

# The Diocese of Newark Commission on Ministry



Guidelines to the Priesthood Ordination Process  
and its Requirements  
*Effective September 1, 2023*

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## Introduction

Welcome to the priestly ordination process in the Diocese of Newark.

Discerning a call to ordination is a process involving both the individual's sense of vocation and the church's affirmation of that call. God calls each of us to ministry of some kind and God is persistent with that call. We discern together in community the best ways to respond to that call. The Bishop, the Commission on Ministry, and the Standing Committee are grateful for your willingness to share your sense of vocation with us. We are committed to making the ordination process one of depth, dialogue, and faithful discernment. We have designed the process to create an environment for this discernment, and for the early stages of priestly formation.

The Commission on Ministry's (hereafter, "the COM" or "the Commission") function is to assist those in discerning their call to ordained or lay ministry.

Please bear in mind that this process involves one-on-one interviews, conferences, and documentation regarding various aspects of your background, spiritual journey, life experiences, education, discernment, and personal matters that have affected you and your family. Throughout this process, you will need to complete and submit a number of documents at various times, and you will be required to advise the Commission any time there are significant life or other events that affect you or may affect the process.

These Guidelines describe the required documents and the sequence of meetings/conferences and steps in the discernment process leading to ordination as a priest. This process is governed by the Canons of The Episcopal Church, and these Guidelines reflect how those Canons are implemented in the Diocese of Newark.

You are responsible for completing and submitting the required paperwork to the appropriate people and for meeting all deadlines throughout the process. Conferences and meetings are scheduled in advance, and you will be expected and required to submit documents on a timely basis.

Throughout the process you may need to seek clarification of a particular requirement. The Commission and its members are available and committed to assist you. The proper person to contact is noted in these guidelines. However, you should feel free to contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission at any time. The name and contact information for the relevant members are available on the Commission's webpage, (<http://www.dioceseofnewark.org/comhome/>) or from the Office of the Bishop.

### **Important Note to Parish Clergy**

An individual seeking to enter the process towards ordination to the Priesthood must spend a minimum of two full years in a single congregation in the Diocese of Newark and must also be a confirmed communicant in good standing<sup>1</sup> in that congregation for at least one full year prior to nomination by sponsoring clergy and Vestry.

After a period of at least one year of active involvement in the congregation's life, parish clergy may enter more formal and serious discussions with an Aspirant regarding that person's interest in becoming ordained, spending a minimum of four to six months in such conversations. Should the clergy and the Aspirant believe the person should continue, certain steps must be taken.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Clergy to contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission at that time. The Co-Chairs will provide an overview of the Diocesan process, including the requirement that the Parish Clergy must discuss the establishment of a Parish Discernment Committee (which shall meet with the Aspirant for a minimum of 6-10 meetings over a minimum of six months) with at least one of the Co-Chairs of the Commission prior to establishing the Discernment Committee.

No Parish Discernment Committee is to be established prior to the Parish Priest's discussion with the Co-Chairs of the Commission.

### **Overview of the Ordination Process<sup>2</sup>**

The priestly ordination process typically lasts between four and six years, beginning with the earliest contact between a parishioner and his or her Parish Priest (also called "Sponsoring Clergy" once the individual enters into the discernment process) about the parishioner's sense of vocation. The following pages describe the stages of the process. Each section includes a list of the documents, conferences and events that are required at each stage.

Individuals wishing to enter the process must also take into consideration that the Bishop's strong desire is that anyone entering the ordination process must be, at the time of ordination, able to provide five years of ministry prior to the mandatory retirement age of 72 years, established in the canons of the Episcopal Church. Ideally, this means that no one should be older than about 67 years at the time of ordination. Age is not a barrier to application, but may limit ministry options upon ordination, because of the requirement for mandatory retirement.

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<sup>1</sup> A Confirmed Communicant in Good Standing is defined in the Episcopal Church canons as someone who has been Confirmed or Received by a Bishop of this Church and has, in the previous year: received Holy Communion at least three times, been faithful in corporate worship, and been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God (Canon I.17.1-3).

<sup>2</sup> See the Appendix at the end of this document for an outline of the process.

It is expected that an Aspirant will be a member of a single sponsoring parish for not less than two years, with a minimum of one year as a confirmed adult communicant in good standing,<sup>3</sup> before being nominated and applying to the Bishop and Commission for postulancy.

The Canons of the Episcopal Church require a minimum of 18 months between the Aspirant's acceptance of Nomination and ordination to the Transitional Diaconate. However, the more typical process is between four and six years.

Throughout the process, all Postulants and Candidates must attend the annual Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Newark and any other gatherings (e.g., retreats) as required by the Commission.

Prior to Postulancy, the Co-Chairs of the Commission on Ministry will serve as the Aspirants' and Nominees' "Liaison" or primary points of contact and should be encouraged to contact the co-chairs at any time with questions, concerns, needs for further information, or any other matters. After being accepted as a Postulant by the Bishop, each Postulant is assigned a Liaison, which is a member of the Commission on Ministry.

### **Administrative Fee**

If you are invited by the Bishop to attend a Postulancy Conference, you will be responsible for submitting an administrative fee. This fee is currently \$3,000 and is necessary to cover the cost of the psychological assessment (and update if needed), the background check (and update if needed), the General Ordination Exams, and the pre-ordination retreat.

It is expected that this fee will be at least shared with the sponsoring congregation, each providing half. However, any Nominee may request support from the Bishop as well. In that case, the fee would be covered by a 1/3 contribution each from the Nominee, the sponsoring parish, and from the Bishop. In the case of extreme financial need, additional assistance may be available; please contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission in that circumstance.

This fee is payable in full within 14 days of receiving an invitation to attend a Postulancy Conference. The fee must be received prior to scheduling psychological interviews and background checks. No one may attend a Postulancy Conference until this fee has been paid in full.

The check is to be made payable to the Diocese of Newark, with the "Commission on Ministry" noted in the memo and is to be sent to the Canon to the Ordinary, who will record receipt of the check for the Commission.

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote on previous page for definition.

## General Guidelines for Submission of Documents

Unless otherwise noted:

- All required documents for each stage of the ordination process are listed in these Guidelines.
- Forms that are provided on the Commission on Ministry webpage must be used. The available forms are indicated in each section.
- Originals are to be uploaded to the Commission's Portal which can be accessed from the Diocesan website.
- Originals of all transcripts are to be sent to the Bishop's office, who will forward them to the COM.
- At each stage of the process, many documents will need to be submitted. In some cases, the same documents may be requested at different stages. Examples of these are transcripts and the Ordination Process Information form. This is to ensure that the Bishop and the Commission have the most current and complete set of information as you proceed through the process toward ordination.
- Additional documents or information may be requested by the Bishop or Commission on Ministry.

