

No assessment of the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries episcopacy as it is today would be complete without acknowledging the extraordinary accomplishments of Bishop Jay Magness. Bp Magness has revitalized this ministry. He has made huge strides in recruiting chaplains, injecting new life, and bringing new chaplains onto the rolls, with potential for long and full careers. Bp Magness has built relationships with diocesan bishops and seminaries. He has forged a shared sense of identity, uniting chaplains from various backgrounds from around the country and across the armed forces, Department of Veteran Affairs, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons into one ministry with one sense of mission. He has established a substantive, coherent, and workable system for helping chaplains from other faith traditions qualify for our orders. Bp Magness has established systems and processes to share the work of his ministry, with an advisory council and a committee to help review applications for endorsement. No doubt there are other improvements of which I am not aware. These accomplishments have already improved the quality of chaplaincy support delivered to the women and men of the FBoP, DVA, and the armed forces, and will continue to bear fruit for years to come. The next bishop's challenge will be to consolidate and build on these accomplishments.

If elected and consecrated, my first and ongoing priority will be to continue an active ministry of **presence and engagement with the chaplains** of the armed forces, DVA, and FBoP. Caring for, educating, and equipping our chaplains requires knowing them, getting to know their various contexts for ministry, understanding their lives, their burden, their joys, and their challenges. Every chaplain should know when she or he can expect a visit and how to get help from his or her bishop when such help is needed. The next bishop must continue to be pastor to these pastors, and use every tool available for this: personal visits, phone calls, letters, Skype, conferences, retreats, continuing education, etc. I fully understand that this bishop must be a "road warrior," committed to tireless travel, with a primary "office" consisting of a laptop and a cellphone rather than four walls. Establishing a visible physical presence and home base for this episcopacy at Woodley House at the Washington National Cathedral has been an important accomplishment, but if elected, I would expect to be on the road more than in Washington DC.

I would expect that my travel schedule would include a plan to **visit our seminaries** regularly to reinforce and expand relationships there. Active presence at our seminaries serves not only the important priority of recruitment. I would also

explore the potential for planned short-term residencies for our chaplains at our seminaries: for continuing education, for respite, for building community (and yes, for supporting recruitment). The US Military Academy requires its active-duty permanent faculty to “regreen” from time to time, leaving the Academy to spend time with regular Army units. I would explore reversing this system: would it profit us (and our chaplains) to “redip” our chaplains, who serve primarily as generalists, giving them the chance to return to living and worship and learning in the intentional Episcopal community of our seminaries? Could we do some of our annual conferences at our seminaries, or encourage our seminaries to offer chaplain-dedicated or chaplain-friendly continuing education opportunities or retreats?

I would also like to **develop our sense of community more broadly**. This episcopacy focuses, as it must, on recruiting, equipping, caring for, and serving our chaplains. Yet this ministry can be shared: others in the armed forces, in the DVA, and FBoP – both active, retired, and former members – have gifts, talents, and abilities, and many of these friends would welcome a chance to help support our chaplains and our Episcopal identity. The Council of Advice and the advisory committee on applicants are examples of this, but these two groups are only first steps. How might this wider community of friends and supporters help with recruiting, equipping, educating, and caring for our chaplains, and publicizing and celebrating their work? I would look ways to involve these friends.

Part of this wider sense of community also involves other bishops. I would expect to put time into getting to know bishops in diocesan ministry: it is these bishops who raised up our chaplains and who must continue to do so. I would expect that the regular meetings of the House of Bishops would provide some of this community building – but not all of it. Part of my planning checklist for every road trip would include not only “what chaplains can I visit?” but also “what bishops should I call on?”

**Improved communications** are limited only by staff time and budget. The BSAFFM does not have a significant or up-to-date **web presence** and we must remedy this. An up-to-date webpage can be a resource for chaplains, congregations, applicants, aspirants, individual Episcopalians, and others seeking to make connections, get information, or find resources. A web search is often the first step for those seeking information today. First-time visits to most churches today begin with the church’s website; if a congregation’s web presence is not current, inviting, and helpful, potential newcomers do not make a physical visit. The Episcopal Church for those we serve

needs to pass this same test. An Episcopalian (or potential Episcopalian) serving anywhere in the world should be able to find out more about our national Church, where to find an Episcopal worshiping community, how to grow in faith, how to prepare for confirmation, how to prepare for deployment, how to spiritually sustain one's self or support a loved while deployed, suggestions and support for reentry, how to go about exploring a call to ministry (lay or ordained), and so much more.

**Other social media.** I write about web presence because that is the technology I am most familiar with. We need to find what other technologies are helpful and effective for our community and then learn and use them.

Although electronic media are often the first ways many people make connections today, **print resources** cannot be overlooked. A well-thought-out magazine or newsletter can help us celebrate the accomplishments of our chaplains, share resources, news, and concerns, encourage qualified applicants, and build community. A newsletter or other regular mailing can connect not only chaplains but also Episcopalians serving on active duty and in the reserve components, retirees, and other friends and supporters.

I would like to explore how to support those in uniform who might be discerning a call to ordained ministry. Most diocesan discernment processes assume that a potential aspirant will be geographically stable, yet most servicemembers do not enjoy this luxury. Is there a way that this episcopacy could provide continuity, support, and guidance, and work with a servicemember's current dioceses to identify and support qualified men and women as they follow God's call from uniform to seminary to qualifying parish ministry and then back to uniform as a chaplain?

My Office of Transition Ministry profile begins with "*Here I am Lord / Is it I Lord? / I have heard you calling in the night. / I will go Lord / If you lead me / I will hold your people in my heart.*" Above all, my vision for this episcopacy is built on the foundation of the bishop on his knees, praying for chaplains, their families, and their ministries every day. My prayer is that God will call the right person to this unique and special ministry; my confidence is that God will equip and lead the person whom God calls.