

The Deacon's Manual

The Ministry of the Deacon

The Diocese of Western North Carolina

Outline

- I. The Deacon's Ministry
 - Diaconal Activities
 - Outreach to the World
 - Inreach to the Church

- II. The Call and Discernment
 - a. Emotional and Spiritual Maturity
 - b. Experience in Lay Ministry
 - c. The Ability to Lead and Inspire Others to Live Out the Diaconal Dimensions of the Baptismal Covenant
 - d. Willingness to Serve Under the Authority of the Bishop and Rector
 - e. Personal and Family Life
 - f. Rootedness in the Episcopal Church and in a Congregation
 - g. Further, the Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry...

- III. Service in a Parish
 - a. Covenant
 - b. Non-Canonically Resident
 - c. Special Situations
 - d. The Deacon and his/her Rector or Priest-in-Charge
 - e. Annual Review
 - f. Compensation and Support
 - g. Conflict Resolution

- IV. Liturgical Ministry
 - a. Diaconate Liturgical Customary
 - i. Communion from the Reserved Sacrament
 - ii. Baptism
 - iii. Marriage
 - iv. Preaching
 - v. Ministration to the Sick
 - vi. The Service of the Deacon during the Bishop's Visitation and in the Diocesan Eucharists

V. Administrative Concerns

- Direction and Guidance of the Bishop and Rector
- Annual Report to the Bishop
- Vacancies in the Parish
- The Role of the Archdeacon (see also Appendix D)
- The Deacon's Council (see also Appendix E)
- Titles and Clerical Attire
- Risk Management
- Voting in Diocesan Convention
- Retirement

Appendix A-The Ordination Process

- Introduction to the Deacon's Formation Program
- Characteristics of a Deacon
- Pre-Ordination requirements
- The Formation Process
- Expectations for Candidates
- Ordination Process Summary
- Ordination Process Check List

Appendix B – The Standard Covenant

Appendix C – The Archdeacon

Appendix D – The Deacon's Council

Appendix E – Policy on Continuing Education for Deacons

Appendix F – Guidelines for Deacons during a Parish Transition

The Diocese of Western North Carolina

The Diaconate The Ministry of the Deacon

Section 1

The Deacon's Ministry

A Deacon is a person called by God and the Church to lifelong, well-trained, specialized, sacrificial service in Christ's name to all people in need. A Deacon incarnates servant ministry, encouraging the Church in its ministry to the world and interpreting the needs of the world to the Church.

The Diaconate is one of the three distinct orders of ordained ministry. The Deacon has a special historical and canonical link to the Bishop of the Diocese and exercises his/her ministry as an extension of the Bishop's outreach to serve all people. Deacons are dedicated men and women of various social and ethnic backgrounds who:

- ❖ Manifest in their lives a commitment to serve others, especially the poor, the forgotten, the vulnerable, the sick, the oppressed and the marginalized;
- ❖ Engage in active ministry at the crossroad of the church and the world/community;
- ❖ Have a vision of and work for the transformation of both the church and the world, based on God's justice, love, mercy and peace;
- ❖ Have discerned, in community, a call to serve as Servant Leaders in Christ's church in the traditional diaconal roles of servant, advocate, prophet, witness, empower and partner in ministry.

The role of the Deacon in the church is also defined in the National and the Diocesan Canons, in the liturgy for the Ordination of a Deacon, in the Catechism.

Diaconal Activities

The ministry of a Deacon reflects the unique gifts of the individual (see I Corinthians 12), the time constraints of his/her life, as well as the needs and the opportunities for ministry in the parish and the world. It encompasses both Outreach to the World and Inreach to the Church (see Acts 6-8).

Outreach to the World

The call of a Deacon is exercised in the world outside the church community, reflecting the church's prophetic concern for economic and social justice, and exemplifying the servant ministry of Christ. Deacons may be involved in caring for the homeless and others in shelter, for those in prison, for the hungry and for victims of abuse and violence of all kinds. Deacons may advocate for and minister to people who are often on the margins of society: the disabled, the mentally ill, cultural minorities, and those with HIV/AIDS and terminal illnesses. Deacons may be called to specialized ministries with the aging and elderly, with gay and lesbian persons, with children and families, with hospital chaplaincy and with hospice and bereavement support. Deacons may be involved with programs that provide labor-intensive help, such as Towel Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, food banks and funding programs. All of the areas are mentioned here as examples and are not intended to be a definitive list.

Inreach to the Church

The Deacon then brings his/her work in the world to the church community, in order to help the community understand the needs and issues of the world, and to assist the church in responding. The Deacon supports individual lay members of the church in finding and activating their own ministries in the world. Thereby, the baptismal ministry of all people is enhanced.

The Deacon's pastoral, teaching, preaching and liturgical activities in the parish are understood in this context. Pastorally, Deacons may be involved in visitation of the sick and shut-ins, with parish nurse and wellness programs, etc. Liturgically, the Deacon reads the Gospel, leads and oversees the Prayers of the People, sets and clears the table, proclaims the Dismissal and serves in other ways as described in the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer. The Deacon may also be involved with the Vestry and various parish committees (especially those concerned with outreach). All of these activities take place under the direction of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the parish to which the Deacon is assigned.

Section II

The Call and Discernment

Details of the ordination process are given in the Manual of the Commission on Ministry in the Diocese of Western North Carolina. Listed here, in this manual, are considerations specific to the diaconate. When a person senses God's call to Holy Orders, or when someone suggests to an individual that he/she consider Holy Orders, then the individual needs to begin a conversation with the Rector of the Parish to discern the appropriateness of the person's sense of call.

When discerning a call to the Diaconate, the following should be considered:

Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

Ordination requires that a person called by God to be set aside as clergy in the Church be a mature Christian on a "journey inward" (often exemplified by an active study of the scriptures and rich prayer life), as well as a "journey outward" (exemplified in servant ministry to the world). The Deacon should be, as any member of the clergy, a truly humble person, who recognizes his/her utter dependence on God in and for all things, and who comprehends that the only ultimate reality is God. Since Deacons are called to interpret the needs of the world to the church, she/he may at times be called to make the Church and the local parish aware of things, which the parish finds uncomfortable and does not want to hear. The Deacon must therefore be a person of strong character, patience and moral courage, remembering that his/her prophetic voice must always be exercised with humility, compassion and respect for the authority of the Bishop and the Deacon's local parish Priest.

