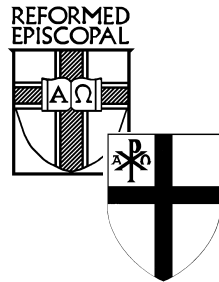


HANDBOOK  
FOR  
THE ORDER OF  
DEACONESSES



IN THE  
REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
AND THE  
ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA

2005



The contents of this handbook were approved by the General Committee, the Committee on Constitution and Canons, the Committee for Doctrine and Worship, the Council of Bishops of the Reformed Episcopal Church, and the House of Bishops of the Anglican Province of America meeting in executive session April 6-9, 2005, in Summerville, South Carolina.

The information contained herein is intended for use in conjunction with Canons 22, "*Of Deaconesses*,"\* as authorized by the General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Province of America in the Constitution and Canons for their respective jurisdictions.                   \* [ See appendices A and B ]

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For those who have been Set Apart and those who will be, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to The Rt. Rev. Royal U. Grote, Jr., Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Mid-America of the Reformed Episcopal Church, and to Dss. Tina Jenkins of the Anglican Province of America for their prayerful and gracious support, guidance, and contributions toward the compilation and approval of this handbook.

A.M.J.

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## FOREWORD

The Order of Deaconesses is an ancient and Apostolic vocation for lay women in Christ's Church. It is a Scripturally based, theologically appropriate venue for women who feel called to ministerial service. (*Romans 16:1; also cited, I Timothy 3:11*) It is not our purpose here to recount the history of Deaconesses through the ages. Suffice it to say that Deaconesses have been set apart to serve the Church at various times throughout history, and continue to do so today. It may be beneficial, however, to document the revival of the Anglican branch of the Order in the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) and the Anglican Province of America (APA), since it is to those jurisdictions this handbook is addressed.

Although the Anglican Deaconess Order began to flourish in the mid-1800's in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, it was not officially recognized and established in canon law until 1889. The Reformed Episcopal Church followed a similar pattern, albeit much later. For nearly a century and a quarter since its founding in 1873, the Reformed Episcopal Church had not seen a need to include an Order for women called to ministerial service, even though a number of women had served the church in similar capacities through the years. However, as the denomination began to expand in the 1990's, and people and congregations formerly belonging to other jurisdictions were received into the REC, it became necessary to consider this historic form of ministry for women. In 1995, an Anglican congregation in Katy, Texas, near Houston, applied to become a part of the Reformed Episcopal Church. Serving the congregation was a resident Deaconess, Annette M. Johnson, who had been Set Apart to the Order in the Anglican Church in America in 1993. When St. Matthias Church was received into the REC by The Rt. Rev. Royal U. Grote, Jr., Bishop Ordinary of what was then called the Missionary Diocese of North America (now the Diocese of Mid-America), he accepted Dss. Johnson's credentials as well. She requested a transfer and began to serve under Bishop Grote. Several years later, in 1999, following General Council at which a major revision of the Constitution and Canons was authorized to begin, Dss. Johnson was asked to submit recommendations for a Canon on Deaconesses. At the 50<sup>th</sup> General Council of the REC in 2002, Canon 22, *Of Deaconesses*, was adopted, and the Order of Deaconesses was officially established in the denomination. In January 2003, another Deaconess, Teresa Johnson of Memphis, Tennessee, was Set Apart and several more are currently in training.

The Anglican Province of America considers its heritage to be classical Anglicanism which historically has authorized an Order of Deaconesses. For that reason when the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Province of America were adopted in 1998, Article 22 "*Of Deaconesses*" was included as part of the original document. The first APA Deaconess, Elizabeth (Tina) Jenkins, was Set Apart at the Provincial Synod held at St. Paul's Church, Melbourne, Florida in 1998. About this time the uniting of Traditional Anglican Churches gathered momentum. Several jurisdictions joined the APA and with them came Deaconesses

who previously had been Set Apart. Currently, the APA has four Deaconesses: Dss. Eunice Brown of Deming, New Mexico, Set Apart in 1983, and now retired; Dss. Suzanne Standifer, of Valparaiso, Indiana, Set Apart in 1995; Sr. Lynda of Charlottesville, Virginia, Set Apart in 1995; and, Dss. Tina Jenkins mentioned above. In addition, there are three candidates presently in training.

