

LETTER OF AGREEMENT: DEACON

Between

The Rt. Rev. Kristin Uffelman White, Bishop of the Diocese of Southern Ohio,

[INSERT NAME OF RECTOR/PRIEST IN CHARGE], rector/priest-in-charge of [INSERT
NAME OF PARISH]

and

The Reverend [INSERT FULL NAME OF DEACON],

who has been appointed by the Rt. Rev. Kristin Uffelman White (the “bishop”) to serve as deacon at [INSERT NAME OF PARISH] for a period of [insert time span], beginning on [INSERT START DATE] (the “Start Date”).

PREAMBLE

The Reverend [INSERT FULL NAME OF DEACON], as a deacon in the church, has been called to a special ministry of servanthood directly under their bishop. According to the Book of Common Prayer, they are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. They are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model their life upon them. They are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by word and example, to those among whom they live, and work, and worship. They are to interpret to the church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. They are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and to carry out other duties assigned to them from time to time. At all times, their life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

According to the canons of The Episcopal Church (Title III: Canon 7. Section 4), “The Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, may assign a Deacon to one or more congregations, other communities of faith or non-parochial ministries. Deacons assigned to a congregation or other community of faith act under the authority of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.”

RESPONSIBILITIES

Section A – Servant Ministry

1. The deacon accepts the following principles of diocesan ministry:
 - a. The diocese is a body of local churches with many members, each sent by Christ with special gifts to minister to one another and to others.

- b. All diaconal ministries of the diocese are exercised under the supervision and care of the bishop with the assistance of others, as needed.
 - c. The fundamental ministry of the deacon is to hold before the church the character of the whole ministry of the church as service and of ministers as servants.
2. The deacon's ministry includes service in the community beyond the church at [NAME/DESCRIBE THE DEACON'S MINISTRY OUTSIDE OF THE CHURCH], [INSERT CITY NAME]. This ministry will consist of [LIST OF SPECIFIC DIACONAL DUTIES].
3. The bishop expects that, in this part-time and uncompensated ministry, the deacon shall serve an average of 5-15 hours per week (to be negotiated when establishing this Letter of Agreement) at [INSERT CHURCH NAME] Episcopal Church, [INSERT CITY NAME], under the direction of [INSERT RECTOR/PRIEST-IN- CHARGE'S NAME].
 - a. This service shall not conflict with the deacon's primary ministry/employment.
 - b. This includes ministries/employment that may fall on Sundays or holy days within the church.
4. This ministry may be further described in a *Deacon Position Description*, which meets the mutual approval of the deacon and the rector/priest-in-charge who directs their work. When the *Deacon Position Description* has been completed, it shall be shared with the bishop and considered a part of this Letter of Agreement.

Section B – Liturgical Ministry

According to the Book of Common Prayer, “a deacon should read the Gospel and may lead the Prayers of the People. Deacons should also serve at the Lord’s Table, preparing and placing on it the offerings of bread and wine, and assisting in the ministrations of the Sacrament to the people.” (pg. 354). The bishop will assign the deacon to serve at large in the Diocese of Southern Ohio, and also to function liturgically and pastorally at [INSERT CHURCH NAME] Episcopal Church in [INSERT CITY NAME], Ohio. The deacon shall be ready and able to respond to the bishop’s call to serve anywhere in the diocese.

The deacon shall serve liturgically as follows, when not in conflict with the deacon’s primary ministry/employment:

1. Parish liturgies on Sundays
2. Special holy days (Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil), and other parish liturgies as agreed between the deacon and the rector/priest-in-charge.
3. Assist at funerals and weddings as agreed between the deacon and the rector/priest-in-charge.
4. Inter-parochial or diocesan liturgies (such as ordinations) when called upon to do so.
5. Preaching, as approved by the bishop, invited by the rector/priest-in-charge, and agreed between the deacon and the rector/priest-in-charge.

6. Other responsibilities that are in alignment with diaconal ministry and mutually agreed upon by the deacon and rector/priest-in-charge.
7. Any other service which the bishop requests.