Experience in Lay Ministry

The hallmark of the office of the Deacon is servant ministry. In discerning vocations to the Diaconate, the Church looks for people who are already involved in servant and prophetic ministries both in the Church and in the world. This is expressed in terms of compassionate service to, empowerment of, and advocacy for those who are in need or marginalized in any way. A person discerning a call to the Diaconate should have experience in lay

ministry particularly in areas related to serving the “poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.” She/He should also demonstrate a history of commitment to justice, inclusiveness and the liberation of all of God’s people.

The Ability to Lead and Inspire Others to Live Out the Diaconal Dimensions of the Baptismal Covenant

Ordination is not a “private” vocation, nor does the Church desire to minimize the ministry of laypersons by ordaining “professional ministers” who understand themselves as doing ministry “on behalf of” or “in place of” the laity. Rather, those who are called to Holy Orders are ordained primarily “to equip the saints for ministry”, to help all baptized persons discover and live out the ministries which are theirs by virtue of baptism into Christ’s body. Among the three orders of ordained ministry within the Church, the special call of the Diaconate is to make sure that none of God’s children is left out or left behind, and to continuously challenge and equip the Church to become more inclusive, more just, more compassionate and more actively involved in human needs, after the example of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Willingness to Serve Under the Authority of the Bishop and Rector

Diaconal servanthood is a special offering of service in that it requires an ability and willingness to serve under authority. Each diocesan Bishop sets guidelines and procedures for the Diaconate within her/his diocese. For that reason the Deacon remains under the direct authority of the Bishop while exercising his/her calling to servanthood under the supervision of the local Rector. Such division of responsibility (defined as responsibility to authority) requires the Deacon to be sure of his/her calling to servanthood, as directed by the Bishop, in a parish, under that parish’s Rector, and from the ground of an already experienced and established servant ministry in the world. This means that the Bishop has the authority to ask a Deacon to serve in a parish other than the one that has raised him/her to ordination.

Personal and Family Life

Ordination to the Diaconate requires the willingness and ability to give time to ministry. This requires a stable personal and family life, and, if married, the support of one’s spouse. It also requires personal circumstances of employment and family that permit time and energy for training and service.

Rootedness in the Episcopal Church and in a Congregation

Because the Diaconate is a Holy Order, which finds its meaning in, the context of the Church, a Deacon needs to have a firm rootedness in and commitment to the Episcopal Church. The Deacon also needs to have the firm support and encouragement of a local congregation (including the people, the Vestry and the Rector) that is well informed about the Diaconate. The sense of “being called” to the Diaconate both by God and by the Church can then be tested in this context through an intentional and prayerful process of mutual discernment.

Further, the Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Western North Carolina note the following:

1. The Diaconate, like any other order, is not an individual or personal “right”, but an order which finds its meaning in the context of the whole church.
2. Diaconal servanthood is far more specific than the general baptismal servanthood to which all are called.
3. It assumes a certain personality or nature of servanthood, an ability and willingness to serve under authority.
4. It requires a specific offering: servanthood in a certain parish, under that parish’s Rector and from the ground of an already experienced and established servant ministry in the world.
5. In looking at prospective deacons, the Standing Committee and Commission on Ministry will look at the person (is the person able to work under authority?) and at the person’s specific place (does the rector want this person as a deacon? does the parish share the sense of call with this person? Does he/she have an existing ministry in the world?)
6. The Church’s role in the ordination process is paramount. This process toward ordination is not an individual pursuit of a personal course.

Section III

Service In A Parish

Deacons in the Diocese of WNC are assigned by the Bishop to serve in a particular parish, under the direction of the Rector or Priest in Charge. Service may include several roles, but is focused primarily on helping the parish identify and respond to the needs of the world.

Covenant

The Covenant is the basic agreement, which the Deacon has with the Rector and Vestry of his/her parish, outlining the responsibilities of the Deacon's ministry. It includes:

- ❖ A description of the Deacon's specialized ministry (outreach to the world)
- ❖ Principles of parish ministry and a description of how the Deacon will function in the congregation (inreach to the church)
- ❖ Responsibilities for Vestry and committee assignments
- ❖ Provision for annual review and for conflict resolution
- ❖ Details of the parish's responsibilities to the Deacon (expense reimbursement, continuing education, discretionary funds, etc)
- ❖ Agreements between the Deacon and his/her supervisor

The covenant is to be renewed annually, usually at the December Vestry meeting. See "Standard Covenant" in Appendix C

Non-Canonically Resident Deacons

Upon arriving in the diocese, the Deacon should meet with the Bishop and Archdeacon about his/her presence and intended ministry affiliation. Once agreement on ministry and assignment is reached, then a Letter of Agreement will be prepared jointly by the Deacon, Rector or Priest in Charge and Vestry, taking into consideration the expected diaconal activities

(ministry in the world and within the parish). This letter will be completed upon a Deacon's assignment to a given parish, submitted to the Bishop with a copy to the Archdeacon, and will be updated annually or as the Deacon's responsibilities change. A Deacon must be present and active in the diocese for at least a year before the Bishop will approve canonical residence.

Special Situations

Deacons who, for a variety of reasons, are no longer able to be active in the community and whose ministry consists primarily of liturgical service, and Deacons who are present in the Diocese of WNC on a seasonal or part-time basis and wish to function as a Deacon will make special arrangements for their ministry with the Bishop, the Archdeacon and Rector or Priest in Charge.

The Deacon and His/Her Rector or Priest in Charge

Each Deacon and his/her Rector or Priest in Charge are to have regularly scheduled supervisory sessions together at least once a month. Expectations of these sessions include:

- ❖ Developing a relationship that is collegial and mutually pastoral
- ❖ Integrating the Deacon's ministry in the world with the life of the parish
- ❖ Coordinating any shared pastoral responsibilities with the congregation
- ❖ Reflecting together on other shared ministries with the congregation, such as preaching, education and formations, liturgy, etc.
- ❖ Developing an annual continuing education plan for the Deacon
- ❖ Finding ways for the Deacon to attend as many retreats, conferences, and gatherings as possible, which are crucial for the continuing formation and spiritual, support of clergy. Money to attend these activities is available by application to the Diocesan Office.

