

# DEACONS HANDBOOK



Diocese of New Westminster  
ANGELICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

# THE ORDER OF DEACONS



As this handbook so ably points out, deacons play a vital part in the life of the Church in that they are called to cultivate and extend Jesus's servant ministry to a world that needs it.

Deacons work to focus our attention on and organize our efforts to engage with the poor, the hungry, the marginalized, the dispossessed and those suffering on account of injustice. Deacons help us become kin with those we had never dreamed were our kin. They also help us become advocates for those we serve, assisting us in taking up the work of making the structures of our society more humane and just.

Deacons proclaim the Gospel, assist at the Holy Table, and dismiss us in that the Gospel is the source of commitment to just action, the Table is the place of feeding for compassionate living and the dismissal is our encouragement to go forth and be Christ-like in and for the world.

I hope that this handbook will be a help to you in your discernment. And I pray that every parish in our diocese will be blessed with a deacon in its midst!

*In Christ,  
+ Melissa*

Melissa



The ordination service for deacons is the foundation for the ministry of a deacon. The charge to the ordinand from the ordination rite includes this statement of ministry:

*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 the authority of 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.*
- *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* 🍁

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This handbook has been compiled by the Bishop's Task Force on the Diaconate and approved by the Bishop of New Westminster and the commentary and policies contained herein are authoritative for deacons licenced in the Diocese of New Westminster.

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# THE HISTORY AND NATURE OF THE DIACONATE



**T**he scriptures and the ancient Christian writers make it clear that there have been different ministries within the Church since the time of the Apostles. The three distinct orders of ordained ministers, Deacon, Priest and Bishop, are the embodiment in the community of the priesthood, servanthood and episcopacy of Christ which all of the people of God participate in through baptism. These orders are a gift of God, to the people of God, for the service of God.

From New Testament times, the Holy Spirit has called and continues to call individuals to leadership in the Church. Those who respond to the Spirit's call do

so in life long devotion. Throughout the history of the Church there have continued to be bishops, priests or presbyters and deacons, or equivalent, functioning in the major Christian denominations.

Almost from the beginning, the Christian community found it necessary to appoint those who would assist in looking after its poor. We see in Acts 6: 1-6 that seven were chosen to take food to widows, who some said were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. These seven have been looked to as a model of the diaconate since early on in the history of the Church. A specific reference to deacons may be found in Philippians 1: 1 where Paul addresses "to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." (NIV) 1 Timothy 3:8-13 contains the third reference in the scriptures to deacons when it sets out the qualifications for bishop and deacon. Both offices are to be filled by respected persons in the community. The requirements for deacon are strict due to the dignity of the office.

The period 100-600 AD has been called the Golden Age of the diaconate. Deacons flourished in numbers and in importance. They oversaw the pastoral care of the Church; administered

so in life long devotion.

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Almost from the beginning, the Christian community found it necessary to appoint those who would assist in looking after its poor. We see in Acts 6: 1-6 that seven were chosen to take food to



Church charities; were assistants to the bishops of the Church; often succeeded the bishops they assisted, and had a major role in the liturgies of the Church. Above all else, they were the living symbol of the servant ministry to which all baptized Christians are called by Christ. Deacons were servants of the Church, not of another order or official. The order of deacon was a permanent vocation. The entrance of unprecedented numbers into the Church in the fourth century led to radical changes in the Church. With these changes came the decline of the diaconate as a separate and distinct order. The ministry of the Church became a graded succession of offices reflecting its greater complexity and its new civic role.

The 1968 Lambeth conference acknowledged that the diaconate as an ordained ministry was necessary to the Church of Christ and recommended that the practice of regarding the diaconate as an inferior order be reformed and that the order of deacon be restored to a significant and operative order.

The deacon's role today is neither inferior to the role of the priest, nor superior to the role of the laity, but instead is a complementary part of the ministry of the whole Church. It is a permanent, not transitional order; full in itself and equal to other ordained roles within the Church. Deacons exist to remind all Christians that the nature and character of the ministry to which all baptized Christians are called is service. Within this, they are both personally involved in service to the world and inspire and support others in their service to the world. Deacons earn their living outside the Church, and, standing at the altar with



other orders, represent the unity and goodness of both 'secular' and 'spiritual' realms, witnessing to the reality that God is present within both.

The order of Deacon was re-established in the Diocese of New Westminster with the first ordination in 1990 and more than forty-five deacons have been ordained since. 🍁

