

# TASK FORCE ON CLERGY FORMATION & CONTINUING EDUCATION

## Membership

The Very Rev. M.E. Eccles, <i>Chair</i>	Chicago, V	2021
The Rt. Rev. Larry Benfield, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Arkansas, VII	2021
Dr. Scott Bader-Saye	Texas, VII	2021
The Rt. Rev. Diane M. Jardine Bruce	Los Angeles, VIII	2021
Dr. Christopher Corbin	South Dakota, VI	2021
The Rev. Canon Catherine Dempsey-Sims	Western New York, II	2021
Dr. Deirdre Good	Maine, I	2021
The Rev. Dr. Robin Hollis	Arizona, VIII	2021
The Rev. Canon Dr. Lang Lowrey	Atlanta, IV	2021
Dr. Gregory Robbins	Colorado, VI	2021
Mr. Marcellus Smith	Alabama, IV	2021
The Most Rev. Michael Curry, <i>Ex Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Ohio, V	

## Changes in Membership

The Rt. Rev. Victor A. Scantlebury died 12/04/2020.

## Mandate

### 2018-Do25 Amend Canons III.6.5.g, III.7.5, III.8.5.b, III.9.1, III.10.1.c, III.12.1, III.12.2

*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 79th General Convention direct the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church to appoint a Task Force on Clergy Formation and Continuing Education, including members experienced in theological formation and education, and consisting of a minimum of two (2) bishops, three (3) presbyters or deacons, to include both orders, and five (5) lay persons, who represent the diversity of the Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Task Force be directed to study the required subjects for the preparation for ordination, including those listed in Canons III.6.5.g and III.8.5.h; and the continuing education of members of the clergy, including Canons III.7.5 and III.9.1; and to study Resolution D025 as originally presented to the 79th General Convention; and to report to the 80th General Convention any proposals for alterations to or consolidation of canons concerning preparation for ordination and continuing education; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$10,000 for the implementation of this resolution

## Summary of Work

The Task Force on Clergy Formation and Continuing Education met four (4) times via Zoom conference on 13 May 2019, 10 November 2020, 1 December 2020, and 17 December 2020.

Once familiarized with the Mandate, the group discovered amongst themselves that the requirements for education and training were widely different based on dioceses. Wanting to get a clear understanding of how the canons concerning preparation for ordination and continuing education are being followed and tracked or recorded, it was decided to create a survey to be sent all Diocesan Bishops.

A sub-committee (Dr. Christopher Corbin, the Very Rev. M.E. Eccles, the Rev. Dr. Deacon Robin Hollis, and Dr. Gregory Robbins) worked on a series of questions to be included in an on-line survey (see Appendix 1) created by The General Convention Office.

A portion of the cover letter accompanying the survey read as follows:

The canons currently require training regarding the prevention of sexual misconduct, civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (particularly Title IV) and the Church's teaching on racism. Our task force is further directed to consider adding "research-based understandings of gender identity an expression and human sexuality" to the required training.

From conversation among the team, it is clear that each diocese has its own way of living into those canons. For us to successfully do our work, we need to know what those ways are...

With the assistance of Mr. Brian Murry, the survey went live on 17 October 2019, and was closed on 15 November 2019.

Forty-six (46) dioceses responded to the survey which (assuming 111 dioceses received it) is a 41.4% response. The Rev. Dr. Deacon Robin Hollis consolidated the information gleaned from the survey.

In subsequent meetings, the Rev. Dr. Deacon Robin Hollis reviewed the focus of the survey, which included, but was not limited to: Gender Equity/Identity/Fluidity, the lack of training standards across the Church and compliance requirements. He also shared the results of the survey. 2018-D025 was also discussed and it was decided to form two sub-committees; one to do a greater synthesis of the survey (the Rev. Canon Catherine Dempsey-Sims; the Rev. Dr. Deacon Robin Hollis - lead) and a deep dive into 2018-D025 (Dr. Scott Bader-Saye - lead; Mr. Marcellus Smith).