- ❖ Reflecting regularly on their shared ministry and seeking avenues for working together as effectively as possible for the up-building and equipping of God's people for ministry.

Annual Review

The Deacon participates in an Annual Review of the Covenant or the Letter of Agreement under the direction of his/her rector or Priest in Charge prior to the end of the calendar year. In some parishes a Clergy or Ministry Commission may contribute to this review.

This process entails a comprehensive review and evaluation of the Deacon's ministry in the world and in the parish. It should include strengths and areas for growth as well as recommendations for continuing education and acknowledgements of changes in personal circumstances. This review is presented to the Vestry at the time of the renewal of the covenant.

Compensation and Support

Normally, the Deacon's relationship with the parish is non-stipendiary. However, it is expected that a Deacon who provides diaconal ministry in a parish (i.e. visiting the sick, teaching, assisting at the Eucharist and carrying out other duties as assigned) be reimbursed for expenses incurred in the exercise of this ministry. Such expenses include travel, mileage, costs of attendance at Convention, Deacons' and Clergy Retreats and other meetings at which the Deacon's attendance is expected. The parish and the Deacon might agree upon reimbursement for other expenses or for continuing education. A parish may also provide a discretionary fund for the Deacon's use in the exercise of his/her ministry.

In a few congregations, a Deacon may be employed by the parish for a specific ministry or position not related to their ordination (i.e. Music Director, Organist, Parish Administration, Pastoral Care Coordinator). An individual in such a position would be considered to be employed by the parish and compensated accordingly.

Conflict Resolution

Should disagreements arise in the parish, Deacons, as all other members of the parish staff, are to follow the advice of their Rector or Priest in Charge. (See “Standard Covenant” in Appendix C. The Bishop will mediate disagreements between the Deacon and his/her Rector or Priest in Charge. The Archdeacon is available as a resource for conflict resolution.

Section IV

Liturgical Ministry

The traditional role of the Deacon in the liturgy is specified in the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and in the Customary that follows. Although liturgical customs may vary from parish to parish and with different Presiders, there are traditional roles normally undertaken by the Deacon. Liturgical decision ultimately rest with the Rector or Priest in Charge.

Diaconate Liturgical Customary

Carrying the Gospel Book, the Deacon walks in front of the Presider in the procession.

The Deacon is always the preferred minister to read the Gospel.

The Prayers of the People are a primary responsibility of the Deacon. At the very least, the Deacon should contribute to the ordering of the intercessions and the presentation of some of the concerns. A suggested format might include:

- Meeting with a prayer group to compose the intercessions/concerns of the parish and the world.

- Introducing the Prayers by announcing the form or page number, or by a bidding such as “Let us pray for the needs of the Church and the World”.

- Reading the names and specific intercessions after a layperson reads the biddings.

- Inviting the congregation to add their own petitions.

- Paying special attention to world events and community concerns by including them in the prayers.

The Deacon bids and leads the confession.

The Deacon prepares the Table for Communion:

- Places the vessels on the altar and arranges the Altar Book and other appointments.

- Receives the offering and oblations of bread and wine from the presenters or acolytes.

Places the bread on the paten and pours the wine into the chalice.
Adds the water to the wine.

During the Great Thanksgiving the Deacon stands next to the Presider, either on the right or the left, depending on their serving function. The Deacon elevates the Chalice at the words: “The gifts of God for the people of God”.

At the distribution it is appropriate for the Deacon to distribute the bread from an additional paten or to administer the wine from the chalice, or to oversee the Altar and provide additional elements to the priests and lay chaliceists.

The Deacon performs or oversees the ablutions and clearing of the altar.

At the conclusion of the service the Deacon sends the people forth with the Dismissal.

If more than one Deacon is a minister at the Eucharist, it is appropriate that both be at the altar with the Presider.

Deacons should preach on a regular (though not necessarily frequent) basis. 4-6 times a year is recommended.

In a Eucharistic service Deacons vest in a white alb with a seasonal color stole. The dalmatic is the distinctive diaconal vestment, and may be worn at any Eucharist, however the general rule is that if the Presider is not wearing a Chasuble then the Dalmatic would not be worn. Normally Dalmatics are worn during festive celebrations such as high Holy Days, Ordinations, and other festive occasions.

The appropriate vestments for choir offices such as Morning or Evening Prayer, and other occasions when the Eucharist is not celebrated, is cassock, surplice, and stole or tippet.

Priests who take the Deacon’s liturgical role in the Eucharist should not vest as a Deacon.

While it is appropriate for the Deacon to point out these diaconal norms, continuing variation from the rubrics should be discussed with the Deacon’s Rector or Priest in Charge. The Bishop remains the Chief Authority for the

liturgy of the Church. The Archdeacon is available to the Rector or Deacon for liturgical consultation.

Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

In the Deacon's own parish, he/she may preside at a Liturgy of the Word with Communion from the Reserved Sacrament only at the request of the resident Priest with the Bishop's approval. This Liturgy should not be offered on a regular basis. In parishes where there is no resident Priest, the services of a supply Priest should be sought often in order to offer the People of God the Holy Eucharist in its fullness. Only in exceptional circumstances may a public Liturgy presenting Communion from the Reserved Sacrament be offered on a more frequent basis.

Baptism

Deacons customarily perform certain functions in the rite of Baptism. They may read the prayers for the candidate, assist the Priest/Bishop with preparing the water, hold the prayer book, hold the oil, light and give the candle (the sign of Christ's light in the world) with the words "receive the light of Christ". Any request for the Deacon to actually perform the Baptism (other than in an emergency) should be approved by the Bishop in advance.

Marriage

Deacons serve in an assisting capacity at marriages.

Preaching

Deacons in the Diocese of Western North Carolina are authorized to preach by the Bishop. Preaching offers the Deacon an opportunity to proclaim the ministry of servanthood to the People of God, and to call the People of God to serve. It is one method of holding before the Church the needs and concerns of the poor, the sick, and those who are marginalized. It also gives voice to a Gospel-centered response to concerns that the Deacon encounters in his/her ministry in the world.

