



The EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
of **WESTERN MICHIGAN**

Customary for Deacons

5th Edition

Updated 2019

Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan
The Rt. Rev. Wayne Hougland, 9th Bishop

From the Bishop

Dear People of God,

In June of 2014, in the second year of my consecration, my colleague from Nevada, Bishop Dan Edwards, wrote about the modern diaconate coming of age. In that essay, he wrote,

The rebirth of the diaconate has restored balance to the Church. The Church is a spiritual body and “spirit” means breath. The Church breathes in and breathes out. The in-breath draws the people together for prayer, worship, fellowship, pastoral support, and spiritual companionship. The out-breath “sends us out into the world to do the work [God has] given us to do” – acts of mercy and advocacy for justice. The priest is ordained to lead the in-breath. The deacon is ordained to lead the out-breath. To be healthy, we need both.

During my first Convention Address, I called for a deacon to be raised up in every parish as a catalyst for mission. When I said “as a catalyst for mission,” I did so because I truly believe that a revival of the diaconate involves our own willingness to change how we call, form, and deploy deacons in Christian ministry. This is essential if we are going to catalyze the people of God for mission in new and faithful ways.

Along those lines, I have sought to lead our diocese in raising up and training deacons who will not just do servant ministry. Rather, a fully vibrant deacon is one who leads the People of God out in servant ministry. To quote my colleague from Nevada once more, “Fundamentally, the deacon’s job is not to do the ministry but rather to get someone else to do it. By doing the job herself, the deacon deprives the layperson of the blessing. Better to enlist, train, and guide people in service.” The modern image I often use when describing a revived diaconate is Christians who are trained as community organizers.

Since sharing that dream for a revived diaconate, you, the People of God in Western Michigan, have responded with enthusiasm. The Commission on Ministry created a new process for raising up and forming people to diaconal ministry. Our Diocesan Council has affirmed this as essential to our evolving vision for the Diocese of Western Michigan. Our current deacons have worked with me as we all try to figure out how this

ministry can be more effective and faithful, one that truly can be a catalyst for mission in every single parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. And, this sixth revision of our diaconal customary represents the 2 fruit of the work of many people to describe the best way in which deacons can function as catalysts for mission in our diocese.

This customary does not exist to serve as a straightjacket to the Holy Spirit or as a selection of walls to keep people or ministries “in check.” Indeed, no truly Christian customary has that as its prime focus or function. Rather, this Customary affirms that the power of the Holy Spirit, through the hands of the Apostles, is indeed alive and active in diaconal ministry. Thus, we, as a community, must know how best to serve as a channel or conduit to that power so that Christ’s ministry of reconciliation to our broken world can be more fully realized in our times.

That said, it is my expectation as your bishop that our deacons will follow the norms and expectations in this customary. Just as important is my expectation that the priests of this diocese, particularly those who have deacons serving or postulants to the diaconate in formation, will be familiar with this customary and the shape of diaconal ministry as it is best practiced in Western Michigan. Lay leaders in the diocese will also find it helpful to familiarize themselves with what is contained herein.

I have great hope for the good work a revived diaconate can do as we seek to spread the kingdom of God in Western Michigan. I ask you to join me in praying for our deacons who currently serve, those who are in formation for this ministry, those currently discerning a call and those baptized Christians sitting in pews throughout Western Michigan to whom the Holy Spirit is speaking. May the call for the diaconate be heard and heeded.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "The Rt. Rev. Wayne Hougland, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Rt. Rev. Wayne Hougland, Jr. D.D.
IX Bishop of Western Michigan

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Vision for the Diaconate

“My *brother/sister*, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. 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 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.

“My *brother/sister*, do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to the life and work of a deacon?”

– “Examination at the Ordination of a Deacon”
1979 Book of Common Prayer, page 543

“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

The Life and Ministry of a Deacon

“The Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy [hereafter known as the “presbyter”] 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.”

– Title III, Canon 7.4, *Constitution & Canons of The Episcopal Church*
(2012)

Deployment

Prior to assignment, the presbyter shall have a conversation with the archdeacon of the diocese, demonstrating the presbyter’s understanding of the guidelines in this customary, the expectation of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the Canons of the Diocese and larger Church. The archdeacon shall then notify the bishop in writing, with a copy sent to the presbyter, that the presbyter is adequately prepared to work in ministry with a deacon.

