

Process for Exploring Ordained
Vocations
in
The Diocese
of
West Tennessee

Vocational Discernment
2010

Contents

2010 Edition

Title III of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, approved by General Convention 2009, govern the discernment and ordination process in The Diocese of West Tennessee and are incorporated herein by reference.

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I. Basic Assumptions and Recruitment

The most basic of our assumptions is that Holy Baptism is the “ordination” of all believers and that the call to ordained ministry is rooted in this prior ordination of the priesthood of all baptized Christians. Therefore, those seeking ordination do not seek a fundamentally different ministry, but seek to exercise their baptismal ministry in particular ways.

All baptized persons are called to minister in Christ’s name. From among the myriad options for ministry available, each baptized person is expected to explore those options most appropriate to that individual through a process of discernment within their respective community of faith. Growing out of this process of exploration, a lifelong commitment to Christian formation is necessary to equip the individual in their respective ministries, either lay or ordained.

It is the Church’s role to help individuals in identifying their gifts in serving Christ’s mission in the world. It is the role of the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry and the local discernment communities of faith to assist all persons in sustaining their Christian commitment and in discerning those persons whose gifts for leadership and service mark them as potential leaders in the Church, either lay or ordained.

The exercise of ordained ministry is set apart from the general baptismal ministry in at least three notable ways:

1. their ministries become more complex, in that the ordained person represents not only God and the Christian faith but also the particular communities in which the person is serving;
2. their ministries become objects of public scrutiny, in which the ordained person, their families, their activities, their relationships and their struggles to live the life of faith are offered up for public view and as examples of Christian living; and
3. their ministries become professionally demanding, in which they are held accountable both by their congregation and by their bishop for their performance of their ministerial duties.

Ordination is a call to holiness of life. It is being “set apart.” While being set apart like this is fraught with challenges and difficulties, men and women so called are able not only to survive the demands, but also enjoy the ordained ministry while serving God and their neighbors and while growing in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

As with the discernment of a call to baptismal ministry, discernment regarding a call to ordained ministry begins in and requires the support of the discerning person’s local community of faith. The process of formal discernment of a call to ordained ministry may be initiated in several ways with an applicant approaching his or her rector. In recent years that step has been seen almost exclusively as the responsibility of the applicant. The way in which an applicant for ordination is identified is when someone goes to his or her rector and says, "I want to be a priest." or "I want to be a deacon." Clearly that self identification will continue.

However, a new emphasis needs to be placed on recruitment. With the clergy of the local parish or mission seeing special gifts for ministry in a member of his or her worshipping community, the initiative for recruitment from the local community of faith's side is becoming more the norm. Clergy and laity are being encouraged to recruit high quality, well-suited people for lay and ordained ministries.

In whatever manner the discernment begins, both the individual discernor and the local community of faith are needed to explore and support application to take next steps in a process of discernment for ordained ministry to the whole Church. It becomes the responsibility of both the individual seeking to discern and of the clergy and lay leadership of the local community of faith to explore in detail the specific expression of baptismal ministry to which the discernor is exploring a call.

The Church considers many factors in identifying persons for ordained ministry. In recruitment for the discernment process, both the character of those who will be ordained and the mission of the Church and its leadership should be considered. We are a missionary church, and clear commitment to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, evident in both word and action, is essential.

We are a church that calls for authentic leadership. It is vital that persons in discernment for ordination need to have a history of demonstrated competency, age-appropriate maturity and personal gifts as leaders in their church and secular environments. Therefore, two factors need to be clearly stated and seriously considered in the recruitment of persons for ordained ministry as a priest or deacon.

The first is what the Church seeks in terms of the Personal Character of those who will be its ordained representatives. While not a complete list, it is intended as a starting point:

- A sense of self: self-knowledge, psychological health, self-care
- Personal integrity: authenticity, trustworthiness, and dependability
- Intelligence: an intellectual grasp of concepts and practical applications and the implications of them
- Spiritual depth: a tended relationship with God in Christ
- A loving heart: the capacity and inclination to be close to and care for others
- A sense of the fitness of things: sound judgment and clear boundaries – personal, ethical, and communal
- A loyalty to the institution of the Church: a healthy respect for the traditions and authority of the Church from a position of challenge as well as from a position of support
- The potential to express one's faith theologically, the ability to think reflectively, and to articulate that understanding within the context of an Episcopal faith tradition
- A commitment to continuing personal, professional and spiritual growth and study
- An awareness of the power of sacrament, word and liturgy: a willingness to become a symbol bearer
- Humility: an understanding and acceptance of his or her own humanity and of one's ultimate dependence on God
- A sense of humor
- A mature sense of appropriate Christian sexual behavior

