



The Deacon in the Diocese of Ottawa

Competencies & Customary

In Holy Scriptures and throughout the history of the Church, there has been a diversity of ministries. Since the time of the early church, three distinct orders of ministry have been known and active. Bishops carry out the apostolic ministry of oversight, leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. Presbyters, or ordained elders, known as priests, work with the bishops in the governance of the Church, in carrying out the missionary and pastoral work, in preaching the Word of God, and in the administration of the Sacraments. Deacons assist bishops and priests and have a special responsibility to minister in Christ's name to those who are poor, sick, suffering, and in any kind of need. Bishops, priests and deacons are selected by the church, ordained and consecrated, according to the church's ordination liturgies. All three Holy Orders emerge from the baptismal ministry of the whole people of God. Those who are ordained work directly with laity and give expression to ministries that are essential to the life of the whole church in shared service to the world God loves.

The diaconate is a separate, distinct, and equal order of ordained ministry dedicated to:

- Empowering and enabling others to serve the needy, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.
- Holding before the Church the needs of the world, interpreting those needs to the Church, and enabling baptized persons to bring the ministry of Christ to the world.

Deacons are icons of the servanthood of Jesus, the body of Christ, the whole church (they are servants to the world on behalf of the Church), agents of the bishop (taking the bishop's vision into the world), leaders (encouraging baptismal ministry within the Church), and prophets (alerting the church to the needs of the world and pushing it to act). (*Diaconate in the Diocese of Toronto – November 2007 – adapted.*)

I. Competencies for Deacons in the Anglican Church of Canada (Board of Directors of the Anglican Association of Deacons in Canada – 8 December 2009 – *adapted.*)

At the heart of the diaconate is a servant community living and proclaiming the Gospel in the world. The deacon's presence is a living reminder of the community's call to servanthood, bringing the needs, concerns and hopes of the world to the church. The community of deacons enable the church to be justice makers, truth tellers, advocates, and reconcilers in the world. A deacon bears the heart of a servant, called to be a sign for hope, an instrument of transformation, and a groundbreaking prophet; all these states of being are part of the diaconal ministry.

Prior to ordination to the diaconate the candidate is expected to:

- Have a personal spirituality that demonstrates an integration of body, mind, and spirit working towards wholeness. This spirituality manifests a maturity that is demonstrated not only in regular participation in the liturgical life of the community, but also in an explicit commitment to spiritual growth, and a disciplined life of prayer.

- Have healthy approaches to their own personal care, as well as a commitment to forming a support system, which meets regularly with the candidate for prayer, reflection, and discussion of ministry, and self care.
- Have an ability to reflect critically and creatively on their theological and behavioural assumptions, as well as their own ministry practice.

Demonstrate competence in the scriptures and church history. To do this, the candidate should have:

- A basic knowledge of the content of the scriptures including the Apocrypha.
- The ability to set scriptural texts in their historical context.
- A familiarity with resources for scriptural exegesis.
- A basic familiarity of church history, with emphasis on Anglican history and history of the church in North America.
- A familiarity with the history and development of the Anglican Church in Canada.

Demonstrate knowledge of Christian theology, particularly as it relates to baptismal and diaconal ministry and work with the poor. This will require:

- A basic knowledge of the primary themes of Christian theology – the Trinity, the person and work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, Christian hope, and the mission and ministry of the church.
- The ability to clearly articulate a personal confession of faith.
- The ability to interpret the baptismal covenant.
- The ability to articulate a theology and ministry of the diaconate.

Demonstrate a competency in the arena of ethical decision-making:

- A familiarity with the theological processes of ethical decision-making.
- The ability to connect the processes of ethical decision-making with ethical questions in the family, congregation, workplace, community, and greater society.

Demonstrate competency in worship.

- Familiarity with structures and general history of Christian worship.
- An understanding of and the ability to exercise diaconal roles.
- The ability to plan and lead worship services within the worship tradition of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Demonstrate competency in one or more influential area(s) of diaconal ministries (e.g. workplace ministries, outreach ministries, social advocacy ministries, environmental advocacy ministries, etc.). This requires that a candidate:

- Have skills in the area of administration, small group work and community organization relevant to the exercise of an identified ministry.
- Have skills in the area of empowering and equipping others.
- Be familiar with the issues relating to their area of ministry and be able to articulate those issues to the church.
- Be familiar with the resources available in the church and the community for effective diaconal ministry and their area of ministry.

