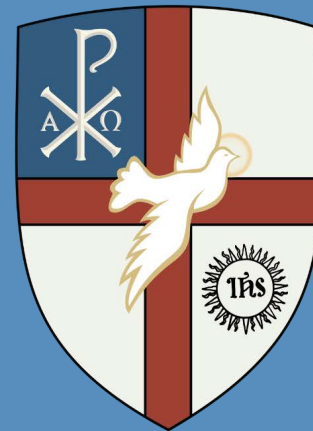
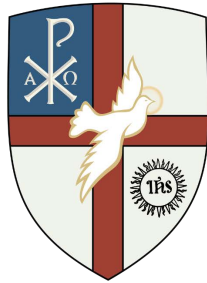


A Handbook
for
Deaconesses



ANGLICAN PROVINCE
OF AMERICA



There are many important ways in which women may serve God and the extension of His Kingdom. Since the dawn of Christianity, one such role has been the Deaconess ministry. While remaining clearly in the order of the laity, these women dedicate themselves to a life of service and are trained to serve as able assistants to the clergy and Christ's Holy Catholic Church. The Anglican Province of America recognizes this lay ministry and supports the dedication and commitment of those women who discern a calling to this state of life. The APA commends this ministry to the life and witness of the whole Church.

The content of this handbook was approved by the House of Bishops on June 20, 2020 and the Provincial Council of the Anglican Province of America on August 31, 2020. The information contained herein is intended for use in conjunction with Canon 22, Of Deaconesses, as authorized by the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Province of America in its Constitution and Canons.

[See appendix A]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	v
Do I have a Calling	vii
Concerning the Ministry of Deaconesses:	
Setting Apart.....	3
Duties.....	3
Functions	3
Candidacy	4
Marital Status.....	4
Course of Study/ Examinations	5
Internship.....	6
Age Requirement.....	6
Testimonials	6
Physical & Psychological Exam	7
Background Check	7
Necessary Recommendations.....	7
Admitted by Religious Service.....	7
Title	7
Jacket and Cross.....	7
License & Authority	8
Diocesan Relation.....	8
Stipend.....	9
Pension	9
Advisory Representative.....	9
Appendices:	
A. APA Canon 22, <i>Of Deaconesses</i>	12
B. <i>The Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses</i>	13
C. History of the Deaconess Ministry.....	19

Through prayerful support and gracious guidance from the Most Rev. Chandler Jones, SSC, *Bishop Ordinary*, the Most. Rev. Walter Grundorf D.D, *our beloved retired diocesan Bishop*, and Dss. Tina Jenkins, *Senior Deaconess*, this handbook has been developed to introduce the lay order of Deaconesses to the Church at large and provide guidance to those who may be called to this vocation and ministry.

FOREWORD

The lay order of Deaconesses is an ancient 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, 1 Timothy 3:11*). It is not our purpose here to recount the history of deaconesses through the ages (For a more thorough history see Appendix C). Suffice it to say that deaconesses have been Set Apart to serve the Church as early as the Apostolic Period and at various times throughout history and continue to do so today.

Although the deaconess ministry has waxed and waned throughout European history, the traditional Anglican Order of Deaconesses began to flourish in America in the mid-1800s in the Protestant Episcopal Church. This ministry however was not officially recognized and established in canon law in that church until 1889. The Anglican Province of America (APA) considers its heritage to be traditional Anglicanism which historically has authorized a lay order of Deaconesses. For that reason, when the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Province of America were adopted in 1998, Canon 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.

Considering the climate of feminism prevailing in other branches of the Church today, one point must be made clear. Although each woman entering the lay order is "Ordered, or Set Apart" to this particular office in the Church, the lay 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 the APA adheres, 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 lay order as *sui generis*, unique unto itself.

This position is not intended to diminish a woman's calling to serve the Church. Quite the contrary. The lay 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 complementary, 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 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 lay order. These are based upon APA Canon Law and reflect the historical role of deaconesses through time (See Appendix A). Also, included in the Appendices is a Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses (Appendix B) taken from the third edition (1960) of *The Book of Occasional Offices*, and authorized for use in the APA.

Do I have a Calling?

