

## **The Rev. Susan B. Haynes** - Sense of Call -

**BEARER OF COMPASSION** – “Coming together, suffering with.” Those are the roots of the word, *Compassion*, the hallmark of my call. God’s grace enables me to tap into His limitless resources of compassion. Through the cultivation of a relationship with Jesus Christ, that passion becomes a healing touch and the accompanying steps with which to touch a suffering, lonely world. In addition to caring for those in my immediate flock, I am passionate about tending to my clergy colleagues. If a fellow cleric is suffering due to stressful workloads, pastoral crisis in the parish, loss and stress in their personal lives, I am eager to connect and to offer support. I attend to my own wellness and encourage my clergy colleagues to do the same. Another aspect of my compassion is my ability to be an advocate for those who do not have voice. I have done this in the public forum, in the legal system and most particularly within the medical system. As a Bishop, I would advocate that every parish is important, that no voice is to be silenced, and that all are valued.

**CONNECTOR OF COMMUNITY** – Communities fracture when trust is broken. When we do not give enough attention to the painstaking process of re-building trust, the fracture continues. Trust happens when all voices are heard, including the voices that are not present, who are excluded for whatever reason. After listening to all voices, we need to move forward with clear, consistent communication using every means possible (including technology). Jesus’ analogy of himself as the vine and His followers as the branches is apt – those who stay close to the vine are the branches that flourish. In building community, we must stay close to the vine and tend healthily to branches. As a student of organizational development (particularly church development), I have learned ways to connect and build community. Every Diocese has its own constellation of parishes scattered on a map – dots that must be connected in order to manifest the picture of its unique calling. As a Bishop, my gift is to be the dot connector.

**CULTIVATOR** – Cultivators tend to the growth that is given and improve the environment in which the given is planted. We all know that plants flourish best in soil that has been well maintained and nourished; and that plants tend to fail when the soil is weak or has been stripped of its nutritive qualities through overuse and pollution. As a **cultivator**, I tend to the soil of souls – of both people and communities. Churches and worshipers who are reminded of the basics of healthy souls through the models of its leaders, are churches that will thrive. As a Bishop I would model and teach a life of prayer, study, and service as the way to make one’s soul a healthy soil for the plants of God. It is specifically this healthy soil that will give birth to our Vision.

Your parish profile spoke of your yearning for compassion – for care of clergy and lay alike, for understanding of the painful journey everyone has walked, for celebration of the healing that has happened. I also hear of an ongoing desire to continue to rebuild trust in the episcopate, to connect communities that have been disenfranchised, and to tend the soil of the Diocese in such a way that it can move forward with a healthy, flourishing vision of being the light of Christ with guidance to offer a suffering world. As a Bishop I can offer that compassion, that advocacy, that connection of community and that cultivation of trust and health.