



Western New York
Episcopal Diocese
Deacons' Customary

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**We gratefully acknowledge the adaptation and use of material previously developed by our sisters and brothers in the Diocese of Albany, Diocese of Chicago, Diocese of Maryland, and Diocese of Southwest Florida.*

CUSTOMARY FOR DEACONS

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN NEW YORK

VISION STATEMENT

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

~Association for Episcopal Deacons

This deacon customary is a description of the working role and common practice of deacons in relationship to the Bishop, clergy, and parishes of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York.

The Relationship of the Deacon to the Bishop and the Diocese

Traditionally, the deacon serves immediately under the authority of the Bishop. In most cases the Bishop will assign the deacon to a parish/mission after consultation with the deacon, the Deacons’ Advisory Council, and the member of the Clergy exercising oversight. In addition, a deacon may be given a non-parochial mission by the Bishop. (Title III, Canon 7.4) The gifts, talents and experience of a deacon will be considered during times of transition, as well as the ministry needs of the diocese.

Assigning of Deacons to Ministries in the Diocese

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

~The Book of Common Prayer 1979

- I. Deacons in the Diocese of Western New York are expected to exercise their ministries in the Church and in the communities they serve.
- II. **Parochial Assignments**
 - a) Deacons shall be assigned to the congregations of the diocese by the Bishop in consultation with the Archdeacon, Deacons Advisory Board, and Diocesan Deployment Officer.
 - b) Such assignments will be for an initial period of one year. A *Letter of Agreement* will be developed for each deacon and congregation in consultation with the priest-in-charge, the deacon, and other appropriate personnel. (See Appendix) At the conclusion of that year the deacon, priest-in-charge of the congregation, Archdeacon and Bishop shall evaluate the suitability of the assignment.

If the assignment is deemed suitable and beneficial, the assignment shall be renewed for a period of three years, subject to an annual review by the deacon and priest-in-charge. If it is not deemed suitable and beneficial, the bishop and Archdeacon shall recommend either: 1) a remedial course of action designed to address the issues and concerns of all parties with a one year continuation of the assignment; or 2) the reassignment of the deacon to another congregation or congregations. Congregations wishing to have a deacon assigned shall make their requests to the Bishop.
 - c) See Appendix for Deanery Deacon Job Description
- III. **Social Ministry Assignments**
 - a) Social Ministry Assignments shall be made by the Bishop in consultation with the Archdeacon and the Deacons' Advisory Board. Deacons are encouraged to prayerfully discern what those ministries might be and to explore opportunities for such ministries.
 - b) Upon the Bishop's request, the deacon will provide contact information for the person to whom the deacon will be answerable in the context of such ministry. (e.g., Supervisory prison or hospital chaplain; chief fire or law enforcement officer; social service agency executive director; athletic program coach or director)
 - c) The suitability and effectiveness of such assignments shall be reviewed on a regular basis by the Bishop, deacon, and when appropriate, the deacon's social ministry supervisor.
 - d) The deacon's role in the Episcopal Partnership for Mission and Outreach has not been fully defined as yet. When it is appropriate, this material will be added as an appendix.

IV. Deacons are required to submit an annual written report to the Bishop and Archdeacon detailing their parochial, liturgical, and social ministry activities for the previous 12 months. Such report shall be in a format deemed suitable by the Bishop. A copy of the report shall be provided to the Archdeacon by the reporting deacon.

V. **Disputes Involving Deacons**

"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

~Ephesians 4:1-3

The body of Christ being called to a standard of living at peace, the multi-step, biblical model for resolving a conflict involving a parish deacon provides a process that present opportunities to clarify communication, address misunderstanding, and reach the heart of the problem.

- a) In the event of a dispute or disagreement that impairs the effective exercise of diaconal ministry in a congregation, such disagreement shall first be prayerfully discussed between the disagreeing parties (e.g. the priest-in-charge and the deacon)
- b) Should such discussions(s) fail to resolve the disagreement or dispute, the parties shall ask a third person agreeable to and respected by both to mediate it.
- c) If steps 'a' and 'b' fail to resolve the disagreement, the matter shall be taken before the church in the form of the Bishop or the Bishop's designee.

1. The Relationship of the Deacon to the Congregation and to the Priest-in-Charge

Each deacon works as a ministry partner with the priest-in-charge. The deacon meets regularly with the priest in his/her parish for a mutual review of the deacon's ministry and for planning. The *Letter of Agreement* is to be reviewed and, if necessary, updated each year, with each revision sent to the Bishop for final approval.

Should a situation of conflict or disagreement arise, the deacon, priest-in-charge, and other individuals involved are encouraged to engage in conversation to clarify the issues and work toward resolution before contacting the Bishop.

Family members are discouraged from serving on the vestry of the parish where the deacon is engaged in ministry. Deacons appropriately work with pastoral care, the outreach committee and/or social ministries within the parish and the Diocese.

When the priest-in-charge resigns or otherwise leaves the cure, the deacon must contact the Bishop immediately and offer his/her resignation. Options for continuing service will be discussed with the Bishop, deacon, warden(s), and interim priest, if there is one. The deacon (and the deacon's immediate family) will take no active role in a congregation's search process. When a new priest is called, the deacon may or may not be reassigned to the congregation by the Bishop.

