

# **Vision for the Permanent Diaconate For the Diocese of Kalamazoo Executive Summary**

(rev. 6/18/2025)

## **I. Introduction and Background**

The Diaconate Vision Task Force (DVTF) was initiated under the direction of Bishop Edward M. Lohse for the Diocese of Kalamazoo in February, 2024. Task Force membership consisted of: Bishop Edward M. Lohse, Rev. Fabio Garzón V.G., Rev. Christopher Ankley, Dcn. James Bauer, Dcn. David Guido, Dcn. Gary Stafford and Dcn. John Ryder. The focus of the Diaconate Vision Task Force was to describe a vision and identify priorities for the formation and ongoing ministry of permanent deacons in the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

As indicated in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States (“National Directory”; Paragraph 270): *The reestablishment or renewal of diaconal ministry within a diocesan Church is best conceived and established within an overall diocesan plan for ministry in which the diaconate is seen as an integral component in addressing pastoral needs. In this way, deacons, who are ordained for service to the diocesan Church, will have a richer and firmer sense of their identity and purpose, as will those who collaborate in ministry with them.*

In order to accomplish its assignment, the task force reviewed certain aspects of the USCCB National Directory and survey responses from permanent deacons which generated a list of over 100 types of ministries presently occurring within the diocese.

The vision document is intended to bring additional local focus, specificity and direction to the formation, life and ministry of deacons in the Diocese of Kalamazoo. It is not intended to replace or supersede any aspect of the USCCB’s National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the U.S.

It is anticipated that primary uses of this document will include:

- i. Guidance for understanding and implementing diaconal ministries within parishes and within the diocese.
- ii. Educational resource for pre-and post-ordination formation sessions and workshops for presbyteral and diaconal communities.
- iii. Guidance for the selection of candidates, selection of formation educational content and determining important aspects of the formation process.
- iv. Guidance for assessing and planning for future needs related to diaconal ministry within the diocese including consideration of demographic trends.

## II. The Four “Wheel Diagrams”

The deacon vision document is built around four “wheel diagrams” that were developed both to facilitate discussion and the work of the task force; and to represent its final output. The “wheel diagrams” are meant to convey the relative importance of various traits and ministries of deacons from four different perspectives which include the deacon as a:

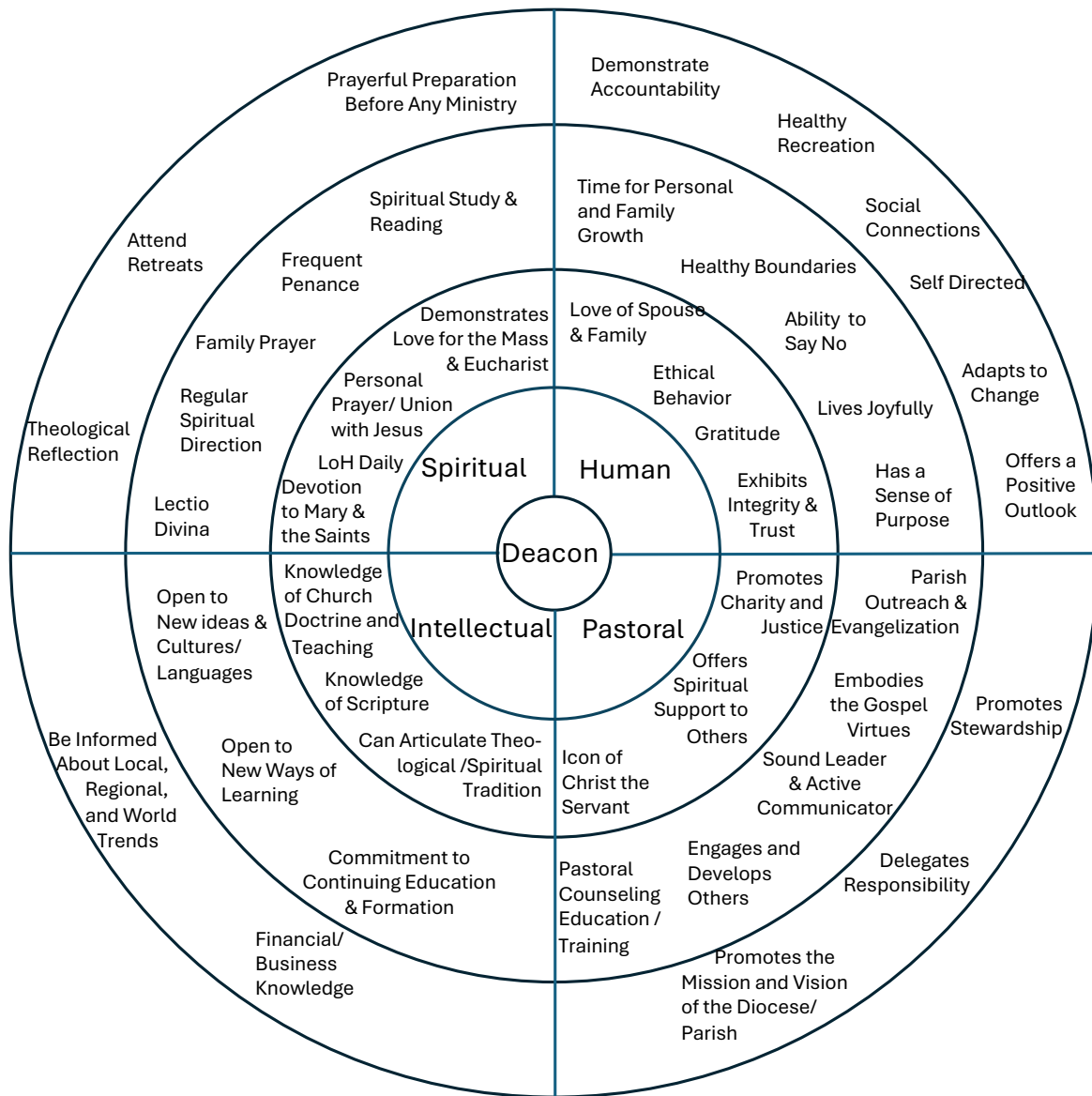
1. **Human Person** across four dimensions:
  - a. Human
  - b. Intellectual
  - c. Spiritual
  - d. Pastoral
2. **Minister** of:
  - a. Word
  - b. Liturgy
  - c. Charity
3. **Minister within a Parish** related to:
  - a. Formation
  - b. Operations
  - c. Outreach
4. **Minister within the Diocese Beyond the Parish** related to:
  - a. Formation
  - b. Operations
  - c. Outreach

