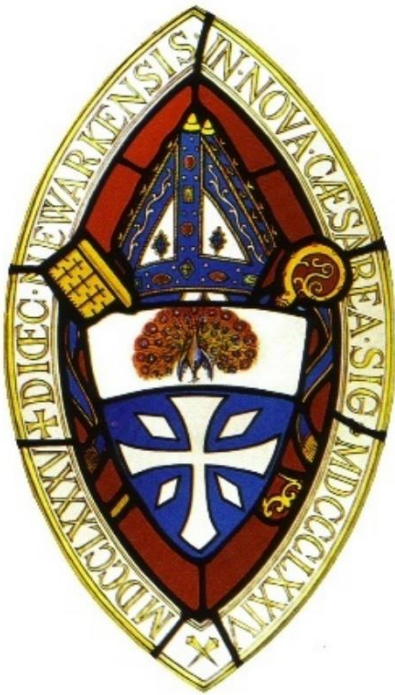


The Diocese of Newark Commission on Ministry



Guidelines to the Diaconal Ordination Process
and its Requirements
Effective January 16, 2025

Table of Contents

Welcome	1
A Note on the Orders of Diaconate and Priesthood.....	2
The Ministry of the Church	2
The Ministry of Deacons	2
The Ministry of Priests	2
Introduction to the Process	4
Important Note to Parish Clergy.....	4
Overview of the Ordination Process	4
Administrative Fee.....	5
General Guidelines for Submission of Documents	6
Terms Used in These Guidelines.....	7
Special Circumstances.....	9
Completed Formation/Coursework Prior to Postulancy	9
Ordained as Deacon in Other Denominations.....	9
Parishes without Clergy.....	9
When the Parish Priest Leaves the Sponsoring Parish	9
Discernment.....	12
Definition.....	12
Parish Priest’s Role	12
The Parish Discernment Committee.....	13
Summary of the Parish Discernment Process.....	13
Pre-Nomination	14
After Nomination.....	14
Nomination	15
From Nomination to Postulancy.....	16
Psychological Assessment	17
Background and Criminal Checks	18
References.....	18
The Postulancy Conference	18
Postulancy	20
Definition.....	20

Activities During Postulancy	20
Communication with the Bishop for Ember Days	20
Liaison.....	20
Attire.....	21
Ordination Process Tracking	21
Requirements for Formation, Coursework, and Spiritual Development	22
Canonical Requirements (TEC Canon III.6.5.f).....	22
School for Ministry	22
Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).....	23
Social Service Placement.....	24
Objectives	24
Responsibilities	24
Parish Internship	25
Objectives	25
Learning Agreement and Evaluation	25
Additional Training	26
From Postulancy to Candidacy.....	27
Prerequisites and Paperwork for Candidacy	27
Additional or Continuing Parish Internship.....	28
The Candidacy Conference	28
Candidacy.....	30
Definition.....	30
Candidates to Remain in Canonical Relationship	30
Communication with the Bishop in the Ember Weeks.....	30
Attire.....	30
Formation and Competency.....	30
Ordination to the Diaconate.....	32
Paperwork	32
Conclusion.....	34
Appendix: Diaconal Discernment Process Outline	35

Welcome

Welcome to the diaconal 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 diaconal 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 deacon. 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/commission-on-ministry/>) or from the Office of the Bishop.

A Note on the Orders of Diaconate and Priesthood

The Ministry of the Church

In Baptism, all Christians are called to ministries of service to the world, seeking to meet those in need and standing for justice for those on the margins and, in Baptism, Christians are called to care for each other, demonstrating the love of Christ, in how we build our congregations and gather together. Deacons and Priests are living symbols of each of those modes of ministry, reminding all Christians of the work they are called to do.

The Ministry of Deacons

Deacons are first attested in the Book of Acts, as part of the Apostolic Church. The word deacon derives from the Greek *diakonos* meaning servant or minister. While diakonia begins in unconditional service to neighbor in need, it leads inevitably through advocacy and prophetic proclamation to bear witness in word and deed to God's presence in the midst of our lives.

Ordained to a special ministry of servanthood directly under the Bishop, Deacons are called, in the name of Jesus Christ, "to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely" (BCP, 543). Going from the gathered church into the world with the people, Deacons aid the Church in serving the world – in hospitals and prisons, with the hungry and those in need, as advocates and helpers. They work to live out the charge that their "life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving those in need they are serving Christ himself."

The Deacon pursues a ministry in the community beyond the Church, often ministering to those in need or in pursuit of social justice. The Deacon also ministers within the Church, interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world to the Church. Within the Church, under the supervision of the Priest, the Deacon functions primarily to inspire and equip all members of the Church to live out their baptismal covenant. All the Deacon does in the congregation works toward the end of empowering everyone to respond to the needs of the world.