After prayer and reflection, a woman who feels she has a calling to serve God should go to her priest for advice. If both the priest and the woman agree that a calling is possible, the ministry of a deaconess, as well as other ways of serving God, should be investigated. There are many ways to serve God in the Church. However, if after working in her local parish in several different capacities the woman still wants a deeper commitment and feels called to this life of special service to God then, with her priest's approval, the ministry of a deaconess should be considered. It would be important at this time for a woman to have read the APA Canon 22 *Of Deaconesses* and the two APA pamphlets "Becoming an APA Deaconess" and "A Deaconess in our Church?" These should be available from her priest.

The process of becoming a deaconess involves three steps:

Step one (Evaluation): This step begins when the woman and her priest consider the possibility of a calling. It usually happens in either one of two ways depending on the woman's previous church experience. It is possible that a woman will go to her priest after extensive experience within her church and it is possible that she will go before she has had these formative responsibilities in her church. If she comes to the priest (or he goes to her) after multiple formative responsibilities (has held several offices, has voluntarily assumed work and responsibilities in multiple areas, is always at church assisting in some way because she just wants to be at the church, seeks ways to help others, etc.) then this first step can be short and reading the pamphlets and talking with a nearby deaconess is in order before going to step two. If the woman has not experienced formative responsibilities, then it would be wise to take the time to give her these experiences and evaluate her response to the work before going to step two. This could include taking a period of several months when the priest and the woman work together on responsibilities involving parish pastoral care to families, education of children, or social work in the church/community. In either case, during this step one, it is time for the woman, with the advice of her priest, to establish and begin to follow a Rule of Life. Note, during steps one and two the possibility of a future as a deaconess should be confidential between the woman and the priest. This allows the woman the chance to change her mind about this life-long commitment without public discussion. At the end of either of these two situations, when the priest feels it is appropriate and if they both still agree that the deaconess ministry is a strong option, then a letter requesting to enter deaconess discernment is written by the woman, with her priest's approval, and sent to the Bishop Ordinary of her diocese and the Chairman of the Board of Examining Chaplains (BEC). The contents of the letter

should include the information listed on the APA website under "Resources," "Canon Law and Policies," "Constitution and Canons," in Canon 1, 1d. The letter should also include a paragraph describing the responsibilities she has held in her church. Upon receiving this letter, the Chairman of the BEC, with the Bishop's approval, will send a notification back to the woman entering her into discernment. It will include reading requirements and written paper assignments.

Step two (Discernment): The notification from the BEC Chairman will be the date starting the woman's year of discernment for the lay order of Deaconesses. As the woman reads the assignments, it is critical that she works with her priest in understanding the books' concepts. She may even ask him to read her reflection assignments before they are sent to the BEC. During this time, the priest and the woman should be regularly evaluating her continued work in the church. This is also a good time for him to be evaluating her skills and how he thinks she fits into his vision for his parish. It is still a good idea for discernment to be confidential between the priest and the woman. During this step, she is considered a Deaconess Aspirant. Also, the BEC usually assigns the General Knowledge, Prayer Book, and Bible exams during this step.

Step three (Candidacy): At the successful completion of the initial 1-year discernment period, the BEC will notify the aspirant that they can submit to the Diocesan office the proper application information listed on the Application for the Lay Ministry of Deaconess Documentation and Process Checklists found under the APA Website "Missions and Ministry" tab. This will include such things as: college transcripts, testimonial letters, and the completion of physical and psychological exams, along with a background check. Once the completed application is received and background check cleared, the aspirant is scheduled for interviews with the Bishop's Advisory Committee, the Bishop Ordinary, and the Board of Examining Chaplains. If approved, the aspirant will become a Deaconess Candidate. During candidacy, the BEC will set certain requirements which usually include the completion of an academic program, exams, and parish practicums overseen by the priest. Candidacy usually lasts two years. Toward the end of candidacy, the BEC will assign written and oral canonical exams. At the successful completion of candidacy, the candidate will meet with the BEC and the Standing Committee, which will make a determination as to whether to forward the candidate's name to the Bishop Ordinary for his approval for her Setting Apart. (See also III. Candidacy)

Prayers for the Lay 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

Duties & Functions
Training & Admission

**Concerning the Ministry of DEACONESSES in
THE ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA
including Requirements for Training & Admission**

***I. Setting Apart
to the lay order.***

The lay order of Deaconesses is a lay office and ministry for women, recognized since Apostolic times. A woman of devout character and proven fitness may be Set Apart as deaconess by any bishop of the Church, subject to the provisions contained herein. A woman should be judged as having a true calling for this ministry by her priest, Bishop's Advisory Committee, Board of Examining Chaplains, and the Bishop Ordinary before she is accepted as a candidate.

