

General Board of Higher Education & Ministry
Division of Ordained Ministry
Secondary Appointment Covenant (Sample)



Appointment Covenant for Nicole Sophia
Deacon in Secondary Appointment, Antioch United Methodist Church

United Methodist deacon's ministry

Deacons are clergy called to fulfill servant ministry in the world and lead the church in relating the gathered life of Christians to their ministries in world, interrelating worship in the gathered community with service to God in the world. Deacons give leadership in the church's life in teaching and proclaiming the Word; in contributing to worship, and assisting the elders in administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; in forming and nurturing disciples; in conducting marriages and burying the dead; in embodying the church's mission to the world; and leading the congregations in interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. . . . Deacons lead the congregation in its servant ministry and equip and support all baptized Christians in their ministry. . . . Deacons are accountable to the annual conference and the bishop for the fulfillment of their call to servant leadership.

. . . When deacons and provisional deacons serve in an agency or setting beyond the local church, the bishop, after consultation with the deacon or provisional deacon and the pastor in charge, shall appoint the deacon or provisional deacon to a local congregation where they will take missional responsibility for leading other Christians into ministries of service. (The United Methodist Book of Discipline, ¶ 328, ¶ 331.5)

Antioch United Methodist Church's mission statement and ministry goals

Mission statement: Antioch United Methodist Church shares the redemptive love of God through Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to its community by inviting and welcoming its neighbors, offering compassionate ministry, pursuing justice for the poor and the left-out, teaching and nurturing Christian disciples for spiritual growth and world-changing ministry, and joining in celebrative worship worthy of God.

Ministry goals and strategy

Ministry context: Antioch United Methodist Church has learned that its neighborhood is becoming increasingly popular with young adults of limited means, due to affordable housing stock. Many have moved from other cities and desire meaningful community with peers. Many are college graduates but underemployed due to national economic conditions. Many enjoy busy social lives on weekends. The median age of Antioch members is 52 and average term of membership is 20 years.

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Church Goals for 2013-2016:

- Invite and welcome the young adults in the neighborhood into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ and the church, the body of Christ
- Increase the depth of spiritual commitment and mission engagement among members
- Offer challenging and inspiring worship, employing our very best gifts, creativity, and expectations

Church Strategy for 2013-2016:

- (1) Develop three ministries to nurture spiritual community among young adults and provide them world-changing ministry opportunities.
- (2) Develop and offer a coffee-house-style worship service, with communion and a meal following, offered on Sunday nights; train young adult leadership for the service.
- (3) Develop and introduce a small-group system that provides faith formation, supportive community, and accountability. Aim for 60 percent of membership participation within 24 months. Require members in leadership roles to be part of a small faith-formation/accountable discipleship group.
- (4) Train members in welcoming and inviting skills.

Responsibilities and goals of Nicole Sophia, deacon in secondary appointment

- Lead or co-lead young adults and other interested members in one outreach activity per year. The deacon shall coordinate the focus, term, and content of the group with the minister of faith formation.
- Participate in worship leadership at least once a month. This may be at the main service or the coffee-house service. The deacon's historic role in worship includes reading scripture, calling for the offering, leading the prayers of the people, assisting in sacraments, and leading the sending forth at the end of the service. The deacon may lead a worship service to assist pastoral staff in their absences.
- Train laypeople to extend the table of communion to those who cannot be present. Work with pastoral staff to identify appropriate servers and scheduler.
- Preach two times per year, as coordinated with the pastoral staff.
- Write a newsletter column at least six times per year that raises to the church's attention a key issue in the world (poverty, hunger, conflict, natural disaster, etc.)
- Conduct weddings or funerals as deacon's schedule permits and as coordinated through the office of pastoral staff.
- Assist pastoral staff in home and hospital visits, when deacon's schedule allows.
- Have an annual check-in visit with the Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

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Considerations:

- Annual continuing education budget of \$500
- Dedicated office space
- Access to office supplies, copier, computer, for church-related work
- Key to church
- Dedicated mail slot

Accountability

According to the United Methodist Book of Discipline, the deacons and provisional deacons in secondary appointment shall be accountable to the pastor in charge, the charge conference, and other bodies that coordinate the ministry of the local church (¶ 331.5).

The deacon shall sign his/her agreement to cooperate with the church Safe Sanctuaries policies and agree to a background check (this can be a check already conducted by the annual conference).

The deacon, as a clergy person, shall uphold high ideals in his/her personal life, shall treat others with respect and lead others in respectful interaction, and shall set appropriate boundaries around time and home, for the sake of wellness and healthy relationships.

The Staff/Parish Relations Committee shall meet annually with the deacon in secondary appointment to review the relationship and address concerns or appreciation and accept changes in the deacon's responsibilities (developed by the deacon and pastor in charge). If necessary, a mutually agreed-upon plan will be developed collaboratively to address concerns.

Changes to appointment status/dismissal

The district superintendent is the supervisor of conference clergy. The bishop appoints conference clergy, which includes deacons. The district superintendent must approve job descriptions and covenants.

No action to change the responsibilities, covenants, considerations, or continued secondary appointment of the deacon may be taken without consultation with the deacon and with the district superintendent (¶ 331.10.e).

The deacon in secondary appointment's relationship to the congregation continues unless the pastor in charge, the Staff/Parish Relations Committee, and the deacon no longer agree upon the terms of the relationship; or if the deacon determines for any reason to discontinue the relationship.

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Covenant Agreement

On this date _____, we hereby agree to uphold and support this covenant, for the enhancement of the church's ministries to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

We agree to pray for each other, support and collaborate with each other in ministry, for the sake of the Gospel.

We agree to direct, honest, and respectful communication with each other. We will not take our concerns about each other to others but speak to each other directly and listen to each other prayerfully.

We agree to review and adjust this covenant, collaboratively, if and when circumstances call for such adjustment.

Rev. Nicole Sophia, deacon in secondary
appointment

Rev. Sue Wesley,
lead pastor

Joseph R. Mathea,
chair of Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Rev. O. Versia,
superintendent of the Western District