

THE RIGHT REVEREND JAMES B. MAGNESS, D.Min., D.D.
Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries
The Episcopal Church



In March 2010 the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church elected James B. Magness to be the VI Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries. In June 2010 at Washington National Cathedral he was consecrated as a bishop of the church. Bishop Magness' span of responsibility is for Episcopal chaplains and their congregations in the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. In January 2012 Bishop Magness was seated by the Presiding Bishop as the Canon for Federal Ministries of Washington National Cathedral. Since becoming a bishop he was appointed as the Vice-Chair of the Anglican Standing Committee for International Peace with Justice Concerns and has served the Presiding Bishop as her representative for a number of communion and international ecumenical engagements to include the Church of England, the Philippines, South Sudan and Israel & Palestine.

At the time of his election he was serving as the bishop's Canon for Mission and Diocesan Administration in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, Norfolk, VA. Prior to that in 2007 Bishop Magness had been the rector interim for Galilee Episcopal Church, Virginia Beach, VA. In this position he provided pastoral and transitional leadership to a parish of over 1200 members, enabling them to create a new and healthy vision for their future. In 2004 Bishop Magness joined the Diocese of Kentucky as the bishop's Canon to the Ordinary. His duties were to assist his bishop through being the director of diocesan staff, transition ministries officer and diocesan operating officer.

Bishop Magness retired from the U.S. Navy in 2004 in the rank of Captain, serving as Command Chaplain of U.S. Joint Forces Command and Fleet Chaplain for the U.S. Fleet Forces Command. Prior to those assignments, from 1997 to 2000 he served as the Navy Chief of Chaplains' Director of Personnel for the Navy Chaplain Corps. Bishop Magness first joined the Navy as an enlisted person in 1966. During his enlisted service he served aboard three Navy ships and spent one year serving as a member of a forward logistics command in the northern-most port of South Vietnam.

After his initial naval service he returned to his hometown of Hendersonville, N.C., married his wife, Carolyn, and took a position at a General Electric factory. Later he and Carolyn became students at Western Carolina University. They graduated in 1974, she with a Bachelor of Science in early childhood education and he with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and sociology.

A lifelong Episcopalian, he became intentional about the Christian faith during his undergraduate years when he began to sense a call to ordained ministry. After graduation while completing the ordination exploration discernment process in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, he worked for a Department of Labor affiliate as field director for two federal programs: Neighborhood Youth Corps and Operation Mainstream, a program for perennially unemployable disadvantaged adults. Later that year he commenced his initial theological studies at the Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas, where he received a master of divinity degree in 1977.

Bishop Magness returned to North Carolina to serve in parish ministry in Edneyville and Flat Rock, N.C. During that time, he also joined the Naval Reserve as a chaplain. Three years later he returned to active duty in the Navy as a Chaplain Corp officer. In 1981 he completed a one-year clinical pastoral education residency year at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Later on he spent two years in an exchange program with the British Royal Navy, working as a chaplain and priest for the Church of England. In 1999, he earned a Doctor of Ministry degree with a concentration in Christian leadership from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. In 2012 the Seminary of the Southwest awarded him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

He has been married to his wife, Carolyn for over 40 years. During their relaxing moments he and Carolyn enjoy dancing the Carolina Shag. Jay also has a fondness for restoring classic cars, fly fishing and road running. They have two married daughters, Laurel and Rebekah, both of whom reside in Virginia.