

Episcopal Recovery Ministries

Episcopal Recovery Ministries (ERM) exists as a resource for people seeking information, guidance, and consolation in their struggles with substance use disorders and addictions of any kind, be it sex, gambling, narcotics, food, alcohol. ERM focuses on the person who is addicted and on the people who are affected by another's addiction, offering information to enable those affected to find the help they seek.

ERM was formed in 2019 when the 180th Diocesan Convention passed a resolution (Nov. 22, 2019) to reestablish the Episcopal Recovery Ministries. Under the leadership of The Rev. Sally Weaver, a committee was formed and the first two years were spent researching and setting up its website -- www.ermdiocesemo.org -- which contains links to resources throughout the state of Missouri.

In mid-2023, Rev. Weaver resigned as chair and leadership of the Diocesan chapter was assigned to the Rev. Deacon Loretta Go. Aside from website maintenance, little activity was being generated that required a committee to handle. The committee disbanded in January 2024 and Bishop Johnson appointed Rev. Go as Missioner of Recovery Ministries.

The Missioner's responsibilities include:

- The creation of a Council of Advice to assist in carrying out their duties.
- Provide resources about addiction and recovery to communities of faith within the Diocese.
- Provide resources to communities of faith within the Diocese for observing Recovery Sunday.
- Provide resources, formation, and training to communities of faith within the Diocese about Narcan and other life-saving measures.
- Preach and teach in communities of faith that make up the Diocese.
- Submit an annual report to the Diocesan Convention.
- Offer presentations to Diocesan Council which highlight the ministries designed to alleviate addiction and marginalization within the Diocese.

Naloxone (Narcan) is a potentially life-saving medicine that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose. At the end of 2023, Life Boxes containing free naloxone on a 24/7 basis were placed at two parishes in the diocese. As of October 1, 2024, the number of boxes in our diocese had risen to 11. Additionally, some of our churches elect to offer Narcan from their blessing boxes instead of having another structure devoted to just Narcan.

In June, the Revs. Weaver and Go attended the annual meeting of Recovery Ministries of the Episcopal Church (RMEC) in Louisville, KY. Rev. Weaver and the Rev. Justin Martin serve on ERM's Council of Advice. Annually on Recovery Sunday, which this year was February 18th, resources such as bulletin inserts and prayers were provided to parishes across the diocese. The Revs. Martin and Go participated in Christ Church Cathedral's Evensong in September in honor of Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Awareness. Planning is underway for a possible Evensong on International Overdose Awareness Day, held annually on August 31st to commemorate those who have died of overdose.

ERM welcomes ideas and suggestions for improving the website and our service to the Diocesan community. Substance use disorder is a major issue in American society. But there is help and there is hope.

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