

CANON FOR EVANGELISM & FAITH FORMATION

With gratitude I submit this report to my sisters and brothers in Christ in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. You who serve in the diocese in a diversity of roles, lay and ordained, strive for faithful, sustainable, and creative means of serving Jesus Christ. I am grateful to serve alongside you.

A principle aspect of my ministry is providing concrete support for households as the primary source of faith leadership. I continue to develop relationships with congregations throughout the diocese to introduce at-home faith formation, which encourages households to become the substantive location of faith practice and conversation. While every parish naturally encourages members to attend worship regularly, what about the days in between?

My role is to help households initiate daily faith practices that require nothing more than a faithful heart. Namely, I teach a practice called FAITH5 which is a cost-free, 10-15 minute practice that anyone can participate in regardless of background, household demographic, or education. Learning FAITH5 involves a preparatory meeting with parish leadership, an initial presentation, a follow-up gathering, and continuing assistance in supporting participants. I am available to any interested parish and household. More parishes have joined in learning about FAITH5 during the past year and my schedule is always open to those who seek an introductory presentation or support session. Additionally, starting in November 2018, there will be a FAITH5 support tool via social media available to the diocese. I am also available to congregations seeking to identify ways to organize cross-generational aspects of regular worship, meaning that people of all ages and experiences gather together to influence, care for, and love one another in the name of Jesus.

In addition to this primary goal and purpose, during the past 2017-18 year I have also focused efforts on developing an Anglican Track of study at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, soon to be formally announced. The Anglican Track will assist students preparing for leadership in the Episcopal Church in organizing a directed course of study from within the excellent academic offerings of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. There are highlighted components that lift up building relationships with the local diocese, clergy, and laypeople to connect the academic theological experience with realities in the community, parish, and wider church.

Music That Makes Community (MTMC) is a national organization that assists parishes, organizations, and communities to connect through song. The group encourages singing as a way to establish and prosper community identity and purpose, as the Christian church has intuited since its inception. MTMC fosters musical expression ranging from traditional to the newly-composed, with dynamic options available for both musical settings and lyrics. Nearly 30 people within our diocese gathered for a MTMC workshop in June 2018. With new ideas and skills for a diversity of church settings and uniformly positive feedback from those who attended, I anticipate organizing a follow-up event in the upcoming year for new and returning participants.

Lastly, and perhaps most notably, I have developed the LOVE+TEACH+HEAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY set to begin in November 2018. This diocesan initiative will focus on small groups throughout the diocese that develop faith practices and formative conversation among interested laypeople in an effort to discern and develop lay leadership throughout our region. The Academy is designed to serve as an adjunct to the excellent ministries already being led throughout our diocese, aimed to support current clergy and congregations, inspire creativity, and connect people and congregations to one another.

It is my goal and abiding hope that 100% of all parishes throughout the Diocese of Pittsburgh would aim to energetically participate in faith formation and evangelism development, both internally and in ways connected to the diocese and wider church body. Not every initiative, program, and offering will move our LOVE+TEACH+HEAL mission forward, and yet when we show up to both succeed and fail – and always grow – together, we faithfully serve our Lord, Jesus Christ.

It is a great blessing to work with our bishop, canons, members of the diocesan staff, clergy, and parish leaders and membership. Furthermore, I am humbled and grateful to serve in a diocese where so many diligently work to make the Gospel of Jesus Christ real among the congregations and communities of our region.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Natalie L.G. Hall
Canon for Faith Formation and Evangelism