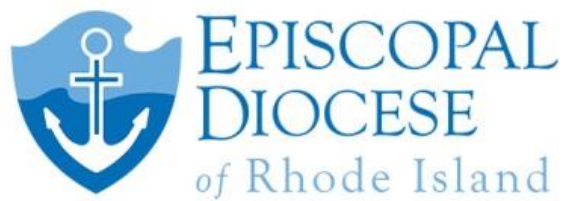


Deacons' Handbook



A deacon is a baptized person called and empowered by God and the Church to be a model of Christ's servant ministry for all people. As agents of God's compassion and reconciling grace, deacons are missionaries to the world and messengers to the Church of the world's needs, hopes and concerns. In the Church, deacons call forth, empower, and inspire the baptized to respond to these needs. The role of the deacon in liturgy mirrors this role of the deacon in Church and world. Deacons are living symbols of Christ's presence as they embody Christ's servant ministry and point to the presence of Christ in those they serve.

-- Association for Episcopal Deacons

Forward by The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely

Thursday, March 12, 2015

Dear colleagues;

We all owe a debt of gratitude to Archdeacon Jan Grinnell and Canon Betsy Fornal for the hours and hours of work they put into editing and expanding this document. I'm personally excited to see this project finally come to the place where we can begin to share it more widely.

There are things to keep in mind as you use and refer to this edition of the Deacon's Handbook for the Diocese of Rhode Island.

This is a living document and it is an evolving document. We are already many decades into the process in the Episcopal Church of recapturing an understanding of the praxis (the work) of the modern vocational diaconate. And this diocese and this diocesan are in some ways catching up to that understanding, and in some ways attempting to push beyond into new territory. With that, you can clearly recognize that this handbook is a living document. We are attempting to behave like the wise scribe in Jesus' parable bringing out of our storehouse what is new and what is old. (Matthew 13:52) But we will need to live into what we are attempting, and that may mean a regular process of conversation and revision as new circumstances and situations arise.

Our understanding of the daily work of deacons in Rhode Island is likely to evolve as the context of our ministry here in the state changes. Rhode Island is in a moment of possibility as I write this letter, for we have a new governor and new leadership in the state legislature, both of whom have indicated a desire to consider new ways of responding to the challenges we all are facing. As the context changes, the needs for ministry will change, and our understanding of the theology of the diaconate, of servant leaders, will be changing as well.

But with that caveat, what we have in this handbook is our present understanding of practice of diaconate by those persons set aside and ordained to this important and incarnational ministry. I hope that it will guide the work of deacons in the congregations in which they serve and in the specialized ministries they take up. I pray it will be helpful to the presbyters who share the work of Gospel ministry with the deacons.

I and the whole body of Christ gathered in the Diocese of Rhode Island have been blessed by the work the deacons are doing. I pray that God's grace will be poured out on them as we move into the future that Jesus is sending us into.

+Nicholas

XIII Rhode Island

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1. Purpose of Handbook

The contents of this document are guidelines set forth to articulate a normative understanding of diaconal ministry (i.e., its form and function) in the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island for ordained deacons. These norms pertain to those called to serve the Church as deacons, and not those serving as “transitional deacons” who are preparing for ordination to the Presbyterate. For information on the discernment and formation process for the Sacred Order of Deacons, go to:

<http://www.episcopalri.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/D-Guide-for-Discernment-012014.pdf>

These guidelines are meant to assist the people and the clergy of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island in the pursuit of the most effective Christian mission possible. They are intended to outline basic procedures for the deacons of this Diocese and are not intended to address every eventuality. In the vast majority of instances, common sense, humility and Godly intent will result in the most effective and faithful actions by the deacons of this Diocese.

May God grant us the courage to pursue Christ’s mission in the world, and the grace and the faithfulness to accomplish it.

2. Nature of the Diaconate

The Diaconate is one of the historic threefold orders of ordained ministry of the Church. Deacons are baptized and confirmed members of the Episcopal Church who have been called by God to be ordained to represent "Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need" (BCP, p. 856). The Preface to the Ordination Rites in the Book of Common Prayer (page 510) states that:

The Holy Scriptures and ancient Christian writers make it clear that from the apostles’ time there have been different ministries within the Church. In particular, since the time of the New Testament, three distinct orders of ordained ministers have been characteristic of Christ’s holy catholic Church. First, there is the order of bishops who carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. Secondly, associated with them are the presbyters or ordained elders in subsequent times generally known as priests. Together with the bishops, they take part in the governance of the Church, in carrying out its missionary and pastoral work, and in the preaching of the Word of God and administering his holy Sacraments. Thirdly, there are deacons who assist bishops and priests in all of this work. It is also a special responsibility of the deacons to minister in Christ’s name to the poor, the sick, the suffering and the helpless.

The Outline of Faith in the Book of Common Prayer states that:

The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant to those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. BCP page 856.

The ritual for the ordination of deacons expresses with particular authority the understanding the church has regarding the ministry of deacons:

... God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself. BCP page 543

Typically a deacon is a non-stipendiary minister who serves those in need in the name of Christ and his Church, helps parishioners do outreach ministries, and assists in the church's liturgy. Like priests and bishops, deacons, once ordained, remain deacons for life. However, again like priests and bishops, deacons may go on leave or retire.

A deacon's assignment includes both a liturgical and a service component. Also like priests and bishops, they do retire for reasons of age or infirmity and are then relieved of the responsibility for regular liturgical and ministry responsibilities.

3. Relationship with the Bishop

Deacons have had a special relationship to the Bishop since apostolic times. In fulfillment of their ordination vows, each deacon has a direct reporting relationship to and is under the direct pastoral care of the Bishop. In this relationship deacons are expected to seek counsel from the Bishop, or the Bishop's designated representative, for issues related to pre-marital planning, marital crisis, hospitalization and severe illness of themselves or family members, personal faith crisis or other serious concerns of ministry.

Deacons are appointed to their respective ministries by the Bishop (see Canon III.7.iv). The Bishop may designate a deacon to serve as Archdeacon. It is expected that every deacon will at all times strive to exercise the ministries and responsibilities particular to their order. All deacons are expected to enter into written agreements that detail the parameters of their congregational ministry (see the Sample Letter of Agreement, Appendix D). Deacons are charged with serving a particular congregation; within

that context, they work collaboratively with the other clergy serving that congregation under the guidance and direction of the priest-in-charge of that congregation.

The Archdeacon provides oversight and pastoral care for deacons, provides support and counsel to the Bishop, and assists the Bishop liturgically as requested. While deacons are always subject to reassignment to further the work of the Church, under no circumstances shall a deacon resign or vacate an assignment without the prior approval of the Bishop. Deacons may serve as chaplains in prisons, hospitals, hospices, schools, and other institutions, provided they are trained and credentialed to do so.

