

The Diocese of Huron

Pamphlet for Those Discerning a Call for
Diaconal Ministry

Table of Contents

Concerning the Order of Deacon	1
The Call to Diaconal Ministry	2
Discerning the Call	3
Deacon Formation Process.....	4
The Ministry of Deacons	4
Liturgical Practices	6
Preaching as a Deacon	6
Accountability	6
Continuing Formation	7
Relationship with the Bishop	7
The Community of Deacons Board ...	8
Titles	8
Membership	9
Compensation of Deacons	9
Retirement of Deacons	9

Membership

Deacons are not members of the Synod of the Diocese. *As clergy Deacons are not voting members of Parishes.* A select number of voting representatives to Synod are elected by the Council of Deacons annually.

Compensation of Deacons

Deacons are ordinarily non-stipendiary with other source(s) of income. However, deacons will receive compensation from the Parish they serve for:

- mileage and other expenses incidental to the performance of their ministry, and diocesan required conferences, including but not limited to clergy days, conferences and continuing formation.
- Payment for supply is appropriate when a Deacon serves outside their assigned Parish to the amount in the published Diocesan Rate.

Retirement of Deacons

Upon reaching age 70, a Deacon's active ministry is no longer automatic. A Deacon may continue to do active ministry in the Parish with permission of the Bishop and consent of the Rector. Permission and consent will be reviewed annually and may be withdrawn by any of the parties at any time.

In this relationship Deacons are expected to seek counsel from the Bishop for issues related to pre-marital planning, marital crisis, hospitalization and severe illness of themselves or family members, personal faith crisis or other serious concerns of ministry. *It is the prerogative of the Bishop to perform the marriage service of a Deacon. At the funeral service of a Deacon or his/her spouse, the Bishop is the designated celebrant, if available, and others may assist.*

The Community of Deacons Board

The Community of Deacons Board acts as the Postulancy Board for Deacons. Its mission is to assist the Bishop in the development and administration of the Deacon Formation Program, and provide chaplains for candidates for the Diaconate. The responsibilities of the Board include (but are not limited to):

- Encouraging and enabling Parishes to recognize and develop vocations to diaconal ministry.
- Coordinating the training weekends, and internship of the program.
- Interviewing prospective participants preparing for ordination to the diaconate.
- Assisting the Bishop in the selection and appointment of a training team. The training team will design the format of the seminars.
- Appointing a Chaplain for each candidate to act as their representative and provide support and guidance during the formation process

Titles

Use of the term ‘the Reverend Deacon...’ applies to all Deacons for use in written communications or in introductions.

Concerning the Order of Deacons

In Holy Scriptures and ancient Christian times, there have been different ministries within the Church. Since the time of the New Testament, three distinct orders of ordained ministers have been known in the Church. First, there is the order of Bishops who carry on the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. Second, there are the presbyters, or ordained elders, in subsequent times generally known as Priests. Together with the Bishops, they take part in the governance of the Church, in the carrying out of its missionary and pastoral work, and in the preaching of the Word of God and administering of holy sacraments. Third, there are Deacons who, in assisting Bishops and Priests in all of this work, have a special responsibility to minister in Christ’s name to the poor, the sick, the suffering and the helpless. (*BAS p. 631*) All three orders are “consecrated”, “ordained” and “made” according to the ordination liturgies.

The Diaconate is a separate, distinct, and equal order of ordained ministry dedicated primarily to:

- serving and enabling others to serve the needy, the weak, the sick and the lonely
- holding before the Church the needs of the world, interpreting those needs to the Church, and enabling baptized persons, to bring the ministry of Christ to the world

The liturgical functions of the Diaconate are secondary to the social ministry and pastoral care functions. A Deacon must not usurp liturgical roles normally assigned to lay people according to the established practices of their congregation. These may include the lessons, the Prayers of the People, and chalice bearer.

The Call to Diaconal Ministry

A call to Diaconal Ministry is largely individual in nature and comes through an individual's prayerful communication with God. Sometimes the call is reinforced by the individual's Parish or another individual. The Church as a corporate body must recognize, test, and affirm an individual's call to ministry.

Some of the signs of a call are an individual's demonstrated desire to:

- serve and to enable others to serve
- hold before the Church the needs of the world
- interpret those needs to the Church
- be a symbol of and model for the ministry of all the baptized
- enable the ministry of all the baptized

Strong empathy with the powerless, poor, sick, weak and lonely may also indicate a call to the Diaconate.

The Church seeks aspirants for ordination who . . .

- have a living, growing, and healthy relationship with God
- are loyal to the Anglican Church while being able to be reflective and constructively critical
- are able to exercise leadership and independence while maintaining a healthy sense of accountability to the church structures of authority and community
- have a loving heart with the capacity for compassion, practical caring, and a living sense of fairness and justice
- are collegial in leadership style and capable of sharing ministry with the lay and ordained ministers of the church

A report of all activities of ministry and continuing education must be submitted annually to the office of the Diocese. A Deacon who fails to make an annual report to the Bishop for two (2) years will meet with the Bishop who will determine whether or not the Deacon will remain in active ordained ministry.