Upon ordination to the diaconate, a deacon may serve in the congregation that raised up the deacon for ordination, with the understanding that a deacon’s ordination is never local, but always for the whole church. Thus, a deacon’s sense of ministry should not be constrained to one parochial context. In general practice, the Bishop will assign the deacon to the parish wherein she or he was raised up, in a parish within the deanery where the deacon lives, or in some similar geographical vicinity, generally no more than a 30 minute drive in one direction.

The bishop may re-assign a deacon, or the deacon may request reassignment, at any time after the second year with a congregation. The gifts, talents, and experience of a deacon will be considered in deployment decisions, as well as the ministry needs of the diocese.

The deacon shall have a written covenant agreement with the congregation signed by the deacon, presbyter, vestry and bishop. This agreement is renewed every two years, or with each new assignment. The contents of the agreement will follow the outline provided by the bishop’s office. (See Appendix A)

Role in the Parish

What follows below includes many notes on liturgical and parochial functions of the deacon. It must be stressed, however, that a Deacon's ministry is most fundamentally as the Deacon leads the Baptized out into the world—the vast majority of a deacon's work is outside the walls of the Parish. The roles undertaken in the Parish and in the Liturgy are intended as symbols of that more fundamental ministry to which a Deacon is called.

Leadership In accordance with Episcopal Church Canon III.4.(c), in those congregations where there are lay people serving in Eucharistic Ministry (Eucharistic Ministers and Eucharistic Visitors), these ministries would normally be under the direction of the deacon of the congregation.

In the Diocese of Western Michigan, the sacramental rites of the church are appropriately administered by a priest. Therefore, Baptism, Eucharist, Marriage, Confession and Unction are to be administered by the priest with the deacon assisting. Exceptions may be made in certain circumstances only with the permission of the bishop. [For example: if a deacon is asked to officiate at a wedding or baptism, she/he must first notify the Bishop of this request before agreeing to the request.]

The often-called “Deacon's Mass,” actually the service of Communion from the Reserved Sacrament with the Deacon officiating, is intended in the prayer book only for use in extraordinary circumstances. In this diocese, any such liturgy must be approved in advance by the Bishop. Requests for a “Deacon's Mass” shall be directed to the Bishop and never to the deacon. The Bishop will give his decision on the request to the person who requested the liturgy and the deacon. Such approval will be rare.

Liturgy It is assumed that all clergy will be knowledgeable in and observant of the Canons of the Church. It is expected that the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and the Canons will guide the liturgical functioning of the deacon. The presbyter will neither ask the deacon to function in ways prohibited by the Prayer Book rubrics and Canons, nor deprive the deacon of those roles which are preferred to the order. In particular, in a Eucharistic liturgy, the rubrics are very clear that when a deacon is serving, she or he shall:

- Shall read the Gospel (BCP 354).
- Shall bid the People to Confession and begin its recitation (BCP 360).
- May lead the Prayers of the People (BCP 354), usually introducing the Prayers if a lay person leads them.

- Shall prepare the altar and place the offerings upon it (BCP 354), and may be assisted by other ministers (BCP 407).
- Shall assist in the ministration of the Sacrament. (BCP 354).
- Shall pronounce the dismissal. (BCP 366)

When a supply priest is called to provide a service such as a funeral, and a deacon has been pastor to the deceased and/or the family, it is especially appropriate for the deacon to participate in the service.

Likewise, it is expected that Deacons will be properly trained and aware of the rubrics of the Prayer Book, particularly as they pertain to diaconal ministry. For example, deacons should take note that the “alleluia” is only appended to the dismissal during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. Deacons do not pronounce God’s blessing. Deacons with a “gift for healing” may be invited to serve at a healing station. When properly invited, the Deacon may preach, but with the understanding that the rector/vicar is the ordinary preacher of the parish. It is appropriate for the deacon to preach on Maundy Thursday and other feast days or occasions related to servant ministry.

For more detail on the liturgical functioning of deacons and lay persons, see the rubrics of the *1979 Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons of the Church*.

Service Fundamental to the calling of a deacon is the calling and empowering the laity to service in the world. The calling is not the service ministry in which the deacon engages as a Christian. Deacons appropriately work with the outreach committee, and/or social justice ministries within the parish. They do not necessarily chair these committees, but support the laity in their call as baptized Christians in the world both locally and globally. The work of the deacon does not generally include other committees or commissions within a congregation.

