



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE  
OF MARYLAND



# MANUAL FOR THE DIACONATE

REVISED APRIL 7, 2018

## An Introduction from Bishop Sutton

*“Now send us out to do the work you have given us to do” (BCP 366)*

The central role of the deacon is to send the church out, individually and collectively, to do God’s work in the world. In their role as “community organizers,” deacons hold up the needs of the world while they encourage and guide the People of God to live out their baptismal promises, transforming the world through works of mercy and justice.

It is to this work that deacons are called. With God’s help, the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland has been forming, ordaining, deploying and supporting deacons to answer that call for many years. Still, our diocese needs more deacons to inspire and guide our parishes in response to the many needs in our midst. In order to build up this ministry of servanthood, we have prayed, discerned, listened, and developed a new program for deacon formation in our diocese.

This manual introduces a new formation paradigm that aligns with the continuing evolution of the diaconate in the Episcopal Church. As we strive to make formation more accessible, flexible and attractive to the diversity of people who are called to be deacons, we employ a lifelong learning model that begins with the experiences, knowledge and spiritual maturity that applicants bring, and builds toward canonically required competencies for ordination and ongoing development across the arc of their service to the church.

We invite the whole diocese to help us find and form future deacons who will continue to send us all out to do God’s work in the world.

The Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton  
Bishop of Maryland  
April 22, 2017

## A Word from Bishop Knudsen

The Order of Deacons (the “Diaconate”) is a “full and equal order” of ministry in the Episcopal Church. Deacons are icons of the Servanthood of Jesus; they remind us that every member of the Church is called, by virtue of our Baptism, to servant ministry. Deacons model this servant ministry for us, they mobilize and support us in servanthood, and they continually call the church to look outside her walls to attend to the needs of the community around us.

I believe that the symbols for the Diaconate are the Book, the Table, the Towel and the Door. Deacons proclaim the Gospel, the Church's "book" that cradles the Word of God. Deacons set and serve at the Table, the altar, to prepare the Eucharistic feast which nourishes us for our journey with Jesus Christ. Deacons also show us humble servant ministry in action, like when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and dried them with a Towel (John 13: 4-15). When the Eucharistic feast has ended, we are sent out into the world to love and serve by the deacon's dismissal at the Door.

Every deacon is entrusted, at ordination, with becoming an ever-stronger model of servant ministry to all the baptized, attending to the wellbeing of the entire human community which God so loved. God fully entered our human experience in the Incarnation, the mystery of the Word made Flesh, Jesus Christ. Deacons remind us that Jesus came to love and to serve and commanded us to do likewise.

Many people have been involved, for over a year's time, in discussions, meetings, email and phone conversation, over countless hours, to re-shape the Deacon Formation Program (DFP) for the Diocese of Maryland. The good news: in an evolving digital universe, we can make alterations to this program (and to this manual!) easily. This will be an organic program, which we can alter as our experience teaches us. We undertake this new program of formation, confident that God's grace will flow lavishly as we move forward towards our Bishop's goal: “A Deacon in every congregation.” May it be so, in the Name of Jesus Christ, who came not to be served, but to serve.

The Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen  
Assistant Bishop of Maryland  
April 22, 2017



# DISCERNMENT



# General Attributes and Qualities of Ordained Leaders

- Personal Faith in God through Jesus Christ that is living, growing in depth and healthy:
  - Practicing a Rule of Life that includes personal and corporate prayer, study of scripture, spiritual direction, and personal stewardship
  - Passion for God's mission
  - Participating and rooted in an Episcopal congregation, informed by and respectful of Anglican traditions and identity
  - Appreciation of cultural contexts that shape one's own and others' faith
  - Private and public ways of life that model Christian virtues by example
- Effective facilitator of the Christian faith in words, deeds, and actions:
  - Ability to write and speak persuasively, including sensitivity to community
  - Ability to articulate the gospel to move people for transformational action
  - Clear and consistent processes of communicating and gathering of feedback
  - Skill in inspiring faithfulness through liturgy
  - Identifiably Christian in the public sphere
- Developer of communities of faith:
  - Proven capacity for gathering, organizing, and inspiring people in mission and helping to extend that vision
  - Positive regard for the capacities of people in the congregation
  - Savvy sense of networks of influence in congregations and local communities
  - Entrepreneurial spirit
  - Consensus builder
  - Cultivate healthy patterns of interaction among people in community, including accountability through structures of authority
  - Skills, gifts, and graces to collaboratively lead the church in mission through liturgy, preaching, spiritual and pastoral guidance, Christian formation, social outreach, and evangelism
  - The ability to encourage, empower, and mentor lay leadership to live into the Baptismal Covenant
- Emotionally mature leadership:
  - Assertiveness and decisiveness, blended with collaborative interest in others
  - Capacity to anticipate conflict and work effectively through it
  - Ability to listen deeply to others and respond constructively
  - Ability to lead with authority, recognizing and honoring the authority of others
  - Acts with awareness and self-awareness of one's impact on others in relationships and leadership roles
- Institutional connection: Recognition and understanding that ordained ministry brings canonical and institutional constraints.

## When God Really Nudges Us ("Elbow in the Ribs" Experience)

Four avenues to consider:

1. Monastic life – not as our stereotype would see it, but as a disciplined structure of prayer, study, and service, responsive to God’s call, and in the context of community. We need to learn a LOT about emergent forms of monasticism, non-residential monastic communities, and the invitation to become more intentional and accountable in our spiritual life. Monastic in the broad sense of intentionality around adopting specific patterns and practice of wholeness, may also mean an assumed discipline of becoming healthier in body and mind: undergoing psychotherapy, entering into recovery, adopting a physical discipline of exercise, cultivating a creative discipline, learning a new language, or seeking a coach/mentor to gain a new skill or sharpen a current skill.
2. An intentional (“consecrated”) lay ministry, towards which a person directs their learning and formation. Church musician? Parish coordinator? Youth group leader? Attorney for end of life issues? Leader of overseas mission trips? J2A leader? Cursillo? Vestry member? Lay Eucharistic minister? Warden? Social outreach worker?
3. Ordination as a servant leader, a deacon. A separate and equal order, NOT a booby prize. Under authority, with both bishop and local person with oversight. Primarily centered in the Table, the Towel, the Book and the Door, symbols of a deacon’s ministry.
4. Ordination as a priest, a sacramental, teaching, governing, and pastoral ministry. Expressed in many ways, but primarily centered on the altar and pulpit. Preparation for this ministry includes seminary work, will involve study and learning, as this is a teaching role. A mastery of content will be expected. A spectrum of skills will be cultivated.