Considering the climate of feminism prevailing in other branches of the Church today, one point must be made clear. Although each woman entering the Order is "ordered, or set apart" to this particular office in the Church, the Order of Deaconesses is not included among the traditional three-fold office of ministry constituting Holy Orders, i.e. Deacon, Priest (Presbyter), or Bishop. Christian orthodoxy, to which both the REC and APA adhere, holds that these offices are exclusively male. A Deaconess is an assistant to the clergy, but not a member thereof, and her duties and functions do not include those of a priestly nature. A number of Anglican theologians have described the Order as *sui generis*, unique unto itself. At first glance this description may seem only to confuse the issue. However, it does appear to be a fitting term for the place and function of the Deaconess in the Church.

This position is not intended to diminish a woman's calling to serve the Church – quite the contrary. The Order of Deaconesses provides a unique office and opportunity for women, compatible with God's established order and authority which the Church is obligated to reflect. It is not, after all, the question of a woman's ability which prevents her from being admitted to Holy Orders, but that of authority – the authority granted by God to Man (male and female) in His creation. The roles of men and women are intended to be equal but complimentary, not competing, with the male being the head. Throughout Scripture we see women occupying various positions of authority from heads of state, to judges, to merchants, as well as other seats of responsibility within society at large. However, within the community of the faithful, the Biblical example shows that a woman was never granted priestly authority among the people. The vocation of women set apart in this context was to prayer, nurture, and service. This concept is reflected throughout Scripture, and was not changed when the New Testament Church was established. By virtue of her office, properly understood and executed, the Deaconess inherently undertakes a certain level of ministerial authority both within and on behalf of the Church, especially among women and children. Nevertheless, she is always subject to the ecclesiastical authority of the men placed over her in the Lord.

Listed within this handbook are the duties and functions of a Deaconess along with requirements for training and admission to the Order. These are based upon the traditions and canon law established in other branches of Anglicanism during the past 150 years and reflect the historical role of Deaconesses through time. Therefore, they are not without precedent. The primary sources were Canon 48, *Of Deaconesses*, from the 1964 Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America with additional stipulations taken from the *Status and Functions of Deaconesses of the Church of England (1939-1941)* as practiced in

1950. Certain additions and changes to these sources were made to meet the specific needs of the REC and the APA, and to conform with their respective Constitutions and Canons. Please keep in mind that some of the specific functions granted to a Deaconess are not intended to be normative in every parish situation. They were included to extend to Deaconesses in remote missionary circumstances, or other special situations, privileges which would not normally be needed otherwise. Any privilege afforded a Deaconess rests with the permission of her Bishop and the incumbent under whom she is assigned. Also, included in the Appendices is *A Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses* taken from the third edition (1960) of The Book of Occasional Offices, and authorized for use in the REC and APA.

On behalf of the Council of Bishops of the Reformed Episcopal Church  
and the House of Bishops in the Anglican Province of America, I am

In His Service,  
Dss. Annette M. Johnson  
Eastertide, 2005

### *Prayers for the Order of Deaconesses*

**O** GRACIOUS FATHER, we here dedicate both our souls and our bodies to thee and thy service, in a sober, righteous, and godly life: in which resolution, do thou, O merciful God, confirm and strengthen us; that, as we grow in age, we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

**O** LORD of souls, who hast chosen and called us to service in thy Church; all our trust is in thee, for in thee are the springs of our life. Abundantly give us of thy blessed Spirit, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, and use us as it shall please thee for the glory of thy Name. Empty us of self and fill us with the meekness of wisdom. Increase our faith, mellow our judgment, stir our zeal, deepen our affections. Do thou choose for us the work we do and the place in which we do it, the success we win and the harvest we reap. Preserve us from jealousy and impatience, from self-will and depression. Make us faithful unto death, and give us at last the crown of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**O** LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy handmaidens who call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Concerning  
Deaconesses

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Duties & Functions  
Training & Admission

**Concerning the ORDER of DEACONESSES  
in the REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
& THE ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA**

**— including Requirements for Training & Admission —**

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**I. Ordering.** The Order of Deaconesses is an Apostolic office and ministry recognized as a lay vocation for women. A woman of devout character and proved fitness may be ordered Deaconess by any Bishop of this Church, subject to the provisions contained herein.