Clothing

Clericals The practice of wearing clerical clothing is one that, at its base, simply reflects conservatism in clothing choices. After all, every aspect of clerical garb has its basis in fashions unassociated with being ordained. In the revival of the diaconate in the Roman tradition, deacons were restricted from wearing clerical attire in the hope of distinguishing them from presbyters. However, with the deacons functioning as a full and equal order alongside presbyters and bishops in The Episcopal Church, clerical clothing

is one way of symbolizing that unity as each of these three orders live a vowed life. Thus, similar to the practice of most ordained clergy, clerical clothing should be worn whenever serving in one's order, whether in the church or in the world. Marks to distinguish deacons from other clergy (such as the "insignia of the Order of Deacons") are unnecessary innovations. Simply engaging in conversation with others can clarify that one is a deacon and not a priest.

Choir Dress There are two general approaches to clerical vesture when one is "in choir" (that is, at a non-Eucharistic liturgy or attending "in choir," but not serving in a Eucharistic liturgy).

- The "English Use" approach, typified by Percy Dearmer, expresses a preference for traditional choir dress of cassock, surplice, and tippet for ordained persons in choir on all occasions.
- The "Roman Use" approach, typified by *Ritual Notes*, changes a tippet for a stole at any occasions where a sacrament is a part of the liturgical occasion (for example, at the celebration of a new ministry or an ordination). This approach also will often have a cassock and surplice with no tippet or stole worn when attending a Eucharistic liturgy "in choir." At times, some following this use will use an alb instead of a cassock & surplice, even when attending in choir.

The question of prevailing approach will depend upon either the custom of the parish (usually articulated by the Rector) or the custom of the diocesan liturgy (usually articulated by the Bishop). In many settings, a Master of Ceremonies can also clarify the expectations. Deacons should enquire in advance as to what custom vesture is appropriate on these occasions or, if an invitation is sent out, should simply heed the advice on the invitation. Many like to adorn the bottom of their tippet with certain insignia, but this is certainly not required as a simple black scarf is the preference of many liturgical scholars.

Eucharistic vestments When serving in a Eucharistic liturgy as a deacon, the proper vesture is generally an alb and stole. If a dalmatic is also worn, it should be keeping with the vestments worn by others. If one does not have a "deacon's stole," complete with clasp, then the rope cincture should be tied with the loops on the right hip, enabling almost any stole simply to be placed on the left shoulder and then be crossed through those loops. If not wearing a

cincture (for example, if in choir dress with the wearing of a stole requested or customary), a regular stole can sometimes simply be tied at the hip.

Rites of Passage

A “Celebration of New Ministry” or other institution with the congregation is appropriate, during a regular worship service, upon a new assignment. Likewise, a leave-taking liturgy is appropriate when a deacon leaves the congregation for reassignment, retirement, or other reasons.

Terms of Stay in a Congregation

When the presbyter resigns or otherwise leaves the cure, the questions of continuing diaconal service should be carefully considered, given the local community’s context. Upon learning of a presbyter’s decision to leave, the deacon shall immediately schedule a conversation with the bishop to determine the best plan for the deacon and the community of faith. In general, a best practice will involve a time apart from the congregation, during which the deacon might either serve in a different parish or might take a time of sabbatical from diaconal ministry.

Diocesan Functions

It is expected that all persons planning diocesan functions and liturgical events will include deacons, providing for appropriate participation according to the order. In particular, deacons will be informed about, and are expected to attend, the annual diocesan convention, and are encouraged to attend diocesan clergy conferences and deanery meetings. If a deacon is not employed full time, it is expected that he/she will attend the monthly Bible Study with the bishop. Deacons will have voice and vote in these meetings according to canon. All deacons canonically resident or licensed in the diocese shall be included in all general diocesan mailings to the clergy.

The Community of Deacons & Deacons’ Council

All deacons canonically resident in the diocese (except those retired or living out of state) constitute a Community of Deacons, which will meet from time to time (see: Title III, Canon 7.2 & 7.3) All are eligible for participation in the Council, which will be called together by the archdeacon and attended by all available deacons. The Council should speak for the deacons of the diocese. It should also arrange for and hold an annual conference for deacons, and all active deacons are expected to attend that conference.

