

BLOY HOUSE

The Episcopal Theological School at Los Angeles



Beginnings and Endings: Report from the Dean, 10/13/23

Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; then stop. ~ Lewis Carroll

Last month, I returned to St. Stephen's in Santa Clarita to complete the pilot program we had begun there a year ago. At the first visit, we discussed lay ministry in general – what it is and isn't, the part it plays in shared ministry with ordained leaders, and why we need to value it more. During the year after that first visit, lay participants were able to enroll in our lay formation courses offerings; their valuable feedback helped us shape the lay formation program at Bloy House.

On the return visit, we focused more practically on how to start a ministry, avoid burnout, and end a ministry. It turns out that how we start a ministry can actually help prevent burnout and set up a gracious end to a ministry that has served the church well. My friend and partner in lay ministry, DJ Gomer, who has started many ministries herself, was there to help the discussion and to network with other lay ministers – an important activity Bloy House hopes to continue providing opportunities for in the future.

We presented a task list for starting a ministry and a selection of suggested new ministries. The participants were asked to break into small groups, choose a new ministry idea, work through the task list, and imagine how that ministry might take shape at St. Stephens. Even though it was only an exercise, it was inspiring to see

these lay ministers envision bringing an Anti-Bullying Forum or a Wilderness Clean Up activity to their community. It showed that given resources and guidance, lay people are not only willing but excited to dream big about their church.



Photo Caption: DJ Gomer (facing), discusses starting a Wilderness Clean Up ministry at St. Stephen's with the Rev. Christopher Montella and St. Stephen's participants.

Our discussion about burnout and ending a ministry was no less engaging. DJ and I shared our experiences of ending a ministry, something that often isn't talked about, and can result in shame for the leader of that ministry. Instead, we proposed a "Marie Kondo" approach, where, at the end, the ministry and its leaders are celebrated for their contributions to the community and sent off with gracious thanks. Perhaps ending ministries in this way might make lay leaders more interested in trying new things, and less prone to burnout, which can come with feeling an overwhelming sense of responsibility for the success of a ministry.

One of the great pleasures for me in developing our new lay formation programs is being able to meet with lay ministers in this way, sharing ideas and real talk about our work. It was the same in our recent Zoom Bloy House class on Leading Adult Formation, where I led a group of thoughtful and dedicated Adult Formation leaders in discussing new ideas and techniques for adult education. I learned from them and drew inspiration from their ministries and experiences.

These encounters give me so much hope about a diocesan future that will depend ever more deeply on the contributions of lay people in collaborative ministry in their congregations and the wider community. As Bloy House begins this program year's expansion of lay formation offerings (more about that below), I look forward to meeting and sharing ideas with more gifted and enthusiastic lay ministers throughout the diocese.



Begins at Bloy House

Bloy House has worked closely with the diocesan Commission on Ministry to design a new program for licensing lay ministries in the diocese. Required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, each diocese can define the requirements for each lay license and organize the process for becoming licensed. The diocese will not only license those ministries outlined in the Canon (Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Preacher, Evangelist, Catechist, Worship Leader, and Pastoral Leader), but two additional lay chaplaincy ministries: Parish Chaplain and Diocesan Chaplain. Bloy House has now designed a curriculum for meeting the training requirements for licensing and will schedule these courses throughout the next few years. This year, we are focusing on the courses required for Eucharistic Visitor, Preacher, Worship Leader, and Pastoral Leader. [Click here](#) for more details.

The Instituto de Liderazgo provides instruction in Spanish to meet the diocesan licensing requirements. [Click here](#) for more information on Spanish classes.



Bloy House Alumni Gather Virtually

Bloy House began its 2023-24 program year on September 6th by gathering alumni and faculty for a virtual gathering. This Zoom meeting was the first time the whole community has met this way, and it was a wonderful occasion to renew acquaintances and exchange ideas about how best Bloy House can serve its graduates and their congregations.

Bishop John Harvey Taylor presided, and the meeting combined institutional updates from Dean Linda Allport and President Gary

Hall and personal reflections from faculty members and graduates. Most of the time was given to hearing news of the lives and ministries of our alumni and news about what our esteemed faculty is up to.

