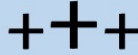


The PeliDeacon

*a newsletter for and about deacons
in The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana*



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March 21, 2023*

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A Message from Archdeacon Charlie

In this issue of The PeliDeacon, we look at St. Ephrem of Edessa, a fourth-century deacon, poet, and composer. I consider St. Ephrem my patron saint for two reasons. The first is that I was ordained a deacon on June 10, 1995, the calendar date on which we remember this holy man. The second is that I too am a deacon, poet and composer.

In my early days as a Christian, I had the sense that my “spiritual” life was comprised of going to church, time spent in prayer, and time spent in ministry. And then there was my business life, my life as a writer, musician, my family life, my social life, etc. Everything seemed to be divided into these neat little boxes.

Over the years, as I’ve matured in my faith, those lines began to blur until now, I don’t see the lines at all anymore. There is just one life I’m leading, and it’s all dedicated to God. Prayer, worship and ministry are, of course, still an important part of that one life, but the rest of my life is not separate from my love and devotion to our LORD. There’s no part of my life in which I’m not aware of and grateful for God’s living Spirit. Whatever I’m doing—playing music, spending time with family, writing, praying, socializing--I dedicate it to God, trusting that he will honor my intention and my efforts with his grace and mercy.

In faith, Charlie

DEACON CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Feb 26-Mar 26—Bishop's Lenten Reflections

Apr 22—Earth Day; Creation Care of Service

Apr 29—SECC 30th Anniversary Event

Jun 3-Conference on Deacons, New Orleans

Jun 9-19—ECW Annual Gathering

Jun 10— Gay Pride Parade

Aug 4-6—Addictions Recovery Retreat

First Deacon Gathering June 3, 2023:

The Life and Living Legacy of Frances Joseph Gaudet

Hi, Deacons,

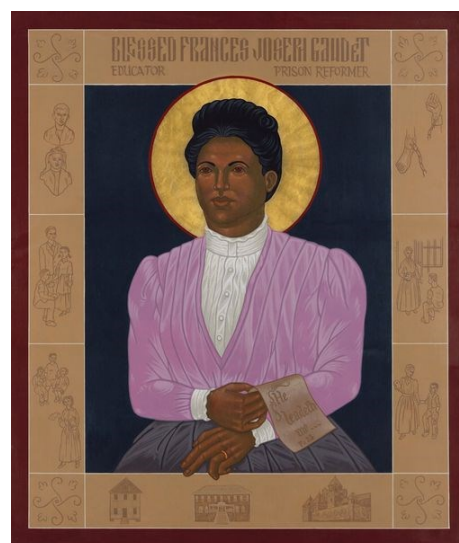
We will start our first Deacon Conference of the year at **9 am on Saturday June 3rd at St. Luke's Church, 1222 N. Dorgenois St., New Orleans.** From there, we'll walk to one of the many nearby restaurants for breakfast.

When we come back to St. Luke's, the Priest-in-Charge, Mother Jane-Allison Wiggin, will give us a presentation on the Blessed Frances Joseph Gaudet, the 19th century reformer revered for her pioneering work in prisons, in education and with youth. We'll view the Gaudet icon and stained glass window, and we'll have time for prayer and discussion.

Around 11:30 to 12 we'll break for lunch at another neighborhood restaurant, and then we'll go to St. Anna's Church, 1313 Esplanade Ave. where The Rev. Bill Terry and Deacon Luigi Mandile will show us the Dodwell House renovations and tell us about the many programs they offer to children and parishioners there. We should be finished about 3:30 or 4 pm.

When we are finished at St. Anna's Church, we then travel home. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