Each of these diagrams places various personal attributes or types of ministries within the bounds of three concentric circles. The innermost circle identifies items with the highest intended emphasis or priority. The second of the three circles identifies important items of high priority. The outermost circle includes items which may apply to fewer deacons, candidates or situations but which are still important for consideration.

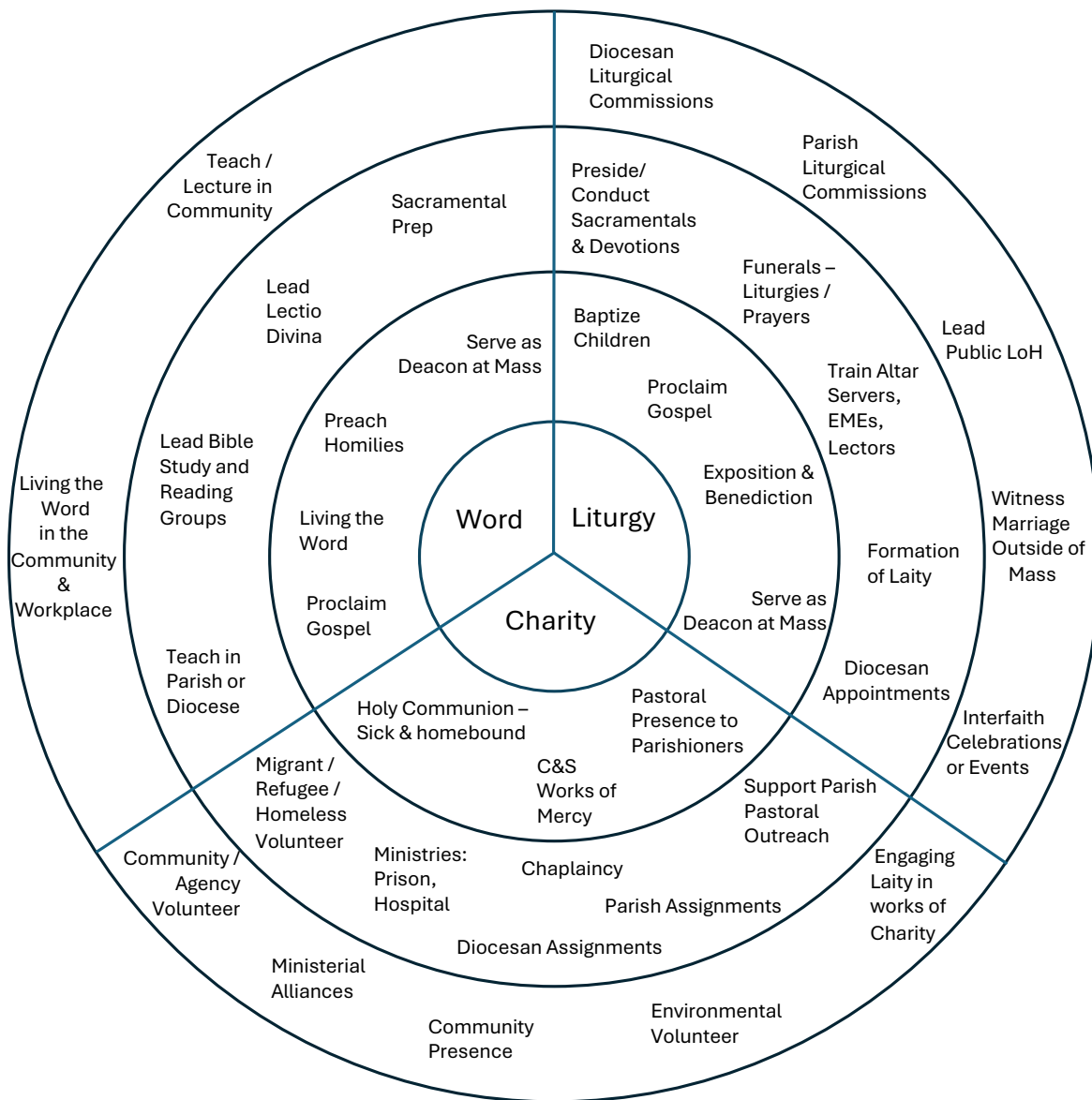
The full vision document includes a narrative description for each of the wheel diagrams and a helpful appendix excerpted from the USCCB’s National Directory for the Formation and Life of Deacons in the United States.

