

The Ordination of Deacons

based on the alternative text issued by the College of Bishops, 2019, revised by the Liturgy Committee and a joint Working Party formed by the Committee and the Diaconal Working Group, 2022-23)

Considerations which have guided the revision process:

- 1. The quite radical transformation in understanding of the Diaconate, within the SEC, across the Anglican Communion, and ecumenically (not limited to denominations which retain the threefold ordering of bishops, presbyters, and deacons), means that the Ordinal of 1984 (amended 2006), derived ultimately from that of 1661, no longer reflects the doctrine and ministry of the Church.*
- 2. Particularly given these changes in the nature and ministry of the Diaconate, congregations at services of Ordination are likely to include supporters of candidates to whom ecclesiastical language is opaque, ritual actions meaningless, and who may not appreciate mystery – but who are people loved by God and made in God’s image, on whose continued support the Church will depend if those ordained are to flourish in ministry. It is therefore important that they be made welcome and put at ease, that their role in the life of the candidate be affirmed, and that the rituals they witness be made as meaningful as possible for them.*
- 3. Those presenting candidates should represent (a) the authorities who have been responsible for their vocational discernment and formation, and testify to the bishop in public, as they have already done privately, that the candidate is fit for ordination, and (b) those who will share with the bishop in responsibility for their continuing formation and oversight of their ministry. The model of “training incumbent and lay representative of the congregation” is no longer appropriate. Nor is this a role for friends, but the liturgical expression of the role of those who have discharged, and continue to discharge, responsible and formational roles in the life of the candidate, on behalf of the Church.*
- 4. Duets are awkward, and usually inaudible, especially those speaking are facing the bishop and away from the congregation. However many people participate in the presentation, where the congregation need to hear the words clearly, one should speak on behalf of both/all.*
- 5. It may be appropriate that the bishop or (liturgical) deacon offer explanation or commentary at different stages in the liturgy, particularly when the congregation is called upon to respond.*
- 6. Especially if there is more than one candidate, the congregation is likely to include people who do not know him/her. It is therefore important that candidates be introduced, and the roles they are assuming identified, and related to the broader ministry of the Church.*
- 7. A deacon, other than the candidates, should play a prominent role in the liturgy, beside the Bishop.*
- 8. In getting to know the candidates, the Bishop will have ascertained the appropriate pronouns (P in text) to use at the Imposition of Hands*

(Section 12). Consideration will need to be given as to how this is reflected in any printed order of service, especially if more than one candidate is to be ordained on the same occasion.

- 9. The diversity of contexts in which diaconal ministry is exercised, and the variety of gifts which empower their work, mean that the tradition of symbols other than the book of Scripture (Gospels or New Testament) and vesture needs to be considered with some care (Section 13). If further symbols are to be used, portable objects appropriate to the ministry of each candidate will need to be identified. If the book of Pastoral Offices for Deacons is given to each, it should be at this point, and not with the book of Scripture.*

INTRODUCTION

(It is suggested that this or similar material be included in printed orders of service)

The significance of the rite

Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons make up the three Holy Orders of the Church's sacred ministry. No one carries out the duties of any of these orders unless first called, tested, examined, and having undergone a programme of formation and training over a period of years. By the time they come to Ordination, candidates are recognised as having the qualities necessary to exercise the duties of their particular office. While this process has been concluded before the Ordination service, it is also confirmed when the candidate is presented to the Bishop for Ordination (sections 9 to 11.)

Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons must also be lawfully admitted to their orders by public prayer, with imposition of hands by the Bishop, according to one of the authorised liturgies of the Church.

The rite of Ordination has always taken place as part of the Eucharist because the sacred ministry has its beginning and its end in the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion.

The ministry of Deacons in the life and mission of the Church

Deacons are ministers set apart for special tasks of service of the Church. They receive through their ordination important responsibilities in the ministry of the word, administration of the sacraments and public worship. This ministry of word and sacrament is the source of their wider ministry, which encompasses care in the name of Christ and the Church for those who are poor, in need, and those who are sick and suffering. They carry out all these tasks and responsibilities under the pastoral authority of their Bishop. With their Bishop, they are called to build bridges between the Church and the world, and to be through their ministry a living expression of the unconditional love of God.

Symbolism

The rite of ordination involves actions as well as words rarely if ever witnessed at public worship on other occasions. Each has its particular significance.

Imposition of hands by the Bishop

Holy Orders are bestowed by the imposition (laying on) of hands by the Bishop, acting in the name of the whole Church (section 12). The imposition of hands is accompanied by a prayer asking God to grant the ordinand the graces of the Holy Spirit required for that ministry. This is the essential ritual act of the ordination liturgy.

Vesting

The vestments worn by the clergy at the Eucharist have their origins in the later Roman empire, and reflect the customs of the court and of everyday life, as well as religious usage of the day. They have developed over the centuries to reflect the office of those who wear them. At their Ordination, Deacons are vested with the distinctive clothing of their Order. The stole – a long strip of

coloured cloth – is placed across the left shoulder and fastened below the right arm. The stole worn in this way is the specific mark of office, the badge of the Deacon's orders. Deacons may also be vested in the Dalmatic, a tunic with wide sleeves, distinctive to the Deacon at the Eucharist, and reflective of their role in representing the Bishop in the service of the Church.