2. The Deacon and the World

The deacon, in addition to being a messenger of servanthood, interprets the needs and concerns of the world to the institutional church. It is appropriate for the parish to have a committee to work closely with the deacon on outreach ministry. The deacon works with the outreach committee and the vestry to make decisions about outreach funds. If the deacon is given a discretionary account it is to be audited annually.

3. The Deacon Speaking to the Church

Because the deacon brings the concerns and needs of the world to the attention of the institutional church, the deacon is expected to have a voice in all decision making bodies in the diocese and in the parishes and missions of the Diocese. The deacons offer prophetic voices wherever the Church makes decisions.

4. The Deacon in the Liturgy

Deacons function in roles appropriate to the order at all diocesan liturgies and those planning such diocesan liturgies will include deacons in their appropriate roles.

The rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Canons and the Diocesan Bishop's expectations, will guide the liturgical functioning of the deacon at the diocesan and local parish level. The priest-in-charge will be expected to encourage the deacon to function in those roles specific to the diaconal order.

The deacon is to emphasize the place of the Gospel in the liturgy. If the parish has a Gospel Book, the deacon should carry it, held high so people can see it, in the entering procession. When carrying the Gospel Book, the deacon walks ahead of the Presider. If there is no Gospel Book, the deacon walks either ahead of the Presider or next to her/him. The deacon places the Gospel Book on the altar as a sign of the connection between Work and Table in the liturgy. Depending on parish custom, the deacon may also carry the Gospel Book in the closing procession of the service.

Other functions of the deacon in the liturgy are to introduce the Prayers of the People, lead the Confession of Sin, set the table, assist in distribution of Communion, and say the dismissal. The deacon may also lead the Nicene Creed. The deacon may coordinate the taking of communion to the home bound parishioners.

Clerical attire should be reserved for liturgical or pastoral occasions. Deacons are encouraged to wear an insignia of the Order of Deacons (pin or pendant) to promote the visibility of the deacon.

Alb and stole should be worn only when the deacon is functioning as a deacon in the worship service. A dalmatic, if any, should be in keeping with the vestments worn by others. Cassock and surplice with deacons' stole, tippet, or academic hood, or alb without stole, is appropriate for non-Eucharistic worship services or when not a participant in the altar party.

5. Responsibilities of Deacons When the Bishop Visits a Congregation

A visit by the Bishop is an important event in the life of the congregation. In most cases, such visits include a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, a celebration that often includes such sacraments and sacramental acts as Holy Baptism and Confirmation.

Whenever possible, two deacons shall accompany the Bishop on these visits. The Archdeacon will assign such deacons.

During the week preceding the visit, the Office of the Bishop shall provide the assigned deacons with the details of the day, including:

- The time(s) of the service they are expected to attend
- The nature of the service (Holy Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation, etc.)
- Any additional activities the Bishop wishes a deacon or deacons to be present for
- (e.g., vestry meeting, coffee hour reception, etc.)

Deacons shall meet the Bishop and Priest of the congregation 30 minutes before the first service. At that time the Bishop, priest(s) and deacon(s) will discuss the details (i.e., the choreography, roles, etc.) of the upcoming service(s).

When two deacons accompany the Bishop, one deacon will serve at the Bishop's chaplain, the other as deacon of the table.

Before, during and after the liturgy, the Bishop's chaplain will attend to the needs of the Bishop. This will include, but not be limited to caring for the Bishop's crozier, mitre, and vestments; proclaiming the Gospel, and assisting with the distribution of Holy Communion.

The deacon of the table will prepare the elements of bread and wine prior to the prayer of consecration, assist with the distribution of Holy Communion, perform the ablutions following such distribution and dismiss the congregation.

At services where only one deacon is present, that deacon shall serve as both Bishop's chaplain and deacon of the table.

6. Regarding "Deanery Deacons"

It is expected that each deacon will be assigned to a single parish "home base" in which to function liturgically. In addition some deacons will have deanery wide tasks/responsibilities. Such deacons will report to the Dean concerning their deanery duties and will report to their parish priest concerning their local liturgical and pastoral responsibilities

7. Deacons as “Supply Clergy”

From time to time, a parish that has been unable to secure a “supply priest” may ask a deacon to lead a service that includes Holy Communion from Reserve Sacrament. You will need permission from your own priest, and you must notify the Bishop’s office before making a commitment to do so.

Remind your contact person that it is customary to remunerate according to the regular diocesan supply clergy schedule, and to pay mileage expenses at the current rate established by the diocese.

8. Frequency of Communion from Reserve Sacrament

This is an extraordinary service and should not happen more than five (5) times per year at any parish. If a need develops to do this service more frequently than that, permission must be obtained from the Archdeacon who will be in communication with the Bishop concerning the special circumstances that make this necessary.

9. Policy when a Rector/Vicar resigns

The staff, including the deacon(s), normally submits letters of resignation to the Bishop, when it is time for the appointment of a new Rector/Vicar. It is up to the discretion of the Bishop and the new Rector whether old staff and deacon(s) will continue to serve or whether a whole new staff will be assembled.

