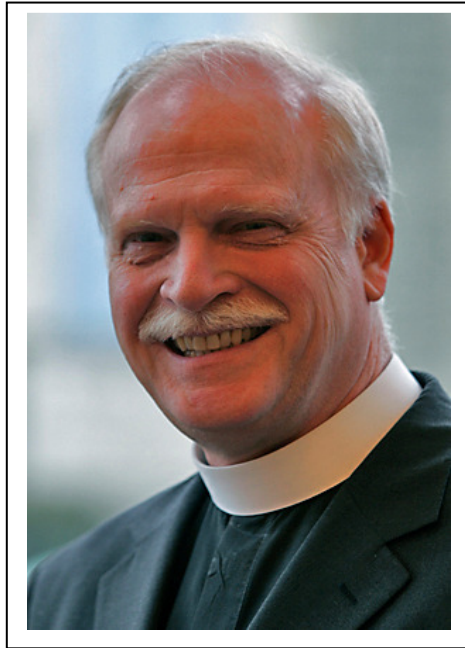


The Reverend Dr. Leander S. Harding



Age (at time of Nominating Synod): 61

Diocese of Canonical Residence:
South Carolina

Current Position:
Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology and
Dean, Church Relations and Seminary
Advancement, Trinity School for Ministry,
Pennsylvania

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Résumé

THE REV. LEANDER S. HARDING, PH.D.

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OBJECTIVE

A position vital to the mission of The Episcopal Church that combines pastoral, preaching, teaching and administrative skills.

SUMMARY

- **Current position:** Dean of Church Relations and Seminary Advancement and Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, Trinity School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA.
- **Twenty-eight years of experience in parish ministry.** Served in rural, suburban and multi-cultural urban parishes. Sixteen years as rector of a complex, institutional, multi-staff parish. Entire parish ministry in settings calling for major redevelopment.
- **An earned doctorate** in Pastoral Theology.
- **Continuing work as a scholar and writer.** Books: *Flying Saucers and Christmas* 2006, *Reverence for the Heart of the Child*, published by YTC press August 2008. Articles in Anglican Theological Review, Trinity Journal, The Anglican, Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Professional Approaches to Christian Education, Harvest, the Journal of Scholarly Engagement With Anglican Doctrine, Leaven, the newsletter of the National Episcopal Clergy Associations, regular contributor to the "Healing Word," of the Homily Service and to Liturgy, both of the National Liturgical Conference. Research project on priesthood and ministry, "What Have We Been Telling Ourselves About The Priesthood?" in Sewanee Theological Review.
- **Teaching experience.** Over twenty five years teaching basic Christian doctrines in parish settings. Presently teaching Pastoral Leadership, Preaching, Sacramental Theology and Mentored Ministry. Teaching Philosophy at a state college, supervising supervisors of Field Education students at Episcopal Divinity School, teaching Family Theory and Therapy at Andover Newton Theological School and providing spiritual direction for ordinands. Teaching the theology of holy orders in the S.T.M. program at Nashotah House Seminary.
- **Experience as a parish consultant,** consulting with congregations in four dioceses for search, conflict resolution, strategic planning and Christian Education.
- **Administration.** A background in business before ordination, an entrepreneurial spirit. Currently lead a team of seven in recruiting, development, alumni affairs and communications. Responsible for managing the strategic plan of the seminary.

EDUCATION

- B.A. in religion and literary criticism, New College, Sarasota, Florida, 1970
- M.Div. cum laude, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts, 1978 (Anglican Studies at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts)
- Ph.D. Boston College, Institute for Religious Education And Pastoral Ministry, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, 1989, Thesis on the Theology and Psychology of Childhood

PASTORAL EXPERIENCE

- **1979–1984, Vicar St. Anne’s, Mars Hill, Diocese of Maine.**

There were 3 persons present at the first service I led. At the end of five years there was a growing, vital congregation. My work as a mission priest was made possible by a combination of farming, teaching at the local university, congregational and diocesan support. My initial stipend from St. Anne’s was \$25 per week plus a supply of potatoes. Toward the end of my ministry at St. Anne’s we raised the funds to put a cement foundation under the church. This allowed us to have a place for fellowship and Sunday School. One day as I stood in the foundation hole I felt God was telling me that the nature of my ministry was to renew the foundations, and so it has been to this day.