- An ability to manage finances: personally and in a corporate setting
- A tough skin: resiliency, adaptability, and the ability to receive feedback
- Leadership: taking initiative, articulating vision, taking risk, and motivating others to accomplish the mission of the Church
 - The ability to handle conflict
 - The ability to deal with people
 - The ability to engage and participate in community/group
 - The ability to delegate responsibility
- Communication:
 - the ability to communicate with presence and poise while functioning with people, both one-on-one and in groups
 - the ability to express oneself simply, clearly and directly
 - the capacity to organize thoughts and actions and to establish goals and direction

The second factor has to do with the Mission of the Church in and for the 21st Century and suggests additional qualities the Church seeks in its leadership in order to live out its mission in this and the next generation:

- Leadership: The *potential* to energize struggling congregations into dynamic and growing congregations
- Diversity: As the Church in the United States seeks to serve and proclaim the Gospel in an environment of ever-increasing diversity, the ordained leadership itself must reflect this environment in order to effectively proclaim the Gospel locally and throughout the world.
- Mobility: Church leaders must be willing and able to serve where needed; those called to the priesthood need to be willing to leave The Diocese of West Tennessee for formation and potentially for a future call. They may well be expected to relocate to a ministry site that is not back in their “hometown” during the time of post-seminary internship. This possibility must be addressed seriously by the person going through discernment for ordained ministry in the Church.
- Potential for Longevity of Service: To be good stewards of, and make best use of, the resources of The Diocese of West Tennessee, those called to ordained ministry should be able to serve the Diocese and The Episcopal Church for many years.

I. Overview of the Process

Discernment Precedes Formation

Discernment involves being sure of one’s call to priesthood or diaconate and the Church affirming that call. If the Church affirms a call to the ordained ministry, a formal time of formation for that call and for that individual follows. Formation includes Postulancy, seminary (or diaconal formation), Candidacy, Ordination as Transitional or Vocational Deacon, or for some, Ordination as Priest, and post-ordination formation.

A. There Are Four Ordination Tracks for The Diocese of West Tennessee (for a more detailed description, see Section IV.)

- Track One – Discerning Young Vocations Experience (DYVE) for those who are college juniors or seniors through those who are age twenty-six,

- Track Two – Vocational Discernment Program
- Track Three – For those exploring a call to the Vocational Diaconate
- Track Four – Christian Clergy Previously Ordained in other Churches

The Process of discernment is divided into three phases: Parish, Intermediate, and Diocesan.

Parish Discernment consists of discernment by a Parish Lay Committee formed by the Rector/Vicar of a parish to work with the Applicant to do initial discernment work.

Intermediate Discernment consists of the Rector/Vicar writing a confidential evaluation to the Bishop of the Applicant, and the Applicant filling out and submitting the Application to enter Diocesan Discernment, all necessary waivers and forms, and all further preparations for one of our diocesan-level discernment programs. (For those participating in the Discerning Young Vocations Experience, discernment begins with Intermediate Discernment, omitting the Parish Discernment Committee.)

Diocesan Discernment consists of participation in one of our three primary discernment programs – Discerning Young Vocations Experience (discernment for Priesthood for those 26 and under who are college juniors or seniors), Vocational Discernment Process (discernment for Priesthood for those over 26 years of age – primarily those for whom Priesthood would be a second career), and the Diaconal Discernment Process for those who are seeking to be ordained a Vocational Deacon. A fourth track for those ordained in another Christian denomination may be found in the appendix of this manual.

Those seeking ordination must first be invited by the Bishop to participate in a diocesan discernment phase, during which they are considered to be Applicants and if recommended, pass through Postulancy and Candidacy. Postulancy assumes that ordination is possible. Candidacy assumes that ordination is probable if a call is available to exercise the particular ordained ministry. Eventual ordination is only with the consent of the Standing Committee and the Bishop. At no stage of the process is ordination guaranteed.

Concerning People Who Go to Seminary “Unofficially” and then Seek Ordination

Relative to the consideration of a call to ordained ministry, formation follows discernment. The diocesan discernment processes are designed for Applicants that have not attended seminary. Formation should take place under the direct supervision of the Bishop. Episcopalians who enroll in seminary coursework for credit toward a degree program prior to going through the discernment process will not be considered for Holy Orders in The Episcopal Diocese of West Tennessee. Exceptions to this policy include persons of other denominations who earlier entered seminary as approved candidates for ordination in their denomination and subsequently have been received or confirmed into a parish in this Diocese (Track 4). Members of The Episcopal Church who have already attended seminary for credit toward a Masters of Divinity degree will not normally be admitted to the discernment process unless and until at least three years have passed since the date of the person’s seminary experience.

