**Letter of Agreement for Deacons in**

**Parish Assignments**

Deacon \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, under whom the deacon directly serves, agree that the deacon's exercise of the diaconate in the Diocese of Maryland shall be subject to the terms set forth in this Letter of Agreement.

1. The deacon and the congregation accept the following principles of the Church's ministry:

a. The Church is a body with many members, each sent by Christ with special gifts to minister to one another and to others.

b. In the congregation all ministries are exercised under the oversight of the bishop of the diocese and under the immediate leadership and authority of the priest of the congregation.

c. The fundamental ministry of the deacon is to hold before the Church the character of its whole ministry as service, and of her members as servants.

d. The ministry of the deacon includes working collaboratively with other members of the Church (lay persons, bishops, and priests), providing servant leadership and support while seeking always to build up the Body of Christ.

2. The bishop hereby assigns \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to serve in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (the congregation) as deacon, on a part-time, non-salaried basis, for the term of this Agreement. Administratively, the deacon reports to the priest of the congregation, who shall serve as the deacon’s immediate supervisor.

3. The primary role of the deacon is to lead the congregation, individually and collectively, into the world to address human suffering and injustice. The deacon may achieve this through empowerment of the laity to advocate for and improve community conditions, especially as they affect people who are poor, sick, weak and lonely. *(Describe on page 4 of this agreement some proposed diaconal activities to lead this congregation into ministry in the world.)*

4. The deacon shall serve liturgically as follows:

a. The deacon shall perform the full and proper role of a deacon (as specified in the canons of The Episcopal Church and the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer) at the Eucharist on Sunday and in all major liturgies of the congregation’s life. In the Eucharist the deacon proclaims the Gospel, waits at table (preparing and clearing), and dismisses the people. In addition, the deacon should normally bid the confession, and facilitate the prayers of the people, receive the offerings and distribute Communion where those functions are not normally assigned to others.

b. The deacon may at any time take the Eucharist, bread and wine, to the sick and infirm of the congregation, and may anoint the sick. The deacon may train and support Lay Eucharistic Visitors who carry the sacrament from the congregation on Sunday, if the priest and community support that ministry.

c. The deacon assists in other liturgies such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and in inter-parochial or diocesan liturgies when called upon to do so. The deacon may be officiant at baptisms, weddings and funerals under designated diocesan guidelines. (See the Clergy Handbook)

5. The bishop hereby licenses the deacon to compose and preach liturgical homilies in this diocese, when properly invited to do so, but with the understanding that the priest is the ordinary preacher of the congregation. In services conducted by the deacon, the deacon ordinarily is the preacher. The deacon is normally provided the opportunity to preach at least once a month.

6. In liturgical services, the deacon may not function in roles proper to priests or other persons. Likewise, priests or other persons in the congregation should not normally exercise liturgical functions proper to the deacon nor wear vestments suggestive of the diaconate. The deacon may, when the service of a priest cannot be obtained, distribute Holy Communion from the Reserved Sacrament as outlined in page 408 of the Book of Common Prayer and in the Clergy Handbook of the Diocese of Maryland.

7. The deacon's proper liturgical garments are a diaconal stole and dalmatic. The deacon may wear a clerical collar as the ministry requires. Titles and forms of address permitted the deacon are the word "Deacon,” either as prefix or suffix, and/or the ascription "The Reverend." The deacon may place a small cross after his/her name when signing official church documents, signifying his/her status as ordained clergy.

8. The bishop expects a non-salaried deacon in the Diocese of Maryland to serve approximately 6-10 hours per week including weekend worship and sermon preparation; this may include social, pastoral, and liturgical functions, with the understanding that this service shall not conflict with the deacon's professional employment, if any. A Deacon may volunteer for more hours but is not obligated to do so.

9. The deacon shall be allowed the following periods of leave:

a. Four weeks vacation each year, not necessarily consecutively.

b. Two weeks for the development of diaconal ministry.

c. Sick leave and inclement weather absence as required.

d. Such other leave as is required to develop and maintain self-support outside the assigned congregation, with adequate advance notice.

e. Sabbatical leave by arrangement with the bishop after seven years of service.

10. The deacon shall serve the congregation without cash stipend, housing, or housing allowance. The congregation shall reimburse the deacon for all conferences that the deacon is required to attend, such as Diocesan Convention, Clergy Conference, vestry retreats, etc. The congregation shall pay for expenses incurred by the deacon in service to the congregation, including mileage at the diocesan rate. The deacon may accept an honorarium for supply services according to the diocesan honoraria schedule when such services are performed in a worship setting other than his/her assignment.

11. The deacon is entitled to have seat and voice in the vestry or advisory board, and is to participate in the annual congregational meeting and other appropriate bodies.

12. When problems arise which affect the welfare and unity of the congregation, the deacon will bring them to the priest or senior warden and shall follow their counsel and advice. The archdeacon may provide support for problem solving. If unresolved, the bishop is the final arbiter.

13. At least once each month, the deacon shall meet with the rector/vicar to discuss the special ministries of the deacon. If trust and harmony have been seriously broken, then the deacon and rector will inform and seek support from the archdeacon.

14. The deacon shall annually review with the priest of the congregation his/her ministry over the past year including performance on the Letter of Agreement with the attachments. The substance of this review is recorded in the deacon’s Annual Report sent to the archdeacon in August of each year.

15. During April, the deacon and/or the priest should inform the archdeacon of their intention to continue (or not) the deacon’s placement in the congregation for an additional year beginning September 1. Final decisions about deacons’ assignments are made by the bishop.

16. Each congregation served by a deacon is expected to contribute annually to support the Deacon Program. The contribution shall be consistent with the following schedule:

Congregation’s Annual Budget Contribution to Deacon Program

 $60,000 or less $250.00

 $61,000-120,000 $500.00

 $121,000-200,000 $750.00

 $200,000 and over $1,000.00

 This payment is due in September at the commencement of the Letter of Agreement. The payment is payable to the Diocese of Maryland with Deacon Program in the memo line and sent to the Office of the Bishop.

 Congregation’s annual budget: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Congregation’s annual contribution to Deacon Program: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

17. This agreement is automatically terminated if and when the deacon moves to another community, and it automatically expires every year on August 31. Upon the departure of the priest, the bishop may terminate the deacon’s appointment. It may be terminated at any time by any party, subject to a 30-day notification to all parties and the final approval of the bishop.

18. In order for the deacon to serve in the congregation identified herein, the written consent of the priest, the deacon, the archdeacon and the bishop are certified by signing this Agreement and any subsequent renewal.

19. The term of this agreement is from the date it is signed by the bishop until August 31st of the following year.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Bishop: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Archdeacon:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (the congregation)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Priest: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*JO/+ETS 8-14-18*

*Response to Item 3:*

**Describe some proposed diaconal activities to lead the congregation into ministry in the world:**