



The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia

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Deacon's Annual Letter of Agreement

Revised September 2020

The Reverend Deacon *(add the Deacon's full name)*

The Reverend *add the Rector or Priest-in-Charge (Priest) full name* Of *(add the congregation's name and location)*

and the Right Reverend Frank S. Logue, Bishop of Georgia, agree that this Letter of Agreement (LOA) sets forth the intentions and goals of the Deacon's ministry for the coming year unless modified together by the Deacon, Bishop, and Priest.

Deacons are assigned by the Bishop to serve special ministries in the Diocese that care particularly for "the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely (BCP p. 543)." They can do so both apart from or connected to a congregation. If a deacon desires to serve a ministry apart from a congregation, she/he should speak directly to the Bishop about drafting an Annual Agreement.

The above-mentioned Deacon and Priest agree that this Deacon should serve her/his ministry as specified below. All the signatories to this LOA agree that:

1. All diaconal ministries are exercised under the oversight of the Bishop with the assistance of priests and others. Deacons are assigned and serve directly under the Bishop (BCP p. 543).
2. A deacon's ministry is to "serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely" with a "special ministry of servanthood" that "interprets to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world (BCP p. 543)."
3. Deacons are discouraged from taking on administrative roles or other activities in congregations that would distract them from their ordination vows.
4. The focus of diaconal ministry is in the community, to bring the needs of the world to the people in the church. Therefore, all deacons are expected to maintain a ministry outside the walls of the church where they also serve.
5. As a symbol of their ministry outside the walls of the church, deacons serve in particular ways liturgically in congregations. At the Eucharist, they:
 - a. Read/Proclaim the Gospel;
 - b. Bid the people to prayer;
 - c. Call people to the Confession of Sin;
 - d. Receive the Offering;
 - e. Prepare the Altar for Holy Communion;
 - f. Assist in serving Holy Communion; and,
 - g. Dismiss the people at the liturgy's end to be the hands, the heart, and feet of Jesus in the world

The Bishop will occasionally ask deacons to serve liturgically in places other than their congregational assignment (when they are so assigned) in the diocese or at diocesan liturgies. In all cases, the Diocese will respect the Deacon's responsibility to his or her family and to his or her secular employment.

For this coming year, the Deacon will have responsibilities in servant ministry in the community as described below:

(Please outline the mutually-agreed upon Deacon's ministry in the community.)

For this coming year, the Deacon shall have the following responsibilities in the Congregation as described below:

(Please outline the mutually-agreed upon Deacon's ministry in the congregation.)

The Priest and Vestry of this congregation commit to assisting and supporting the Deacon's servant ministry by publicly sharing with the congregation (referenced above) the ministry of this deacon and by providing financial reimbursement (up to an agreed upon amount specified in an attached addendum to this LOA) for costs related to her/his ministry.

The Deacon and Priest will meet annually to reflect on the Deacon's ministries for the coming year and for potential renewal of this Letter of Agreement. After the review and decision to renew, the Deacon will send the Letter of Agreement to the Bishop for his review and signature.

The Bishop licenses the Deacon to preach in any church in the Diocese when invited to do so and with the approval the priest of the inviting congregation.

The Deacon is expected to serve regularly with and through this congregation (as specified above), visibly demonstrating servant leadership to others. This includes Sunday liturgies, congregational ministries as agreed upon with the Priest, and service ministries in the community as outlined in this Letter of Agreement.

The Deacon will serve at least one Sunday liturgy each week, at liturgies on major feasts, and at other significant observances. The Deacon may be responsible for parish prayer lists that are offered in the Prayers of the People and for training and supervising Lay Eucharistic Ministers who take the Sacrament to the sick and shut-in.

The Deacon may not administer communion at a Sunday liturgy without a priest present. One standing exception: The Deacon may administer communion from the Reserved Sacrament in her or his assigned congregation on a Sunday if the priest is becomes seriously ill or in an accident within 24 hours of the liturgy and then may do so with the priest's permission (BCP p. 408, par. 5).

Deacons may assist in pastoral offices such as burials and marriages under the guidance of the Priest.

The Deacon is encouraged to take four Sundays a year as a vacation from liturgical service and is also encouraged to use two weeks each year for diaconal development.

The Deacon will participate in continuing education annually through the Deacon's Conference of the Diocese, Clergy Conferences, and other diocesan events unless family or work commitments prevent him/her from doing so. The Priest and Vestry of this congregation will provide funds for the Deacon's continuing education up to an agreed upon amount specified in an addendum to this LOA.

This Letter of Agreement expires automatically if the Priest leaves this congregation. In consultation with the Bishop or his appointed representative, the Vestry and the Deacon may extend the agreement to cover the interim period. On the arrival of a new Priest, the Deacon will leave the congregation, unless the Bishop gives specific permission for the Deacon to remain. After three months, the new Priest may, with permission of the Bishop, draw up a new Letter of Agreement.

If the Deacon has reached retirement age (age 72), she or he must write a letter to the Bishop officially retiring, as the Canons prescribe. If, however, the deacon wishes to continue on in active ministry, nothing needs to change as long as this Annual Agreement is renewed appropriately.

The Deacon and Priest may add additional parts to this LOA by attaching addenda.

Deacon

Bishop

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

Date