

COVENANT BETWEEN DEACON AND RECTOR/VICAR

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COVENANT

Deacon _____ and (Church/organization) _____

Date _____

_____, ordained as a Deacon in the Episcopal Church, and the Rt. Reverend Mark Beckwith, tenth Bishop of Newark, agree that his/her exercise of the diaconate in the Diocese of Newark shall be subject to the terms set forth in this covenant:

I. THE DEACON ACCEPTS THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES OF DIOCESAN MINISTRY:

- A. The diocese is a body of local churches/organizations with many members, each sent by Christ with special gifts to minister to one another and to others.
- B. All ministries of the diocese are exercised through the oversight and care of the Bishop with the assistance of presbyters and others. Deacons shall serve under the pastoral direction of the bishop, who in turn seeks regular consultation with the archdeacon(s).
- C. The fundamental ministry of the deacon is to hold before the church the character of the whole ministry of the Church as Service, and of ministers as Servants.
- D. The ministry of the diocesan deacon includes working in harmony with others in the diocese and in the community, especially its Bishop and other leaders, lending support and seeking always to build up the body of Christ.

II. THE NATURE OF THE DEACON'S ASSIGNMENT;

- A. The deacons are assigned by the Bishop and report to the Bishop. However, the deacons are responsible to the rector/vicar for the liturgical and pastoral activities that they covenant to perform as part of their ministry to the congregation.
- B. The Bishop assigns the deacon to serve at large in the Diocese of Newark, which has chosen her/him for the diaconate; and also to function liturgically and pastorally at _____

C. The deacon agrees to serve the congregation/organization a maximum of _____ hours per week in ministry on behalf of the above-named congregation under the supervision of the incumbent rector/vicar. This service shall not conflict with the deacon's regular employment. The covenanted _____ hours also will be commensurately reduced or eliminated in weeks when the deacon attends diocesan-required programs. (See Sections F-3b and III-C below.)

D. As part of the deacon's allotted time in service to the church and community, the Rector and the deacon agree to meet at least twice a month for prayer, exchange of information and planning.

E. The congregation/organization will provide work space and parking for the deacon.

F. Within the limits of the covenanted time, the deacon shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Liturgy:

a). The deacon shall perform the full and proper liturgical role on Sundays and other occasions of worship, including Christmas and Easter service. When possible, the deacon should also serve in parochial liturgies such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and inter-church or diocesan liturgies when invited to do so by a proper authority.

At a minimum, this deacon and this rector/vicar agree that the deacon shall serve at (_____ this church name _____) for one regularly scheduled Sunday service, alternating service times in order to become acquainted with all members of the congregation.

b). In the Eucharist, the deacon proclaims the Gospel, prepares and clears the table, serves the bread or wine as appropriate, and dismisses the people. At the discretion of the priest, the deacon may also read the Liturgy of the Word, the Prayers of the People, and/or the bidding for the Confession of Sins. The deacon may also distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday and participate in healing and blessing prayers (e.g., birthdays, anniversaries, etc.) at the altar rail.

c). The deacon may take the Eucharistic bread and wine to the sick and infirm of the congregation, and may anoint the sick.

2. Other liturgies: Please see **Customary for Deacons in the Diocese of Newark**: "Guidelines for use of the Of the Reserved Sacrament"

3. Preaching:

- a). The Bishop hereby licenses the deacon to compose and preach liturgical homilies at any church in the diocese, when properly invited to do so, but with the understanding that the rector/vicar is the ordinary preacher of the parish. The deacon is encouraged to lift up the *diakonos* of Christ and His people in preaching.
- b). The deacon and rector/vicar will determine a schedule for the deacon to preach on an average of _____. The deacon will be credited with four hours of sermon preparation time. These four hours will be included within (not added onto) the weekly covenanted ministry hours, each time he/she preaches.
- c). In services in which the deacon serves as officiant, the deacon is the ordinary preacher.

4. Pastoral Care/Congregational Development

- a). In coordination with other lay, clergy and staff, the deacon will visit homebound members on a rotating basis and share in hospital visitations.
 - i). offer support and education to lay pastoral care providers, including Lay Eucharistic Visitors.
 - ii). be present whenever possible during coffee hour and at other social settings. Be open and willing to enter into a friendly yet professional relationship with members of the congregation.
 - iii). Within the hours of ministry covenanted, the deacon will offer presence and support to parishioners at other appointments and gatherings deemed appropriate to diaconal ministry.

5. Outreach Ministries:

- a). The deacon will assess the surrounding community in collaboration with the rector/vicar to determine those needs of the community which might be served by the church.
- b). The deacon will work with the rector, members of the congregation and staff to develop outreach ministries that will bring the love of Christ to those in need.

- c). The deacon will act as a role model and catalyst to encourage parishioners to develop, implement and participate in outreach ministries.
- d). The deacon will keep the congregation apprised of outreach activities within the diocese, the community at large and in the world in which they can participate

6. Adult Education and Congregational Business:

- a). In collaboration with the rector/vicar, the deacon will participate in developing and offering adult education opportunities to parishioners.
- b). Congregational activities and meetings: The deacon may also participate in ____ Vestry meetings per year as well as the annual Business Meeting; and at the invitation of the rector/vicar, the annual vestry retreat.
- c). The deacon shall normally have seat and voice, but not vote in the vestry or executive committee. However, as an ordained person, the deacon is not eligible to be elected to the vestry (or executive committee) or to be elected as delegate to the diocesan convention.

