused on diaconal discernment. This person could be a deacon or understand the call/ministry of a deacon. The Liaison would connect with the Association of Episcopal Deacons (AED). They would become familiar with the AED's updated competencies and update the COM on new findings or changes to the AED's recommendations.

We recommend that the Deacon liaisons on a quarterly or monthly basis to network and share resources. The AED would be a support line for questions as well as resources will be available on the hub.

We recommend each liaison scheduling time of each Commission on Ministry to Education Using the document "A Christian Life of Faith: Signs and Thresholds Along The Way" as a guide, and the [AED Competencies](#)

We recommend that a survey be conducted as to what dioceses have a lay discernment process and collect information on how their process is done.

Exploring pathways for Church Pension vesting

Clergy receiving any amount of regularly scheduled compensation, who meet the eligibility requirements for participating in The Church Pension Fund Clergy Pension Plan (the Plan) and become vested in the Plan may be eligible for benefits as summarized below.

Outlined below are some of the benefits provided to eligible Active and Retired clergy. The example shown is based on a cleric having Total Assessable Compensation (TAC) of \$300 per year, or \$25 per month, with 10 years of earned Credited Service (CS) at the time of retirement.

If you participated in The Episcopal Church Lay Employees' Retirement Plan or the Staff Retirement Plan of The Church Pension Fund and Affiliates, your vesting service under those plans will count for vesting purposes under the Clergy Pension Plan. You must provide a written request to CPF, along with any required supporting documentation, in order to receive vesting credit.

To be eligible to receive a pension benefit from the Clergy Pension Plan upon retirement, you must become vested. You become vested when you earn 5 years of credited service or are 65 or older while an Active participant. (For example, if you find your first employment in the Church when you are age

67, you will be fully vested under the Clergy Pension Plan after your employer makes the first Assessment payment on your behalf.)

Benefits of Pension if giving minimum of \$300/year (\$25/month)

- While Active, life insurance benefit (6 x TAC): \$1,800
- When Retired, life insurance benefit (6 x HAC): \$1,800
- Annual pension benefit (2.75% x HAC x CS): \$82.50***
- Annual Christmas benefit (\$25 x CS): \$250***
- Resettlement benefit (one-time payment at the time of retirement equal to 12 times the monthly retirement benefit with a minimum of \$2,000): \$2,000

Conferences available to eligible clergy

- Invitation to CREDO and Planning for Wellness Conferences

CPG worked up some of the scenarios for what it would look like based on the \$25 stipend with various years of service.

[\\$25/month](#)

[\\$100/month](#)

Church Pension also has a detailed [Guide to Clergy Benefits](#)

We recommend that each diocese work with its chancellors to explore legal ways of compensating deacons and non-stipendiary priests regarding state law (minimum wage laws) in a way so that they are eligible for benefits. Each state has different laws. We also recommend collaborating with Church Pension Group to create video/audio materials to help with explanation.

Recommend strategies for the support of networks

Our recommendation for supporting the various networks within and connected to the Episcopal church is to create a comprehensive learning and resource platform. This centralized hub will provide a one-stop destination for Episcopalians to access a wide range of educational resources. This can include materials for lay leaders, clergy, and individuals of all ages, fostering a comprehensive and continuous learning experience.

Lay Leadership Development:

- Empowering lay leaders is crucial for the growth and vitality of any religious community. The hub can offer training modules, workshops, and materials specifically tailored for lay leaders, helping them develop the skills and knowledge needed to contribute effectively to their congregations.

Formation Resources for All Ages:

- Catering to individuals of all ages ensures that the formation hub addresses the diverse needs of the Episcopal community. Resources can be categorized for children, youth, young adults, and adults, promoting lifelong learning and spiritual growth within the context of different life stages.

Community Building:

- The hub can facilitate connections and networking among various Episcopal entities, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. This can include partnerships with dioceses, congregations, educational institutions, and other Episcopal organizations, creating a supportive network for shared resources and best practices.

