



*The*  
EPISCOPAL  
DIOCESE OF  
UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA

## Strategic Visioning Resource

*Serving Christ not only with our lips, but in our lives*



*...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”*

(EPHESIANS 4: 12-13)

## DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST:

At diocesan convention in October 2011, Bishop Waldo presented an emerging vision of a critical response for a critical time—a vision to make, equip and send mature disciples of Jesus Christ into the world in witness to God’s love. Feedback from convention delegates, coupled with our work as the diocesan Strategic Visioning Task Force, led to the following resource.

We know that the Church’s front lines of mission are local—in congregations, convocations and institutions—and the process of strategic visioning must occur at these levels. Therefore, instead of providing specific objectives for your congregation, we offer targeted questions designed to help you imagine and implement God’s mission in your faith community. If your congregation currently is engaged in strategic planning or has recently completed it, we hope you will use this guide to refresh and reinvigorate your work. We expect that much of this four-part vision already aligns with your own priorities. Your congregation’s results from the recently completed U.S. Congregational Life Study, also, offer critical insight into your process of strategic planning.

The diocesan staff and commissions are delighted to provide a facilitator to work with your congregation as you begin the visioning process. Please contact The Rev. Geoff Taylor, Canon for Leadership and Congregational Development, at 803-771-7800 or [gtaylor@edusc.org](mailto:gtaylor@edusc.org). If you choose not to work with one of our facilitators, we highly recommend that your facilitator not come from within your congregation.

When Bishop Waldo, diocesan staff and/or members of the Commission on Congregations visit your congregation during the coming year, they will ask you about your process of strategic planning.

We eagerly imagine what 26,000 Episcopalians in the Diocese of Upper South Carolina can do in the name of Christ. It is our prayer that you will use this resource to inspire reflection on God’s call to you, your congregation or institution, and to all of us in this diocese as we seek to serve Christ, not only with our lips, but in our lives.

In Christ’s name,

## THE STRATEGIC VISIONING TASK FORCE

The Rev. Rob Brown

Ms. Sally McKay

The Rev. Mike Flanagan

Dr. Rodger Stroup

Mr. Chris Klasing

Mrs. Nela Edgar

The Rev. Canon d’Rue Hazel

Mr. Bill Thomason

The Rev. Deacon Dianna Deaderick

The Rev. John Nieman

Ms. Beth Hendrix

The Rt. Rev. W. Andrew Waldo

## ***Serving Christ not only with our lips but in our lives***



*...give us such an awareness of your mercies,  
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves  
to your service...* — BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, P. 101

### **Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina Strategic Visioning Summary**

**We live in a critical time filled with critical needs. The Strategic Vision of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina is to make, equip, and send mature disciples of Jesus Christ into the world in witness to God's love.**

**These disciples are formed and transformed in congregations that are healthy communities of growth and transformation.**

**Our Strategic Vision sees four primary areas of health to be critical to strong, healthy congregations:**

- I. The Church as a Community of Worship, Prayer and Dialogue**
- II. Formation, Teaching and Vocation within the Church (Way, Truth and Life)**
- III. Witness, Common Mission and Service to the World**
- IV. Stewardship and Care of People, Place and Money**

**Below, we have offered tools for ongoing visioning and planning within your congregation, commission or staff in each of these four areas. We hope that these tools, in combination with your results from the U.S. Congregational Life Study, will help you identify and address opportunities for growth and reflection.**

**Before you begin:**

- 1. Reflect in your community on these questions about your life together at this time.**
  - Who do we say we are?**
  - Where do we say we're going?**
  - Why?**
- 2. Discuss your strength report from the U.S. Congregational Life Study as a precursor to the following s**



## I. The Church as a Community of Worship, Prayer and Dialogue

*I was glad when they said unto me,  
"Let us go into the house of the Lord." (PSALM 122:1)*

Worship, prayer and dialogue are three fundamental aspects of mature Christian discipleship.

- We worship God WITH one another.
- We pray to God FOR one another.
- And in dialogue, we speak and listen TO one another as fellow children of God.

The following questions are intended to guide you in planning how your [congregation, school, commission, etc.] will live out its call to discipleship in deepening, nourishing, strengthening and transforming your personal and corporate relationships with God and each other.

