



LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Between the Right Reverend Jeremiah Williamson and

The Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, Deacon

Whom the Bishop has assigned as

Deacon at \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church

In \_\_\_\_\_, New York

Effective \_\_\_\_\_

**PREFACE:** The ministry of the deacon has its origins in the life and ministry of Christ and in the history of the early Church. It is given shape, meaning and purpose in the words of the Baptismal Covenant. This ministry is made concrete and specific by the words of the ordination service for deacons:

“God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known by your word and example, to those among whom you live and work and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God’s Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.” (BCP p. 543)

Per Bishop Jeremiah’s pastoral letter sent on February 7, 2025 to our diocesan deacons, “Deacons are under the appointment of the Bishop. The reason the Bishop appoints deacons is so we are able to best address and respond to the changing needs of the diocese.” [www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org/deaconletter0125](http://www.albanyepiscopaldiocese.org/deaconletter0125)

Diaconal ministry is understood as one which takes on characteristics of both servanthood and leadership. While the Deacon is bound by vow directly to the Bishop, the Deacon also carries out ministries in close collaboration with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge (*hereafter referred to as “Rector”*) and congregation, as well as outside the formal boundaries of the Church.

May 23, 2025  
*Letter of Agreement for a Vocational Deacon  
 The Diocese of Albany*

## 1. Authority and Relationships

1.1 Deacons serve directly under the authority of the Bishop and are accountable to the Bishop. Their office in congregations reflects and extends their role as agents of the Church, commissioned by the Bishop to make the Word of God, the mystery of Christ, known in many different ways and venues.

1.2 Rectors preside in their congregations and exercise authority in matters concerning the congregation.

1.3 The relationship between Deacon and Rector is collaborative in nature. It is characterized by mutual respect, trust and a shared sense of purpose originating in their separate but complimentary ordination vows.

1.4 The work of a Deacon is not reviewed or evaluated by the Vestry. The Rector shall have full authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop.

## 2. Tenure

2.1 The Bishop shall consult with the Deacon and the Rector or other leader exercising oversight before making an assignment to a specific congregation or other position in the Diocese, taking into account the particular gifts, travel requirements and time constraints of the Deacon.

2.2 The assignment is effective on \_\_\_\_\_.

2.3 The assignment will continue to be in effect for three years or until the Bishop changes it, at the Bishop's discretion.

## 3. Non-Liturgical Ministries of the Deacon

3.1 The Deacon shall work with the Rector and the baptized members in the ongoing ministries of the congregation, focusing particularly on developing ministries to those in need. The Deacon shall interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. In cases of necessity, a deacon may perform the anointing of the sick or dying, using oil blessed by the Bishop. (BCP p. 456)

3.2 The Deacon **shall**:

- Minister to the poor, the sick, the weak and the lonely
- Bring the needs, concerns and hopes of the community to the attention of the congregation and encourage people to help meet those needs
- Serve those in need in the community and greater world
- Train Eucharistic Visitors (EVs) and Eucharistic Ministers (EMs)

3.3 The Deacon is called to give voice and bear witness to the presence of God through word and deed. By way of illustration and not limitation some examples include:

- Develop and foster a devotion to God through prayer
- Lead retreats

- Teach Bible studies
- Train acolytes/lectors
- Train altar guild members
- Other congregational ministries which reflect the unique gifts and talents of the individual Deacon with the approval of the Rector

#### 4. Liturgical Ministries of the Deacon

4.1 The Deacon shall perform the full and proper liturgical functions of a deacon as defined in the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and approved supplemental liturgies.

4.2 The Deacon **shall**:

- Proclaim the Gospel
- Bid the confession
- Prepare the altar and do the ablutions
- Elevate and administer the chalice
- Dismiss the congregation
- Have the opportunity to preach at least four times a year

4.3 The Deacon **may**:

- Lead the prayers of the people

4.4 In the absence of a priest or bishop, the Deacon **may** preside at the following liturgies in accordance with the rubrics below:

- Holy Baptism – page 312 BCP
- Holy Eucharist – page 408 BCP
- Marriage – page 422 BCP
- Burial of the Dead – pages 468 or 490 BCP

#### 5. Participation in Diocesan and Congregational Life

5.1 From time to time the Deacon may assist at liturgies elsewhere.

5.2 The Deacon will participate, to the fullest extent possible, in diocesan convention, clericus, deanery and other required meetings, and in gatherings for deacons.

5.3 The Deacon shall participate in the Councils of the Church as prescribed by the canons of the Diocese.

5.4 By agreement with the Rector, the Deacon may serve on appropriate committees of the congregation. Deacons have a seat and voice at vestry meetings but do not have vote.

