



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

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Nominating Committee of the Diocese of Southern Ohio
The Rev. Gia Hayes-Martin, Chair
Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio
412 Sycamore St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

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Dear Friends in Christ,

What I love most about the gospel accounts of call is that healing and evangelism are always intimately connected. Jesus heals someone and then immediately calls them to follow him on The Way so that they too may spread the Good News he has just awakened within them. This is a pattern I have experienced over and over in my own life, and I sense it is a journey the Diocese of Southern Ohio is walking as well.

The aftermath of addiction, the struggle to articulate a unifying theology of money and power, the paradox of needing revitalization despite an abundance of ministry gifts and material resources, and the deep desire for ongoing growth as Beloved Community call for a partner in ministry who is wholeheartedly committed to the work of trust-building, truth telling, and the gentle yet fierce art of presence that points toward hope.

I find these strands echo in my ministry as a Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development and a parish priest, but even more deeply in my personal life. My older sister died of a drug overdose at the age of 33 in 2010, and through that years-long tragedy God has led—and at times pushed—me through the deepest spiritual work of my life.

I have served as a rector in three congregations and now serve in executive leadership on a diocesan staff. My ministry contexts range from being an urban cathedral curate in a bi-lingual environment to being a priest-in-charge to yoked rural congregations as well as an associate rector in suburban churches. This diversity of ministry fields has challenged me to develop my leadership to effectively support my congregations in living out their gifts.



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“Guardian of the faith” is an oft-quoted description of the work of a bishop, but today’s church does not need rigid defenders of cold doctrine. To me, guarding the faith means tending to the networks of relationship that bind us together: guarding our faith in one another, guarding our faith in what’s possible, guarding our faith in how the Spirit is leading us forward.

I chose the name “Roof Crashers and Hem Grabbers” for my blog for the group who cut through a roof to get their ailing friend in front of Jesus and the hemorrhaging woman who knew that if she touched the hem of his cloak she would be healed. Jesus says in response to these seekers, “Take up your mat and walk,” and, “Go, your faith has made you well.” These two commands seem to be where the journey of the Diocese of Southern Ohio and my journey intersect, and I welcome the opportunity to explore that crossroads further. Thank you for considering my materials, and you are very much in my prayers as your discernment continues.

In the hope of Christ,

The Rev. Canon Whitney E. Rice

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