As we take seriously the calls and journeys of those who come to us, let us own all these paths as our responsibility to affirm and support. One path is not holier than another. Our responsibility is to help discern what path the Holy Spirit is calling each person to travel, be it 1 or 2 above or 3 or 4 above, at THIS MOMENT on the journey.

God honors each path, and says a divine YES! to each vocation. Our job is not binary (are you called to be ordained or not?) but multivalent, given that there are four broad general avenues open in discernment.

The Rt. Rev. Chilton Knudsen  
Assistant Bishop of Maryland



# WHAT IS A DEACON?



## What is a Deacon? Quotes on the Diaconate

“Deacons call us to the margins where Jesus expects to meet the church.”

The Rt. Rev. Rob Wright, Bishop of Atlanta

“Deacons are the ‘ants in the pants’ of the Church, spurring the Church to care for others and look beyond institutional maintenance to mission in the world.”

The Ven. Audrey Delafield, Retired Archdeacon, Diocese of Maine

“The diaconate, an institution of great importance in the early church, is again coming to life in the church as a ministry and office closely related to central aspects of the church’s identity: service, outreach, humility, concern for human needs.”

The Hanover Report (1996)

Of all the orders of ministry, the diaconate embodies the servanthood of Jesus, with concern for the last, the lost and the least.

Bishop Neil Alexander, Dean, School of Theology, Sewanee

The Rev. Jeffrey D. Lee (now Bishop of Chicago) began an address in 1991 to the North American Association for the Diaconate (now AED – Association of Episcopal Deacons), saying that the Church must be about “Recovering a full realization of the awesome dignity of baptismal vocation and ministry, of which the diaconate is the principal sign.”

“The qualifications for the diaconate are quite different from those of the priesthood. The tendency to create qualifications for deacons in the same general pattern (except in lesser degree) as for those in the priesthood remains a significant problem, stemming as it does from the centuries-old single model of ministry, that of the priest... The symbol of the deacon’s ministry of the Word is the high privilege of reading the Gospel at the Eucharist. Liturgically, this is the apex of the ministry of the Word, as is shown... by the people standing....”

James Monroe Barnett, *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*

## Deacons in the Diocese of Maryland

Deacons are ordained to a separate, distinct and equal order of ministry. The deacon is a “community organizer,” encouraging and guiding the People of God to live out their baptismal promise to serve Christ by serving others. Deacons’ responsibilities in the liturgy include: proclaiming the Gospel, facilitating the Prayers of the People, bidding the Confession, serving at Table, and announcing the Dismissal to send the Church, individually and collectively, out to serve. In short, the priest cares for the flock gathered around the altar and the deacon leads the flock out the doors into servant ministry.

Both the order of deacons and the Church’s commitment to serve disadvantaged people were instituted in its earliest days, as described in Acts 6:1-8:2.

The Canons of the Episcopal Church clarify the role of a deacon in the ongoing life of the Church (Title III, Canon 7, Section 1 and 4):

*Deacons serve directly under the authority of and are accountable to the bishop. The bishop, after consultation with the deacon and the member of clergy 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 clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.*

The charge to deacons during ordination defines their unique ministry (BCP 543):

*God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by 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.*

**Mission:** To engage and inspire the People of God to follow Jesus’ example, loving and serving others in daily life, and reaching across boundaries to serve and advocate for marginalized and disadvantaged people.

**Vision:** That the People of God, through their lives of service and advocacy, will be active and visible witnesses to God’s justice, peace and love in the world.

## On Engaging the *Diakonia* of all Believers

Diakonia is central to fulfilling the church's mission as servant leaders. Diakonia is not optional in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; rather it is an essential part of discipleship. Diakonia reaches out to all persons created in God's image, and all of God's creation. While diakonia begins in unconditional service to neighbor in need, it leads inevitably through advocacy and prophetic proclamation to bear witness in word and deed to God's presence in the midst of our lives.

We are shaped to serve others through worship, where we celebrate God's gift of grace in the Word, water, bread and wine, through which we glimpse the fulfillment of God's promise. In this broken world where sin and injustice abound, God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit shapes us as a gathered community. Thus, we become the voice, hands and feet of Christ and agents of grace for the healing of the world.

All Christians are called through the baptismal covenant to live out diakonia through what they do and how they live their daily life in the world. This is the first and most fundamental expression of diakonia. Organized expressions of diakonia occur at the congregational level, as well as through those who are set apart as ordained deacons. Deacons are to model and lead, by inspiring, empowering, and engaging every baptized person in living out the diakonia of all believers in everyday life. Deacons do not – cannot – “do” diakonia on behalf of the baptized, but they help to lead all people, including the ordained, into the servant ministry of all believers which is the essence of our baptismal covenant.

Because of the holistic mission of God, diakonia is deeply interrelated with *kerygma* (proclamation of the Word) and *koinonia* (sharing at the Table). Diakonia is witnessing through deeds. It is rooted in the sharing of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. The mutual sharing inherent in the communion of the Church bears witness in word and deed to the unjust power relations that often are present in some diaconal work, such as between “wealthy givers” and “poor recipients.” In diakonia those serving and those served are both transformed; the purpose of diakonia is to make Christ's redemptive love known by word and example, not to proselytize. Diakonia is not the strong serving the weak, which can lead to paternalism by assuming that some churches are unable to engage in diakonia because of their lack of resources or expertise. As Episcopalians, we envision that diakonia is part of the calling of all churches, regardless of size and all Christians, regardless of wealth, because we believe that all of God's people, individually, and as communities, are blessed with gifts to share.

We must challenge all theological interpretations that do not take seriously the suffering in the world, a world afflicted with poverty, violence and injustice, and environmental degradation. We must also challenge all theological interpretations that do not take seriously the systems, structures, and powers that foster, or even benefit from, poverty, violence, and injustice, and environmental degradation. As Episcopalians, we are shaped by

both an incarnational theology and a theology of the cross. In the incarnation, God's identification with all of humanity, indeed with all of creation, compels us to identify with all of our sisters and brothers, and the environment in which we live.