If there are any changes to any of your personal contact information at any time (e.g., address, email address, phone numbers, etc.), you must complete a new Ordination Process Information Form in its entirety and submit it immediately to the Bishop and the Commission Co-Chairs.

You must retain a complete set of copies of all documents that you submit throughout this process. At any time, should you have any questions as to those documents that are required, please contact the Commission Co-Chairs.

## Terms Used in These Guidelines

### Ordination Process Stages

**Aspirant** – Informal term used to describe someone who has begun conversation and consideration of a call to ordained ministry. Anyone looking at discernment for Holy Orders prior to becoming a Nominee

**Nominee** – Canonical term used to describe someone nominated by their Vestry and parish clergy after a period of active ministry and discernment with both the clergyperson and a parish discernment committee. The Nominee has to have accepted the nomination.

**Postulant** – Canonical term describing the formal entry into the diocesan discernment process; a period of formation and continued discernment; Postulancy is granted by the Bishop after recommendation of the Commission on Ministry.

**Candidate** – Canonical term for entry into a more focused time of discernment for Holy Orders; a period of continuing formation and discernment; evaluation of preparation usually takes place during candidacy; Candidacy may be granted by the Bishop after a favorable response by the Standing Committee who has interviewed and reviewed the applicant's materials, including a certification from the Commission on Ministry that formation is progressing favorably.

**Ordinand** – Informal term used to describe someone who has received approval for Ordination by the Bishop, after approval by the Standing Committee and recommendation of the Commission on Ministry

### Diocesan Bodies

**Commission on Ministry (COM)** – Lay and clergy members of the Diocese appointed by the Bishop who advise the Bishop on discernment for ministry and manage the discernment process. This group works with individuals who are interested in discerning a specific ministry, whether lay or ordained, or are seeking to have their ordination received in the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Newark. The COM monitors the discernment process, provides guidance to individuals in the process, and makes recommendations to the Bishop to assist in the Bishop's decision to grant canonical status to an individual.

**Co- Chair of the Commission on Ministry** – Chairs all Commission meetings and oversees all Commission activities.

**Conference Chair** – Responsible for inviting individuals to attend Postulancy, and Candidacy Conferences; for setting the date, time, and location of each Conference; for organizing such Conferences; and for providing feedback to individuals following their attendance at such Conferences.



*Bishop's Office Liaison* (formerly Documents Chair) – Responsible for interactions between the Bishop's Office and those in the process and coordinates with the COM. Also works with individuals in the priestly process in terms of all paperwork and documents required for submission throughout the process; and for setting the dates that all such documents must be submitted.

*Education Chair* – Responsible for ensuring compliance with all matters relating to the education of the individuals in the process.

*Education Committee* – Refers to the committee responsible for working with individuals in the ordination process with regards to all education requirements, including remediation for General Ordination Exams.

*Executive Committee* – The body consisting of the Commission Co-Chairs, the Conference Chair, the Education Chair of the Commission on Ministry. The Bishop's Office Liaison participates ex officio.

***Standing Committee (SC)*** – An elected body of lay and clergy members of the Diocese who have authority to approve and recommend to the Bishop regarding Candidacy and Ordination, among other matters.

## **Special Circumstances**

### **Completed Seminary Prior to Postulancy**

Occasionally, Aspirants begin the ordination process after they have completed seminary, although this is strongly discouraged. Aspirants who have already completed seminary must still go through all the steps in the ordination process including completing the Anglican Studies requirement as described under the seminary coursework heading below in addition to any additional education requirements.

### **Ordained in Other Denominations**

Individuals who have been ordained in other denominations and who are seeking to have their orders received in the Episcopal Church should review the Canons of the Episcopal Church as well as these Guidelines, to gain an overview. Such individuals should contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission as early as possible to discuss in detail the steps that must be taken, which will depend on the tradition in which the individual was previously ordained.

### **When the Parish Priest Leaves the Sponsoring Parish**

The Commission recognizes that parishes and missions are dynamic entities, and that Parish Priests (as defined above) may, in due course, leave a congregation while it is in the process of sponsoring a person for ordination. As there are required processes of discernment within the congregation (involving the Parish Priest as well as the lay leadership) and documents of support required by the Parish Priest and Vestry of a Nominee, Postulant or Candidate, such departures can have a significant impact on an individual in the process.

Episcopal Church Canons provide that another priest of the Diocese “acquainted with the nominee and the Parish” may fulfill the role required for supporting and approving the individual in the process (e.g., when the required written sponsorship certificate is submitted). This Priest could be the Interim Rector or, in certain circumstances, another priest in the Diocese who is approved to assist in this situation.

It is not practical to provide definitive guidelines to address every possible situation. However, there are certain steps to be taken by those involved to facilitate the appropriate decision.

The Nominee, Postulant or Candidate must contact the Commission Co-Chairs as soon as they are aware that their Parish Priest may be leaving the sponsoring parish. It is the responsibility of the clergy person to contact the Co-Chairs about their departure as well.

The COM Co-Chairs will discuss the situation with the individual and the Parish Priest who is leaving in order to consider the immediate impact on the individual; e.g., the period of time

until an interim priest is assigned, the length of time the interim is expected to serve, whether there is another priest in the Diocese who knows the individual and parish sufficiently to assist, and so on.

Because each situation is unique, the decision regarding the impact of the Parish Priest leaving will depend on several things, and the following questions are among those that will be considered:

- How far into the process is the individual when the Parish Priest leaves?
- How long has the individual been part of the parish, and how well is the individual known by the parish?
- Does the individual have close and deep ties with another priest who also knows the parish community?
- How long has the Commission known the individual?
- Has the Commission concluded that the individual has clearly demonstrated his or her vocation to the Commission?
- What recommendations were made to the individual at previous conferences, and what steps have been taken to address those recommendations?
- Is the lay leadership of the parish stable and supportive of the individual?
- Are there other matters in the congregation that may affect this situation?
- Is there another Priest in the Diocese who could assist?

Interim clergy may be able to step into the Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-Charge's role of support depending upon the length of time the interim is expected to stay in the position, and if the individual is well enough along in the process and is well supported by the parish and is well known by the Commission. In some cases, however, the individual may not be well known to the interim as the individual is likely to be "away" from the parish at seminary or at field placement and may not be present at the parish long enough to build some relationship with the new clergy.

The situation can be significantly complicated if the individual has not yet been nominated by sponsoring clergy and vestry. The individual's process may be so new that it would make sense for the individual to take no further steps until the new Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-Charge is in place at the sponsoring parish. That decision will be made by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission.