**II. Duty.** (a.) The duty of a Deaconess is to assist in the work of the Parish, Mission, or institution to which she may be appointed, under the direction of the Rector or Priest in charge; or, if there be none such, to perform such functions as may be directly entrusted to her by the Bishop.

**Functions.** (b.) The following are the chief functions which may be entrusted to a Deaconess:

- 1.) To care for the sick, the afflicted, and the poor;
- 2.) To give instruction in the Christian Faith;
- 3.) Under the Rector or the Priest in charge, to prepare candidates for Baptism and for Confirmation;
- 4.) To assist at the administration of Holy Baptism, and when Baptism is administered privately in the absence of the Priest or Deacon to be the ministrant by virtue of her office;
- 5.) Under the Rector or Priest in charge to organize, superintend, and carry out the Church's work among women and children;
- 6.) With the approval of the Bishop and the incumbent, to read Morning and Evening Prayer (except such portions as are reserved for the Priest) and the Litany in Church or Chapel in the absence of the Minister; and when licensed by the Bishop to give instruction or deliver addresses at such services, but not during Holy Communion;

- 7.) To organize and carry on social work; and in colleges and schools to have a responsible part in the education of women and children, and to promote the welfare of women students.

**III. Candidacy.**

(a.) A woman desiring reception as Candidate for the office of Deaconess shall submit to the Bishop of the Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District, letters of recommendation from her Rector and from two women communicants of the Church, together with evidence that she is a communicant of the Church in good standing; and that she is a graduate of a four-year institution of higher learning.

(b.) If the Candidate be not a graduate as aforesaid and she shall have attained the age of thirty-five years, she must satisfy the Board of Examining Chaplains that she possesses the intellectual ability to enter with advantage upon a course of study preparatory to being Set Apart. To this end, the Board of Examining Chaplains in each Diocese and Missionary Diocese or District shall develop and publish, with the consent of the Bishop and the Standing Committee or Council of Advice, a procedure of study and examination for those Candidates that do not meet the requirements of Clause (a.) of this Section. Such procedure shall be applied uniformly to all Candidates not meeting the requirements of Clause (a.) of this Section.

(c.) During the period of Candidateship, she shall be under the supervision of the Bishop, and shall report to him quarterly at the Ember Seasons. If possible, at least one-half of the time of her preparation shall be spent in residence with Deaconesses, or at a Church Training School.

**Marital Status.**

(d.) It should be understood that a Deaconess dedicates herself to a life-long service, but that no vow or implied promise of celibacy should be required as necessary for admission to the Order. However, if a woman seeking candidacy is already married, or should the question of marriage arise after her ordering, she must be able to convince the Bishop that she will be able to fulfill her vocation to married life as well as that of a Deaconess. The Bishop shall seek to counsel the Candidate's husband and children (if there be such), or, in the case of one already

Set Apart, her intended spouse as to the demands and expectations of her office and to confirm their support of her ministry.

(e.) For due cause the Bishop may terminate any Candidacy.

**IV. Examination required.**

(a.) Before admission to the office of Deaconess a Candidate shall be required to pass examinations in the following subjects:

- 1.) Holy Scripture: The Bible in English; introduction to and contents of the various books; special knowledge of at least one Gospel and one Epistle.
- 2.) Church History: A general outline, including the History of the Church in the United States, and special knowledge of the first five centuries, and to include the history of Deaconesses both ancient and modern.
- 3.) Christian Missions: History; present extent and methods; at least one missionary biography.
- 4.) Doctrine: Contents and teaching of the Book of Common Prayer, including preparation for the Sacraments.
- 5.) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology: Particular emphasis on matters pertaining to the counseling of women and children.
- 6.) Ministration: The office and work of a Deaconess; Parish Work and Organization.

Candidates should be qualified in one or both of the following areas:

- 7.) Religious Education: Psychology; Educational methods; Church School Management.
- 8.) Social Service: Principles involved in the adjustment of individuals to each other and to the community; the methods of social case work; familiarity with the recognized standards of the work of social organizations including institutions.

**Medical training.**

In addition:

- 9.) First Aid, CPR, Basic Home Care: All Candidates shall be certified in an American Red Cross course in First Aid, CPR, and Basic Home Care Skills. Proof of completion shall be presented to the examiners.
- 10.) EMT Training: Candidates seeking to be assigned to the Missionary field shall be certified as Emergency Medical Technicians. Any Deaconess accepting a Missionary assignment shall be so qualified before embarking for her destination.