Christ's suffering on the cross compels us to identify especially with those of our sisters and brothers who suffer today, moving beyond politeness and pretense, breaking the silence and risking speaking truth to power, even when this threatens the established order and results in hardship or persecution. This is the heart of the prophetic diaconal calling.

The Association of Episcopal Deacons (AED)



# HOW ARE DEACONS FORMED?



# Discernment, Application and Diaconal Formation Summary

## Discernment and Application

- A person who believes God is calling him/her explores that call in community with their congregation and priest, along with discernment resources/programs at the diocesan level (Exploring Baptismal Ministry/EBM, Discerning Ordained Vocation/DOV, or successor programs). If the call is affirmed, the congregation makes a nomination to the bishop for ordinations.
- The nominee will have a personal meeting with the bishop for ordinations, and perhaps others as requested by the bishop. If discernment points the way forward into the ordination process, the nominee will receive an application packet listing tasks to do.
- The nominee begins accumulating a portfolio to document and describe all prior relevant experiences, education and trainings. The portfolio will represent what the nominee brings into the process of diaconal formation.
- The nominee makes application for postulancy, using the required form. With endorsement from the bishop, the Commission on Ministry interviews the nominee.
- For acceptance into postulancy, all tasks must be complete, including background check, medical and psychological evaluations, following directions in the application packet.
- An assessment review of the portfolio forms the basis of an Individual Formation Plan (IFP). The assessment will involve the bishop for ordinations, the archdeacon for formation, the deacon mentor and members of the Commission on Ministry trained for this purpose.

## Formation

The design of the Deacon Formation Program (DFP) is aimed at two goals: 1) creating a process for adult learners, and 2) meeting both canonical and diocesan standards. Meeting these standards involves carefully considering the prior learning experience of each applicant. Diaconal formation requires a minimum of two years, and must be completed within five years.

The Deacon Formation Program is comprised of five Elements of Formation:

- **Canonical competencies:**
  - Academic studies including Holy Scriptures, theology, ethics and the traditions of the Church
  - Diakonia and the diaconate
  - Human awareness and understanding
  - Liturgy, worship and the Book of Common Prayer

- **Spiritual formation** (spiritual direction, a rule of life, spiritual retreats, spiritual growth and renewal programs.)
  
- **Three required internships:**
  - Parish ministry in an Episcopal congregation/faith community
  - Pastoral formation in a clinical setting (hospital, assisted care facility, etc.)
  - Organizing in a social justice agency, initiative or advocacy program
  
- **Complete required trainings:**
  - Safeguarding God's Children (online, preferably before postulancy application)
  - Safeguarding God's People (online, preferably before postulancy application)
  - Racism awareness training (Seeing the Face of God in Each Other)
  - Domestic violence awareness training (Breaking the Silence)
  
- **Engagement in community** with deacons and others in formation:
  - Overnight retreats – 2 or 3 per year, completing 4 retreats in total.
  - Regular meetings with a deacon mentor to provide one-to-one guidance and support - this relationship begins in postulancy and continues through the first two years after ordination.

The work completed for each of the five components of formation is documented and added to the portfolio. Documentation is established through memos, certificates, reflection papers, research reports, supervisory and self-evaluations, written/oral exams, academic papers, sermons, descriptions of adult formation projects developed and led, videotapes, digital scrapbooks, transcripts, etc.

The Deacon Formation Program builds a learning community in which each participant functions as both learner and teacher. Much of the time spent in the overnight retreats involves peer learning, theological reflection and sharing of expertise. Several deacon mentors are present at each of the overnight retreats, lending their wisdom and expertise to the retreat.

## Deacon Formation Program Requirements

The outcome of the Deacon Formation Program is that all deacons have fundamental competencies and that all have specialized skills to grow and to develop. Formation does not end with ordination. Beginning with discernment, each deacon follows a formation program, based on the initial portfolio, that can be individualized and customized.

*With regard to the possibilities of exceptions,  
The Bishop's authority will prevail.*

Area of Competency	Learning Goals	Measurable Objectives	Examples of Applicable Previous Experience
<b>Scripture</b>	General understanding of Old Testament, New Testament, and Apocrypha for purposes of preaching and teaching.  (not all deacons are called to preach)	Read entire Bible and Apocrypha. Demonstrate familiarity with exegetical resources. Do two exegeses (one OT and one NT)	Complete <i>Education for Ministry</i> . Undergraduate Bible course work. Taught Adult Formation in church and include curriculum. St. Mary's/EI course. On-line course.
<b>Theology</b>	Understanding basic theology of the prayer book.	Able to explain theologically and lead discussion of what it means to be a Christian and Anglican in today's world.	Undergraduate course in Systematic Theology. Complete Education for Ministry. Taught Adult Formation in church and include curriculum. St. Mary's/EI course. On line course.
<b>Tradition of the Church</b>	General familiarity with the Book of Common Prayer, including leading major services.	Able to lead all 4 daily offices. Able to lead "communion from the reserved sacrament." Understand diaconal roles and boundaries in Holy Eucharist. Have familiarity with lectionary, catechism, and prayers.	Read <i>Commentary on the American Prayer Book</i> . Licensed lay worship leader.
<b>Diakonia and Diaconate</b>  (complimentary with Human Awareness and Leadership)	Understand deacon's call to servanthood which include prophetic ministries of peace and justice and community organizing. Serve the needs of the community as a missionary.	DOV. Initial discernment of gifts for future ministry development. Know the canonical requirements as well as the roles and theology of the diaconate in the Book of Common Prayer, the roles and theology of diaconate in the Book of Common Prayer.	CALL from CDSP, online course. VTS course on the canons. Teach a significant course on the diaconate, prepare 3 session course at internship parish.

