

“The Seven”- an exciting new initiative from AED

The Association for Episcopal Deacons is pleased to announce that *The Seven* began the last week of September with two introductory teleconference calls. The Seven is coordinated by Deacon Kyle Pedersen of the Diocese of Connecticut and with the support of Deacon Susanne Watson Epting, Executive Director of the Association for Episcopal Deacons.

This new and exciting mentored experience in diaconal ministry for young adults includes eight participants from the dioceses of Connecticut, Iowa, and Olympia. The participating women and men range in age from 18-37 and have a variety of life, educational, work, and ministry experiences. Participants include:

Andrea Banfield – Andrea is a home maker, wife and mother who is living in Edmonds, WA and is sponsored by St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Longview, WA. Andrea says that she “has a heart for the poor,” and is interested in discerning more about diaconal ministry through this project. Her mentor is Phyllis McCormick of Seattle.



Laura Bersos –



Laura just graduated from Seattle University with a teaching major and a math minor. Laura says, “Following a vocation makes one feel more whole, complete and filled with the love and spirit of God. Following a vocation is not a self-motivated decision, but more a community and God oriented decision. She’s sponsored by the Diocese of Olympia and is being mentored by Mary Shehane of Seattle.

Rachel Cosca
– Rachel has a BA in International Studies from the University of Oregon, works as a bartender/server and lives in Seattle. She tells us, “I am interested in The Seven because I care about the Episcopal Church, because I care about the Church universal, and because I want to be challenged and transformed into the person these institutions call me to be, and need me to be.” She’s sponsored by the Diocese of Olympia and mentored by Brian Wright of Lake Stevens, WA.



Michael Greve



– Michael is a freshman at Kirkwood Community College in Iowa City, IA. He writes, “I have had a love for mission and outreach to others for a very long time. I know that is one thing that a deacon does in the church and it’s something that I would like to dig deeper into as a possible vocation.” Michael is sponsored by the Diocese of Iowa and mentored by Susanne Watson Epting of Davenport, IA.

Rachel Heath
– Rachel is a 2011 graduate of Yale Divinity School currently looking for employment in New Haven, CT. She shares, “I am drawn to participation in The Seven because it will be a year of intentional discernment regarding whether I feel called to be ordained to the diaconate or whether I feel called to serve the church as an active lay member.” Rachel is sponsored by St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church and mentored by Diane Hovey.



Todd Lane



– Todd works as a medical librarian and serves on his hospital’s Ethics Committee. He has degrees in history, teaching, and library science. He writes, “We are to continue to tell the story of God’s love and outwardly demonstrate it through corporal works. God’s love is not only found in the printed word (scripture) or in Sunday sermons, rather, it is a living entity found in each of us.” Todd is sponsored by St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church in Bridgeport, CT. Jose Mestra, of Bridgeport,

serves as his mentor.

Tony Ramsey – A student at the University of Washington School of Law, and living in Lynnwood, WA, Tony writes, “I feel drawn to the diaconate because it seems to me that the deacon represents the troublemaker in the Church, continually pushing it to see and react to social and economic injustice in all its forms. As a law student, awareness of these injustices has become particularly acute.” He’s sponsored by Trinity Parish in Seattle and mentored by Judy Mullins.





– Jason is the Officer for Young Adult Leadership and Vocations at the Episcopal Church Center. As someone steeped in the work of the institutional church, Jason writes, “The Seven sounds like a well structured program for exploring the questions before me, for finding support for the projects and ministries I’m already involved in and looking to engage in more deeply, and a great opportunity to build a community of peers and mentors in ministry.” He is sponsored by St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Seattle and mentored by Stephen Crippen.

Gen Grewell, who serves as archdeacon in the Diocese of Olympia, will also join us as an extra mentor, and someone who will help support the group of five in that diocese.

Starting October 1 and running through the end of November,

participants will begin an on-line learning experience with the CALL program of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. This online component will be led by Deacon Phina Borgeson and will equip participants with the competencies they will need to identify, undertake and reflect on a ministry project of their own choosing in their own community. Participants will also be joining in monthly teleconference or video-conference (once we figure out the time zone and other technical challenges!)

As the program unfolds additional contributors and advisors will help with analyzing and innovating as we prepare for next year. Our advisory group includes:

Deacon Carol Archer, Christ Church, New Haven, Connecticut and Chaplain, SolAmor Hospice, Milford, Connecticut; Deacon Josephine Borgeson, Ministry Developer and Consultant, Diocese of Northern California; Ms. Lydia Kelsey Bucklin, Youth Missioner, Diocese of Iowa; The Ven. Catherine Cooke, Archdeacon, Diocese of Vermont; Mr. John Cumming, Esq., Diocese of California, Member of the Board of Directors, Association for Episcopal Deacons; The Rev. Valerie Bailey Fischer, Priest in the Diocese of Massachusetts and Coordinator for the Episcopal Peace Fellowship’s Urban Pilgrimage; Prof. Willis Jenkins, Ph.D., Margaret Farelly Assistant professor of Social Ethics, Yale Divinity School/Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut; The Rev. Steve Kelsey, Priest and Hospice Chaplain, Tuscon Arizona, and Ministry Developer, Episcopal Church in Navajoland; Deacon Aaron Perkins, St. George’s Episcopal Church, York Harbor, Maine, and Chaplain, Maine Correctional Center, Windham, Maine; Ms. Emily Perow, former Missioner for Youth and Young Adults, Diocese of Connecticut; The Rev. Margaret A. Thomas, Priest and Former Coordinator of the Deacon Formation Program in Maine, and of Anglican Studies at Bangor Theological Seminary.

We are very grateful to the participants, mentors, and sponsoring parishes for their commitment to and faith in this new project.

We look forward to sharing more information with you as the project unfolds and ask our prayers for God's good work in our local communities and in our world. For those planning to take part in our group next year, additional information is on our web site, including a downloadable brochure to distribute to congregations. <http://diakonoi.org>