## DESCRIPTION AND STORIES OF MINISTRY

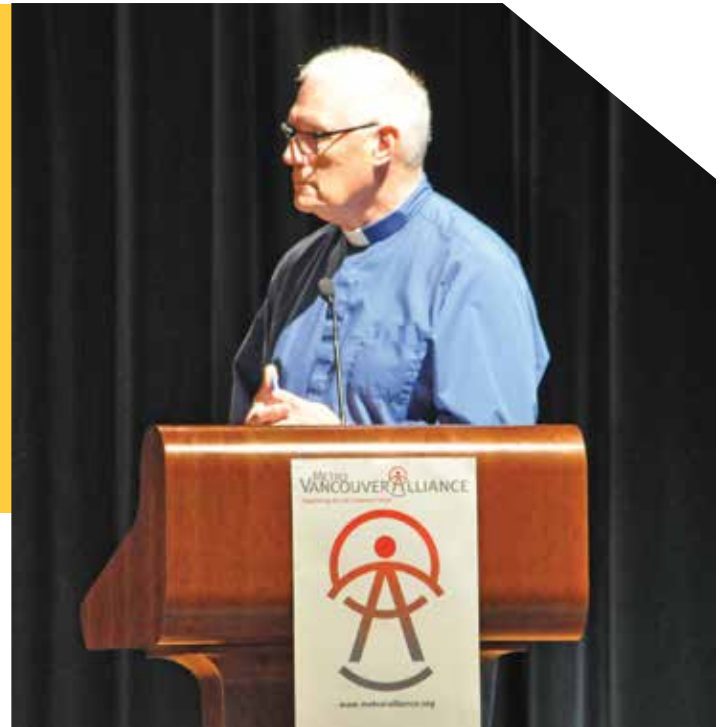
**A**s ministers of the Anglican Church, deacons are based in a parish or other Church body, but most of their ministry is exercised outside the usual reach of the parish on behalf of all the baptized and for the sake of the world. The ordination service for a deacon includes the following charge:

*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 ..... At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.*

We refer to this aspect of a deacon's ministry as "workplace ministry." This ministry is at the heart of what it means to be a deacon.

Some deacons work in completely secular jobs; some work on advocacy efforts; some are retired and exercise their ministries through volunteer groups; many will exercise their workplace ministry through parish outreach programs. When not engaged in these workplace ministries, deacons engage in other parish-based ministry to support the baptized in their awareness of and engagement in serving others: education, preaching and pastoral care. Throughout a deacon's life, the deacon focuses his or her ministry on empowering the members of the Church to live out their baptismal ministries.

The deacon's liturgical role is highly symbolic of his or her workplace ministry. Since deacons take the Word of God out into the world, a role of



proclamation, the deacon proclaims the Gospel; since deacons are engaged with feeding, both figuratively and literally, their liturgical role includes setting the table for Holy Communion; and since deacons are models and encouragers for the whole people of God as they live out their baptismal ministries, the deacon dismisses the people from the liturgy, prompting them to go out and continue their Christian service.



"Feed My Sheep". *Sharing Abundance* is the retirement dream for Deacon Lizz. For over





seven years her registered non-profit society has been offering welcoming places where food and community meet.

Together with hundreds of dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors, her team provides weekly lunch and dinner programs in various locations to folks in her community and beyond. Community guests include veterans, seniors, folks on disability pensions, families students and those who have fallen through the cracks. Many of the guests attend three or more programs a week as they struggle to live in one of the most expensive cities in Canada. Most have no other link to the Church.

These community meal programs address social isolation as well as poverty, feeding the body and the soul in this active diaconal ministry. Lizz takes every opportunity to tell the Church about Sharing Abundance and to invite our members to become involved.



Anne has worked in a major bank for many years. Her corner of the branch is known to be a place of refuge and peace for any co-worker or client facing a challenge or uncertainty in their life. Following her vocation as one who makes Christ and his redemptive love known to those among whom

she works, Anne provides counsel, prayer, reassurance and an understanding of God's love to those who seek her out. She is engaged with her co-workers and has assisted them through various pastoral issues such as a co-worker struggling through marital issues, or assisting a co-worker in making a decision of fulfilling her dream of becoming a nurse, talking with young working mom's as they struggled to

balance raising a family and commitment to their job, or talking with a co-worker who had a brother struggling with drug addiction.

A co-worker commented once, "Anne, you are forever counselling us, not only in our job but in our family and personal life, I guess that is the Deacon coming out in you. You never judge but instead listen and give the best advice as a friend would." The manner in which Anne exercises her workplace ministry is at the core of her understanding of her call to be a deacon in the church.



Pitman is a law professor at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and a deacon on the wealthy west side of Vancouver. In spite of the wealth of that area of the city, there are still many who are homeless and

hungry. Pitman leads the West Point Grey Neighbourhood Ministry in collaboration with other west side parishes, serving the needy on the streets of Point Grey. Volunteers walk the streets in teams twice weekly year round and deliver nutritious packets of food, clothing and other necessities to the homeless.

Pitman also ministers to residents at a local supportive housing facility, which was established in large part due to the advocacy of the Neighbourhood Ministry.

It was Pitman's quest for social justice, his recognition that many in Point Grey live



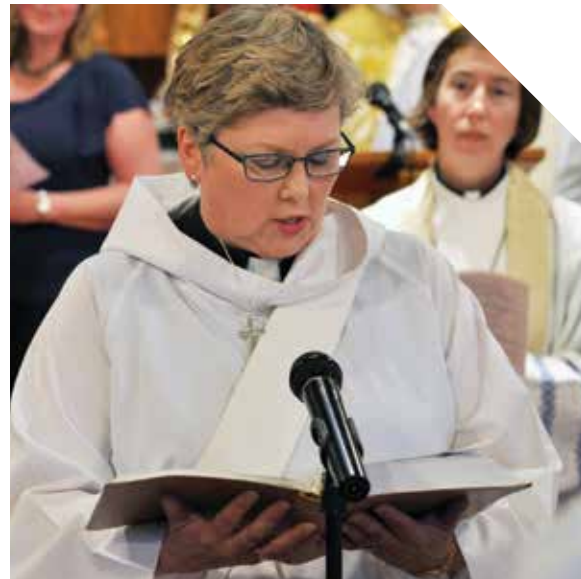
disadvantaged lives, and his vision that the Church could play a central role in relieving suffering that has resulted in the activities of the West Point Grey Neighbourhood Ministry.