7. Diocesan Events and Diocesan Committees

- a). Deacons are required by their Bishop to attend the following annual events: Annual Renewal of Vows, Bishop's Day with the Deacons, and the Annual Convention; at least part of the Annual Clergy Conference; at least one of the two Clergy days (spring or fall); and at least one District Clergy Conversation during the year. In case of necessary absence, the deacon will make a courtesy call to the Bishop's Administrative Assistant.
- b). Deacons are also strongly urged to serve as members of at least one of the commissions or committees that govern, or focus on the mission and ministry of the diocese.
- c). The deacon's weekly covenanted hours with the congregation will be reduced by the amount of time spent in each of above named ('a' or 'b') activities.

8. Vacations and sick days:
- a). The deacon shall take the following periods of leave from diaconal responsibilities and service, and all other diaconal functions in the church:
 - i) One month vacation each year;
 - ii) Sick leave as required;
 - iii) Other leave required by the deacon's professional development: continuing education related to the diaconate; diocesan duties as requested by the Bishop, the rector/vicar, or the deacon, in order to maintain his/his professional and/or diaconal vocation.

III THE DEACON'S NON-STIPENDIARY STATUS:

- A. Deacons serving under the provisions of this agreement shall ordinarily serve the church without cash stipend, housing or housing allowance.
- B. However, the congregation/organization *is required to pay* for:
 1. Reimbursement of actual expenses, including mileage to and from meetings or appointments directly connected to the deacon's ministry
 2. Reimbursement of the expenses, including mileage, of attending Diocesan Convention and other Diocesan-required meetings (Fall/Spring Clergy Days; Clergy Conference; Bishop's Day with Deacons, and Annual Holy Week Renewal of Vows).
 3. A deacon who serves as supply in place of a priest/vicar, (using Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, and preaching), whether within the deacon's assigned congregation, or invited by another congregation, will be reimbursed at the diocesan going rate for supply clergy contracted for regular Sunday or special services. (See also: **Customary for Deacons in the Diocese of Newark: "Financial Status"; and "Deacons In Times of Transition."**)
 4. The deacon shall receive credit toward covenanted hours with his/her assigned congregation for contracted supply ministry to other parishes, including sermon preparation time.
- C. The congregation/organization may *in its discretion*, provide financial assistance for other important convocations such as continuing formation courses, the deacons' annual retreat, district Clergy Conversations and clergy support groups.

1. The deacon may also request supplemental assistance from the diocesan Deacon's Budget for limited financial support to any of these functions.

D. The deacon shall receive credit toward covenanted hours with the congregation for all required and optional diocesan functions attended.

IV. REPORTING:

A. The deacon will prepare a written report to be presented at the congregation's Annual Business Meeting in the month of outlining the deacon's ministries for the priest and vestry of the congregation. This letter will include:

1. Gifts, ministries and challenges identified; hopes fulfilled;
2. Plans for the coming year
3. A revised Covenant as needed

B. The letter will be forwarded with the rector's accompanying notes, to the Bishop by April 1st.

V. WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE WHICH AFFECT THE DEACON AND/OR THE WELFARE AND UNITY OF THE DIOCESE:

A. The deacon may bring the matter to the attention of the Archdeacon for Witness or to the Bishop, and shall make a reasonable and prayerful effort to resolve such matters with their counsel and advice.

B. If matters cannot be settled to the satisfactions of the deacon and the rector vicar, either one or both has access, and should take advantage of the diocesan Mediation Team. This Team is activated at the sole discretion of the Bishop. (See **Customary for Deacons: The Mediation Team**)

VI. THIS COVENANT WILL BE IN FORCE FOR THREE YEARS FROM THE DATE ACCEPTED

A. The Covenant must be reviewed by rector/vicar and deacon annually.

B. The Covenant may be amended at any time should the deacon's ministry change and working arrangements altered. Such changes may be initiated by the deacon, the rector/vicar, or the Bishop, so long as all parties shall agree to such changes.

- C. The Covenant may be terminated at any time by the deacon with the advice and consent of the Bishop; or by the Bishop on the request of and following consultation with the deacon's rector/vicar or other supervisor, provided written notice is given.
- D. The Covenant will expire automatically if the rector/vicar leaves the cure, but the deacon continues in that assignment. (See Appendix B "The Service of Deacons during an Interim Period.")

VI. THIS COVENANT IS AGREED TO BY SIGNATURES OF THE FOLLOWING:

Deacon _____ Date: _____

Rector/Vicar (or Senior Warden) _____ Date: _____

Bishop _____ Date: _____

(Revised: Sept 29, 2012: Canon Greg Jacobs & Archdeacon Liz Ostuni;
 Additional revisions, Oct 1, 2012: Archdeacons Deborah Drake and Peter Jackson)