II. Duties.

(a.) There are many duties all deaconesses are asked to do regardless of personal talent. Each candidate, however, must have particular skills or training in teaching, social work, and pastoral care. The priest of her parish will decide how a deaconess' talents are to be best used in his congregation. Almost all will be involved in assisting parish families, women and children in particular. She may also assume other non-liturgical duties based on her unique talents and the needs of her parish as directed by her priest.

Functions.

- (b.) The following are the chief functions which may be
- 1.) To care for the sick, the afflicted, and the poor entrusted to a deaconess;
 - 2.) To give instruction in the Christian Faith;
 - 3.) To assist the rector or priest-in-charge in preparing candidates for Baptism and for Confirmation;
 - 4.) Under the rector or priest-in-charge to organize, superintend, and carry out the Church's work among women and children;

- 5.) 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 spiritual welfare of women.
- 6.) At the request or under the direction of her Bishop Ordinary or priest, plan and/or conduct provincial and diocesan activities, such as women's retreats, workshops, etc.

III. Candidacy.

(a.) It is recommended that a woman seeking the deaconess ministry be a college graduate. 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.

(b.) During the period of candidacy, she shall be under the official supervision of the Bishop while actual daily supervision will be assumed by her parish priest. The candidate shall report in writing to her Bishop quarterly at the Ember Seasons. The major portion of her training will be divided between activities prescribed by the Board of Examining Chaplains and training duties assigned and supervised by her priest.

***Marital
Status.***

(c.) 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 lay 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, or in the case of one already Set Apart, her intended spouse as to the demands and expectations of her office and to confirm his support of her ministry.

IV. Course of Study and Examinations.

(a.) Before admission to the lay order of Deaconesses, a candidate shall be required to pass a course of study, designed by the Board of Examining Chaplains, which includes but is not limited to the following subjects:

1.) Holy Scripture:

Bible history 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.) Doctrine:

Contents and teaching of the Book of Common Prayer, including preparation for the Sacraments.

4.) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology:

Particular emphasis on matters pertaining to the counseling of women and children.

5.) Ministration:

The work of a deaconess within the lay order, the parish, and the community.

6.) Other Courses: Any other courses required by the Board of Examining Chaplains. All courses and educational requirements are subject to change.

*** In addition, Candidates should be familiar with one Or both of the following areas:**

7.) Religious Education: Psychology;

Educational methods; Church/School Management.

8.) Social Service: The methods of social casework; understanding of local social organizations including institutions, shelters, charitable organizations, etc.

(b.) The following examinations shall be conducted by the Board of Examining Chaplains. The results of the examinations shall be certified to the Bishop Ordinary and to the Standing Committee of the diocese. Please note: These examinations are always subject to change.

- Basic Christian Knowledge
- Prayer Book Exam
- Bible Exam
- Written Canonical Exam
- Oral Canonical Exam

Internship required.

(c.) In addition to the course of study and examinations, the candidate shall also complete the Deaconess Practicum as set forth by the Board of Examining Chaplains. These practicums/internships will be supervised by the candidate's priest.

V. To be at least twenty-three years old & two years a Candidate.

The Bishop Ordinary 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 lay order she shall have attained the age of thirty years. Nor shall a woman be Set Apart within two years of her reception as a candidate.

VI. Testimonials required.

No woman shall be admitted as deaconess until she shall have laid before the Bishop Ordinary 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 priests of this Church and by twelve lay communicants, six of whom shall be women.

VII. Physical, Psychological Examinations & Background.

Before admission as a deaconess the Bishop Ordinary will require the candidate to submit to thorough examinations by a physician and a psychologist. These examinations shall cover her physical and mental health. She will also be subject to a background check. All reports shall be kept on file by the Bishop Ordinary.

VIII. Necessary recommendations.

When the foregoing specified requirements have been complied with, the Bishop Ordinary, upon the recommendation of the Board of Examining Chaplains and Standing Committee, may admit the candidate to the lay order of Deaconesses. The fact of the Setting Apart of a deaconess shall be transmitted by the Bishop Ordinary to the Registrar with the following:

- 1.) Application.
- 2.) Letter of Orders.
- 3.) Certificate of Authority

IX. Admitted by Religious Service.

Any change in the status of a deaconess shall be likewise notified to the Registrar by the Bishop Ordinary.