Accessible and Inclusive:

- By providing online resources, the Episcopal Formation Hub can reach a broader audience, including those who may not have easy access to traditional educational opportunities. This inclusivity can enhance participation and engagement across different demographics and geographic locations.

and Flexibility:

- A digital hub allows for easy updates and adaptations to changing needs. New resources, updated materials, and emerging topics can be incorporated swiftly, ensuring that the hub remains relevant and responsive to the evolving requirements of the Episcopal community.

Measurement of Impact:

- A digital platform allows for the collection of data and analytics, enabling organizers to measure the impact of the hub. This information can be used to assess the effectiveness of various resources, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions to enhance the overall impact of the Episcopal Formation Hub.

We will recommend this be a three step process.

1. Discovery: We recommend gathering data from Episcopal Entities focused on education, formation, leadership, and ministry.
2. Analysis: Review data, identify trends, create categories, etc .
3. Reporting: hire a professional web designer to create a visually attractive and intuitive website. (www.episcopalformation.org) *using the grids (Pathways and AED) to potentially guide the hub: claiming, engaging, sustaining, cultivating

By combining these advantages, an Episcopal Formation Hub has the potential to create a dynamic and supportive environment for spiritual growth, learning, and collaboration within the Episcopal community.

Proposed Resolutions

A132: Establishing an Online Hub for Continuing Formation and Ministry Resources

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention reiterates its commitment to the establishment of an Online Hub for Continuing Formation and Ministry Resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention acknowledges the lack of funding from previous conventions, hindering the progress of critical work identified by the Task Force on Formation and Ministry of the Baptized; and be it further

Resolved, That this Online Hub will serve as a central repository of vetted resources, ensuring that leaders have access to adaptable materials for their specific contexts, fostering ongoing formation, and addressing the current void left by the absence of sustained denominational-level work; and be it further

Resolved, That the Online Hub, curated by subject-area experts, will connect leaders with proven formation processes, materials, and networks to facilitate vocational development, thereby alleviating the need for leaders to develop tools independently; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution emphasizes the urgency of providing leaders with a starting point for spiritual discernment, leadership development, and ordination preparation, recognizing the diverse situational needs within The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urges the allocation of funds to support the establishment and maintenance of the Online Hub for Continuing Formation and Ministry Resources in the upcoming triennium.

EXPLANATION

The Standing Commission on Formation, the Task for on Formation and Ministry of the Baptized, and the Task Force on Theological Networking have served as short-term solutions for ongoing denominational-level work within The Episcopal Church; and despite the passing of legislation in previous General Conventions, funding has not been allocated for the implementation of these crucial tasks, hindering progress and development; and there is a pressing need for a sustainable and accessible platform that provides vetted resources for leaders to adapt within their unique contexts, fostering ongoing formation and ministry development. An online hub curated by subject-area experts would uplift diverse voices from across The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, offering leaders a centralized starting point for their spiritual discernment, leadership development, and ordination preparation; and would network the resources currently available but often siloed in such entities and individuals as the Department of Faith Formation, Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers, Association of Episcopal Deacons, Young Adult Campus Ministers, Young Adult Service Corps, Episcopal Service Corps, FORMA, Schools for Ministry, Education for Ministry, and Seminaries.

A133: Establishing a Taskforce for the Study of Fair Hiring Policies within The Episcopal Church

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention establishes a Taskforce on Fair Hiring Policies within The Episcopal Church to conduct a comprehensive study and analysis of existing hiring practices, identify areas for improvement, and propose recommendations for implementing fair hiring policies across all levels of the Church's structure; and be it further

Resolved, That the Taskforce composition shall be inclusive and diverse, reflecting the broad spectrum of The Episcopal Church, and shall include representation from clergy, laity, and experts with experience in human resources, diversity, and inclusion. The Taskforce shall be charged with, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- Conducting a thorough review of current hiring policies within The Episcopal Church.
- Analyzing data on past hiring practices to identify trends, disparities, and areas for improvement.
- Consulting with stakeholders, including dioceses, congregations, and affiliated entities, to gather input and insights.
- Developing a set of recommendations and guidelines for fair hiring practices that align with the Church's commitment to justice, diversity, and inclusion;