In any case, it will be important that the individual's Parish Discernment Committee continue to support the Nominee, Postulant or Candidate during this transition period should such a committee already be in place. (A Parish Discernment Committee may not, however, be created in the absence of a Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-Charge, and may not be created by an Interim Rector without discussing the matter with the Co-Chairs of the Commission.)

## **Discernment**

### **Definition**

The traditional name of the first stage in the ordination process is "Aspirancy." This suggests that a person is aspiring to discern, or come to know more deeply, the vocation to which God calls him or her. Aspirancy begins with conversations between the Aspirant and the Aspirant's Parish Priest (as defined earlier) These conversations happen over a minimum of four to six months and often take longer, as each person's process of discernment is different.

These conversations may reach the point where both the Aspirant and the Aspirant's Parish Priest feel that the Aspirant is ready for the next step. Both the Aspirant and the Parish Priest have certain responsibilities and certain actions must be taken, as outlined below.

### **Parish Priest's Role**

The discernment process begins with the Aspirant and subsequently a series of conversations with the Parish Priest. In these initial discussions the Parish Priest can help the Aspirant by exploring with the Aspirant the extent and nature of the call experience, including whether the call is of service to the Church as a lay person, priest, or deacon.

After a period of four to six months of discussion, if the Parish Priest and the Aspirant mutually agree that a formal discernment process is appropriate and could be meaningful, the Parish Priest will first contact one or both of the Co-Chairs of the Commission, who will discuss the initial steps in the process. If there is not a shared sense of discernment for ordained ministry, the Parish Priest and Aspirant should explore intentional lay ministries in the parish or beyond.

After the priest from the sponsoring parish has identified the Aspirant to the Co-Chairs of the COM, a conversation will be setup between the Aspirant, the Co-Chairs of the COM, and the Parish Priest. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the Aspirant and Co-Chairs to become acquainted and to answer questions about the ordination process generally.

Following those discussions between the Parish Priest and the COM Co-Chairs, the Parish Priest will select appropriate individuals to serve on a Parish Discernment Committee. Under no circumstances is a Parish Priest to establish a Parish Discernment Committee prior to a discussion with the Co-Chairs of the Commission. Among other reasons, it may be that the Commission will ask that the Parish Discernment Committee include one or more persons from outside of the parish and who do not previously know the Aspirant, which is an encouraged practice.

Parish Priests should select persons for the Parish Discernment Committee who have a good understanding of their own ministries and who understand that a call to ministry does not necessarily mean a call to ordination. The Parish Priest is to appoint a person to chair the Parish Discernment Committee who is responsible for convening and holding meetings and for ensuring that the report to the Commission that is written by the Parish Discernment Committee is in compliance with the Guidelines. Parish Discernment Committee members should have good listening and pastoral skills as well as a thorough understanding of the expectations, duties, and responsibilities of ordained persons. The Parish Discernment Committee should include an equal number of male and female members and members with a range of ages. The Parish Discernment Committee should also reflect the overall diversity of the parish, and, as noted above, may be asked to include one or more persons from outside of the parish.

The Parish Discernment Committee may not include: members of the Aspirant's family; the Parish Priest, or member of the Parish Priest's family; or anyone whose participation may represent a conflict of interests or the appearance of such a conflict.

### **The Parish Discernment Committee**

After the initial meeting between the Aspirant, the Parish Priest, and the COM Co-Chairs, the Parish Priest will begin selecting members for the Parish Discernment Committee. It is encouraged to include a member from another parish in the Diocese. The Co-Chairs of the Commission can assist in identifying outside members, if needed. When a group is ready, the Parish Priest will contact the Co-Chairs to schedule a training for the Parish Discernment Committee, which will be conducted by the Co-Chairs or other members of the COM that they designate.

### **Summary of the Parish Discernment Process**

The Parish Discernment Committee plays several roles. First, at this early stage of the process this Committee serves as a sounding board for the Aspirant where the aspirant explores the different dimensions of a call to ordination. Second, this Committee offers to the Vestry and Rector (and, eventually, the Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and Standing Committee) its observations regarding the strengths the aspirant would offer the church as a priest, the areas in which the Aspirant would need to grow to become a well-rounded priest, and the way the Parish Discernment Committee experienced the Aspirant in the course of their meetings.

The role of the Parish Discernment Committee is to evaluate the Aspirant's qualifications for ordained ministry, and to help the Aspirant gain greater self-awareness and a deeper understanding of the aspirant's call to ministry, whether ordained or not. The Parish Discernment Committee and Aspirant should meet 6-10 times over a minimum of 6 months.

The Parish Discernment Committee is to write a report to the Commission, with a copy to the Aspirant, prior to the Nomination by the sponsoring parish clergy and vestry. The report must be four to five pages in length and must follow and address each of the areas as outlined in the *Guidelines for Discernment Committees*. The Commission and Bishop rely heavily on this written report when it meets with the individual at the Postulancy Conference. Not addressing all of the points in those guidelines may lead to the individual not being invited to the Postulancy Conference.

#### Pre-Nomination

The Parish Discernment Committee is charged with helping an Aspirant discern the nature of the Aspirant's call to ministry. It is intended to supplement the one-on-one discernment discussions that the Aspirant will have with the Parish Priest of his or her own parish.

The Parish Discernment Committee is to provide an environment in which the Aspirant and Parish Discernment Committee members may freely and openly discuss the Aspirant's call to ministry. The Parish Discernment Committee and Aspirant must therefore treat all of their meetings as strictly confidential.

The Parish Discernment Committee also serves as a support system for the Aspirant in the Aspirant's discernment process. In that context the Parish Discernment Committee should encourage the Aspirant to engage in a process of profound and honest self-examination. This includes exploration regarding baptismal ministry generally as a lay person and also consideration of ordination. The Parish Discernment Committee should uphold and support an Aspirant's decision to pursue a call to ministry, whether through lay ministry or ordination.

In addition, the Parish Discernment Committee is to evaluate the Aspirant's qualifications for ordained ministry, and to help the Aspirant gain greater self-awareness and a deeper understanding of the Aspirant's call to ministry, whether ordained or not.

The Parish Discernment Committee produces a report for the Vestry, which is also shared with the Commission and the Bishop, advising on whether the Aspirant may be called to ordained ministry.

#### After Nomination

If the Nominee is invited to attend a Postulancy Conference and subsequently *is accepted* for Postulancy by the Bishop, the Parish Discernment Committee should continue to provide a support network as the challenges/hurdles of seminary, candidacy and ordination are faced.

