

# Candidate Essay Responses

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1. The Apostle Paul writes that “there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord” (1 Corinthians 12:4–5). The Diocese of Long Island encompasses remarkable diversity—geographic (from Brooklyn to the Hamptons), cultural (multiple languages and traditions), socioeconomic, and theological. Yet we are called to be one Body of Christ. Describe a time when you have led or participated in ministry that brought together diverse communities while honoring their distinct gifts and identities. How did you navigate the tension between unity and particularity? What theological and practical approaches guide your understanding of how the Church can be both authentically diverse and genuinely unified?



*The Healing of the Officer's Son, James Tissot. 1836-1902.  
Brooklyn Museum.*

that centers the well-being of diverse communities. Together we study books, themes, and scripture, engaging our faith and spirituality through conversations that honor experience and intellect. The cathedral congregation and the Dean's Forum are notably diverse, a living mosaic requiring continual attentiveness and care.

*“And thus with joy we meet our Lord, his presence, always near, is in such friendship better known: we see and praise him here.”  
(Hymn 304, The Hymnal 1982).*

Christian unity is rooted in particularity. The Church's theologies of reconciliation and healing, which lead us toward unity in Christ, depend upon the surfacing and sharing of our genuine diversity. Unity grows not from abstraction but from the courageous expression of our distinct identities in all their specificity.

In 2016, I established the Dean's Forum with this understanding of Christian unity in mind. Each week, the forum unfolds through a method of engaged pedagogy

The unity we discover together in the Dean's Forum reminds me of a watercolor I first encountered years ago at the Brooklyn Museum: James Tissot's depiction of Matthew 8:5–13 (above). In the painting, we glimpse Jesus' healing ministry in all its intimacy and humanity. He moves among people doing ordinary things and responds humbly to those who cross his path. Tissot captures the presence of Jesus embedded in a diverse human community. The scene is crowded, full of motion and difference, yet within that ordinary bustle we perceive a profound unity. This is the heart of Christ's ministry and the essence of the Church: unity in particularity.



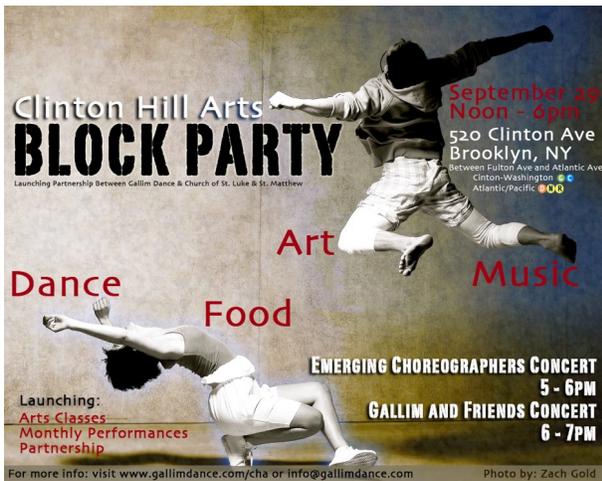
On Long Island, we minister amid extraordinary diversities: people of every faith, ethnicity, background, and circumstance. Our shared life is as complex and crowded as Tissot's painting. Each of us brings our own story into Christ's path. It is through the sharing of our particularity that divine unity is revealed.

Humanistic psychologist Carl Rogers famously wrote that 'what is most personal is most universal.' Similarly, Søren Kierkegaard taught that the universal is disclosed in the individual. The Gospels confirm this again and again. True unity is not achieved by erasing difference but by meeting one another in the specificity of our experience, trusting that the same Christ moves through every story.

In the Dean's Forum, I have witnessed how honesty about who we are, our stories, our wounds, our perspectives, and our gifts, creates space for us to recognize each other and to see in the other our own need for grace. This is where unity in Christ begins. The tension I experience in ministry is not between unity and particularity, but between authentic unity and any imitation or abstraction that avoids particularity. Unity that refuses difference will always remain shallow and short lived. Unity in Christ reaches deeper, beyond the surface of our commonality to the depths of our shared humanity.

Our task as leaders in the Church is to cultivate spaces where particularity is not a threat to unity, but its foundation. The Gospel does not call us to sameness, but to communion. As we stand before Christ, each from our own place and story, we discover that our deepest distinctiveness is what unites us. In Christ, grace abounds, and we discover that our healing and our unity are never solitary. They are always shared.

2. Jesus said, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old” (Matthew 13:52). The Episcopal Church is rooted in ancient tradition—Scripture, sacraments, and the historic episcopate—yet we live in a rapidly changing world that requires fresh expressions of timeless truths. Reflect on a situation where you helped a Christian community honor its foundational traditions while adapting to contemporary challenges or opportunities. How do you discern when change serves faithfulness and when it undermines it? What is your vision for how the Church can be both deeply rooted and creatively responsive in our current cultural moment?



