

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEACONS IN THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EAST CAROLINA**

### **DIACONAL MINISTRY IN THE COMMUNITY**

The focus of diaconal ministry is service in the community outside the bounds of a parish or mission. The ministry of a deacon varies widely, taking such forms as hospital or prison ministry, ministry to the elderly, poor, dying, homeless, marginalized, the sick, etc. The Bishop approves the specific form of diaconal ministry at any given time, and **the Deacon is accountable to the Bishop for that ministry. The Bishop has appointed Archdeacons to be the first point of contact for Deacons in all matters related to diaconal ministry and administrative matters.**

### **DIACONAL MINISTRY IN THE CONGREGATION**

In their ministry within local parishes and missions, the Deacon brings to the awareness of the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the community and the world. The Deacon helps lay people to identify their gifts for ministry, assist in providing training in the use of those gifts, and suggests opportunities for service. All that the Deacon does in the congregations should work toward the end of empowering the laity to respond to the needs of the community/world. This should mean a role in outreach development and programming as well as Eucharistic Visitors' training and Christian education and formation (e.g. the catechumenal process).

#### **Holy Eucharist:**

When a Deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the Deacon normally:

- reads the gospel,
- reads the summary of the law,
- reads at least the call/bidding of the Prayers of the People, and
- calls to and leads the confession.
- The Deacon prepares the Altar. This includes receiving the offerings and oblations from acolyte or other lay person and preparing the vessels on the altar and arranges the Altar Book and other appointments.
- It is also appropriate and recommended that the Deacon elevate the cup at the celebrant's words, "The gifts of God for the people of God" while the celebrant elevates the paten.
- If a Deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the Deacon assists in administering communion, either the bread or the cup and will perform the ablutions.
- The Deacon gives the dismissal.

If the Deacon is administering bread and comes to a child or adult who does not receive, a Deacon may say, “The Peace of the Lord be always with you.” **The Deacon may touch the child or adult on the shoulder, but will not make the sign of the cross or lay a hand on the person’s forehead.**

### **Holy Baptism:**

When a Deacon is one of the ministers at baptism, the Deacon normally:

- reads the gospel,
- may read the prayers for the candidate(s), and
- may assist the celebrant by pouring water in the font, holding towels, oil stock, prayer book and otherwise being of service, and may administer water baptism (but not the signation - p. 307, BCP).
- If the service continues with the Prayers of the People, the Deacon may read at least the bidding.

**A DEACON IS NOT ORDINARILY THE SOLE OFFICIANT AT BAPTISMS, FUNERALS OR WEDDINGS AND MUST HAVE THE ARCHDEACON’S PERMISSION IN WRITING TO DO SO IN EACH CASE. ANY EXCEPTIONAL REQUEST WILL BE REFERRED BY THE ARCHDEACONS TO THE BISHOP.**

### **Special Days:**

- **Ash Wednesday:** It is appropriate for the Deacon to read the invitation on page 264 of the Prayer Book and to assist in the imposition of the ashes. It is also appropriate for the Deacon to sing or say the Great Litany at any time it is used.
- **Palm Sunday:** If a Deacon is one of the ministers present, the Deacon normally reads the gospel and bids the people to the procession.
- **Maundy Thursday:** The Deacon should prepare the towels, ewer and basin and assist the celebrant in the washing of feet.
- **Good Friday:** The Deacon normally reads the solemn collects and biddings.
- **Easter Vigil:** The Deacon normally bears the paschal candle in procession and sings or says the Exsultet.

### **Bishop’s Visitation and Diocesan Eucharists:**

- All the above applies when the Bishop is celebrant. In addition, the Bishop's Chaplain may be a Deacon.
- In liturgical procession, all Deacons present immediately precede the Bishop or the Bishop's chaplain unless functioning in a specific role in the procession.
- In diocesan Eucharists, and especially at ordinations, the liturgical role of Deacon should be filled by a Deacon.
- At diocesan Eucharists, all Deacons present should come to the Altar immediately following the service and assist with the ablutions.

