



Making Disciples Raising up Saints Transforming Communities for Christ
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
THE TRANSITIONAL DEACON EXPERIENCE

Purpose: to live out the vows taken when ordained as a transitional deacon

At your ordination to the diaconate you were given the following charge.

“My brother/sister, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself..” --BCP, Page 543

We are asking you to live out this charge and these promises as a transitional deacon:

- To be faithful in prayer, and in the reading and study of the Holy Scripture
- To look for Christ in all others, being ready to help and serve those in need
- To be a wholesome example to all people
- To seek not your glory but the glory of the Lord Christ

THE ARCHDEACON'S EXPECTATIONS

Goal: To demonstrate competency in Diakonia and the Diaconate.

During the Transitional Diaconate you will be expected to:

- Get to know the internal dynamics of the congregation you are assigned to and the differences in the roles of priest, laity and deacon
- Discover the issues, needs and responses of the marginalized and oppressed in the community you serve
- Practice skills for raising awareness about contemporary/local social issues, i.e.,
 - Match the needs of the community with the skills of the congregation;
 - Practice skills required to empower individuals and groups;
- Understand the deacon as interpreter and catalyst
- Become adept at articulating, from experience, what it means to be a deacon in the church
- Develop an understanding of the role and duties of the deacon in all the liturgies of the Episcopal Church, as written in the rubrics and additional directions of the Book of Common Prayer

The Transitional Diaconate is an opportunity to live into your diaconal ordination vows. We hope this experience will help you to articulate the following:

- What it means to be a deacon in the church
- The issues needs and responses of the marginalized and oppressed in the community you serve
- The concerns of the community and build bridges between your congregation and the marginalized
- The internal dynamics of the congregation to which you are assigned
- The differences between the roles of priest, laity and the deacon
- The role and duties of the deacon in the liturgy

The Deacon Mentor's role:

- Resource-- Will share their knowledge and experience but not to act as a supervisor
- Support--A confidant to "check in" with, and available to help you process your experience
- Guide--Will advise and help keep you focused and on track with your diaconal work

Begin working on the following tasks the first day of the month following your Ordination and continuing up to your Ordination to the priesthood:

1. **PLAN:** Execute a Letter of Agreement with Presbyter Supervisor for 8 hours of diaconal work a week. The Deacon can serve as the deacon of the table and proclaim the gospel. The agreement should include a minimum of 4 hours a week of community ministry.
 - This Letter of Agreement needs to be approved and signed by the COM chairperson and the Archdeacon
 - Copies of this letter need to be sent to your Presbyter Supervisor, Deacon mentor and your COM liaison
 - The community ministry hours can include planning, reading and time spent getting to know the community context of the congregation
 - Additional time in the congregation beyond your liturgical duties may include congregational fellowship opportunities, teaching, preaching and pastoral care

2. **EXPLORE:**
 - Read at least 2 books on the diaconate from the following list:
 - *Many Servants*, by Ormonde Plater
 - *Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, by James M. Barnett
 - *Deacons and the Church*, by John N. Collins
 - *Deacons in the Liturgy*, by Ormonde Plater
 - *Being a Deacon Today*, by Rosalind Brown
 - *All who Minister*, by Maylanne Maybee
 - *The Servant Church*, by John Booty
 - *Servanthood*, by Bennett J. Sims
 - *Unexpected Consequences, the Diaconate renewed*, by Suzanne Watson-Epting
 - Review and study, from the Book of Common Prayer:
 - Ordination of a Deacon (BCP p. 537-544)
 - Rubrics and Additional Directions for all services in the Book of Common Prayer. *These are easy to find by going to the Online Book of Common Prayer <http://www.bcponline.org> and searching for "deacon"*

3. **CONNECT:** Meet in person or by teleconference monthly with your Deacon Mentor and other transitional deacons for one or more of the following activities:
 - Worship
 - Discussion of one of the charges at ordination
 - Discussion of one of the books
 - General conversation about how your ministry is going

4. **REFLECT:** Keep a journal with the purpose of documenting and reflecting on your experience as a transitional deacon. Frequently consider how these experiences relate to the vows you took when ordained a deacon. Share insights from this journal with your mentor deacon monthly. You may also choose to also share some of these reflections with your COM liaison.

5. **PORTFOLIO:** Gather ideas and information into a portfolio during your time as a deacon. The purpose of this portfolio is to collect ideas, inspirations and resources. Many of the items you include in this portfolio will be useful if you are putting together an OTM ministry portfolio.
The portfolio can include but is not limited to:
 - Your contributions to the church newsletter
 - Sermons (print, audio, video)
 - Information related to classes you have taught or presentations you have made (Curriculum outlines, lecture notes, etc.)
 - News articles about concerns in the world and the local community
 - Stories of diaconal work in the church and beyond that inspire you
 - Plans for missional activity
 - Lists of neighborhood resources
 - Lists of topical books you have read or would like to read