10. When a Deacon receives a new parish assignment

Once a deacon has been given a new parish assignment--- that deacon ceases to function clerically in any way with the people of the previous parish. “No looking back.” Any association with people from the previous parish should be strictly social. While it is sometimes hard to break attachments, it is necessary in order to give the new clergy a fair chance to establish themselves as effective pastors and leaders without perceived competition.

Canon III.7.4

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

11. Deacons may not serve as administrators in a congregation to which they are assigned.

It is believed that the duties of administration would divert the deacon from diaconal ministry. While some deacons have functioned in this capacity in the past, and have provided heroic service, this is a “past practice,” which provides a golden opportunity for the abuse of the deacon. When a parish is engaged in the search process for a new priest, the parish is administered and daily ministries are to be carried out by an interim priest or by the lay leadership of the parish. If a deacon remains assigned to the parish, that deacon is expected to continue to function liturgically as deacon, to continue in diaconal ministry in the community, and to encourage and sometimes advise the lay leadership. To take on a large role as decision maker and administrator in the absence of the priest has a number of undesirable effects. It undermines and displaces the lay leadership who should rightly be exercising their own ministries; it distorts the office and role of the deacon making it hard to self correct after a new priest is installed; it puts an undue burden upon a volunteer ministry of service, and it may cause issues for the new priest, as he or she initiates a leadership style that may differ from the deacon’s. If an interim pastor is assigned, it is important that the interim assume all appropriate duties and not “off-load” to a skilled deacon responsibilities beyond the diaconal role. A parish decision to remunerate a deacon for taking on this additional responsibility would seem logical, but it in no way ameliorates the negative effects of the practice.

There may be other situations in which a parish may be tempted to see its deacon as the administrator or clergy person in charge, but this is not an acceptable practice.

12. Appropriate References to Deacons

The deacon is referred to as “deacon,” rather than “vocational” or “permanent” deacon. A deacon in the process of ordination to the priesthood may appropriately be referred to as a “transitional” deacon. The proper title or address for a deacon is “Deacon (first name, last name). The form, “the Rev. Deacon,” may also be used with full name as normative for written communication, diocesan and parish publications, and newsletters.

13. Finances

It is expected that the deacon will be reimbursed by the parish for expenses related to his/her service, including reimbursement for mileage, expenses of attending diocesan convention and the annual deacon's conference. When able, the parish is encouraged to provide a stipend. This matter should be specifically addressed in the deacon's agreement including the number of hours the deacon serves weekly. The congregation should provide funding for continuing education for the deacon (books, courses, etc.) When a deacon undertakes a non-parochial, community-service assignment, reimbursement of expenses related to the deacon's service shall be discussed with the Bishop and the supervisor and resolved before the assignment is effective.

14. Discretionary Fund

Clergy discretionary funds have a long history of customary use in the Episcopal Church. The existence and use of the clergy discretionary funds rest on the canonical authority of the Almoner's Fund described in Title III, canon 9, Section 5(6) of the canons of the Episcopal Church. The discretionary fund is for such pious and charitable uses as shall by the member of the clergy in charge be thought fit and will be audited annually as part of the regular parish audit.

The member of the clergy in charge of a congregation customarily has a special fund made available by the Vestry, the expenditure of which is under the authority of the cleric. The member of the clergy in charge of a congregation also may grant assistant clergy, permission to expend monies from the discretionary fund, or the vestry may establish separate funds for the use of assistant clergy or deacons. The clergy in charge of the parish where a deacon is assigned shall discuss with the deacon the usage of the discretionary fund.

15. Rule of Life

It is expected that the deacon will maintain a disciplined prayer life, and deacons are encouraged to have and consult a trained spiritual director approved by the Bishop, and follow a regular program of study. A plan of continuing education should be prepared annually, and implementation should be reported in the deacon's annual report.

16. Resignation and Retirement

A deacon may resign by submitting a letter of resignation to the priest-in-charge and to the Bishop, giving at least 30 days notice.

The age for retirement set forth in the canons is 72. Deacons may serve beyond their 72 birthday, with the permission of the Bishop, and continue contingent upon a satisfactory annual review by the Bishop.

17. Job Description of a Deanery Deacon

The description of the duties and parameters of a “Deanery Deacon” can be delineated within a standard *Letter of Agreement* that would include:

- ❖ **Times of Work and Leave**
- ❖ **Compensation, Benefits, and Expenses**
- ❖ **Discretionary Funds**
- ❖ **Supplemental Income**
- ❖ **Mutual Ministry Review**

However, a “Deacon-At-Large” status would differ from a standard parish contract in the following manners:

Times of Work and Leave

The Deacon would serve all congregations of the deanery on a rotating basis. He/she would liaison between parish/parishes in a local Diaconal Ministry. The Dean would consult with the Deacon, the Bishop, and Deanery rectors to investigate and decide upon the chosen ministry.

It would provide an opportunity to model the Deacon’s liturgical roles to those parishes that have never had a Deacon serve them.

The dissolution of the *Letter of Agreement* should be given with 30 days notice by either the Deacon or the Bishop.

Compensation, Benefits, and Expenses

The Educational Allowance of \$800 will be supplied by the parish the deacon has liaison with in his/her ministry. In lieu of a single parish, each parish in the Deanery shall support the educational allowance in an equal manner (e.g., 8 parishes = \$100 each).

