

ORDER OF DEACONESSSES

58th General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church June 10 - 12, 2026

Once again, I would like to express heartfelt appreciation on behalf of all our deaconesses and prospective deaconesses for the support of our bishops, clergy, and laity in developing this biblically based and historic Order of ministry for women in the REC. It has not been easy to earn the trust of those in the church who have witnessed the turmoil created by the innovation of the ordination of women in other parts of the Anglican world and mainline denominations. However, through patience and confidence in our Lord, and through the Apostles' recognition of faithful women as assets to the Church and clergy, the REC's steadfast witness regarding women's ministry is making a positive and significant impression on those both within and beyond our ranks.

ROSTER:

Currently, we have 16 active Deaconesses, 3 retired Deaconesses, and 8 Candidates across our REC dioceses in the U.S., plus 3 new candidates in Berlin, Germany, and 1 new deaconess and several candidates in Cuba. The term "Candidate" designates those who have been approved by the Bishop and Standing Committee of their respective diocese to begin training to become a deaconess and are preparing to take the canonical exams required to be Set Apart by the bishop. A Postulant is one who has made known her intention to discern her call to be a deaconess but has not yet applied to become a candidate. A list of all our deaconesses and candidates is included at the end of this report. The date beside each name indicates the start date of their candidacy, or the date they were Set Apart.

DEACONESS EMBER CONCLAVE:

In February 2024, during the Lenten Ember Days, we began an online video conference, the "Deaconess Ember Conclave," to provide practical and spiritual support for our Deaconesses and Candidates. Since then, we have received requests from Deaconesses in various traditional Anglican jurisdictions, as well as those in the ACNA, to join us. At present, we have 35 Deaconesses and Candidates participating. We meet one evening during the Ember Day Weeks throughout the year.

ANGLICAN DEACONESS ASSOCIATION:

The Anglican Deaconess Association (ADA), through which the Deaconess Ember Conclave operates, was recently invited to apply to become an Affiliated Ministry Partner of the ACNA. This requires a three-round approval process. The ADA made it through the first round. However, the second round requires submission of legal and financial documents, which we could not provide. The ADA was originally organized under the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas (FACA) in 2008, prior to the formation of the ACNA, as a professional organization for all Anglican deaconesses in traditional Anglican jurisdictions. With the dissolution of FACA, whatever legal documentation we may have had has been lost or is otherwise outdated, and we no longer operate under any "umbrella" organization. We have kept our website open, since that has been the source of most of our inquiries and contacts for deaconesses. Another round of invitations to apply will be launched later this year. In the meantime, we are attempting to obtain the legal documentation required to successfully reapply.

ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA (ACNA):

In relation to receiving this invitation, the Order of Deaconesses has been represented at the ACNA Provincial Councils and Assemblies for the past several years. Since 2024, we have had our own booth and distributed information about the Order to attendees. We have made a number of contacts with clergy and laity within the ACNA who would like to see the restoration of the Order across the Province. Having a Deaconess presence at ACNA events is helping to change attitudes about the ordination of

women, especially when people can see that there is a valid, historical alternative for an official women's ministry already present within the Church. In fact, the Anglican Diocese of Ft. Worth recently Set Apart two new Deaconesses in May 2025, an event attended by Dss. Jill Nowell, Dss. Marisa Cappuccia, and Dss. Canon Annette Johnson. So, please encourage the deaconesses in your diocese to participate. One way to do this would be to consider appointing a qualified deaconess to be a lay representative for your diocese in the coming years. The more deaconesses we have attending, the more influence we have in making people aware of the Order.

To emphasize the impact our Deaconess model has had in its association with the ACNA, I was recently contacted by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Darrell Critch, Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of Mahajanga, Madagascar, in the Anglican Communion Province of the Indian Ocean, to meet with him via Zoom. Prior to his election as Bishop of Mahajanga, he served as Archdeacon in the ACNA in Newfoundland, Canada. Shortly after assuming his position as Bishop in Madagascar, he rescinded his predecessor's authorization for the ordination of women in his diocese. His desire is to restore the Order of Deaconesses in Mahajanga. He already has a woman who is completing her seminary training and will be Set Apart soon. He was aware of the REC's model for deaconesses and was seeking information to help in his efforts. I sent him a copy of our Deaconess Information Packet for Bishops. He is also interested in obtaining our deaconess crosses for his deaconesses.