Area of Competency	Learning Goals	Measurable Objectives	Examples of Applicable Previous Experience
<b>Human Awareness and Leadership</b>  <b>(complimentary with Diakonia and Diaconate)</b>	Awareness of: personality types including self, divergent needs of individuals and groups, ability to lead others to work together for the common good.	At least two parochial and one non-parochial leadership experience. Demonstrate organizing and delegating to group producing a program or initiative. Project goes from beginning to ending with raising up leadership to continue the ministry. Ability to integrate and synthesize. Ability to balance different ideas and perspectives.	Vestry. Boards. Myers-Briggs. Ennegram. Group Therapy. Group discernment. Secular work experience.  Spiritual Formation for Adults. 12 Step Recovery.
<b>Spiritual Development</b>	Intentional Formation through spiritual practices and integration into everyday life as a deacon.	Regular spiritual direction. Daily prayer life. Regular sacramental worship. Stewardship practice of time, talent, and treasure.	Spiritual director. Giver of record. Participate in Christian Formation opportunities.
<b>Ethics</b>	Self-awareness with issues of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, social and economic justice. Ability to foster and manage conversations with others of divergent viewpoints on these issues. Professional ethics of the clergy.	Didactics and case studies presented at the required retreats.	Required retreat and participation in case study.  By candidacy all required diocesan trainings are completed.
<b>Practical Theology</b>	Understand the context of the congregation/ institution as well as the relationship between the deacon and the parish context.	Presentation to peers at required retreats on history, culture, communication, demographics of internship site. Explain how deacon fits within the congregation's self-perception and vision.	Required retreat and participation in congregational study.
<b>Congregational Internship</b>	Sacramental, prophetic voice, areas not previously experienced from other canonical areas	Assisting in worship, Sunday and other; preaching and teaching, not what rector needs helps with; others are identified as lacking from canonical areas; minimum 180 hours, including one Christmas or one Holy Week/Easter	In addition to Sundays, 1-2 midweek services, wedding, funeral; organizing outreach initiative; teaching on social justice topic.

Area of Competency	Learning Goals	Measurable Objectives	Examples of Applicable Previous Experience
<b>Pastoral Formation in a Clinical Setting</b>  <b>Accredited CPE is acceptable but not required.</b>	Training in group clinical settings in active listening, pastoral presence, and self awareness and its effects on pastoral presence.	Minimum of 200 hour with other learners and supervision. Didactics from content. Individual supervision (paid).	A clinical experience that is pre-approved. For example, GBMC. Peer groups (paid). Mid term and Final Evaluation.
<b>Community/Social Internship</b>	Social Justice, Advocacy, Community Organizing for ministry in the world	Minimum of 100 hours. Keep a journal. Note especially insights, surprises, and “ah-ha” moments. At the next overnight retreat, present a 30 minute program with handouts: 1) description of your experience, 2) scriptural reflection or experiences, 3) theological reflection	Social justice experiences, paid or unpaid.
<b>Community Formation with Others in DFP</b>	Develop relationships with others in DFP for mutual support and experience in collegial teamwork.	Minimum 4 weekend overnights with others in DFP before ending formation program.	Two overnight retreats per year.

**Individual Formation Plans (IFP)** are developed with the bishop for ordinations, the archdeacon for formation and the deacon mentor. IFPs are “road maps” for the formation of each deacon. They may be altered as circumstances suggest, with the consent of the bishop for ordinations.

**Deacon Mentor** relationship begins at postulancy and continues through first two years of ordination.

# HOW ARE DEACONS DEPLOYED?



# Norms for Deacon Deployment

*In the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland*

"Deacons serve directly under the authority of and are accountable to the Bishop. The Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy 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." (Canons of the Episcopal Church, Title III, Canon 7, Sections 1 and 4.)

The Archdeacon for Deployment and Pastoral Care assists the Bishop with the administration of the Deacons in the Diocese.

*Note: In cases of any disputes about these norms, the Archdeacon will be consulted and the Bishop is the final arbiter.*

## **1. Pre-Assignment:**

- A. The Member of the Clergy exercising oversight submits the Request for a Deacon to the Bishop and the Archdeacon for Deployment and Pastoral Care describing the need for a Deacon and outlining the Deacon's ministry in that congregation/organization.
- B. The Deacon's gifts/skills must match the needs of the congregation/organization.
- C. Although the Deacon's assignment is ultimately the Bishop's decision, the Deacon's desires may be taken into account.
- D. The Deacon and Member of the Clergy exercising oversight meet to discuss the prospective assignment before the placement is finalized. If approved, a Letter of Agreement (LOA), which must be signed by the Bishop, is developed.
- E. No Deacon is assigned a long distance away from his/her home, unless agreed upon by the Deacon, Member of the Clergy exercising oversight, and the Bishop.
- F. Archdeacons, experienced Deacons, or appropriate diocesan staff members conduct training/orientation for prospective Members of the Clergy exercising oversight as to their role in the diocesan vision for the diaconate.
- G. An orientation video should be developed for use throughout the diocese to assist with item "F" above.

H. The Bishop may decide, on a case-by-case basis, to appoint a Deacon to his/her sponsoring congregation.

## **2. Assignment:**

- A. The Bishop may assign the Deacon to a non-parochial or parochial ministry. The assignment is defined in a letter of agreement signed by the Bishop, the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy exercising oversight.
- B. Non-parochial assignments are important, even desired. However, each Deacon should have a congregation that is considered his/her spiritual "home base," where the Deacon functions to the full extent of his/her Order at least once a month.
- C. The Deacon's ministry in a congregation is non-stipendiary. However, congregations reimburse Deacons for professional travel mileage, Diocesan Convention, and Clergy Conference.
- D. Arrangements for Continuing Education will be specified in the Letter of Agreement. Continuing Education funds are available from the Diocesan Office.
- E. Deacons who are employees in any church position (for which any qualified lay or ordained person is eligible) will be compensated for that specific employment, including Pension Benefits through the Clergy Pension Group.
- F. The Deacon's ministry is normally 6-10 hours per week, including Sunday mornings and sermon preparation. A Deacon may volunteer for more hours but is not obligated to do so.
- G. The Deacon's assignment is normally three years, although exceptions are made by the Bishop on a case-by-case basis.
- H. The Member of the Clergy exercising oversight and the Deacon will meet for an annual evaluation/ministry review. The report will be signed by the Deacon, Member of the Clergy exercising oversight and the Bishop.

## **3. Retirement:**

- A. The Deacon, like all Episcopal clergy, retires/resigns from the currently-served ministry at age 72, in accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Church.
- B. Post-retirement appointments as Deacon Associate to congregations and other ministries are at the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Deacon, for a term not exceeding 12 months, and may be renewed.