If the Nominee is not invited to attend a Postulancy Conference by the Bishop or if Postulancy is not given, the Parish Discernment Committee must be prepared to provide pastoral care and help as the Nominee discerns how to live out his or her call in lay ministry. It is recommended that the Nominee be supported in identifying specific lay ministries by the Commission.

The Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and the Parish Discernment Committee shall assist persons engaged in a process of ministry discernment to determine appropriate avenues for the expression and support of ministries, either lay or ordained.

## Nomination

After the Parish Discernment Committee's report is presented to the Parish Priest and Vestry (as defined earlier), the Aspirant may be nominated for ordination to the Priesthood as specified in Canon III.8.2(a).

The nomination shall be in writing and shall include a statement of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to pledge to contribute financially to that preparation and involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood.

The nomination shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.

If the Nominee agrees to the nomination, the individual shall accept the nomination in writing as specified in Canon III.8.2(b); at that point, the Aspirant is known as a Nominee.

The Parish Priest will then forward the approved nomination and adds an accompanying letter to the Bishop's Office and the Commission Co-Chair, informing them of the Nomination. This letter may also address the aspects outlined in the *Guidelines for Discernment Committees* from the Parish Priest's perspective.

At this point, the Nominee should choose a Spiritual Director (if they have not done so already) and meet with them on a regular, mutually agreed frequency going forward.

The documents that must be submitted to the Bishop's Office at this stage include the following:

Form	Description
P-1*	Ordination Process Information Form
P-2*	Certificate of Minister and Vestry Form - indicates the Parish Priest's and its Vestry's support of the Nominee, financially and otherwise; includes a letter from the priest
P-3*	Acceptance of Nomination and application for Postulancy
P-4	Report of Parish Discernment Committee

\* These forms are both available on the Commission webpage under the heading "Forms for Nomination and Postulancy" (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/com/application-postulancy>).



## From Nomination to Postulancy

The Nominee’s next steps after nomination are to prepare and file the following documents to the Bishop’s Office:

Form	Description
P-5	A four-page, double-spaced spiritual autobiography
P-6	A two-page, double-spaced statement describing the Nominee’s sense of call, describing the process of discernment by which the Nominee has determined this call
P-7	A current resume

Upon completion and submission of the first necessary set of documents, P-1 through P-7, the Nominee will contact the Office of the Bishop to schedule a meeting with the Bishop. After that meeting, the Bishop will determine if the Nominee will be invited to attend a Postulancy Conference and will then forward the Nominee’s documents to the Commission on Ministry.

Upon receipt of the invitation, the Nominee will submit the administrative fee of \$3000, supported by their sponsoring parish and, if desirable, the Bishop. The Nominee will also submit the remaining documents necessary at this stage to the Bishop’s Office who will communicate them to the Commission. The Nominee will be given instructions by the Bishop’s Office regarding the psychological assessment, the medical examination, and the background check. Additional documents are required prior to the Postulancy Conference and include:

Form	Descriptions
P-8	Official transcripts of <u>all</u> academic work (undergraduate and graduate)
P-9	A one-page letter from the Nominee’s spouse/partner expressing his/her thoughts on the Nominee’s seeking ordination, where applicable
P-10	Passport-sized photo, no older than six months
P-11	Names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of three references, indicating your relationship to each reference (see below)
P-12	Bishop’s Office affirms receipt of Administrative Fee

P-13	Completed psychological assessment (recommendation summary form, as provided by the Church Pension Fund, transmitted to COM; the full report is sent only to the Bishop and <b>is not sent to the full COM</b> ) (see below)
P-14*	Completed Medical Examination Form (physician’s recommendation sent to COM; the full report is sent only to the Bishop and <b>is not sent to the COM</b> )
P-15	Completed background check (Background and criminal checks remain in the Bishop’s office only; <b>no copy is sent to the Commission on Ministry</b> ) (see below)

\* These forms are both available on the Commission webpage under the heading “Forms for Nomination and Postulancy” (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/com/application-postulancy>).

It is critical that all documents be uploaded to the Commission on Ministry Portal (found on the Diocesan website at <https://dioceseofnewark.org/com/submit-docs>) in a timely fashion, and it is the responsibility of the Nominee to ensure they are received on time. Since some documents (e.g., transcripts, certificates, and so on) must be obtained from others, the Nominee should begin gathering these documents as soon as possible. *If all required documents are not received by the Bishop’s Office on or before the deadline, a Nominee may be advised that he or she may not attend the Postulancy Conference, or the Conference may be delayed.*

### Psychological Assessment

When the Nominee knows that he or she will be attending a Postulancy Conference and after the administrative fee has been received by the Bishop’s Office, the Nominee will be provided with necessary forms and the contact information for the agency that conducts psychological assessments for the Diocese of Newark. It is the Nominee’s responsibility to schedule the psychological interviews and tests. After the interviews, the Nominee will have an opportunity to review a draft report and correct any errors of fact before a final report is issued. **The psychological assessment report is issued only to the Bishop and not the full Commission on Ministry.** The Bishop may ask 1-3 members of the Commission who have psychological training to read the report as well, to be able to interpret any significant findings to the COM and to provide feedback to the Bishop. The Commission hopes Nominees will find these reports enlightening regarding personal psychological issues bearing on ordination.

Nominees should allow up to three months for the completion of the psychological assessment process and should schedule appointments accordingly.

This psychological assessment must be updated if the period from the date of the initial

evaluation report until ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood is 36 months or more, or at the request of the Commission (Canons III.8.5(k) and III.8.7(a)(3)). The cost of this assessment and any needed updates is included in the Administrative Fee.

### **Background and Criminal Checks**

Background and criminal checks on each Nominee are conducted prior to attendance at the Postulancy Conference and include credit, motor vehicle, and criminal checks. These background checks must be updated prior to ordination if more than 36 months have elapsed between the date of the background check and the date of ordination to the Diaconate or to the Priesthood, or at the request of the Commission. The cost of these checks is included in the Administrative Fee.

### **References**

People to be used as references should be those who have known the Nominee long enough to provide information about the Nominee that will be helpful to the Commission. For example, employers, people with whom the Nominee has worked, former or present teachers, someone who is involved with the Nominee in lay ministry, and others may be good references.

Certain individuals may not be used as references, including

- any clergy from the sponsoring parish
- any member of the Nominee's Parish Discernment Committee
- any member of the Commission on Ministry or Standing Committee
- anyone who is currently in the process of seeking ordination
- any member of the Nominee's family
- a former or current spiritual director

### **The Postulancy Conference**

Postulancy Conferences are generally held when the Nominee has submitted the necessary paperwork and all reports and assessments are in hand. If multiple Nominees have been invited in a relatively close timeframe, the Commission will often schedule multiple conferences on the same day.