4. Vocational and Transitional Deacons

A vocational deacon is one who is called, prepared and educated and ordained for life to the servant nature of the diaconate as outline above.

In accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church, a person called, prepared and educated for the priesthood is first ordained a deacon, and usually after a minimum of six months is ordained to the priesthood. These persons are referred to as transitional deacons.

5. Relationship Between a Deacon and Sponsoring Congregation

Deacons serve at the pleasure and direction of the Bishop. While postulants/candidates are supported by their sponsoring congregations through the ordination process, deacons are normally assigned to other congregations in the Diocese by the Bishop after ordination rather than their sponsoring congregations. While it is a sacrifice for the sponsoring congregation and deacon, it is a necessary one for the health and growth of both. *Like all those ordained, a deacon belongs to the Diocese and not to a particular congregation.* With the permission of the Bishop and invitation of the priest-in-charge, a deacon may participate occasionally in his/her sponsoring congregation's functions, events and celebrations.

6. Liturgical Functions

When deacons are assigned to congregations, they serve at the weekend liturgies and other occasions of worship including Christmas Eve-Day, Ash Wednesday, the Paschal Triduum, and other occasions as indicated by the-priests-in-charge of their congregations. When appropriate the priests may invite them to assist in baptisms, weddings, funerals, and in other services as needs and opportunities present themselves. It is desirable when practical to include deacons in diocesan liturgies.

At all celebrations of the Liturgy, it is fitting that the principal celebrant, whether bishop or priest, be assisted by other priests, and by deacons and lay persons.

A deacon should read the Gospel, and may lead the Prayers of the People. Deacons should also serve at the Lord's Table, preparing and placing on it the offerings of bread and wine, and assisting in the ministration of the Sacrament to the people. ... BCP page 322

Other duties may include taking the Sacrament to the sick, and other assignments as the celebrant priest-in-charge indicates.

At the Great Vigil of Easter, It is the prerogative of a deacon to carry the Paschal Candle to its place, and to chant the Exsultet (BCP pg 284). At the discretion of the celebrant, another person may be asked to chant the Exsultet.

When assigned to a congregation, a deacon (unless specifically prohibited by the Bishop) is licensed to preach in that congregation when invited to do so by the priest. The frequency of such preaching should not be inconsistent with the expectation that the priest is the normal preacher.

Deacons shall not preside at the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified (commonly called a “deacon’s mass”), except in an emergency or an extraordinary circumstance and only after ad hoc permission has been given by the Bishop. In such cases after permission has been given the deacon must follow the appropriate rubrics in the Prayer Book. Vacations or other non-emergency absence of the priest at a weekend or midweek service shall not be considered an extraordinary circumstance since they are usually scheduled well in advance and it is the priest’s duty to provide a priest to serve as substitute.

Deacons shall not preside at Holy Matrimony since that is a pastoral office properly within the context of a priest’s pastoral care. When appropriate a deacon may be invited by the priest to assist in a wedding. Any baptized person may administer Holy Baptism in an emergency situation and deacons may be called to administer this sacrament in emergency situations. In such cases the person who does the Baptism is to inform the priest of the appropriate congregation, so that the sacrament can be properly recorded. If the baptized person recovers, the Baptism should be recognized at a public celebration of the Sacrament with a bishop or priest presiding and the person baptized, together with the sponsors or godparents, taking part in everything except the administration of the water.

Whenever possible funerals should take place in a church and a priest or bishop should preside since this is a pastoral occasion. When pastorally appropriate a deacon may be invited by the priest to assist in such a service. Sometimes it is necessary for the burial service to be someplace other than a church. In such cases it is strongly desired that a priest or bishop preside.

When that is not possible, a deacon may preside at a funeral home or at grave side. But that service should be immediately recorded in the appropriate church and notice be given to the priest. The Archdeacon should also be notified that a deacon has presided at such a service. Such ministrations do not include the administration of Holy Communion.

6. Deacons at Diocesan Liturgies

Deacons may be invited by the Bishop to assist in any Diocesan services.

During the Bishop’s Visitation in congregations it is desirable that the deacon serving in that congregation be invited to play appropriate roles.

7. Annual Report

Each deacon must submit an annual report to the Bishop no later than the end of February of each year with a copy to the Archdeacon. A sample template for the report is contained in Appendix E.

8. Deployment/Transition/Termination

Deacons are deployed by the Bishop. In deciding specific assignments, the Bishop is assisted by the Archdeacon and the Council on Deacons. Consultation with other persons on the Bishop's Staff may take place in the interests of mission strategy.

While the assignment is by the Bishop, consultation with the deacon and other relevant persons is a normal part of the decision process. Both the liturgical and service aspects of a ministry need to be approved by the Bishop to constitute part of the deacon's official ministry assignment. When assigned to a congregation or mission congregation the priest-in-charge must agree to the nature of the ministry in the congregation and to the deacon being assigned to that ministry. While working in the congregation, the deacon reports to the priest-in-charge regarding parochial matters and follows the *policies* set by the priest-in-charge in accordance with the canons.

When a deacon's priest-in-charge announces his or her departure, the deacon should immediately contact the Archdeacon to begin the dialogue about the deacon's continuing role and future assignment. A deacon may be reappointed by the Bishop to serve during the interim period of a church in transition. The deacon then serves under the direction of the Bishop and the interim priest-in-charge or the senior warden if there is no interim priest. When a new rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge is called, the Bishop will assign the deacon to another congregation or mission within six months of the arrival of the new priest. The deacon may also be assigned to another congregation before or during the interim period.

A deacon's outreach or service ministry must have the approval of the Bishop in order to be considered as part of the deacon's ministry. The process leading to this approval is carried out by the Archdeacon in consultation with the Council of Deacons, the deacon and others, as appropriate. The deacon's priest-in-charge will be consulted if the ministry is associated with his/her congregation or involves members of the priest-in-charge's congregation. If the service ministry is in or affiliated with a church other than the one where the deacon serves liturgically, the priest-in-charge of that church will be consulted. It is expected that in many instances the deacon may initiate suggestions and/or ideas about outreach ministries.

9. Spiritual Direction

It is expected that a deacon will maintain a disciplined prayer life, have and consult a trained spiritual director, and follow a regular program of study. Trained spiritual directors are those individuals who have undergone a course of study to be a spiritual director, and they themselves are 'in direction.' The Bishop has appointed a priest to be available to help deacons and priests identify a spiritual director if

needed. This information can be obtained by contacting the Archdeacon or the Administrative Assistant to the Bishop.