*“Move among your people gathered, hasten now creation’s birth; love’s compassion healing, mending, giving peace to all the earth.” (Hymn 63, Voices Found)*

In 2010, The congregation at the Church of St. Luke and St. Matthew, Brooklyn, was faithful, prayerful, and deeply kind—known for service to the homeless, the lonely, and those living with addiction. The neighborhood around us was changing fast. Clinton Hill was becoming a crossroads: longtime residents, artists, young families and financiers all seeking belonging in a shifting city. We faced the question of how to live our tradition faithfully amid rapid social change.

Parish lay leaders and I began by naming some of our greatest strengths. Hospitality stood out as the beating heart of parish life. We deepened that tradition by opening our doors more often and more widely. We started by being open for prayer every day. Then we began hosting community meals, neighborhood gatherings, and small events where strangers could become friends. Our decisions about adapting ministries for our neighborhood in transition began with prayer, asking: How will this extend the table of Christ’s love in this place right now?

In time, we discerned another significant gift in our community: a passion for the arts. Just blocks from the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Pratt Institute, and the Mark Morris Dance Center, creativity was how our neighbors spoke of hope, transcendence, and imminence. So, we prayed, considered, and finally decided to appoint an Artist in Residence to help us explore beauty as a form of ministry.

Through a Spirit-led process, we called Andrea Miller, a recent Juilliard graduate who had just founded Gallim Dance (*Gallim means waves or fountains in Hebrew*). Together, we transformed an underutilized parish hall into a multi-use modern dance studio—a space that was alive with movement and connection. Professional dancers rehearsed by day; neighborhood children and youth gathered for after-school programs; and by evening the hall filled with music, laughter, and community. Gallim Dance became a vital part of our parish life over the coming years. Our first company manager would go on to lead the Boston Ballet, and Andrea would become the first ever Choreographer in Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Our parish was launching world-class artists like the great Anglican churches of the past.



And yet, the true measure of accomplishment was not artistic acclaim—it was spiritual development and communal transformation. The parish did not treat Gallim as an outside group, but as a part of our ministry. Young families who came for dance classes found themselves drawn to the altar. Parishioners discovered new energy through the creativity of neighbors. The Spirit was teaching us that a vibrant future for the Church requires us to move and grow.

This ministry became a living expression of the Incarnation, the Word made flesh through beauty, movement, hospitality, and relationship. We became more observably the Body of Christ. In this sense, it was nothing new. Our Anglican tradition teaches that beauty and justice flow from the same spring: both invite us to behold the world as God intends it—whole, reconciled, and alive with grace. As we lived into this calling, a more just vision for our neighborhood began to take shape, shimmering with possibility. It carried us into work we could not have foreseen, toward ministries that seemed to arise on their own, like light breaking through the surface of the water.

3. **Moses learned from his father-in-law Jethro that effective leadership requires both personal attention to individuals and systematic organization of the community (Exodus 18:13–26). Episcopal ministry demands both tender pastoral care and sophisticated institutional stewardship, especially in a complex diocese with multiple corporations, schools, and ministries. Describe your experience balancing hands-on pastoral ministry with strategic organizational leadership. How have you maintained spiritual groundedness while exercising administrative responsibility? Share a specific example of how you have integrated prayer and discernment with practical decision-making in a leadership role. What sustains you spiritually in the demands of institutional ministry?**



*“I want to walk as a child of the light, I want to follow Jesus.  
God set the stars to give light to the world, the star of my life is Jesus.”  
(Hymn 490, The Hymnal 1982)*

*Photo: U.S. Navy Lt. Michael Sniffen, battalion chaplain, 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, delivers a prayer to Marines with Alpha Company, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Marine Division, as a part of communion during Mountain Training Exercises in Bridgeport, California, June 16, 2024. The training emphasized the importance of maintaining operational readiness and cohesion while mountaineering through dense forests, rivers and uneven ground. MTX includes a variety of scenarios to test the Marines' adaptability and resilience, simulating real-world environmental challenges they might face.’ (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Jestin Costa)*

Serving as a chaplain in the United States Marine Corps has expanded my understanding of pastoral care and strategic leadership as deeply as any church, classroom, or boardroom ever did. It is ministry in motion—demanding, relational, unpredictable, and filled with grace. The Marine Corps is a highly complex organization and ministry within it requires disciplined strategic planning and leadership that responds to command priorities while remaining focused on Christian service to the human beings at the center of it all.

When I am knee to knee with an enlisted Marine, everything else falls away. The pastoral moment requires full attention, with an open heart and an undivided presence. Similarly, when I am meeting with a commanding officer, I must arrive with that same readiness, but also with the ability to articulate what I see, what I sense, and what I advise. In both cases, pastoral leadership begins in listening.