And be it further

Resolved, That the Taskforce shall present its findings and recommendations at the 82nd General Convention, accompanied by a comprehensive report detailing the study's methodology, key findings, and proposed fair hiring policies; and be it further

Resolved, That the Taskforce may collaborate with relevant committees, commissions, and organizations within The Episcopal Church to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to implementing fair hiring policies; and be it further

Resolved, That a budget of \$75,000 be allocated to support the work of the Taskforce, covering expenses related to research, outreach, and the production of the final report.

EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Church is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable community that reflects the principles of justice, fairness, and respect for all individuals; and fair hiring practices are integral to upholding the values of our Church and ensuring that our leadership and staff embody the diversity and inclusivity we strive for; and The General Convention recognizes the importance of thorough and informed study to develop effective policies that promote fair hiring practices throughout The Episcopal Church. The Episcopal Church is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable

community that reflects the principles of justice, fairness, and respect for all individuals. Fair hiring practices are integral to upholding the values of our Church and ensuring that our leadership and staff embody the diversity and inclusivity we strive for. The General Convention recognizes the importance of thorough and informed study to develop effective policies that promote fair hiring practices throughout The Episcopal Church.

A134: Establishing a Task Force for the Funding and Study of Compensation and Benefits for Deacons and Non-Stipendiary Priests

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention establishes a Task Force to Study of Compensation and Benefits for Deacons and Non-Stipendiary Priests; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force composition shall be diverse, inclusive, and representative of the broader Episcopal Church, including individuals with expertise in clergy compensation, finance, and those who have direct experience as deacons or non-stipendiary priests; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force is charged with, but not limited to, the following responsibilities:

- Conducting a thorough study of current compensation and benefit structures for deacons and non-stipendiary priests.
- Examining data on compensation trends, disparities, and challenges faced by deacons and non-stipendiary priests.
- Consulting with stakeholders, including dioceses, congregations, and relevant committees, to gather insights and recommendations.
- Developing a set of recommendations and guidelines for fair compensation and benefits that align with the Church's values and commitments;

And be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall seek external funding to support the execution of the study, ensuring its independence and thoroughness; and be it further

Resolved, That a budget of \$60,000 be allocated to the Task Force to cover expenses related to research, outreach, and the production of the final report; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force shall present its findings and recommendations at the 81st General Convention, accompanied by a comprehensive report detailing the study's methodology, key findings, and proposed compensation and benefits guidelines; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force may collaborate with relevant committees, commissions, and organizations within The Episcopal Church to facilitate the implementation of recommended policies; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

EXPLANATION

Deacons and non-stipendiary priests play a vital role in the ministry and mission of The Episcopal Church, contributing significantly to the spiritual well-being of our communities. It is essential to ensure that deacons and non-stipendiary priests receive fair and equitable compensation and benefits for their dedicated service. A comprehensive study is necessary to assess the current state of compensation and benefits for deacons and non-stipendiary priests within The Episcopal Church, identify areas of improvement, and recommend strategies for implementation;

A135: Compensation for Non-stipendiary Clergy

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention requires that all active currently non-stipendiary clergy of any order under the age of 72, canonically resident in and serving in the Episcopal Church, and with a current letter of agreement with the congregation or entity they serve, be paid a minimum of \$25 per month and assessment be paid on their account to the Church Pension Fund (CPF) beginning January 1, 2025; and be it further

Resolved, That compensation may be designated as housing allowance with agreement of the clergy and vestry of the congregation served; and be it further

Resolved, That two or more congregations or entities served by the same clergy person must agree in a timely manner upon the fair allocation among them of the costs of the clergy's compensation and the related assessment to the CPF. Those congregations must also in a timely manner decide on a process for paying those amounts, which may require one congregation to be responsible for communicating with and paying the CPF; and be it further

Resolved, That compensation paid under this resolution does not replace payment on behalf of the clergy by the congregation or the diocese for the expenses of Diocesan Convention, Clergy Conference, continuing education, discretionary fund, or mileage, and other expenses as may be established in the letter of agreement.