The Ministry of Priests

Priests developed as an extension of the ministry of the Bishop in the early Church, as Dioceses grew in size beyond a local community or congregation, and so share in the pastoral oversight and care of the congregations. The work of the Priest is focused on caring for the flock and equipping them for ministry.

While all baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the renewing of his world, Priests "are called to work as a pastor, priest, and teacher," along

with the Bishop and fellow presbyters and to join in “the councils of the Church” (BCP, 531). Ministering within the Church, Priests are a symbol of sustaining and nourishing the People of God, seeking “to nourish Christ’s people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.”

Priests strengthen the people and congregations through administering the Sacraments, through formation and teaching and preaching, through pastoral care and by providing the oversight support that a congregation needs to function well (administrative leadership). At their heart, Priests are equipping the saints for ministry so that the world may be transformed.

Introduction to the Process

Important Note to Parish Clergy

An individual seeking to enter the process towards ordination to the Diaconate 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 standing¹ 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 with at least one of the Co-Chairs of the Commission prior to establishing the Discernment Committee. The Parish Discernment Committee meets with the Aspirant for a minimum of 6-10 meetings over a minimum of six months.

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

If the parish is without clergy, the Wardens and aspirant should contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission for guidance on how to proceed.

Overview of the Ordination Process²

The diaconal ordination process typically lasts between three to five 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

¹ 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).

² See the Appendix at the end of this document for an outline of the process.

ordination, able to provide five years of ministry prior to the mandatory resignation age of 72 years, established in the canons of the Episcopal Church. (Ministry beyond the age of 72 may be permitted on an annual basis with the Bishop's permission.) 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 resignation at 72. The Bishop always has the authority to make exceptions to this guideline of five years of ministry.

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,³ 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 Diaconate. However, the more typical process is between three and five 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 for the Diaconate is currently \$2,250 and is necessary to cover the cost of the psychological assessment (and update if needed), the background check (and update if needed), 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.

³ See footnote on previous page for definition.

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 is paid in full.

The fee is payable to the Diocese of Newark. If paying by check, "Commission on Ministry" should be noted in the memo and it is sent to the Canon to the Ordinary, who will record receipt of the payment for the Commission. Please contact the Canon to the Ordinary for instructions if paying by electronic payment or credit card.

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 diaconal 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.

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 Formation/Coursework Prior to Postulancy

Occasionally, Aspirants begin the ordination process after they have completed significant theological education or seminary, although this is strongly discouraged. Aspirants who have already completed their coursework must still go through all the steps in the ordination process including completing any additional education requirements.

Ordained as Deacon in Other Denominations

Individuals who have been ordained in other denominations as a Deacon 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.

Parishes without Clergy

As noted above, if the parish is without clergy, the Wardens and aspirant should contact the Co-Chairs of the Commission for guidance on how to proceed.

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, 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. This depends partly on the length of time the interim is expected to stay in the position and how far the individual is in the process. 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, in early stages of the process, this Committee serves as a sounding board for the Aspirant, so the Aspirant can explore different dimensions of a call to ordination. Second, this Committee offers to the Vestry and Rector (and, eventually, the Bishop, the COM, and Standing Committee) its observations regarding the strengths the aspirant would offer the church as a deacon, the areas in which the Aspirant would need to grow to become a well-rounded deacon, 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 in preparation for the Postulancy Conference. Not addressing all of the points in the guidelines may hinder the individual 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 Committee produces a report for the Vestry, which is also shared with the COM 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 formation, 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 Diaconate as specified in Canon III.6.2.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 Diaconate.

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.6.2.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 available on the Commission webpage (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/commission-on-ministry/>).

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, if so, 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 \$2250, 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	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 is not sent to the full COM) (see below)
P-14*	Completed Medical Examination Form (physician's recommendation sent to COM; the full report is sent only to the Bishop and is not sent to the COM)
P-15	Completed background check (Background and criminal checks remain in the Bishop's office only; no copy is sent to the Commission on Ministry) (see below)

* These forms are available on the Commission webpage (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/commission-on-ministry/>).

It is critical that all documents be uploaded to the Commission on Ministry Portal (found on the Commission webpage at <https://dioceseofnewark.org/commission-on-ministry/>) 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 is 36 months or more, or at the

request of the Commission (Canon III.6.5.j). 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 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 to diaconal ministry, 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 Postulancy⁴

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.

⁴ Occasionally, the Commission may ask the Nominee to complete additional steps or provide additional material before determining their recommendation.

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 Diaconate.

