

DIOCESE OF OLYMPIA
Deacon Letter of Agreement
Between

The Right Reverend _____
Bishop of Olympia

And,

The Reverend _____,
Rector (Vicar), St. _____ Episcopal
Church

And,

The Reverend _____
Deacon

who has been assigned by the Bishop to serve as Deacon at St. _____ Episcopal
Church and beginning on this ____th day of _____ in the year _____.

Prologue

Deacons are ordained to a special ministry of servanthood directly under their bishop to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick and the lonely. They are called to make Christ and his redemptive love known by word and example, to those among whom they live and work and worship. They are called to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world, to assist the bishop and presbyters in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments and to carry out other duties as assigned by the bishop (See Book of Common Prayer, pp. 543-544). A deacon is assigned to a parish by the Bishop to be present among the people as the Bishop's servant to be an example of Christian service and to assist the congregation in fulfilling their baptismal vows.

Mutual Agreement regarding Roles and Responsibilities

The Deacon in consult with the bishop and vicar/rector identifies the diaconal ministry roles which will become apart of St. _____. The outline of the deacon's roles and responsibilities at minimum shall contain the following:

- Deacon's principal diaconal ministry
- Deacon's work in outside organizations and their connection to the church
- Deacon's role in the liturgy and how often he/she shall serve
- Meeting attendance
- Visitations with the Bishop(s)
- Other Committees and work groups as requested

Times of Work and Leave

In keeping with the common standards for the ministries of non-stipendiary deacons, Deacon _____ will serve in the Church on average approximately eight to ten hours per week . He/She may, at his/her discretion commit additional hours of service but is also responsible for maintaining his/her professional responsibilities, his/her spiritual life and his/her physical health and achieving balance in his/her life and relationships.

He/She will have one Sunday off per month as well as two weeks per year of time for spiritual retreat and continuing education and formation in ministry.

He/She will accrue two months of sabbatical time for every three years of service in the parish. Sabbatical time will be scheduled in conversation with the St. _____ Rector/Vicar.

Compensation

Deacon _____ will serve in a non-stipendiary role

Expenses

St. _____ will establish a fund to compensate the Deacon for mileage (excluding travel between his/her home and the church). Deacon _____ may be reimbursed for expenses accrued in the attendance of Diocesan Convention and other mandatory meetings of the Church. A continuing education fund of \$_____ per year will be established as part of the annual budgetary process. The amount will be reviewed annually. This money shall be set aside and paid to or on behalf of the Deacon toward expenses incurred in relation to continuing education.

Discretionary Fund

In accordance with the Canons of the General Convention, a Discretionary Fund shall be set up such that the Deacon _____ will have access to use a designated amount of funds for serving the poor, the weak and the hungry. This dollar amount to be agreed upon by the vicar/rector. The Deacon shall present an accounting by category to the Vicar/Rector and the Vestry/Bishop's Committee at the end of each calendar year. The fund shall be audited annually.

Ministry Review

There shall be an annual discussion and mutual review of the total ministry of the parish in order to accomplish the following:

- a. celebrate the joys and successes of this ministry
- b. provide the Vicar and/or Rector, other presbyters, the Deacon, the Wardens and the Bishop's Committee, an opportunity to assess how well he/she is fulfilling his/her responsibilities to the ministry they share;
- c. establish goals for the work of the congregation for the coming year;
- d. isolate areas of tension or disappointment which may adversely affect mutual ministry;
- e. clarify expectations of all parties to strengthen the ministry shared together;
- f. allow for creative, Gospel centered resolution of tension and conflict if it exists at the time.

The Ending of a Diaconal Relationship

If for any reason this diaconal relationship becomes imperiled, both the deacon and the church should seek wisdom and advice of the Bishop. This relationship of ministry, however, may be ended at the sole discretion of the Bishop should he/she choose to assign Deacon _____ to other duties for the good of the wider church.

The Deacon, the Vicar and/or Rector, and the Wardens and Bishop's Committee may petition the Bishop for a change in assignment for the Deacon at any time any of them feel this would be helpful for the good of the congregation or the promotion of the Gospel.

It is understood that at the time the deacon reaches the age of 72 he/she will notify the Bishop of this event. He/she will submit a letter of resignation in accordance with the Canons. The Bishop with the consent of the deacon may reappoint him/her to his/her existing ministry or appoint him/her to another ministry as he sees fit. Any appointment is for a one year period is renewable annually.

Revisions

This letter may be revised only by mutual agreement of the Bishop, the Rector/Vicar and the Deacon at any time, but most expeditiously at the time of the mutual ministry review each year.

Date

The Right Reverend _____, Bishop of Olympia

Date

The Reverend _____ Rector

Date

The Reverend _____, Deacon