10. Role of Archdeacon

The Archdeacon is appointed by the Bishop to assist him in coordinating deacons for the leadership of mission ministry within and beyond the body of the church. The overall objective of the Archdeacon is to develop, build, form and maintain a vibrant diaconal program in the diocese that will enhance the life of the diocese and lead to a greater realization of the Realm of God.

Towards this end, the Archdeacon is invited to do the following:

1. Assist the Bishop in deploying deacons by:
 - a. Studying, recommending, and implementing a model of deployment as may best further the ministry of the church and mission goals of the diocese;
 - b. Reviewing placement needs and opportunities for deacons with the Bishop, site leadership, Council on Deacons to facilitate deployment recommendations to the Bishop.
2. Assist the Bishop in the supervision and pastoral care of deacons through:
 - a. Travelling to and meeting with each deacon and the congregation/site leadership periodically;
 - b. Reviewing the deacon's annual report to the Bishop;
 - c. As requested by the Bishop, meeting with the congregation/site leadership on behalf of the Bishop to identify and address matters needing diocesan intervention or involvement in resolving;
 - d. The Archdeacon's supervisory role is not to supersede but to enhance the close relationship between the Bishop and deacons;
 - e. Developing support groups and meetings of deacons;
 - f. Developing, implementing and encouraging continuing education among deacons;
 - g. In general, being an advocate for all deacons on issues relating to the health and well-being of deacons.
3. Develop visibility for and understanding of the diaconate as a full and equal order. This includes:
 - a. Holding periodic educational meetings on the diaconate in different venues within the diocese;
 - b. Aiding discernment committees, such as the Commission on Ministry as requested;
4. Organize a Council on Deacons. The Council on Deacons appointed by the Bishop as mentioned in Title 111 Canon 7, Section 3 states, 'The Bishop may establish a Council on Deacons ("Council") to oversee, study, and promote the Diaconate.' The Archdeacon serves on this Council and convenes the Council in the absence of the Bishop. The membership consists of the Archdeacon, one deacon elected by the Community of Deacons, and one retired Deacon appointed by the Bishop.
5. Act as a liaison for those preparing for diocesan liturgies to include deacons in the liturgy where appropriate. The Archdeacon and/or deacons for the liturgy shall share in the roles proscribed by the rubrics found in the Book of Common Prayer, specifically:
 - a. Proclaiming the Gospel;
 - b. Bidding the General Confession;
 - c. Setting and clearing the Table for the Eucharist and assisting with distribution of bread and/or wine at Communion;
 - d. Giving the Dismissal.

The Archdeacon and/or deacons for the liturgy will at all times encourage the participation of

the Baptized in reading Lessons, leading the Psalms, leading the Prayers of the People and similar activities in furtherance of their call to the one ministry of Christ as his body, the church.

6. Participate so far as possible in Diocesan Conventions and other appropriate diocesan meetings and gatherings.
7. Participate in continuing education and when possible the Association of Episcopal Deacons and the New England Deacons Network.
8. The Archdeacon will have access to the use and functionality of the diocesan offices as necessary.
9. Assists the Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and Standing Committee, as requested, in the ordination process.
10. Uses the title Archdeacon or, in formal usage, "The Venerable."
11. To the purpose of all of the above, the Diocese shall reimburse the Archdeacon for reasonable expenses incurred by the Archdeacon in performance of this ministry. This shall include travel, meal and lodging expenses, annual dues in the Association of Episcopal Deacons, and conference fees. The Archdeacon will work with the appropriate Diocesan offices in the preparation of a budget for the Office of the Archdeacon.

The Archdeacon and Bishop shall meet regularly to review progress, consider any problems, plan future activities, and support the development and execution of their ministry.

11. Diocesan Ministry

As clergy, all Deacons are welcome and encouraged to sit on all Diocesan committees as appropriate and as permitted by canon. They may run for a position or be appointed. Deacons as clergy are voting members of Diocesan Convention. Rhode Island Deacons may be elected or appointed to serve as delegates or alternates to General Convention. They may also be chosen to serve on national church committees.

12. Congregational Assignment

All active deacons serve in a congregation in collaboration with the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge. All deacons assigned to a congregation enter into a Letter of Agreement (see Appendix D) with the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge and the congregation. This covenant must be approved by the Bishop, and will provide the structure for an annual ministry review by the Archdeacon.

The deacon's primary ministry within the context of a congregation should be structured in a manner consistent with the understanding of diaconal ministry set forth above (see section two).

Disagreements between clergy open the possibility for scandal and division within the Body of Christ. In the event of irreconcilable differences between a deacon and other clergy with whom the Deacon serves, conflicts should be quickly and discretely brought to the attention of the Archdeacon and the Bishop. Likewise, if problems arise that affect the welfare and unity of the congregation, the deacon

shall bring them to the clergy charged with oversight of the congregation and shall follow his/her advice and counsel.

13. Relationship with Priest-in-Charge, Rector, or Vicar

The relationship between a priest and deacon is that of colleague. In a congregational setting, the relationship is such that the priest is in charge of liturgical, pastoral, and organizational responsibilities. Good and timely communication is key, especially with seasonal liturgical changes and celebrations. The deacon may be invited to attend general staff meetings as appropriate. The deacon should meet with priest prior to their service in the congregation and periodically, at least two times a year. The priest and deacon should be aware of rubrics that pertain to a deacon's responsibilities and also the particular responsibilities of the deacon as they interpret the good news of the church to the world and the news and condition of the world to the church. In all instances the relationship and responsibilities of priest and deacon should be visible to others. When appropriate the priest will inform and include the deacon in diocesan events and local ecumenical happenings. Again, the relationship between priest and deacon is that of colleagues supporting and working together for the betterment of the church and it's people.

14. Community of Deacons

All deacons canonically resident in the diocese constitute a Community of Deacons, which will meet from time to time. [See Appendix B, TITLE III, Canon 7.2]

Monthly meetings are scheduled by the Archdeacon and all active deacons should attend when able to do so. Four of the meetings are attended by the Bishop which allows for conversation with him, and an opportunity for him to update the community on items of interest. One of those meetings occurs typically in the spring in the form of a retreat with the Bishop. The cost of the retreat is to be covered by the Bishop. The Bishop views this time with the Community of Deacons as crucial to their mutual ministry, and every effort should be made by the deacons to prioritize this event.

All active deacons are required to participate in a Clergy Support Group on a regular basis. The purpose of the group is to offer collegiality to deacons and provide a forum for personal sharing, support and accountability.