Discretionary Funds

The parish the “Deacon-At-Large” has established a liaison with shall maintain and support his/her discretionary fund. In lieu of such a “home parish,” the parish of the deanery Dean shall maintain and support the discretionary fund.

The four signees for this contract would be: The deacon, The Dean, the Archdeacon, and the Bishop.

The Deacon's Role

Episcopal Partnership for Mission and Outreach [EPMO]

Formerly known as Episcopal Community Services [ECS]

The EPMO is experiencing a transition as to restructuring their goals and mission. EPMO will include in their mission, Deacon's ministries to participate in this Diocesan Outreach arm to those agencies in need in the WNY Diocese, and it is expected that:

1. Each deacon be prepared to be a liaison between a social ministry organization among the EPMO and the parish[es]/deanery that decides to partner with that particular organization.
2. The deacon may serve as an informational and organizational resource for that ministry in presentations to partnering entities (i.e., a speaker's bureau).
3. The deacon may become an ex-officio member of EPMO in that s/he may be called upon for yearly evaluation of each partnership.

Letter of Agreement for Deacons **The Diocese of Western New York**

The Bishop of The Diocese of Western New York, the Rev. Deacon _____ and the Priest, Warden(s) and Vestry of _____ Church agree that the exercise of diaconal ministry in Western New York shall be subject to the terms set forth in this Letter of Agreement.

1. The Deacon accepts the following principles of Diocesan ministry:
 - a. The Church is a body with many members, each sent by Christ with special gifts to minister to one another and to others.
 - b. All diaconal ministries of the Diocese are exercised under the oversight and care of the Bishop with the assistance of presbyters.
 - c. The fundamental ministry of the Deacon is to hold before the Church the character of the whole ministry of the Church as service and of ministers as servants.
 - d. The ministry of a deacon includes working collaboratively with other members of the Church (lay persons, deacons, priests, and bishop), providing servant leadership and support while seeking always to build up the Body of Christ.

2. The Bishop assigns the Rev. Deacon _____ to serve the Diocese of Western New York, and also function liturgically at _____ Church, as a deacon, on a part-time, non-salaried basis, for the term of this Agreement.

3. The Bishop expects that as a part-time, non-salaried deacon, the Deacon shall serve the Diocese 10 hours a week dividing that time among the duties of serving:
 - a. the community/society-at-large (social ministries)
 - b. the Diocese (Committees/Commissions as appointed or elected)
 - c. the assigned Church (liturgically and pastorally)And that such service shall not conflict with the Deacon's regular employment. The congregation will support the Deacon's ministry through prayer, financial support, and participation in programs.

4. The Deacon shall serve liturgically as follows:
 - a. Liturgically – the Deacon shall perform the full and proper role of a deacon at the Eucharist on Sundays and in all major liturgies of the parish life. In the Eucharist, the Deacon shall proclaim the Gospel, wait at table, and dismiss the people. The Deacon may bid the Confession, support the prayers of the people, receive the offerings, and distribute Communion where those functions are not normally assigned to other clergy or laity.
 - b. Pastorally – the Deacon may at any time take the Eucharist, bread and wine, to the sick and infirm of the parish/mission, and may anoint the sick. The Deacon may train and support Lay Eucharistic Ministers who carry the Sacrament from the Church on Sunday.
 - c. The Deacon shall assist in other liturgies, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals. The Deacon may officiate at baptisms, weddings, and funerals with permission by the Bishop.
 - d. Occasionally, as agreed upon by the Priest and the Wardens, the Deacon will officiate at Sunday liturgies only when no priest or supply priest is available.
 - e. The Deacon may preach once a quarter --- or when requested.

5. The Deacon may be responsible for:
 - a. Attending monthly Vestry meetings as an ordained member of the staff with voice but no vote, as permitted by the Parish By-Laws.
 - b. Other responsibilities mutually agreed upon by the Deacon and the Priest.

6. The Deacon shall take the following period of leave from diaconal responsibilities and service:
 - a. Four weeks of annual vacation leave.
 - b. Two weeks of continuing education leave each year.
 - c. Two weeks per year of service in the parish for Sabbatical Leave, to be available after the third year, and cumulative through the sixth year.
 - d. Sick leave as required.

7. The Congregation shall pay the following expenses incurred by the Deacon in fulfilling the duties of the office:
 - a. The normal expenses of the Church's office operation, such as postage, office equipment, supplies, secretarial services, etc.
 - b. A professional development allowance of \$800 annually to or on the behalf of the Deacon toward expenses incurred in relation to professional development. Unexpended portions of this allowance shall be allowed to accumulate for use in succeeding years up to six years.
 - c. The Congregation will contribute \$250 a year to the Deacon's Discretionary Fund. The use of this account shall follow the same guidelines as the Priest's.

8. The Deacon, functioning on behalf of the Bishop, shall serve as a ministry partner with the Priest. In the absence of a Priest, the Deacon shall serve as a ministry partner with the Dean of that Deanery.

9. The Deacon and Priest agree to an annual discussion and mutual review of the total ministry of the congregation in order to:
 - a. Provide the Deacon and Priest opportunity to assess how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and to the ministry they share.
 - b. Isolate areas of conflict or disappointment that have not received adequate attention and may be adversely affecting mutual ministry.
 - c. Clarify expectations of all parties.
 - d. A mutually agreed upon third party shall be engaged to facilitate the mutual ministry review process.

