

**THE ST. STEPHEN'S DIACONAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
IN THE DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK**

**CONSTITUTION**

**PREAMBLE**

We the Diaconal Community of the Diocese of Rochester, New York, joining together for our mutual support and growth in the Christian ideal, strive to promote through word and deed, the motto

**"We have come to serve."**

Furthermore, we strive to promote and to develop the ministry, which we share with the Bishops, Priests, and Laity for the welfare of all God's people.

**ARTICLE I --NAME**

Section I: The name of this organization shall be:

**St. Stephen's Diaconal Community Association**

**ARTICLE II -- MISSION**

We, as members of the diaconal community of the Diocese of Rochester, establish this association to build and nurture community among deacons, candidates, aspirants, wives, widows and families. Specifically, we join together to promote the spiritual life and to support diaconal ministry and life with special attention to those in formation as they discern their vocation. We do this out of a sense of the unique bond we share, a bond of charity, prayer, obedience to our bishop, service and witness. As a result of this association, we hope we all will grow as witnesses to Christ, the servant.

**ARTICLE III -- PURPOSES**

Section I: to serve and glorify - Almighty God as ordained servants of the Church of the Diocese of Rochester, New York.

Section II: to demonstrate our love, loyalty, and fidelity for our Bishop.

Section III: to further the education and spiritual growth of our members.

Section IV: to foster love, understanding, and cooperation among the clergy, religious, and laity of the Diocese of Rochester.

Section V: to develop and maintain a strong sense of community among the members and their families.

Section VI: to maintain the welfare of the Diaconal Community by being sensitive to the changing needs of the membership.

Section VII: to be a voice within the Church and community, speaking out on significant issues that affect all God's people.

Section VII: These purposes will be accomplished by:

- A. Meeting regularly to identify, discuss and evaluate the pastoral needs of the Diaconal Community.
- B. Cooperating with the Director of Deacon Personnel and the Deacon Personnel Board in conducting programs to further the continuing formation and spiritual growth of our members.
- C. Undertaking specific projects that enhance and maintain a strong sense of community.

#### **ARTICLE IV -- MEMBERSHIP**

Section I: Members shall consist of:

- A. All permanent deacons – Latin and Eastern - ordained in or incardinated in the Diocese of Rochester, as well as their wives and widows and who are in good standing with the Diocese.
- B. All in formation for the permanent diaconate of the Diocese of Rochester, and their wives.

Section II: Members are requested to assist in the mission and purposes of this association through the payment of dues, which are determined by the Board.

#### **ARTICLE V -- OFFICERS**

Section I: The officers of this Association shall be a president, executive vice president, regional vice-presidents, secretary, and treasurer.

Section II: The officers shall serve a term of two years.

Section III: Nominations for the various offices shall be presented to the membership before the annual retreat. Elections shall be conducted at the annual retreat, with provision for write-in votes.

Section IV: The candidate receiving a simple majority of the votes cast shall be elected. In the event of a tie vote or a non-majority vote, a runoff election shall be held. If a tie vote or a non-majority vote still exists after the second ballot, lots shall be drawn to determine the winner.

- Section V: The officers shall assume duties on 1 January.
- Section VI: If a vacancy in an officer position occurs, the Board is authorized to fill the remaining term of that office, excepting the office of president, which shall be filled by the executive vice-president.
- Section VII: The immediate Past-President will serve as an ex officio member of the Board.
- Section VIII: The Director of Deacon Personnel for the Diocese of Rochester will serve as an ex officio member of the Board.
- Section IX: Each officer is to keep current their section of the SSDCA web site.

### **ARTICLE VI -- DUTIES**

- Section I: The President of the Association shall:
- A. Preside at the general meetings
  - B. Call, prepare the agenda, and preside at all meetings of the Board.
  - C. Appoint chairpersons to committees.
  - D. Be an ex-officio member of all committees.
  - E. Uphold and enforce this Constitution.
  - F. Represent the best interests of this association and its members.
- Section II: The Executive Vice-President shall:
- A. Perform the duties of the President in the event of the president's absence or incapacity to serve
  - B. Serve as President-Elect for the next term of office.
  - C. Assume basic responsibility for membership by:
    - 1. Chairing the Nominating Committee, which will identify members who are interested in becoming officers.
    - 2. Maintaining records on the terms of Board Members.
  - D. Chair the Deacon Stan Zawacki Award Committee.
- Section III: The Regional Vice-Presidents shall assist, advise, and support the president of the SSDCA in:

- A. The implementation of the SSDCA polices and programs in their regional areas of responsibility.
- B. The pastoral-spiritual development, well-being, and formation of association members.
- C. These responsibilities will be accomplished by:
  - 1. Participating in board meetings to identify, discuss and evaluate the needs within the diaconal community.
  - 2. Serving as the liaison between the board and the diaconal community in their region by seeking input and advice from association members.
  - 3. Promoting vocations to the diaconate by sponsoring regional interest meetings in consultation with the Director of Deacon Personnel
  - 4. Promoting membership and participation in the association as well as its activities by the diaconal community within their region.
  - 5. Insuring that the Association has sufficient resources to fulfill its purposes through monitoring the payment of dues.

Section IV: The Secretary shall:

- A. Keep permanent records of the proceedings of each meeting and of the Association as well as to post same to the SSDCA web site.
- B. Keep on file the Constitution and amendments thereto.
- C. Serve as the secretary of the Board.
- D. Furnish a copy of all approved meeting minutes to the Director of Deacon Personnel.
- E. Maintain ministerial and regulatory documents on the SSDCA web site.

Section V: The Treasurer shall:

- A. Receive and transfer to the Diocese of Rochester all money belonging to the Association.
- B. Keep an accurate account of the receipts and expenditures, and authorize payment of all bills by the Diocese of Rochester.

- C. Submit a written financial report to the Board and to the Deacon Personnel Board during the first quarter of the year.
- Section VI: The Board shall consist of the President, Executive Vice-president, the Regional Vice-Presidents, the Secretary, and the Treasurer.
- A. The duties of the Board will be to:
    1. Provide topics for meeting agenda.
    2. Act as an advisory and policy-making body for the Association between general meetings.
    3. Determine membership dues.
- Section VII: Standing Committees:
- A. Nominating Committee is chaired by the Executive Vice-President. It is responsible for identifying potential officers.
  - B. Stan Zawacki Award Committee is administered by SSDCA and annually selects the recipient of this recognition.
    1. The Executive Vice-President, the Secretary, a representative of the Zawacki family, and persons named by the Director of Deacon Personnel are the committee members.
    2. Nominations are addressed to the Secretary and have no expiration date.

**ARTICLE VII -- MEETINGS**

- Section I: There shall be at least one general membership meeting each year, ordinarily to be held in connection with the annual Diaconal Retreat.
- Section II: Special meetings may be called by the President, the Board, or by a special written petition of at least 10% of the Association's membership. The president must call a special meeting of the membership within one (1) month of receipt of a lawful written petition.
- Section III: Petitions must state the purpose of the meeting, and no other business shall be transacted at the meeting so ordered.
- Section IV: Within five days of receipt of a valid petition, the President or appropriately directed officer must send out notices calling for a special meeting. Such notices must be sent out at least fifteen days in advance of the determined date of the special meeting. In no case, however, should a special meeting occur more than thirty days after receipt of the petition.
- Section V: For any motion to be considered as passed by the Association, the said motion must receive an affirmative number of votes equal to at least a

majority of the a quorum number of the Association members present at the legal meeting at the time the vote on the motion was taken. Proxy voting and voting by mail may be utilized.

Section VI: A meeting of the Association shall be considered to be a legal meeting for voting purposes if a quorum of the membership of the Association is present. A quorum shall consist of at least fifty members.

Section VII: All matters of decision for this Association will be determined by the process of consensus except for those situations as designated in this Constitution. At meetings, this Association will assure that the principles of equality, harmony, and efficiency are practiced by insuring the following "four basic meeting principles" for the good of the order:

- A. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
- B. The will of the consensus must be carried out.
- C. The minority must be heard, and its rights protected.
- D. Only one topic will be considered at a time.

#### **ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Section 1: This constitution may be amended by a two thirds majority of the membership, present and voting, provided that the amendment(s) has (have) been posted to the SSDCA web site at least fifteen days in advance of the meeting during which they are voted upon.

Section II: Amendments to this Constitution may be voted upon once each year at the general membership meeting.

Section III: Proxy voting and voting by mail may be utilized when amending this constitution. The proxy ballot and the mail ballot shall be counted as voting membership in attendance for purposes of a quorum.

Section IV: The amended constitution will be effective upon receiving approval by the Bishop of Rochester

#### **ARTICLE IX -- BY-LAWS**

Section 1: The Executive Board may create By-Laws in order to carry out the SSDCA Constitution.