15. Compensation and Benefits

In most instances diaconal ministry is non-stipendiary. However, a congregation shall reimburse a deacon for expenses in connection with ministry in a congregation and provide resources and leave for the deacon's growth and well-being. The Letter of Agreement in Appendix D shall spell out minimal reimbursements. Ordinarily, every agreement will include provision for the following:

- The deacon shall be reimbursed by the congregation for mileage spent in ministry upon submission of a statement from the Deacon to the Priest-in-charge, using the current IRS approved mileage rate. This should include all congregation related ministry other than regularly scheduled worship services beginning in Advent 2015. (per Bishop)

- The deacon shall be reimbursed by the congregation for ministry expenses (up to \$_____ per year) upon submission of a statement. This includes such things as the expenses of attending Diocesan Convention and/or other diocesan events as appropriate, program materials or pastoral care supplies used in the exercise of ministry, etc.
- The deacon shall receive a continuing education allowance of up to \$350 annually upon submission of receipts to the Priest-in-charge.
- four weeks of vacation annually;
- two weeks for leave for continuing education and diaconal formation annually;
- as needed, any days needed for sickness or other debilitation;
- At the end of each Congregational Assignment, a deacon shall have a three-month sabbatical for rest and refreshment as s/he prepares to enter a new congregation contingent on the Bishop's approval.

When a deacon undertakes a non-parochial assignment, reimbursement of expenses related to the deacon's service shall be discussed with the Bishop and the supervisor and resolved before the assignment is effective.

16. Continuing Education

The Episcopal Church expects that deacons (like bishops and priests) will engage in a regular program of continuing education. Christian formation must be a lifelong process. It is expected that each deacon will be engaged in an intentional program of continuing formation. This may be in the form of conferences (one day or longer) and continuing education in their particular focus of ministry or other area of interest or personal growth. It may be course work offered by a local school or seminary, or an extension program.

Compensation for Continuing Education is available through the agreement with the deacon's assigned congregation (as contained in the Letter of Agreement). Additional funds are available through the Continuing Education Fund in the Diocese. Application forms for these funds can be found on the Diocesan website. The Episcopal Church Women also offer continuing education funds for female clergy.

Continuing Education shall be documented each year in the Deacon's Annual Report to the Bishop.

17. Council on Deacons

The Council on Deacons appointed by the Bishop as mentioned in Title 111 Canon 7, Section 3 states, 'The Bishop may establish a Council on Deacons ("Council") to oversee, study, and promote the Diaconate.' The Archdeacon serves on this Council and convenes the Council in the absence of the Bishop. The membership consists of the Archdeacon, one deacon elected by the active members of the Community of Deacons, and one retired deacon appointed by the Bishop. Membership is for a one-year term.

The purpose of the Council is to be a working advisory body for the Bishop and Archdeacon in all matters related to the diaconate. The primary areas of responsibility of the Council will be:

- a. Deacons are deployed by the Bishop. In deciding specific assignments the Bishop is assisted by the Archdeacon and the Council on Deacons. Consultation with other persons on the Bishop's Staff may take place in the interests of mission strategy.
- b. Continuing education,
- c. The deacons' annual meeting/retreat with the Bishop,
- d. Diocesan education related to the diaconate,
- e. Maintaining links with deacons in other diocese, and seeking to be an ecumenical voice in communities.
- f. Formulating the budget request for the Office of the Archdeacon

The Council will meet approximately four to six times a year.

18. Retirement

On reaching age 72 years, a Deacon shall resign from all positions of active service in the Church and the resignation shall be accepted. The Bishop may, with the consent of the Deacon, assign a resigned Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith, or ministry in another setting, for a term not to exceed 12 months, and this term may be renewed. (Canon III.7.7)

If not assigned by the Bishop, a resigned deacon does not normally function liturgically except on those specific occasions where they have the Bishop's permission and the invitation of the priest-in-charge of the congregation.

Retired deacons are invited to attend meetings of the Community of Deacons and other church related functions. The requirement of the annual report discussed elsewhere still applies.

With the approval of the Bishop upon recommendation of the Archdeacon, a deacon may be placed on leave. Leave may be for a shorter or longer period of time and be for various reasons, e.g. study, health, personal issues, etc. Deacons on leave are invited to attend Community of Deacons Meetings but do not carry out liturgical or service ministries while on leave.

19. Clerical Clothing

Street clothing is the norm for deacons except when involved in specific ministries or official diocesan events or meetings in which case a clergy collar is appropriate.

When carrying out diaconal roles in the Holy Eucharist the vesture should reflect the direction of the Priest celebrating and the style of the congregation.

20. Professional Organizations

The Diaconate is a worldwide ministry. There are a number of organizations primarily focused on deacons and their ministry. Some are Episcopal and some more ecumenical in scope including other traditions supporting diaconal ministry in various forms.

New England Deacons Network. An informal network including deacons in the seven Dioceses in Province One. This group in recent years has sponsored an Assembly of Deacons every two years, in even years. Centrally located, this event has gathered seventy-five or so deacons to share experience, learn from one another and from a leadership keynoter around a topic of special interest. These have been lively and worthwhile gatherings open to all deacons, those in process and others interested in diaconal ministry. There has always been at least one Bishop in residence.

Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED). AED is the primary professional association for Deacons in the Episcopal Church. It is a membership association supported primarily by dues paying members. AED provides support at the church-wide level. An annual conference of Deacon Directors and Archdeacons shares deacon program developments and activities at the diocesan level, suggests model training curriculum ideas and successful ways for supporting and encouraging diaconal ministry. AED also conducts a National Assembly of Deacons every three years. Bringing together several hundred deacons from across the church becomes a rich experience of sharing and learning. All deacons are encouraged to join AED and be in touch with fellow deacons.

The Fund for the Diaconate. A foundation originally created in 1926 as a Retiring Fund for Deaconesses who were not included in the Church Pension Fund. Most Deaconesses retired with minimal support. As the church evolved and the order of deacons grew to include both men and women so did the Fund. All Deacons canonically resident in an Episcopal Church Diocese are members of the Corporation. The Fund performs a vital service for the Church by assisting deacons—working, retired, or disabled—who have insufficient funds for their needs. The Fund is administered by a board of directors with funds distributed by periodic allowances based on individual needs. Special grants are made to cover emergency situations.

Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean. Also known as DOTAC this organization represents Diaconal Associations across traditions in our hemisphere it gathers those engaged in *diakonia*, is a prophetic voice for ecumenical relations and social justice, and encourages, supports and empowers the development of groups doing *diakonia* in the region. DOTAC organizes an Assembly of Deacons in the Region every four years.

World Federation of Diaconal Associations and Diaconal Communities. This world-wide group, of which DOTAC is part, represents deacons and their communities from across the globe. Some are well developed, such as AED, while others are in undeveloped countries or regions with little support. The World Federation holds a World Assembly of Deacons every four years, which is an incredible gathering of diaconal folks from around the world, usually over 400 in number. It is open to any deacon to participate. Many come from Europe, Africa, and the Pacific region.