Deacon Robert's regular practice was to walk to work each day, having left home at least 30 minutes earlier than he needed to get to work. Each

day he would take a breakfast with him. Each day he would find someone in his community who had spent the night sleeping in the street. And he would give breakfast to that person and spend the extra 30 minutes talking with the person, hearing their story and getting to know them. When he arrived at the welding shop where he worked, each day he would don his welding helmet and spend the entire day praying for the person he had just met.

He and his wife Teri founded a Saturday food program feeding those living on the street, and offering the love of Jesus Christ to all whom they met. Sadly, Robert died within a year of his ordination; but his ministry continues through Teri and others. According to Teri, "In the beginning we served the homeless twice a month and only needed one crock pot. We also used to hand out just one loaf of sandwiches. Today we serve between 100 and 150 people every Saturday night and go through ten crock pots, two or three large bowls of salad, twelve to fifteen loaves of sandwiches and anywhere from 100 to 200 desserts. Robert inspired so many people and because of that, the ministry he started back in 2004 continues to this day."



Karen describes her ministry like this: "To be a deacon is to offer one's life to the service of God through serving the people of God. As deacons we act as the hands, mouths, and hearts of God as we work with those to whom we minister. For example, for the past six years, I have worked with Mary, my vision-mate partner through the CNIB. I am literally her eyes for a few hours a week, driving her around and helping her with tasks her compromised vision will not allow her to do independently. As her husband is also vision-impaired, I assist her family when there are forms to be filled and mail to be read. Mary and her husband emigrated from Africa and I have brought the needs of her community in her homeland to the attention of our parish, which raised funds and materials for Mary to take back to her village." 🍁

***Through this kind of outreach, deacons extend the ministry of our church beyond the parish walls.***



# HOW TO ENTER THE ORDER

## Overview of the Process of Discernment, Application and Formation for the Diaconate

The discernment of a particular vocation for which God is calling and equipping an individual is the responsibility of that individual together with the Christian community. See Appendix 1 for the diocesan criteria for those in Holy Orders. For this reason the diocese requires discernment procedures at the Parish and Diocesan levels.

The Discernment and Application Package contains a detailed description of the steps leading to ordination, summarized here in overview form.

### DISCERNMENT

The formal discernment process has three phases:

**1. The first phase in the parish** consists of working one-on-one with a clergy leader, normally the rector of the enquirer's home parish, to explore the enquirer's perceived call and to embark on a time of assessment, goal setting and action-learning. This typically lasts nine months to a year. At

the end of this phase, should the clergy leader be affirmative in supporting the enquirer's call to ordained ministry, the clergy leader will decide that the second phase will begin.

- 2. In the second phase in the parish**, the enquirer: continues to work and learn in the parish and a lay committee is convened for the purpose of working with the enquirer
- to explore the enquirer's sense of call,
  - to give feedback on the continuing action-learning of the inquirer in the parish and
  - to come to a decision as to whether the committee will affirm the enquirer's call to ordained ministry.

The Archdeacon for Deacons will arrange a visit so that the whole parish can learn about the role of a deacon in its midst. In addition, those involved in the discernment group will attend a short course on their roles. This phase typically takes 6 to 12 months. Should the



committee and the clergy leader be in the affirmative in supporting the enquirer's call to ordained ministry, the enquirer becomes an applicant and will begin phase three.

**3. In the third phase in the diocese**, the applicant, now supported and prepared by a clergy leader and a parish, enters into conversations with the Bishop, the Examining Chaplains and the Ministry Discernment Conference. If the bishop concurs with the assessments, the applicant becomes a Postulant for Ordination.

### EDUCATION AND FORMATION

The Postulant will meet with the Director of Diaconal Formation to review previous education and



experience and plan a program of studies which meets the criteria outlined in the Diaconal Formation Expectations. Some Postulants may have begun their theological education while still applicants or even earlier. However, a period of formation, distinct from formal education is still required.

The Director of Diaconal Formation and the Archdeacon for Deacons review the status of each Postulant on a regular basis. When the Director and the Archdeacon determine that the Postulant has completed the academic studies and the period of formation, they will make a recommendation to the Bishop that the Postulant be referred to the Examining Chaplains a second time to determine readiness for ordination.

The program of education and formation allows flexibility to accommodate work and family schedules.

The whole process from initial enquiry to ordination normally takes between two and five years. 🍁

## THE COVENANT

When deacons are ordained, they enter into a covenantal relationship with the parish or ecclesial group to which they are assigned. The relationship is founded on the deacon's personal vocation to minister in God's name and to represent the Church in the wider world. The



relationship also recognizes that the role of the deacon is to extend the ministry of the parish into the wider community. Therefore much of the deacon's ministry is normally outside the regular reach of the parish, primarily exercised through the deacon's involvement in their workplace and other organizations. Deacons are engaged in taking the Word of God into the community and in feeding those with whom they minister, sometimes literally and always figuratively.

A deacon is also an interpreter and presenter to the Church of the needs, concerns and hopes of the world. As such, it is central to the deacon's ministry that they are involved in a meaningful way with society "beyond the church walls". It is also central that the deacon is intentional in translating for the Church the understanding of the issues being faced and presenting these as a call for mission by the Church. Deacons have a significant role in empowering their lay members of their parishes to live fully into their baptismal ministries.