- **1982, Church Of the Good Shepherd, Houlton, Maine.**

For 6 months during the Rector’s sabbatical I was priest in charge of this shire town parish. I led the services, provided emergency pastoral care and provided support for lay leaders who took on new responsibilities during this creative time.

- **1984–1989, Rector, Church Of Our Saviour, Arlington, Massachusetts.**

In 1984 I was offered a scholarship in the Ph.D. program at The Institute for Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry at Boston College. I became Rector of the Church Of Our Saviour in Arlington, a suburb of Boston. The parish was a mix of long-time working class residents, new young professionals and students transiting through Boston graduate schools. The initial challenge was to help the parish adjust to its first part-time Rector. This required the development of new patterns of parish life and leadership. During this time attendance and stewardship increased and many new persons were integrated into parish leadership.

- **1989–2005, Rector, St. John’s, Stamford, Connecticut.**

St. John’s has occupied the same city block in Stamford for 260 years. The parish experienced decline during a long and conflicted search process. Stamford is forty five minutes from New York City by train. St. John’s reflects the city. The parish has every race, every nation, every condition from the Chairman of the Board to the street person. During my tenure as Rector the parish went through a major process of redevelopment. Together we: 1.) identified and encouraged new leadership, established a year round program of adult Christian Education, 2.) pioneered an approach to Christian Education for children that is more like worship, integrated children into the Sunday Eucharist, 3.) developed an innovative program to attract the unchurched to our parish, 4.) instituted the sacramental rite of healing with a moving and strong response from the parish, 5.) worked with the diocese to develop a ministry to the Haitian population in Stamford, Eglise Epiphanie, 6.) became a Jubilee Center, 7.) began the capital projects to prepare the historic buildings for

the next one hundred years of ministry, at a total cost of one and a half million dollars. The parish has changed from being an aging declining congregation to a growing congregation with a mix of ages.

- 2006–2008, **Asst. Grace Episcopal Church, Edgeworth, Pennsylvania.**
Part-time assistant
- 2008–March. 2010, **Senior Priest, Fox Chapel Episcopal Church, Fox Chapel Pennsylvania.**
Part-time assistant.
- May 2010, **Supply Priest, The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh**

DIOCESAN MINISTRY

- **Diocese of Maine.** I served as president of Regional Council, on the Christian Education Committee, the Commission on Missions and as chair of the Evangelism Committee and as an examining chaplain for the Deacons program.
- **Diocese of Massachusetts.** Worked as a member of the consultants team and was Vice President of the Clergy Association.
- **Diocese of Connecticut.** Served as Dean of the Stamford Deanery, as a spiritual director for persons enrolled in a diocesan program for the development of lay ministry, as a member of the screening committee for postulancy to Holy Orders, as a member of the Board Of Overseers of Transfiguration Lodge, a center for prayer and spirituality and as a member of the Cathedral Chapter. Canon IV consultant. President of the Standing Committee.

MINISTRY IN THE WIDER CHURCH

- Member of the Theology and the Priesthood team of the Cornerstone Project of the Episcopal Church Foundation.
- Godly Play Founding Trainer. Godly Play is an innovative program for Christian Education with children.
- Adjunct Faculty in Field Education, Episcopal Divinity School, 1988–89.
- Adjunct Faculty in Family Theory and Therapy, Andover Newton Theological School, 1990.
- Mentor in the Annand Program for Spiritual Formation at Berkeley Divinity School 1999.
- Frequent guest preacher and retreat leader. Chaplain for Mere Anglicanism Conferences.

