

MEDIA STATEMENT

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On Saturday, Jan. 10, The Right Rev. Robert O'Neill ordained Mary Catherine Volland to the sacred order of priests, along with Heather Leigh Payton, Michael David Scott Demmon and Bret Bowie Hayes. All four ordinands will be serving congregations in Colorado.

Volland, a long-time resident of Colorado, was a candidate for ordination from the Diocese of Minnesota where she was ordained to the transitional diaconate this summer. She has been called to serve as an assistant priest at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Denver, and was ordained here by Bishop O'Neill on behalf of the Bishop of Minnesota, the Right Rev. James Jelinek. (Hayes, a candidate for ordination from the Diocese of Connecticut, is serving as a curate at St. John's Cathedral, and was also ordained here by Bishop O'Neill on behalf of the Bishop of Connecticut, the Right Rev. Andrew Smith.)

Volland is a partnered lesbian. The Episcopal Church does ordain partnered gay and lesbian persons. Several Colorado congregations have been and are served faithfully by gay and lesbian clergy. Although there is a clearly range of opinion among clergy and lay people of the diocese about the ministry of partnered gay and lesbian clergy, one of the gifts of Anglican Christianity is its tradition of holding widely divergent points of view in a context of orthodox Christian faith.

"The Diocese of Colorado is perhaps the most politically and theologically diverse diocese in The Episcopal Church," says Bishop O'Neill. "Our faithful walking together as sisters and brothers in Christ is at once challenging and a great gift that we have to offer to a broken and divided world. I am grateful to all in this diocese who faithfully come to the table to offer their many gifts to God's service, including the gay and lesbian Christians among us who so generously contribute to our common life and ministry."

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