### **Step 1: The Character of a Disciple**

What are the characteristics of a disciple (individual) who is mature in corporate worship, personal prayer and in living with different people and perspectives? Make a list of these characteristics.

### **Step 2: Discovery and Action**

#### **DISCIPLES IN WORSHIP—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. What in Sunday morning worship inspires you, affects your relationship with God and energizes you to serve Christ not only with your lips, but in your life?
2. How does worship transform who you are and how you live your daily life? Your relationship with those you know and those you do not know?
3. Does our worship involve lay people of all ages?
4. What do we know or hear about our visitors' experiences of our worship, our hospitality and our accessibility?

#### **DISCIPLES IN WORSHIP—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What specific steps can we take to deepen and sharpen our worship?
2. Looking at worship from the time our guests arrive at church to the time they leave, what specific changes would create a more hospitable, accessible, participatory and transformational experience of worship?

**DISCIPLES IN PRAYER—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. How do we currently teach and encourage our people to pray, personally and corporately? How do we help people enhance and deepen their prayer lives?
2. How well do our people understand and make use of the Book of Common Prayer? How well do they understand it to be a prayer resource beyond corporate worship?
3. Describe the current “prayer culture” in our congregation.

**DISCIPLES IN PRAYER—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What SPECIFIC steps can we take to ensure that all members learn and practice the disciplines of Christian prayer? What opportunities and encouragement can we provide for them to pray publicly?
2. What SPECIFIC plans can we implement to make prayer a persistent and central teaching of our Christian formation program for all ages?

**DISCIPLES IN DIALOGUE—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. How do clergy and lay leadership encourage (or discourage) dialogue in our congregation?
2. Describe any effects that have resulted from constructive (or unhealthy) dialogue in our congregation. How has that changed us for better or for worse?
3. How do we make sure that all voices in our congregation are heard and respected?

**DISCIPLES IN DIALOGUE—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What steps will we take to teach and practice the discipline of healthy dialogue? How can our leadership model this?
2. When we experience conflict in community, what will be our norms for dialogue?
3. How will we teach these norms and how will we hold one another accountable to them?

**Step 3: Vivid Description**

Describe, in 10 lines or fewer, and in a vivid, action-oriented narrative, your faith community, filled with mature, accomplished disciples, when it is engaged in new levels of vibrant worship, intentional prayer and healthy dialogue. The intent of this narrative is to articulate what impression of your faith community you would want a visitor to have 5-10 years from now.

**Step 4: Final Step**

Using the information you have gathered, indicate on the follow-up form at the end of this document the specific actions you are going to take in this area, the date by which they will be completed and the person responsible.



## II. Formation, Teaching and Vocation within the Church

*For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."  
But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed?  
And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard?  
And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?  
And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?  
As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"*  
(ROMANS 10: 13–15)

Transformed disciples are deeply and continually formed, taught and called in Christian truth and witness.

The following questions are intended to help you evaluate the thoroughness, efficacy and transformational nature of teaching, formation and vocational discernment within your [congregation, school, commission, etc.] and to guide you in identifying and planning for next steps.

### **Step 1: The Character of a Disciple**

What are the characteristics of a disciple (individual) who has a mature understanding of Christian formation, Christian teaching and Christian vocation? Make a list of these characteristics.

### **Step 2: Discovery and Action**

#### **FORMATION AND TEACHING—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. What formative opportunities (classes, ministries, study groups, etc.) do we currently provide for communicants of all ages? Does the parish at large participate in these programs, ministries and opportunities? Does the leadership of the parish participate in these things, serving as an example to all others?
2. More specifically, what do we currently offer in the area of learning and studying Holy Scripture? What are we currently doing to ensure that members are a deeply rooted and biblically literate parish?
3. What models of mentoring disciples of all ages do we have in our congregation?

#### **FORMATION AND TEACHING—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What NEW formative opportunities (classes, ministries, study groups, etc.) should and can we offer that will increase participation by people of all ages, by the parish at large and by the leadership?
2. What models of mentoring disciples of all ages will we develop in our congregation?



**FORMATION AND TEACHING—ACTION QUESTIONS** *(continued)*

3. What NEW opportunities should we offer to encourage the practice of reading and studying Holy Scripture amongst all the people of the parish?
4. Are there any current programs that we offer that we should cease so that human and financial resources can be reallocated for these new programs?
5. Are the ideas we have named the best solutions to these issues?