- C. Post-retirement appointments to other ministries are solely at the need and discretion of the Bishop.

# RESOURCES FOR DEACON DEPLOYMENT

- Request for a Deacon
- Sample Letter of Agreement for Deacons - Parish Assignments
- Sample Letter of Agreement for Deacons - Non-Parish Assignments
- Sample Continuing Letter of Agreement for Deacons - Parish and Non-Parish Assignments
- Liturgy to Celebrate a New Ministry for a Deacon
- Liturgy to Conclude a Deacon's Service





# DEACONS

IN THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE  
OF MARYLAND

**Mission:** *To engage and inspire the People of God to follow Jesus' example, loving and serving others in daily life, and reaching across boundaries to serve and advocate for marginalized and disadvantaged people.*

## Request for a Deacon

*[To apply for the assignment of a deacon to your congregation or other ministry, please submit this request to the Bishop and the Archdeacon. This form is available as a Word document upon request to [archdeacon@episcopalmaryland.org](mailto:archdeacon@episcopalmaryland.org).]*

**Date:**

**Congregation/Ministry:**

**Priest or other person exercising oversight:**

**Title:**

**Address:**

**Phone number:**

**Email address:**

- 1. In addition to a deacon's liturgical role, what are your goals for a deacon's leadership in your congregation/organization?** *[Your goals may include a type of ministry you want started or supported, or may be focused on every Christian's service to others in the world. Refer to the Mission Statement above and the call described in the Examination of a Deacon (BCP 543) as you answer this question. Note: a deacon's assignment is normally no longer than three years.]*

- 2. Deacons help congregations identify issues of justice and/or conditions of need in the local community, then make plans to address such problems. What local issues might a deacon help your congregation to address?**
  
- 3. What are the proposed weekly responsibilities you envision for a deacon?** *[Many deacons have full-time employment in the world that will influence their ministries in the church. The general guideline is that the deacon's weekly hours are 6-10 hours including Sunday mornings and sermon preparation. However, individual circumstances might require more or less time than this. Please explain if your request is significantly outside of the general guideline.]*
  
- 4. What financial support will your congregation/organization provide for a deacon?**  
*[While deacons are non-stipendiary, expenses such as continuing education, mileage, Diocesan Convention and Clergy Conference costs are to be provided by the congregation/organization. In addition, an annual contribution to the Deacon Formation Program (\$200 - \$1,000 based on your annual budget) is expected. Please confirm that your congregation/organization can budget and provide for these expenses.]*
  
- 5. List past experience with deacons placed in your congregation/organization. What experience has the priest or other person exercising oversight had with the ministry of deacons?**

*[All requests will be evaluated by the archdeacon and other members of the bishop's staff who will make recommendations to the bishop. Approved requests will be filled as deacon supply, talent and geography allow. If you have any questions, please contact the archdeacon:  
[archdeacon@episcopalmaryland.org](mailto:archdeacon@episcopalmaryland.org).]*

Revised 3-21-18

## Sample Letter of Agreement for Deacons Parish Assignments

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ and the Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, under whom the deacon directly serves, agree that the deacon's exercise of the diaconate in The Diocese of Maryland shall be subject to the terms set forth in this Letter of Agreement.

1. The deacon accepts the following principles of the Church's 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. In the congregation all ministries are exercised under the oversight of the bishop of the diocese and under the immediate leadership and authority of the priest of the congregation.
  - 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 her members as servants.
  - d. The ministry of the deacon includes working collaboratively with other members of the Church (lay persons, bishops, and priests), providing servant leadership and support while seeking always to build up the Body of Christ.
2. The bishop hereby assigns \_\_\_\_\_ to serve in \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_ as a deacon, on a part-time, non-salaried basis, for the term of this Agreement. The priest of the congregation will exercise oversight with respect to the deacon's ministry in this setting.
3. The deacon shall serve society at large by: (attach description)
4. The deacon shall serve pastorally as follows: (attach description)
5. The deacon shall serve liturgically as follows:
  - a. The deacon shall perform the full and proper role of a deacon (as specified in the canons of The Episcopal Church and the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*) at the Eucharist on Sunday and in all major liturgies of the congregation's life. In the Eucharist the deacon shall proclaim the Gospel, wait at table (preparing and clearing), and dismiss the people. In addition, the deacon should normally bid the confession, and facilitate the prayers of the people, receive the offerings and distribute Communion where those functions are not normally assigned to others.
  - b. The deacon may at any time take the Eucharist, bread and wine, to the sick and infirm of the congregation, and may anoint the sick. The deacon may train and

- support Lay Eucharistic Visitors who carry the sacrament from the congregation on Sunday, if the priest and community support that ministry.
- c. The deacon shall assist in other liturgies, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and in inter-parochial or diocesan liturgies when called upon to do so by proper authority. The deacon may be celebrant at baptisms, weddings and funerals under designated diocesan guidelines. (See the Clergy Handbook)
6. The bishop hereby licenses the deacon to compose and preach liturgical homilies in this diocese, when properly invited to do so, but with the understanding that the priest is the ordinary preacher of the congregation. In services conducted by the deacon, the deacon is the ordinary preacher. It is understood that the deacon will be provided the opportunity to preach at least once a month at \_\_\_\_\_ Church.
  7. In liturgical service at \_\_\_\_\_ Church, the deacon may not function in roles proper to priests or other persons. Likewise, priests or other persons in the congregation should not normally exercise liturgical functions proper to the deacon nor wear vestments suggestive of the diaconate. The deacon may, when the service of a priest cannot be obtained, distribute Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament as outlined in page 408 of the *Book of Common Prayer* and amplified in the model issued to each deacon during formation and in the Clergy Handbook.
  8. The deacon's proper liturgical garments are a diaconal stole and dalmatic. The deacon may wear a clerical collar as the ministry requires. Titles and forms of address permitted the deacon are the word "Deacon," either as prefix or suffix, and/or the ascription "The Reverend." The deacon may place a small cross after his/her name when signing official church documents, signifying his/her status as ordained clergy.
  9. The bishop expects a non-salaried deacon in the Diocese of Maryland to serve approximately 6-10 hours per week including weekend worship and sermon preparation; this may include social, pastoral, and liturgical functions, with the understanding that this service shall not conflict with the deacon's professional employment, if any. A Deacon may volunteer for more hours but is not obligated to do so.
  10. The deacon shall be allowed the following periods of leave:
    - a. Four weeks vacation each year, not necessarily consecutively.
    - b. Two weeks for the development of diaconal ministry.
    - c. Sabbatical leave for continuing education, research, and reflection for six months after seven years of service.
    - d. Sick leave and inclement weather absence as required.
    - e. Such other leave as is required to develop and maintain self-support outside the assigned congregation, with adequate advance notice.

