

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESES OF EASTERN & WESTERN MICHIGAN

APPENDIX A: LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Deacon: _____ Date: _____

The diaconate is 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.

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 the bishop, and a new agreement signed every two years.
- B. Deacon: _____ shall serve with The Reverend _____, Rector of _____ Church, (hereafter referred to as presbyter) who will act as immediate supervisor.

Ministry Guidelines

- A. All parties to this agreement understand 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 services in liturgies in 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:
- _____ for Continuing Education (such as the Association of Episcopal Deacon's Conference or other program of continuing formation).
 - _____ for Professional Expenses (such as the annual Deacon's Conference, the annual Diocesan Convention, and other expenses incurred in the course of one's ministry).
 - _____ 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 served).
 - The deacon should have access to a discretionary fund, established by the parish for such purposes.

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Service

The deacon shall serve 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:

Pastoral Ministry

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

Serve Liturgically

The deacon shall serve 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.

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- 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.

Leave

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.

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.

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, 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.

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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.

In order for the deacon to function at this parish, written consent to the Agreement by the following parties:

Deacon: _____ Date _____

Archdeacon: _____ Date _____

Bishop: _____ Date _____

On behalf of _____ Church, _____, Michigan.

Sr. Warden: _____ Date _____

Rector: _____ Date _____