Deacons may be asked to preach outside their parish for the purpose of illustrating their specialized ministry or on other topics of a specifically diaconal nature. Deacons are not to be used as supply preachers.

Ministration to the Sick

In the absence of or at the request of a Priest, it is appropriate for a Deacon to anoint with oil when praying for the sick. In a public liturgy of healing, the Priest should anoint with oil while the Deacon may assist in the laying on of hands and prayers.

The Service of the Deacon during the Bishop's Visitation and in Diocesan Eucharists

All of the items in the Customary apply when the Bishop is the Celebrant. In addition, the Bishop's Chaplain will be a Deacon, if possible. If two Deacons are available, it is appropriate that they both serve the Bishop at the altar. In the procession, the Deacon(s) immediately precede the Bishop. Dalmatics may be worn by Deacons if the Eucharistic vestment for the Priests is a chasuble.

At diocesan Eucharists, and especially at ordinations, a Deacon will fill the liturgical role of Deacon.

Section V

ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS

Direction and Guidance of the Bishop and Rector

Deacons exercise their diaconal ministry as an extension of the Bishop's outreach to serve all people. The Bishop assigns each Deacon to a given parish, in consultation with the Rector, the Deacon and the Archdeacon. While in that parish, the Deacon is directly under the oversight of the Rector or the Priest in Charge. The details of the relationship are given in Section III of this manual. Any exceptions to the assignment and practice of ministry of Deacons in this diocese are under the authority of the Bishop. Changes in parish assignment or diaconal focus are arranged with the Bishop through the Archdeacon.

Annual Report to the Bishop

Each Deacon reports annually to the Bishop on the exercise of his/her ministry using the Deacon's Annual Report. The report will be mailed to each Deacon in December and is to be completed and returned to the Archdeacon by January 30.

Vacancies in the Parish

When the Rector of a parish retires or resigns, the Deacon will consult with the Bishop and the Archdeacon as to the nature of his/her continued service in the parish. At the discretion of the Bishop, the Deacon may come under the supervision of the Priest in Charge until the new Rector has been called. The Deacon will then take a leave of absence from parish service for discernment of future ministry. During the Deacon's leave, a ministry plan should be submitted to the Bishop through the Archdeacon for approval. The plan could be for a temporary reassignment, sabbatical, continuing education or other creative ministry possibility. Reassignment to parish service is done in consultation with the Bishop, the Rector, the Deacon, and the Archdeacon.

The Role of the Archdeacon

The Archdeacon is a Deacon appointed by the Bishop and guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of the Bishop. The Archdeacon models Servant Ministry in service to the Diocese as a whole and as servant to the Deacons performing their ministries. The Job Description of the Archdeacon is included in Appendix C.

The Deacon's Council

The Deacon's Council is a council of advice to the Bishop, the Deacons and any other committee, council or group in the diocese. Areas of concern include education, training, deployment, and continuing development of all Deacons resident in the diocese and those in process to be ordained in the diocese. The job description of the Deacon's Council is included in Appendix D.

Titles and Clerical Attire

The title "Deacon" (abbreviated "Dn") is encouraged for normal address. When the title, "The Reverend" is used, it should always have the word "Deacon" appear in association with the title (for example, "The Rev. Jane Doe, Deacon").

"Transitional Deacon" is preferred designation for a person who has been ordained a Deacon who will later be ordained a Priest. The preferred designation for a person who is ordained a Deacon (and does not seek the order of Priest) is, simply, "Deacon".

Deacons normally wear clerical attire when serving in a liturgical role, when representing the church in an official capacity, and at other appropriate times that may include their specialized ministry in the world.

Risk Management

Deacons are required to meet all the Risk Management policies of the Diocese of Western North Carolina, e. g. attendance at the sexual abuse workshops and anti-racism workshops.

Voting in Diocesan Convention

Deacons have voice and vote at the Diocesan Convention and are seated with the parish/ministry they serve. In a vote by orders, Deacons vote as clergy.

Retirement

The National Canons, Title III, Canon 16, Section 5, sets the mandatory retirement age at 72. The Bishop expects this requirement to be honored. On reaching the age of 72, a Deacon will submit to the Bishop his/her intention to retire at the end of that year (or earlier if desired). With the approval of the Bishop, the Deacon may continue to serve at the Rector's request. This request should come to the Bishop in writing, from the Rector, and should specify the expectations for the Deacon's ministry. This letter of agreement between the Rector and the Deacon will take place of the diaconal covenant with the parish.

APPENDIX A

The Ordination Process

Details of the ordination process are given in the Manual of the Commission on Ministry. Following is a summary of the process. The process requires the proper certification and documents as outlined by the Commission on Ministry.

Discernment	Applicant must be resident in the parish for 12 months Applicant works with the Parish Discernment Committee for at least 6 months Applicant attends at least 2 overnight retreats with the Commission on Ministry/Standing Committee
Postulancy	At the overnight, the Applicant can apply for Postulancy Postulants are eligible to enter the Diaconal Formation Programs which lasts two years
Candidacy	After completing half of the Diaconal Formation Program and 6 months after Postulancy, the Postulant may apply for Candidacy
Ordination	6 months after receiving Candidacy and upon completion of the Diaconal Formation Program

The Role of the Parish

The parish and Rector have important discernment and support roles during the ordination process of Deacons. The process begins with the individual having conversations with the Rector concerning his/her sense of call. A Discernment Committee of the Parish then works with the Applicant for at least six months. The committee reports back to the Rector who is then responsible for shepherding the applicant in continuation of the process. At various stages in the process, the Rector and Vestry will submit certificates of support to the Bishop. The Applicant and Rector together are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the process.

A person in the ordination process needs to be supported with fellowship and prayer by the Parish. The ordination process is both stressful and inspiring. The person in process remains in the care of the parish during the process.

A Deacon is ordained into the larger Church and is assigned to a different parish beginning the second Sunday after ordination until Advent 1. After that period and upon consultation with the Bishop, Archdeacons and Rectors, the Deacon may return to their sponsoring parish or remain in the parish in which they are currently serving. Sponsoring parishes raise Deacons into ordained servant ministry and at the same time release them to serve the needs of the Church at large.

