



GUIDELINES FOR SED LAY DEACON PROGRAM

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SED Lay Deacon Advisory Board
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Office of District President
Southeastern District, LCMS

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT, LCMS
SED LAY DEACON PROGRAM

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SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

The Diaconate in the Holy Scriptures

The diaconate is a group of people committed to service in and for the Church, a group which has its roots in the New Testament [see Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-6]. As the Church catholic has grown, so too, the diaconate has had a history of development and usage.

The diaconate has had a variety of definitions over time and has included a broad range of people, privileges, and responsibilities all dealing with sharing the Word of God and service in the Lord's kingdom.

Purpose of the SED Lay Deacon Program

Welcome to the new Deacon Training initiative here in the Southeastern District! We are excited that you have taken the time to prayerfully consider participating in this new training. In partnership with the Mission Training Center (MTC), it is designed to equip and empower men and women for Kingdom service within your congregation and beyond as an everyday missionary in love and service to your neighborhood and community.

The purpose of the SED Lay Deacon Program is to encourage lay leadership; to provide some basic and uniform standards for preparation, education, and accountability; to offer opportunities for continuing education, collegiality, and support; to encourage excellence in service; and to be a forum for mutual concerns and needs. The Program also seeks to continue or to bring Lutheran ministry to communities where pastoral leadership is wanting.

Members of the SED Lay Deacon Program

Members of the SED Lay Deacon Program are men and women selected and nominated by a local congregation of the SED and its pastor and approved by the SED's Lay Deacon Advisory Board to serve after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ by sharing the Word and doing acts of service.

Members of the SED Lay Deacon Program are those individuals who apply for membership, meet the requirements as set by these guidelines, and subscribe to these guidelines for service and supervision. The title that each member has is "SED Lay Deacon Intern" while doing course work and "SED Lay Deacon" after the acceptance process is complete.

An SED Lay Deacon's focus of work is in the local congregation and in the surrounding community through that congregation.

SED Lay Deacons are licensed to serve in the SED only. Service in other districts of the LCMS would require the approval of the new district president and/or Board of Directors.

The Work of SED Lay Deacons

Works of mercy, Word, and Witness that support our life together are at the heart of the work of SED Lay Deacons. The actual tasks undertaken will vary according to the gifts and skills of the Lay Deacon and the needs of his or her congregation and of its surrounding community. All aspects of SED Lay Deacon work are under the supervision of the Supervising Pastor.

Qualifications for Lay Deacons

An SED Lay Deacon shall be a confirmed member in good standing of a congregation of the SED and be involved in parish life. SED Lay Deacons shall have the support of their family and shall be of sound moral character and mature faith.

SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

Application and Letters of Support

The Lay Deacon Application, a letter of support from the Supervising Pastor, and the Background Check form must be completed prior to admission to the training.

The application and background check can be filled in on the SED Website at <http://se.lcms.org/?????>

The letter from the Supervising Pastor should be emailed to ldcoordinator@se.lcms.org

Training for Lay Deacons

As a minimum, applicants for the SED Lay Deacon Program shall have a high school diploma or its equivalent (GED Certificate). Other educational background or experience, including academic, business, etc., will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis.

The SED Lay Deacon shall have completed a course of theological education through the Mission Training Center (MTC) out of Irvine, California. These courses will include:

Year 1:

- Missio Dei in the Scripture (OT) 8 hrs
- Missio Dei in the Scripture (NT) 8 hrs
- The Christian Faith 16 hrs
- Missional Church & Outreach 8 hrs
- Root & Meaning of Worship 8 hrs

Total 48 hrs

Year 2:

- Defining & Engaging Your Community 8 hrs
- Sharing the Faith 8 hrs
- Spiritual Care 8 hrs
- Creating & Leading Worship 8 hrs
- Teach the Faith 8 hrs
- Starting New Ministries 8 hrs

Total 48 hrs

SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

Coaching For Lay Deacons

In addition to the educational component offered through the SED Lay Deacon Training Program, there is a 2-year coaching component as well. Each year participants will receive 24 hours of coaching (48 hours over the 2 years) which will take place on a semi-monthly schedule. The purpose of this coaching relationship is to help you grow in your spiritual formation both personally and as a deacon, and to disciple you to live out your calling in Christ in love and service to others.

