

**Diaconate Working Group
June 2009**

Deacon's Parish Covenant Template

Within the Anglican Church, the office of deacon is one of servanthood (diakonia), which demonstrates Jesus' model of compassionate servant-leadership; which characterizes a significant part of the ministry of the whole people of God; and which features, among other things, education, which provides Christian formation and nurture and advocacy, which invites the Body of Christ to exercise and call for justice and generosity on behalf of the voiceless and the marginalized in society. As well, the deacon may be called to exercise his/her gifts in the areas of leadership in Worship, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, and Administration as required or expected in some parishes.

The Diaconate is one of the historic threefold orders of ministry for which a person is called to a lifelong, specialized ministry in the church and in the world. The Deacon is appointed by the Bishop and functions as an agent of the Bishop in a covenant relationship with the Parish Incumbent and the Parish. This covenant is subject to the approval of the Bishop.

The primary function of a Deacon is to undertake ministry in and to the world, and to interpret the needs of the world to the Church. As Deacons themselves vary in their qualifications, life experience, education, interests and involvement in and of the world, and in the Church, as well as in their particular calling, so can and will their ministry vary with each individual's calling to diaconal service.

Liturgy

The four duties of a deacon in worship according to the BAS and the BCP are:-

- Read the Gospel
- Lead intercessions
- Set the table before Eucharist, and complete the ablutions following Eucharist
- Dismiss the community at the conclusion of the service

In any given setting a Deacon may or may not carry out all or some of these duties. Parishes may vary in their needs and in what the Incumbent may or may not approve. Duties may include preaching, prayer ministry, Christian education, leading, and/or assisting at particular worship services, anointing ministry, along with many other possibilities.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral duties will vary according to the parish's needs, and the deacon's gifts and calling. Responsibilities may include:

- Visiting shut-ins at home
- Leading and assisting in nursing home worship services
- Visiting parishioners in hospital

- Organizing parishioners to be involved in pastoral visiting
- Carrying out home or hospital communions with reserve sacrament

Community Outreach

Deacons are called to be involved in, and spokespersons for, ministry to and within the world. They may undertake (for example):

- Ministry to specialized needs of various groups - e.g. ethnic groups, Aboriginal and Métis, the poor, and the marginalized
- Involvement in environmental concerns
- Involvement in advocacy work - local, national, and international
- Addressing community needs

Other Possible Duties

Deacons are often expected to assist the parish in administrative duties, which may include the following:

- Involvement in administration - e.g. writing reports for Vestry and AGM, or writing articles for the Parish Newspaper, and the Rupert's Land News
- Helping in building maintenance in the Parish
- Preaching
- Making schedules
- Attending Vestry meetings/Writing a report for Vestry
- Leading Bible or book studies
- Leading in marriage prep, baptismal prep, and confirmation prep
- Acting as a Mentor
- Becoming involved in Diocesan groups
- Attending Clergy conference, Synod, Faith Horizons, NOD, and Bishop's days

Parish Responsibility to the Deacon

The parish also has responsibilities regarding the deacon in its midst. Duties include:

- Providing a support team with which the deacon meets regularly
- Providing salary or compensation, travel allowance
- Providing for regularly-scheduled meetings with the Incumbent
- Providing adequate work space
- Providing funding for the Deacon to attend Clergy gatherings, Synod, Faith Horizons, and the Clergy Live-In

Holidays/Time Away/Days Off

The deacon needs to have time for refreshment and renewal.

- Negotiations should be made with the Parish for holiday time - e.g. 4 weeks off during the summer, or at another time of the year, and days off throughout the year to provide a break, or other possible times for family involvement or family concerns, or educational events. As well, the Deacon may request a sizable time away for particular needs; e.g., for sabbatical leave, educational leave, sick leave, or time away due to an unexpected event in the life of the Deacon.

- In each parish there will be individual decisions made according to the available time of the Deacon, the needs of the parish, and a common agreement arrived at by both the Deacon and parish.

Hours of Work

The deacon can be expected to provide the parish with about 6-10 hours per week, including travel time, subject to negotiation with the parish. Many deacons earn their living outside the parish, and do additional volunteer ministry in the parish or in the world. Depending on their circumstances, some deacons can give considerably more time to the parish than is noted here.

The Deacon's Parish Covenant should be a fluid document, which can change at any time according to changes occurring in the life of the Deacon or the needs and events of the Parish. The document should be revisited at regular intervals to make adjustments that are in accord and agreed upon by both parties.

Signatures/Date: Incumbent and Deacon