Appendices

Appendix A - Frequently Asked Questions

As a deacon should I attend Vestry Meetings?

As a deacon you are not a member of your assigned congregation's vestry. This does not mean that you cannot attend the meetings and speak especially if invited by the Rector and /or vestry. At monthly Vestry meetings many things are discussed and being privy to these discussions help you to keep your finger on the pulse of not only the church leadership but also the direction of the church ministry and focus. It could very well help you as you work to bring the concerns of the community and world into the church.

Should I connect with members of the congregation on social media?

Social media has become the tool of communications for many families and friends today. And while you have a relationship with the people at your assigned church, social media such as Facebook and Twitter usually contain running conversations with families and very close friends. If you wish to use social media to communicate with members of the congregation, use the church Facebook page. It's open and all in the congregation can see it and no one gets upset because, "You didn't friend them." *Finally, remember, if you don't want it published on the front page of the local newspaper, don't write it or post it.* Use social media responsibly to build friendships and share the Gospel. Use common sense.

A parishioner handed me one hundred dollars to use as I see fit? Is this OK?

It is possible that people will want to do a little extra to help you "defray expenses" or to help in your ministry. Monetary donations should not be taken directly from a member of your congregation. Expenses for education and of travel associated with your duties in the congregation are negotiated into your Letter of Agreement with the congregation and should not be accepted from parishioners directly. Other monies to support ministries, buy food cards, shoes, socks for the homeless, etc., should be given directly to the church as a part of a congregation's and/or ministry discretionary fund. While a deacon may have a discretionary fund you may find that the accounting and tax paper work is not worth the effort.

Where do I find continuing education courses?

Continuing education experiences can be found in several venues. Much of this may be relevant and useful to the deacon's special ministry, and may need to be updated periodically. This especially pertains to a deacon's responsibilities to communities or institutions outside the walls of the traditional church – chaplaincies; in physical or mental health institutions; with social service organizations that work with housing, special needs populations, low income individuals and groups. The deacon must be willing and ready to learn about new situations as we have done with the AIDS situation several years ago and more recently with disaster preparedness.

Local colleges such as CCRI, URI, RIC, Salve Regina University, and Bryant University offer classes and workshops in psychology, social work, holistic health care, as well as non-profit business management and grant writing. Chaplains may wish to pursue further study in Clinical Pastoral Education. Several nearby colleges offer classes pertinent to the work of a deacon in the church and/or community. They include the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge and Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton, MA. Times of these classes are usually attractive to working deacons and may include short term involvement. The Church Divinity School of the Pacific, offers online classes which are very relevant to the work of a deacon.

Of a more immediate and practical nature are regional Deacons Conferences, in-state workshops sponsored by such organizations at the RI Council of Churches, Butler Hospital, and the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless. Information on these workshops will usually be shared by the Diocese or found in the Deacon's Blog.

Each educational experience is different and information on them should be shared with other deacons, whether experiencing a class with another person, written description of classes noting and reviewing classes or workshops participated in, or looking at an online file kept in the deacon's part of the Diocesan website. This is coordinated by contacting the Archdeacon after the training is completed and a decision will be made as to how it should be disseminated.

Remember each deacon has two weeks of continuing education leave each year and can receive support for this in various ways – congregation or diocese.

Appendix B - Canons of the Episcopal Church - Title III Canons 6 and 7

CANON 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons

Sec. 1. Selection

The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and to select persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Diaconate.

Sec. 2. Nomination

A confirmed adult communicant in good standing, may be nominated for ordination to the diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith.

(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to

- (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and
- (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate.

If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.

(b) The Nominee, if in agreement with the nomination, shall accept the nomination in writing and shall provide the following to the Bishop:

- (1) Full name and date of birth.
- (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.
- (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.
- (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned, and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

Sec. 3. Postulancy

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy and may initiate the formal preparation for ordination. Postulancy involves continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to the Diaconate.

(a) Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop shall

- (1) determine that the Nominee is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, and
- (2) confer in person with the Nominee,

(b) If the Bishop approves the Nominee proceeding into Postulancy, the Commission, or a committee of the Commission, shall meet with the Nominee to review the application and prepare an evaluation of the Nominee's qualifications to pursue a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. The Commission shall present its evaluation and recommendations to the Bishop.

(c) No Bishop shall consider accepting as a Postulant any person who has been refused admission as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate in any other Diocese, or who, having been admitted, has afterwards ceased to be a Candidate, until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission, or in which the person has been a Candidate, declaring the cause of refusal or of cessation.

(d) The Bishop may admit the Nominee as a Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Postulant's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Postulant, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the Postulant's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(e) Each Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

(f) Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Postulant and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

Sec. 4. Candidacy

Candidacy is a time of education and formation, in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, the Standing Committee and the congregation or other community of faith.

(a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall apply to

the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:

- (1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and
- (2) a letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a written statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having received approval in writing of the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Candidate, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(c) A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon, except, for reasons acceptable to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate.

(d) Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate, at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

(e) If a Bishop has removed the Candidate's name from the list of Candidates, except by transfer, or the Candidate's application for ordination has been rejected, no other Bishop may ordain the person without readmission to Candidacy for a period of at least twelve months.

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

(a) The Bishop and the Commission shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate in accordance with this Canon to ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.

(b) The Bishop may assign the Postulant or Candidate to any congregation of the Diocese or other community of faith after consultation with the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(c) Formation shall take into account the local culture and each Postulant or Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry.

(d) Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination.

(e) Wherever possible, formation for the Diaconate shall take place in community, including other persons in preparation for the Diaconate, or others preparing for ministry.

(f) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas:

- (1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.
- (2) Diakonia and the diaconate.
- (3) Human awareness and understanding.
- (4) Spiritual development and discipline.
- (5) Practical training and experience.

(g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding

- (1) prevention of sexual misconduct.
- (2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
- (3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
- (4) the Church's teaching on racism.

(h) Each Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

(i) During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment

of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination. Records shall be kept of all evaluations, assessments, and the recommendation, and shall be made available to the Standing Committee.

- (j) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished
- (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.
 - (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.

(k) Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain a part of the permanent diocesan record.

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate

(a) A person may be ordained Deacon:

- (1) after at least eighteen months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2(b), and
- (2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

(b) The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- (1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.
- (2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- (3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the dates of admission.
- (4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.
- (5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

(c) On the receipt of such certificates, the Standing Committee, if a majority of all members consent, shall certify that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon have been met, that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination. The Standing Committee shall evidence such certification, by a testimonial, addressed to the Bishop in the form specified below and signed by the consenting members of the Standing Committee.

(d)

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of ____ We, the Standing Committee of _____, having been duly convened at _____ at _____, do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.6; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend A.B. for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this day of _____, in the year of our Lord ____ .