The Bloy House Alumni Association is in a process of reorganization and will soon announce future in-person and virtual gatherings. We will have a booth at Convention in Riverside and look forward to visiting with friends and graduates in the exhibit hall.

If you would be interested in serving on the Alumni Association steering committee, please contact Rick Felton at rfelton@bloyhouse.org.

Fall 2023 Lay Licensing Training and Formation Classes

Episcopal Identity

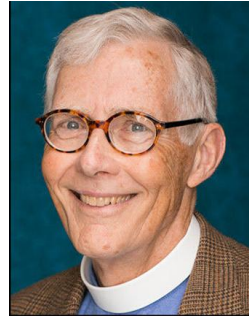
Wednesday Evenings, Oct. 25, Nov 1, 8, and 15

7:00-8:30 pm

Via Zoom

\$25

[Click here](#) to register.



How would you describe the modern Episcopal Church - its theology, its worship and community, its history, its organization, and what you love about it - to a friend who has never experienced it? A deeper dive than a confirmation class, even cradle Episcopalians will learn something new about our church. Facilitated by Gary Hall, President of Bloy House, and Linda Allport, Dean.

This class is required for all licensed lay ministries, except Eucharistic Minister and Eucharistic Visitor, where it is recommended. [Click here](#) for more information.

Anti-Racism

Tuesday Evenings Nov. 28, Dec. 5, 12, and 19

7:00-8:30 pm

Via Zoom

\$25

[Click here](#) to register.



In accordance with a resolution of the 2000 General Convention that “the lay and ordained leadership of the Episcopal Church, including all ordained persons, professional staff, and those elected or appointed to positions of leadership on committees, commissions, agencies, and boards be required to take anti-racism training and receive certification of such training”; the diocese is requiring every lay minister complete a training in understanding systems of oppression and how they play out in the Episcopal Church and society in general. Facilitated by Suzanne Edwards Action, M.A. (Pastoral Ministry), founder of My Work To Do.

This class is required for all licensed lay ministries. [Click here](#) for more information.

January 2024 Lay Licensing Training and Formation Class

Introduction to the Bible for Lay Licensing

Tuesday evenings, Jan 9, 16, 23, and 30

7:00-8:30 pm

Via Zoom

\$25

[Click here](#) to register.



While this course has been designed for the new diocesan lay licensing program, the

topic is of general formation interest as well. How did we get the Bible we have today, and how do we best read and interpret it? We will cover the composition and construction of our Hebrew and Christian scriptures and pay close attention to the diverse voices and major themes that we encounter. These discussions will develop tools for interpretation and study of our sacred scripture. Facilitated by the Rev Jerry Sather, St. John Chrysostom, Rancho Santa Margarita, and Linda Allport, Dean, Bloy House.

This course is required for licensing of Lay Preachers, Evangelists, and Pastoral Leaders, and recommended for Worship Leaders and Catechists. [Click here](#) for more information.



New Book by Theology and Ethics Professor Michael McGrath

From the publisher:

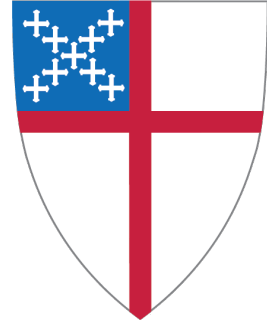
The goods that we pursue in our lives are for us, first and foremost, goods that are particular and personal, and thus goods that are immediate to our attention. Not readily apparent to us are goods necessary for the flourishing of our lives but that can be attained by us only in consort with others and thus realized only through collective action. Such goods are common goods. The wider the good, the more extensive must be the human cooperation to realize the good. A stable, orderly society and a habitable planetary environment are common goods that can be realized

only in and through the cooperation of all for the benefit of all. That all contribute to the shared good of the whole is a matter of justice--social justice. Acting for the Common Good undertakes the study of social justice in light of the common good--this from the viewpoint of Catholic social teaching, which draws upon the tradition of the common good that is articulated classically in the philosophy of Aristotle and the theology of Thomas Aquinas and in the modern-day social thought and authoritative teachings of the Catholic Church.

[Click here](#) for more information.

As we transition to being a wide-ranging diocesan educational institution, where affordable lay formation is a focus, we will depend increasingly on donations from supporters like you. Please join us in this important work!

**Donate
Now!**



bloyhouse.org

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