Activities During Postulancy

Postulants would typically enroll in a course of study approved by the Bishop, which will include Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), a social service placement, and a church internship. The Commission expects Postulants to find this a time of significant spiritual growth and formation. Postulants are required to have a Spiritual Director.

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 Diaconate 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 13.⁵

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

⁵ The Book of Common Prayer 1979, 18.

as possible for the Postulant/Candidate.

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

Ordination documents and information about progress will be maintained by the Bishop's Office Liaison. Once an individual is accepted as a Postulant by the Bishop, the Postulant may contact the Bishop's Office or the Commission Co-Chairs for information on the completed and remaining steps of their process. It is the responsibility of the Postulant to ensure that all steps have been fulfilled in a timely fashion. The purpose of tracking one's process is to allow the individual to plan activities well in advance of required deadlines (e.g., attendance at conferences, submitting documents, and so on).

Requirements for Formation, Coursework, and Spiritual Development

Individuals in the process must understand that it is the right of the Bishop to approve the formation requirements which an individual shall attend. In most cases, postulants will participate in the School for Ministry in the Diocese of Newark in their diaconal program.

Should alternative coursework be necessary, the Commission may review additional programs to be approved by the Bishop.

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 generally will be asked to enroll in the School for Ministry of the Diocese of Newark (or equivalent program as indicated by the Bishop) to undertake their formation. In certain circumstances, if the Postulant has already undertaken equivalent theological training, a customized program of study will be developed. Other educational arrangements may be made for some Postulants with extenuating circumstances under the direction and with the approval of the Bishop and COM.

Canonical Requirements (TEC Canon III.6.5.f)

The Canons of the Episcopal Church require that those who would be ordained Deacon demonstrate proficiency in the following five areas:

1. Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.
2. Diakonia and the diaconate.
3. Human awareness and understanding.
4. Spiritual development and discipline.
5. Practical training and experience.

The Diocese of Newark primarily uses the School for Ministry to accomplish this formation, along with practical training in Clinical Pastoral Education, Social Service Placement, and Parish Internship.

School for Ministry

The School for Ministry curriculum for the diaconate uses the Iona Collaborative resource library for its coursework. Coursework is divided into core classes over approximately two years before ordination and additional needed material for the two years following ordination. The curriculum includes the area below. The examples of topics are illustrative, not exhaustive):

- Diakonia (includes History and Theology of Diaconate, Prophetic Voice, Leading Change, Justice Issues, among other topics)
- Holy Scripture (provides overview of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament)
- Christian Theology (includes discussion of Councils and Creeds, Development of

- Doctrine, and an overview of Systematic Theology)
- Anglican Theology and the Book of Common Prayer
 - Homiletics (training in writing and delivering sermons)
 - Practical Liturgy (includes Prayer and Liturgy in Pastoral Care, BCP exercises, the Deacon in the Liturgy)
 - Church History (includes Early Church, Medieval West, Reformations, 20th Century)
 - Ethics and Moral Theology (includes material on justice, ethics, and moral decision-making)
 - Liberation Theology (includes teaching in Social Location, Sin and Liberation, and Sacred Ground)

It is the Postulant's responsibility to make sure that all the requirements for ordination are met by the time of ordination to the diaconate. To complete formation, the Postulant must successfully complete each required course, be in good standing, and receive the program director's recommendation for ordination.

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 scholarships, their parish, and other resources before seeking support from the Bishop and the Diocese. Attention to COM and scholarship application and financial aid timelines will help Postulants maximize the financial support awarded to them.

Additional requirements required by Canon III.6.5.g 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 diocese. Other training courses may be assigned.

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.

The expectation of the Commission is one unit of CPE, which is 400 clinical hours. It may be taken as a summer program or a year-long program. Most other clinical sites are in hospitals, but there are a variety of settings, as long as it is a certified site.

Social Service Placement

A social service internship is required for those pursuing ordained ministry to the diaconate. A social service internship is not required for those pursuing ordained ministry to the priesthood (which includes the transitional diaconate). Social Service organizations play a key role in the community. Services and resources available to those in need are often delivered by social service organizations. It is critical therefore that deacons have a basic understanding of the role of social services and the organizations that provide them. In addition, giving those in the process expanded opportunities to work with people with a variety of backgrounds is part of the formation for diaconal ministry. It is not unusual for those seeking diaconal ordination to have social service experience in their background. The COM will review and evaluate a Postulant's past experience in order to consider a waiver of this requirement on a case-by-case basis.

Objectives

The internship serves the following objectives.

- Develop capacity to relate to wide variety of people (socioeconomic status, culture, race, age)
- Enter into dialogue with those who differ
- Understand issues relating to those who are vulnerable
- Practical knowledge of community organizations
- Exposure to community resources
- Observation or practice in collaborative leadership
- Identifying passions, expanding ministry gifts
- Identifying and articulating biases

The Social Service Internship is a minimum of 6 months and a minimum total of 120 hours (which is 20 hours per month). The Postulant must be supervised by a service professional during this internship.