EXPLANATION

Compensation for traditionally non-stipendiary clergy promotes equity, diversity, and inclusion for all who may feel called to ordination. Providing compensation for all our clergy is an investment in our future clergy.

The financial burden of formation and service as an unpaid clergy person (deacon or priest), is a barrier for many who need to balance costs and demands of their call with the practical needs of their lives.

Currently many non-stipendiary clergy are retired and in households where they do not need to earn a living. The demands of earning to support self and family and limited discretionary income are real barriers to answering God's call; these barriers are most felt by marginalized groups. Thus most non-stipendiary clergy now serving live with significant privilege. Lack of compensation is an unwritten barrier to Christians who are young, are without adequate employment, are without resources to assist in planning for their futures.

God shows no partiality; the call to ordination is not limited to those with means and leisure; ordination should be inclusive and representative of all parts of society—by age, economic status, ethnicity, race, gender identity.

The BCP bids that the “Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the people, from time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families (p. 445, Thanksgiving for a Child). Access to the benefits of enrollment in the Church Pension Fund assists non-stipendiary clergy to do so.

We are told that the Church Pension Fund would like to assist all clergy; it cannot do so for clergy not enrolled with assessments paid to the Fund. Potential benefits for eligible clergy include (eligibility is very broadly defined):

- Pension (depending on years of assessment paid)
- CREDO
- Access to financial planning
- Medicare supplement plan
- Disability benefits
- Mental health resources

Similar resolutions have already passed by a number of diocesan conventions. We ask the Episcopal Church to recognize that compensation for non-stipendiary clergy is a move towards equity and inclusion of marginalized groups who will be our future leaders.

A136: Translating the Catechism

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention recognizes the need for access to the catechism in the Book of Common Prayer in languages beyond English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Kreyol and directs the Task Force on Translation and Interpretation to facilitate the professional translation of An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism to Arabic, Dutch, Georgian, German, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, and Russian; and be it further

Resolved, that said translations be made available digitally; and be it further

Resolved, that the sum of \$50,000 be appropriated for the completion of these translations and their distribution.

EXPLANATION

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer has been translated from English into Spanish, French, and Haitian Kreyol. However, there are Episcopal congregations that include additional language communities who cannot access a basic statement of Episcopal belief and practice, which can serve both evangelistic and formational purposes.

The amount requested is commensurate with the amount of work required for professionally translating a text of approximately 4500 words into multiple languages and to enable digital availability.

A137: Create a Task Force for Youth Formation and World Mission

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention establish a Task Force for collaborative research, relationship-building and program development for the purpose of identifying, sharing and developing global mission opportunities for youth (ages 13-21) in The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force gather information on programs and resources currently in use across The Church, highlighting particularly the areas of intersection that exist between the formation of Christian identity and the expression of God's love through loving our neighbors near and far and especially in global and intercultural contexts, and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force may be comprised of membership including, but not limited to, from Interim Bodies, relevant Episcopal Church entities, youth (ages 13-21), and representation from domestic and non-domestic dioceses with special consideration given to inclusion of persons from non-English speaking dioceses, jurisdictions, and mission areas; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request a budget allocation of \$30,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

EXPLANATION

Acknowledging the myriad ways in which world mission and faith formation intersect with other disciplines and ministries in The Episcopal Church and beyond, and lifting up the increasing need for vocational discernment and formation opportunities for young people, the Standing Commission on World Mission and The Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development call for the creation of a Task Force to study, network and share resources regarding the formation and discernment of young people in global and intercultural contexts. The two Commissions seek to work in partnership with each other, the relevant TEC offices and stakeholders across the Church including, but not limited to, the Standing Commissions for World Mission and Formation and Ministry Development, and Office of Youth and Young Adult and Campus Ministries, the Office of Global Partnerships, the department of Faith Formation, the Young Adult Service Corps, Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers, seminaries and diocesan formation programs.