DEACONESSSES CROSSES:

Earlier this year, we attempted to order a new deaconess cross for the Setting Apart of Mei-li Sivigny in the Diocese of the Southeast. Our jeweler informed us that, due to the dramatic rise in silver prices, she could no longer honor the flat-rate price she had originally quoted for making our crosses. The cost of a new cross and chain has more than tripled, making the price unaffordable. Therefore, we have entered into a contract with a Virginia company, Canterbury Pewter, to make our official deaconess crosses. The cost of the new pewter crosses, including the chain, is estimated to be in the range of \$50.00 - \$70.00 (much less than our original crosses). The \$800.00 design fee for creating the mold has been generously donated by The Chapel Shoppe at St. Matthias Anglican Church in Katy, Texas, and authorized by their Vestry as a donation to the Order.

DEACONESS EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIPS:

Two of our deaconesses, Dss. Canon Annette Johnson and Dss. Teresa Johnson, serve as faculty members at Cranmer Theological House in the Deaconess Studies Program. Cranmer House offers both a Deaconess Certificate curriculum and a Master of Arts in Religion for Deaconess Studies. Similar programs are now being offered at Reformed Episcopal Seminary and Cummins Memorial Seminary.

In relation to the seminaries and their Deaconess Studies programs, a Deaconess Scholarship Fund was established in 2023, with funds raised by the Committee on Women's Ministry (COWM) through its Women's Day Project that year. This fund is intended for women seeking to complete the academic coursework required by the REC Constitution and Canons to become Deaconesses. As specified by our bishops, the scholarship fund is to be shared equally between our three seminaries for their Deaconess Studies students. The Guidelines and Application Form for requesting a scholarship may be downloaded from the REC Deaconess website at <https://recdss.org/scholarship-fund/>. First-time applicants must submit their application by August 1st for the Fall semester, or by November 15th for the Spring semester. Our first scholarship was granted in early 2025. As part of our goal for the Deaconess Scholarship Fund to become self-sustaining, an annual Church-wide appeal for donations has been designated for the Sunday closest to St. Phoebe's Day, September 3.

INTERNSHIP AND SERVICE TO THE CHURCH:

We pride ourselves on the level of education our Candidates for Deaconess receive. As part of that process, they are required to participate in a 9-month internship under the direction of their sponsoring rector during their candidacy. We now have a "*Rector's Internship Checklist for Deaconess Candidates*" to help guide the clergy in training their candidates for the functions they may be called upon to perform in the parish. This practicum gives hands-on experience to our deaconesses-to-be, so they are prepared before their Setting Apart.

The training and education a Deaconess receives also helps prepare her to serve beyond the parish walls. Besides serving in their various capacities at the parish level, our deaconesses have been called upon to share their talents across the REC. Several serve on various church committees and boards. Some have authored annual devotional books for the Women of the Church and contributed to other church materials and publications as well. Others have been invited to speak at various women's gatherings, synods, and convocational meetings.

REC INTERCESSORS:

As a reminder, our Deaconesses and Candidates are always available to pray for members of the clergy and deaconesses whenever a particular need arises. Together with the Daughters of the Holy Cross in the REC, we constitute the REC Intercessors, whose function it is to pray for our clergy. Prayer requests are processed by Dss. Teresa Johnson and Dss. Canon Annette Johnson as co-chairs for the Intercessors. Your confidentiality is sacred to us, and we will share your requests only with the Intercessors as per your instructions. This is the special email address where you can send prayer requests to the RECI via Dss. Canon Annette and Dss. Teresa: Intercessors@rechurch.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

As Canon for Deaconesses in the REC, I would like to request that each Bishop Ordinary send me a copy of any approved application for Deaconess Candidate, along with a copy of the official approval letter from the Bishop and/or Standing Committee to the applicant. This gives me the new Candidate's contact information and other pertinent information, as well as her official approval date to place in our records for deaconesses in the REC. It also allows me to send her a packet of information regarding becoming a deaconess for her use during her discernment and training. Also, Deaconess Candidates are included with the Deaconesses in other activities within the Church, such as the REC Intercessors and Convocational meetings, as part of their training. Therefore, it would also be helpful to include their names and contact information in your diocesan directories under the category of "Candidates". "Postulants" may also be listed, but they are not eligible to participate until they are approved as a Candidate.

As a reminder, our Canons require that the names of all women connected with the Diocese or Missionary Diocese who have been Set Apart as deaconesses during the preceding year to be submitted to the office of the Presiding Bishop and the General Council Secretary with her full name and date of birth, the date and place of her Setting Apart, and the name of the Bishop who presided at the Setting Apart. This information is recorded as part of the clerical records of the Church. Whenever a deaconess resigns, retires, or passes away, that information must also be submitted. Updated contact information for deaconesses and candidates should be included in

the Diocesan Directories, which are to be submitted to the General Council Secretary on the first of March each year.

REVISIONS TO CANON 22, *OF DEACONESSSES*:

We commend the revisions to Canon 22, *Of Deaconesses*, to be presented by the Committee on Constitution and Canons to this 58th General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church as needed and necessary to properly define the Office of Deaconess in the Church and to clarify other matters as they pertain to Deaconesses.