Finances

The deacon shall normally serve the congregation or ministry to which he/she is assigned for a maximum of eight to ten hours per week without stipend, or other compensation. The Diocese is currently in a state of discernment regarding this question, however. If our Diocesan community determines a stipend should be given to those serving in the diaconate, that stipend will likely be modest and will be paid from the Diocesan budget.

It is expected that the deacon will be reimbursed by the parish or ministry for expenses related to his/her service, including reimbursement for mileage for all travel, with the exception of regularly scheduled worship services at the parish (reimbursement shall occur at the IRS rate for employees), expenses of attending diocesan convention, and the annual deacons' conference. All questions of reimbursement should be specifically addressed in the deacon's agreement. The congregation shall also provide some funding for continuing education for the deacon (books, video rental, courses, the NAAD convention, etc.), at an amount to be jointly agreed upon in advance by the deacon, bishop, and presbyter.

When a deacon undertakes a non-parochial assignment for the diocese, 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. A line item in the diocesan budget will be provided to ensure adequate reimbursement of expenses (including mileage) and funding for continuing education for all diocesan deacons serving in non-parochial assignments. In general, the funds in this line item shall not be for deacons who are currently without an assignment, nor for deacons serving in a parochial context, unless the bishop indicates otherwise in advance. Furthermore, deacons in non-parochial assignments shall still be assigned a parish community in which to worship. Their participation in that parish community shall be determined in advance through a conversation between the deacon, rector/vicar, and bishop.

As deacons serve local communities but do so as members of the diocesan community of deacons, questions of stewardship can be difficult. Prayerful attention should be paid to where one pledges. Appropriate options do include the Diaconal Formation Fund of the diocese, the local community where one serves, or other ministries for which the deacon may have passion.

Rule of Life

It is expected that the deacon will maintain a disciplined prayer life, have and consult a trained spiritual director approved by the Bishop, and follow a regular program of study. Trained spiritual directors are those individuals who have undergone a course of study to be a spiritual director, and they themselves are ‘in direction.’

Continuing Education

A plan of continuing education should be prepared annually and discussed with the bishop (see Appendix A). All active deacons shall complete eight hours of continuing education per year (or sixteen every two years) in addition to the Deacons’ Conference. Topics chosen should either improve skills and vision for the deacon’s current ministry or prepare the deacon for a new ministry of justice. It is important at the beginning of each year to know the general areas of study anticipated, but not the particulars of time or place. Personal experiences may be used in some cases.

Continuing education is to be completed in community, not in isolation. Suggested are short-term classes or seminars sponsored by hospitals, civic organizations, and educational institutions, as well as religious organizations (houses of faith, denominational entities) at the state, national or international level.

Retirement

Pursuant to Title III Canon 7.7 – See Appendix B

A deacon may retire from active service for reasons of age or infirmity with the consent of the bishop at any time and shall retire for reasons of age or infirmity at the request of the bishop. The canons of the church require that a deacon resign from all active positions of the church upon reaching the age of seventy-two.

The bishop may, with the consent of the deacon, assign a retired deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or non-parochial ministry, for a period not to exceed twelve months. This period may be renewed.

Agreements

Leave: The deacon should take the following periods of leave:

- One calendar month vacation each year, or four weeks.
- Three-month sabbatical of rest for refreshment outside the present diaconal assignment every five to seven years, with the bishop's approval.

Leave of Absence: A leave of absence from ministry may be taken after a conversation with the bishop and rector of the congregation. At that time the length of the leave will be determined, with appropriate check-in points.

Reports: The deacon shall provide a written annual report to the bishop if he/she has not met with the bishop during the year. Deacons functioning in a congregation shall give a written report to the presbyter of the parish. Those deacons on leave or otherwise not actively deployed shall write the bishop an annual letter describing their activities, spiritual life, connection with church, etc. Retired deacons are not required to provide annual reports/letters.

If problems arise which affect the life of the congregation, and/or the ministry of presbyter or deacon, the deacon shall discuss them first with the presbyter who is his/her supervisor and follow his/her counsel and advice. In case of disagreement, the deacon, with the knowledge of the presbyter, shall inform the bishop in writing, with copies to the presbyter and the archdeacon. The bishop shall accept the responsibility for resolution. The quality of supervision and the adequacy of interpersonal communication shall be considered in working towards resolution.

