

**A MINISTRY COVENANT BETWEEN DEACON A, BISHOP ALAN SCARFE,  
THE REV. X AND THE CONGREGATION OF ST. M CHURCH OF \_\_\_\_\_**

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.”

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, he or she also carries out ministries in close collaboration with his or her priest and congregation, as well as outside the formal boundaries of the Church.

**I. THE DEACON AND THE BISHOP**

- A. The Bishop has assigned Deacon A to serve in Congregation M.
- B. The Bishop and Deacon A agree that the primary focus of his/her ministries in the world will be comprised of  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- C. Deacon A agrees to be a full participant in the life of the Diocese through regular attendance at diocesan conventions, deacon gatherings and clergy conferences. Deacon A further pledges to serve the diocese through (e.g. membership on committees or commissions, special assignments to lead programs, etc.)
- D. Deacons typically serve in the assigned parish on a non-stipendiary basis. All of the ministries of the Deacon A shall be conducted without monetary compensation from the Church (except: list any exceptions her.)
- E. The Bishop will support Deacon A in his/her ministries through rendering of advice, support for continuing education and

sabbatical opportunities, assistance in procuring spiritual direction, and establishing a process of mediation in times of conflict.

- F. The Bishop and Deacon A will meet together on an annual basis to discuss ministry goals, achievements and problems. This meeting may be scheduled on the occasion of the Bishop's visitation or at another mutually convenient time.
- G. The Deacon will provide an annual letter of review to the Bishop on the occasion of his/her anniversary of ordination.

## **II. THE DEACON AND THE PRIEST**

- A. Deacon A will participate liturgically in Sunday services. (If there are multiple Sunday services, note the expectations here), as well as Holy Week and Christmas services. Deacon A will also participate in weddings and funerals as mutually agreed upon with the priest and as his/her schedule permits.
- B. Deacon A will also participate in worship, teaching and service within the parish in the following ways: (specify expectations concerning preaching, leading forums, discussions in preparation for baptism and confirmation, chairing or serving on committees or special programs)
- C. The priest pledges to support the ministries of Deacon A, both inside and outside the Church in the following ways: (e.g. recruiting support for the deacon's ministries in the community)
- D. The priest and Deacon A will meet at least \_\_\_\_\_ times (specify weekly, monthly or annually) for purposes of evaluating their working relationship, sharing information on their respective ministries and discussing special issues and situations within the congregation.

## **III. THE DEACON IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRIEST**

- A. In the absence of a priest in charge of Deacon A's congregation it is understood that the deacon does not automatically assume additional administrative or liturgical responsibilities. In some instances, the deacon may assume additional ministries within the congregation by mutual agreement with the vestry. (If this is the case, specify additional ministries here.)
- B. It is the responsibility of the vestry to procure the services of a supply priest for services of the Holy Eucharist. The deacon will not preside at services of the Eucharist except in emergencies or special circumstances approved by the bishop.

- C. During the period in which the congregation is without a regular priest, the deacon and the senior warden will meet \_\_\_\_\_ times (monthly or annually) to share information and to discuss issues and situations within the congregation.

#### **IV. THE DEACON AND THE CONGREGATION**

- A. Deacon A will address concerns in the world to the congregation through (specify regular offering of prayers at worship, service announcements, written materials for bulletins and newsletters, etc. as well as preaching and teaching covered in Section II).
- B. Deacon A will participate in the life of the congregation through regular attendance at annual meetings, and may participate in vestry meetings. In both instances, the deacon shall be understood not to have voting status.
- C. The congregation through its vestry, pledges to support the ministries of Deacon A through (including but not limited to payment of diocesan convention travel and registration, travel to deacon meetings, subsidy of continuing education expenses, providing a deacon's discretionary fund, and budgeting outreach funds related to the deacon's ministries in the community).

#### **V. REVIEW AND DISTRIBUTION**

- A. This covenant should undergo a thorough review every three years. In the interim it may be reviewed at the request of any party to it and should be reviewed when there is a new priest or bishop as a party to it.
- B. Copies should be distributed annually to all vestry members with provision made for asking questions about its contents.

#### **VI. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- A. In the event that conflict arises over any item covered in this covenant, the deacon should first attempt to resolve them through direct meetings with his/her priest or vestry.
- B. If conflicts cannot be resolved through local discussions, the deacon should contact the bishop to determine subsequent steps in the process (which could next involve the participation of the bishop, a member of his/her staff, or an appointed task force for conflict resolution).

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
(Bishop)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Deacon)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Priest)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Senior Warden)  
(Bishop's Warden)

DATE OF VESTRY, BISHOP'S COMMITTEE REVIEW: \_\_\_\_\_