THE DEACON FORMATION PROGRAM

In the Diocese of Western North Carolina, the Deacon Formation Program uses a small group model. The program will only be offered with the approval of the Bishop and when there are sufficient numbers of participants approved by the Commission on Ministry to allow the small group model to be used. Postulants who are waiting for a Formation Group to begin are encouraged to participate in an Education for Ministry class. Normally a class begins every January.

Outline of the Program

The Deacon's Formation is a two-year program consisting of:

- a. One or two all-day Saturday meetings a month with a variety of resource people and mentors who assist with various components of the process.
- b. One or two 3-day "intensives" each year, usually over a weekend.
- c. Assigned readings and other assignments related to the various areas of study prescribed in the canons of the Episcopal Church
- d. An on-going mentoring relationship with one of the Deacons in the diocese, mutually agreed upon by the participant and the Formation Director.
- e. The expectation that each participant have a Spiritual Director

Education for Ministry (University of the South)

Ideally, those beginning the two-year Diaconal Formation Program will have completed the 4-year course for laypersons entitled Education for Ministry. If not, they are free to take it concurrently with the Formation Program or wait until after they are ordained to take it. In any event, EFM is **required** for all Deacons, either before, during, or after the 2-year Formation process, either as a participant or as a mentor.

Focus of the Program

Although there is definitely a challenging intellectual dimension to the Formation Program, it should be understood that (1) the process of forming a Deacon is quite different from that of forming a Priest, and (2) that this Diaconal Formation Program is not based on a mini-seminary model (which is designed to educate and form people for the Priesthood). Because the Diaconate is focused in the very practical and deeply spiritual challenge of connecting the compassionate and prophetic love of Christ with the concrete needs of people who are poor, sick and on the margins, this program is concerned more with “formation” than “education” (at least in its traditional, post-Enlightenment form). The readings and study are neither abstract nor disconnected from the world, but always related to ministry development. While it is deeply important that a Deacon be familiar with and grounded in the scriptures, history, traditions and theology of the Church, the approach to these subjects for diaconal formation is quite different from the approach of a three-year residential seminary program for Priests. The distinction is important: We are not the least bit interested in creating Deacons who see themselves (or whom others see) as “second-rate Priests”. Rather, through a balanced program of prayer, study, daily Bible reading, hands-on ministry and an action/reflection model of learning, our goal is to form First-Rate Deacons.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition for the program will be set in consultation with the Diocese and is, in part, subsidized by the Diocese. Sponsoring parishes are encouraged and expected to pay at least half of the tuition of their Postulants. Scholarship monies will be available in case of financial need. In addition, participants are responsible for purchasing their own books as well as paying for travel, certain meals, supplies, etc.

Canonical Examinations

Examinations are written twice a year to evaluate knowledge gains during that time. Remediation is asked of those not performing to standard.

APPENDIX B

The Standard Covenant (for Deacons in the Diocese of Western North Carolina)

Diaconal Covenant between (name of Deacon) And (name of parish) for (year)

The Diaconate is one of the historic threefold orders of ministry for which a person is called to a lifelong, specialized service ministry in the Church. The Deacon functions within a covenant relationship with his/her Rector and Vestry. All covenants are subject to the approval of the Bishop.

The exercise of diaconal ministry by (name of Deacon) is subject to the terms of this covenant.

1.As a way of bringing the church to the world, the Deacon shall provide a specialized servant ministry in the community as follows: **(insert. description of Deacon's outreach ministry)**

2.As a way of bringing the needs of the world to the church, the Deacon's teaching, preaching, pastoral care, and liturgical activities provide an opportunity to remind the parish of each baptized person's call to serve those in need. In proclaiming the Gospel, in contributing to and overseeing the Prayers of the People, in assisting at the altar and with the distribution of communion, and in dismissing the congregation to go out into the world to love and serve the Lord, the Deacon encourages the people of God to live out their baptismal promises.

Other ways the Deacon will serve the parish will include: **(Insert description of parish responsibilities)**

In other liturgies, the Deacon will function according to the accepted guidelines of "The Diaconate" and "Customary."

3.The Deacon accepts the following principles of parish ministry:

- a. The fundamental ministry of the Deacon is to hold before the church the character of the whole ministry of the church as servant and of her members as servants.
- b. The ministry of the Deacon will include working in harmony with others in the parish, especially the Rector and other leaders, lending support and seeking always to build up the body of Christ.
- c. All ministries of the Deacon are exercised under the oversight of the Bishop of the Diocese and under the immediate leadership and authority of the Rector and Vestry.

4.The Deacon is a part-time, non-salaried person who gives (number) of hours of service per week in outreach ministry and parish responsibilities, with the understanding that this service shall not

conflict with the deacon's employment.

(Outline the form that remuneration will take – mileage, continuing education expenses, etc. if applicable.)

5. The Deacon is expected to participate in diocesan programs and meetings concerning the Diaconate, and other clergy gatherings appropriate to his/her order. This includes diocesan programs of continuing education and other forms of continuing education.
6. The Deacon shall participate in meetings of the vestry with seat and voice.
7. The Deacon shall report at stated intervals to the Rector (or to others as the Rector may direct) on the Deacon's ministry.
8. When problems arise which affect the welfare and unity of the parish, the Deacon shall bring it to the Rector (or in the absence of the Rector, the Bishop) and shall follow the counsel and advice of the Rector (or the Bishop).
9. There shall be an annual discussion and evaluation of the Deacon's ministry with the Rector. There shall be an annual review of the deacon's ministry with the Vestry. These annual events give the Deacon an opportunity to express opinions, establish goals for the Deacon's work, explore areas of concern, resolve conflict, and clarify expectations. .