Meeting the emerging needs of youth in the context of a changing Church and world requires new ways of collaborating and imagining God's dream for our world. Currently, there are no ways for youth to access global mission travel, pilgrimage or learning opportunities unless they are able to access it privately or are resident in a diocese or parish that offers such programming. Such inequality must be resolved by sharing opportunities more broadly across the Church.

This Task Force would do the research of discovering what resources and programs are working well to highlight formation as growth experience, and global mission as an inherent expression of our Christian faith in the Episcopal tradition. Intercultural programming could be included in this body of work, as welcoming new Americans and immigrants through migration ministries is a facet of global work, conducted within our own communities. The work of the Task Force over the course of the upcoming triennium may include lifting up existing resources like the Toolkit for Pilgrimage, exploring opportunities for collaboration (even across dioceses) ensuring all young Episcopalians have access to intercultural and international programming, adapting the Guiding Principles and Global Mission Toolkit put out by SCWM for use specifically with persons aged 13-21, identifying opportunities for dioceses/parishes with global mission experience to become mentors to those interested in growth, exploring ways to incorporate/adapt anti-racism and anti-colonialism training for young people and coupling that learning with opportunities to engage that work as Episcopalians in the world, creating opportunities for vocational discernment for youth interested in international and advocacy work, making known the possibilities to work alongside our global partners within the structure of the church, and potential for collaboration with the new Global Mission Advocates Network through the Standing Commission on World Mission.

Acknowledging that world mission and migration ministries will only increase in volume and urgency as climate change redefines our human existence, and that the landscape for young peoples' formation and participation in church is changing rapidly, a Task Force for sharing, resourcing and innovating in these areas in the Church is essential.

Supplemental Materials

One: SCFMD covenant/group norms

Intentionally grounding this work together in our shared life in Christ, we will:

- *Listen to each other; we will not interrupt.*
- *Wait for each other: group discussion will be paced to allow time for silence, reflection, processing.*
- *Assume the most generous interpretation possible of our colleagues' words or actions.*
- *Acknowledge our responsibility to transparently document our work through published minutes of SCFMD meetings. And, guided by the question "Is this my story to tell?", we will honor our working space as safe/brave space for the group by not publicly disclosing details of our working deliberations or conversations.*
- *Decide by consensus whenever possible, acknowledging that this calls us to be honest about dissent during discussion, and commit to living with the group's consensus.*
- *Let our "yes" be yes and our "no" be no: having made a promise about a task or a deadline, we will keep those promises; we will respect a colleague's decision when they decline a task.*
- *Share in nurturing the group's spiritual life, through a rota for leading prayer, Bible study, or other practices.*

Two: What we are excited about for formation work

- *Remote and in-person learning opportunities and challenges*
- *Communities of learning*
- *Local formation*
- *How we form for ministry*
- *How we form young people*
- *Discernment and conclusions: what happens after a discernment process*
- *Theological education standards*
- *Attention to outcomes*
- *Accessibility (especially for younger people)*
- *Leadership development*
- *A belief that formation needs to be transformation*

- *Attention to dissemination strategy and tools*
- *Gaining a comprehensive and deep understanding of what formation is*
- *Resource accessibility - democratize for all ministers*
- *New methods/teachings of discernment for ministry : For ALL the Baptized*
- *How do we as a Standing Commission honor our short time together and how can we offer effective tools that assist people “on the ground”*
- *President of the House of Deputies Julia Ayala Harris’s themes of “Accessibility, Inclusion and Safety” as guiding principles/value lenses for our work*

Three: What makes formation transformational?

A final visioning document emerged from the concluding session in November, facilitated by Bishop Betsey Monot, transcribed by Beverly Hurley Hill, and discerned by a small group of SCFMD members whose travel arrangements made it possible to participate in the final morning of the residency. This list records insights shared insights/observations about the qualities which, in our direct experience, TRANSFORMATIONAL FORMATION EXPERIENCES have had in common:

- *Small group communities*
- *Practices - full body*
- *Embodiment - experiential*
- *Active learning*
- *Self-direction*
- *Liturgy*
- *Safe spaces*
- *On-going - slow formation - illuminated by moments*

The group also affirmed that Formation leaders are needed to facilitate/lead transformational work and that Offerings are needed to help develop practices of discernment in community for all.