Section C– Administrative Ministry

1. The deacon may be responsible for:
 - a. Lay eucharistic ministry;
 - i. keeping record of actual visits, and training and assigning eucharistic visitors to specific parishioners who are unable to attend public worship.
 - b. Assisting the Parish Outreach Committee (or the like) in identifying, developing, and implementing programs of service to the community, the nation, and the world.
 - c. In collaboration with the rector/priest-in-charge, identifying gifts for baptized or ordained ministry among people within the congregation; equipping and connecting lay people with opportunities for ministry according to the needs within the community.
 - d. Making reports to vestry around the ministry set forth in this letter.
 - e. Other responsibilities in alignment with diaconal ministry and mutually agreed to by the deacon and the rector/priest-in-charge.
2. The deacon will make an annual report to the bishop during their yearly birthday meeting to be scheduled with the bishop’s administrative assistant.

Section D – Times of Work and Leave

1. The deacon will have the following periods each year, to be negotiated and coordinated with the rector/priest-in-charge:
 - a. Time for professional development.
 - b. Sick leave as required.
 - c. Vacation/time away.
 - d. No fewer than twelve (12) weeks of parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child for a member of the clergy; beginning at a time decided by Reverend [INSERT LAST NAME OF DEACON].
 - e. Family leave as needed.
2. Time shall be provided to allow the deacon to fulfill the obligation of attendance at diocesan events, including, but not limited to: Diocesan Clergy Conference, Diocesan Convention, Clergy Renewal of Vows, Diocesan Clergy Days, Deacon Retreat, and one annual three-day spiritual retreat, ordinations, funerals of clergy and other similar activities so designated by the bishop. It is understood that the deacon shall participate fully in the life of the diocese by attendance at these events when not in conflict with the deacon’s primary ministry/employment.

In addition, the deacon shall receive two weeks per year of service to the parish for sabbatical leave, to be available after the third year of service. Sabbatical leave arrangements shall be made in full consultation with the rector/priest-in-charge and the vestry/mission council, to ensure benefits for the parish as well as the deacon.

Section E – Expenses

The vestry shall pay the following expenses incurred by the deacon in fulfilling the duties of their office:

1. The parish shall cover expenses for diocesan convention consistent with guidelines for delegates and other parish clergy.
2. An expense allowance **up to \$200.00** annually for reimbursement of expenses, excluding travel expenses, incurred in the course of professional activities on behalf of the parish, to be reviewed annually.
 - a. Travel expenses: mileage, reimbursed at the volunteer per-mile rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (*\$0.14 in 2025*), plus out-of-pocket costs of parking fees, tolls, bus fares, etc.
3. Annual continuing education allowance **up to \$300.00** for expenses incurred in relation to the Professional Development Leave, referenced above. Additional continuing education funds may be requested through the bishop's office.

Additional expenses are not anticipated, however reimbursements shall be negotiated prior to the incurring of the expense, as the parish budget allows.

All annual amounts in this Section C will be prorated for partial calendar years.

Section F – Other Agreements

1. This Letter of Agreement shall be made part of the minutes of the next vestry meeting following signing, and copies shall be given to each vestry member.
2. This agreement begins **[INSERT START DATE]** and automatically terminates if and when the deacon moves to another diocese, when the deacon turns 72, or when the **rector/priest-in-charge** in the liturgical ministry leaves the congregation. This agreement may be terminated at any time by the deacon with the advice and consent of the bishop or by the bishop at her discretion. Should the rector/priest-in-charge request the dissolution of this agreement, the rector may contact the bishop.
 - a. After the age of 72, continued active service must be renegotiated directly with the bishop on an annual basis.
3. A standard term is 3 years of service to any one congregation/ministry. Assignments will be reviewed by the bishop in consultation with the deacons' council on an annual basis.

If disagreement concerning interpretation of this Letter of Agreement arises, appeal for mediation may be made to the canon to the ordinary, the bishop remaining the final arbiter.

[SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS]

[SIGNATURE PAGE TO LETTER OF AGREEMENT]

This Letter Agreement was approved by and entered into as of _____ .

Bishop:

The Right Reverend Kristin Uffelman White
Bishop of the Diocese of Southern Ohio

Rector/Priest-in-Charge:

The Reverend [**PRIEST FULL NAME**]

Deacon:

The Reverend [**INSERT FULL NAME OF DEACON**]

Reviewed By:

The Reverend Melanie W. J. Slane
Transition Minister, Diocese of Southern Ohio