**VOCATION—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. How do we provide the opportunity for individuals to discern their gifts and skills for ministry and offer them to the leadership of the parish?
2. How do we use those gifts and skills once they have been offered?
3. Are we faithful and thorough in following up with individuals once they have offered their gifts and skills?

**VOCATION—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What NEW ways can we create for individuals to discern their gifts and skills for ministry and offer them to the leadership of the parish?
2. What NEW ways can we create to use those gifts and skills once they have been offered?
3. How can we ensure that we are faithful and thorough in following up with individuals once they have offered their gifts and skills?
4. Are the ideas we have named the best solutions to these issues?

**Step 3: Vivid Description**

Describe, in 10 lines or fewer, and in a vivid, action-oriented narrative, your faith community when it accomplishes new levels of forming and transforming members, discerning and honing their gifts, and empowering them to build up the body of Christ.

**Step 4: Final Step**

Using the information you have gathered, indicate on the follow-up form at the end of this document the specific actions you are going to take in this area, the date by which they will be completed and the person responsible.



### III. Witness, Common Mission and Service to the World

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. (MATTHEW 28:19)*

*'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;  
for I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,  
I was naked and you gave me clothing,  
I was sick and you took care of me,  
I was in prison and you visited me.'  
'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'* (MATTHEW 25:34-36, 40)

Word and example: the two ways we promise to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ in our baptismal vows. The following questions are intended to help you examine your service to the world, evaluating levels of personal involvement in mission and effectiveness in collaborative service, and to guide you in gathering your resources for evangelism and for mission to a broken world in need of healing and reconciliation.

#### **Step 1: The Character of a Disciple**

What are the characteristics of a disciple (individual) who bears witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus and serves the world in Christ's name?

#### **Step 2: Discovery and Action**

##### **WITNESS AND EVANGELISM—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

- 1.** In what ways do we currently practice evangelism—"proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?" (BCP pg 305)
- 2.** How comfortable are we in talking about our faith outside the walls of the church?
- 3.** Who do we see as evangelism leaders in our parish? Why?
- 4.** How are lives changed by our evangelism and how does it impact church growth?





**WITNESS AND EVANGELISM—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What SPECIFIC steps will we take to increase our evangelism? What formation and/or training do we need?
2. How can we help people become more comfortable speaking about their faith outside the walls of the church?
3. What SPECIFIC steps will we take to identify and support evangelism leaders in our parish?

**COMMON MISSION/SERVICE TO THE WORLD—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. In what specific ways do we serve others so that we witness “not only with our lips but with our lives?” (list time, talent and treasure invested)
2. Which of the above activities have the greatest impact, involve the most people, use resources effectively?
3. Which activities cost us much but produce the fewest results?
4. In what specific ways do we teach, train and encourage all members of the parish to engage in mission and service to the world?

**COMMON MISSION/SERVICE TO THE WORLD—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. Which of our activities require additional training and/or support to move them to the next level?
2. Which of our activities (if any) lend themselves to collaborations with other parishes? The convocation? The diocese? Other denominational bodies in our area?
3. What NEW activities should our parish undertake?
4. What current activities should we drop in order to become more focused in our efforts?

**Step 3: Vivid Description**

Describe, In 10 lines or fewer, and in a vivid, action-oriented narrative, what you want participants within your faith community to engage in with regard to witness, common mission and service to the world.

**Step 4: Final Step**

Using the information you have gathered, indicate on the follow-up form at the end of this document the specific actions you are going to take in this area, the date by which they will be completed and the person responsible.



## IV. Stewardship and Care of People, Place and Money

*... and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that you give me I will surely give one tenth to you. (GENESIS 28:22)*

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. (ACTS 2:42-44)*

The sharing of all that God has given to us—our gifts of treasure, time and talent—has always been a principal aspect of showing gratitude to God.

The following questions are intended to help you reflect on the character and extent of your stewardship of the people, places and money to whom and to which you are connected and for which you share responsibility.

### **Step 1: The Character of a Disciple**

What are the characteristics of a mature disciple who stewards and cares for people, place and money? Make a list of these characteristics.

