



WHAT IS A DISCERNMENT FACILITATOR?

Discernment facilitators train parish discernment committees in discernment – the art of prayerful listening, questioning, and analysis – and mentor those committees as they help a seeker clarify calls to lay leadership, the priesthood, or the diaconate.

The discernment facilitators also meet as a group to reflect on issues and concerns, refine their approaches and practices, and deepen their faith lives. Facilitators grow their understanding of this ministry through mentoring, discerning in community, and a formal training retreat.

Qualities of Good Facilitators

A good discernment facilitator has a sharp mind, a loving heart, a prayerful lifestyle, patience - including patience for facilitating communities (families, parish committees, etc.) to come to spiritual consensus, experience with listening and following the Holy Spirit's calls, and the time and energy to serve. He or she uses these gifts to help others discern in churches within driving distance of the facilitator's home. Good facilitators have an interest in creating authentic spiritual community, and gifts for teaching. Having a spiritual director is highly recommended. Discernment Facilitators are both lay and ordained.

Time Commitment & Dates

Facilitators typically serve two parish discernment committees per year, and can serve more if they wish. For each committee, the facilitator leads a training session which typically runs for one evening and one day (12-hours of training). The committee then typically has four or five 3-hour evening meetings.

All of the facilitators attend regular meetings twice per year. New facilitators also attend a one-time training retreat and shadow trained facilitators working with discernment committees.

- Jan. 11-13, 2019: Facilitator Training Retreat @ Richmond Hill ([register here](#))
- March 23, 2019 (10 a.m. – 1 p.m.): Facilitators' Spring Meeting @ Trinity, Fredericksburg
- September 21, 2019 (10 a.m. – 1 p.m.): Facilitators' Fall Meeting @ Trinity, Fredericksburg

Benefits of Service

Facilitators learn skills for discernment that will enrich their personal and parish lives, play a part in an essential ministry in our parish and diocesan life, and form tightknit communities. Discernment facilitators can apply their gifts for discernment to major decisions in their own lives and the lives of those they love, and teach their parish to approach substantive issues in new ways.

The Rev. [Bambi Willis](#) and Mr. [Tom Hahn](#) serve as co-chairs of the discernment facilitators.

Do you know someone who you feel is has the gifts for this ministry? Please send a recommendation to Ed Keithly, deputy director of transition ministry, at ekeithly@thediocese.net. [More on the discernment process.](#)