5.5 The Deacon shall participate in continuing education and retreats.

5.6 The Deacon shall participate in the diocesan mandated misconduct prevention training.

#### 6. Work and Leave

6.1 The Deacon has historically served the congregation without stipend or fee. However, congregations will be expected to make a monthly stipend of \$25, plus the necessary Church

Pension Group (CPG) assessment so that they have access to CPG programming such as CREDO for Deacons under the age of 72.

6.2 Payment for the Deacon's attendance at diocesan convention and other required meetings shall be paid by the parish.

6.3 The congregation shall assure access to a discretionary fund for the Deacon, funded out of offerings for the poor, other special offerings, and direct donations, to be used for charitable purposes in the congregation's name, using the congregation's tax ID number. The Fund should follow diocesan guidelines, including being subject to annual audit. The Deacon shall make a regular report to the Rector on the use of the fund.

6.4 Travel expenses will be reimbursed at the current IRS rates annually for use of the Deacon's privately-owned vehicle (excluding round trip per day between home and the Church)

6.4.1 The travel budget shall provide for the Deacon to attend Diocesan Convention, the annual Clergy Retreat, and other required meetings. If the congregation is financially unable to pay for some or all of the above, the Diocese may be able to help. Such a contingency should be discussed before the contract is signed.

6.5 A Continuing Education Allowance (CEA) will be given to the Deacon, to be reviewed annually and will be set aside in a special account, and paid to or on behalf of the Deacon toward expenses incurred in relation to continuing education. The Deacon may use the CEA to maintain membership in professional organizations such as: Association for Episcopal Deacons, etc. and may subscribe to professional periodicals and buy religious books, all pertaining to work as a deacon.

6.6 The congregation shall furnish vestments for the Deacon's role in congregational liturgies.

6.7 The Deacon is eligible for the following periods of leave, if possible taken concurrently with leave from secular work:

6.7.1 Four weeks' vacation each year, to include five Sundays.

6.7.2 Two weeks each year for continuing formation.

6.7.3 Such other leave as is required.

6.7.4 Sabbatical leave from all church duties, normally after each seven years of service, after application to the Rector and with the consent of the Bishop. The typical length of such leave is three months. The sabbatical should not be interrupted by church duties or divided into portions over the course of a year.

6.7.5 Such other leave as required by diocesan responsibilities.

6.7.6 Parental leave as follows: The Deacon is entitled to leave if the Deacon or the Deacon's spouse/partner gives birth to a child or takes legal custody of a minor child who enters the Deacon's home. This leave is for a minimum of twelve (12) consecutive weeks.

## 7. Review

7.1 The Deacon will submit a brief Deacon's Annual Report to the Bishop and Archdeacon during the season of Epiphany. (These forms can be found at [Deacon-Annual-Report-2025-Fillable.pdf](#) or [Deacon-Annual-Report-2025-Printable.pdf](#) )

7.2 This Letter of Agreement (LOA) shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised every three years, with the exception of the first review after the Deacon's ordination, which shall be reviewed and, if necessary, revised between 12 and 18 months after the first day of the assignment. Revision may be initiated at any time by the Bishop or at the request of the Deacon or the Rector or assignment of a new Rector.

## 8. Discernment/Transition/Termination of Agreement

8.1 Should the Rector leave the congregation, the Bishop shall review the Deacon's assignment and may elect to reassign the Deacon before or after the next Rector is called. After a new Rector has taken office, the Bishop may continue the Deacon's assignment to the congregation, after consultation with the Rector and the Deacon. The Rector and the Deacon shall then, as soon as possible, establish and sign a new Letter of Agreement, subject to the signed approval of the Bishop. A three-month leave of absence for the Deacon, agreed upon by the Bishop, Rector and the Deacon, may be appropriate at any time during the first six months of the new Rector's tenure.

8.2 The Deacon or the Rector may request termination of this agreement, including withdrawal of the Deacon from the congregation, at any time, by giving written notice to the Bishop. The Bishop may act on the request, at the Bishop's sole discretion.

8.3 The Bishop may terminate this agreement, withdrawing the Deacon from the congregation, at any time and for any reason, by giving notice to the Deacon and the Rector.

8.4 Upon reaching the age of mandatory retirement (72) and every year thereafter, the Deacon will notify the Bishop and Archdeacon and will request permission to continue in ministry using the Deacon's Annual Report.

## 9. Interpretation

If the Deacon and Rector are in disagreement concerning interpretation of this Letter of Agreement, either party may appeal for mediation to the Bishop, whose decision shall be final.

Deacon	Date	Preferred Email
Rector	Date	Preferred Email
Archdeacon	Date	Preferred Email

---

Bishop

---

Date

---

Preferred Email