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**Title**

Harry Stock Oral History Interview Webpage

**Date**

May 10, 2023

**Extant**

1 webpage, (53.7 minute interview), transcript

**Abstract**

This interview of Rev. Harry Stock was conducted as part of the Called and Holy: Virginia Theological Seminary LGBTQIA+ Oral History Project. Stock was the first openly gay seminary student at Virginia Theological Seminary. He forfeited his ordination in the Episcopal Church to serve in the LGBTQ-friendly congregation of MCC Washington D.C. during the AIDS crisis. His ordination was reinstated in 2024.

**Biographical**

Harry Stock was born in 1940 and raised in the Roman Catholic Church. While attending and later working for West Virginia University, he attended Trinity Episcopal Church. He credits the Rev. John Glover, Trinity's then-rector, and the Rt. Rev. Wilburn Campbell, then-bishop of the Diocese of West Virginia, as important figures in welcoming him as an Episcopalian and supporting his three years of study in the West Virginia School for Religion. He discerned a call to the priesthood, and entered Virginia Theological Seminary in 1975.

His time at Virginia Theological Seminary where he was the first openly gay student was often difficult. The Episcopal Church could be hostile to LGBTQ+ persons, and Integrity USA was in its infancy. Then-Bishop of West Virginia, the Rt. Rev. Robert P. Atkinson, supported Stock and his ministry while aware that he was gay. After graduating from VTS in 1978, he stayed in Washington, D.C., working a secular job and serving as a lay assistant at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Foggy Bottom, where he had served as a seminarian.

Bishop Atkinson ordained Stock as a deacon at St. Mary's in 1980 and ordained him a priest in 1981 at St. John's Episcopal Church in Charleston, West Virginia, despite realizing that no church in the Diocese of West Virginia would call a gay priest. Stock continued his ministry in Washington, D.C., several years before he accepted a call to minister in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC). This revoked his Holy Orders and ordination as a priest in the Episcopal Church and Stock went on to serve as pastor for the Metropolitan Community Church of The Disciples for twelve years.

During the AIDS epidemic he would visit up to ten or fifteen AIDS patients a day and sometimes officiated at six or seven funerals a week. He credits his prior ministry working with young children on the terminal ward at Children's Hospital with preparing him to face the AIDS crisis.

After retiring from Metropolitan Community Church, Stock found a home at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., where he became a "parish partner, occasionally preaching, assisting with pastoral counseling, leading Christian education classes, and celebrating the Eucharist. While at Westminster, Stock founded "Scrolls Revealed Ministries" and for over 20 years traveled to churches, colleges, universities, retreats, and conferences in 19 states, leading a Seminar "Biblical Translation for Gay Liberation: How the Bible Does Not Condemn Homosexuality. An In-Depth Study."

In October, 2024, forty-three years after being stripped of the priesthood in the Episcopal Church, the Rt. Rev. Matthew Cowden, bishop of the Diocese of West Virginia reinstated Stock as an Episcopal priest. The service of reinstatement was an ecumenical gathering and included members and leaders from around The Episcopal Church, including the Rt. Rev. Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop in The Episcopal Church, and the Very Rev. Ian Markham, dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary.

Since being reinstated an Episcopal priest, Harry and his husband Mark now attend St. Paul's Episcopal Church, in Waldorf, Maryland, where Stock occasionally preaches. They alternate Sundays, also continuing to attend Westminster Presbyterian Church (their home church over the previous thirty years).

(This biographical statement was written by Doris Malkmus from information in the interview and edited by Harry Stock.)

Biography Date: December 2025.

### **Scope and Content**

In this interview, Harry Stock recounts his sense of calling, his awareness of his attraction to men, the homophobia at Virginia Theological Seminary in 1975 when he arrived, his ordination with the tacit approval of the Seminary knowing of his gay

identity, but his decision to serve in an LGBTQ-centered MCC church in Washington, D.C.

### **Source**

This interview was conducted by VTS Archivist Joshua Waits for the project, *Called and Holy: Virginia Theological Seminary LGBTQIA+ Oral History Project* available online at <https://vtsbpl.omeka.net/items/show/503>

### **Access**

Open to all researchers at <https://lgbtqreligiousarchives.org/oral-histories/harry-stock>

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### **Language**

Collection material is in English

### **Cite as**

See Virginia Theological Seminary for citation information.

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**Digital finding aid created by Doris Malkmus, 2026**

### **Tags**

Episcopal Church, Virginia Theological Seminary, homophobia, ordination/clergy, AIDS.