(b.) This examination shall be conducted by examiners appointed by the Bishop. The results of the examination shall be certified to the Bishop, and to the Standing Committee of the Diocese or Council of Advice of the Missionary Diocese or District.

**Internship required.**

(c.) The Candidate shall also be required to serve a minimum of nine months internship, supervised by a Presbyter.

**V. To be at least twenty-three years old, & eighteen months a Candidate.**

The Bishop shall not Set Apart as Deaconess a woman under the age of twenty-three years, but that in ordinary circumstances it is advisable that before a woman is admitted to the Order she shall have attained the age of thirty years. Nor shall a woman be Set Apart within eighteen months of her reception as a Candidate, unless the Bishop, with the advice and consent of a majority of the members of the Standing Committee or Council of Advice, agree to shorten the time of her Candidateship; but the time shall not be shortened to less than one year.

**VI. Testimonials required.**

No woman shall be admitted a Deaconess until she shall have laid before the Bishop testimonials showing that she is a communicant of this Church in good standing, and that she possesses such characteristics as, in the judgment of the persons testifying, fit her for the duties of that office. The testimonials of fitness shall be signed by two Presbyters of this Church and by twelve Lay communicants, six of whom shall be women.



**VII. *Physical & Psychological examination.*** Before admission as a Deaconess the Bishop may require the Candidate to submit to a thorough examination by a physician appointed by the Bishop. This examination shall cover her mental and nervous as well as her physical condition. Any reports shall be kept on file by the Bishop and shall be submitted to the Standing Committee or Council of Advice with the application to be recommended for admission to the office of Deaconess.

**VIII. *Standing Committee recommendation necessary.*** When the foregoing specified requirements have been complied with, the Bishop, upon the recommendation of the Standing Committee of the Diocese, or Council of Advice of the Missionary Diocese or District, may admit the Candidate to the office of Deaconess. The fact of the setting apart of a Deaconess shall be transmitted by the Bishop to the Secretary of the General Council or Provincial Synod, together with the following data:

- 1.) Her full name.
- 2.) Place and date of birth.
- 3.) Date and place of such setting apart.

Any change in the status of a Deaconess shall be likewise notified to the Secretary by the Bishop.

**IX. *Admitted by Religious Service.*** No woman shall be recognized as a Deaconess until she has been admitted to that office by a service prescribed either by the General Council or Provincial Synod; or, in the absence of such prescription, by the Bishop of the Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District. [See Appendix C]

**X. *Title.*** A woman having thus been Set Apart to the Order is properly addressed as “Deaconess”. The appropriate abbreviation being “Dss.”

**XI. *Habit.*** A Deaconess shall wear a distinctive dress (habit) adopted for the Order in witness of her office and vocation when engaged in the duties of her office and on official occasions. This may include a sash bearing the seal of the Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District, in which she is canonically resident and the training school she attended.

A common cross adopted for the Order shall be blessed and presented to her by the Bishop upon the occasion of her Setting Apart.

**XII. *License & Authority.***

(a.) Upon Setting Apart a woman as Deaconess, the Bishop shall issue to her a “Letter of Orders” officially signifying that she has been duly ordered to the office of Deaconess in Christ’s Church. The certificate shall include the woman’s name, the date and place of her Setting Apart, and signed by the Bishop.

(b.) A Deaconess shall not accept work in a Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District, without the express authority in writing of the Bishop of that Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District; nor shall she undertake work in a Parish without the like authority from the Rector of the Parish. No Candidate shall be admitted as Deaconess until she shall have been appointed to serve in some position under the jurisdiction of the Church.

(c.) The Bishop shall issue to any Deaconess canonically attached to his Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District, a form of identification to be carried on her person stating that she is authorized to function on behalf of the Church and the Diocese in all ways pertaining to her office.

(d.) A parochial Deaconess should be considered an official member of the staff.

(e.) A distinctive seat in the Church in Choir, or elsewhere in the Chancel, may be assigned to the Deaconess by virtue of her office.