10. The Deacon shall update and report annually in writing to the Bishop: the diaconal duties performed including the Deacon's social ministries, Diocesan Committee work (if applicable), liturgical and pastoral functions of the congregation. Copies shall be sent to the Archdeacon and the Priest of the assigned Church.

11. This agreement automatically terminates if and when the Deacon is assigned to another Church or moves to another Diocese. It may be terminated at any time by the Deacon with the advice and consent of the Bishop.

12. Should the Priest leave the Parish assignment, the Deacon is to contact the Bishop and offer to resign, so that all new assignments may be made.

13. If the Deacon, Priest, or Vestry are in disagreement concerning interpretation of the Letter of Agreement, either party may appeal for mediation to a mutually agreed upon third party, the Bishop remaining as the final arbiter.

This agreement will be in effect _____ to _____ and will be renewed with any changes suggested by the mutual ministry review and any changes in organization at _____ Church.

Signed by: Deacon: _____

Priest: _____

Warden(s): _____

Archdeacon: _____

Bishop of Western New York: _____

Distribution of Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament **Episcopal Diocese of Western New York**

[This is a unique liturgy reserved for special occasions and authorized only for the deacon as officiant.]

Theological Background

The leader of worship in a Christian assembly is normally a bishop or priest. However, when the services of a priest cannot be obtained for a Sunday congregation, the bishop may at his discretion authorize a deacon to distribute Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament in the context of a service of the Word (*Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 13 and 408.)

Such a liturgy is envisioned by the *Book of Common Prayer* only in exceptional circumstances and with explicit authorization by the Bishop. Regular use of this liturgy would reflect negatively on the wholeness of the Church and would destroy the servant symbolism of the deacon's ministry. Historically, the function of the deacon with regard to Holy Communion was to take the sacrament to the homes of those who could not be present for the Sunday Eucharist. The deacon did this immediately following the liturgy, or upon a later day, from the Reserved Sacrament. The deacon did not normally preside at a Sunday Eucharist and distribute Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament. There were exceptions to this pattern, however, notably liturgies of some fast days – Good Friday for example, with the ancient liturgy of the pre-sanctified gifts.

Catholic Christianity from the earliest times has recognized the real presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine. When these elements are taken to the sick or absent members of the Christian community, such communicants are deemed to be receiving the same Body and Blood of Christ as those who received it in the assembled community and in union with that community. There is no diminishment in the character or the quality of the sacramental presence of our Lord under these circumstances. Whether on the altar, or in transit, or resting in the tabernacle, the real presence is a theological and spiritual reality, which neither distance nor time has the power to diminish. There is an unlimited "shelf life" to the consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist. Accordingly, the reserved species are treated with extraordinary respect and reverence by the lay or ordained ministers who handle them. Such reverence is especially important in a public liturgy of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament.

One should not neglect to note the real presence of Christ in the proclamation of the Word of God, and the real presence of Christ in the liturgical assembly.

Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament (Rite I) Form to be used by a Deacon

The Liturgy of the Word follows the BCP pp. 323-332.; or begins with the Penitential Order, pp. 319-321.

After the Confession of Sin, the Deacon remains kneeling and says:

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant us absolution and remission of all our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of His Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

After the Liturgy of the Word, the Deacon, standing in the center of the chancel, away from the altar, says one of the following Offertory Sentences:

Ascribe unto the LORD the honor due unto His Name; bring presents, and come into His courts.

Psalm 96:8

Or

Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.

Ephesians 5:2

Or

Worthy art Thou, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou hast created all things, and by Thy will they were created and have their being.

Revelation 4:11

Or

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty. For all that is in heaven and in the earth is Thine. Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all.

1 Chronicles 29:11

A hymn is now sung.

The Deacon receives the people's offering. The following may be said:

All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee. Amen.

The people kneel.

The Deacon [spreads a corporal and then] reverently takes the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle or aumbry and places it on the Altar.

[BCP, page 333]

Deacon The Lord be with you.

People And with thy spirit.

Deacon Let us pray.

Almighty Father, whose dear Son,
on the night before He suffered,
did institute the Sacrament of His Body and Blood:
Mercifully grant that we may thankfully receive the same
in remembrance of Him who in these holy mysteries
giveth us a pledge of life eternal,
the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
Who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*
And now, as our Savior Christ hath taught us, we are bold to say,

People and Deacon sing or say:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The following may be sung or said:

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world,
grant us thy peace.

The following may also be said:

We do not presume to come to this Thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table. But Thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. ***Amen.***

The Deacon stands facing the people and says one of the following Invitations:

The Gifts of God for the People of God: Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on Him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Deacon receives the Sacrament in both kinds, and then distributes it to the people.

During the administration of Communion, hymns, psalms, or anthems may be sung.

The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words:

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,
preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.
Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee,
and feed on Him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.
The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee,
preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.
Drink this in remembrance that Christ's Blood was shed for thee,
and be thankful.

Or with these words:

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [*Amen.*]

Or with these words:

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [*Amen.*]

The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [*Amen.*]

The ablutions are done in the usual manner.

