

## Community of Deacons – Annual Diocesan Report

About 1,800 years ago Rabbi Tarfon wrote these words which could be a mantra for the diaconate: “It is not your responsibility to finish the work [of perfecting the world], but you are not free to desist from it either.” That idea of doing something – anything in the world – to help bring a little more goodness and light into our world is an idea which our Community of Deacons tries to instill upon each person in our communities.

Our diocesan deacons have incredible wisdom and lived experience in the world around us. We have backgrounds in nursing, education, IT, emergency response planning, counseling, Home Economics, food pantry management, finance – and the list goes on. Many deacons bring real life experience to our ministry and the various committees which we serve. Our numerous ministries have a wide area of focus such as gardening, hunger, health advocacy, senior care, interfaith work in the community, veterans support, dismantling racism and LGBTQ+ issues - just to name a few. Our deacons bring their experience and their passions into our Church so that we can teach and inspire people to serve their neighbors, their local community, their church and the world.

Since the vast majority of our deacons are not paid for their service to the Church, we model sacrificial living. The time we spend in meetings, tending to the liturgies of the Church, providing pastoral care, serving at various occasions are a gift of our time and energy which we freely give to the Church.

This year has continued to be a challenge for the Church and definitely for the deacons. With our slow transition to safe, in person worship – we have become quite adept at hosting and attending virtual meetings, providing pastoral care via the phone and zoom – and have found creative ways to involve persons in the act of serving others. We have kept food ministries open with a minimum of social distant volunteers. We have found ways to involve the neighborhood at large in a gardening ministry. We have taught classes on liturgics at the Episcopal School for ministry while keeping everyone safe. Indeed, our deacons have found creative ways to continue ministries and serve others during this awful time of pandemic.

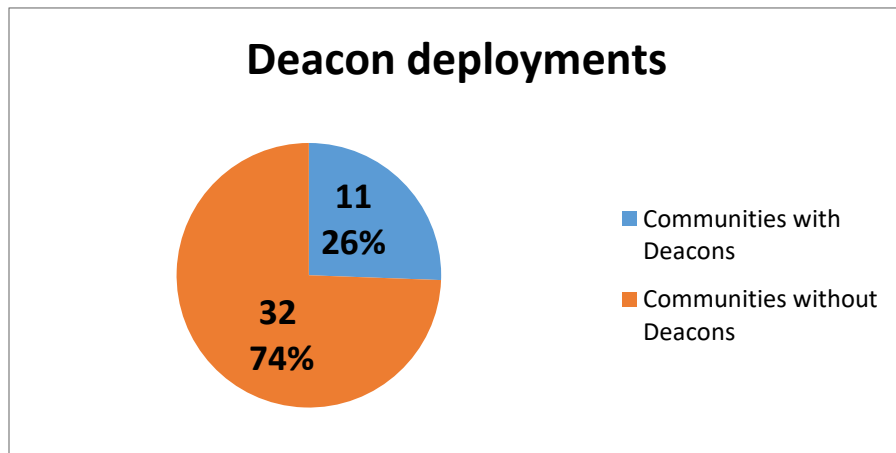
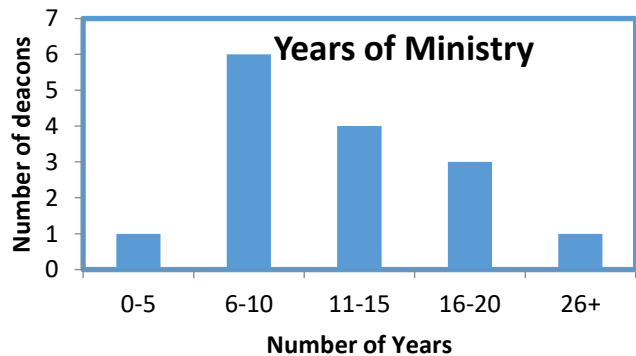
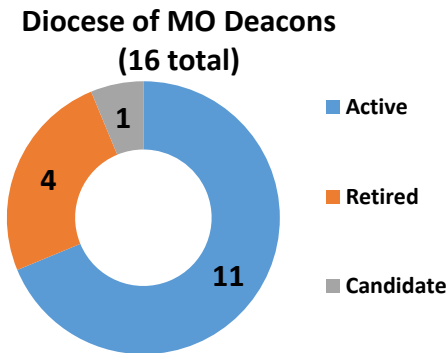
I am excited that the Community of Deacons will be welcoming new deacons very shortly. It has been wonderful getting to know our new siblings-to-be as they journey thru their discernment. To be formed as a deacon is such a blessing and I’m glad more people are beginning to ask about our order. The Diocese is working to release a more streamlined discernment process with new educational opportunities for those in discernment. In the new year, you’ll hear more about the life and work of deacons in our diocese which we hope will inspire others to consider discerning a call to the diaconate.

For myself, stepping into the role of Archdeacon for the Diocese this year has been nothing less than a joyful journey. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Deacon Rebecca Barger, former Archbishop whose heartfelt leadership of the deacons was nothing less than outstanding. It

continues to be a privilege (and a little scary) to attempt to walk in her mighty shoes. I also owe a big thanks to former Archdeacon Susan Naylor for her humor and great advice. As a Community this year, we grieved the death of Deacon Susan Bartlett who was not only a great evangelist for the deacons, but as my mentor when I was first ordained – she was a never ending source of stories, advice and feisty wisdom. We miss her presence greatly. May light perpetual shine upon her.

I also want to thank each deacon for their service this year – despite all our collective challenges. You all are truly icons of service who I continue to be privileged to lead. A big shout-out to the Diocesan staff who welcomed me earlier this year and have been a never-ending stream of assistance, knowledge, humor and awesome teamwork! And lastly, a big tip of the hat (or mitre) to our Bishop who continues to lead our deacons into more and more opportunities to serve. We all appreciate your leadership, passion and dedication to the work of our order.

Lastly, in my role I’m often asked how many deacons are active, where they serve, etc. To help answer some of these questions, here’s some summary information:



To learn more about the diaconate and the Community of Deacons, find us on the diocesan website at:  
<https://www.diocesemo.org/community-of-deacons/>