

**Final Report of the NSOM Task Group to Diocesan Council  
June 15,2013**

**NSOM Discernment Process Task Force Membership**

The Rev'd. Ron Barkhouse, NSOM Priest, Parish of St. Martin's, Western Shore  
 The Rev'd. Cathy Lee Cunningham, Part-Time Rector, Church of the Good Shepherd, Beaver Bank and Principal, Spirit of Reciprocity Consulting  
 Edy Guy-Francois, Warden, St. Andrew's, Locks Rd., Dartmouth  
 Max Mouton, Warden, St, Paul's, Halifax  
 Archdeacon Marilyn Newport, Acting Coordinator of Anglican Health Care

This report is in addition to the October 20, 2012 report to Diocesan Council on Discernment and Formation.

**Core Values continue to be:**

1. We ground ourselves and the process in the knowledge that all of our ministry callings are from God.
2. That any process we form and recommend must, at its very core, be spiritual and prayerful.

**Leadership:**

The October report recommended A Vocations Coordinator and a Vocations Team be put in place to provide the leadership of this program. The distribution of the work of the coordinator and the supporting team can be fluid and distributed according to the skills required at various times throughout the process.

**JOB DESCRIPTION NSOM VOCATIONS COORDINATOR**

**Job Status:** Appointed by the Bishop for a term of three years, renewable.

**Accountable to:** The Bishops

**Job Purpose:** To coordinate the NSOM Discernment and Formation Program and to walk alongside individuals, their parish and rector from the outset of their journey and to its conclusion.

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

Develop a Vocations Team to work with the coordinator to provide the parish with the resources and pathways necessary for the process of discernment and formation at each phase of the journey. Those who make up the Vocations Team will have different specialized knowledge, skills and professional experience in conflict transformation; congregational development; family systems dynamics; facilitation of dialogue; team ministry; healthy organizational life; human resources, etc. Team members will be provided with the additional resources that they need to assist and strengthen the individuals and parishes involved in the process.

When the Bishop refers an individual and a parish discerning a call to NSOM the coordinator will schedule and ensure all aspects of the program outlined in the policy will take place.

Ensures psychological testing & background checks for candidates at the appropriate time of the process.

Will develop a discernment and formation programs and work with the individual to discern the nature of the call; and how it will be lived out, regardless of the call being to ordained or lay ministry. The frequency of meetings with each person may vary.

Develop and train Discernment Committees within the parishes in the program.

Ensure the development and maintenance of resource material to support the discernment process at all of its various stages.

Ensure workshops are developed and made available to any parish that needs further clarification of the renewed discernment process.

Regularly meet with Bishop to offer feedback / evaluation on candidates' engagement in the Discernment Process and in their Formation Process.

### **Skills**

- Self-motivated and able to work as part of a team;
- Must possess excellent time management and organizational skills;
- Ability to pay attention to detail so that accuracy is ensured;
- Ability to maintain confidentiality;
- Good working knowledge of the Diocese;
- Good public relations skills when working with clergy, parishioners, and general public to ensure a professional and caring atmosphere;

- a) Demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the difference between identity and role and its relationship to the discernment and formation for ordained ministry.
- b) Demonstrated understanding of interpersonal dynamics
- c) Demonstrated pastoral skills

### **Education & Experience**

A Priest in the Diocese of NS & PEI with:

- a) Education specific to the areas of Discernment and Formation.
- b) A minimum of five years experience in parish ministry.
- c) Education and Experience in the supervision of students.
- d) A knowledge of national and diocesan Church policies regarding the practise of training for ordained leadership in the Church

### **DEPLOYMENT**

We ground ourselves and the process in the knowledge that all of our ministry callings are from God.

With this foundation it follows that vocational discernment, spiritual formation, education and deployment are all tied to our call to ministry. The vocational discernment, identity and spiritual formation and the education are the foundation of a covenant in ministry. This is to be drawn up between the Rector, the NSOM, and the Supporting Parish(s) in conjunction with the Archdeacon before deployment commences. All parties to the covenant are to be well informed of both the responsibilities and the limitations of this ministry.

When this program began deployment was to be within the parish that affirmed the candidate.

As it has been lived out, non stipendiary priests have been deployed to other parishes within the region and to roles that go beyond a supplementary and supportive role. For example: paid services to other parishes.

We recognize a person's call from God may shift and change over time as needs change and the individual grows into a deeper relationship with God, self and other. However, at the heart of this call is the discernment, formation and education that is developed for a non stipendiary supplementary and supportive ministry.

Any shift in placement must begin with a new discernment, formation, education program tied to the new sense of call, which may reaffirm the current covenant or result in a new covenant.

With the appropriate formation and training deployment may change from within the parish to a larger regional ministry or even to another institution. However, if going to another institution it may come with its own discernment, formation and educational requirements that will have to be met before deployment.

It has been practice for some NSOM's to provide occasional help with sacramental ministry in nearby parishes. **Any deployment that falls outside of the covenant between the NSOM, their rector and parish requires the approval of their Archdeacon.** The Archdeacon will in turn advise the Bishop and when deemed necessary consult with the Bishop.