The Postulancy Conference consists of small group interviews of a Nominee by the Commission and members of the Standing Committee where Nominees are asked questions based on their written materials. The Postulancy Conference is used to assess a person's sense of call, emotional and spiritual maturity, leadership ability, vision for church/ministry, and the ability to bring others to Christ. Therefore, the goal of the

Postulancy Conference is for the Commission to be able to recommend whether a Nominee's call to ordained ministry is discerned enough for the Nominee to proceed into the Postulancy stage of the ordination process. The Commission also considers other matters that may impact whether it is appropriate to proceed into the Postulancy stage at that time.

The Conference Chair provides information regarding the date, time, and place of the Conference to Nominees several months in advance. The Bishop's Office Liaison contacts Nominees who will attend the Postulancy Conference to outline the timing of submission of documents, and to clarify any issues that Nominees may have regarding documents. Documents are generally due to be submitted six to eight weeks prior to the Postulancy Conference.

Following the Postulancy Conference, the Commission makes one of the following recommendations to the Bishop regarding Postulancy for each Nominee:

- Recommended for Postulancy
- Not Recommended for Postulancy

All recommendations from the Commission to the Bishop require a two-thirds vote of all Commission members present and eligible to vote.

With the Commission's recommendation, the Bishop will make a decision about whether to admit the Nominee as a Postulant for Holy Orders. The Bishop will then contact each Nominee, usually within one week of the Postulancy Conference.

Each Nominee should then contact the Conference Chair to schedule an appointment to review feedback from the conference and to discuss the next steps.

If the Bishop accepts the Nominee as a Postulant, they will meet with the Bishop and the Education Committee Chair as soon as is convenient to determine a formation plan. The Postulant will also meet with the Bishop annually for the remainder of the discernment process.

Nominees who are not made Postulants by the Bishop may return to a future Postulancy Conference for reconsideration, if invited to do so by the Bishop. Nominees should decide when to request to attend the second conference after consultation with the Co-Chairs of the Commission. Nominees not granted Postulancy after the initial conference must wait at least one year before returning to a second conference. Nominees not granted Postulancy after attending two Postulancy Conferences may not attend future Postulancy Conferences, unless the Bishop makes an exception.

## **Postulancy**

### **Definition**

Postulancy is a time for those in the ordination process to be formed personally, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and vocationally and to be better prepared for the ministry to which they are called. Postulancy is the time leading to candidacy and may initiate the formal preparation for ordination. Postulancy involves continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to the Priesthood.

### **Activities During Postulancy**

Postulants would typically enroll in a course of study approved by the Bishop, which will include Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and a church field placement. The Commission expects Postulants to find this a time of significant spiritual growth which normally parallels the first two years of seminary.

Each Postulant is to meet with the Bishop to discuss issues related to theological education, finances, field work, mentor assignments, and other relevant issues.

### **Communication with the Bishop for Ember Days**

Each Postulant for ordination to the Priesthood shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the weeks that have Ember Days, reflecting on the Postulant's academic experience and personal and spiritual development. Ember Days are the Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays after the First Sunday in Lent, the Day of Pentecost, Holy Cross Day, and December 13.<sup>4</sup>

One of these four letters each year should include information about how the Postulant has followed up on recommendations the Commission made following the Postulancy Conference. This letter should be in the Ember Week that falls closest to six months after the Postulancy Conference at which the individual was made a Postulant, and annually thereafter.

### **Liaison**

All Postulants are assigned a member of the Commission to serve as a liaison. The liaison is the contact person who facilitates communication between the Postulant/Candidate and the Commission. The liaison makes the initial contact with the Postulant. Although the Postulant/Candidate is solely responsible for making sure all requirements are fulfilled, the liaison serves as a facilitator, helping to make the process as clear and orderly as possible for the Postulant/Candidate.

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<sup>4</sup> The Book of Common Prayer 1979, 18.

There must be contact between the liaison and the Postulant/Candidate on at least a quarterly basis. The liaison and the Postulant/Candidate share responsibility for planning this contact.

The liaison should check on the Postulant/Candidate's progress in fulfilling recommendations from the Commission.

The liaison presents a report to the Commission at least twice annually regarding the Postulant/Candidate, progress made with respect to Commission recommendations, and any other matters of importance.

The liaison is responsible for accurately representing the requirements and procedures of the Commission to the Postulant/Candidate – or referring the Postulant/Candidate to someone else who can, such as the Bishop's Office Liaison, Education, or Conference Chairs.

It is expected that the liaison's relationship will increase his or her familiarity with the Postulant/Candidate's skills and potential. This additional knowledge of the Postulant/Candidate should not be a reason for future recusal in voting. If the liaison feels that he or she will be unable to cast a vote in the future, he or she should meet with the Commission Co-Chairs to discuss the situation. The Commission Co-Chairs have the option of assigning the Postulant/Candidate a new liaison.

The Postulant/Candidate may, without prejudice, ask for a new liaison by contacting the Commission Co-Chairs.

### **Attire**

Postulants should not wear any clerical attire, including a seminarian's collar. In corporate worship, Postulants should wear only vestments appropriate for a lay person.

### **Ordination Process Tracking Form**

Once an individual is accepted as a Postulant by the Bishop, the Postulant is to complete the Ordination Process Tracking Form, available on the Commission's webpage.

This form assists the Postulant and the Commission in tracking activities that have been accomplished and laying out the expected timetable for future activities from the time one becomes a Postulant through the remainder of the time the individual remains in the process toward Priesthood.

The initial Form is due to be submitted within 45 days of being accepted as a Postulant, and by January 15 of each year thereafter until ordination to the Priesthood. In addition, should there be any significant change to the information included on the most recently submitted form, an updated one is to be submitted immediately.

The purpose of the form is to allow the individual to plan activities well in advance of required deadlines (e.g., attendance at conferences, taking the GOEs, and so on). It also assists the Commission in identifying when individuals plan to attend conferences and other matters of importance.

### **Requirements for Seminary Coursework and Spiritual Development**

Individuals in the process must understand that it is the right of the Bishop to approve the seminary which an individual shall attend.

Shortly after Postulancy, the new Postulant, the Bishop, and the Education Chair will meet to discuss and determine a formation plan. **Formal theological education towards ordination should not begin until after this meeting, unless expressly approved by the Bishop.** Postulants should apply to, select, and attend an Episcopal Seminary only with the approval and under the guidance of the Bishop and the COM. Other educational arrangements may be made for some Postulants with extenuating circumstances under the direction and with the approval of the Bishop and COM.

