



CALLED OUTWARD

THE DIACONAL CHARGE TO THE CHURCH

THE “UPSIDE DOWN” TREE



THE BANYAN TREE

- ▶ Seeds do not germinate beneath the soil but on top of another tree.
- ▶ Roots extend outward from the branches and reach down into the soil for nutrients.
- ▶ Size is not limited by the reach of a subterranean root system.



- ▶ Does not have a single trunk; each pop root becomes a sturdy trunk unto itself.
- ▶ Canopy and roots reach outward and expand together.



- ▶ The branches need the pop roots to gather nutrients; the pop roots need the branches in order for the tree to expand.
- ▶ Largest banyan tree is in India - canopy covers 3.5 acres; over 2,000 pop roots.

DEEP ROOTS, BROAD REACH

- ▶ Bishop has challenged each of us here in the diocese to deepen our roots in Christ.
- ▶ In so doing, we will find ourselves strengthened to reach out together into the world around us.
- ▶ Bishop wants to expand the diaconate as part of the effort to expand the reach of the church.

WHAT IS THE DIACONATE?

- ▶ The diaconate is the outward call of the church for lay and clergy alike to serve those in need.
- ▶ Like the banyan tree, the initial root is in the congregation, but the reach is outward.

WHAT DO DEACONS DO?



WHAT IS THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS?

- ▶ To focus the church on its outward call and lead us to act on the promises we made at baptism to take Christ's love and service into the world.
- ▶ To be the eyes and ears of the Bishop on the ground.
- ▶ To connect the congregation with the needs of the surrounding community.

DEACONS AS ICONS

- ▶ Deacons are ordained to be symbols
- ▶ Deacons are icons of Christ
- ▶ Deacons are not about serving the church; they are about the church serving the world.

WHERE DO DEACONS SERVE?

- ▶ Deacons serve both in the church and outside it.
- ▶ Deacons are assigned to congregations that seek to increase their involvement with community problems, to alleviate suffering, and to address injustices.

- ▶ A deacon serves under the auspices of the bishop and reports to the bishop.
- ▶ A deacon is assigned by the Bishop to serve in a particular congregation for a period of time.

ARE DEACONS AND PRIESTS THE SAME?

- ▶ Deacons are NOT “mini-priests”.
- ▶ A priest’s ministry is in the congregation, teaching and caring for the spiritual needs of the members.
- ▶ Deacons do not want to be priests.
- ▶ Deacons are clergy, ordained to a full and equal order that is different from priests (but complementary).

THE CHARACTER OF DIACONAL MINISTRY

- ▶ Diaconal ministry is servant leadership.
- ▶ The ministry of deacons is as organic as the needs of the world around them.
- ▶ It is in the ministry of the deacon that the sacred and the secular meet.

THE CHALLENGE

- ▶ The diaconate has been declining in the diocese; currently only 6 active deacons.
- ▶ Deacons don't grow on trees; they ARE trees!

THE CHARGE

- ▶ Deacons spring forth from within congregations, with deep roots in Christ and a broad reach to the world outside.
- ▶ The canopy of Christ's love is expanded through the ministry of deacons.
- ▶ Jesus went out among the people, and he calls us to do the same.

THE DEACON AS A BRIDGE

“The Deacon is often called a bridge; has one foot in the church and the other in the world. This is so that the gathered community is always mindful of, holds up in prayer, and responds to in life the pain, brokenness, and hunger of the wider world.”

Roderick B. Dugliss, Ph.D.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER . . .

- ▶ What could diaconal ministry look like here at Trinity-on-the-Hill?
- ▶ What local issues of injustice or need might a deacon help this congregation to address?
- ▶ What leadership role could a deacon play in developing or supporting a ministry?

ARE YOU A DEACON?

- ▶ There are deacons right here at Trinity-on-the-Hill, in our midst, right now!
- ▶ If you think that God may be nudging you to discern a possible call to the diaconate, speak with Fr. Chris.

▶ QUESTIONS?

▶ COMMENTS?



*“Now send us out to do the work
you have given us to do.”*

▶ *BCP page 366*