

Episcopal Deaconesses

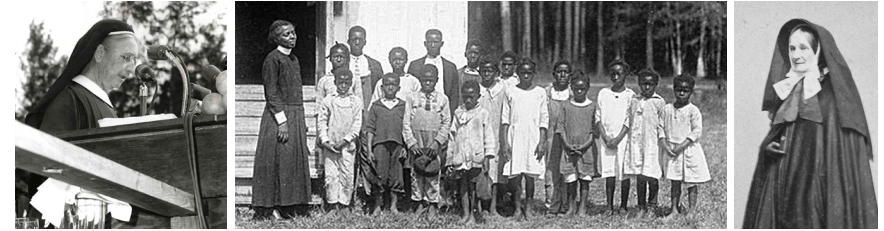
Feast Day - September 22, 2023 (*Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2022*)

Episcopal Deaconesses were faith-filled women and pioneers of servant ministry. They were set apart for service by their bishops, beginning in 1857 and ending with the ordination of women as deacons, authorized by General Convention in 1970. Deaconesses ministered as nurses, teachers, chaplains, caregivers, administrators, fundraisers and missionaries; within the U.S. and around the world. They often served under difficult conditions, with little compensation, serving in times of peace and in times of war. The bishop of Maryland set apart the first six deaconesses in the Episcopal Church on September 21, 1857.

Notable deaconesses include those pictured above: Harriet Bedell, a teacher and nurse in Alaska, who later reopened a Florida mission among the Mikasuki Indians; Anna Alexander, born to newly emancipated slaves, who founded a church in Georgia and taught children to read using the Bible; and Adeline Tyler who cared for wounded soldiers in her home during the Civil War and ministered to “fallen women” at a New York mission.

Collect: O God of love, we bless you for calling and equipping the deaconesses of the Episcopal Church, who served your people at risk or in need, at home and throughout the world. With grateful hearts we honor their hard work, perseverance, and leadership in following Jesus into places of suffering or hardship, injustice or unchampioned hope. May we, like them, bear the light of Christ to all people with humility and grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Meet the deaconesses, download liturgical readings for deaconesses and learn more at www.fundfordiaconate.org/deaconesses.



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THE WORK OF The Fund

The Fund for the Diaconate of The Episcopal Church assists deacons - working, retired, in formation or disabled - who have insufficient funds for their needs. We offer Regular, Emergency and Diaconal Formation grants. Deacons can also apply for a Hallenbeck Fellowship, to enable them to attend conferences or educational events.

Our History

The Fund was established in 1927 as a “Retiring Fund” by the deaconesses themselves. This was because women were not accepted into the Church Pension Fund at that time. It was created to help those of their order who could no longer work and had no financial resources.

Through bequests from individuals and donations from parishes and women’s groups, the Retiring Fund was able to support any deaconess who was in need well into the 1980’s. Today, deacons of either gender are served by the renamed Fund. In the past ten years, just over \$1,000,000 has been given to deacons who can’t make ends meet.

The need continues. The Fund still accepts donations, so we can serve those ordained to this servant ministry.

Leave a Legacy

Planned Giving with The Fund means that your gift can help deacons, and those in formation, now and in the future. Visit our website for details.



Deacon Phoebe

A contemporary of St. Paul and a resident of Cenchreae near Corinth, Phoebe is recognized as the first female deacon. Her feast day in The Episcopal Church is January 27.

Suzanne Jones Schleck, iconographer



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