The parish or ecclesial group provides a home base for the deacon, a place of support and accountability and a place where the deacon can bring to the attention of the Church the concerns and issues they are encountering in the community around the parish.

The manner that the deacon uses to raise awareness of community ministry may include: preaching, education, pastoral ministry, and involvement in the liturgy.

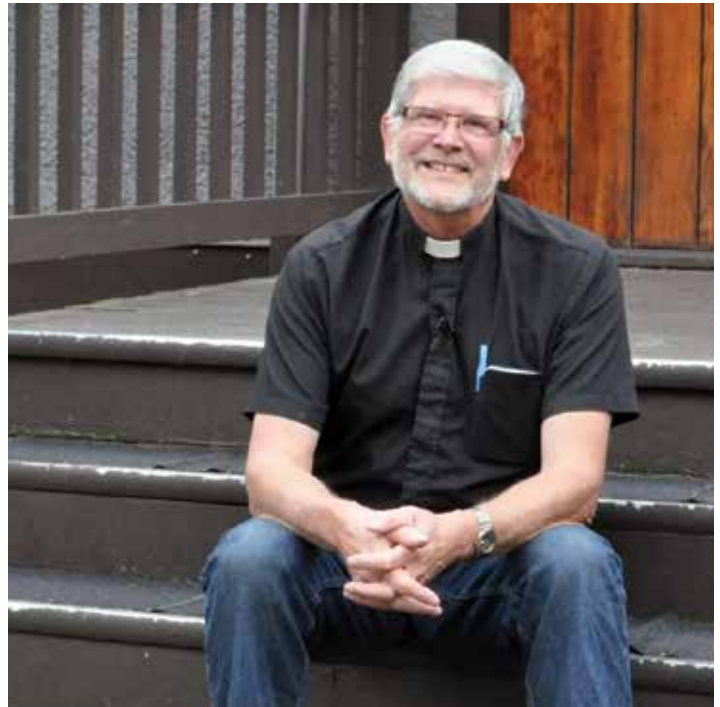
The traditional diaconal roles of proclaiming the Gospel, setting the table for Eucharist and dismissing the people are inextricably and symbolically linked to the deacon's ministry in the wider community. For example, the deacon reads the Gospel because their call is to take the Word of God out to the people of God. Their role as proclaimer of the Gospel in the Sunday liturgy is symbolic of the way they spread the word of God in their workplace ministry. And the role of the deacon as proclaimer of the Gospel during the liturgy reinforces the authority of the deacon to do the same in the wider community and to speak for the Church.

As the home base for the deacon, the parish or group provides the initial locus for the deacon's accountability to the Church. The deacon is expected to report to the rector and wardens on their ministerial activities and to be accountable to the rector for the ministry of the parish. In a group setting the deacon might report to the Archdeacon or Regional Dean and appropriate lay authorities.

The parish or group also has responsibilities to support and care for the deacon and to resist the temptation to call upon the deacon for more involvement than the deacon can reasonably provide. Deacons, whether in paid employment or not, should safeguard sufficient energy for their work in the world.

When a deacon is licenced to a ministry, the relationship that results is covenantal in nature, based on commitments and promises and inspired always by the Holy Spirit. In this diocese, we use a written form to record this relationship, and we call this a Covenant. It is not a contract of service, but rather a document

that explains the nature of the deacon's ministry at a particular time and place, the manner of support that the ministerial setting will provide, and the deep bond of respect and love that is intended to exist throughout the relationship.



The covenant is prepared jointly by the deacon and representatives of the parish (always including the rector of the parish and lay representatives), or of the group. A draft copy of the covenant is sent to the Archdeacon for Deacons for review and approval before it is signed. The covenant is then signed by the rector (or other appropriate authority such as a Regional Dean), wardens, deacon, archdeacon and bishop. The covenant is renewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and the ministry remains effective, and notice of the results of that review is also sent to the Archdeacon for Deacons. ✚

*See Appendix 2 for further details and a sample form of a covenant.*




## OUR BEST PRACTICES

**W**e serve the Church and our order best when we adhere to norms and are consistent in the roles we assume through our ministries. The following comprise the norms for deacons in the Diocese of New Westminster.



- Deacons are clergy, a full, equal and distinctive order. They are ordained for life and under authority, having taken the vows and made the oaths required by the canons of the Anglican Church of Canada. They function only with a licence or letter of permission from the bishop and are accountable to the incumbent of their parish, or other person designated by the bishop, and to the bishop directly. Deacons are subject to all of the provisions of Canon Law regarding discipline and to all the policies and practices of this diocese, which apply to their order.
- The details of the deacon's ministry under their licence, including any term to their appointment, will be written into their covenant with their parish or other ecclesial body, the Archdeacon for Deacons and the Bishop.
- All deacons with a licence from the bishop are expected to attend and vote at Synod as members of the order of clergy, according to the process outlined in the Canons. They receive the clergy mailings of the diocese and an invitation to the clergy conference.
- Deacons are normally non-stipendiary clergy.
- Deacons bear the title: "The Reverend" or "Deacon".
- Deacons may wear clerical collars when they are in a role of proclamation or witness. If vesting for the Eucharist the proper liturgical dress will be an alb (or cassock with surplice), clerical collar and stole. A deacon may wear a dalmatic when vesting for the Eucharist if it is a parish's custom to do so.
- The central roles for the deacon in the Eucharist include proclaiming the Gospel, preparing the communion table and dismissing the people to their mission in the world. Deacons will normally also be involved in overseeing, providing training for, and participating in the administration of communion and aspects of the liturgy. Deacons are expected to preach on a regular schedule, if skilled in this area. Deacons are to give leadership to these roles in parishes/congregations in ways which uphold and affirm the ministries of all baptized persons.
- Use of the reserved sacrament by deacons is limited to pastoral occasions such as visits to the sick.
- Deacons may officiate at daily offices including morning prayer, evening prayer and night prayer. With the agreement of the rector, deacons may

also officiate at other pastoral offices, especially if these are the result of pastoral connections, such as involvement with a family during a time of illness or bereavement.