(Signed) _____

(e) The testimonial having been presented to the Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate to the Diaconate under this Canon; and at the time of ordination the Candidate shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution.

CANON 7: Of the Life and Work of Deacons

Sec. 1. Deacons serve directly under the authority of and are accountable to the Bishop, or in the absence of the Bishop, the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

Sec. 2. Deacons canonically resident in each Diocese constitute a Community of Deacons, which shall meet from time to time. The Bishop may appoint one or more of such Deacons as Archdeacon(s) to assist the Bishop in the formation, deployment, supervision, and support of the Deacons or those in preparation to be Deacons, and in the implementation of this Canon.

Sec. 3. The Bishop may establish a Council on Deacons to oversee, study, and promote the Diaconate.

Sec. 4. The Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, may assign a Deacon to one or more congregations, other communities of faith or non-parochial ministries. Deacons assigned to a congregation or other community of faith act under the authority of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.

(a) Subject to the Bishop's approval, Deacons may have a letter of agreement setting forth mutual responsibilities in the assignment, and, if such a letter exists, it is subject to renegotiation with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee after the resignation of the Rector or the Priest-in-Charge.

(b) Deacons shall report annually to the Bishop or the Bishop's designee on their life and work.

(c) Deacons may serve as administrators of congregations or other communities of faith, but no Deacon shall be in charge of a congregation or other community of faith.

(d) Deacons may accept chaplaincies in any hospital, prison, or other institution.

(e) Deacons may participate in the governance of the Church.

(f) For two years following ordination, new Deacons shall continue a process of formation authorized by the Bishop.

(g) The Bishop or the Bishop's designee, in consultation with the Commission, shall assign each newly ordained Deacon a mentor Deacon where a suitable mentor Deacon is available. The mentor and Deacon shall meet regularly for at least one year to provide guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about diaconal ministry.

Sec. 5. The Bishop and Commission shall require and provide for the continuing education of Deacons and keep a record of such education

Sec. 6 (a) A Deacon may not serve as Deacon for more than two months in any Diocese other than the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident unless the Bishop of the other Diocese shall have granted a license to the Deacon to serve in that Diocese.

(b)

- (1) A Deacon desiring to become canonically resident within a Diocese shall request a testimonial from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident to present to the receiving Diocese, which testimonial, if granted, shall be given by the Ecclesiastical Authority to the applicant, and a duplicate thereof may be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese to which transfer is proposed. The testimonial shall be in the following words:

I hereby certify that A.B., who has signified to me the desire to be transferred to the Ecclesiastical Authority of ____, is a Deacon of ____ in good standing, and has not, so far as I know or believe, been justly liable to evil report for error in religion or for viciousness of life, for the last three years.

(Date) ____ (Signed) _____

- (2) Such testimonial shall be called Letters Dimissory. If the Ecclesiastical Authority accepts the Letters Dimissory, the canonical residence of the Deacon so transferred shall date from the acceptance of the Letters Dimissory, of which prompt notice shall be given both to the applicant and to the Ecclesiastical Authority from which it came.
- (3) Letters Dimissory not presented within six months from the date of transmission to the applicant shall become void.
- (4) A statement of the record of payments to The Church Pension Fund by or on behalf of the Deacon concerned shall accompany Letters Dimissory.

Sec. 7. On reaching the age of seventy-two years, a Deacon shall resign from all positions of active service in this Church, and the resignation shall be accepted. The Bishop may, with the consent of the

Deacon, assign a resigned Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or ministry in another setting, for a term not to exceed twelve months, and this term may be renewed.

Sec. 8. Release and Removal from the Ordained Ministry of this Church

If any Deacon of The Episcopal Church shall express, in writing, to the Bishop of the Diocese in which such Deacon is canonically resident, an intention to be released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church and from the obligations attendant thereto, including those promises made at Ordination in the Declaration required by Article VIII of the Constitution of the General Convention, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to record the matter. The Bishop, being satisfied that the person so declaring is acting voluntarily and for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and is neither the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer nor a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, shall lay the matter before the Standing Committee, and with the advice and consent of a majority of the Standing Committee the Bishop may pronounce that the person is released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church and from the obligations attendant thereto, and is deprived of the right to exercise in The Episcopal Church the gifts and spiritual authority as a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments conferred in Ordination. The Bishop shall also declare in pronouncing and recording such action that it was for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and shall, at the person's request, give a certificate to this effect to the person so released and removed from the ordained Ministry.

Sec. 9. If a Deacon submitting the writing described in Section 8 of this Canon be the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer or a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, the Ecclesiastical Authority to whom such writing is submitted shall not consider or act upon the written request unless and until the disciplinary matter shall have been resolved by a dismissal, Accord, or Order and the time for appeal or rescission of such has expired.

Sec. 10. In the case of the release and removal of a Deacon from the ordained Ministry of this Church as provided in this Canon, a declaration of release and removal shall be pronounced by the Bishop in the presence of two or more Members of the Clergy, and shall be entered in the official records of the Diocese in which the Deacon being released and removed is canonically resident. The Bishop who pronounces the declaration of release and removal as provided in this Canon shall give notice thereof in writing to every Member of the Clergy, each Vestry, the Secretary of the Convention and the Standing Committee of the Diocese in which the Deacon was canonically resident; and to all Bishops of this Church, the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese of this Church, the Presiding Bishop, the Recorder of Ordinations, the Secretary of the House of Bishops, the Secretary of the House of Deputies, The Church Pension Fund, and the Board for Transition Ministry.

Appendix C - BCP – Ordination of a Deacon

The Ordination of a Deacon

A hymn, psalm, or anthem may be sung.

The people standing, the Bishop says

Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
People And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever. Amen.

In place of the above, from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost

Bishop Alleluia. Christ is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

In Lent and on other penitential occasions

Bishop Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
People His mercy endures for ever.

Bishop
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Presentation

The bishop and people sit. A Priest and a Lay Person, and additional presenters if desired, standing before the bishop, present the ordinand, saying

N., Bishop in the Church of God, on behalf of the clergy and people of the Diocese of N., we
present to you N.N. to be ordained a deacon in Christ's holy catholic Church.

Bishop
Has he been selected in accordance with the canons of this Church? And do you believe his
manner of life to be suitable to the exercise of this ministry?

Presenters
We certify to you that he has satisfied the requirements of the canons, and we believe him
qualified for this order.

The Bishops say to the ordinand
Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received
them? And will you, in accordance with the canons of this Church, obey your bishop and other
ministers who may have authority over you and your work?

Answer

I am willing and ready to do so; and I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church.

The Ordinand then signs the above Declaration in the sight of all present.