The work of both sub-committees was used to create the following report.

### **CURRENT WORDING OF CANON III.8.5 IN MANDATE 2018-D025**

**g.** Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding

1. prevention of sexual misconduct.
2. civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
3. the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
4. the Church's teaching on racism.

### **D025 proposes inclusion of the following under III.8.5.h (and parallel lists for deacons, bishops, and continuing education**

“5. research-based understandings of gender identity and expression and human sexuality.”REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This committee, based on the mandate “to report to the 80th General Convention any proposals for alterations to or consolidation of canons concerning preparation for ordination and continuing education,” proposes the following alterations.

### **III.6.5.g**

**g.** Preparation for ordination shall include ~~training regarding~~ *the development of competencies for*

1. ~~prevention of sexual misconduct.~~ *forming communities of racial reconciliation and justice, drawing on the Episcopal Church's teaching on racism.*
2. ~~civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.~~ *forming communities that understand and welcome diverse experiences of gender and sexuality, manifest safe and appropriate boundaries, and implement strategies to prevent sexual misconduct.*
3. the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
4. ~~the Church's teaching on racism.~~

**III.7.5**

The Bishop and Commission shall require and provide for the continuing education of Deacons and keep a record of such education *in the Deacon's personnel file. Continuing education shall consist of a minimum of 30 hours of pedagogically engaged courses of study to support ministry and to enhance the continued personal and vocational growth of the clergy.*

**III.8.5.h**

**h.** Preparation for ordination shall include ~~training regarding~~ *demonstrated knowledge o*

~~1. prevention of sexual misconduct~~

~~2.~~ 1. civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.

~~3.~~ 2. the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.

~~4. the Church's teaching on racism.~~

*i. Preparation for ordination shall include the development of competencies for*

*1. forming communities of racial reconciliation and justice, drawing on the Episcopal Church's teaching on racism.*

*2. forming communities that understand and welcome diverse experiences of gender and sexuality, manifest safe and appropriate boundaries, and implement strategies to prevent sexual misconduct.*

**III.9.1**

The Bishop and Commission shall require and provide for the continuing education of Priests and keep a record of such education *in the Priest's personnel file. Continuing education shall consist of a minimum of 30 hours of pedagogically engaged courses of study to support ministry and to enhance the continued personal and vocational growth of the clergy.*

**III.10.1.c**

**c.** demonstrated knowledge of and competencies for

~~1. prevention of sexual misconduct~~

~~2.~~ 1. civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.

~~3.~~ 2. the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.

~~4. the Church's teaching on racism.~~

3. *forming communities of racial reconciliation and justice, drawing on the Episcopal Church's teaching on racism.*

4. *forming communities that understand and welcome diverse experiences of gender and sexuality, manifest safe and appropriate boundaries, and implement strategies to prevent sexual misconduct.*

### III.12.1

No change recommended.

### III.12.2

The House of Bishops shall require and provide for the continuing education of Bishops and shall keep a record of such education *in the Bishop's personnel file. Continuing education shall consist of a minimum of 30 hours of pedagogically engaged courses of study to support ministry and to enhance the continued personal and vocational growth of the clergy.*

## Explanation

**1. Changing “training” to “demonstrated knowledge”:** Requiring attendance at a training course does not in itself assure that the desired knowledge has been gained. Some trainings are high quality, and some are not. Shifting the language from training to “demonstrated knowledge” names more clearly what is required and makes clear that the knowledge needs to be demonstrated through some means of assessment.

**2. Adding III.8.5.i:** Some parts of III.8.5.h are primarily knowledge focused (civil requirements, Constitution and Canons) while others imply competency (preventing sexual misconduct and addressing racism). Separating these allows for this distinction to be clear. Adding III.8.5.i gives a place to name and describe competencies needed to form communities that can embody the gospel in relation to issues of race, racism, sex, and gender.

