



(This is a sample template. Sections III through VII are to be used as a starting point for discussion and consensus among the Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge and Deacon – to be effective only after the approval of the Bishop. The Preface and Sections I and II must be included as given.)

COVENANT OF CALL

Between

The Right Reverend Deon K. Johnson, 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Missouri,

and

The Reverend _____,

whom the Bishop has assigned to serve as Deacon

at _____ Episcopal Church

in _____, Missouri,

effective _____.

PREFACE

The Deacon acknowledges *his/her* allegiance to the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, also known as The Episcopal Church, (the "Church") and to The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Missouri (the "Diocese"). *He/She* submits to the authority of the General Convention of the Church and the Convention of the Diocese. *He/She* accedes to, recognizes and accepts the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church and the Constitution and Canons of the Church and of the Diocese, as may hereafter be amended from time to time. In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the organizational documents of this *Parish/Mission* and the Constitution and Canons of the Church and of the Diocese as may be amended hereafter from time to time, the Constitution and Canons shall control and govern. The foregoing provisions may not be altered or deleted without the written consent of the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese.

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 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." (BCP p. 543)

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/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* and congregation, as well as outside the formal boundaries of the Church.

- I. **AUTHORITY** – the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* and Deacon acknowledge the following:
 - 1.1 That Deacons serve directly under the authority of the Bishop, and that their office in congregations reflects and extends their role as agents of (having limited authority to act for) the Bishop, commissioned to make the word of God, the mystery of Christ, known in many different ways and venues;
 - 1.2 That Deacons provide servant leadership in worship, ministry, and outreach in the congregation in close collaboration with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*, and serve in accordance with the policies of the Bishop of Missouri; and
 - 1.3 That *Priests/Vicars/Priests-in-Charge* preside in their congregation and exercise authority in all matters concerning the life of the congregation.

II. TENURE

- 2.1 By canon law, the consent of the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* is required for the assignment to become effective, and the execution of this Covenant of Call by the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* makes such assignment effective.
- 2.2 The assignment continues until the Bishop withdraws it, at his discretion, and either the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* or the Deacon may request such a withdrawal from the Bishop.

III. MINISTRIES IN THE PARISH

- 3.1 The Deacon shall work with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* and the baptized members in ongoing spiritual renewal of [the Parish].
- 3.2 The Deacon shall work with the people of [the Parish] in discerning gifts and developing ministries to those in need.
- 3.3 The Deacon shall cultivate sensitivity to the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world.
- 3.4 The Deacon shall have other duties as assigned by and agreed upon with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* which are to be detailed in an attachment to this Covenant of Call and may be amended from time to time by mutual agreement between the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* and the Deacon.

IV. LITURGY

- 4.1 The Deacon shall perform the traditional liturgical functions of deacons in the Episcopal Church—including proclaiming the Gospel, bidding the Creed, bidding or leading the Prayers of the People and the Confession, assisting at and preparing the Table, sending forth Eucharistic Visitors, and bidding the Dismissal.
- 4.2 The Deacon shall serve in the regular liturgies of the parish, especially the (primary) Eucharist on Sundays, Holy Day Liturgies, and at other liturgies such as baptisms, marriages, and burials by mutual agreement with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*.
- 4.3 The Deacon may preach at the parish as agreed upon and scheduled with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* or at the invitation of the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*.
- 4.4 The Deacon may officiate the Daily Offices as agreed upon and scheduled with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*.

V. PARTICIPATION IN DIOCESAN AND CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

- 5.1 From time to time, the Deacon will assist the Bishop at liturgies elsewhere, as assigned by the Bishop.
- 5.2 The Deacon will participate, as far as possible, in Diocesan Convention and other diocesan meetings, in gatherings for the Community of Deacons, and in continuing education or formation.
- 5.3 By agreement with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*, the Deacon may serve on appropriate committees of **[the Parish]**.

VI. WORK AND LEAVE

- 6.1 The Deacon serves **[the Parish]** part-time without stipend or fee.
- 6.2 Time devoted to diaconal ministry shall be made with consideration of maintaining professional responsibilities, spiritual life, and physical health and in achieving balance in life and relationships.
- 6.3 **[The Parish]** shall reimburse all fees and other expenses, including mileage, required for attendance at Diocesan Convention, Clergy gatherings, and other diocesan meetings. Mileage shall be reimbursed at the current IRS rate for business use.
- 6.4 **[The Parish]** shall reimburse other reasonable expenses, including that for continuing education, if requested by the Deacon and approved by the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* in advance of the expenditure.
- 6.5 Annual membership of \$50 with the Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) will be provided for the Deacon through **[The Parish]**. If the parish is unable to provide for the membership to AED, the Deacon may contact the Bishop.
- 6.6 **[The Parish]** shall furnish a discretionary fund, funded out of offerings for the poor and other special offerings, and direct donations, to be used for charitable purposes. The fund shall be set up as an account in **[the Parish's]** name, using **[The Parish's]** tax ID number, but with the Deacon as the only signatory. The Deacon shall make a regular report to the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* on the use of the fund, without necessarily disclosing the names of the beneficiaries.
- 6.7 Leave shall be negotiated with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* on an ongoing basis but shall minimally include:
 - 6.7.1 Four weeks of vacation each year, which include four Sundays.
 - 6.7.2 Two weeks each year for continuing education or mandated prevention training.
 - 6.7.3 Medical/sick leave as required.

- 6.7.4 Sabbatical leave from all church duties, normally after each five years of service (not necessarily in one parish) with the consent of the Bishop. A typical length of such leave is six months.
- 6.7.5 Such other leave as is required to develop and maintain self-support outside the church.

VII. REVIEW

- 7.1 The Deacon will schedule a meeting with the Bishop annually to discuss ministry goals, achievements and concerns.
- 7.2 This Covenant of Call may be amended or restated at any time by mutual agreement of the Deacon, *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*, and Bishop.
- 7.3 This Covenant of Call shall be reviewed and if necessary revised every three years. Revision may be initiated at any time by the Bishop or at the request of the Deacon or *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*.
- 7.4 In the event of the departure of the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* from [the Parish], this Covenant of Call shall remain in effect until amended or restated by mutual agreement between the Deacon and Bishop. Financial compensation by [the Parish] to the Deacon may be appropriate in this situation.

VIII. TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

- 8.1 This agreement automatically terminates, including withdrawal of the Deacon's assignment to the congregation, if and when the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* leaves this congregation. The Bishop may continue the Deacon's assignment for the interim period. A new Covenant of Call shall be in place during the interim. After a new *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* has taken office, the Bishop may continue the Deacon's assignment to the congregation, after consultation with the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* and the Deacon. The *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* and the Deacon shall then, as soon as possible, establish and sign a new Covenant of Call, subject to the signed approval of the Bishop.
- 8.2 The Deacon or the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* 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 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/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*.
- 8.4 On such termination, if desirable, an interval of thirty days shall be granted before the Deacon is withdrawn.

8.5 Upon reaching the age of mandatory retirement (72 years), the Deacon will initiate a meeting with the Bishop to consider possible ministry extension or reassignment.

IX. INTERPRETATION If the Deacon and *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* are in disagreement concerning interpretation of this Covenant of Call, either party may appeal for mediation to the Bishop whose decision shall be final.

COVENANT OF CALL

Signed by the Bishop of Missouri, the Archdeacon, and the Deacon:

Bishop of Missouri	Date
Archdeacon	Date
Deacon	Date

Signed by the *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge*, if any, consenting to the assignment of the Deacon:

<i>Rector/Vicar/Priest-in Charge</i>	Date
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