

DIACONATE PROFILE

(Revised 11/13 by the Diaconate)

By-Laws - Section IV

The Diaconate, with the Minister(s), shall be responsible for leading the spiritual affairs of the church, including pastoral duties, worship, caring for the membership, support for the church as a teaching parish, and outreach to encourage lay participation in each of these responsibilities. The Diaconate shall provide and distribute the elements for Communion, as well as be responsible for Baptism and Confirmation. The Diaconate shall be responsible for the distribution of the Deacon's Fund.

The Diaconate shall be responsible to the Church Committee.

Membership shall consist of nine men, nine women and up to two high school members, if such high school members willing to serve shall have been identified by the Nominating Committee or by nomination from the floor as contemplated in X.A, Election of Officers and Committees. Three men and three women shall be elected annually for a term of three (3) years. The high school members shall be elected annually for a one-year term.

Meetings

Meetings of the Diaconate are held monthly on the second Tuesday of each month, from September through June.

Term and Responsibilities

Diaconate members are elected annually for a term of three years. At the option of the Nominating Committee, members can be re-elected for a second, three- year term. Deacon responsibilities include:

- Distributing the elements of Communion. Deacons serve communion on the first Sunday of each month on a rotating schedule.
- Participating on one sub-committee. Two Deacons are typically assigned to each sub-committee (see list below).
- Attending monthly meetings, as well as volunteering for at least one meeting role during the year. Roles include taking Minutes or offering a Moment of Reflection at the start of each Diaconate meeting.

- Volunteering to be “Deacon of the Day.”—Deacons are responsible for providing logistical support for summer services. This duty is based on each Deacon’s summer schedule.

Areas of Focus

- Support the Clergy. The Diaconate is responsible for supporting the clergy in planning, participating in, and conducting worship services throughout the year. This includes special services during the liturgical year, such as Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Holy Week. To work with our clergy in creating meaningful services and expressions of worship is one of the most rewarding responsibilities of being a Deacon. In this mission, we see God working through the ministry of clergy and laity alike to make His promise real in today’s world.
- Core Sacraments. Working with our clergy, the Diaconate supports the core sacraments of our United Church of Christ Church, which are Communion and Baptism. We honor the sacraments in a variety of expressions, always attempting to make them vibrant and meaningful in today’s world.
- Spiritual Life of the Church. Together with our church family, the Diaconate works to attract new church members by creating programs and initiatives that reinforce our spiritual mission. An example of this is the creation of the 4th Sunday Worship Service.
- Ministry of the Laity. The United Church of Christ is a member-led community of faith and, as such, the Diaconate works to encourage the congregation to participate in services (by being an usher or a liturgist, for example) as well as to create new expressions of worship, such as small group ministries. Examples of lay-led initiatives the Diaconate has helped to launch include the Caring Connection, Stephens Ministries, the Filipov Forum, as well as Lenten and Advent Small Groups. The Diaconate provides supportive oversight for each of these initiatives as needed.

Subcommittees

- Communion - Assigning Deacons to serve communion throughout the year, including set-up and clean-up. Training new Deacons to prepare and serve communion.
- Confirmation - Assisting the Associate Minister, as needed, in soliciting confirmation mentors and in hosting the annual confirmation breakfast for confirmands, their families, and mentors.
- Baptism - Organizing Baptisms 3-4 times per year, including supporting the families and participating in the service.
- Liturgists - Soliciting liturgists to read the Call to Worship and scripture passages, as well as to offer a Call to Stewardship, including holding periodic trainings on the role of a liturgist.

- Flowers - Arranging for flowers to be displayed during each service and writing thank-you cards to those contributing flowers.
- Ushers - Soliciting ushers and assigning head ushers, including holding periodic trainings on the role of ushers. This has been recently organized by Judy Walpole, assigning Ushers in September for the year. Deacons are still responsible for Special Services like Christmas Eve and Holy Week.
- 1st Sunday Service (formerly 4th Sunday Service) – Recruiting spiritual leaders and, in conjunction with the Music Coordinator, musicians for each service.
- Small Group Ministries - Encouraging lay-led expressions of faith and providing support, as needed. Lenten and Advent study groups have become a regular part of the church calendar. Deacons often serve as Facilitators, Hosts or participants.