- 11. The deacon shall serve the congregation without cash stipend, housing, or housing allowance. The congregation shall reimburse the deacon for all conferences that the deacon is required to attend, such as Diocesan Convention, Clergy Conference, vestry retreats, etc. The congregation shall pay for expenses incurred by the deacon in service to the congregation, including mileage at the diocesan rate. The deacon may accept an honorarium for supply services according to the diocesan honoraria schedule when such services are performed in a worship setting other than his/her assignment.
- 12. The deacon is entitled to have seat and voice in the vestry/advisory board and will participate in the annual congregational meeting and other appropriate bodies if available.
- 13. When problems arise which affect the welfare and unity of the congregation, the deacon will bring them to the priest or senior warden and shall follow their counsel and advice, and then to the bishop as final arbiter, if unresolved.
- 14. At least once each month, the deacon shall meet with the rector/vicar to discuss the special ministries of the deacon.
- 15. The deacon shall annually review with the priest of the congregation his/her ministry over the past year including performance on the Letter of Agreement with the attachments required in paragraphs 3 and 4. The substance of this review is recorded in the deacon's Annual Report sent to the Archdeacon by August 31 each year.
- 16. If the intention is for the deacon to continue to minister within that congregation for the coming year, the deacon and priest should initiate a Continuing Letter of Agreement using the Annual Report as a basis for planning for the following year. They should send the Annual Report and the Continuing Letter of Agreement to the office of the Archdeacon by August 31 of each year.
- 17. Each congregation served by a deacon is expected to contribute annually to the Deacon Formation Program, to assist in the training of future deacons. The contribution shall be consistent with the following schedule:

Congregation's Annual Budget	Contribution to Deacon Formation
\$60,000 or less	\$250.00
\$61,000-120,000	\$500.00
\$121,000-200,000	\$750.00
\$200,000 and over	\$1,000.00

This payment is due each September at the commencement of the Letter of Agreement. The payment is payable to the Diocese of Maryland with Deacon Formation in the memo line and sent to the Archdeacon.

Congregation's annual budget: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation's annual contribution to Deacon Formation Program: \_\_\_\_\_

18. This agreement is automatically terminated if and when the deacon moves to another community, and it automatically expires every year on the anniversary date. This agreement is also terminated on the departure of the priest. It may be terminated at any time by any of the parties to this Agreement, subject to final approval of the bishop, provided that written notice of the intention to terminate the Agreement is given to the other parties at least 30 days prior to the proposed termination date.
19. In order for the deacon to serve in the congregation identified herein, the written consent of the priest, the deacon and the bishop are certified by signing this Agreement and any subsequent renewal.
20. The term of this agreement is from the date it is signed by the bishop until the following August 31.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Archdeacon: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Priest: \_\_\_\_\_

# Sample Letter of Agreement for Deacons Non-Parish Assignments

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ and the Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, under whom the deacon directly serves, agree that the deacon's exercise of the diaconate in The Diocese of Maryland shall be subject to the terms set forth in this Letter of Agreement.

1. The deacon accepts the following principles of the Church's 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. In a non-parochial assignment all ministries are exercised under the oversight of the bishop of the diocese and under the immediate leadership and authority of the person exercising oversight in the ministry.
  - 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 her members as servants.
2. The bishop hereby assigns Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ to serve at \_\_\_\_\_ (Ministry) on a part time, non-salaried basis, for the term of this Agreement. A person in a leadership position in this setting will exercise oversight with respect to the deacon's ministry.
3. The duties of the deacon in this ministry are as follows: (attach description)
4. The deacon shall serve on average \_\_\_\_\_ hours per week in this ministry for a term of no longer than one year, beginning on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In addition to serving in this non-parochial ministry, the bishop assigns the deacon to \_\_\_\_\_ Church, \_\_\_\_\_, as a "home base," where the deacon will function to the full extent of his/her Order at least one Sunday a month, and at other times as may be requested by the congregation and agreed to by the deacon. At \_\_\_\_\_ Church, the deacon shall serve liturgically as follows:
  - a. The deacon shall perform the full and proper role of a deacon as specified in the canons of The Episcopal Church and the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*.
  - b. The deacon may at any time take the Eucharist, bread and wine, to the sick and infirm of the congregation, and may anoint the sick.
  - c. The deacon may assist in other liturgies, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and in inter-parochial or diocesan liturgies when called upon to do so by proper authority. The deacon may be celebrant at baptisms, weddings

and funerals under designated Diocesan guidelines. (See the Clergy Handbook)

6. The bishop hereby licenses the deacon to compose and preach liturgical homilies in this diocese, when properly invited to do so. In services conducted by the deacon, the deacon is the ordinary preacher. It is understood that the deacon will be provided the opportunity to preach from time to time at \_\_\_\_\_ Church.
7. In liturgical service at \_\_\_\_\_ Church, the deacon may not function in roles proper to priests or other persons. Likewise, priests or other persons in the congregation should not normally exercise liturgical functions proper to the deacon nor wear vestments suggestive of the diaconate. The deacon may, when the service of a priest cannot be obtained, distribute Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament as outlined in page 408 of the *Book of Common Prayer* and amplified in the model issued to each deacon during formation and in the Clergy Handbook.
8. The deacon's proper liturgical garments are a diaconal stole and dalmatic. The deacon may wear a clerical collar as the ministry requires. Titles and forms of address permitted the deacon are the word "Deacon," either as prefix or suffix, and/or the ascription "The Reverend." The deacon may place a small cross after his/her name when signing official church documents, signifying his/her status as ordained clergy.
9. The deacon shall be allowed the following periods of leave:
  - a. Four weeks vacation each year, not necessarily consecutively.
  - b. Two weeks for the development of diaconal ministry.
  - c. Sabbatical leave for continuing education, research, and reflection for six months after seven years of service.
  - d. Sick leave and inclement weather absence as required.
  - e. Such other leave as is required to develop and maintain self-support outside the assigned ministry, with adequate advance notice.
10. The deacon shall serve the non-parochial ministry and the assigned congregation without cash stipend, housing, or housing allowance.
  - a. The non-parochial ministry agrees to reimburse the deacon for all expenses incurred by the deacon as part of his/her service to and for the ministry, including mileage at the diocesan rate and meetings that the deacon is requested to attend by or on behalf of the ministry.
  - b. The congregation agrees to reimburse the deacon for all expenses incurred by the deacon as part of his/her service to and for the congregation, including mileage at the diocesan rate and meetings that the deacon is requested to attend by or on behalf of the congregation.
  - c. Notwithstanding the requirements of sub-paragraphs 10a and b above, in cases of financial hardship, the non-parochial ministry and/or the home congregation may apply to the bishop for a reduction of the