Episcopal seminaries design their MDiv programs and offerings to fulfill the requirements for ordination of The Episcopal Church in Canon III.8.5(g) and most dioceses of the church. Virtually every formational requirement for ordination can be obtained during the 3-year MDiv program at an Episcopal seminary. However, it is the Postulant's responsibility to make sure that all the requirements for ordination are met by the time of ordination to the priesthood. Upon graduation from seminary, the Postulant must receive a passing grade, be in good standing, and receive the seminary's approval for ordination.

A Master of Divinity degree from an accredited Episcopal seminary will include Field Education and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). The Diocese of Newark requires one unit of CPE and 2 years of Field Education. The diocese expects regular attendance at chapel during seminary, spiritual direction and therapy and other mental and physical wellness practices which a COM liaison can make the Postulant aware of.

The Diocese of Newark is committed to enabling Postulants for ordained ministry to complete their formation without incurring debt, as much as possible. The Postulant must make use of all resources available to them through their seminary, parish, and other resources or scholarships before seeking support from the Bishop and the Diocese. Attention to COM and seminary application and financial aid timelines will help Postulants maximize the financial support awarded to them.

Additional requirements required by Canon III.8.5 (h) and the diocese include Adult Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training, Child Abuse Awareness Training, Title IV Training, Anti-Racism Training, and Anti-Sexism Training which can be arranged through the seminary or diocese. Other training courses may be assigned.

Theological education for priests is assessed in the General Ordination Exams (GOEs). Postulants take and pass the GOEs or complete assigned remediation before ordination to the priesthood.

If a Postulant is approved by the Bishop to pursue theological education in an alternative program or context, the requirements above will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly as a recommendation by members of the COM and with the approval of the Bishop.

### **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)**

Clinical Pastoral Education is a vital part of the formation process, helping future clergy to know themselves better and know how they respond to others, especially when faced with pastoral crisis or difficult circumstances. CPE is an interfaith professional educational program which prepares adult students for intentional ministry. It brings theological students, clergy, and laypersons of diverse cultures, ethnic groups, and faith traditions into supervised encounters with persons in crisis. A major focus of the course is the integration of one's personal history, faith tradition and the behavioral sciences in the practice of spiritual care. The primary methodology combines action (real-life ministry encounters) and reflection (using resources such as written reports of visits, group discussion and feedback from peers and a supervisor). This action/reflection model of adult education helps to bring theology and pastoral practice together. It is both practical and theoretical. CPE takes place at certified sites, which is a separate application process.

### **Field Placement**

The Commission expects that all persons in the ordination process will complete their fieldwork at a congregation other than their sponsoring congregation or home church, which church must be approved by the Commission and the Office of the Bishop. It is the Commission's expectation that the Postulant will complete the two full program years in one congregation or parish setting. (A program year will generally align approximately with an academic year.) However, the Commission may decide that it would be more beneficial for the Postulant's formation to spend the two years in two different congregations. Further, if the Postulant seeks to serve in a setting other than a parish after ordination to the Priesthood, it is preferred that the two program years be divided to have one year served at a parish and the other served at a location of the type the Postulant expects to serve after ordination to the Priesthood.



The Commission will ask Postulants to report on these activities at the Candidacy Conference.

### **Additional Training**

Prior to undertaking fieldwork in a congregation, Postulants must complete training in Adult Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Child Abuse Awareness as offered and required by the Diocese. Since changes are being made to the format of these training courses, Postulants should discuss this with the Bishop's Office Liaison after being granted Postulancy.

Postulants must also complete the diocesan Anti-Racism Training and Anti-Sexism Training or similar training programs of at least ten hours in length. This should be done prior to undertaking fieldwork in a congregation if the dates on which the training is offered makes this possible, or, if not, the first time it is offered after commencement of the fieldwork. These trainings are offered in the Diocese of Newark during the year on designated dates. This training, as well, is subject to change; Postulants should discuss this with the Bishop's Office.

It is highly recommended that all training be completed as early in the process as possible, preferably before attending seminary or immediately after being granted Postulancy. It is the responsibility of the individual to complete such training and submit proof of completion to the Commission as soon as completed.

Alternative training options, including completion of comparable courses at seminary, may or may not meet the specific requirements of the Diocese. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure that training is completed, and that the training is acceptable to the Diocese, by contacting the Liaison to the Bishop's Office.

Prior to ordination to the transitional diaconate, the individual is to be thoroughly familiar with and trained in the provisions regarding Ecclesiastical Discipline which are covered under Title IV of the Episcopal Church Canons.

## **From Postulancy to Candidacy**

### **Prerequisites and Paperwork for Candidacy**

The Postulant must have been enrolled in a theological school or seminary or some other program of preparation for the ordained ministry, approved by the Bishop and the Commission, before applying for Candidacy. Usually, Candidacy applications occur after the equivalent of the first two years of education and CPE.

Postulants must submit the following candidacy-related paperwork:

Form	Description
P-1*, P-7	Update to Ordination Process Information Form and resume, if necessary
C-1*	Application for Candidacy
C-2*	Reaffirmation of Minister and Vestry/Executive Commission For Candidacy Status
C-3	Seminary/Formation transcript to date
C-4	Evaluations of the Postulant's fitness for ministry from Seminary or Formation Program; the Postulant should request a separate evaluation at the completion of each year
C-5	A written copy of a recent sermon
C-6	Clinical Pastoral Education evaluation, including also the Postulant's self-evaluation(s).
C-7PR	Field placement supervisor's evaluation for each year of field placement
C-8	Anti-Racism training—proof of completion
C-9	Adult Sexual Misconduct Prevention training—proof of completion
C-10	Child Abuse Awareness training—proof of completion
C-11	Anti-Sexism Training – proof of completion
C-12	Most Recent Ember Week Letter

\* These forms are both available on the Commission webpage under the heading “Forms for Candidacy” (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/com/application-candidacy>).

Candidacy Conferences may be scheduled as needed. Copies of the documents must be uploaded/sent to the Bishop's Office six to eight weeks prior to the Conference.

It is critical that all documents be submitted when scheduled and it is the responsibility of the Postulant to ensure they are received on time and uploaded to the COM's document archive. Since some documents (e.g., transcripts, certificates, and so on) must be obtained from others, the Postulant should begin gathering these documents as soon as possible. *If all required documents are not received on or before the deadline, a Postulant may be advised that he or she may not attend the Candidacy Conference or the conference may be delayed.*

The Postulant is responsible for obtaining an evaluation of the Postulant's fitness for ministry from the Dean of Students at the Postulant's seminary (document C- 4 above), at the conclusion of *each year* of seminary. Evaluation letters may be sent directly by the Dean to the Bishop's Office.