The first year of coaching will focus on growing in your IDENTITY in Christ and EMPOWERING you in whole-life discipleship (heart, soul, mind and body). The second year of coaching will focus on living out your faith in Christ for greater Kingdom IMPACT.

Internship Supervision

Each applicant's internship supervisor will be a rostered Pastor of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This supervisor shall:

- assist the candidate in establishing goals and expectations for the internship;
- meet with the applicant no less than twice monthly to discuss specific assignments, development, progress and concerns; and
- certify that the SED Lay Deacon Intern has successfully completed the required hours.

All applicants, upon completion of the internship, shall submit a written report of his/her service, describing the nature of and personal reflections on the experience. This shall be submitted to the SED's Lay Deacon Advisory Board prior to the final interview.

SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

Compensation and Lay Deacons

An SED Lay Deacon may receive compensation for service, but this is not expected nor required. An SED Lay Deacon's service is a gift to God and the Church.

It is expected that most members of the SED Lay Deacon Program will continue to hold regular employment and therefore would be involved in diaconal service on a part-time basis. There may be instances where an SED Lay Deacon will serve on staff and receive compensation.

Whenever possible, congregations and other agencies in which Lay Deacons are serving shall meet expenses incurred during such service. It is further encouraged that churches offer support for continuing education. In service to congregations outside of their own, such service shall be approved by the Supervising Pastor and the Pastor of the congregation where service is to be rendered in consultation with the SED President. This shall be done prior to service. Lay Deacons shall normally receive honoraria for such service.

Acceptance Interview Process for Lay Deacons

An interview shall be conducted after the course work has been completed. This shall be conducted through a face-to-face meeting of the

- SED Lay Deacon Intern,
- Supervising Pastor,
- SED Lay Deacon Coordinator (or his representative),
- Members of the Advisory Board.

In support of the acceptance process, a letter from the congregation accepting the applicant as a Lay Deacon is required. Once a candidate has successfully completed this interview his/her name will be forwarded to the SED President for final approval. When the candidate has received BOD approval he/she shall be blessed for service as an SED Lay Deacon in a liturgical rite.

Accountability of Lay Deacons

The SED Lay Deacon serves under the supervision of a Pastor appointed by the SED President. The SED Lay Deacon and the Supervising Pastor:

- 1 Develop goals and tasks for the Lay Deacon;
- 2 Meet on a regular basis to discuss progress and assignments;
- 3 Hear the voice of the lay leadership of the congregation on the perspective and vision they have for the work of the lay deacon; and
- 4 Annually clarify and explain the SED Lay Deacon's position in the congregation.

SED Lay Deacons may serve in an elected position in a parish, though not if they serve on staff, depending on local bylaws and considerations.

SED Lay Deacons shall always be accountable to the SED President, chiefly through the recertification process and triennial review. This accountability shall include a triennial report of the SED Lay Deacon's work [Addendum I], filed with the congregation and the SED Office. It is to be completed jointly by the Supervising Pastor and SED Lay Deacon.

The SED Lay Deacon shall comply with the requirements for continuing education.

SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

Recertification Requirements

SED Lay Deacons are certified for a three-year period. They may be re-certified on a three-year basis without limitation, congruent with the regular Conventions of the SED. Recertification is undertaken after the second year through application for continued service as received through the SED Lay Deacon's congregation and Supervising Pastor. Such application shall include:

- 1 Attendance at an SED Lay Deacon conference, unless excused for service or hardship reasons by the Lay Deacon Advisory Board or the SED President;
- 2 Participation in continuing education, a minimum of one completed opportunity per year (see below: Continuing Education), Lay Deacon Training Program courses, or other opportunities approved by the Supervising Pastor; and
- 3 Submission of a triennial report (Addendum I)

Lay Deacons who do not complete the steps for re-certification shall no longer be considered active. SED Lay Deacons may also be removed for three reasons: adherence to false doctrine, neglect of duties/incompetence, and/or an immoral lifestyle. Such removal will be done through the SED President following the Church's usual order.