reimbursable expenses outlined in paragraph 10 and the expected contribution in paragraph 14.

- d. Upon request, the diocese agrees to reimburse the deacon for expenses incurred for attendance at Diocesan Convention and Clergy Conference.
- e. The deacon may accept an honorarium for supply services according to the diocesan honoraria schedule when such services are performed in a worship setting other than his/her assignment.

- 11. At least once each month, the deacon shall meet with the person exercising oversight in this ministry to discuss the special ministries of the deacon.
- 12. At least annually, the deacon shall confer with the person exercising oversight concerning his/her ministry over the past year including performance on the Letter of Agreement with duties required in paragraph 3. The substance of this review is recorded in the deacon's Annual Report sent to the Archdeacon by August 31 each year.
- 13. If the intention is for the deacon to continue to serve within that non-parochial ministry for the coming year, the deacon and person exercising oversight should initiate a Continuing Letter of Agreement using the Annual Report as a basis for planning for the following year. The Continuing Letter of Agreement will be sent to the office of the Archdeacon, prior to the expiration of the original Letter of Agreement.
- 14. The "home base" congregation is expected, as it is able, to contribute annually to the Deacon Formation Program, to assist in the training of future deacons. The contribution should be consistent with the following schedule:

Congregation's Annual Budget	Contribution to Deacon Formation
\$60,000 or less	\$125.00
\$61,000-120,000	\$250.00
\$121,000-200,000	\$375.00
\$200,000 and over	\$500.00

This payment is due at the start of the period of Agreement. The payment is payable to the Diocese of Maryland with Deacon Formation in the memo line and sent to the Archdeacon.

- 15. The non-parochial ministry is requested to contribute to the Deacon Formation Program as it is able.
- 16. This agreement is automatically terminated if and when the deacon moves to another community, and it automatically expires every year on the anniversary date. It may be terminated at any time by any of the parties to this Agreement, subject to final approval of the bishop, provided that written notice of the intention to

terminate the Agreement is given to the other parties at least 30 days prior to the proposed termination date.

17. In order for the deacon to serve in the ministry identified herein and at the assigned “home base” congregation identified herein, the written consent of the persons exercising oversight at the ministry and the “home base” congregation, the deacon, and the bishop is certified by signing this Agreement and any subsequent renewal.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Ministry)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person exercising oversight: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Church

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Priest: \_\_\_\_\_

# Sample Continuing Letter of Agreement for Deacons Parish and Non-Parish Assignments

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ and the Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, under whom the deacon directly serves, agree that the deacon's exercise of the diaconate in the Diocese of Maryland shall continue to be subject to the terms set forth in the original Letter of Agreement dated \_\_\_\_\_. The bishop hereby approves that Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ shall continue to serve at \_\_\_\_\_ (*congregation*) and/or \_\_\_\_\_ (*other ministry*) as deacon, on a part-time, non-salaried basis for the term of this Continuing Agreement.

Update attachments required in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the original agreement. List here any changes or additions to the original Letter of Agreement:

The term of the Continuing Agreement is from the date it is signed by the bishop until the following August 31, or alternatively, from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Signatures:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ Church

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Priest: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation's annual contribution to Deacon Formation Program (payable at start of agreement): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**If a non-parochial assignment:**

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Ministry)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Person exercising oversight: \_\_\_\_\_

# Diocese of Maryland

## Liturgy to Celebrate a New Ministry for a Deacon

### Concerning the Service

*The new deacon will perform all diaconal liturgical duties in this service. It is appropriate to plan the celebration of new ministry with the deacon participating in the choice of readings, hymns, and the selection of gifts for ministry.*

*The Welcome Rite immediately follows the Collect of the Day.*

*After the presentation of gifts, the liturgy continues with the readings for the day, with the deacon proclaiming the Gospel.*

*The Litany for New Ministry replaces the Prayers of the People.*

*Normally the Collect and Lectionary Readings assigned for the Sunday of the service are used. If not, you may choose from the following*

### Alternative Collects – BCP 256

*For those to be ordained*

Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, in your divine providence you have appointed various orders in your Church: Give your grace, we humbly pray, to all who are [now] called to any office and ministry for your people; and so fill them with the truth of your doctrine and clothe them with holiness of life, that they may faithfully serve before you, to the glory of your great Name and for the benefit of your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

*For all Christians in their vocation*

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers, which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

### Alternative Readings

#### Jeremiah 1:4-9

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' But the Lord said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to

deliver you, says the Lord.' Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth.

### **Psalm 84**

### **Psalm 119:33-40**

### **Psalm 139:1-17**

### **Acts 6:2-7**

And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait at tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.' What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

### **Luke 22:24-27**

A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

### **John 13:1-15**

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

## Order of Service

### Opening Acclamation

### Song of Praise

### Collect

### Welcome Rite

*The people are seated. The Rector and Wardens, stand before the Archdeacon (or diocesan representative) and the new deacon, and say*

[Archdeacon Name], we have come together today to welcome [Deacon Name] who has been chosen to serve as Deacon in the Church.

*The Archdeacon explains to the congregation about the ministry of the deacon and reads the letter of assignment.*

*Archdeacon* [Deacon Name], do you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?