To the Presbyter: It is expected that the deacon serving your parish, will be given responsibilities, liturgical and otherwise, appropriate to the order. The presbyter (or other supervisor) and appropriate members of the congregation will prepare an annual evaluation of the work of the deacon, and after reviewing and discussing it with him/her, send a copy to the bishop. The contents of the evaluation shall be considered when continuing education decisions are made.

Discerning a Call to the Diaconate

Through their ordination vows, deacons place themselves under orders to follow Jesus and to be obedient to the bishop, who gives them the mandate to encourage, support, and develop servant ministry in this diocese.

Three Aspects of Call

A deacon has the ability to articulate the proclamation of servant in the Gospel and has leadership skills and the willingness to lead others into servant ministry. Deacons are not simply those who exercise servant ministry as baptized Christians. Rather, deacons are those who call and empower the laity to exercise servant ministry.

A deacon has the courage to be a prophetic voice to the Church concerning the needs of the powerless and voiceless in the community. She or he has the mental ability and competence for ordained ministry, and understands that the diaconate is a life-long discernment of ministry. This process involves continuous prayer, openness to change, willingness to study, and the active quest for personal growth.

The diaconate is a distinct order and is not a stepping-stone to the priesthood. Likewise, the diaconate is not to be seen as a reward for faithful service as a Reader, Eucharistic Ministers, Warden or member of the Vestry. Nor is it to be seen as a reward for a pre-existing servant ministry. The individual aspiring to the Sacred Order of Deacons must clearly articulate and demonstrate that he or she is called to the order of ministry which is integral to the church leading the laity into lives of servant ministry, *diakonia*.

Signs of Call

FIRST, a person identified with having a vocation to the diaconate would be recognized by him/herself and by the Church as meeting three fundamental requirements:

- 1) The exercise of a servant ministry in the world.
- 2) The desire and capacity to call, equip, empower, and enable the baptized to the practice of servant ministry as required of each person through baptism.
- 3) The desire and capacity to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.

SECOND, a person with a discernible vocation evidences many, if not all, of the following qualities:

- 1) a strong commitment to and deep love for Jesus Christ and the Church;
- 2) an ability to articulate his or her faith;
- 3) a confirmed adult communicant in good standing with the understanding of his or her ministry as a baptized person;
- 4) a spiritual life marked by the holy habits of worship, prayer, the study of scripture, and proportional giving;
- 5) a vocation to serve and enable others to serve;
- 6) empathy for the powerless;
- 7) a history of satisfactory employment (if applicable) and interpersonal relationships;
- 8) a willingness to undertake extensive preparation, including theological education, spiritual formation and practice of ministry;
- 9) a clear understanding of the ministry of a deacon;
- 10) a willingness to serve God through the leadership of the diocesan bishop.

THIRD, a person with a discernible vocation to the diaconate would be recognized both by her/himself and by the Church as being called to live the vision statement for diaconal ministry noted at the beginning of this booklet. Deacons are often at work in risky places and at the margins, responding to the needs of the poor, the weak, the addicted, the sick, and the lonely, thus enabling them to discover the presence of God in their world. Deacons are called to engage the issues of justice, mercy, poverty, family and the environment. Increasingly, the role is one of opening doors of opportunity, encouraging others to take risks, and serving as agents of change.

NOTE: The ministry of a deacon is a ministry served under the Bishop on behalf of the Church in Western Michigan. Though a local context can provide fertile ground for a sense of call to ministry, ordination is rarely, if ever, to a specific location. One is ordained for the whole church. Thus, though the Customary does allow for the possibility of a Deacon continuing to serve in the parish where the Deacon was raised up for ordination, a true sense of call to the Sacred Order of Deacons must also involve a willingness to serve elsewhere in the Diocese, with the strengthening of the total ministry of the church being the focus and goal.

Appendix A: Letter of Agreement Sample

Deacon _____ Date _____

The Rt. Rev. Wayne M. Hougland, Bishop of the Diocese of Western Michigan, agree that the exercise of the diaconate by _____ shall be subject to the terms set forth in the Customary for the Diaconate in Western Michigan as reviewed by the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee, and as amplified by the additional provisions of this Letter of Agreement.