The remaining Reserved Sacrament is reverently placed back in the tabernacle or aumbry by the Deacon.

After Communion, the Deacon and people kneel. The Deacon says:

[BCP, page 339]

Let us pray.

Deacon and people:

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank Thee
for that Thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries,
with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood
of Thy Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and dost assure us thereby of Thy favor and goodness towards us;
and that we are very members incorporate
in the mystical body of Thy Son,
the blessed company of all faithful people;
and are also heirs, through hope,
of Thy everlasting kingdom.
And we humbly beseech Thee, O heavenly Father,
so to assist us with Thy grace,
that we may continue in that holy fellowship,
and do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost,
be all honor and glory, world without end.

A hymn may be sung before or after the Post-Communion Prayer.

In place of the Blessing, the Deacon remains kneeling and may say the following:

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

The Deacon dismisses the people with one of the sentences from the BCP p.339-340.

Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament (Rite II)

Form to be used by a Deacon

The Liturgy of the Word follows the BCP pp. 366-360; or begins with the Penitential Order, pp. 351-353.

After the Confession of Sin, the Deacon says:

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen*

After the Liturgy of the Word, the Deacon, standing in the center of the chancel, away from the altar, says one of the following Offertory Sentences:

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and make good your vows to the Most High. *Psalm 50:14*

Or

Ascribe to the Lord the honor due his Name; bring offering and come into his courts. *Psalm 96:8*

Or

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

Or

I appeal to you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present yourselves as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. *Romans 12:1*

Or

If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. *Matthew 5:23, 24*

Or

Through Christ let us continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his Name.

After the Liturgy of the Word (and the receiving of the people's offering), the Deacon spreads a corporal and then reverently takes the consecrated Sacrament from the tabernacle or aumbry and places it on the Altar, during which time a communion hymn may be sung.

The Lord's Prayer is then said, the Deacon first saying:

“Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us.”

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Deacon may then say:

“The Gifts of God for Us, the People of God”.

The Deacon receives the Sacrament in both kinds, and then distributes it to the people. During the administration of Communion, hymns, psalms, or anthems may be sung. The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words:

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. [Amen.]

or with these words

The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven. [Amen.]

The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation. [Amen.]

The ablutions are done in the usual manner.

The remaining Reserved Sacrament is reverently placed back in the tabernacle or aumbry the by Deacon, or consumed either after the Communion of the people or after the Dismissal.

After Communion, the Deacon says:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Or the following

Almighty and everliving God,
we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food
of the most precious Body and Blood
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;
and for assuring us in these holy mysteries
that we are living members of the Body of your Son,
and heirs of your eternal kingdom.
And now, Father, send us out
to do the work you have given us to do,
to love and serve you
as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.
To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

In place of the Blessing, the Deacon remains kneeling and may say the following:

The Lord bless us and keep us.
The Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon us and give us peace:
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

A hymn may be sung before or after the Post-Communion Prayer.

The Deacon dismisses the people with one of the following sentences:

Deacon Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.

Or this

Deacon Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Or this

Deacon Let us go forth into the world,
rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People Thanks be to God.

Or this

Deacon Let us bless the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

From the Easter Vigil through the Day of Pentecost "Alleluia, alleluia" may be added to any of the dismissals.

The People respond Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Bishop Franklin's Customary

The Bishop's visit to a congregation should be a time for celebration of the ministry of the whole congregation. Although confirmations are important they are not the only reason for the Bishop's visit – other parts of the ministry of the congregation should be celebrated as well.

Planning the Visit

Bishop Franklin appreciates the opportunity to participate in various activities in the life of the congregation during his visits any or all of the following may be possible:

- Meeting with confirmands or the vestry and wardens on Saturday evening
- Having dinner with the clergy and spouses on Saturday evening
- Meeting with confirmands prior to the service (if he hasn't had the opportunity to meet them the evening before)
- Meeting with vestry and wardens following the service
- Having lunch with the clergy and spouses following the service
- Teaching an adult education class on any of the following topics
 - The first 50 years of the Church
 - How the Episcopal Church works
 - How the Episcopal Church came to be
 - What does a Bishop do all day?

If you have other ideas please feel free to ask – please confirm any events with Lorraine Hapeman (lorrainehapeman@episcopalwny.org) before you publicize any events.

Please e-mail or send Lorraine the bulletin for the services 10 days before the visit. Please also let her know how many confirmations, receptions and reaffirmations you will have so that she can send you the correct certificates.

Use the Bishop's visit as an opportunity to publicize your congregation. Write an article about the Bishop's visit for your local newspaper and send it to them 10 days before the visit. A biography of the Bishop can be found on the Diocesan website (Episcopawny.org). Laurie Wozniak can help you craft your article. You can reach her at lauriewozniak@episcopalwny.org

The Canons of the Episcopal Church say that during his visit the bishop must examine the records of the congregation and the life and ministry of the clergy and the congregation. Bishop Franklin finds this difficult to accomplish in the course of a Sunday morning visit. So, 10 days before the visit please send the following information to Lorraine Hapeman – either electronically or in the US mail.