### **Field Placement**

Field placement continues during Candidacy and must take place outside the Postulant's home or sponsoring parish. The Field Placement Supervisor's Evaluation should be a comprehensive report that includes information regarding the period of field placement, a full description of the tasks and assignments, the goals set for the field placement, the accomplishments achieved, and the detailed observations of the supervisor. If the Commission had made any specific observations or recommendations that were to be addressed during the field placement, those matters should be specifically addressed. A candid report of the observations of the individual's activities, strengths, and areas to be addressed in the future should also be included. Any concerns or reservations by the supervisor regarding the individual's ongoing process towards ordination should also be addressed.

### **The Candidacy Conference**

The Candidacy Conference is similar in format to the Postulancy Conference. The Postulant is asked questions about their academic progress, spiritual development, and vision for ministry.

The Candidacy Conference is intended to enable the Commission to assess progress towards readiness for ordination and to determine: if there are other areas that still need to be addressed; the leadership style the person has developed; the gifts for ministry that the person has developed; and if the person has discerned where his or her particular gifts for ministry might be used.

Following the Candidacy Conference, the Commission makes one of the following recommendations to the Bishop and Standing Committee regarding Candidacy for each Postulant:

- Recommended for Candidacy
- Not Recommended for Candidacy

All recommendations from the Commission require a two-thirds vote of all Commission members present and voting.

After receiving the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry, the Bishop will submit the document file for each Postulant that she wishes to be considered for Candidacy to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee will interview each Postulant and vote on whether they support Candidacy.

Upon compliance with the requirements specified in Canon III.8.4(a)-(b), including approval in writing of the Standing Committee, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood. The Bishop will then contact each individual within a week following the Standing Committee interview to communicate whether they have been admitted or not admitted as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood.

All Postulants should schedule a meeting with the Conference Chair following the Candidacy Conference to discuss the Commission's feedback from the conference.

## **Candidacy**

### **Definition**

Candidacy is a time of continued education and formation in preparation for ordination to the Priesthood, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the congregation or other community of faith.

The term Candidate reflects the church's expectation that, by the end of this stage of the ordination process, persons will have integrated their academic studies, spiritual development, and field experience so that they are prepared to offer themselves for ordination to the transitional diaconate.

### **Candidates to Remain in Canonical Relationship**

A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8.4(c), except for reasons acceptable to the Bishop. The Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate.

### **Communication with the Bishop in the Ember Weeks**

Each Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood must continue to communicate with the Bishop by letter, four times each year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic experience and personal and spiritual development.

As is the case during Postulancy, one of these four letters each year should include specific information about how the Candidate has followed up on recommendations the Commission made following the Candidacy Conference. This letter should be in the Ember Week that falls closest to six months after the Candidacy Conference at which the individual was made a Candidate, and annually thereafter. Ember letters are required throughout the remainder of the process until ordination to the Priesthood.

### **Attire**

Candidates should not wear any clerical attire, including a seminarian's collar. In corporate worship, Candidates should wear only vestments appropriate for a lay person.

### **The General Ordination Exams (GOEs)**

The canons (III.8) require that before ordination a Candidate must be examined and show

proficiency in (1) The Holy Scriptures; (2) History of the Christian Church; (3) Christian Theology; (4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology; (5) Christian Worship according to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts; and (6) The Practice of Ministry in contemporary society. These are known as the six canonical areas. The GOEs are administered to those Candidates for Holy Orders who have been identified to the Board by the Bishop.

Candidates will generally take the General Ordination Exams in January of their last year in seminary. One must be a Candidate on or before October 15 prior to the January exams in order to take the GOEs. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to advise the Bishop's office, no later than September 1, that the Candidate intends to take the GOEs in the following January. Once approved for taking the GOEs, the Bishop's office will register the individual for the upcoming exam.

The General Board of Examining Chaplains evaluates each Candidate's exams, grading the Candidate's performance in each of seven areas of study. Persons taking the exams receive either a score of Proficient or Not Proficient. A score of Proficient certifies competency in a canonical area. A Not Proficient score carries the recommendation that diocesan authorities further assess competency or re-examine the Candidate.

The Candidate's GOEs and the Board's evaluation of the same are released to the Bishop who shares them with the Chair of the Education Committee of the Commission on Ministry. The Education Committee reads any area in which the Candidate has been deemed to be "Not Proficient." The Education Committee may make recommendation to the Bishop to uphold the findings of the Board or to set them aside. If the Education Committee and the Bishop determine that remediation is needed in one of the canonical areas of proficiency, the Education Committee is tasked with formulating a plan to address that need. Such remediation may include: the Candidate being required to rewrite the answer; to answer a different question provided by the Education Committee; to meet with someone who can mentor the Candidate in this area; to undertake further coursework or field placement; or any other way the Education Committee determines is appropriate. Ultimately, the Bishop determines whether or not to accept the GOE results and whether to accept the remediation report of the Education Committee.

If a Candidate's performance on the GOEs calls his or her preparedness for ordination into question, a consultation between the Commission and the Candidate's seminary may take place. The Bishop may decline to approve the ordination of such Candidate and may seek the counsel of the Standing Committee on the matter.

## Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate

A Candidate must be at least twenty-four years of age before being ordained as a Deacon. The Commission does not hold a conference prior to recommending a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate, but discerns a Candidate's readiness based on GOE results, seminary record, and the cumulative evidence of the Candidate's preparedness for ordination.

### **Paperwork**

The following paperwork is to be submitted to the Bishop's Office for a Candidate to apply for ordination to the transitional diaconate:

Form	Description
P-1*, P-7	Update Ordination Process Information Form and resume, if needed
D-1*	Application for Ordination to the Diaconate
D-2*	Reaffirmation for Ordination to the Diaconate by the Candidate's Parish Priest (as defined earlier) and Vestry
D-3	Record of completed course of preparation and/or coursework
D-4	Recommendation of director of program of studies
D-5	Evidence of Title IV Training
	Medical Examination update, if required
	Psychological Assessment update, if required
	Background Check update, if required

\* These forms are available on the Commission webpage (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/com/application-ordination-diaconate>).

Note: Medical, Psychological Examination, and Background Check reports submitted for Postulancy must be updated before ordination if at the time of ordination more than three years will have elapsed since the original exams, or at the request of the Commission.

The Commission will report to the Bishop and the Standing Committee whether each Candidate is successfully completing (or has successfully completed) the required course of study and training and will give an evaluation and recommendation as to the Candidate's readiness for ordination to the Diaconate.