Responsibilities

Those in the process are responsible for planning for the internship and obtaining COM approval for the assignment. The following should be included in a letter requesting

consideration: a description of the organization, site address, the supervisor's information, a brief description of the engagement tasks or job description (should one exist), start date and anticipated schedule.

Once approved by the COM, the application letter can either be signed by the supervisor, to indicate their agreement, or a separate letter from the supervisor with the agreement or understanding of the arrangement can be provided. At the conclusion of the internship, the intern is expected to write a brief summary (1-2 pages) of their experience and what they learned, especially in terms of personal growth. The intern is also responsible for obtaining a letter from the supervisor certifying that the internship has been successfully completed.

Parish Internship

Additionally, a parish internship is required for those pursuing ordained ministry. For those in the process for the Diaconate, the parish internship is six months in length. The parish site will be a congregation other than the Postulant's sponsoring parish or home church. The site is chosen with the consultation of and approval by the COM and the Office of the Bishop. In most cases, the parish site will be a congregation of the Diocese of Newark, though there may be exceptions. A parish site candidate must have a Rector or Priest-in-Charge in place to supervise the internship.

Objectives

The internship serves the following objectives.

- Familiarity with the roles of parish and clergy leadership
- Engage with the diversity of people in the congregation (socioeconomic status, culture, race, age)
- Explore the ministries of the parish, especially those engaged in areas related to diaconal ministry, such as outreach, justice ministries, or advocacy.
- Participate in liturgical leadership as a lay minister (see note below)
- Observation or practice in collaborative leadership
- Identifying passions, expanding ministry gifts
- Identifying and articulating biases

Note: Diaconal Postulants are not intended to exercise the liturgical ministries of a Deacon during this internship. Learning more about that role is encouraged, but interns should not read the Gospel, set the Table, or provide the Dismissal during worship.

Learning Agreement and Evaluation

A learning agreement will be constructed between the supervising priest and the Postulant and submitted to the COM. At the end of the internship, the supervising priest will write an evaluation based on the learning agreement, review it with the intern, and

submit it to the COM. At times, the Commission may require a second internship.

The Commission will ask Postulants to report on these activities (CPE, Social Service Placement, and Parish Internship) 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. Postulants should discuss this with the Bishop's Office Liaison after being granted Postulancy, to ensure that they are up to date in this training.

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 their internship 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 internship. 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 beginning formation 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 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 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 engaged in formation 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 first year 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	Formation transcript to date
C-4	Evaluations of the Postulant's fitness for ministry from their 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).
C7-D1	Social Services placement supervisor's evaluation
C-7D2	Parish internship supervisor's evaluation
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 available on the Commission webpage (<https://dioceseofnewark.org/commission-on-ministry/>).

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 director of the Postulant's formation program (document C- 4 above), at the conclusion of *each year* of formation. Evaluation letters may be sent directly to the Bishop's Office.

Additional or Continuing Parish Internship

Once the 6-month parish internship is completed, usually prior to Candidacy, there is no further requirement for internship. If desired, and with the Bishop's permission, Candidates may continue in an extended parish internship at their internship site. Candidates may also voluntarily explore a new site for an internship.

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.6.4(a)-(b), including approval in writing of the Standing Committee, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate. 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 Diaconate.

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 Diaconate, 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.6.4(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 Diaconate 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 Diaconate.

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.

Formation and Competency

As noted above, the Episcopal Church canons (III.6.5.f) require that before ordination a

Candidate must be examined and show basic competency in (1) The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church; (2) Diakonia and the diaconate; (3) Human awareness and understanding; (4) Spiritual development and discipline; and (5) Practical training and experience.

Candidates will complete their formation during this period and will demonstrate basic competency in these areas through successful completion of formation required and approved by the Bishop, as reported by the director of the formation program.

If a Candidate's performance in their program of formation calls their preparedness for ordination into question, a consultation between the Commission and the Candidate's formation program director 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 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 formation reports, liaison reports, 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/commission-on-ministry/>).

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.

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 deacon 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 January 2025)

Appendix: Diaconal 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 may invite Nominee to proceed; additional forms turned in
- Nominee encouraged to have spiritual director
- Nominee pays Administrative Fee \$2250 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, Archdeacon, 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, 6 months of approved parish internship placement, 6 months of approved Social Service placement, 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 formation program
- 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 formation program
- 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
- Formation program 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
- Reach 24 years of age; 18 months from Nomination

Ordained Deacon

- Deacon mentor assigned
- Diaconal formation continues for 2 years post-ordination