I. Deployment

- A. The Bishop assigns the Reverend _____, Deacon, to serve in _____ Church, _____, Michigan, where he/she shall function as a part-time, non-stipendiary deacon. This assignment is to be reviewed annually by the Rector and Bishop, and a new agreement signed every two years.
- B. Deacon _____ shall serve with the Rev. _____, Rector of _____, (hereafter referred to as presbyter) who will act as immediate supervisor.

II. Ministry Guidelines

- A. All parties to this agreement understand that the deacon's secular employment takes precedence over community involvement and church activities.
- B. The deacon generally expects to serve the church a maximum of 10 hours per week (including service in liturgies of the church), with an overall goal of a maximum of 30 hours per month.
- C. The deacon should receive financial assistance for the undertaking of ministry in the following amounts:
 1. _____ for Continuing Education (such as the Association of Episcopal Deacons' Conference or other program of continuing formation).
 2. _____ for Professional Expenses (such as the annual diocesan Deacon's Conference, the annual Diocesan Convention, and other expenses incurred in the course of one's ministry).

3. _____ as a Travel Allowance to cover the cost of mileage incurred in the fulfillment of diaconal ministry (not including regular travel to and from the parish where one serves).

D. The deacon should have access to a discretionary fund, established by the parish for such purposes.

III. The deacon shall serve in the world as follows:

A. Encourage the Church's participation in all opportunities for ministry locally and globally in the world.

B. Make Christ and his redemptive love known, by word and example to the people of the world through:

IV. The deacon shall serve the congregation through pastoral ministry, particularly to: _____

V. The deacon shall serve liturgically as follows:

A. Perform the full and proper liturgical role of a deacon at Eucharist on Sunday, the seven Principal Feasts of the Church and at the liturgies of Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and other congregational worship services as requested by the rector.

B. Assist at other liturgies, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and in the inter-parochial or diocesan liturgies when called upon to do so by the rector or the bishop.

C. Compose and preach liturgical homilies [___ times per year], with the understanding that the presbyter is the ordinary preacher of the parish. In services of Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline conducted by the deacon, the deacon is the ordinary preacher. It is particularly appropriate for the deacon to preach on Maundy Thursday and other occasions where the gospel readings focus on the ministry of service.

VI. The deacon shall take the following periods of leave:

A. One calendar month vacation each year, or 4 weeks.

- B. _____ days/weeks for development of diaconal ministry.
- C. Sick leave and personal days as required.
- D. Such other leave as is required to develop and maintain financial support outside the Church, with adequate advance notice.
- E. Three month sabbatical of rest and refreshment, outside the present diaconal assignment, every 5 to 7 years with the Bishop's approval.

VII. Conflict resolution

- A. If problems arise which affect the welfare and unity of the parish, the deacon shall consult with the presbyter and shall follow his/her counsel and advice. In case of a disagreement, the deacon, with the knowledge of the presbyter, shall inform the bishop in writing, with copy to the presbyter and the archdeacon. The bishop shall accept the responsibility for resolution. The quality of the priest's supervision and the adequacy of interpersonal communication shall be considered in working towards resolution.
- B. If problems arise concerning the deacon's role or work, the presbyter will consult with the deacon and work together for resolution. In case of disagreement, the presbyter with the knowledge of the deacon, shall inform the bishop in writing, with a copy to the deacon. The bishop shall accept responsibility for the resolution.

VIII. Annual Report

The deacon shall submit to the parish an annual report of all ministry and continuing education performed in the previous year with a copy to the supervising priest and to the diocese, who shall provide an evaluation of the deacon's contributions to the life of the congregation. The major emphasis of this report shall not be liturgical, but shall be the development of lay ministries in the world under the leadership of the deacon. The deacon shall send a copy of this written report to the bishop.

IX. This agreement terminates:

- A. At the discretion of the bishop and/or presbyter.
- B. If and when the deacon moves to another community, which would require over a 30-minute drive in one direction on a regular basis to perform assigned duties.
- C. When the supervising presbyter resigns from the parish.
- D. After _____ years; after evaluation, then may be renewed after any necessary changes.
- E. If deacon is reassigned to a new parish. A new agreement should be in place after ninety (90) days.
- F. At age 72, following the guidelines of the Customary for Deacons.