Deacon Charmaine Kathmann

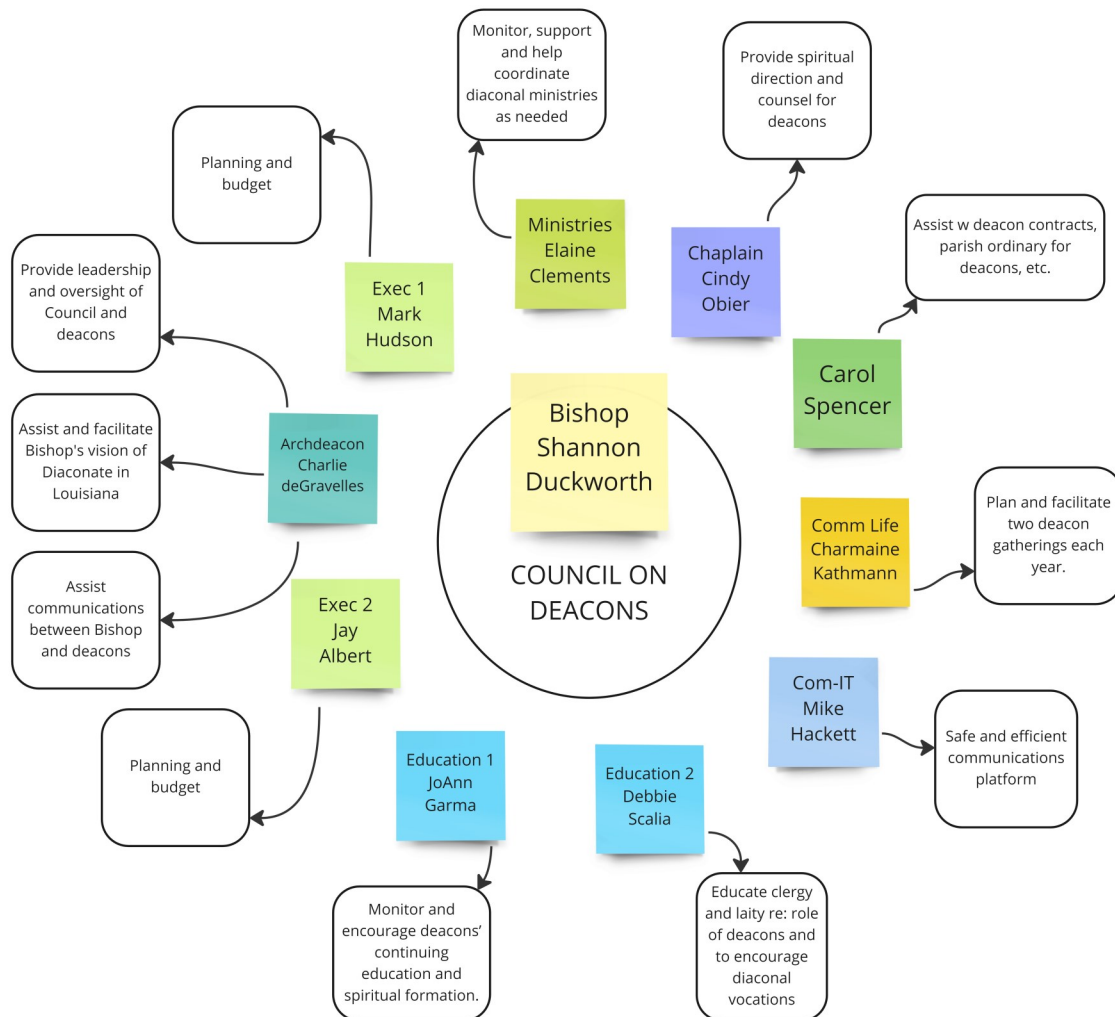


Your Council on Deacons Is Hard at Work

Appointed by Bishop Shannon Rogers Duckworth at the beginning of her tenure, the Council on Deacons has been meeting regularly to strengthen the role of the diaconate in the diocese and to raise awareness of and educate people about this important order of ministry.

Members of the Council are Archdeacon Charles deGravelles, deacons Jay Albert, Elaine Clements, JoAnn Garma, Michael Hackett, Mark Hudson, Charmaine Kathmann, Cindy Obier, Debbie Scalia and Carol Spencer. All of the Council members are seasoned clergy representing an impressive history and variety of servant ministries. Their respective areas of responsibility are shown on the chart below.

“Our goal is to inspire *diakonia* throughout the Church and world—with our lips, our leadership and our lives—in selfless service in the Spirit of Christ,” said deGravelles. “If you, as fellow deacons, priests or lay people have questions, suggestions, concerns or needs, please let us know.”