AWARDS

- Episcopal Church Foundation Fellow. Boston College University Fellowship.
- College Theology Society of America Best Graduate Essay in Theology.
- Lilly Foundation Seminar for outstanding Ph. D. candidates.
- One of Ten Best Sermons, 1997, and Sermons That Work, 2002, by Episcopal Evangelism Foundation.
- Research Fellow, School of Theology, University of the South, 1999.
- Research Fellow, Yale Divinity School, 1999-2000.
- Pastor-Theologian Fellow, Center For Theological Inquiry, 2001-2004.
- Deming Foundation Scholarship for Advanced Management Training, 2008.
- Templeton Foundation Seminar for Pastoral Science 2009

PERSONAL

- Health Excellent, Married 7/3/71 to Claudia Bolin Harding. Three adult sons.
- Life experience includes work in the construction trades, commercial agriculture, wood harvesting and agriculture related business.

Written Responses to Questions by the Nominee
The Reverend Dr. Leander S. Harding

1. Who do you say Jesus Christ is?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour and He is the Lord and Saviour of the whole cosmos. Jesus is the ultimate, unique and irreplaceable revelation of God. The Father wants to make himself known in such a way that men and women are drawn to him in love, worship and service, and therefore the Father gives us his son, the son of God and the son of man who gives up his life as a ransom for many that we might be reconciled to the Father in the power of the Spirit.

Jesus Christ is indeed the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to Father save by him. This is not because there is no truth or beauty in the world's great religions but because as Emil Brunner has said, "nowhere there will you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd calling each sheep by name." We cannot climb up to God. God must descend to us in mercy and grace, and this he has done in Jesus Christ the Lord.

In the words of the Prayer Book, "He stretches out his arms of love on the hard wood of the cross, so that everyone might come within the reach of his saving embrace." On the cross God both judges and redeems our sin, rebellion and resistance, our captivity to evil, our tendency toward violence, with a love that looks weak but is really the greatest power in the universe. How else shall he defeat our rebellion without destroying us? How else can he demonstrate his power and still leave us room to respond?

Jesus rises victorious from the grave with a new and transformed life. It is the life of a new humanity transfigured by the power of God. In the resurrection God shows us the life for which he has made us and which he wants to give us. He does more than show us. He offers us a participation in this life now through our connection to the living Lord. We are connected to him through his words in the Bible, through the sacraments of the church, and through Christian fellowship and service. Through these means, the Risen Lord comes to us with the gift of his Spirit and the promise of eternal life.

2. What is the gospel message?

The gospel is literally good news. It is the news first and foremost that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. It is the news that there is a new life with God and a new life with each other that begins now and which the grave cannot hold. It is the life which the crucified and risen Lord breathes into his church. It is a life in which sins are forgiven and there is real peace between us and God, and real peace with each other. It is a life where there is a new power of love for God and for each other, and a new wellspring of service to God and to our neighbors.

This new life comes to us at great cost through Jesus Christ's sacrifice of love on the cross. It comes in the power of his resurrection and by the gift of his spirit. We encounter the one who is the way, the truth and the life in the words of scripture, in the preaching of the church, the sacraments of the church and in the fellowship and service we share in his name. This encounter brings us to a point of decision. Will we reach out in faith and lay hold of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ? Will we in repentance and humility seek this new life? As St. John says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all that believe in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

The gospel is good news. It is a message of mercy, forgiveness and love. It is a message of new life but it is more than a message and more than a set of ideas or values. The gospel is the announcement of a new reality. The Gospel is the announcement that God has acted decisively for us in Jesus Christ the Lord and that the Kingdom of God is at hand. The church is imperfect and frail but it is also what St. Paul calls the *arrabon*, the down payment of the kingdom, the new reality which God is bringing to pass through his son. It is part of the gospel and inseparable from it that people from many different languages, tribes and nations are actually living a new life with God and with each other, a life marked by charity and love and service. In the midst of the sad old reality of hatred and violence a new reality has appeared. The Christian life the local congregation lives together and presents to the world is a primary witness to the reality of the good news that the Lord is risen and the kingdom of God is at hand.