Receiving the Book of the Gospels or the New Testament

After the Vesting, Deacons receive either a Book of the Gospels or the New Testament (section 13), because their Order has the special duty and ministry of reading the Holy Gospel during the celebration of the Eucharist. This ministry expresses the teaching of the faith and the proclaiming of the good news of Jesus Christ more widely in the Church and in the World. The ministry to which Deacons are ordained is the work of the Gospel.

Other Symbols

Deacons in their ministry glorify God in a variety of contexts. A symbol of their particular work, either a utensil they will use in their ministry or an object that reflects the nature of their service, may also be given to the newly ordained Deacons.

The Ordination of Deacons

for use with Scottish Liturgy 1982 (revised 2022)

1. Presentation of the Candidate

The candidate(s) are presented to the bishop and congregation.

Presenters: Bishop, we present to you N. to be ordained as a Deacon in the Church of God.

The candidates are introduced to the congregation.

2. The Bishop's Charge to the Candidate(s)

Bishop: The Church is the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

In baptism every disciple is called to make Jesus known as Saviour and Lord, and to share his work in renewing the world. The indwelling Spirit of God has endowed every baptised person with particular gifts, to be used to God's glory and in building up the community. In discovering their gifts, and seeking ways to use them, some are called to distinctive offices, to which they are ordained by the bishop.

Deacons share with the bishop and presbyters in the ministry of word and sacrament and in works of love. They call the people of God to worship, and assist the priest in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. In the name of the Church, deacons proclaim Christ's redeeming love to the world, and interpret its needs and hopes to the Church.

In a distinctive way deacons are a sign of the gospel they proclaim and an example of the humility which marks all service offered in the name of Christ, bearing witness to the Lord who laid aside all

claims of dignity, assumed our human nature, and accepted death on a cross.

In the name of the Church, deacons are sent to declare the kingdom of God and to care for those in need, serving God and the world after the pattern of Christ. In their life and teaching they show that, in serving those in need, they are serving Christ. Deacons are committed to outreach and witness, advocacy and prophecy, flowing from their historic ministry of caring for the poor, the needy, and the sick in the name of Christ and the Church, and of seeking out all who know their need of God. With their bishop, they are called to build bridges between the Church and the world, and to be an expression of the unconditional love of God.

To fulfil such a task is not in human power but depends upon the grace of God, to whom we now pray.

Silent prayer, followed by

either Almighty God, by grace alone you call us and accept us into your service: strengthen us by your Spirit, and make us worthy of your call; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

or

Everliving God, strengthen and sustain those whom you have chosen, that with patience and understanding they may love and care for your people; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

9. Declaration of the Candidate(s)

We SIT. The candidate(s) stand(s) before the Bishop.

Bishop: N., before you are admitted to the Order of Deacons, you must declare before God and the Church that you intend to fulfil the duties of that office. I therefore ask you:

Do you trust that you are truly called by God to serve as a deacon in the Church?

Answer: I do.

Bishop: Will you devote yourself to prayer, to reading the Holy Scriptures, and to all studies that will increase your faith and deepen your understanding of the truth?

Answer: *By the help of God, I will.*

Bishop: Will you, in all your dealings with others, in the life of the Church, in your home, and in the world, seek to show an example of obedience to the way of Christ?

Answer: *By the help of God, I will.*

Bishop: Will you be a diligent minister of the Word of God, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ in your life and in your work, upholding catholic doctrine founded upon the Scriptures?

Answer: *By the help of God, I will.*

Bishop: Will you, as a deacon in the Church of God, be ready to help and serve those in need, seeing in them the Lord Jesus Christ?

Answer: *By the help of God, I will.*

Bishop: Will you respect the pastoral direction, leadership and guidance of your bishop?

Answer: *By the help of God, I will.*

Bishop: May the Lord who has called you to this work, and given you the will to undertake it, also give you grace to perform it.

People: **Amen.**

10. The Assent of the People

Bishop: Do you, the people of God in this place, trust that N. is truly called by God to serve as a deacon in the Church?

People: **We do.**

Bishop: Will you uphold N. in prayer, and support *her/him/them* in the ministry to which *she/he/they* has been called?

People: **We will.**

11. The Calling of the Candidate

Bishop: In the name of the Holy Spirit and of the Church of Christ we call you to serve in the Order of Deacons. Do you accept this call?

Answer: *I do.*

12. The Prayer of the People

Litany or Silent Prayer (*See Appendix for alternative Litanies*)

Bishop: Creator of all,
your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
came among us in humility,
proclaiming a gospel of justice, love and peace.
Through every age you send your Spirit
to fill those whom you have chosen,
to equip your people for ministry,
and to build up Christ's body, the Church.

*The Bishop
lays hands on
the head of
each
candidate*

You have called your servant *N*.
Pour now upon *P* your Spirit
and make *P* a deacon in your Church;
send *P* to follow your beloved Servant, Jesus,
who washed the feet of his disciples;
that *P* may proclaim your love
in word and deed.

May *N*. be holy, disciplined and sincere;
and *P* words and actions
declare your truth,
and *P* life shine with
the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ;
who with you and the Holy Spirit
lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever.

People: **Amen.**

13. Presentation of Symbols of Office

The deacon is vested according to custom, and is presented with the Book of the Gospels or the New Testament. The following words may be used:

Bishop Receive the living Word of God,
 and proclaim the Gospel of Christ in the world.

The book of Pastoral Offices for Deacons, and other symbols which reflect the ministry of each, may also be given to the newly ordained.

The bishop and other deacons present greet the newly ordained.

The liturgy of the Eucharist continues with the Peace.