I have sat with commanding officers before major operational decisions, bringing prayer and perspective to choices that will affect many lives. I have prayed with Marines one-on-one and in small groups as they wrestle with suicidal ideation, broken relationships, and struggles to make sense of what it means to serve faithfully in a demanding and dangerous calling. In this way, military chaplaincy is a ministry of accompaniment: bringing stillness, courage, and perspective to people in high-pressure environments.

I approach this work primarily through the lens of Christian contemplation. As a vowed member of

the Community of the Incarnation, my life is shaped by the rhythms of Benedictine stability, Carmelite silence, and Franciscan joy. These rhythms are not abstract; they keep me grounded in God while serving in an institution (*the Department of Defense*) that can easily exhaust the spirit. Practicing my spirituality in a community of accountability and vulnerability sustains me amid the demands of institutional ministry.

My practice includes the Daily Office, daily Eucharist whenever possible, and an hour a day in silent contemplation. I meet weekly with a therapist and monthly with a spiritual director. These practices are not

accessories to institutional ministry and organizational leadership; they are its foundation. Without them, my capacity for pastoral presence and wise decision-making would quickly erode.

In my current work, I serve as both a cathedral/seminary dean and as a tactical and command chaplain in the United States Navy. These two worlds—ecclesial and military—represent dynamic environments in which the pastoral and the strategic must live together. Remaining close to the ground in direct pastoral care while also attentive to systems-level discernment and strategic leadership is essential. Both require prayerful courage and the ability to see the whole field.



For me, pastoral care and strategic leadership are not separate callings but one integrated ministry. Leadership that is not pastoral becomes brittle. Pastoral care without vision loses direction. The balance comes through a contemplative center; a life rooted in prayer, reflection, and the daily awareness that leadership in Christ's Church, whether in the field, the sanctuary, the classroom, or the boardroom, is always an act of love.

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4. **The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14–30) teaches both gratitude for God's gifts and accountability for their use. The Diocese of Long Island has been blessed with significant financial resources, talented people, and institutional assets, yet faces real challenges including declining membership and aging infrastructure in some areas. Reflect on a time when you helped a community or organization move from scarcity-thinking to abundance-thinking, or vice versa—when you helped address complacency about resources. How do you approach the tension between celebrating gifts and addressing genuine challenges? What does faithful stewardship look like when resources are both significant and limited? How do you inspire generosity while ensuring sustainability?**

When I arrived at the Cathedral of the Incarnation in 2015, the community was living in a long shadow of scarcity. The annual budget carried a sustained deficit in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Endowment



CONCEPT PLAN 1

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assets were invested very conservatively in low-growth bonds, and decision-making was shaped by anxiety rather than hope and imagination. The question in the air was, “How can we survive?” rather than, “How might we thrive, with God’s help?”

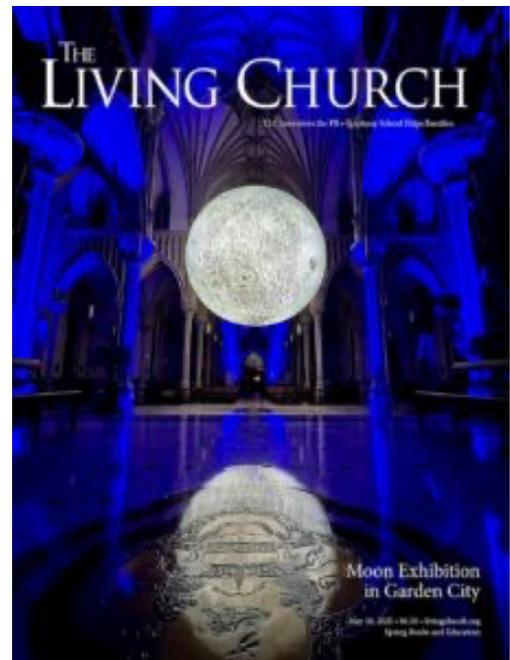
Over the next year, we began the slow and faithful work of discerning a new future. We changed investment management principles, renegotiated budgets, and built a new financial model focused on mission, anticipated growth and sustainability. Our aim was not merely to close a deficit, but to reawaken hope. Scarcity thinking drains the soul of a community. It

breeds fear and stifles creativity. When a congregation begins to imagine its life through the lens of abundance, the Holy Spirit reveals new possibilities.

In 2016, we launched a visioning process called Incarnation 2020: a five-year plan to see more clearly where God might be calling us. We prayed together, listened deeply, and named our virtues and our values. Gradually, a new culture took root. Instead of focusing on what might be lost, we began to imagine what might be found. We invested in new ministries, expanded worship and formation, grew our staff and clergy, and committed to repairing and restoring our historic buildings.