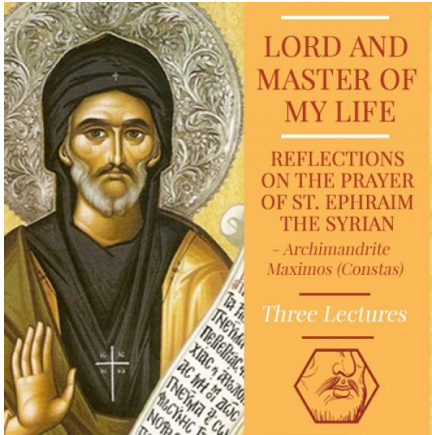


Deacon Saints and Heroes



Saint Ephrem of Edessa

Deacon, poet, composer, defender of the faith



Recent book on Ephrem of Edessa

Born in 306 AD, Ephrem of Edessa (also known as Ephrem of Syria or Ephrem of Nisibis) was a prominent Christian theologian and writer, who is revered as one of the most notable hymnographers of Eastern Christianity. He was born in Nisibis, served as a deacon and later lived in Edessa, and is counted as a Holy and Venerable Father (i.e., a sainted Monk) in the Eastern Orthodox Church. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in the Roman Catholic Church in 1920. Ephrem is also credited as the founder of the School of Nisibis, which, in later centuries, was the center of learning of the Church of the East.

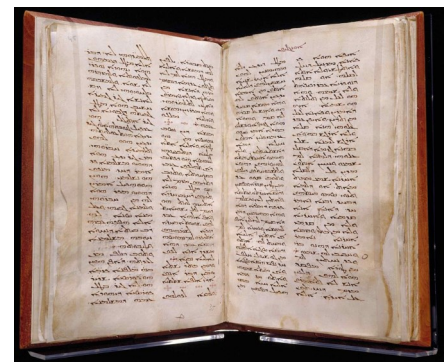
Ephrem countered the Gnostics' practice of spreading their message through popular songs by composing Christian songs and hymns of his own, with great effect. He is known to the Syrian church as "the harp of the Holy Spirit." He wrote a wide variety of hymns, poems, and sermons in verse, as well as prose exegesis. He is said to have accompanied his bishop, James of Nisibis, to the Council of Nicea in 325.

Ephrem's writings are an eloquent defence of the Nicene faith in the Deity of Jesus Christ. Ephrem eventually retired to a cave outside Edessa, where he lived in great simplicity and devoted himself to writing. He frequently went into the city to preach. During a famine in 372-3 he worked distributing food to the hungry, and organizing a sort of ambulance service for the sick. He worked long hours at this, and became exhausted and sick, and so died.

Of his writings there remain 72 hymns, commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and numerous sermons.

PRAYER (contemporary language)

Pour out upon us, O Lord, that same Spirit by which your deacon Ephrem declared the mysteries of faith in sacred song; that with gladdened hearts we too might proclaim the riches of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Manuscript of the Ephrem's Commentary on the [Diatessaron](#). Egypt, late 5th or early 6th century.
Chester Beatty Library

Emergency 101 for Deacons

Emergency preparedness refers to actions which can and should be performed prior to an emergency, such as planning and coordination meetings, procedure writing, team training, emergency drills and exercises, and prepositioning of emergency equipment. **Emergency response** refers to actions taken in response to an actual, ongoing event.

Long-time ERD responder Deacon Elaine Clements explains these two categories “call for two different skill sets, two different kinds of people. It’s important to consider ahead of time where your personality type and skills might be the best fit.”



A Prayer of St. Ephrem of Edessa

O Lord and Master of my life, do not give me the spirit of laziness, meddling, self-importance and idle talk. (prostration) Instead, grace me, Your servant, with the spirit of modesty, humility, patience, and love. (prostration) Indeed, my Lord and King, grant that I may see my own faults, and not condemn my brothers and sisters, for You are blessed unto ages of ages. Amen. (prostration) (Twelve deep bows, saying each time: O God, be gracious to me, a sinner.)

[Translation by Fr. James Silver, Drew University; posted on the Orthodox list]



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Our Vision: The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana is one church, faithful to our Lord Jesus, united in mission, reaching out through service and proclamation to all for whom Christ died. We live in joyous expectation of God’s transforming power, compassion, and mercy in our lives.

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