**XIII. *Diocesan relation.***

When not connected with a Parish, the Deaconess shall be under the direct oversight of the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District, to which she is canonically attached. Each Deaconess shall report annually to the Bishop of her Diocese in the form prescribed by the Bishop. A Deaconess may be transferred from one Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or District, to another by Letters Testimonial (Dimissory). A Deaconess may at any time resign her office to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, or Missionary Diocese or

District, to which she is attached, but she may not be suspended or removed from office except by the Bishop for cause. A Deaconess thus suspended or removed may demand a trial by a special Court, to be composed of two Presbyters and four Lay communicants, one man and three women, of whom two shall preferably be Deaconesses. The members of the Court shall be chosen by the Standing Committee or Council of Advice. The procedure of the Court shall be according to the rules governing the trial of a Clergyman as provided by Canon.

**XIV. *Stipend.***

The stipend of a Deaconess shall be determined by the Diocese, Missionary Diocese or District, Parish, or institution to which she has been assigned and presented in a written contractual agreement. In ordinary circumstances beginning salaries should be at the least commensurate with minimum wage requirements and, when possible, should be on an increasing scale. The Deaconess, at her discretion and in consultation with the Bishop, may decline remuneration under certain conditions.

**XV. *Pension.***

Deaconesses are eligible to participate in the pension plan provided by the Church and administered by the Board of Pensions and Relief. Each Diocese, Parish, or other agency of the Church employing the regular services of a Deaconess may choose to provide for a pension upon her retirement, at the expense of such employer.

**XVI. *Advisory Council.***

It is desirable that for the superintendence of matters connected with the Order of Deaconesses and of the preparation of Candidates for that office, there should be an Advisory Council on which Deaconesses should be adequately represented. Initially, it is recommended that the Council be comprised of two Diocesan Bishops, the Dean of the Seminary where a Deaconess Training School has been established, two Presbyters, two members of the House of Laity, the Warden or Chaplain of the Deaconess Training School(s), and up to eight Deaconesses. This shall be amended as the Order grows and need requires. Members of the Council shall be appointed by General Council and serve for the intervening three year period.

**ADDENDUM:**

It is suggested that upon appointment, the initial members of the Advisory Council develop the following:

- 1.) Guidelines to interview and accept prospective Candidates.
- 2.) An official Deaconess Training Program in conjunction with our seminaries.
- 3.) A comprehensive curriculum based on the specifications listed in the Handbook.
- 4.) A list of adjunct faculty and facilitators willing to train Candidates in those subject areas not generally offered at the seminaries.
- 5.) Possible venues for internships.
- 6.) Preparations to found a proper Deaconess House if and when that may be feasible.

# APPENDICES

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- A. Reformed Episcopal Church Constitution and Canons: Canon 22, *Of Deaconesses*
- B. Anglican Province of America Constitution and Canons: Canon 22, *Of Deaconesses*
- C. *Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses*

## APPENDIX A

*From the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church  
as adopted at the 50<sup>th</sup> General Council, 2002:*

### **CANON 22** *Of Deaconesses*

**Section 1** A woman of devout character and aptitude may be Set Apart to the lay order of Deaconess by any Bishop of this Church, having jurisdiction in the Diocese or Missionary Diocese in which she shall serve.

**Section 2** The duty of a Deaconess is to assist the Minister in the care of the poor and sick, the religious training of the young and others, and the work of moral reformation, but shall not include the performance of any liturgical function which is reserved to those in Holy Orders.

**Section 3** No one shall be appointed Deaconess until she shall be at least twenty-three years of age; nor until she shall have laid before the Bishop testimonials certifying that she is a communicant of this Church in good standing, and that she possesses such characteristics as, in the judgment of the persons testifying, fit her for at least one of the duties above defined. The testimonial of fitness shall be signed by two Presbyters of this Church, and by twelve lay communicants of the same, six of whom shall be women. The Bishop shall also satisfy himself that the applicant has had an adequate preparation for her work, both technical and religious, which preparation shall cover the requirements as established by the Council of Bishops.

**Section 4** No Deaconess shall accept work in a Diocese without the express authority, in writing, of the Bishop of that Diocese; nor shall she undertake work in a Parish without the like authority from the Rector of the Parish.

**Section 5** When not connected with a Parish, the Deaconess shall be under the direct oversight of the Bishop of the Diocese in which she is Canonically resident. A Deaconess may be transferred from one Diocese to another by Letters Testimonial.

**Section 6** A Deaconess may at any time resign her office to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which she is at the time Canonically resident, but she may not be suspended or removed from office except by the Bishop for cause, with the consent of the Standing Committee, and after a hearing before the Bishop and Standing Committee.