### **Step 2: Discovery and Action**

#### **STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF PEOPLE—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. We discussed how we care for those outside our church walls in section III, how do we care for people of all ages within our church community?
2. How do we care for our clergy and lay leadership? Do we provide them with resources to grow? Do we protect them from exhaustion and burn-out?

#### **STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF PEOPLE—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What NEW programs should we start to provide better care for people of all ages within our church community?
2. What SPECIFIC steps will we take to take better care of our clergy and lay leaders?

#### **STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF PLACE—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. What do people see first when they look at the church property? Does the building and the property around it look well cared for?

**STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF PLACE—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS** *(continued)*

2. How are we caring for our facilities? Insurance, maintenance, repairs, cleaning?  
Do we demonstrate LEADERSHIP to the community in care of our facilities?
3. How do we demonstrate care of the Earth— the air we breathe, the water we drink and the space in which we live?

**STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF PLACE—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. What SPECIFIC steps should we take to take better care of our facilities?
2. Is there a program we should initiate to be better stewards of the Earth?

**STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF MONEY—DISCOVERY QUESTIONS**

1. Do we have an understanding of the Biblical nature of stewardship? Are we expressing gratitude to God or are we “fundraising?”
2. How are we educating the parish about stewardship?
3. How do we execute the financial portion of our annual stewardship effort?  
Are we comfortable talking about money?
4. What has and what has not worked?
5. Are our vestry/leaders leading by example in stewardship?
6. Who do we see as stewardship leaders? Why?

**STEWARDSHIP AND CARE OF MONEY—ACTION QUESTIONS**

1. How can we as leaders deepen our understanding of the Biblical nature of stewardship, and what SPECIFIC steps can we take to educate the parish about it?
2. What SPECIFIC steps will we take to improve the financial portion of our annual stewardship effort? How will we help people be more comfortable talking about money?
3. What SPECIFIC steps can we take to help the lay leadership and clergy lead by example in stewardship?

**Step 3: Vivid Description**

Describe, in 10 lines or fewer and in a vivid, action-oriented narrative, how you want participants within your faith community to engage the stewardship and care of people, place and money.

**Step 4: Final Step**

Using the information you have gathered, indicate on the follow-up form at the end of this document the specific actions you are going to take in this area, the date by which they will be completed and the person responsible.



## **Wrap-Up**

- A.** In light of your work on steps 1-4, and your results from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey, reflect in your community on the following questions:
- Who are we?
  - Where is God calling us to go?
  - Why?
- B.** On the following pages you'll find a form to help identify and communicate specific actions and goals that are the result of your work, as well as a guide to the resources you will need to accomplish them.



# Form for Follow-Through and Diocesan Reporting

DIOCESAN STRATEGIC VISIONING  
Specific Activities / Initiatives Planned

CHURCH / LOCATION:  
AREA OF DISCIPLINESHIP  
(Circle One):

Worship, Prayer & Dialogue      Formation, Teaching & Vocation      Witness, Mission & Service      Stewardship & Care

Activity/Initiative	Target Date	Person Responsible	Resources Needed (from Diocese or Elsewhere)	Resources Available to be Shared with Others	Status

PLEASE LIST ACTIVITIES / INITIATIVES IN PRIORITY ORDER

**Area of Ministry /  
Commission / Committee****2012 Chair**  
*(email address listed with first listing of a name)***Staff Liason**  
*(contact information follows at end)***OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

Anti-Racism Training	The Rev. Dianna Deaderick dinnald@sc.rr.com	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Bishop's Visitations, Customary		Ms. Mary Weston
Celebration of New Ministry	The Rev. Canon Joseph Whitehurst joseph.whitehurst@gmail.com	Ms. Mary Weston
Christian Formation		Canon Kellie Wilson
Church Finance, Treasurers, Audits		Ms. Alisha Hudson
Communications		Ms. Jennifer Hile
Congregational Development		The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Transition Ministries		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Diocesan Database		Ms. Jennifer Hile
Diocesan Liturgies	The Rev. Canon Joseph Whitehurst	
Discretionary Funds		Ms. Alisha Hudson
Diocesan Convention	Ms. Angela Daniel adaniel@sandhillsschool.org	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Diocesan Journal		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Evangelism		The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
e-DUSC		Ms. Jennifer Hile
Finances—Diocesan		Ms. Alisha Hudson
Insurance: Health & Property— Enrollments, etc.		Ms. Cynthia Hendrix
Lay Ministry Licensure & Training		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Leadership Development		The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Letters Dimissory		Ms. Mary Weston
Licensing for non-canonical clergy		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Marital Judgments		Ms. Mary Weston
Parochial Reports		Ms. Cynthia Hendrix

