

Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan Clergy Covenant

Basis of the Covenant: The BCP Ordination Vows

My sister/brother, do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to this priesthood?

Answer I believe I am so called.

Do you now in the presence of the Church commit yourself to this trust and responsibility?

Answer I do.

VOWS OF OBEDIENCE — THE DISCIPLINES OF WORK

Will you respect and be guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of your bishop?

Will you endeavor so to minister the Word of God and the sacraments of the New Covenant, that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received?

- I. Strive for healthy work-life balance—Attentive to hours articulated in one's Covenant agreement. Full-time clergy reserve two days for personal and family time. Part-time clergy keep comparable boundary.
- II. Participate in diocesan life—Deanery Convocation, Pre-Convention meetings, and Annual Convention. Willing to serve in one role in community ministry outside the church and one role on a diocesan commission or council.
- III. Care of personal and work relationships—Intentional setting aside time weekly for hobbies, play, relaxation. Financially responsible, exercising caution with regard to debt

VOWS OF STABILITY — THE DISCIPLINES OF STUDY

Will you be diligent in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ?

Will you undertake to be a faithful pastor to all whom you are called to serve, laboring together with them and with your fellow ministers to build up the family of God?

- I. Ongoing continuing education in area of interest
- II. Participate in monthly clergy council and Bible study
- III. Attend various retreats and clergy days

VOWS OF CONVERSION — THE DISCIPLINES OF PRAYER

Will you do your best to pattern your life [and that of your family, or household, or community] in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may be a wholesome example to your people?

Will you persevere in prayer, both in public and in private, asking God's grace, both for yourself and for others, offering all your labors to God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit?

- I. Three fold prayer—Aware and responding to God in our Lives:
 - a. God: Attentive to Christ's presence in Eucharist and God's presence in all things.
 - b. Self: Engaging in personal prayer in other areas of one's life
 - c. Others: Faithful to the Office in our own lives through regular engagement with at least one of the four offerings, also inviting our people to the broad opportunities to share in this disciplined daily prayer of the Church.
- II. Spiritual Growth — Seeking to be more fully conformed to the mind of Christ
 - a. Practice vulnerability: Regular use of a form of spiritual direction or counsel. Entering into the Sacrament of Reconciliation when needed. Always being quick to forgive and to admit own guilt.
 - b. Care of body: Attentive to health through diet, exercise, moderate use of alcohol or tobacco, abstinence from illegal drugs or the misuse of legal drugs. In recovery from any addictions.
 - c. Embrace a chaste intimacy: Celebrate the grace of healthy sexuality through committed relationships and the gift of celibacy for those so called. Reject all forms of false or damaging intimacy (whether married or single), including abuse and pornography—human trafficking and the objectification of others are antithetical to our baptismal and ordination vows.

The Bishop and clergy commit to this shared covenant—in particular, the Bishop will support his priests and deacons as they seek to live into this Covenant, bringing the resources of the Episcopal Office to bear that we might have a rich and healthy life as the clergy of Western Michigan. When any of us, whether bishop, priest, or deacon, feel we are not being supported in this Covenant, we will go directly to the person with whom we are struggling and seek to call that person back to this Covenant. Any such conversation will be honored.