- A cover letter that describes the three biggest challenges facing the congregation and the three things that bring the most hope. Please also include any themes or issues that it would be helpful if the Bishop touched on in his sermon.
- The most recent month's treasurers report as it was presented to the vestry or Bishop's committee
- The monthly average Sunday attendance at services for the most recent six month period
- The most current parish directory

This will help Bishop Franklin be more familiar with what is going on in the life of the congregation.

Preparing Confirmands

Bishop Franklin prefers that those presented for confirmation be a minimum of 15 years old – or turning 15 during the current academic year.

While the exact confirmation preparation is left to the clergy in charge of individual congregations – the Bishop expects that those presented for confirmation or reception will be familiar with the following:

- The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments
- The history of the Anglican Church and the Episcopal Church in the United States
- The structure and polity of the Episcopal Church in the United States
- The Catechism of the Episcopal Church as found in the Book of Common Prayer
- The contents of the Book of Common Prayer in general
- The structure and content of the Holy Eucharist
- The Baptismal Covenant –
- The Nicene Creed
- Their own personal faith, call and ministry

Please write the first name of each confirmand in large print on an index card and hold that card where the Bishop can see it as he is confirming that person. This is in addition to the name tag the person should be wearing.

Some details for the Day

Bishop Franklin will be present at all Sunday morning services and will preach and celebrate. If you have regularly scheduled Saturday or Sunday afternoon or evening services please let Lorraine Hapeman know – she will let you know about the Bishop’s availability for those services.

The Bishop will generally arrive ½ hour before the first service. Please reserve a parking place for the Bishop if at all possible. Please also have someone watching for the Bishop to help carry his vestments and crozier to wherever you would like him to vest.

The Bishop will usually have a deacon assigned to accompany him if the congregation does not have their own deacon. The deacon should be given the seat at the right hand of the Bishop’s chair – or as close to that as is possible.

Dr. Franklin will often accompany the Bishop. She prefers to be introduced as Carmela. Please have someone designated to sit with her and show her where the bathrooms and the coffee hour is and to introduce her to other people.

If a lunch is to follow the late service please assign someone other than the Bishop or the priest of the congregation to say grace. The Bishop is often the last person to arrive at the reception and does not want people waiting for him to begin to eat. The priest should move the Bishop around to each table at the reception.

The loose offering should be designated for the Bishop’s Discretionary Fund. Lorraine will send envelopes for the collection. The funds should be deposited by the church and a check written to the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York noted for the Discretionary Fund and mailed to the Diocesan Center – please don’t hand the Bishop cash to take with him.

The Service

Bishop Franklin generally wears a cope at the beginning of the service and switches to the chasuble during the offertory – please place the chasuble in a convenient place. He will wear the chasuble for the rest of the service – so the cope can be removed to an out of the way place.

Please use the propers for the Sunday and the color for the season. Similarly, the proper preface should be that of Sunday or of the season, not for Baptism. If there are confirmations only: use red. If baptism and confirmation: use white.

At the service, the bishop will open the liturgy. If there is a special bishop's chair, he prefers the chair be left in its normal place in the sanctuary. He will begin the service from there or by standing in the center of the chancel.

If there are baptisms and confirmations, after the sermon is finished, a small chair or stool should be moved to the top of the chancel steps for him to continue with the examination of the candidates. If there are no baptisms or confirmations, the bishop will continue the service with the creed after which the person appointed reads the Prayers for the People.

When there is a baptism, the baptismal party should be brought to the bishop who will first address candidates and/or sponsors using the form on page 301-313. Then, the confirmands and other candidates will be presented (by standing in place or coming forward as is most convenient). The bishop will then lead the congregation in the Baptismal Covenant. A lay reader should then lead the congregation in the Prayers for the Candidates the bishop, priest and baptismal party then move to the font. The bishop reads the Thanksgiving over the water and then the priest will administer the water baptism. When all have been baptized, the bishop then leads the prayer and seals each candidate with chrism.

In the case of an adult baptism, this suffices for confirmation as well. That person should not be presented again, but should be given both a baptismal and confirmation certificate. After welcoming those baptized, they may return to their seats and the other candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation are then presented, each in turn by name. They kneel one at a time before the bishop for the laying on of hands. When all have been presented, the peace is then exchanged. Prayers of the People are normally omitted.

If there is no baptism, but there is confirmation, reception or reaffirmation, use the service beginning on page 415. The bishop will lead the congregation in the Baptismal Covenant. A lay reader then leads the congregation in the Prayers for the Candidates. The candidates for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation are then presented, each in turn by name. They kneel one at a time before the bishop for the laying on of hands. When all have been presented, the peace is then exchanged. Prayers of the People are normally omitted.

The Bishop would prefer that the deacon or priest who is reading the gospel come to him for a blessing prior to the gospel procession.

The local priest should make announcements as usual, wherever they usually occur in the course of the service. If the announcements occur after the Peace, The Bishop will conclude with the offertory sentence.

It is important that the local pastor and other clergy stand at the altar with the Bishop during the Eucharistic prayer. The Bishop would like to be fully involved administering communion and that all vested priests and deacons administer Communion.

Other information

The form for reporting confirmations is located on the Diocesan website. Please complete it and mail it to the Diocesan office within 3 days of the service. Please don't hand it to the Bishop to take with him.

Notes for Deacons

It is all about paying attention to what is going on in the service, what will happen next in the service and what the Bishop needs and will need.