The group also noted this common fact about “formation that transforms”: An encounter with “something different” was often a catalyst: Notably, transformation was not necessarily linked to the content of an encounter/practice but to the contrast itself; for example, the experience of informal camp-style worship for someone previously only familiar with Anglo-Catholic practice, or vice versa.

Four: From/To statements

In our initial work we seek to move:

- FROM relative vagueness of the mandate’s direction to consider formation for “all ages and stages” TO more specificity about who is served and who serves them
- FROM youth, camp, campus, and young adult ministry being widely underappreciated in TEC as locations of formation TO wide visibility, legibility, and integration of the formation work accomplished by YACM, ESC, ECCC
- FROM Scattered resource across dioceses and church groups TO a formation hub for all
- FROM disconnected, isolated Commissions on Ministry (COMs) TO networked, connected, and resource-sharing COMS
- FROM Diverse ways COMs think about competencies TO greater collaboration while honoring diocesan differences
- FROM uncertainty about how COMs address bias, gender, and diversity TO awareness of need and increased work by COMs around those issues
- FROM not questioning the General Ordination Exam TO questioning the GOE’s suitability to assess formation
- FROM lack of info about lack of information about domestic violence, gender violence, and suicide TEC-wide (all countries) TO such statistics gathered and shared
- FROM no plan to change the ordination process medical and psychological evaluation forms TO a plan for updating those forms
- FROM no plan to addressing continuing education on mental and physical health TO a plan for this
- FROM uncertainty about the availability of Spanish-language formation and theological educational resources for mainland US Episcopalians and affiliated learners TO wider promotion and so awareness of such resources.
- FROM frustration with an incomplete vision of our immediate work TO excitement about generating a **Blue Book report that asks good questions / makes questions visible**

As the SCFMD’s work continues, we seek to move:

- FROM a scattered approach TO a clear direction and vision for the SC
- FROM a newly formed SC TO a SC in touch with the work of its predecessor bodies and other SCs and groups doing work relevant to our mandate

- FROM a newly established team unfamiliar to each other TO a fuller inventory of gifts we bring to this work (with the clarifying point that, as a Standing Committee, this interim body will continue, with regular changes in membership)
- FROM a lack of clarity why this SC exists TO clarity about our function and purpose
- FROM a model of scarcity TO a model of abundance
- FROM a bias towards discernment for ordained ministry TO discernment for all
- FROM resting in historical and traditional understanding of “church” TO allowing room for the Holy Spirit to lead to new, innovative ideas
- FROM the existing level of support and resources for formation TO providing useful and accessible support and resources
- FROM a scattered/piecemeal approach to addressing formation topics TO clear vision and goals for long-term work.

Explanation and Content of To/From Statements

April’s gathering also saw a return to visioning work, inspired by the phrase “WE WOULD SEE JESUS” (John 12:21) with Bishop Monnot facilitating.

Our task as SCFMD is to support the people in this church who help people show Jesus, even as many of us are directly involved in formation.

Our work as standing committee can be grouped into two key types: both **deadline-based work**, as set out in the SCFMD workplan and linked to our Blue Book report, which has a December 1, 2023, due date, and **work relevant to our ongoing purpose as the SCFMD**, which we look to pursue with energy and excitement. (We refer to our document from November, “What we are excited about”)

Facilitating the group’s discussion, B Monnot introduced a College of Congregational Development planning tool, “FROM/TO” statements. The group proceeded to formulate “FROM/TO” statements about both our **deadline-based work** and our **work relevant to our ongoing purpose**. SCFMD Leadership reminded the group that the Blue Book deadline is only one point in time, and that the SC and its work continues beyond that deadline. The bluebook timeline demands focused, time-realistic goals; our continuing work invites more expansive proposals.