This covenant will be renewed on or before December 31. **(Another date may be used)** Made in the

Name of our Lord Jesus Christ by:

_____, Deacon

_____, Rector

_____, Senior Warden

(on behalf of the vestry)

_____ Date

APPENDIX ONE - - Agreement between Deacon and Supervisor

1. Supervision for the Deacon shall be provided by **(name of supervisor)**.
2. In the absence of the supervisor, the Deacon will be under the supervision of the Bishop or **(name of Priest)** as designated by the Bishop.
3. The Deacon will regularly report to the supervisor **(number of times per month)** for direction, dealing with problems, diaconal formation and review of the deacon's work.
4. The Deacon will serve **(outline frequency of participation in parish liturgies)**
5. The Deacon will assist at weddings and funerals as requested.
6. The Deacon and supervisor shall **(outline form of annual review and evaluation)**
7. The Deacon will preach **(outline days or number of times the deacon will preach)**
8. Vacation and leave time will correspond to that of secular employment. **(if applicable)**

This agreement will be reviewed annually.

_____, Deacon

_____, Supervisor

_____, Date

ANNOTATIONS FOR THE DIACONAL COVENANT

Covenant, item 1: The Deacon sets forth his/her servant ministry in the community or the world. '

Covenant, item 2: The Deacon's liturgical and servant ministry in the parish is outlined. Covenant, item 3: This item outlines the principles for being under authority.

Covenant, item 4: The Deacon, because of his or her secular employment, gives a limited amount of time to the church. This item notes that the deacon is a non-stipendiary person. The Deacon may, however, receive remuneration for expenses incurred in his/her ministry within and outside the parish, as well as financial support for ongoing formation and education.

Covenant, item 5: A Deacon's training is never complete. Their ministry will always need to be enhanced with diocesan programs for ongoing formation for Deacons and other educational opportunities. The Diocesan Continuing Education Fund is available to help with continuing education expenses. Requirements are for 1/3 of the cost to be paid by the individual, 1/3 by the person's parish, and 1/3 by the diocesan fund.

Covenant, item 6: Some form of participation with the vestry is important. This is one way of bringing the needs of the world to the church.

Covenant, item 7: The Rector (and other parish leaders) should be kept fully informed of the servant ministry of the Deacon in the church and to society at large.

Covenant, item 8: Deacons must guard against being sources or sustainers of any form of division in the parish. Always, the Deacon must follow the counsel and advice of the Rector (or the Bishop in the absence of the Rector).

Covenant, item 9: Evaluation is an important element in the ongoing formation of the Deacon. This should be done at least annually and the covenant renewed with the Vestry at that time. Covenants are to cover the calendar year. Each December the supervisor and Deacon must file a renewed covenant with the Bishop's office. Deacons without annual covenants approved by the Vestry and Rector may not function in their diaconal ministry until such a covenant is on record. If the position of Rector becomes or is vacant, a new covenant incorporating such a circumstance which protects the integrity of the diaconate (i.e. the Deacon is not expected to assume any priestly functions) should be written immediately.

A COVENANT OR LETTER OF AGREEMENT MUST BE WRITTEN OR RENEWED AT THE END OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR AND COPIES MUST BE FILED WITH THE BISHOP'S OFFICE AND THE ARCHDEACON BY THE LAST DAY OF JANUARY IN THE YEAR IT IS TO BE IN EFFECT. DEACONS WHO DO NOT HAVE COVENANTS ON FILE AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH NEW YEAR, MAY NOT FUNCTION AS A DEACON UNTIL THE COVENANT IS APPROVED BY VESTRY AND RECTOR AND FILED WITH THE BISHOP.

Appendix C

Archdeacon, Diocese of Western North Carolina

Job Description

August 4, 2000

The ministry of the Archdeacon, and of all Deacons, is to hold before the Church the icon of the Servant Christ, and the Church's mission to servant ministry. The Archdeacon models this ministry in service to the Bishop, the Diocese, and the Deacons.

The Archdeacon is a Deacon appointed by the Bishop of WNC and will be guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of the Bishop. The Archdeacon will not normally have a formal parish responsibility or ministry assignment other than the following duties:

Pastoral Duties

1. Consults with the Bishop about the pastoral care of Deacons and their families, and assists as needed.
2. Facilitates communication between Deacons, the Diocese, supervisors, and ministry assignment.
3. Keeps the Bishop informed of problems between Deacons and their supervisors and assists, as needed, in their resolution.

Administrative Duties

4. Assists and consults with the Bishop in decisions about Deacon's placement and/or deployment
 - i. Annual evaluation of the Deacon's placement and ministry as requested by the Bishop.
 - ii. Review of Deacons annual reports as requested by the Bishop.
5. Serves on Diocesan commissions and committees as appointed by the Bishop.
6. Represents the Bishop as liaison to the Deacon's Council.
7. Performs other duties as assigned by the Bishop.

Provides oversight of the Formation Process

8. Conducts initial information interviews with inquirers prior to the work of the Parish Lay Committee.

9. Recommends a consultant to the Parish Lay Committees.
10. In consultation with the Formation Directors and the Commission on Ministry, assists in the formation process of Deacons.
11. Has seat, voice, and vote on the Formation Committee for Deacons
12. Upon request, assists new Deacons in the assignment/selection of a Deacon Mentor.

Liturgical Duties

13. Assists in Diocesan liturgical events/services, and ensures diaconal representation.
14. Assists or represents the Bishop at the Celebration of a New Ministry of a Deacon in a Parish.
Assists at Ordinations of (vocational) Deacons.

APPENDIX D

Deacon's Council Draft Job Description Revised July 2003

1. It shall be the ministry of the Deacon's Council to be a council of advice to the Bishop, the Deacons, and any other committee, council, or group in the diocese concerning matters pertaining to the diaconate in Western North Carolina.
Areas of concern of this council include the education, training, pastoral care, deployment, and continuing development of those in process to be ordained diocesan Deacon, and of all Deacons in the Diocese.
The council will offer leadership to the unique order of Deacons in the Diocese by identifying and facilitating servant ministry. Of equal importance will be the encouragement of the Deacon's Council to all Deacons that their ministry reaches beyond the parochial level, and is intended to be shared with the Diocese.
2. The council will consult with the Bishop, and seek the Bishop's direction regarding its ministry. The council membership shall inform the Bishop, the Archdeacon, resident Deacons, Postulants, and Candidates to the diaconate, and diaconate supervisors and liaisons, of all actions of the Council through the distribution of its meeting minutes.
Other duties will include the planning and facilitating of an Annual Meeting with the Bishop, Retreats, and Continuing Education events. The Council will submit items for funding to the Archdeacon, who will prepare and oversee, on the Bishop's behalf, an annual budget for the administration and support of the diaconate in Western North Carolina.
3. The Deacon's Council is elected by the canonically resident Deacons of the Diocese.
Membership shall consist of 8 members divided among clergy and laypersons as follows: 2 members from the Laity; 2 members from the canonically resident Presbyters (Priests who have experience working

with Deacons); and 4 members from the canonically resident Deacons.