*Deacon* I do.

*Archdeacon* People of [Church Name], do you accept [Deacon Name] to serve as deacon among you?

*People* **We accept and welcome *him/her*.**

*Archdeacon* Will you serve with [Deacon Name] in the mission to which Christ has called you?

*People* **We will, with God's help.**

### Presentation of Gifts for Ministry

*The Rector and selected others then present the deacon with symbols of ministry. The symbols should be visible to the congregation and after presentation placed in a prominent location. Appropriate gifts include: Gospel Book, stole, bread and wine, oil for anointing the sick, Book of Common Prayer, Readings for Daily Office, keys, church directory... use your imagination.*

*Presenter* [Deacon Name], accept this Gospel Book and teach our congregation to share the Good News.

*Presenter* [Deacon Name], accept this Communion Kit and take the sacrament to the sick, the lonely and the homebound.

*Presenter* [Deacon Name], accept this (blank) to communicate to our church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.

*Presenter* [Deacon Name], accept this (blank) as representative of this church's commitment to lead us in (blank) ministry.

*Others may be added as to identify the ministries particular to the congregation.  
At the conclusion of the gift giving the Archdeacon says*

*Archdeacon* [Deacon Name], let all these be signs of the ministry belonging to the congregation, the Bishop, and to you. Let us pray.

Heavenly God, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, we may minister in Christ's name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy. We pray in the love of the One who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

## **Readings**

### **Gospel**

### **Sermon**

### **Nicene Creed (or Renewal of Baptismal Covenant)**

### **Litany for New Ministry**

*A lay leader (or leaders) from the parish leads the following litany. The people kneel or stand according to local custom and season. The new deacon stands or kneels at a suitable place in front of the congregation during the litany.*

*Leader* Let us pray for our ministry in Christ's name and for [Deacon Name], our deacon saying, Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

*Silence is held after each petition.*

We praise you, O God, for the creation of all things through your Word, Jesus Christ. You entrusted your world and all its creatures to us that we might be faithful stewards. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

To save us from ourselves, and the chaos and sin we brought about, you came among us in your Son Jesus. You called us to love and serve one another as he loved and served us. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

We thank you for this community in which we minister, and we remember those who are in need of our prayers (especially...). Despite the sickness and brokenness around us, give us the courage to see and work toward your new creation in everything we encounter. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

We pray for those who have completed their ministry on earth [especially - insert names] that they may rejoice with you in eternity. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

We pray for those who still minister in this life, that we may be sustained in our work. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

We bless you for raising up in many places ministers of Word and Sacrament. We welcome [Deacon Name] to this parish community, to be a deacon among us. May he/she be a faithful herald of the Gospel and help us to see and minister to the needs of the world. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

Give us the hearts and minds and hands to be faithful stewards of this household of faith and your creation. Bless our work together in [name ministries of the congregation] that our fruitfulness will signify not our accomplishments, but your glory. Lord of love, **Renew us in your service.**

May the servant Christ be our guide and companion in the days to come. **Amen.**

*Deacon*

O Lord my God, you have called your servant to serve at your altar. I humbly devote myself in body, soul, and spirit to being a faithful servant to your church. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of this ministry. Help me model servant ministry and draw others to serve beside me. Assist me in continually calling your church to look outside her walls to attend to the needs of the community around us. All this I ask for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*Archdeacon* Greet your Deacon!

*The people may express their approval. The service continues with the peace and offertory. The newly welcomed deacon joins the celebrant and Archdeacon at the altar.*

**The Peace**

# Diocese of Maryland

## Liturgy to Conclude a Deacon's Service

*After the post communion prayer the deacon, altar party, and wardens move to the front of the congregation. The congregation is seated.*

*Deacon*

Deacons are placed in various ministries for a period of time to serve the needs of the Diocese under the bishop. In [Date Assignment Began] I was assigned by [Bishop Name] to [Parish Name], in the Diocese of Maryland. With God's help and to the best of my abilities, I have exercised my diaconal responsibilities and privileges here as you have entrusted them to me. After much prayer and careful consideration [Bishop Name] has discerned that it is time for me to serve in another ministry setting; therefore my service as deacon among you ends this day, [Date].

*Presider*

Do you the people of [Parish Name] recognize and accept the conclusion of this ministry relationship? **We do.**

*Deacon presents the warden(s) a letter of resignation, the Gospel book, the keys to the parish, and any other symbols of ministry that have been given.*

I present to you this letter of resignation signifying the end of this ministry relationship.  
*Warden* I receive your letter.

I present to you this Gospel book that represents one of my primary roles as the deacon – to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and call the people forth to do his work.  
*Warden* I receive this Gospel book

I present to you the keys of this parish that were given to me in trust that the doors would remain open to all people.  
*Warden* I receive these keys.

### **Prayer of Leaving**

*The congregation stands (as able).*

*Deacon*

Lord, we have been bound together for a time as deacon and people to work for the advancement of your kingdom in this place. We give you humble and hearty thanks for the ministry which we have shared these years now past.

**People: Be with those who leave and with those who stay.**

We thank you for your never-failing presence with us through these past years and for the deeper knowledge of you and of each other which we have attained.

**Be with those who leave and with those who stay.**

We thank you for those who have been joined to Christ's family through baptism. We thank you for opening our hearts and minds again and again to your Word and for feeding us abundantly with the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of your Son.

**Be with those who leave and with those who stay.**

## **Concluding Collect**

*Rector (or priest-in-charge)*

O God, our loving Creator, whose glory fills the whole world, and whose presence we find wherever we go. Preserve and guide [Deacon Name] who is leaving this community. Surround *her* with your loving care; protect *her* from every danger; and bring *her* safely to the journey's end. We give thanks for *her* time with us and for all the ways *she* has supported this community. Bless *her* steps in this time of transition and remind *her* again and again of your presence and love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Rector*

Please express your appreciation for [Deacon Name] and *her* ministry with your applause.

## **Blessing**

*The presider offers a blessing and the people respond. Amen.*

## **Dismissal**

*Departing deacon offers the dismissal after the concluding hymn.*



**For information about**  
The Diaconate in the Diocese of Maryland  
Please contact:  
[Archdeacon@episcopalmaryland.org](mailto:Archdeacon@episcopalmaryland.org)