All stand. The Bishop says to the people

Dear friends in Christ, you know the importance of this ministry, and the weight of your responsibility in presenting N.N. for ordination to the sacred order of deacons. Therefore if any of you know any impediment or crime because of which we should not proceed, come forward now, and make it known.

If no objection is made, the Bishop continues

Is it your will that N. be ordained a deacon?

The People respond in these or other words
It is.

Bishop
Will you uphold him in this ministry?

The People respond in these or other words We will.

The Bishop then calls the people to prayer with these or similar words

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

All kneel, and the Person appointed leads the [Litany for Ordinations](#), or some other approved litany. At the end of the litany, after the Kyries, the Bishop stands and reads the Collect for the Day, or the following Collect, or both, first saying

The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were being cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Ministry of the Word

Three Lessons are read. Lay persons read the Old Testament Lesson and the Epistle.

*The Readings are ordinarily selected from the following list and may be lengthened if desired.
On a Major Feast, or on a Sunday, the Bishop may select Readings from the Proper of the Day.*

Old Testament [Jeremiah 1:4-9](#), or [Ecclesiasticus 39:1-8](#)

Psalm [84](#), or [119:33-40](#)

Epistle [2 Corinthians 4:1-6](#), or [1 Timothy 3:8-13](#), or [Acts 6:2-7](#)

The Reader first says

A Reading (Lesson) from _____.

A citation giving chapter and verse may be added.

After each Reading, the Reader may say

The Word of the Lord

People Thanks be to God

or the Reader may say Here ends the Reading (Epistle).

Silence may follow.

A Psalm, canticle, or hymn follows each Reading.

Then, all standing, a Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to _____.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

[Luke 12:35-38](#), or [Luke 22:24-27](#)

After the Gospel, the Reader says

The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The Sermon

The Congregation then says or sings the Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Examination

All are seated except the ordinand, who stands before the Bishop. The Bishop addresses the ordinand as follows

My brother, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

My brother, do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to the life and work of a deacon?

Answer I believe I am so called.

Bishop Do you now in the presence of the Church commit yourself to this trust and responsibility?

Answer I do.

Bishop Will you be guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of your bishop?

Answer I will.

Bishop Will you be faithful in prayer, and in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures?

Answer I will.

Bishop Will you look for Christ in all others, being ready to heal and serve those in need?

Answer I will.

Bishop Will you do your best to pattern your life [and that of your family, *or* household, *or* community] in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may be a wholesome example to all people?

Answer I will.

Bishop Will you in all things seek not your glory but the glory of the Lord Christ?

Answer I will.

Bishop May the Lord by his grace uphold you in the service he lays upon you.

Answer Amen.

The Consecration of the Deacon

All now stand except the ordinand, who kneels facing the Bishop.

The hymn, Veni Creator Spiritus, or the hymn, Veni Sancte Spiritus, is sung.

A period of silent prayer follows, the people still standing.

The Bishop then says this Prayer of Consecration

O God, most merciful Father, we praise you for sending your Son Jesus Christ, who took on himself the form of a servant, and humbled himself, becoming obedient even to death on the cross. We praise you that you have highly exalted him, and made him Lord of all; and that, through him, we know that whoever would be great must be servant of all. We praise you for the many ministries in your Church, and for calling this your servant to the order of deacons.

Here the Bishop lays hands upon the head of the ordinand, and prays

Therefore, Father, through Jesus Christ your Son, give your Holy Spirit to N.; fill him with grace and power, and make him a deacon in your Church.

The Bishop continues

Make him, O Lord, modest and humble, strong and constant, to observe the discipline of Christ. Let his life and teaching so reflect your commandments, that through him many may come to know you and love you. As your Son came not to be served but to serve, may this deacon share in Christ's service, and come to the unending glory of him who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

The People in a loud voice respond Amen.

The new deacon is now vested according to the order of deacons.

The Bishop then gives a Bible to the newly ordained, saying

Receive this Bible as the sign of your authority to proclaim God's Word and to assist in the ministration of his holy Sacraments.

The Peace

The Bishop then says to the congregation

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

The Bishop and the Clergy now greet the newly ordained.

The new Deacon then exchanges greetings with family members and others, as may be convenient.

The Clergy and People greet one another.

At the Celebration of the Eucharist

The liturgy continues with the Offertory.

The newly ordained Deacon prepares the bread, pours sufficient wine (and a little water) into the chalice, and places the vessels on the Lord's Table.

The Bishop goes to the Table and begins the Great Thanksgiving.

After Communion

In place of the usual postcommunion prayer, the following is said

Almighty Father, we thank you for feeding us with the holy food of the Body and Blood of your Son, and for uniting us through him in the fellowship of your Holy Spirit. We thank you for raising u glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Bishop blesses the people, after which the new Deacon dismisses them

Let us go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
People Thanks be to God.

From Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost, "Alleluia, alleluia," may be added to the dismissal and to the response

Appendix D - Letter of Agreement

Letter of Agreement

This is a template to be adapted by each congregation and submitted to the bishop.

The Rev. _____, (the Priest-in-charge) and the Vestry (Bishop's Committee) in _____ Church in _____, RI acknowledge the appointment of the Rev. Deacon _____ to serve in said Church according to the following conditions:

Liturgy and Ministry

- The Deacon will strive to encourage lay people to engage in works of service to people in need.
- It is expected that the Deacon have a special ministry of service outside of their congregation responsibilities. Such involvement and experience can be rightly shared with the congregation and throughout the diocese.
- Normally the Deacon shall read the Gospel, may lead or participate in the prayers of the People, prepare the Holy Table, assist with the administration of Holy Communion, and give the dismissal. The Priest-in-charge may invite the Deacon to preach occasionally in accordance with the policies of the Deacons' Handbook.
- The Deacon will strive to bring the needs, concerns, and hopes of the outside community to the congregation's attention.
- The Deacon's ministry in said Church shall conform to the policies set forth in the current edition of the Deacons' Handbook and by the Bishop of Rhode Island.
- The Deacon will (will not) have responsibility for pastoral care including (visitation of the sick and homebound) (oversight of Eucharistic Visitors) (other). If this responsibility is included in this letter of agreement, the Deacon should report the number of hours for this ministry on a quarterly basis in accordance with the appropriate form located in the Deacons' Handbook.
- The Deacon will not normally "hear confessions" but may lead the *Reconciliation of a Penitent* using the same form as laity. The Deacon will not officiate at a baptism but may baptize in an emergency or at the request of the Priest-in-charge, for a special reason. The Deacon may not preside at weddings or at a blessing of a civil marriage or a same-sex blessing. They may, at the request of the Priest-in-charge, participate in liturgical leadership, including preaching, at these services. Deacons may, at the request of the Priest-in-charge, officiate at a funeral outside the church. Any of these liturgical activities that are not associated with the congregation must be approved by the Bishop.
- It is appropriate for the Deacon to lead Morning or Evening Prayer, Compline or other offices of the church. This includes doing so at the main service(s) on Sundays if requested to do so by the Priest-in-charge or, in the absence of the same, by the Senior Warden. It is appropriate for a Deacon to lead the *Ministration to the Sick* or the *Ministration at the Time of Death*. This is especially relevant if the Deacon has pastoral care responsibilities.
- The Priest-in-charge shall have final authority in liturgical and pastoral policies that do not have rubrics associated with them.
- The Deacon will serve a maximum of ___ hours per week under the supervision of the Priest-in-charge. This will include assisting at (all) (the X o'clock) Sunday service(s) plus services at Christmas, Ash Wednesday and the Pascal Triduum.