- Deacons in the Diocese of New Westminster are not issued a license to officiate at weddings in the normal course, but may be asked by the bishop to officiate in circumstances of pastoral necessity.
- Deacons are required to maintain a schedule of continuing education, including clergy conferences. Continuing education will be a requirement for the renewal of licenses.
- Deacons may attend regional, diocesan, and national committees as a deacon representative of this diocese.
- If the situation arises, arrangements may be made for a transfer of a deacon to a different parish, provided the parish receiving the deacon undergoes a process of education, arranged by the Archdeacon for Deacons. The transfer will require the consent of the bishop, the deacon and the rector and wardens of the new parish.
- In the event that a deacon subsequently discerns a call to priesthood, the process will be the same as for any baptized applicant and will include a new discernment process, visits to the examining chaplains and attendance at an appropriate discernment conference.
- Deacons shall submit an annual letter reporting to the bishop on the deacon's life and ministry. As an addition to the deacon's letter, the rector of the parish where the deacon is assigned, is asked to write a paragraph describing and evaluating the deacon's role in the parish. Deacons are expected to report their Continuing Education activities in the annual letter. Annual letters should be sent to the Archdeacon by the end of March of each year and then, when all are received, sent in one package to the bishop. 

## THE CONTINUING EDUCATION PLAN

Whether it is sharpening a skill or scholarly pursuit for professional development, you can exercise your mind with the help of the diocese's Continuing Education Plan (CEP). A healthy inquiring mind contributes to your personal well-being and, by extension, to the well-being of your parish and the Church as a whole.

All deacons automatically have a CEP account opened on their behalf on their first day of licensing with a parish or ecclesial body. Benefits accumulate in your account at the rate of \$50 per month, which your parish contributes on your behalf. The contribution amount is reviewed from time to time to ensure it meets the needs of deacons for continuing education. The collective funds in the CEP are invested in the Consolidated Trust Fund and your account earns a share of the total investment earnings. There is no limit to the amount deacons can accumulate.

A statement is sent to you each year showing contributions and withdrawals from your CEP account. Your account balance information is also available from the Diocesan Controller at 604-684-6306 ext. 214.

You may draw funds up to the amount available in your account. As long as the expenditure confers a benefit to the Church, you may use your CEP account to cover up to 100% of the cost of:

- any continuing education program or course of study
- clergy conference, clergy days and clergy retreat
- books or other materials and equipment
- computer hardware or software

The plan is designed to promote lifelong learning among deacons. Deacons are encouraged to have a personal continuing education program that supports



the specific ministries in which they are involved. A suggested minimum amount of continuing education time per year is two full days. There is no requirement to obtain pre-approval for expenditure. However, if you are unsure whether an expenditure will qualify, please ask for an interpretation from the Archdeacon for Deacons or Executive Archdeacon.

The Application form for benefits is available for download, from the diocesan website. Please submit your application and receipts in the same quarter in which the events took place.

If you retire or leave covenanted ministry, you are no longer eligible to claim under the plan since Canada Revenue Agency requirements state that all funds used in the CEP by the account holders must be for the benefit of the employers. Our administrative policy is that eligible expenditures under the CEP must be incurred more than three months prior to the date of retirement or termination, in order to satisfy CRA's requirement.

When you retire or leave covenanted ministry, your account will be frozen for a period of 12 months. In the event of your return to covenanted ministry within 12 months of ceasing participation, your account will be reinstated at the level it was upon leaving. If you resume covenanted ministry more than 12

months after retiring or leaving, a new account will be established.

### Programs and courses

Attach receipts for the course and any related travel and accommodation costs to the application form. Ensure that you have included, on the application form, an explanation of how the Church benefits from you taking the program or course


### Books and Journals

Books' titles and copy of receipt of purchase must be attached to application form.

### Computers

Hardware and software may be purchased – you may apply your funds to computer hardware once every three years. A copy of receipt of purchase must be attached to application form. Upon completion, return to:

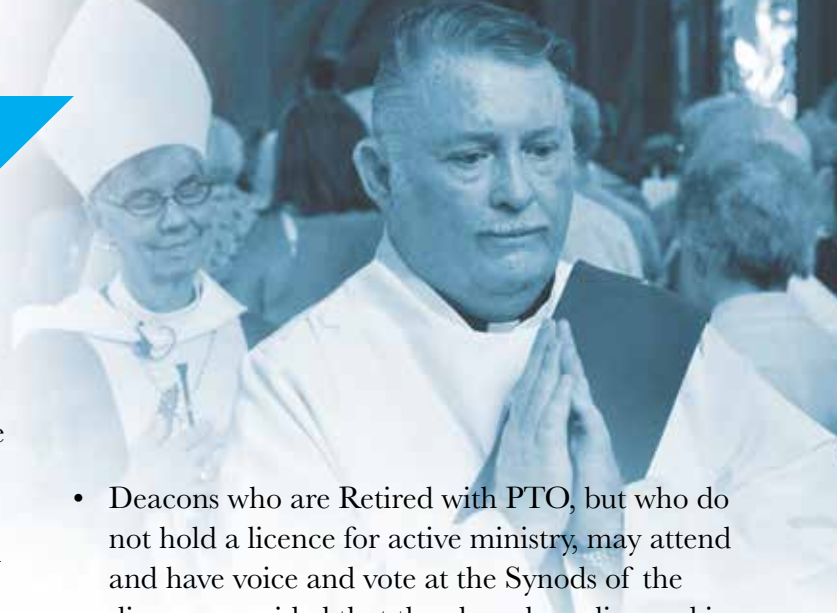
The Ven. Douglas Fenton  
Diocese of New Westminster  
1410 Nanton Avenue  
Vancouver B.C. V6H 2E2

Or scan and send by email to:  
[dfenton@vancouver.anglican.ca](mailto:dfenton@vancouver.anglican.ca) 






# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RETIRE



- Deacons conform to the Diocesan Canon on retirement which requires clergy to retire at age 65. In accordance with the retirement policy, a deacon may defer retirement by applying to the bishop for up to two one-year extensions of the deacon's license to the parish in which he/she is serving at the time of retirement provided that the deacon, the incumbent of the parish, the wardens of the parish and the Archdeacon for Deacons agree to each extension. At or near retirement age, the deacon will meet with the bishop to discuss retirement and possible deployment in the diocese as a retired deacon.
- Deacons may retire early before the age of 65, after the 5th anniversary of their ordination. A deacon who retires early may request reinstatement to active status until the age of 67.
- Upon retirement, deacons will normally be granted Permission to Officiate, unless the bishop determines it appropriate to withhold or remove permission due to specific circumstances. Retired with PTO means that a deacon does not vest or perform the role of deacon in liturgical observances, except on an occasional basis and by specific invitation from the incumbent of a parish. Retired deacons are not expected to exercise any specifically diaconal ministries, such as workplace ministry or other parish ministries, but are expected to continue to exercise their baptismal ministries.
- A retired deacon may choose to leave the parish in which they are serving at the time of their retirement, especially if their continued presence may create issues for the ongoing parish leadership.
- Deacons who are Retired with PTO, but who do not hold a licence for active ministry, may attend and have voice and vote at the Synods of the diocese, provided that they have been licensed in the diocese for a period of not less than 10 years in the 15 years immediately prior to retirement. A deacon who does not hold a current licence and who has been licensed in the diocese for a period of less than 10 years in the last 15 years prior to retirement, may attend the Synods of the diocese as an observer.
- At the time of retirement, contributions will no longer be made by the parish to the deacon's continuing education fund administered by the diocese and the deacon will no longer be an ex officio member of the parish council of the parish in which he/she is resident, unless the deacon enters into a Covenant of Ministry with their parish.
- Retired deacons may be engaged by a parish, either their existing parish or one to which they move upon retirement, or other diocesan body to perform diaconal ministry for a specific function and period of time. The retired deacon must negotiate a Covenant of Ministry with the parish or diocesan body, and must be in receipt of a licence to that ministry from the bishop. An engagement of this nature is expected to be for a short term or on a year-to-year basis, and the covenant must be reviewed at least annually with a copy of the signed covenant and a report of the ministry review forwarded to the Archdeacon for Deacons.



- o During the engagement, the retired deacon will as a first priority focus on some form of “workplace” ministry as well as the usual diaconal functions in the liturgy. Any other parish-based ministries (preaching, education, pastoral care) will support the participation of the baptized in serving and advocating for the poor, marginalized, etc.
  - o Upon engagement, the deacon retains the privilege of contributions to the Continuing Education fund, similar to a deacon in active ministry, for the period of time covered by the covenant.
  - o The deacon retains the privileges of synod membership as a member of the clergy for the parish or diocesan body.
- If it becomes apparent that the deacon is not able to perform effective and / or appropriate ministry, the bishop, after due consultation but in her sole discretion, may move the deacon from active status to retired status. 

## Appendix 1

### CRITERIA FOR THOSE IN HOLY ORDERS


In the Diocese of New Westminster we want to bring new energy in encouraging gifted, capable people to explore whether priesthood or the diaconate might be their calling. Within this, we will be seeking those who have both an *inner awareness of a call from God and are affirmed in that call in the eyes of others*. We will be seeking those who show both passion and realism in their commitment to the Church as a bearer of God’s mission in the world, and a current involvement in that mission through the life of a congregation within the diocese. We will be seeking those whose spirituality is centered in their baptismal identity, rooted in a relationship with the Triune God and lived out in their practices of private and public prayer, and the stewardship of their relationships and their resources.

To assist us all in identifying those people we want to encourage to explore discernment for Holy Orders, we have drafted a *set of criteria to use*: a) to guide those who initiate conversations with potential discerners, b) to assist discerners in their own reflections on vocation, and c) to use in parishes in conversations between discerners and parish discernment committees and as a basis for discerners’ action-reflection.