3. What is your understanding of "Mission and Ministry"?

To be on mission is to be one who is sent and who is under orders to accomplish the purpose of the sender. To be a minister is to be a servant and in this case to be the servant of the one who sends, and of his purpose. It is the Father who sends and his only begotten Son who is the only true missionary and the only true servant or minister. He is the one who is sent to serve and to accomplish the Father's purpose.

The mission that the Father gives to the Son is to reconcile all things to the Father in the power of the Spirit. The Son accomplishes his mission through a service of sacrificial love by his life, death and resurrection. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and has given us this ministry of reconciliation." All Christian ministry whether lay or ordained is a participation in and a carrying forward of the ministry of the Son which is the pouring out of his life toward the Father for the sake of the world and the pouring out of his life toward the world for sake of his Father.

First and foremost, Christian mission is the calling of people to be reconciled to God and to each other in Jesus Christ the Lord. It means inviting people to cross the boundary between unbelief and belief. This invitation is given by word and by deed. Humble service is to be offered to the neighbor in Christ's name. The hungry are to be fed, the naked clothed, the sick and imprisoned visited, the poor relieved. Healing is to be offered in the name of Christ. But it must be clear that these ministries are in service to the mission of the Son that all people should be reconciled to the Father in and through him. Words without deeds are empty. Deeds without gospel proclamation do not answer the deepest human need and fail in the mission which has been given to us. All Christians are incorporated into the mission of the Son by baptism and are called to find their unique place of service and ministry. As St. Paul says "Ye are the body of Christ and each one of ye individually members of it." And "For there are many gifts but one Spirit."

Sometimes the unity of the church and the mission of the church are played off against each other. One hears the advice to put divisions aside and get on with mission and ministry. The mission of the church is to incarnate the costly unity with God and each other that has been won by the death and resurrection of the saviour. People must see that the reconciliation of God is a living reality into which they can enter. Therefore there is the closest possible connection between building up the unity of the church and advancing the mission of the church.

4. Provide an autobiographical sketch of your life, including those turning points which were significant in your spiritual development.

I was very drawn to God and to religion as a child. When I was very small before I went to school I used to go to a spot in the woods where there was a certain kind of light that spoke to me of a presence which was scary not because of a sense of anything bad but of everything good and beautiful. I attended a small one room school run by Benedictine nuns where I learned the name of God and who Jesus is and what he had done for us and where I was brought into the sacramental life of the church. I was asked to serve at the weekly mass at the school, and serving at the mass I perceived the same light that I perceived in the woods. I did not have the name for it then but I would call it now the glory of God. As a child I had a very powerful perception of the glory of God, the radiance of the divine love gathered about the altar of God. When it came time for me to leave the school my teacher took me aside and told me that she thought I had a vocation to the priesthood. I felt that what she was telling me was a prophecy that both thrilled and frightened me.

Like a lot of young people I wandered away from the church in my teenage years. I had questions and nobody would answer them. I continued to be interested in the big

questions of life and studied philosophy and religion in college. In my senior year of college in the midst of talking about one of the Christian concepts that I admired, love of the enemy, the penny very suddenly dropped for me that I was God's enemy and yet he loved me and that the price of that love was the cross. I went to seminary originally to fit this recognition of the in-breaking power of Christ into a worldview which had squeezed out the supernatural. Instead I got a supernatural world view. I found the Episcopal Church and felt that I had come home and my desire for Holy Orders was awakened. I heard again the voice that I had heard as a child.

Over many years as a parish priest I have come to understand something of the depth of the Lord's passion of rejected love. I have come to a fuller understanding of God's love for his enemies and have a deep identification with the passion and sacrifice of this seeking and searching love. There was a window in my last parish of the Risen Christ appearing to Peter on the beach after the Resurrection. The wounds in his hands and side are transfigured and He is telling Peter to "feed my sheep." In my prayers I return to that image again and again.

