



# Deaconal Ministry and Reporting Policy

## Guidelines for Deaconal Ministry and Reporting

### Purpose:

This policy outlines the roles, responsibilities, reporting structures, and expectations for deacons serving within the Episcopal Church in Idaho. It aims to clarify the distinctive nature of the diaconal order, ensure effective deployment and support for deacons, and establish clear guidelines for their ministry, compensation, and ongoing accountability.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all deacons canonically resident in or licensed to officiate within the Diocese of Idaho, both active and retired.

### Policy Statements:

#### 1. Direct Oversight by the Bishop:

Deacons in the Diocese of Idaho work directly under the direction and authority of the Bishop. Their ministry is an extension of the Bishop's ministry of service to the world.

#### 2. Parish Assignment and Reassignment:

Deacons are typically assigned to a church or parish based on the needs of that parish and upon request by the parish leadership (e.g., Vestry or clergy in charge). Reassignment of a deacon to a different church or to further ministry will be made by the Bishop in consultation with the deacon and the local church leadership, taking into careful consideration any potential hardship such reassignment may cause.

#### 3. Retirement and Continued Ministry:

The retirement age for deacons, consistent with other ordained clergy in the Episcopal Church, is 72. However, the diaconal call is a lifelong call. Therefore, after retirement, a deacon may be chosen to serve in a church at the discretion of the Bishop, in consultation with the local church's needs and the deacon's availability and willingness to serve.

4. **Financial Appreciation and Compensation:**

- **Monthly Appreciation and Pension Contribution:** Each church to which a deacon is assigned by the Bishop, or invited to serve regularly, is expected to pay a minimum of \$25 per month to the deacon, *plus* an additional amount equivalent to 18% of this monthly contribution to the Church Pension Group (CPG) on the deacon's behalf. This payment serves as an expression of appreciation for their ministry and is in accordance with national church guidelines for supporting diaconal ministry. Through the CPG contribution, deacons may become eligible for benefits such as Credo and healthcare benefits at retirement. Churches are strongly encouraged to contribute more if their financial capacity allows.
- **Sunday Service Compensation:** If a deacon serves in a church, not of their own primary place of ministry, in the capacity of a supply clergy on a Sunday, they are expected to be compensated according to the minimum guidelines provided annually by the Diocese for their service and mileage.
- **Continuing Education and Diocesan Event Expenses:** The parish to which a deacon is assigned is expected to pay for the deacon's continuing education expenses. Furthermore, the parish is also expected to cover the deacon's expenses for attending the annual clergy retreat and the annual diocesan convention.

5. **Annual Ministry Reporting:**

Each deacon is required to submit a report of their ministry to the Diocesan Office annually. This report should detail their activities, areas of service, and reflections on their ministry in the world and within the church.

6. **Meetings with the Bishop:**

Each deacon is expected to meet with the Bishop annually, either in person or via virtual platforms (e.g., Zoom), to discuss their ministries, spiritual well-being, and ongoing formation.

7. **Quarterly Meeting of Deacons:** All ordained deacons in the Diocese of Idaho are expected to participate in the quarterly Meetings of deacons and participate

in the Diocesan Annual Convention. If you are unable to attend any or both, contact the bishop's office to be excused.

**8. Formation and Mentorship:**

Deacons are expected to meet with the Archdeacon to discuss their ministries and, when appropriate, to participate in the formation and mentorship of individuals who in the process of discerning or preparing for diaconal ordination.

**9. Distinctive Role of the Deacon:**

The primary role of the deacon is to take the church into the world and bring the needs and concerns of the world back into the church. Their ministry is primarily focused on service to the community and advocating for the marginalized, while also serving at the altar to support the liturgical needs of the church as assigned. The Order of Deacons is a distinctive and full order of ministry, equal in dignity and importance to that of a priest.

**10. Collaboration with Parish Leadership:**

Deacons assigned to a church are expected to work in conjunction with the priest (if applicable) and the lay leadership (e.g., Vestry, Wardens) to establish and maintain a cohesive and healthy congregational life and ministry.

**11. Participation in Vestry and Boards:**

By virtue of ordination, deacons are not members of the Vestry or other church boards unless explicitly stated in their letter of agreement. Deacons may attend Vestry meetings or serve on boards/committees only if specifically invited or directed by the Vestry, Senior Warden, or clergy in charge. Regular attendance at such meetings requires prior consultation with and permission from the Bishop.

**12. Financial Oversight:**

Deacons do not have financial oversight responsibilities for the church's general operating funds or accounts. Their involvement with church finances is limited to the administration of discretionary funds as outlined in the Discretionary Funds Policy.

**13. Deacon's Discretionary Fund for Community Needs:**

Churches are strongly encouraged to establish a dedicated discretionary fund that a deacon can administer to care for the needs of the community, reflecting the deacon's primary call to service in the world. All guidelines outlined in the Diocese's Discretionary Funds Policy apply to a deacon's discretionary fund, and the deacon's discretionary fund is open for audit by the Vestry. Arrangements should be made for regular contributions to this fund, which could include a

monthly collection, a dedicated budget contribution, or other methods approved by the Vestry.

**14. Liturgical Role:**

A deacon serves at the altar as assigned by the Bishop or the priest in the parish. It is understood that a deacon is not primarily a minister of liturgy, but rather a minister of service to the community, bringing their unique gifts to bear in letting the world around them know that they are cared for and loved by God and the community.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Bishop and the Diocesan Council to ensure its continued relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with the canons of the Episcopal Church and the evolving needs of the Diocese.