No woman shall be recognized as a deaconess until she has been Set Apart. [See Appendix B]

X. Title.

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

XI. Jacket and Deaconess Cross.

A deaconess shall wear a distinctive dress adopted for the lay order in witness of her office and vocation when engaged in the duties of her office and on official occasions. A common cross adopted for the lay order shall be blessed and placed on her by the bishop when she is vested with the blue deaconess jacket on the occasion of her Setting Apart.

XII. License & Authority.

(a.) Upon Setting Apart a woman as deaconess, the Bishop Ordinary shall issue to her a “Letter of Orders” officially signifying that she has been Set Apart to the lay order of Deaconesses 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 Ordinary.

(b.) No deaconess shall accept work in a diocese without the express authority, in writing, of the Bishop Ordinary of that diocese. Nor shall she undertake work in a parish without the like authority from the rector of the parish.

(c.) A parochial deaconess shall be considered an official member of the parish staff.

XIII. Diocesan Relation.

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, or missionary district, to another by Letters Testimonial. 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 Ordinary for cause, with the consent of the Standing Committee, and after a hearing before the Bishop Ordinary and Standing Committee.

XIV. Stipend.

The stipend of a deaconess will be determined by the parish, or institution to which she has been assigned and presented in a written agreement. The deaconess, at her discretion and in consultation with the parish priest and Bishop Ordinary, may decline remuneration under certain conditions.

XV. Pension.

Deaconesses are eligible to participate in the Pension Plan of the Anglican Province of America or some other qualified pension plan subject to the same funding provisions of the Pension Plan as the Anglican Province of America.

XVI. Advisory Representative.

For the superintendence of matters connected with the lay order of Deaconesses and of the preparation of candidates, there will be a deaconess advisory representative assigned to the candidate. Upon her admission as a candidate for deaconess, the candidate will meet with the Senior Deaconess of her diocese. The Senior Deaconess will then work with the candidate's rector or vicar to assign a deaconess mentor to guide and support the candidate throughout the candidacy process. The Senior Deaconess, or her designated deaconess appointee, will be present for the candidate's scheduled meetings with the Board of Examining Chaplains, Standing Committee, and any other required meetings at which representation of the candidate would be appropriate.

Note: An earlier handbook was written in 2005 by Dss. Annette Johnson, Cathedral of St. Matthias, Katy, Tx., Reformed Episcopal Church (REC), after consultation with many sources, including documents and deaconesses of the Anglican Province of America (APA). It was planned as a joint document for use by deaconesses in both the APA and the REC. The APA is very grateful for Dss. Annette's excellent work in creating the original handbook. However, with the passage of time, inevitable changes have occurred within both jurisdictions. For this reason, it has been agreed that the APA and REC should have their own handbooks, better allowing each jurisdiction to address their particular Canon and needs. In 2021, this revised APA handbook was published for those who have been Set Apart and those who will be.

A special mention to those APA Deaconesses who helped with the revisions: Dss. Elizabeth "Tina" Jenkins, DEUS Sr. Deaconess, St. Michael the Archangel Anglican Church, Charlotte, NC; Dss. Clare Burgess, St. Paul's Anglican Church, Melbourne, FL; Dss. Cynthia Hensley, All Saints Anglican Church, Mills River, NC; Dss. Deborah "Debbie" Kidd, St. Michael the Archangel Anglican Church, Charlotte, NC; and Sr. Linda Burns, St. Alban's Cathedral, Oviedo, FL. A special mention and thank you to Dss. Cynthia Hensley for her diligent work preparing this document. Also, sincere appreciation to the Venerable Erich Zwingert, SSC, Rector, All Saints Anglican Church, Mills River, NC, for his excellent guidance in helping to prepare this document for publication.

APPENDIX A

*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.

APPENDICES

- A. APA Canon 22, Of Deaconesses
- B. The Form for the Setting Apart of Deaconesses
- C. History of the Deaconess Ministry

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.

IBESEECH 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.

OBE 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.

GLORY 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.

MY 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.