**3. Vision of the good:** instead of listing “prevention of sexual misconduct” and “teaching on racism,” the canons could more clearly point toward the goal of what kind of communities we wish to create. This orients the formation toward achieving a good rather than just avoiding an evil.

**4. Inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity:** expanding the “prevention of sexual misconduct” canon to include “understand and welcome diverse experiences of gender and sexuality” makes clear the importance of church leaders understanding the basic concepts and vocabulary related to sexual and gender diversity, as well as the importance of providing places for inclusion and support for those who may have experienced rejection, shaming, and violence.

**5. Continuing Education minimum standard:** Many professional organizations and certifications (i.e. driver's licenses) require a renewal process. This is to ensure that those certified are aware of and responsive to changes in operating standards, societal changes, and legislative changes. This applies to clergy in order to continue honing skill sets – especially skillsets to adapt to constantly changing societal, spiritual, demographic, and environmental issues/concerns. This can be accomplished by mandating continuing education (CE). The CE points to the competencies of each order.

The global pandemic and racial unrest in 2020 illustrated an unexpected need to begin or increase the use of technology to integrate worship and congregational communication. Many clergy did not possess the knowledge or skills to pivot to meet the needs of their congregations. This situation supports the requirement for a minimum and consistent standard for continuing education.

The ability for clergy to move between calls and dioceses has become more frequent. A minimum and consistent standard for all required training and continuing education means assures a level of knowledge that can be maintained, and common agendas shared. Local requirements can be added to reflect cultural and local understanding as needed.

Analysis of the survey feedback indicated a need to identify a minimum amount of CE for all clergy. Additionally, a better definition and common language as to what constitutes minimum form of CE is necessary. For example, CE must be interactive (i.e., not just reading a book or watching video) focusing on the ability to encourage self-directed learning with accountability through incentives and/or consequence recommendations. Possible incentives might be:

- Bonus and/or honorarium (in part because Deacons are non-stipendiary)
- Scholarship money for further studies or courses
- Gift certificate
- Honor roll of recognition at a diocesan convention

The survey also exposed there are no substantive consequences or minimum standards for not completing the required learning. Potential consequences could be:

- Reprimand in file
- Ineligibility to stand for Diocesan office
- Limitation placed on opportunities to move assignments or cures

**6. Need for a minimum consistent standard for a “Human Gender and Sexuality” curriculum:** to support minimum requirements, common language and definitions are needed to ensure TEC is addressing the same issues in all dioceses. The ability to use TEC’s economies of scale, expertise and programming to create a curriculum which teaches an understanding of human gender and sexuality that goes beyond simply watching a video and printing a certificate is paramount. With this focused effort, a minimum level of demonstrated knowledge and understanding using common language will allow clergy to share, teach, and preach more effectively. Within TEC, the use of “Sacred Ground” and listening circles are proving effective in deepening and broadening understanding issues of racial injustice and plausible solutions. The use of a similar approach regarding human gender and sexuality (adapted for local use) could be expected to have a similar result.

**7. Recommendation for consistent/standard online tracking of training:** To ensure compliance and assess the efficacy of required continuing education in today’s fast-paced and cross-cultural environment, a technological resource is needed. Again, using TEC’s economies of scale, creation of a TEC-level recording/tracking system of competency-based education and a learning record (CLR)\* for all clergy is critically important.

\* Footnote:[ Learning Record] Open Standard Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR). It is an open-source, secular system, reportedly superior to Moodle. CLR defined: The Comprehensive Learner Record (CLR) is the new generation of secure and verifiable learning and employment records supporting all nature of academic and workplace recognition and achievements including courses, competencies and skills and employer-based achievements and milestones.

A potential solution other task forces are currently reviewing include competency-based theological education. One example is Pathways for Baptismal Living, a comprehensive process for discerning and answering the Call. Led in part by Bexley-Seabury Seminary Federation, we understand this suggestion has support from Association for Theological Schools ( i.e., new standards and regardless of where the formation comes - seminary, local, 3rd party like IONA, CALL, etc.).