

As co-chairs of this ministry Chris Martin and myself, deacon Jay Albert, lead this ministry for the Diocese of Louisiana. This diocesan ministry offers support and understanding for anyone who is going through, or has gone through, any addiction. We often connect to those who have a family member going through an addiction as well. We have a volunteer committee of 6-10 people who meet quarterly to discuss our programs and look for more opportunities to connect in our diocese. We organize and host two retreats at the Solomon Conference Center each year. The womens' retreat this past January had approximately 59 women attend, and we received many notes of appreciation for this offering. We recently held our mixed, men and women, retreat at the Solomon Center on Aug 7-9th. Due to the Covid-19 concerns, we had approximately 20 people attend. They all told us how much that appreciated the chance to get away from all of the chaos and focus on their individual recovery. Each year we endeavor to send one or two of our committee members to the National Gathering of the Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church to seek out new ways to reach and help people and contact possible new retreat leaders to lead our retreats. However, this year the gathering has been cancelled for reasons we all know about. A few of us offer to speak at churches about this diocesan recovery ministry and offer to explain facts about addiction and ways people can seek help. We know that addiction touches at least 80% of the people we meet, and, for many, it is something that it is still thought of as "Taboo" to speak about due to the shame. Our goal is to be understanding, compassionate, and helpful to all we encounter. Because addiction is not spoken about much in public, we can and have taken the lead in standing up to be counted and let others know there is hope. Addiction knows no boundaries and comes in many different forms. We do not judge. We share our experience, strength and hope and provide a safe environment for those wanting to grow along spiritual lines. We are all volunteers and we truly appreciate the support of the Diocese of Louisiana to keep this ministry alive and functioning.

May God Bless

Rev. Jay Albert, Dcn.