**Area of Ministry /  
Commission / Committee****2012 Chair**  
*(email address listed with first listing of a name)***Staff Liason**  
*(contact information follows at end)*

Pension: Lay and Clergy		Ms. Cynthia Hendrix
Reporting for non-parochial clergy		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Retired Clergy	Ms. Betty Jean Ireland clydeireland@bellsouth.net	
Sabbatical Leave Policy	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel	
Safe Church and Sexual Ethics	Mr. Frank Ballard	Canon Kellie Wilson
Certification & Training	fballard@stmaryscolumbia.org	
Stewardship	The Rev. Grant Wiseman atwinfather@gmail.com	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Supply Clergy		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Theological Education & Financial Assistance		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Title IV Training & Intake Officer		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Web Site: www.edusc.org		Ms. Jennifer Hile
<b>THE DIOCESAN EXECUTIVE COUNCIL</b>	Mr. Bill Thomason, President wpthom@bellsouth.net	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Standing Committee	Mr. Bill Thomason	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
<b>COMMISSION ON CONGREGATIONS</b>	Mr. Ned Badgett nedbadgett@bellsouth.net and The Rev. Mike Schnatterly mikeGoodShepherd@aol.com	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Bishop's Visitations		Ms. Mary Weston
Canterbury Communities	Ms. Amy Hixon aehixson@gmail.com	Canon Kellie Wilson
Celebration of New Ministry	The Rev. Canon Joseph Whitehurst	Ms. Mary Weston
Church Finance, Treasurers, Audits		Ms. Alisha Hudson
Clergy Compensation		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel

**Area of Ministry /  
Commission / Committee****2012 Chair**  
*(email address listed with first listing of a name)***Staff Liason**  
*(contact information follows at end)*

Congregational Development		The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Discretionary Funds		Ms. Alisha Hudson
Episcopal Pledge		Ms. Alisha Hudson
Letters Dimissory		Ms. Mary Weston
Licensing for Non-canonical Clergy		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Marital Judgments		Ms. Mary Weston
Ministry Covenants		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Mission Congregations		The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Parochial Reports		Ms. Cynthia Hendrix
Reporting for non-parochial clergy		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Spanish Speaking Ministries	The Rev. Fred Gonzalez agonzalez@stmaryscolumbia.org and The Rev. Robert Taylor rctaylor@greenville.k12.sc.edu	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Stewardship	The Rev. Grant Wiseman	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Supply Clergy		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Transition Ministries		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
<b>COMMISSION ON CONVOCATIONS</b>	The Rev. Tula Henson rev.henson@sainttimothysc.columbia.com and The Rev. Sally Franklin revsfranklin@yahoo.com	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Catawba Convocation		
Foothills Convocation		
Gravatt Convocation		
Midlands Convocation	The Rev. Sally Johnston sally.johnston@smartinsinthefields.com	
Piedmont Convocation	The Rev. Ned Morris nmorris@churchofadvent.org	



**Area of Ministry /  
Commission / Committee****2012 Chair**  
*(email address listed with first listing of a name)***Staff Liason**  
*(contact information follows at end)*

Matthew 25 (to include all outreach opportunities)	The Rev. Fred Walters faw@fawlawfirm.com	
Race Relations Committee	The Rev. Fred Walters	
<b>COMMISSION ON THE DIOCESE</b>	Mr. Rusty Miller rmiller52@sc.rr.com and The Rev. Harrison McLeod hmcLeod@ccgsc.org	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Church Encumbrances	Mr. Rusty Miller	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
Communications		Ms. Jennifer Hile
Constitution and Canons	Mr. Dan Hunt dhunt@danhuntlaw.com	
Diocesan Convention	Ms. Angela Daniel	
Diocesan Database		Ms. Jennifer Hile
Diocesan Journal		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Diocesan Liturgies	The Rev. Canon Joseph Whitehurst	
Diocesan Planning, Architecture, and Construction Committee	Ms. Suzi Clawson sclawson@hsblawfirm.com	
e-DUSC		Ms. Jennifer Hile
Financial Information	Mr. Rusty Miller	Ms. Alisha Hudson
Insurance		Ms. Cynthia Hendrix
Property and Insurance Committee		Ms. Cynthia Hendrix
Statement of Mission	Mr. Bruce Schwartz bschwartz@mthcpa.com	The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor
www.edusc.org		Ms. Jennifer Hile
youthspace.edusc.org		Canon Kellie Wilson
<b>COMMISSION ON MINISTRY</b>	Dr. Norah Grimball ntgrimball@gmail.com	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Application for Theological Ed & Financial Assistance		Ms. Roslyn Hook