Any social ministry of a Deacon outside of a Parish in a community agency should be fulfilled within the accountability structure of that agency. Some Deacons may choose to initiate a new ministry, but it is expected that they will do so in concert with other members of the Church interested in that ministry and with the advice and consent of their current Rector and the Parish Council.

The Bishop and all Deacons will meet twice a year where there is an opportunity for the Bishop and Deacons to share their journey, support each other, and reinforce their mutual commitment.

Continuing Formation

Christian formation must be a life long process. It is expected that each Deacon will be engaged in an intentional program of continuing formation which may be in the form of conferences (one day or longer) and continuing education in their particular focus of ministry or other area of interest or personal growth.

Relationship with the Bishop

In fulfillment of the ordination vows, each Deacon has a direct reporting relationship to and is under the direct pastoral care of the Bishop.

Duties In Exceptional Circumstances

- Conduct funerals, with consultation of parish priest

Liturgical Practices

The liturgical functions of Deacons are secondary to Social Ministry and Pastoral Care. Deacons must not usurp liturgical roles normally assigned to Lay people: i.e. reading lessons, the Prayers of the People, chalice bearer or the duties of a Licensed Lay Reader.

Preaching as a Deacon

Deacons have a special responsibility to preach the diaconal message of Jesus Christ. Priests may focus on theological concepts in their preaching, but Deacons have a special responsibility to emphasize the diaconal aspects of Christ's teaching and motivate the congregation serve the poor, the sick, the suffering, the helpless, and the lonely in their Parish community as well as in their surrounding communities.

Accountability

Deacons are directly accountable to the Bishop and to those with whom the Bishop's ministry is shared. The Rector of the Parish where a Deacon is doing active ministry, will have administrative authority, in the name of the Bishop, over the ministry and parish relationship of the Deacon. There shall be an annual review of ministry by the Rector and Deacon to reflect on the past year, which is formalized by a contract. Such contract shall be completed and sent to the Bishop by September 1st of each year. A Deacon shall not be permitted to do active ministry in a Parish without a current annual contract on file.

- have a healthy sense of self, manifesting the capacity to be appropriately self aware, self affirming, and self critical with evidence of healthy self care – physical, emotional, and spiritual
- have the ability to manifest a sense of humour and joy

Discerning the Call

Discernment refers to the initial stages of self-examination, conversation, and guided reflection by which a person and the Church consider whether they are called to ordained or lay ministry.

The process of discerning the call to the Diaconate begins when a baptized person approaches his or her Rector and asks for information. The Rector is encouraged to invite the inquirer to join the next session of the Diocesan formal "Discernment Process". Further information is available in the "Discernment Process Manual" which can be obtained from the Diocese by the Rector.

The primary responsibility for recognizing and developing a vocation to ordained ministry lies with the Parish. It may seem presumptuous to observe, question and judge another's call to ordained ministry. However, for someone aspiring to Holy Orders in the Church, this is not private matter, but the proper concern of the entire Body of the Church.

The Discernment Process Program allows individuals who feel they may have a call to a more structured and intentional ministry within the Church to explore the opportunities available in both ordained and lay ministry. As part of the Discernment Process Program, a support committee will be chosen by the Pastor to both challenge and support the applicant. It is desirable that the

committee continue its commitment to the candidate's discernment process throughout the program towards ordination.

After the "Discernment Process Program", those who discern a renewed call to lay ministry are strengthened by the experience to provide a deeper, more mature lay ministry to the Church. Those who discern a call beyond lay ministry may be supported in the Deacon Formation Process period. This process begins with support from the Rector and Vestry for consideration for the Diaconate by the Bishop.

The Deacon Formation Process

Deacon aspirants who complete the *Discernment Process* will be interviewed by members of the Community of Deacon's Board to evaluate their call to ordained ministry. *Based upon the interview with the Board and documentation in their application file including a commendation from the Parish plus the Board's recommendation. This process is two years minimum in length.*

The Deacon Formation Process (DFP) of the Diocese of Huron provides the training that enables the formation of its participants in the discipline of Christian servanthood from the perspective of the Diaconate. Details of the training program may be obtained from the *Deacon Formation Process Manual* available from the Diocese of Huron.

The Ministry of Deacons

The ministry of Deacons in the Diocese of Huron is to support the people of the Church (within and without the Parish) as they explore opportunities for their own ministries in the world. As a

catalyst to outreach ministries, the Deacons build relationships within the life of their parish and the life of the wider community. The Ministry commitment of a Deacon is focused in three areas: Social Ministry, Pastoral Care, and assistance in liturgical ministry. Ministry activities **may** include: (This list is neither exhaustive nor restrictive)

Social Ministry

- Support Outreach Committee
- Exemplify outreach in personal ministry
- Participate in community programs

Pastoral Care

- Train and supervise Lay Eucharistic Ministers
- Take Communion to the hospitalized and homebound
- Administer a chalice at Eucharist
- Support Parish visiting teams
- Assist in the catechetical process
- Support ministry to specific Parish segments (youth, singles, seniors, etc.)
- Foster and support education for Lay Ministry

Liturgical Functions

- Read the Gospel
- Set the table
- Clear the table
- Dismiss the people