**All requests for assistance from a NSOM in another parish must be made to the Rector of that parish. Should a NSOM be invited directly they are to refer the caller to the rector with whom they have a covenant.**

In all cases the NSOM must be free to discern whether such a ministry relationship is faithful to his or her call, work, family and leisure. The primary connection and prayerful support of all NSOM's remains with his or her home parish and rector.

### **Fees**

It is recognized that the need for NSOM varies throughout the diocese. In some regions the need extends throughout the region and in others it is centered within larger program parishes. It is not necessary for the supporting parish to request compensation for the services rendered by their NSOM, but it may very well be appropriate at times to do so.

### **Occasional Help:**

Occasional help is understood to be no more than three times a year. No change to a covenant would need to take place if this is truly an exception to the norm. When the rector and the NSOM and the Archdeacon agree the NSOM is to be paid for travel based on the travel rate outlined in the Occasional Services Policy.

### **Recurring Help:**

Requests for assistance from a NSOM on a recurring basis, such as ongoing coverage for vacation will require further discernment, with the parish. In this case the Archdeacon is to be brought into the process and a revision to the covenant will be required. When the rector, the NSOM and the parish agree to

this arrangement any fee for the occasional service is to be paid to the supporting parish to assist in covering the costs of education and ongoing formation for their NSOM. Mileage will be paid to the NSOM in these situations.

### **Cooperating Congregations:**

Regular, scheduled sharing of the sacramental ministry of willing rectors, the NSOM and the parishes is another scenario. In this case the Archdeacon will work with all parties involved as well as obtaining approval from the Bishop. A covenant will be developed between each of the parishes involved, the rectors, and the NSOM. In this arrangement any fee for the occasional service is to be paid to the supporting parish to assist in covering the costs of education and ongoing formation for their NSOM and mileage will be paid to the NSOM.

An example here would be the Parishes of Musquodoboit and Ship Harbour.

## **EDUCATION**

We recommend the Graduate Certificate Program in Theological Studies as offered at The Atlantic School of Theology for the education component of the NSOM program. While we are not recommending the Education for Ministry (EFM) Program, we do affirm the EFM curriculum as a valuable program for the training for lay ministry in the diocese.

Obtaining the Graduate Certificate Program in Theological Studies (GCTS) will require the completion of at least ten academic courses, distributed as follows:

### **Seven required:**

- Two foundation courses in biblical studies
- One foundation course in theological studies
- Anglican Theology: Roots and Branches
- Anglican Sacraments: Divine Nexus
- Preaching

## Worship Foundation

**Three elective** courses designed around the learning needs of each postulant.

**Cost:** At the present time each credit course is \$552.00. We are recommending this be shared between the candidate parish(s) and/or region that will benefit from this ministry.

### **Benefits of this program:**

Consistency of training

The elective components of the program could be used to reflect the various forms of NSOM.

Should the postulant decide to take the Master of Divinity Degree Program, all credits can be transferred into the degree.

The courses can be taken in three formats, a regular fall (September – December) or winter (January – April) terms, the intensive two week courses offered in the summer term or **on-line, in conjunction with a summer program.**

### **Admission Requirements:**

The academic requirement for admission to the GCTS is a Bachelor's degree (or its educational equivalent) from an accredited university, with a minimum of a "B" average (or grade point average equivalent.)

#### Studying at AST without a Bachelor's Degree:

Students who seek admission to the GCTS may apply for admission on the basis of having a Bachelor's Equivalency.

Applicants may present a case for acceptance based upon life experience alone, although some university course work is preferable.

Those students who seek to be admitted to the school on the basis of a Bachelor's Equivalency or life experience are invited to contact the Registrar at AST, 425-3691. The Registrar will then refer the applicant on to AST's Prior Learning Assessment Advisor.

They are also expected to submit a substantial sample of academic writing as part of their application documents.

The fee for the processing of the Prior Learning Portfolio is \$400.00. We recommend this be shared between the candidate, parish(s) and/or region that will benefit from this ministry.

### Who is using this Program?

The Archdiocese of Halifax is using the GCTS in the formation of their deacons. The Maronite Church (in communion with the Roman Catholic Church) is exploring the GCTS as an option for the preparation of their deacons. Both churches have requested an academically rigorous program. Both churches augment the course work with their own formational requirements.

In the case of the Maronites it has been suggested that they do their own course on “worship within their tradition.” This will be granted course status by AST and count as one of the ten credits.

### **On Going Continued Education**

We recommend:

On Going Continued Education be offered in a one day format three or four times a year.

Each day be designed to deepen, enhance and enrich areas of ministry focus being exercised in the diocese.

Every NSOM be required to attend two of the three or three of the four whichever format is decided upon.

Failure to do so would result in a loss of license.

The Discernment and Vocation coordinator provide on going discernment and identity formation on both an individual and/or small group format once or twice a year.

### **Competencies:**

We would recommend the following documents and issues be held up as the program goes forward and adjustments made to reflect the development that takes place within the church.

- 1) *The d'Youville Report – National Gathering on Theological Education*, The Anglican Church of Canada , January, 2010
- 2) The reports of Theological Education for the Anglican Communion (TEAC),
- 3) Reports of The Ontario Provincial Commission on Theological Education (OPCOTE)

**The NSOM Task Group Respectfully present this Our Final Report to Diocesan Council, Saturday, June 15, 2013.**