**Area of Ministry /  
Commission / Committee****2012 Chair**  
*(email address listed with first listing of a name)***Staff Liason**  
*(contact information follows at end)*

Committee for Ordained Support (Clergy Conferences, Council of Deacons, Fresh Start, Retired Clergy)	The Rev. Jim Neuburger jeneuburger@att.net	The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Cursillo	Mr. Emery Clark emery.clark@usdoj.gov	
Daughters of the King	Ms. Karen Lumpkin akmgj@bellsouth.net	
Diaconal Formation	The Rev. Canon Susan Parlier parlier@mailbox.sc.edu	
Examining Chaplains		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Lay Ministry Licensure & Training		Ms. Roslyn Hook
Sabbatical Leave Policy		The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel
Safe Church & Sexual Ethics Certification & Training	Mr. Frank Ballard	Canon Kellie Wilson
Youth Ministries		Canon Kellie Wilson
<b>COMMISSION ON THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS</b>	The Rt. Rev. Andrew Waldo Co-chair, The Rev. Furman Buchanan buchananf@bellsouth.net	Ms. Mary Weston
World Mission Committee	Co-chairs, Dr. Harry Morse hgmorse@gmail.com and Dr. Reg Brooker pbroo10157@aol.com	Ms. Mary Weston
<b>COMMISSION ON THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH &amp; NATIONAL CONCERNS</b>	Head of GC 2012 Deputation The Rev. Mike Flanagan frflan@charter.net Co-chair, The Rev. Joseph Smith jks@stchrisonline.org	Ms. Mary Weston
Deputies to Synod and General Convention	Ms. Angela Daniel	Ms. Mary Weston
<b>OTHER MINISTRIES AND COMMITTEES</b> Disaster Planning	Ms. Jayne Crisp jayne.crisp@safeharborsc.org	Ms. Sally McKay
Ecumenical Relations—LARCUM	The Rev. Furman Buchanan	Ms. Mary Weston

**Area of Ministry /  
Commission / Committee****2012 Chair**  
*(email address listed with first listing of a name)***Staff Liason**  
*(contact information follows at end)*

Episcopal Church Women	Ms. Karen Ellison kdte11@hotmail.com	Canon Kellie Wilson
Episcopal Relief and Development	Ms. Scooty Burch eburch@innova.net	Ms. Mary Weston
HIV/Aids	The Rev. Canon Dianna Deaderick	
Millennium Development Goals	Ms. Angela Daniel	Ms. Mary Weston

**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION****(803-771-7800)****Extension****Bishop's Office**The Rt. Rev. Andrew Waldo  
Ms. Mary Westonbishopwaldo@edusc.org  
mweston@edusc.org102  
102**Christian Formation**

Canon Kellie Wilson

kwilson@edusc.org

104

**Congregational Development**

The Rev. Canon Geoff Taylor

gtaylor@edusc.org

101

**Discernment and Transition Ministries**The Rev. Canon d'Rue Hazel  
Ms. Roz Hookdhazel@edusc.org  
rhook@edusc.org107  
106**Communications**

Ms. Jennifer Hile

jhile@edusc.org

109

**Communications Consultant**

Ms. Sally McKay

sallymck@gmail.com

803-238-2328

**Controller**

Ms. Alisha Hudson

ahudson@edusc.org

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**Property, Insurance, and  
Safety Management**

Ms. Cynthia Hendrix

chendrix@edusc.org

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*The*  
**EPISCOPAL**  
**DIOCESE** OF  
UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA

*Serving Christ not only with our lips, but in our lives*

1115 Marion Street | Columbia, SC 29201

803-771-7800 | 800-889-6961 | [www.edusc.org](http://www.edusc.org)