



Letter of Agreement

Suggestions and Supportive Materials

I. This section seems obvious but there are two comments:

First, the time frame for most diaconal deployments is expected to be three (3) years. However, the canons are important if the deacon has reached the age of 72. The canons required deacons to retire once that age is attained but may be deployed for one (1) year at a time once this age has been reached. Please take this into account when writing your LOA.

Second, because many of our deployments are multi-parish, each LOA will need to clearly state all names of congregations in this deployment, all supervisors, and if there is a primary supervisor or shared supervision.

II.

A. Maybe this is obvious, but we need to recognize that the deacon is either gainfully employed or has a life and commitments outside the parish. Remember that the deacon has a family, other ministries commitments, and that the deacon is not "free" labor.

B. The recommended hours to be given to the ministry are between 10-12 hours per week - with many of those hours being given to bridge ministry and a smaller portion to liturgical ministry. It should also be noted in the LOA that a deacon, once familiar with the parish of deployment, will be given one Sunday each month to visit, serve, and learn about other congregations in their region or area. This will be worked out with each deacon in consultation with the Bishop/Archdeacon or others on the diocesan staff and what is happening in that region or area. Obviously, some regions are too large in the number of parishes for this to be feasible and some congregations have already begun collaborative relationships. And some of our deployments are already yoked to two or more congregations. We want to work with that and not against that process. It is hoped that this might begin after at least 6 months of deployment.

C. Deacons are expected to attend Diocesan Convention, the Annual Deacon's Retreat, and if possible, the clergy conference. These fees are expected to be paid by the congregation. Mileage or transportation fees should be compensated outside of the regular weekly commute for worship. Some contribution is expected toward continuing education as well. In the first two years after ordination new deacons will be expected to take two classes each year through an online program at CDSP. The costs for convention, deacons' retreat and clergy conference is around \$600, and the cost per class for CDSP is \$205.

D. Deacons, like priests, should have access to and funding for discretionary needs. These funds should be under the same regulations and accountability as all parish funds and included in the yearly audit.

E. Even though this is expected to be a non-stipendiary role, deacons should be given the normal clergy vacation of 4 weeks and 2 weeks of continuing education. This time is determined via the same process as any stipendiary staff member. Usually the deacon's time away is not taken at the same time as the rector or priest-in-charge, but that may be different in congregations with multiple clergy.

F. This LOA will be for 3 years with a yearly evaluation that includes the supervisory priest and the archdeacon. The letter could be mutually terminated and the recommended time for termination would be 60 days. Please see the first paragraph of this document regarding the age of retirement in the canons.

G. Good ministry requires good relationships and good communication. This statement should outline the process for the deacon and priest(s) to have regular meetings to build relationship, have conversations about mission and ministry, and to be in prayer together.

III. This section of the LOA will be different in each congregation. It should outline the areas of ministry outside of the congregation where the deacon could be present, engage the neighborhood, and bring the needs and hopes of the neighborhood back to the congregation. It should also outline some of the areas of responsibilities of engagement with ministries that are currently on-going in the life of the congregation, working with mission or outreach committees, and areas of developing ministry.

IV.

A. The deacon, when vested and serving in the Eucharistic liturgy, is expected to proclaim the gospel, invite the confession, set and manage the table, and give the dismissal. Other duties may be assigned. The deacon is not expected to serve in every liturgical service in the congregation. These four diaconal liturgical roles should not be done by a priest when a deacon is vested and present in a liturgy.

B. Deacons should preach at least 4 times annually and probably no more than once each month. These times may be in liturgies other than Sunday mornings and for those occasions where a deacon's voice may be needed. Clearly this will be different for each congregation.

Other questions may arise as you complete this document because deployments and the congregations to which deacons are deployed are different. It is meant to be a creative document that incorporates expectations but also leaves room for expansion and dreaming about what could be. It is hoped to be seen as a document of possibility and not of limitation.