Setting Apart of Deaconesses

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.

GLORY 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,*

OETERNAL 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.*

DEARLY 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.

Setting Apart of Deaconesses

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,*

ALMIGHTY 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,*

GOD 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.*

OUR 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.*

ENDUE, 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.*

Setting Apart of Deaconesses

¶ *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.*

¶ *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.

WE 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.

LET 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.

APPENDIX C
HISTORY OF THE DEACONESS MINISTRY

The lay ministry of Deaconesses as a means of service in aiding the Church and the clergy is to be found in the New Testament. There is the mention of Phoebe (Romans 16.1), who is called diakonos, who was "in the ministry [service] of the Church." It is possible that the widows who are spoken of at large in 1 Timothy 5.3-10 may also have been Deaconesses. That some women functionaries were appointed at an early date in the Church seems likely from Pliny's letter to Trajan concerning the Christians of Bithynia. There he speaks of obtaining information by torture from two women, "who were called deaconesses." Before the middle of the fourth century, women were permitted to exercise certain definite functions in the Church and were known by the special name of diakonoi or diakonissai.

It is not always possible to draw a clear distinction in the earliest Church between Deaconesses and widows. The Didascalia, Apostolic Constitutions, and kindred documents recognize them as separate classes - and they prefer the Deaconess in the duty of assisting the clergy. Indeed, the Apostolic Constitutions enjoin widows to be obedient to the Deaconesses! In the earlier period of Church, it was only a widow who could become a Deaconess, but the strict limits of age, sixty years, which were at first prescribed for widows were relaxed, at least at certain periods and in certain localities, in the case of those to be appointed Deaconesses. The Council of Trullo in AD 692 fixed the age at forty. Deaconesses in the fourth and fifth centuries had a distinct ecclesiastical standing, although there are traces of much variety of practice and custom.

The Councils of Laodicea and Nicaea I clearly state that Deaconesses are to be accounted as laywomen and receive no sacramental ordination. The Church has always repudiated the idea that women could be recipients of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

With regard to the duration of the Deaconesses in the ancient Church, we note that when adult baptism became uncommon, this ministry, which seems primarily to have been devised for the needs of women catechumens, gradually waned and in the end died out altogether.

In their original form, Deaconesses were intended to discharge charitable offices connected with the temporal well being of their poorer fellow Christian women and children. In the instruction and baptism of catechumens, their duties involved service of a more spiritual kind. The universal prevalence of baptism by immersion and the anointing of the whole body which preceded it rendered it a matter of propriety that in this act the functions of the ordained should be discharged instead by women. The Didascalia Apostolorum explicitly directs that the Deaconesses are to perform this function. The Apostolic Constitutions attribute to

them the duty of guarding the doors and maintaining order amongst women in the church, and the document also assigns to Deaconesses the role of acting as intermediaries between the clergy and the women of the congregation. On the other hand, it is laid down that "the deaconess gives no blessing, for she fulfills no function of priest or deacon."

Anglicanism has reaffirmed the ministry of Deaconess over the past century and a half, as was confirmed by the Lambeth Conference of 1948. The Church of England restored the ministry of Deaconess with the setting apart of Elizabeth Catherine Ferard in 1861 - she was the first Anglican Deaconess.

Following the example of the Church of England, the American Church revived the ancient ministry of Deaconess, and from 1885 to 1970 almost five hundred American women were set apart as Deaconesses to care for the sick, the afflicted, and the poor. The 1889 American General Convention passed a canon on Deaconesses which recognized their ministry. The canon set standards and qualifications for Deaconesses. Their work included instructing in the faith, preparing candidates for baptism and confirmation, caring for women and children, and organizing and carrying on social work. There were training schools for Deaconesses in New York and Philadelphia. The Deaconess ministry was restored once more in the Continuing Churches from 1977 to the present, with a renewed emphasis on service to women, children, and parishes.

There are many important ways in which women may serve God and the extension of His Kingdom. Since the dawn of Christianity, one such role has been the Deaconess ministry. While remaining clearly in the order of the laity, these women dedicate themselves to a life of service and are trained to serve as able assistants to the clergy and Christ's Holy Catholic Church. The Anglican Province of America recognizes this lay ministry and supports the dedication and commitment of those women who discern a calling to this state of life. The APA commends this ministry to the life and witness of the whole Church.