5. Describe your rule of life in detail.

I follow a personal rule of life that is rooted in the prayer book tradition. I strive for a life that has a balance of scripture reading, prayer, worship, service, fellowship and recreation, including exercise and rest. The foundation of my rule is the Daily Office. I pray morning and evening prayer. I also pray to God in a very simple conversational way during my daily one hour walk. My wife and I start each day with prayer together. I make a regular confession and seek spiritual direction from those I consider more proficient in the Christian life. I am fortunate to live in a community with regular days of quiet, prayer and retreat. During the last several years I have been drawn to contemplative or centering prayer and practice this form of prayer throughout the day.

6. Based on your reading of the Diocesan Profile (including the Survey) and other knowledge you have, what do you see that is positive and what do you see that is challenging for the next Bishop of Springfield?

The size of the diocese is such that a personal and pastoral ministry of the bishop to the clergy and parishes is possible. The stability of the diocese in terms of numbers, finances and faithfulness is very encouraging. The pattern of the clergy and bishop meeting together in prayer and retreat is well established and a major strength. There is a strong infrastructure of departments and commissions that is tied to mission and ministry and obviously has committed participation by the members of the diocese. There are many examples of

outreach and service to the community in the name of Christ. Youth work is a strength. There is a palpable sense of the diocese as a real Christian community that comes through the profile. The ministry of the ECW is a strength. Especially impressive is the “pausing for prayer.” The camping ministry and the Toddhall center for renewal place Christian formation and education at the heart of diocesan activities. The ecumenical witness with the Lutheran Church is very important.

The presence of so many educational and health institutions is a strength and an opportunity. There is a new conversation coming between science and religion which will be friendlier and more conducive to faith than has been so for centuries. The diocese is well positioned to take a lead in that conversation. The healing ministry of the church is one of the great points of evangelical and apologetic contact in time. Our tradition is uniquely well equipped for outreach to the worlds of medicine and education.

The mix of growing urban areas and rural areas is a strength and opportunity. I believe small cities which are educational and healthcare centers are inherently attractive to the rising generation. This has positive implications for the rural communities in the region. There will be opportunities for church planting and replanting. For me personally the rural character of much of the diocese is a plus. My wife and I simply love to be out and about in farm country.

Nurturing the life of very small churches in isolated places will continue to be a challenge. This will require individual hand crafted solutions worked out in close consultation with the people. There will be the challenge that the whole church shares of building up the unity of the church and handling controversy in a spirit of prayer, charity and mutual forbearance. There will be the challenge of maintaining both the connection to TEC and the wider Anglican Communion. In some places men are conspicuous by their absence from the life of the church and there is a need to address ministry to men. There will be a challenge to reach out to young adults and young families and bring them into the life of the church. There will be a challenge to reach across boundaries of race and ethnicity in the church’s evangelistic mission.

7. Describe your understanding of leadership, particularly as it would be exercised as a bishop.

The bishop first and foremost is a pastor to the pastors, building up the church by encouraging and caring for its pastors. There is no effective leadership without investing in

personal relationships. I would wish to make spending time with the clergy in conversation, Bible study and prayer a major focus.

Secondly, the bishop is an apostolic teacher with a responsibility to hand over intact the faith once received from the apostles. In addition to the yearly Sunday visitation in each parish it would be my hope to develop festivals of faith where the bishop would be able to gather the clergy and people in a region of the diocese for shared teaching and conversation about the basics of the Christian faith and for the opportunity to share stories of faith, hope and service and thereby build up the body of Christ.

The first parish I led was to be closed. I believed it had a future and a viable ministry. We began with no people and no money and redeveloped a parish that is still viable today in a part of the country that has been steadily losing population since the civil war. Toward the end of my tenure there we raised \$10,000 to put a foundation under the remodeled chicken house that was the church. In terms of the times, the community and the resources, it was an unexpected miracle. I didn't come up with this vision on my own. The spark of this vision was in the hearts of the people. We discovered it together in a community of prayer and discernment. It was my job to give voice to the vision we had discerned together. At the right time I challenged them to act and they responded.