The Bishop will process in and process out carrying the crozier and wearing the mitre – please be ready to carry his prayer book if necessary.

The Bishop will hand off the crozier to the chaplain as soon as he is in place at the beginning of the service.

If the Bishop is leading the opening prayers from the middle of the chancel – please stand on his right, hold the crozier in your left hand with the crook facing out and hold the Bishop's prayer book open to the correct spot in your right hand so that he can see it. When he proceeds to his seat please place the crozier in a convenient place (not lying on the altar)

If the Bishop is leading the opening prayers from the Bishop's chair please place the crozier in convenient place and then hold the Bishop's prayer book for the opening prayer.

The Bishop will normally need the crozier again three times: (a) at the Gospel reading, during which time he will hold it, (b) held next to him during the baptism and confirmation rites and (c) for the final blessing (after which he will keep it to process out). If you are the only deacon bring the Bishop the crozier before getting the gospel book and coming to him for his blessing.

If there is a procession to the baptismal font, the Bishop will need the crozier and mitre.

As for the mitre, the Bishop doesn't wear it to pray – but he does wear it when he is sitting down, as a sign that he is presiding over the service. So:

- On through the opening acclamation, removing it for the Collect.
- Back on when we sit to hear the readings
- On for the presentation of candidates if he is sitting down – if he is standing it stays off
- Off for the Prayers for the Candidates at Confirmation or Baptism (and the Blessing of the water if there is a baptism)
- Off for Confirmation itself
- Off for the Eucharistic Prayer
- On for the final blessing.

Please hand the mitre to him with the bottom edge facing him – the back of it up with the lappets flipped over the mitre so that he can put it on in one movement.

During Baptism and Confirmation please stand on the Bishop's right holding the crozier in your left hand – crook facing out and hold the Bishop's prayer book in your right hand so that he can see it.

During the Eucharistic prayer either the deacon or one of the priests at the altar should turn the pages in the Altar Book. The deacon should stand at the Bishop's immediate right hand.

CANONS III.6 - Of the Ordination of Deacons - CANONS III.7 - Of the Life and Work of Deacons

Sec. 1. Selection

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

Sec. 2. Nomination

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

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

(1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and

(2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate.

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

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

(1) Full name and date of birth.

(2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.

(3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.

(4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.

(5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.

(6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned, and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

Sec. 3. Postulancy

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

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

(1) determine that the Nominee is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, and

(2) confer in person with the Nominee,

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

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

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

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

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

Sec. 4. Candidacy

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

(a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:

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

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

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

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

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

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

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

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

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

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

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

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

(1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.

(2) Diakonia and the diaconate.

(3) Human awareness and understanding.

(4) Spiritual development and discipline.

(5) Practical training and experience.

(g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding

(1) prevention of sexual misconduct.

(2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.

(3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.

(4) the Church's teaching on racism.

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

(i) During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination. Records shall be kept of all evaluations, assessments, and the recommendation, and shall be made available to the Standing Committee.

(j) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished

(1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.

(2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.

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

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate

(a) A person may be ordained Deacon:

(1) after at least eighteen months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2 (b), and

(2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

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

(1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.

(2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the dates of admission.

(4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

(5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

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

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

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

CANON 7: Of the Life and Work of Deacons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(2) Such testimonial shall be called Letters Dimissory. If the Ecclesiastical Authority accepts the Letters Dimissory, the canonical residence of the Deacon so transferred shall date from the acceptance of the Letters Dimissory, of which prompt notice shall be given both to the applicant and to the Ecclesiastical Authority from which it came.

(3) Letters Dimissory not presented within six months from the date of transmission to the applicant shall become void.

(4) A statement of the record of payments to The Church Pension Fund by or on behalf of the Deacon concerned shall accompany Letters Dimissory.

Sec. 7. On reaching the age of seventy-two years, a Deacon shall resign from all positions of active service in this Church, and the resignation shall be accepted. The Bishop may, with the consent of the Deacon, assign a resigned Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or ministry in another setting, for a term not to exceed twelve months, and this term may be renewed.

Sec. 8. If any Deacon of this Church shall declare, in writing, to the Bishop of the Diocese in which such Deacon is canonically resident, a renunciation of the ordained Ministry of this Church, and a desire to be removed therefrom, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to record the declaration and request so made. The Bishop, being satisfied that the person so declaring is acting voluntarily and for causes, assigned or known, which do not affect the Deacon's moral character, shall lay the matter before the clerical members of the Standing Committee, and with the advice and consent of a majority of such members the Bishop may pronounce that such renunciation is accepted, and that the Deacon is released from the obligations of the Ministerial office, and is deprived of the right to exercise the gifts and spiritual authority as a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments conferred in Ordination. The Bishop shall also declare in pronouncing and recording such action that it was for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and shall, if desired, give a certificate to this effect to the person so removed from the ordained Ministry.

Sec. 9. If a Deacon making the aforesaid declaration of renunciation of the ordained Ministry be under Presentment for any Offense, or shall have been placed on Trial for the same, the Ecclesiastical Authority to whom such declaration is made shall not consider or act upon such declaration until after the said Presentment shall have been dismissed or the said Trial shall have been concluded and the Deacon judged not to have committed an Offense.

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