The term of office will be 3 years. The Archdeacon, Formation Director, and a designated member of the Commission on Ministry will be non-voting members of the Council. The Bishop will appoint the Convener of the Council.

Any Council member that misses 3 consecutive meetings will be asked to resign their seat. If the vacancy occurs more than 6 months from the Annual Meeting then the Council will have the authority to fill the unexpired term by appointment. If the vacancy occurs within 6 months of the Annual Meeting then nominations for the unexpired term will be made by the Deacons and balloting will occur as part of the yearly election cycle.

Nominations and balloting will be done by mail prior to the Deacons Annual Meeting. Nominations will be requested 2 months prior to the meeting and ballots 1 month prior to the meeting.

The Deacons present will hold any run off ballots at the Annual Meeting.

Deacon's Council Election Procedure

Nominations and election will be done by mail.

Elections should occur yearly prior to the Annual Meeting.

Any tied elections or unfilled slots will be voted on at the Annual Deacon's Meeting.

Positions on the Council will be filled according to the proper cycle to fill the vacant positions, and according to the Deacon's Council Job Description.

- 1 A request for nominations for the positions to be filled will be mailed to all canonically resident Deacons at two months prior to the Annual Meeting.
2. Nominations will be submitted by mail at least 1 month before the Annual Meeting.
3. Ballots will be mailed to canonically resident Deacons 1 month before the Annual Meeting and required to be returned two weeks before the Annual Meeting.

4. Any run-offs or unfilled positions on the Deacon's Council will be determined at the Annual Meeting by nominations and voting of those canonically resident Deacons attending the meeting.

APPENDIX E

Policy on Continuing Education for Deacons

Believing that effective diaconal ministry in the world and in the church is undergirded by an intentional pursuit of spiritual renewal, new ideas, and sharing with others similarly engaged, Deacons in the Diocese of Western North Carolina plan for opportunities in continuing education each year.

This involves attending at least three events per year, each with a minimum of 4 contact hours:

- 1) An event that will be theologically and/or spiritually nourishing and reviewing.
- 2) An event related directly to the specific ministry in which they are engaged as a Deacon, or in an area being explored for new ministry.
- 3) An event that is a clergy meeting

If at the end of a year the full amount of continuing education has not been met, the Deacon could be placed on probation. If at the end of the second year the continuing education requirements have not been met, the Deacon's license to serve could be suspended until the requirements are fulfilled.

A plan for continuing education is to be worked out in consultation with the Deacon's supervisor, and yearly activities are to be reported and described in the Deacon's Annual Report.

To be effective beginning January 2004.

7/10/03

APPENDIX F

Guidelines for Deacons during a Parish Transition

Summary

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the process that a deacon follows during a transition in parish leadership and during the search process for a new rector. It is also a guide to supporting the Deacon through the transition and provides for the timely review and evaluation of the Deacon's ministry.

The goal of a structured transition period is to identify the healthiest option for the Deacon, the parish, and the Priest in Charge. The process recognizes that the healthiest option will vary from location to location based on the needs of all parties involved. A structured transition period also provides time and space for a Deacon to evaluate their ministry and identify opportunities for growth. A trained Deacon mentor will work with the Deacon involved in a transition to provide support as the Deacon works through the process, help the Deacon stay on track, assist with an evaluation of ministry, and hold the Deacon accountable to expected outcomes.

As soon as an anticipated change in leadership is announced, the Deacon should contact the Archdeacon, and will be paired with a Deacon mentor who will start the process by facilitating a confidential self-assessment and ministry evaluation designed to identify strengths, opportunities for growth, and needs of the deacon. The Deacon mentor will help the Deacon determine a plan to meet the needs of the parish and interim Priest during the search process via development of an interim covenant. The Deacon, in consultation with the Archdeacon, will then gather the necessary information to develop a plan that best meets the needs of the parish and new Rector, for an absence from liturgical service in the parish at some point in the transition process. The Deacon mentor will also help the deacon work through a self-evaluation process determining areas for continuing education or growth and the most effective means for growth of ministry. It is anticipated that the Deacon will submit quarterly reports to the Archdeacon throughout this process and consult with him/her as the final plan is being developed.

Deacon mentors will be selected by the Archdeacon, located throughout the Diocese, and participate in mentor training for the program. Trained peer

mentors are to provide a sounding board for the Deacon, help the Deacon look at their needs and options, and hold the Deacon accountable for consultation with all of the parties involved on both a local and a Diocesan level.

7/10/03

Deacon Transition Guidelines

When a transition of leadership occurs in a parish the interim time can last 1-2 years or more. There are many decisions that will need to be made by the Deacon. These guidelines are recommended to be followed.

The Role of the Deacon Mentor

1. Support and Care of the Deacon

- Confidential debriefing of the situation and transition
- Debriefing the past years of this ministry/relationship
- Facilitate grieving the lost relationship
- Whether to stay or whether to leave during the interim time
- How to take care of yourself during the transition

The Transition Process

1. Transition as a form of renewal, not just organization

- Develop an interim covenant with the vestry and the interim Priest
- Reports and communication with Diocese
- Begin a ministry review and evaluation of ministry area/assignment,
- professional goals, etc.

2. Identifying the Deacon's role during the transition

- Help the Deacon look at healthy boundary setting
- How to set limits on ministry and pastoral concerns of the Deacon

3. Planning

- Identifying future personal and professional goals
- Is it time for a new ministry focus?
- Is it time for a new parish assignment?
- Develop a growth plan

4. Reports and Communication

- Initial meeting with the Archdeacon, Deacon and Deacon Mentor
- Quarterly reports to the Archdeacon
- How is the process unfolding?
- What are current needs?