X. In order for the Deacon to function at this parish, written consent to this Agreement by the following parties is required.

Deacon: _____ Date _____

Archdeacon: _____ Date _____

Bishop: _____ Date _____

On behalf of _____ Church, _____, Michigan.

Sr. Warden: _____ Date _____

Rector: _____ Date _____

Appendix B: Episcopal Church Canons

MINISTRY

CANONS III.5.3, III.6.1-3

(e) If the applicant is a member of a Religious Order or Christian Community recognized by Canon III.24, the letters of support referred to in Canon III.5 or Canon III.6 and any other requirements imposed on a congregation or Member of the Clergy may be given by the Superior or person in charge, and Chapter, or other comparable body of the Order or Community.

Member of a Religious Order or Community.

Sec. 3. An application for any dispensation permitted by this Title from any of the requirements for ordination must first be made to the Bishop, and if approved, referred to the Standing Committee for its advice and consent.

Dispensations.

CANON 6: Of the Ordination 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.

Selection and Nomination of Deacons.

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:

Application for admission as Postulant.

- (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

Postulancy for the Diaconate.

	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,
Commission to review the application.	(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.
Previous refusal or cessation.	(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.
Admission to Postulancy.	(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.
Ember Weeks.	(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.
Removal.	(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
Definition of 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.

Admission to Candidacy.

(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.

Transfers to another Diocese.

(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.

Candidate may be removed.

(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.

Assignment.

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

Formation.

(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.
- Areas of competence. (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.
- Training. (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.
- Ember Weeks. (h) Each Candidate 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 Candidate's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.
- Evaluation of progress. (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.
- Examinations and evaluations. (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:

Ordination papers.

- (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.

Standing Committee to consent.

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) _____

Declaration of conformity. (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.

Community of Deacons. 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.

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

Rights and responsibilities. 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.

Mentors. (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. Continuing 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. License to serve in another 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: Letters Dimissory.

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. Resignation.

Release and Removal of a Deacon.	<p>Sec. 8. Release and Removal from the Ordained Ministry of this Church</p> <p>If any Deacon of The Episcopal Church shall express, in writing, to the Bishop of the Diocese in which such Deacon is canonically resident, an intention to be released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church and from the obligations attendant thereto, including those promises made at Ordination in the Declaration required by Article VIII of the Constitution of the General Convention, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to record the matter. The Bishop, being satisfied that the person so declaring is acting voluntarily and for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and is neither the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer nor a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, shall lay the matter before the Standing Committee, and with the advice and consent of a majority of the Standing Committee the Bishop may pronounce that the person is released and removed from the ordained Ministry of this Church and from the obligations attendant thereto, and is deprived of the right to exercise in The Episcopal Church 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, at the person's request, give a certificate to this effect to the person so released and removed from the ordained Ministry.</p>
In disciplinary cases.	<p>Sec. 9. If a Deacon submitting the writing described in Section 8 of this Canon be the subject of information concerning an Offense that has been referred to an Intake Officer or a Respondent in a pending disciplinary matter as defined in Title IV of these Canons, the Ecclesiastical Authority to whom such writing is submitted shall not consider or act upon the written request unless and until the disciplinary matter shall have been resolved by a dismissal, Accord, or Order and the time for appeal or rescission of such has expired.</p>
Declaration.	<p>Sec. 10. In the case of the release and removal of a Deacon from the ordained Ministry of this Church as provided in this Canon, a declaration of release and 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 released and removed is canonically resident. The Bishop who pronounces the declaration of release and 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</p>

House of Bishops, the Secretary of the House of Deputies, The Church Pension Fund, and the Board for Transition Ministry.

CANON 8: Of the Ordination of Priests

Sec. 1. Selection

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

Selection and nomination to the Priesthood.

Sec. 2. Nomination

A confirmed adult communicant in good standing may be nominated for ordination to the Priesthood 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:

Application for admission to Postulancy.

- (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and
- (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood.

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 agreeing, 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 Priesthood.
- (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 Priesthood.

Postulancy for the Priesthood.

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

- (1) determine that the person is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing.
- (2) confer in person with the Nominee.
- (3) shall consult with the Nominee regarding financial resources which will be available for the support of the Postulant throughout preparation for ordination. During