As is always the case, the following gifts, abilities and characteristics may be present in each person in varying degrees given his or her age, church background, life experience and time in the discernment process. Thus, *we are seeking people who possess the following gifts, abilities and characteristics in a more fulsome manner, or who demonstrate a clear potential to develop these gifts, abilities and characteristics during their discernment or formation.*

In the case of *those in discernment for the priesthood*, the gifts, abilities and characteristics listed below are

## ROLE OF THE ARCHDEACON FOR DEACONS

The Archdeacon for Deacons (AD) is the senior deacon for the diocese. The AD is responsible for the overall management of the Order of Deacons in the diocese, including maintaining the health of the order, providing pastoral care and oversight of deacons in their ministries and promoting the extension of the order. In addition, the AD manages the diocesan discernment process for those exploring ordination as a deacon and, together with the Director of Formation, is responsible for the education of postulants. The AD reports directly to the bishop and is a member of the Archdeacons’ council. 

meant to be in the service of the role of the priest—the spiritual and pastoral ministry of gathering a community of faith; presiding in that community through proclaiming the Word and presiding at the Eucharist and at Baptism; the preparation of people for Christian life and ministry; and participating in the oversight and overall integration of a community of faith as it focuses on its purpose of gathering, renewing baptismal identity and purpose and sending the baptized into the world as salt, light and leaven.

In the case of *those in discernment for the diaconate*, the gifts, abilities and characteristics listed below are in the service of the deacon's role of being both a sign and an animator of the Christ-like service of the whole people of God in the world. As such, the deacon both personally enacts this servanthood as well as leads others in the church community into such service in the world.

We, therefore, seek the following gifts, abilities and characteristics in those we encourage, form and call to the priesthood and to the diaconate:

- **A person who is a gatherer and builder of community:** We seek a person who is gifted in gathering diverse people into a community and then building and developing that community over time. We seek those who can help groups of people come together around shared values and a sense of purpose. We seek those who can assist others in identifying and developing their gifts and skills in service to God, the church and the broader community.
- **A person who has a pattern of spiritual practice that is rooted in a Christ-centered, Anglican approach to spirituality:** We seek a person who is committed to a life of prayer. We seek a person who is regular in the Daily Offices, faithful in their participation in the Eucharist, and active in the practice of personal prayer. We seek a person who is working with a spiritual director and who makes regular use of the Rite of Reconciliation.
- **A person who has a sense of presence and who is emotionally and relationally mature:** We seek a person whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others. We seek a person who is working on their self-awareness and who nurtures authentic and productive relationships with others. This includes: having an understanding of emotions and having the ability to communicate emotions, being aware of strengths and areas needing attention in terms of relationships with others, having and being attuned to the impact of their presence, words and actions on others. We seek a person of emotional resilience who can persevere and stay in relationship with others when situations get difficult.
- **A person who can exercise leadership that carries authority and can live productively in relationship to those in authority:** We seek a leader who is comfortable exercising a style of leadership that is both relational and carries authority. We seek a person who, having made ordination vows, acknowledges the authority and responsibility that others (archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, rectors, elected and appointed lay leaders, etc.) carry in relationship to them and can nurture productive relationships with those carrying authority and responsibility.
- **A person who listens and loves to learn:** We seek a person who is open and intrigued by the learning process and who sees God as moving and active in Scripture, tradition, reason, learning from other disciplines and in the wisdom of the community. We seek a person who is committed to increasing their own learning and theological understanding over time. We seek people who learn from their experience: both their successes and their failures.
- **A person who is a good steward.** We seek a person who cares for themselves in terms of body, mind, spirit and who nourishes the





important relationships in their lives. We seek a person who gives generously of their time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God who is the source of all. We seek people who have developed and are working with a Rule of Life and whose lives reflect a deep commitment to all the dimensions of their baptismal covenant to include care for creation.

## Appendix 2

# COVENANT OF MINISTRY

The sample covenant in this appendix is for reference purposes. Actual covenants should include the elements included in the sample but the form and the words may vary. Note that the signatories to the covenant must be as shown in the sample.


The covenant begins with a statement of the deacon's vocation and the manner the deacon is called to engage in ministry. One would expect to find the work of the deacon in the parish or group at the intersection of their mission and of the sense of call of the deacon. The description of the deacon's ministry will include their external ministry, stated to explain how the Church's mission is being extended into the wider community.

The next part of the covenant should deal with the areas of ministry the deacon will undertake in the Church setting for the next year. The expectation is that the covenant will be specific and measurable. How many times and how many hours are questions that should be asked. Write from the perspective of the annual review and ask the question, "How will I know if I have accomplished this?" Diocesan work should be included in this part of the covenant as well as parish and workplace ministry.

The third part of the covenant should encompass accountability and discipline. The deacon is accountable to the rector, or other authorities appointed by the bishop. At the same time, the parish or group is accountable to the deacon for support. Another statement will indicate a recognition of the rector's authority on all matters relating to the parish. There should also be a statement that outlines the intention to meet, report and consult. Another statement indicates that the covenant will be reviewed annually. This portion of the covenant needs to recognize that the deacon is non-stipendiary and that paid employment and family commitments must be recognized and have priority at most times.

The fourth and final section of the covenant outlines working conditions and support. There must be a statement that the expenses of the deacon's ministry will be paid by the parish or group. This might include books for classes the deacon is leading, mileage for trips to a nursing home and similar expenses. Some parishes may make provision for the deacon to have a monthly or annual honorarium to cover such expenses. The parish or group must also provide for the full cost of the deacon's membership in the Continuing Education Fund of the Diocese of New Westminster. Provision should be made for holidays and study leave. Other matters may also be covered according to the needs of the parish and the deacon, such as parking and office space.