For the purposes of this Executive Summary, only the diagrams are presented below.

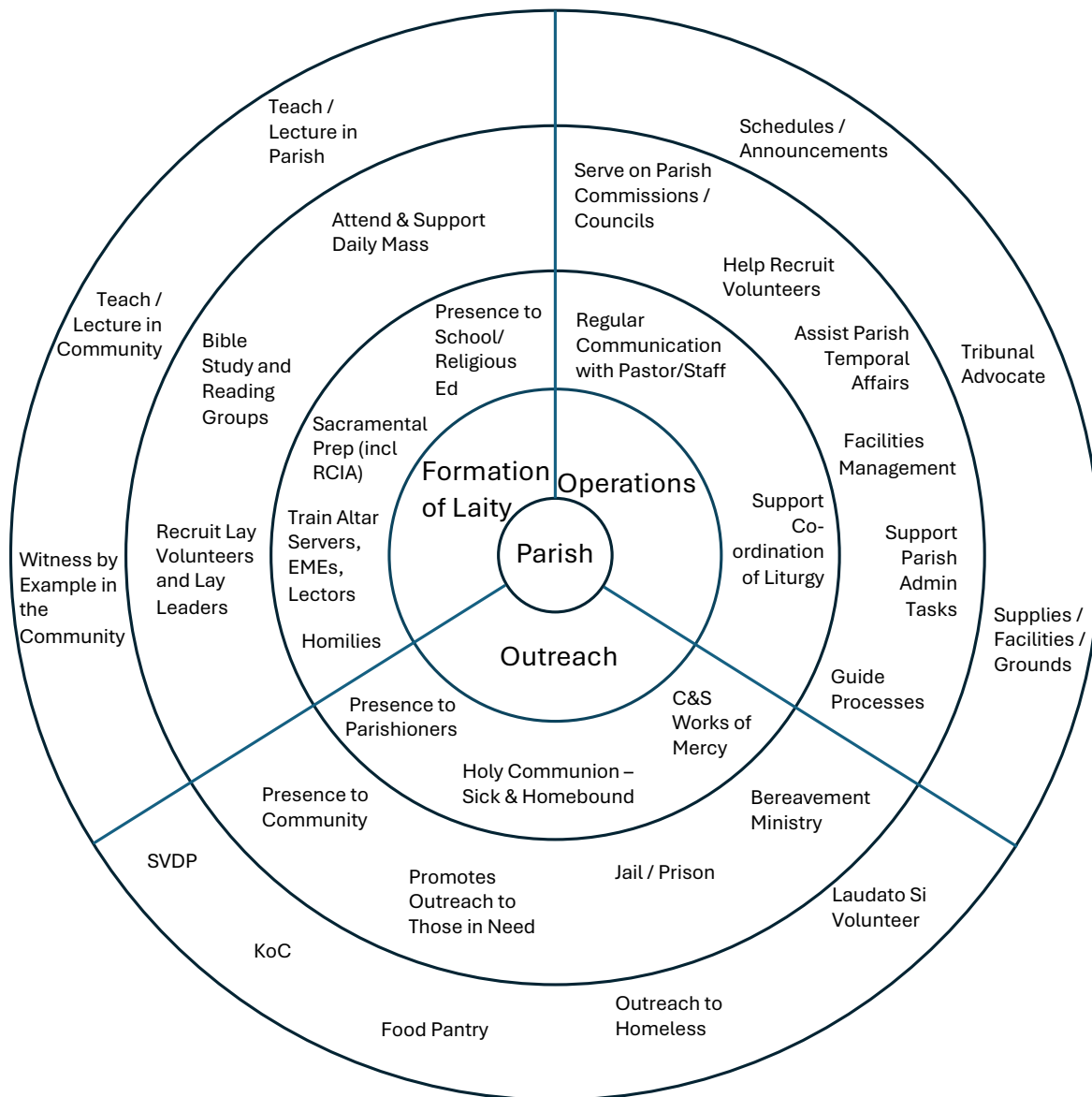
**Diagram 1 – The Deacon or Deacon Candidate as a Human Person – Desirable Traits**



**Diagram 2 - The Deacon as Minister of Word, Liturgy and Charity**



**Diagram 3 – Diaconal Ministry in Parishes**



**Diagram 4 – Diaconal Ministry in the Diocese Beyond the Parish**