**Section 7** No woman shall be recognized as a Deaconess until she has been Set Apart for that office by an appropriate service, to be prescribed by the Diocesan Bishop.

## APPENDIX B

*From the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Province of America  
as adopted at Provincial Synod, 2004:*

### **CANON 22** *Of Deaconesses*

**Section 1.** A woman of devout character and proved fitness may be Set Apart to the lay order of Deaconess by any Bishop of this Church.

**Section 2.** The duty of a Deaconess is to assist the Minister in the care of the poor and sick, the religious training of the young and others, and the work of moral reformation, but shall not include the performance of any liturgical function as reserved to those in Holy Orders.

**Section 3.** No one shall be appointed Deaconess until she shall be at least twenty-three years of age; nor until she shall have laid before the Bishop testimonials certifying that she is a communicant of this Church in good standing, and that she possesses such characteristics as, in the judgment of the persons testifying, fit her for at least one of the duties above defined. The testimonial of fitness shall be signed by two Presbyters of this Church, and by twelve lay communicants of the same, six of whom shall be women. The Bishop shall also satisfy himself that the applicant has had an adequate preparation for her work, both technical and religious, which preparation shall have covered the period of two years.

**Section 4.** No Deaconess shall accept work in a Diocese without the express authority, in writing, of the Bishop of that Diocese; nor shall she undertake work in a Parish without the like authority from the Rector of the Parish.

**Section 5.** When not connected with a Parish, the Deaconess shall be under the direct oversight of the Bishop of the Diocese in which she is canonically resident. A Deaconess may be transferred from one Diocese to another by Letters Testimonial.

**Section 6.** A Deaconess may at any time resign her office to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which she is at the time canonically resident, but she may not be suspended or removed from office except by the Bishop for cause, with the consent of the Standing Committee, and after a hearing before the Bishop and Standing Committee.

**Section 7.** No woman shall be recognized as a Deaconess until she has been Set Apart for to that office by an appropriate service, to be prescribed by the Diocesan Bishop.

APPENDIX C

# The Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses

as taken from

## THE BOOK OF OFFICES

Services for Certain Occasions  
not provided in the  
Book of Common Prayer

Compiled by the  
Standing Liturgical Commission  
Commended for use by General Convention  
(The Protestant Episcopal Church  
in the United States of America)

["... the revision of the Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses has drawn extensively upon the contents of this rite as proposed in the *Second Report of the Joint Commission on The Book of Common Prayer Appointed by The General Convention of 1913* (New York: Macmillan, 1919)."]

– from the Preface, p. v –

THIRD EDITION  
1960

THE CHURCH PENSION FUND  
New York

# The Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses

¶ *All things being in readiness, a Priest shall present to the Bishop, sitting in his chair near the Holy Table, such as are to be Set Apart as Deaconesses, saying,*

REVEREND Father in God, I present unto you *these women*, to be Set Apart to the office and work of Deaconess.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

DECLARE, we pray you, unto those who are here gathered what the office and work of a Deaconess are.

¶ *Then shall the Priest, addressing the People, say,*

DEARLY beloved, that it is agreeable to the mind of Christ that women should do him service by offices of loving-kindness, we gather from Saint Paul, who saith to the Philippians, Help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel, and who also commendeth unto the Romans one Phoebe, a Deaconess of the Church which was at Cenchrea.

Touching the duty of women Set Apart to this office and ministry, the Canons of the Church affirm that it is to assist the Ministry in the care of the poor and sick, in the religious training of the young and others, and in the work of moral reformation. That *they* may be duly appointed to such service, *have these women* come hither.

¶ *Then shall the Bishop say,*

BELoved, we have good confidence that *they* who *are* now presented to be Set Apart to the office of Deaconess *are* competent thereto, for it hath been so certified unto us, as the Canons require, by them whose word we trust. Nevertheless, if there be any who can allege aught on account of which it is inexpedient that *these persons* be so Set Apart, let protest be now made openly and before all men.

¶ *If no good reason be alleged by any why any should not be Set Apart, the following Lesson shall be read.*

ROMANS 12.