### **Related Liturgical Issues:**

- **Marriage Rite:** When assisting a Priest at a Marriage ceremony, the Deacon may, as the rubrics suggest, deliver the charge, request the declaration of consent, read the gospel, and perform those assisting functions outlined under the section of the Eucharist.
- **Ministration to the Sick:** In the absence of or at the request of Priest, it is appropriate for a Deacon to anoint with oil while praying for the sick. In a public ceremony of healing, the Priest should anoint with oil while the Deacon may assist in the laying on of hands and prayers.
- **Preaching:** Deacons may preach sermons of their own composition under the supervision of their parish Priest, or as designated by the Bishop.
- **Communion using Reserved Sacrament:** Deacons may administer Reserved Sacrament for Communion at a service of public worship **ONLY** with permission from the Archdeacons. The Deacon must follow the service in the *Customary* (Rev. 4/2009).

### **FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE DEACON**

Deacons should receive reimbursement for travel and other expenses resulting from their parish ministry. In order to be reimbursed for travel and ministry expenses, receipts must be attached to the Reimbursement Request. Mileage will be reimbursed in an amount equal to the current IRS standard rate. Discretionary funds must be maintained in accordance with Chapter V: Clergy Discretionary Funds of the Financial Manual of the Diocese. Documentation shall also be retained for continuing education expenses.

**If an honorarium is offered at a baptism, funeral or wedding in which the Deacon participates, the Deacon should accept the gift with thanks and state clearly to the donor that the gift will be used either in the parish or their diaconal ministry. A written thank you note should follow.**

**Deacons do not fall under the category of Supply Priests. Therefore, deacons do not receive a stipend for services conducted in their assigned parish. If a Deacon goes outside their parish (with the permission of the Bishop) to conduct a service, they are not to accept remuneration other than actual travel cost reimbursed in an amount specified by the current IRS standard rate.**

## **NOMENCLATURE**

The only title or verbal form of address for the Deacon is the word “Deacon,” either as prefix or suffix. The title “The Reverend Deacon or The Reverend (Name), Deacon” is proper in written correspondence only. No qualifying adjective such as “permanent” is necessary. Ordained Deacons in process toward eventual ordination to the priesthood are properly called “transitional Deacons.”

**Deacons are not “assistants to the rector” and should not be so designated.**

## **DRESS**

Deacons will wear proper vestments and symbols. The following vestment combinations are appropriate for deacons:

- \*cassock, surplice, and stole
- \*cassock-alb and stole
- \*cassock-alb, dalmatic, and stole
- \*cassock, alb, amice, and stole
- \*cassock, alb, amice, dalmatic and stole

The stole may be worn either under or over the dalmatic. A white or ivory dalmatic may suffice in all seasons with the appropriate stole. The deacon’s vestments should be in keeping with the assigned parish church’s customs. For example, if the priest wears cassock and surplice, then, the deacon would wear cassock, surplice, and stole. On occasion, choir habit is the vestment de jour. The Daily Office or the Burial Office are two examples. In this case, a deacon wears cassock, surplice, and tippet (and academic hood for awarded or honorary degree). The tippet is worn over the hood.

Street clothing is normal wear for the Deacons. Deacons will wear clerical attire when exercising their servant ministry only after consulting with the Archdeacons.

### **PARTICIPATION IN DIOCESAN LIFE**

The Bishop expects that deacons will participate in clergy conferences, clergy days, regional clericus meetings and Convention, where they have seat, voice and vote. Deacons are eligible for appointment and election to clergy positions on all boards, committees and commissions of the Diocese; including Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, Trustee of the Diocese, and Deputy to General Convention.

### **OTHER DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES**

The “Celebration of a New Ministry” (BCP 559) is appropriately used in the parish upon the assignment of a new Deacon. The Bishop will issue a Letter of Institution to be provided to the Deacon at the celebration.

The Deacon will take the initiative to schedule a conference with the Rector **at least monthly** to review their parish ministry and discuss their diaconal ministry life. One such review will be scheduled immediately prior to the anniversary date of their Letter of Agreement. A summary of responsibilities for the prior six months and a plan for the coming six months must be developed.

The community of Deacons will gather one or more times during the year at the direction of the Bishop for continuing education, prayer, worship and conversation.

(Revised 03/09)