The Archdeacon for Deacons will assist the rector, wardens and ordinand with the development of the first covenant and is available to assist in later reviews if requested to do so.

For postulants, it is appropriate to have a learning covenant which is a modified form of the deacon's covenant. The learning covenant should outline the postulant's learning goals, plans for achieving those goals and supervision. 

## A COVENANT BETWEEN

\_\_\_\_\_

(Parish/Deanery/Ministry Group)

AND

\_\_\_\_\_

(deacon's name)

This Covenant describes the ministerial relationship between the Parish/Deanery/Ministry Group of \_\_\_\_\_, Diocese of New Westminster and (deacon)\_\_\_\_\_.

**Statement of Vocation of** (deacon)\_\_\_\_\_.

### We understand that the ministry of a deacon is to:

- make Christ and his redemptive love known, by my word and example, to those among whom I live and work and worship.
- interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.
- enable and support the people of God in carrying out the baptismal ministries to which God calls them;
- be visible as a deacon and perform the liturgical functions of a deacon as set out in the liturgies of the Anglican Church of Canada: and
- assist and support my rector.


### Ministry and Relationship with the Parish

**Workplace Ministry** – Insert a description of the deacon's workplace ministry here, the deacon's work in the world or work that assists God's people in engaging with and serving the poor, the needy, the marginalized. Explain how this pastoral ministry extends the ministry of the Church and elaborate on its diaconal nature. Comment on how the deacon will interpret to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the greater community.


**Parish Ministry** – Insert a description of the deacon's parish ministry here, explain how this ministry cultivates a heart for service within the parish. The description may include the following:

- **Worship** – Elaborate on the role of the deacon at the Sunday liturgies and at such other liturgies as may be reasonably agreed to from time to time.



- **Christian Education** – Insert a clear statement of what it is you will provide in this area and its clear relationship to cultivating a heart for service in the parish
- **Pastoral Ministry** – Describe any pastoral ministry you will undertake and its relationship to cultivating a heart for service within the parish.
- **Diocesan Ministry** – Specify any service on committees of the Diocese as requested and as time permits. Time spent in such service will be included in the required ministry hours set out in the section of this Covenant which speaks to working conditions and support. 
- Through regular staff meetings and reports, (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ will report and consult with the rector with respect to the various aspects of his/her ministry.
- As deacon, (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ is a member of (insert names of parish committees of which you are a member).
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ will participate in an annual review of his/her ministry and these provisions with the rector and wardens and will accept amendment of these provisions as necessary and as may be mutually agreed to by the rector, the wardens and (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ . Evaluation of performance and competence and continuation of ministry connected to the parish.

## ACCOUNTABILITY AND DISCIPLINE

- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ is accountable to the rector in all matters pertaining to the Parish of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ accepts the overall authority of the Bishop and Archdeacon for Deacons.
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ is accountable to \_\_\_\_\_ in all matters pertaining to his/her work as a \_\_\_\_\_ (use this section if engaged by an ecclesial body other than a parish).
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ will adhere to the requirements for deacons as contained in the Deacons' Handbook, including the policy and process relating to retirement.
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ will attend Vestry Meetings of the Parish and submit a written report of his/her ministry and activities within and outside the Parish to Vestry.
- The rector and the wardens recognize and affirm (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ 's family and work obligations with respect to time and energy, the need for balance in his/her life and the lives of his/her family members and the need for (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ to take care of himself/herself in all aspects of her wellbeing. The Parish will, as much as possible, limit its access to (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ to the agreed periods of time he/she will be engaged in active diaconal ministry.
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ and the rector and wardens will perform an assessment of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the ministry described in this Covenant and review the wording of this Covenant in one year's time. 



# WORKING CONDITIONS AND SUPPORT

- The Parish has no obligation to provide remuneration for (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ 's ministry. The Parish will reimburse to (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of his/her ministry.
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ will take advantage of continuing educational opportunities within and without the Diocese and the Parish. To facilitate (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ 's continuing education, he/she is entitled to three weeks' annual educational leave. Additional educational leave may be taken as may reasonably be agreed to from time to time by the rector and (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_. The Parish will pay the entire amount of monthly contributions required by Canon 12 and Regulations of the Anglican Church of Canada in respect of (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ 's continuing education to the Diocese of New Westminster Continuing Education Fund.
- (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ will carry out his/her ministry in the parish / in workplace (clarify) an average of \_\_\_\_ hours per week. (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ is entitled to four weeks' vacation each year, the timing of which will be reasonably agreed to by the rector and (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_. If required for the efficient exercise of (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ 's ministry, the Parish will provide a work space for (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ to use, if available. 🍁

**In witness of this Ministerial Relationship,** the Rector and Wardens of the Parish of

\_\_\_\_\_ and (Deacon) \_\_\_\_\_ and the Archdeacon and Bishop

have signed this Covenant as of the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rector

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deacon

\_\_\_\_\_  
People's Warden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Archdeacon for Deacons

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rector's Warden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bishop





*Is God calling you to the  
Ministry of Deacon?  
Want further Information?*

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- Are you interested in exploring a call to ministry for you or for someone you know?
- Do you have any questions about the Order of Deacons in the Diocese of New Westminster?



**For More Information:**

Contact the Archdeacon for Deacons,  
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