IBESEECHE you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or

## Setting Apart of Deaconesses



he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

¶ *Then shall be said or sung Psalm 100, or the Magnificat.*

*Psalm 100. Jubilate Deo.*

**O**BE joyful in the Lord, all ye lands: \* serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; \* we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; \* be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting; \* and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

**G**LORY be to the Father, and to the Son, \* and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, \* world without end. Amen.

*Magnificat. St. Luke 1.46.*

**M**Y soul doth magnify the Lord, \* and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded \* the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth \* all generations shall call be blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me; \* and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him \* throughout all generations.

He hath showed strength with his arm; \* he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, \* and hath exalted the humble and meek.

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He hath filled the hungry with good things; \* and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel; \* as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed, for ever.

**G**LORY be to the Father, and to the Son, \* and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, \* world without end. Amen.

¶ *Then, all kneeling, the Bishop shall say,*

*Versicle. Unto thee lift we up our eyes;*

*Response. O thou that dwellest in the heavens.*

*Versicle. As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters;*

*Response. And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;*

*Versicle. Even so our eyes wait upon thee, O Lord;*

*Response. Until then have mercy upon us.*

*Versicle. O Lord, have mercy upon us.*

*Response. Have mercy upon us.*

*Versicle. O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us;*

*Response. As our trust is in thee.*

¶ *The Bishop shall then say,*

**O**ETERNAL God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hast in all times accepted and blessed the services of holy women: Look mercifully, we beseech thee, upon *these thy servants*, about to be Set Apart to the office and work of Deaconess. Protect *them* in the way wherein *they* go, and grant that in singleness of purpose and with a willing mind *they* may worthily accomplish the task committed to *them*, to thy glory and to the praise of thy Christ, to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be glory and worship for ever and ever. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Bishop ask of them the following questions, to which each Candidate shall answer for herself.*

**D**EARLY beloved in the Lord, who are minded to take upon you this service in the Church of God, have you duly considered how weighty an undertaking this is, and are you prepared with a willing mind to take upon you this office?

*Answer.* I have so considered it, and will do so, by the help of God.

*Bishop.* Will you endeavour faithfully to fulfill the duties of the same?

*Answer.* I will.

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*Bishop.* Will you diligently ask of God the grace to enable you to persevere in this endeavour?

*Answer.* I will.

*Bishop.* Will you be diligent in prayer and in reading of the Holy Scripture, and in such studies as help to the knowledge and teaching of the same?

*Answer.* I will so do, by the help of the Lord.

*Bishop.* Will you be obedient to those who are over you in the Lord, cheerfully and faithfully performing the service that shall be appointed to you as Deaconess in singleness of heart?

*Answer.* I will endeavour so to do, the Lord being my helper.

¶ *Then shall the Candidate kneel, and the Bishop shall say,*

**A**LMIGHTY God, who hath called you to serve him in this holy life, give you power to fulfill this your service acceptably; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

¶ *Then shall the Bishop lay his hand upon the head of the person to be made Deaconess, saying,*

**G**OD the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, bless, preserve, and sanctify you; and so endow you with all faith, wisdom, and humility, that you may serve before him to the glory of his great Name, and to the benefit of his Church and people; and make you faithful unto death, and give you the crown of everlasting life. *Amen.*

**N.** I admit thee to the office of Deaconess, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

*Bishop.* The Lord be with you.

*Answer.* And with thy spirit.

*Bishop.* Let us pray.

¶ *Then, the People kneeling, the Bishop shall say these prayers following.*

**O**UR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**E**NDUE, O Lord, we beseech thee, *these thy servants*, with the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Preserve *them* alike from faithless fears and unreasonable desires, that with a steadfast heart and settled purpose *they* may run the way of thy commandments; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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¶ *Then shall be said:*

*Bishop.* O magnify the Lord with me;

*Answer.* And let us exalt his Name together.

*Bishop.* O give thanks unto the God of Heaven;

*Answer.* For his mercy endureth for ever.

*Bishop.* O give thanks unto the Lord of Lords;

*Answer.* For his mercy endureth for ever.

*Bishop.* The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

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¶ *It is desirable that the Service of Holy Communion should follow, the newly Set Apart Deaconesses communicating.*

– *At the Communion* –

*The Collect.*

**O** GOD, who hast prepared for those who love thee such good things as pass man's understanding: Pour into our hearts such love toward thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

*The Epistle.* Romans 15:1-6.

**W**E then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The Gospel.* St. Luke 12:35.

**L**ET your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.