The financial results were remarkable. We eliminated deficits, increased our endowment through wise investment, and inspired a new spirit of generosity. But the greater change was spiritual. As people saw that their giving was building a future rather than maintaining the past, they gave more with joy. Major gifts began to flow, not from obligation, but from excitement and faith. I see faithful stewardship as eucharistic in shape. We take, bless, break, and give. We do not hoard, and we do not squander. We hold our resources lightly and our mission boldly. Stewardship is not primarily about protecting what we hold dear. It is about offering what we have to God, trusting that it will be multiplied.

When resources are both significant and limited, faithful stewardship looks like creativity and courage rooted in prayer. It looks like a willingness to risk for the sake of the Gospel, and the discipline to sustain what has been entrusted to our care. It looks like transparency, shared decision-making, and the conviction that every dollar, building, program, and service must relate to the mission of Christ.



As Incarnation 2020 reached its fulfillment, we expanded our vision into Incarnation 2030, continuing to invest in people, property, and purpose. The cathedral’s spiritual and physical renewal has shown that abundance is not a number but a posture of faith. To steward God’s gifts faithfully is to lead with imagination, accountability, and joy—trusting always that God’s grace is greater than our limits.

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5. **Jesus prayed “that they may all be one” (John 17:21), yet he also sent disciples out “two by two” (Mark 6:7) to serve in their particular contexts. The Diocese of Long Island includes parishes that are geographically distant and culturally distinct, each with unique ministries and challenges, yet all called to be part of one diocesan family. Describe your experience building connection and collaboration across differences—whether geographic, cultural, theological, or institutional. How have you strengthened relationships while respecting autonomy? Share a specific example of how you have helped separate communities or organizations discover a shared mission, without losing their distinctive identities. What practices or principles guide you in fostering both unity and local empowerment?**



*“In Christ there is no East or West, in him no South or North, but one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth.”*

(Hymn 529, The Hymnal 1982)

Throughout my ministry, I have sought to nurture relationships that honor connection and autonomy. In the Church, these two qualities are not opposites but partners.

Healthy connection strengthens identity, and genuine autonomy allows for deeper relationship. This conviction has guided my leadership in launching Cathedral College at Mercer in partnership with Codrington College and the University of the West Indies.

Codrington, founded in 1710, is the oldest seminary in the Western Hemisphere and a living witness to the complex history of Anglicanism in the Caribbean. Our partnership spans differences of geography, culture, theology, and institutional life. It was born from a friendship cultivated over several years of shared conversation, prayer, and vision. The Principal of Codrington and I spent many days candidly discussing the challenges of forming clergy in postcolonial contexts and the need to bridge historical and theological divides with honesty and grace.

Following our conversations over the course of a year, I was invited to preach in the seminary chapel and later in several cathedrals across the Province of the West Indies. I met with diocesan bishops to explore how our two seminaries might prepare future priests who are spiritually grounded, contextually aware, forward looking and attentive to the wounds of history. We did not avoid our differences, especially around human sexuality, but addressed them directly in prayerful conversation.

Together we reflected on the legacies of slavery and colonization, recognizing that the Church must take an active role in the work of reparations, not as a gesture of guilt but as an act of reconciliation and love.

As trust deepened, we began faculty exchanges. Codrington professors lectured at Mercer, and Mercer faculty, myself included, taught at Codrington. The relationships that emerged were marked by mutual respect and shared curiosity. This growing collaboration led to a formal agreement recognizing each school's faculty as an extension of the other for teaching in a new master's degree in Christian Theology and Spirituality. That degree now stands as a sign of our shared mission to form leaders for a global Anglican/Episcopal church that is rooted, just, and faithfully imaginative.



Our partnership also engages the differing postcolonial perspectives of the Caribbean and the United States. In the Caribbean, the experience of colonization remains vivid and formative in national identity, while in the United States, the legacy is often obscured beneath privilege and denial. Learning from one another across this divide has been both humbling and liberating. Our collaboration has drawn us into shared concern for creation care, especially as the effects of climate change are felt most acutely by poor island communities throughout the Caribbean and on Long Island.

Our connection and our autonomy in this partnership represents an archipelagic spirituality, shaped by the geography and imagination of island chains. I have been inspired by Barbadian poet Kamau Brathwaite, who first framed the notion of 'tidalectic thinking,' where islands remain distinct yet connected through the tides that move between them. This concept has become a living theology of partnership for me. Connection and autonomy are seen as gifts that sustain one another through movement, exchange, and grace, like the islands of an archipelago.

Institutions and people flourish when they are allowed to be fully themselves while remaining in relationship with others. The Church's future depends on this balance: strong local identities interwoven through trust, collaboration, and prayer. The partnership between Mercer and Codrington continues to show that relationship does not diminish distinctiveness. It deepens it. Connection and autonomy together create a living rhythm that is holy, resilient, and endlessly creative.