The Standing Committee may then make a recommendation to the Bishop that the Candidate be ordained to the Diaconate. The Standing Committee may or may not ask to meet with the Candidate prior to making its recommendation to the Bishop.

After receiving the Commission's recommendation and the Standing Committee's approval, the Bishop will determine whether to ordain the Candidate as a Deacon and will communicate the ordination date and location to the Ordinand.

The Ordinand will work with the Bishop's Office regarding announcements/invitations and the planning of the liturgy.



## Ordination to the Priesthood

After a minimum of six months following ordination to the Diaconate and eighteen months from the time of acceptance of Nomination by the Nominee, a Deacon may be ordained to the Priesthood.

A Deacon must submit the following paperwork to the Bishop’s Office prior to being ordained a Priest:

Form	Description
P-1*, P-7	Update Ordination Process Information Form and resume, if needed
PR-1*	Application for Ordination to the Priesthood
PR-2*	Reaffirmation for Ordination to the Priesthood by the Deacon’s Parish Priest (as defined earlier) and Vestry where the Deacon is serving
PR-3	A letter of evaluation from the supervising cleric in the Deacon’s place of employment
PR-4	Completed seminary transcript, if not previously supplied with the Application for Ordination to the Diaconate
PR-5	Seminary Dean evaluation of the Deacon’s fitness for ministry if the Deacon has not yet completed seminary at the time of diaconal ordination
	Updated Psychological assessment, if needed; updated medical exam, if needed; updated background check if needed
	Bishop determines if ordinand has an appointment to a priestly ministry
	Remediation, if any, completed
	COM certifies completion of all requirements and recommends ordination; Standing Committee reviews and recommends for ordination.

\* These forms are available on the Commission webpage (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/com/application-ordination-priesthood>).

Deacons must also submit updated reports of medical and psychological examinations and background checks if the most recent reports were completed more than three years prior to the date of (expected) ordination to the Priesthood.

The Commission does not necessarily hold a conference during the diaconal period approaching priestly ordination. If the Deacon was ordained to the Diaconate while still completing applicable requirements for priestly ordination (e.g., graduation from

seminary or completion of GOEs), then the Executive Committee of the COM may certify completion of all applicable requirements and make its recommendation to the Bishop and Standing Committee. The Standing Committee reviews the material and makes a recommendation to the Bishop concerning ordination to the Priesthood. If approved by the Bishop, a date will be set and the service will be planned in conjunction with the congregation that the Deacon is serving, in most cases.

At the time of ordination to the Priesthood, the transitional Deacon shall be at least 24 years of age and shall publicly and in the presence of the ordaining bishop(s), sign the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church.

### **Conclusion**

The ordination process is long, complex, and has many steps. The Commission on Ministry recognizes the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual stamina required to complete this process and hopes that each newly ordained priest will have experienced life-changing spiritual growth during his or her time in the process.

The Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and Standing Committee again thank you for your willingness to share your sense of vocation with us. We look forward to getting to know you in person through this process and sharing in the ministry of Christ's Church. Please do not hesitate to contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission or the Conference Chair if you have any questions about the ordination process.

(Revised September 2023)

## **Appendix: Priestly Discernment Process Outline**

### Aspirant

- Member for 2 years in a congregation; 1 year as a confirmed communicant in good standing
- Attend discernment day, when available
- Conversations with priest
- Orientation Interview: Aspirant, Commission on Ministry (COM) Co-Chairs
- Parish Discernment Committee
- Vestry and Parish Clergy write Letter of support and nomination (2/3 approval)

### Made Nominee

- Nominee accepts nomination and submits initial set of forms to Bishop's Office
- Nominee schedules meeting with Bishop; Bishop meets with Nominee
- Bishop invites Nominee to proceed; additional forms turned in
- Nominee encouraged to have spiritual director
- Nominee pays Administrative Fee \$3000 to Bishop's Office
- Nominee schedules psychological and medical evaluations, initiates Background check
- Nominee attends Postulancy Conference; COM meets to recommend postulancy or not (2/3 vote)
- Bishop makes decision regarding postulant

### Made Postulant

- Postulant meets with Bishop and Chair of Education Committee of the COM to develop Formation Plan
- Postulant writes Ember Letters 4 times a year, completes Ordination Process Tracking Form
- Theological Coursework begins, Clinical Pastoral Education, 2 program years of Field Ed placement (approved by Bishop and COM), Adult Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training, Child Abuse Awareness Training, Title IV Training, Anti-Racism Training, Anti-Sexism Training
- Meet with the Bishop annually
- Meet/communicate regularly with COM liaison
- Annual report from seminary
- Parish Clergy and Vestry write reaffirmation of letter of support for Candidacy
- Postulant submits Candidacy forms to the Bishop's Office
- Candidacy Conference; COM meets to recommend Candidacy or not (2/3 vote)
- Bishop's Office sends application materials to Standing Committee (SC); SC interviews Postulant and reviews materials; SC approves or not of Candidacy
- Bishop receives approval from SC; Determines Candidacy

#### Made Candidate

- Candidate updates Ordination Process Tracking Form, continues to communicate with liaison, continues in Canonical Relationship with Diocese, continues Theological Education and Coursework, continues to write Ember Letters 4x a year
- Meets with the Bishop annually
- Annual report from seminary
- Candidate takes GOEs; Candidate accepts remediation plan, if needed
- Update psychological, medical evaluations and background check if more than 36 months prior to ordination date
- Candidate applies to bishop for ordination
- Reach 24 years of age
- Vestry and Parish Clergy write reaffirmation of support for ordination to diaconate
- Seminary report and recommendation; update transcript
- COM reports on successful completion of study and recommends for ordination to Diaconate
- Bishop presents documents to Standing Committee; SC recommends and consents to ordination to Diaconate; may meet with Candidate
- Bishop meets with Candidate
- Bishop determines ordination and communicates ordination date/location
- Candidate takes pre-ordination retreat

#### Ordained Deacon

- Reach 24 years of age; 18 months from Nomination; 6 months from diaconal ordination
- Deacon applies to Bishop for ordination to priesthood
- Vestry and Parish Clergy write reaffirmation of support for ordination to priesthood
- Update medical, psychological, background check if more than 36 months old
- Seminary report and recommendation; transcript
- GOE Remediation complete, if any; remediation certified by Education Chair of COM to COM and Bishop
- COM certifies completion of all applicable requirements and recommends ordination to the priesthood
- Bishop presents documents to Standing Committee; SC recommends and consents to ordination to the Priesthood
- Bishop ensures that Deacon has a Parochial Cure
- Bishop receives SC consent and determines whether to ordain; Determine and communicate ordination date/location
- Deacon takes pre-ordination retreat

#### Ordained Priest