Administrative Matters and Congregation Life

- The Deacon shall have a vacation of four weeks annually. Vacation time shall be scheduled in consultation with the Priest-in-charge.

- The Deacon shall have time and funds available for continuing education as developed by the Bishop's office or, if there is no diocesan program, as agreed to with the Bishop and Priest-in-charge.
- The Archdeacon and/or the bishop's staff may consult from time to time with the Deacon and/or the Priest-in-charge regarding life and ministry in the Church.
- Deacons shall report annually to the Bishop or the Bishop's designee on their life and work.
- Should the Priest-in-charge leave her/his position, this agreement shall end. The Bishop may then appoint the Deacon to serve on a temporary assignment during the interim.
- The Deacon is appointed for a period of _____ beginning _____. This appointment may be renewed. However, the Bishop may end the assignment at any time.
- For special circumstances, other leave may be arranged. Such leave shall be authorized by the Bishop on recommendation of the Archdeacon and after consultation with the Deacon and the Priest-in-charge.
- The Priest-in-charge and Deacon shall meet from time to time to consult about ministry and reflect on their working relationship. At least once a year, the Priest-in-charge and the Deacon shall reflect on this Letter of Agreement. The Archdeacon is always available for consultation. A deacon is responsible to the Bishop and Priest in charge. Their work is not reviewed or evaluated by vestry or Bishop's committee.

Financial Considerations

- The Deacon shall be reimbursed by the congregation for mileage spent in ministry upon submission of a statement from the Deacon to the Priest-in-charge, using the current IRS approved mileage rate. This should include all congregation related ministry other than regularly scheduled worship services.
- The Deacon shall be reimbursed by the congregation for ministry expenses (up to \$_____ per year) upon submission of a statement. This includes such things as the expenses of attending Diocesan Convention and/or other diocesan events as appropriate, program materials or pastoral care supplies used in the exercise of ministry, etc.
- The Deacon shall receive a continuing education allowance of up to \$350 upon submission of receipts to the Priest-in-charge.

Date: _____

**Type Name Here,
 Priest-in-charge**

**The Rt. Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely
 Bishop of Rhode Island**

**Type Name Here,
 Senior Warden
 Rev. 7/2014**

**Type Name Here,
 Deacon**

Appendix E - Annual Report

DIOCESE OF RHODE ISLAND

Annual Questionnaire for Deacons

Year: 2013

Name: _____

Address: _____ City/Town: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Ordination Date: _____

Present Status: Active _____ On Leave _____ Resigned [Retired] _____

Congregation: _____

Address: _____

Date Assigned: _____

Rector: _____

Hours of Congregation Commitment: _____

Ministry[ies]: _____

Location of Ministry[ies]: _____

Address [es]: _____

Hours of Ministry per week: _____

Supervisor: _____

Ministry [ies] Created: _____

Secular Employment: _____

Address: _____

Diocesan Committees, Appointments [dates]:

Continuing Education, Conferences, Retreats, etc [Name, date, hours and location]:

Brief Report to Bishop: [due by February 28, 2014]

Signed:_____Date:_____

Archdeacon: _____

Appendix F - List of RI Deacons (historical with date of ordination)

FIRSTNAME	LASTNAME	ORDINATION DATE
Paul G	Pickens	7/1/1976
Edmund C.	Mayo	7/27/1980
Austin Albert	Almon Jr	7/13/1985
Paul J	Boardman	7/13/1985
Jean Olsen	Barry	7/13/1985
Janet M	Broadhead	7/13/1985
Edwin F (Ted)	Hallenbeck	7/13/1985
Jean	Hickox	7/13/1985
Ida R	Johnson	7/13/1985
Robert	Johnson	7/13/1985
Mary	Johnstone	7/13/1985
Betsy E	Lesieur	7/13/1985
Iris E	Mello	7/13/1985
James L.	Verber	7/13/1985
Lester	York	7/13/1985
Carol L	Millette	4/5/1986
Edward J	Trafford	4/5/1986
Lorraine	Mills-Curran	8/8/1988
Charles	LeClerc	Received 8/8/1988
Robert	Adams	2/4/1989
Robert W.	Field	2/4/1989
Eloise	Neilsen	2/4/1989
Gail	Wheelock	2/4/1989
Betty Lou	Wright	6/23/1990
Margaret C F (Robin)	Higbie	6/23/1990
Hedwig B	Neale	6/23/1990
Bruce	Nickerson	6/23/1990
Ann D	Pelletier	6/23/1990
Marlene Jenny	Simonian	3/16/1991
Janice L	Grinnell	3/16/1991
Susan	North	3/16/1991
Stephanie	Shoemaker	3/16/1991
Christine H	Burton	3/28/1992
M. P.	Schneider	3/28/1992
John	Miller	6/20/1992
Judith T	Collins	6/20/1992
Sue	Crowninshield	6/26/1993
Gloria Lee	Wong	6/26/1993
Elaine A.	Cole	4/1/1994
Barbara L	Mays-Stock	6/18/1994
Mary L	Hitt	4/13/1995
Patricia Ann	Bailey	6/24/1995
Nancy F	Miller	6/24/1995
Linda F.	Cappers	6/24/1995
Leroy S.	Close	5/20/2000
Dorothy Louise	Brightman	5/25/2006
Anne Bridget	Burke	9/12/2009
Mark	Warter	6/2008
Joyce	Thorne	5/22/2010
Mary Ann	Mello	6/15/2013

- P. J. Boardman, Lester York, Robert Adams, Robert Field, and Susan Crowninshield renounced their orders.
- Mary Johnstone, Stephanie Shoemaker, M.P. Schneider and James Verber went to seminary and were priested.
- Charles LeClerc resident in NH
- Mark Warter is canonically resident in SC
- Paul Pickens, Robert Johnson, Jean Hickox, Hedwig Neale, John Miller, Susan North deceased.