5. Transition/Interim Time

- Continuing consultation with the Deacon Mentor
- Be given a specific list of ways to help build a working relationship with the Interim Priest
- Get to know the Interim Priest by sharing your journey
- Orientation to worship space and sacristy
- Take to local hospitals and nursing homes and introduce key people there and in the community
- Go over pastoral needs/concerns in the parish
- Provide liturgical support and coaching to parish liturgical customs

6. Search Committee and Vestry selection of the new Rector

- Deacon and new Rector meet
- Consultation about the details of the Deacon's ministry and their possible mutual ministry discussed (details to be shared with the Bishop and Archdeacon before final agreements made)
- Draft of agreement between the Deacon and the new Rector submitted to the Archdeacon and Bishop for approval (includes the timing of any suggested leave of absence from the parish and/or liturgical duties for the Deacon)
- Final drafting of a new covenant between the Parish and the Deacon (submit to the Archdeacon and Bishop for approval before presenting to the Vestry)

7. Options for time away from Parish

- Sabbatical
 - Continuing education for training/preparation for a new Ministry
 - Development of a new ministry
 - Spiritual growth and renewal
- Leave of absence
 - Absent from the parish for specified period of time (normally 3-month minimum)
 - Does not serve liturgically or pastorally in home parish but may attend services and sit in pew
- Reassignment
 - Temporary assignment to another parish for specified time
 - Other creative assignment of duties such as modeling your ministry in several parishes and getting that work started in new areas of the diocese

7/10/03

Deacon Sabbatical Policy

It is the recommendation of the Bishop and the Deacon's Council that the following policy on Sabbaticals in the WNC Clergy Manual be included in the Covenant or the Letter of Agreement that the Deacon enters into at the beginning of every year with the Vestry and Rector.

After every five calendar years of employment, a Clergyperson should receive a minimum of two months paid sabbatical leave, to which can be added his or her annual vacation time, for a period of rest, renewal, refreshment and study. It is desirable that funds for this leave be included in the Parish budget on a cumulative basis over the five-year period.

In order to facilitate this policy we encourage you to use some of the following suggestions in planning a sabbatical. Most of these thoughts are from the book *CLERGY RENEWAL – ALBAN STUDY GUIDE*, which is available in the Diocesan Resource Center or directly from the Alban Institute.

“Jesus models for us what we need to do in the sabbatical and in daily ministry: keep moving toward Abba, the Father – in prayer, in teaching, in travel, and especially in moving from community to community. That is what sabbatical is about: pilgrimage with Jesus toward God. We can be recharged as we walk with Jesus in holy places and with everyday people during our extended time of reflection, spiritual encounter, and community. Some clergy have experienced life-changing and life-saving “ahas” by listening to God during renewal times and sabbaticals.”

It is desirable for the Deacon to discuss this policy with the Rector and Vestry at their annual Covenant review. One year before it is time for the Sabbatical it is desirable to begin specific planning using the following suggestions:

DEVELOPING YOUR PLAN

Dreaming a plan

What do I need from a time away – What part of the holy do you need to cultivate? What is your learning style? What challenges you?

Start with dream and then develop your plan during the year sharing with Rector and others in the parish the dream.

Use paper with these questions and let your imagination go:

- I. Sabbatical dream: to clarify one's thinking:

- A. In what areas of your life do you desire renewal?
- B. What will bring you joy during the renewal leave?
- C. How would you spread your wings during your renewal leave?
- D. How would you deepen your roots?
- E. Where is God moving your life? Where is God in this opportunity for renewal?
- F. What challenges and opportunities are facing your congregation and community?
- G. What would you like to learn or experience during your renewal leave?

1. Planning could be done using 3 blocks:

- a) Resting, Renewal, Rebirth
- b) Letting Go, Living in God's Presence, r
- c) Decompression, Transition, Reentry

II. When?

A. **SCHEDULING:** In the planning process negotiate the specific time with Rector and Vestry. Remember that you will let go of all parish, diocesan and community responsibilities. You can take this opportunity to worship in other parishes or congregation to gain new insights into worship styles. If you have full time employment that you cannot leave for a protracted amount of time, you might want to plan your usual vacation time during this sabbatical time. Usually, it is best taken in the summer when there are many opportunities for rest, renewal, continuing education events, travel, and families are able to take vacations.

“Many who have experienced renewal leave have spent portions of the time traveling with spouse and children. They report that this shared travel enriches their own experience. Some, however, have stayed at home and spent time with family members in this more ordinary setting. They reported that home once again became a place of rest and a place where they slept soundly. They renewed significant family relationships and had a sense of nesting in the house, the yard, or the garden. They undertook projects that allowed them to use their creativity and muscles in ways not often open to them in their congregations.”

III. Where

- A. The office of the Archdeacon has resources available.

IV. With whom?

V. How long?

VI. Cost and funding?

- A. Funds set aside yearly for sabbatical fund – in small parishes this could be as little as \$20 per month for five years**
- B. Special offerings taken**
- C. Special gifts from individuals sought
- D. Diocesan continuing education funds
- E. Grants or scholarship from institutions

VII. Why?

A. Sabbaticals are a time of change and growth and risk. The stories from many point up both the risks and the marvelous blessings. Sabbaticals are always times of new beginnings, new vision, and renewed hope and surprises that often come in the most unexpected ways.

The Archdeacon can connect you with Deacons who have taken sabbaticals to learn about their experiences that you might use in your planning process.

“Top Nine Reasons for NOT Taking a Sabbatical”

9. Can't stand all the free time with family and friends.
8. Church might be able to function without me.
7. Don't have a thing to wear that isn't black.
6. Afraid parishioners will forget my name.
5. Can't live without phone calls during suppertime.
4. Might forget how to do the liturgy.
3. Too much rest, prayer, travel, and renewal is a living hell.
2. Won't be able to use “I'm burned-out!” as an excuse anymore.
1. Finally learn that you're saved by grace through faith. P. 49

See: CLERGY RENEWAL – ALBAN INSTITUTE GUIDE for:

Leave taking ritual. P. 50

Resources on the Internet Appendix B

The Archdeacon is always available to assist you in your planning process.