After completing the requisite academic courses, the candidate for the diaconate will:

- Have comprehensive knowledge of the Holy Scriptures (Old Testament, Apocrypha, and New Testament).
- Be able to outline the history of the biblical record, and identify the various contexts of the Bible.
- Be aware of the process of the development of the Bible, including the development of the Canon.
- Be familiar with various approaches to scriptural interpretation, and be able to identify one's own approach.
- Be able to identify prophetic and servanthood themes in scripture, and relate those themes to the needs of the world and the church's response to those needs.
- Be able to articulate basic historical periods of the Christian faith, including the Church's relationships within its divisions and with other faiths.
- Be grounded in the development of the Anglican tradition and liturgy.
- Have a clear understanding and appreciation of the traditions of other Christian communities and world religions, and particularly the ecumenical and interfaith nature of human concerns.
- Have an overview of expressions of theology being explored by contemporary theologians, especially those involving the poor and marginalized.

II. Customary: the expression of the Diaconate in the Diocese of Ottawa

Common practice in the Diocese of Ottawa regarding those individuals the church calls to the order of Priest include: (1) adherence to the expectations and guidance of the Bishop's Postulancy Panel and, (2) a commitment to engage the National Church document, Competencies for Ordination to the Priesthood in the Anglican Church of Canada, 2013: Primate's Commission on Theological Education.

Similarly, those individuals the church calls to the order of Deacon must: (1) adhere to the expectations and guidance of the Bishop's Postulancy Panel and, (2) meet or surpass the competencies outlined in section one above.

- Deacons are ordained for the whole diocese, and are directly accountable to the bishop. Normally, they will be licensed to serve the diocese and not a particular parish or ministry. However, a contractual arrangement may be required with a particular ministry group, parish or institution from time to time.
- The intensity of formation and training for deacons should be equal to that of a priest as they are full and equal orders. This will include the B.Th. degree or its equivalent and at least an additional year of specialized training for the diaconate.
- Deacons will receive an appropriate stipend or honourarium from the diocese for the particular ministry and work assigned by the bishop. Normally, deacons are expected to have specialized skills. These might include, among other skills or gifts: small church coaching, parish development, social service delivery, spiritual direction, conflict management and prayer.
- Deacons may be informally known as "Deacon John/Jane Doe" or "Dn. Doe. " If and when a formal title is required, it shall be "The Rev Deacon John/Jane Doe."

- Those ordained deacons who anticipate also being ordained priest, are referred to as transitional deacons. Those ordained deacon with no anticipation for priestly ordination will be referred to simply as Deacon.
- Deacons may wear a clerical collar when (a) functioning liturgically or attending formal church gatherings such as Synod and, (b) exercising a specific diaconal ministry outside the church community, such as hospital visitation, services in seniors' homes, and officiating at public events.
- Regarding liturgical wear, a deacon may wear a dalmatic over an alb if the practice is consistent with local tradition, and a stole worn over the left shoulder and tied or fastened under the right arm. As well, new deacons, at their ordination, will be vested with a maniple (an ancient vestment which looks like a stylized 'towel'), worn as a liturgical vestment, which marks them as icons of the servanthood of Jesus. The maniple is worn over the left arm. Deacons may also choose to wear a cassock, surplice and tippet.
- If a deacon is liturgically present for the Eucharist, he or she functions under the direct authority of the presiding bishop or priest. It is the deacon's role to proclaim the Gospel. They may also set and clear the Altar at Eucharist. The deacon proclaims the dismissal at the end of the Eucharist. Deacons may also assist in intercessions, administering the sacraments, and reading lessons if those roles do not take away lay involvement.
- When appropriate, deacons will preach and proclaim the Word of God. The deacon has the special responsibility to promote the diaconal message of Jesus Christ, which is to speak to the church and motivate the Church to serve the poor, the sick, the suffering, the helpless, and those in need, as well as to encourage people to live out their baptismal ministries.
- A deacon may conduct a funeral with consultation and approval of a priest. In the absence of a priest (but with the priest's permission), a deacon may perform a baptism (and, as with laity, may perform an emergency baptism). Deacons will not perform marriages.
- A deacon may not officiate at the Liturgy of the Word and then distribute Reserved Sacrament in lieu of a full celebration of the Eucharist in a congregation (the so-called 'deacon's mass'). The deacon may lead worship using Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer for a Sunday service. Deacons may bring the Sacrament to the ill and homebound.
- Deacons are full members of the college of clergy and as such have voice and vote at Synod. They may serve as clergy on the councils of the Diocese and wider Church. They are invited to attend clergy days and clergy conference, but may be excused if their attendance conflicts with secular work or personal schedules.
- Deacons are encouraged to continue in the life-long process of Christian formation, which involves an intentional form of continuing education in their field of focus and in the life, prayer and ministry of the Church.

Feast of St. Mary the Virgin, 2013
The Rt. Rev. Dr. John H Chapman
9th Bishop of Ottawa