The Deaconess Canon is always available to answer questions from the clergy or prospective deaconesses when needed. With the attention our Deaconess model has received of late, I pray that the Order will continue to grow and serve the Church as a reflection of God's order and glory in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dss. Canon Annette M. Johnson".

Dss. Canon Annette M. Johnson, M.A.R.

Presiding Bishop's Canon for the Order of Deaconesses

DEACONESS ROSTER as of April 2026

The following is a list of current Deaconesses and Candidates for Deaconess in each REC Diocese and Missionary Dioceses or Convocations:

DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC:

Deaconesses:

1. Dss. Susan Regisford, M.D. (*St. Alban's, NYC - Set Apart 2024*)

Retired: Dss. Ruth Creswell (*Set Apart 3/9/2014*)

Candidates: (*Dates indicate the official start of their candidacy.*)

1. Nkiru Menekaya (*Covenant Chapel, Basking Ridge, NJ – 2024*)

DIOCESE OF MID-AMERICA:

Deaconesses:

1. Dss. Marisa Cappuccia (*Holy Communion, Dallas, TX – Set Apart 8/20/2025*)
2. Dss. Jane Charnock (*St. Mark's, Waxahachie, TX – Set Apart 7/24/2025*)
3. Dss. Gay Flack (*St. Stephen's, Montrose, CO - Set Apart 9/8/2019*)
4. Dss. Cheryl Ivers (*Good Shepherd, Tyler, TX - Set Apart 1/21/23*)
5. Dss. Canon Annette M. Johnson (*St. Matthias, Katy, TX - Set Apart 1/31/1993*)
6. Dss. Cynthia Longueville (*Holy Communion, Dallas, TX - Set Apart 2/7/2021*)
7. Dss. Jill Nowell (*Good Shepherd, Tyler, TX - Set Apart 8/12/2019*)
8. Dss. Melinda Skelton (*Holy Communion, Dallas, TX – Set Apart 10/2024*)
9. Dss. Barbara West, Ph.D. (*St. Stephen's, Flowood, MS - Set Apart 10/27/2019*)

Retired: Dss. Karen Pierpoint (*Bend, OR - Set Apart 2/25/2016*)

Candidates: (*Dates indicate the official start of their candidacy.*)

1. Katia Crabb (*Holy Communion, Dallas, TX – 12/2024*)
2. Marcia Farrar (*St. Stephen's, Flowood, MS – 12/2024*)
3. Kaylene Graham (*Anglican Church of the Epiphany, La Mirada, CA – 4/2025*)
4. Kimberly Hiles (*St. Benedict's, Rockwall, TX - 12/20*)

Candidacy terminated or suspended: Renee Boutwell (*Holy Cross, Alpine, TX – 2/22*) - *health*

DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHEAST:

Deaconesses:

1. Dss. Alvalene G. Rogers, Ph.D. (*Nazareth, Moncks Corner, SC - Set Apart June 3, 2023*)
2. Dss. Mei-li Sivigny (*All Saints, Greenville, SC – 2022 - Set Apart March 1, 2026*)

Candidates: (*Dates indicate the official start of their candidacy.*)

1. Allyce Wilson (*Good Shepherd REC, Bonneau, SC - 2021*)
2. Karen Tryon (*Christ the King, Atlanta, GA - 2025*)
3. Elizabeth (Beth) Widner (*Christ the King, Atlanta, GA – 2025*)
4. Stacey Agee (*Incarnation, Canton, GA – 2025*)

DIOCESE OF THE CENTRAL STATES:

Deaconesses:

1. Dss. Michelle R. Caldwell (*Christ the King, Dayton, OH - Set Apart 11/22/2009*)
2. Dss. Shelley Fleming (*Holy Trinity REC, Fairfax, VA - Set Apart 5/18/24*)
3. Dss. Teresa R. Johnson (*St. James', Memphis, TN - Set Apart 1/26/2003*)

Retired: Dss. Ella "Candy" Jacques (*Set Apart 10/5/2008*)

Candidates: *(Dates indicate the official start of their candidacy.)*

MISSIONARY DISTRICT OF CUBA (REC):

Deaconesses:

1. Dss. Yamilet Conde Hernández (*Set Apart at church synod in Cuba - December 2025*)

Retired: Dss. Magalis Sierra Romero (*Iglesia San Marcos, Moa, Holguin, Cuba - Set Apart 5/24/2013*)

Candidates:

(Bp. Boonzaaijer reports several potential candidates)

REC IN GERMANY:

Candidates:

1. Stefanie Menk
2. Marita Stefanski
3. Eva Gabelmann