I have applied these lessons in every parish I have led, all of which have been venues requiring fundamental redevelopment. I have learned over and over that people respond to an articulate vision that communicates imaginatively the hopes and dreams that God has stirred up in us.

Vision is put in action through the policies, processes and systems of organizational life. Often when things are stuck we look for someone to blame. Most people do the best they can within the system in which they must operate. Identifying the system and taking a lead in improving it constantly and forever is a fundamental responsibility of leadership. The bishop also has the responsibility of making the gifts and abilities of the members of the diocese available for the mission of church and of seeing that people are where they can place their best gift on the altar.

8. A bishop is called to “guard the faith, unity and discipline in the Church” (BCP 517).

How do you understand this charge as it relates to the current crisis and other challenges within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion?

A bishop is a walking witness and sign of the dependence of the church as the one body of Christ upon its one head and upon the historical events of the death and resurrection of the Lord. My experience with maintaining the unity of a diverse parish in a metropolitan area is that if there is clear and articulate teaching and witness to the death and resurrection of the Lord at the center of parish life, combined with a gentle pastoral spirit, this creates a center of gravity that is able to hold together a diverse group of people who are in different places in their spiritual walk and have differing opinions about some of the divisive issues in the church. The unity of the church is grounded in the faith of the church, and building up faith in Jesus Christ is the primary way of guarding the unity of the church.

In the current crisis I believe that the Anglican covenant is the way forward for the Anglican Communion and that bishops should take the lead in helping clergy and people understand and support that process. In the context of The Episcopal Church this presents the bishop with the challenge of maintaining the connection with both The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. A bishop with a traditional point of view will be in the minority in the house of bishops but that such a bishop can have a faithful and effective ministry while maintaining the connection with the Anglican Communion is witnessed to by the Communion Partner bishops, and I would want to identify my ministry with those bishops who I believe are maintaining both the unity of the church and its faithfulness.

One way in which I have exercised leadership both as a parish priest and part of the leadership team at the seminary has been to work to put in place norms and principles of Christian conversation and to build up relationships of trust *before* controversial issues arise. This way, we find that they can be handled in an atmosphere of genuine Christian community and with prayer and mutual respect.

9. Describe your liturgical style; include in your answer your understanding of the place of preaching and the use of music in the liturgy.

I am for a reverent and dignified ceremonial that is appropriate to the real presence of Christ to us in the Eucharist. The liturgy should be done with careful preparation and to the highest level of excellence we can manage. The liturgy is also the work of the whole people of God and their sincere participation is more precious than an elusive perfection of performance. My own piety is deeply rooted in the Eucharist. Perhaps you could describe me as moderate Anglo-Catholic in style.

I believe the Eucharist contains both the audible words of the Gospel and the visible words of the bread and wine. These dimensions of the Eucharist can be distinguished but not separated. The preaching of the church makes it plain who it is that gives us this bread and this wine and stirs up in us the faith by which we take to ourselves the gift of his body and blood. Reading of the word of God and preaching must be part of every Eucharist. At times, perhaps at a sick bed, no more than a brief word is appropriate but it must be said. It is the responsibility of the bishop to encourage in every way possible an effective preaching ministry in the church. "For faith comes by hearing." There is also a need for preaching and teaching services which are oriented toward those who do not know Christ and which set out in a plain and winsome way the basics of the Christian faith. Evensong lends itself especially to this purpose.

Music is a very powerful ministry in the church and is a kind of preaching in its own right that exercises a profound spiritual formation on us. There are portions of the liturgy that

are traditionally sung and this kind of congregational singing lays the truths of faith deep in the soul. We should be learning new songs but need a steady diet of familiar ones so that the words will come to us easily to encourage and strengthen us apart from the liturgy. There is room for all kinds of music in the church. The use of more world music is a witness to the global community of Christians. We must be open to music that speaks to our times but we must also be stewards of the riches of our tradition and realize that liturgical music has both the task of responding to and forming the desires of the worshipers.