

# COVENANT AGREEMENT FOR PERMANENT DEACONS

## Diocese of Albany

*The Deacon is called to a special ministry of servanthood directly under his/her bishop  
... to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.  
... to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them.  
... to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live,  
work, and worship.  
... to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.  
... to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments  
... to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.  
(Book of Common Prayer, p. 543)*

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of  
(Name of Deacon) (Name of Rector, Vicar, Interim Pastor, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, New York, as well as my spouse,  
(Name of Church) (Location of Church)  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ agree that the exercise of this diaconal ministry related to this parish  
(Name of Spouse, if applicable)  
will be in accord with the terms set forth in this covenant.

The deacon accepts the following principles of ministry:

1. The Church is a body with many members, each sent by Christ with special gifts to serve first one another and then others.
2. Every parish rector, by virtue of his or her order and the good order of the Church as set forth in its canons, has been given the ministry and authority to function in the role of primary leadership in the parish.
3. The ministry of the deacon is an assisting role in the parish structure and is always to be exercised in harmony with the rector, lending support, and seeking to build up the body of Christ.
4. Under the present canons the deacon is subject to the authority of the bishop and is assigned to his or her ministry by the bishop.

The bishop's approval of this covenant constitutes assignment to this ministry in this parish.

The deacon's proposed pastoral and/or charitable ministry(s) in this parish will be as follows:

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The deacon's proposed pastoral and/or charitable ministry(s) in the world will be as follows:

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The deacon shall exercise the full and proper liturgical service of a deacon at the Church's liturgies, particularly at the Eucharist. The deacon may officiate at Holy Baptism, the Celebration of a Marriage, or the Burial of the Dead, at the direction of the rector. The deacon shall never be supplanted by a Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM) during administration of Holy Communion (BCP pg 408). The deacon shall oversee LEMs.

The deacon shall use the approved diocesan format when leading a service in which Holy Communion is distributed from the reserved Sacrament.

The deacon shall not officiate at the marriage ceremony of a divorced person without first seeking the bishop's consent in writing. No cleric is compelled to officiate at any marriage.

If a priest desires a deacon to supply for them, the deacon's rector shall be contacted first. The deacon shall inform their rector and obtain *his* consent if called directly to supply at another church.

The deacon shall attend vestry meetings and participate fully in those meetings without voting privileges.

The position of deacon is understood to be non-stipendiary. The parish may reimburse the deacon for expenses incurred in service to or for the Church at its discretion.

The bishop's approval of this agreement authorizes the deacon to prepare and preach sermons in any congregation of the diocese when invited to do so by the rector of that congregation.

The deacon shall participate in the annual Diocesan Convention, Parish Leadership Conference, and Deacon's Retreat, unless excused by the bishop. The deacon shall also participate in continuing education and other gatherings for deacons (such as the deacon's picnic) to the greatest extent possible as their schedule allows.

The deacon shall provide the bishop a written communication of their ministry at least annually, during the month of their birth.

The rector and deacon agree to meet weekly with the wardens and other parish clergy (as applicable), and also agree to participate in regular prayer together and with other parish clergy (as applicable).

The deacon and rector shall have an annual review of this covenant during the Easter season and make amendments, as necessary, consistent with changes to ministry focus and/or responsibilities that have occurred since the last review or are planned to occur in the next review cycle. A written evaluation of the deacon's performance and of the effectiveness of the shared ministry of the rector/deacon team (using the standard form provided by the diocese) shall be completed independently by both the deacon and the rector, discussed jointly, and then submitted to the bishop after this annual review.

The deacon agrees to minister to the people of this parish and community according to the description above. Realizing modern life is filled with many activities that need to be properly balanced (e.g., family, work, education, exercise, community service, etc. as well as parish ministries), the deacon will share in the ministry of this parish and community, to the best of their ability, by setting realistic priorities that place serving God foremost in their lives.

To be signed and dated by all of the following in pledge to this covenant agreement:

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*Deacon*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Spouse (if applicable)*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Rector*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Warden(s)*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Bishop*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*