Continuing Education Opportunities

SED Lay Deacons shall attend a minimum of one continuing education course on a yearly basis. Continuing education may comprise the following:

- Additional course work with the Mission Training Center.
- Seminars specific to the Lay Deacon Program as offered by Mission Training Center
- Attendance at an SED workshop
- Outside seminars approved by the Supervising Pastor as beneficial for the Lay Deacon's particular service. Credit will be given upon a written report by the SED Lay Deacon approved by the Supervising Pastor.

Moving from One Congregation to Another

In the event that an SED Lay Deacon moves to a new location and congregation, continued service in the new congregation will depend on agreement by the new pastor, previous Supervising Pastor, and the Lay Deacon Advisory Board, or district president, if necessary.

The SED President may license SED Lay Deacons for emergency Sacramental ministry in accordance with LCMS guidelines. It is understood that such licensing in the SED is applicable only to the SED and only to the congregation where licensed.

SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

Garb for Lay Deacons

Liturgical attire for the SED Lay Deacon Program follows the local custom of the congregation where the SED Lay Deacon serves. To prevent confusion with the Pastoral office, SED Lay Deacons are not to wear clerical shirts or other clerical garb (Chasuble, pastoral stoles, etc.).

Leadership of Lay Deacons

The SED Lay Deacon Program reports to the SED President and its respective conventions.

The SED has a Lay Deacon Advisory Board consisting of the District President (or regional Vice President), Chair, and five other members, both pastors and laity. The Lay Deacon Advisory Board is directly appointed by the SED President. Members serve with the approval of the President renewable every District regular convention year.

The responsibilities of the Lay Deacon Advisory Board include:

- gathering District-wide, as the Lay Deacon Advisory Board at least annually;
- supervising the SED Lay Deacon Interns in matters pertaining to fulfilling the SED Lay Deacon guidelines;
- conducting an interview with SED Lay Deacon applicants as prescribed in other sections of this document;
- providing SED Lay Deacon Interns with the guidelines and expectations of the members of the SED Lay Deacon Program;
- through the office of Regional Vice President, providing encouragement and counsel to Pastors and congregations concerning the role and expectations of an SED Lay Deacon in the parish.

Additional Items

The SED Lay Deacon Program Guidelines cannot cover every issue or concern. Those issues not covered in this document will be handled in a Christ-like manner, calling upon the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit for proper discernment. The SED Lay Deacon Advisory Board, as the supervisor of the SED Lay Deacon program, will serve as the final arbiter of any issues not covered by this document in consultation with the SED President. All changes to this document will proceed through the office of the SED President.

SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

Commitment of SED Lay Deacon Program Applicant

I have read and agree to follow the guidelines as presented in this document.

SED Lay Deacon Applicant

Applicant's Supervising Pastor

_____ Date



**Triennial Report of
SED Lay Deacon**

From the SED Lay Deacon Guidelines

This form is part of the triennial report that the certified Lay Deacon is to complete every 3 years just prior to the SED Convention. It shall be submitted to the Supervising Pastor and the SED Lay Deacon Program Office.

Print or use computer to enter all information.

Personal Information

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

_____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Employer (Name and Address): _____

Contact Information

Cell: _____ Home: _____

Email: _____

Congregational Information

Congregation (Name and Address): _____

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SED Lay Deacon Work

What Lay Deacon activities and continuing education have you received over the past year?

Please circle the areas in which you frequently participate as an SED Lay Deacon:

Bible Study Leader

Worship Leader

Evangelism

Social Ministry

Sick/Homebound Calls

Youth Ministry

Other: _____

Continuing Education Completed:

Year 1 _____

Year 2 _____

Year 3 _____

Signed by the certified SED Lay Deacon and the Supervising Pastor:

Lay Deacon

Supervising Pastor

Date

This report is to be reviewed by both the SED Lay Deacon and the Supervising Pastor before being submitted to the SED Lay Deacon Program Office