B. The Role of the Sponsoring Congregation and Parish Discernment

In the early church, spiritual leaders were often identified and brought forward by a congregation. A more complex world has produced a more elaborate system, but the core of the

ancient practice remains, a congregation has an essential role in discerning those in their midst with the gift for ordained ministry. For this reason, an Applicant must have been a confirmed communicant in good standing and be considered by the rector or vicar to be an active member of the congregation following the date of confirmation for at least one-year and have demonstrated leadership in the parish before formally asking for sponsorship from the rector and congregation.

The exception to this rule is for those under 26 and discerning for the priesthood through the Discerning Young Vocations Experience (or DYVE) program. Those participating in DYVE must be confirmed to enter the DYVE process.

The sponsoring congregation (hereafter the “parish”) also has a critical role in the discernment process. After speaking with their Rector, the Rector may choose to help the Applicant begin the formal discernment process by forming a Parish Discernment Committee. The parish participates directly through this Parish Discernment Committee, which meets with the Applicant following guidelines provided by the Commission on Ministry, both during and after the discernment process. If the Applicant’s discernment process at both a Parish and Diocesan level results in a decision by the Bishop that the Applicant should be made a Postulant, the relationship with the sponsoring parish continues until ordination. Among the aspects included in this relationship are financial support of the Postulant by the sponsoring parish for certain aspects of the discernment process such as examination fees before, during and after the discernment process and, if the person ends up attending seminary, financial support to the individual throughout that period of time.

C. The Role of the Sponsoring Member of the Clergy

Those interested in entering the process in The Diocese of West Tennessee should begin conversations with the rector/vicar of his/her parish. A Letter of Recommendation from the Applicant’s parish’s Clergy person in charge (hereafter, “Rector”), as well as a separate Letter of Support signed by 2/3 of the members of the sponsoring Vestry is required for admission to the discernment process for consideration by the Bishop. However, these letters are not voted on by the Vestry or provided to the Bishop by the Rector until after the Parish Discernment Committee has completed its discernment process and made its recommendation to the Rector. All sponsoring Rectors are asked to assist Applicants within their own parish in discerning their gifts and vocation. It is during this parish level discernment process that the full range of these options for baptismal ministry as a lay or ordained person should be most thoroughly explored.

Because the local parish is expected to give seminarians spiritual, emotional and financial support, each Rector should take seriously his or her recommendation of an Applicant to enter the diocesan discernment process for ordination. The sponsoring Vestry is also required by Canon to agree to take on the support by the parish (Canon III.8.2.a). The Letter of Support from the Vestry shall address each of the canonically required aspects of the Applicant’s support as a commitment to be provided by the parish.

The sponsoring Rector is an adviser and pastor throughout, and after, the process and a guide in deciding if and when it is time for a next step to commence following the parish’s lay discernment. Should the Rector’s responsibility to serve as adviser and pastor to the Applicant be designated by the Rector to another Member of the Clergy on his or her staff, this delegation

shall take place only with written permission of the Bishop. The section of this handbook entitled “Basic Assumptions and Recruitment” (page 1) and the questions contained in the “Confidential Recommendation” program give details on the qualities of ordained leadership and character that the Church in West Tennessee seeks.

The Applicant and Rector’s conversation should continue long enough to adequately cover all the questions the Rector is asked to address on the “Confidential Comments by the Sponsoring Rector” form and may be carried on over several years. The sponsoring Rector helps the Applicant decide if and when it is appropriate to take the next step and apply for the formal Diocesan Discernment Program. Therefore, the Bishop’s office and the Vocational Discernment Process (VDP) or Diaconal Discernment Program (DDP) are not the first steps in discernment. (Details concerning each diocesan discernment track follow beginning on page 10.) They do not become directly involved unless and until the thorough preliminary steps at the parish level have been completed to the satisfaction of the Rector. However, the report of each Parish Discernment Committee should be sent to the Diocesan Offices for file, even if it is the recommendation of the Parish Discernment Committee and the Rector for the Applicant to not continue in the process.

As pastor, the Rector may propose to the Applicant a period of hard questioning and challenging experiences that may lead to needed growth before proceeding. The Rector should also pay attention to any particular personal or family-related problems which may be part of this person’s recent history and which may require time or other action steps to address. The ordination process is inevitably demanding and sometimes stressful. Therefore, a life that is already too laden with stress may not provide enough room for this important internal work. Sometimes the Rector’s best answer is neither “Yes” nor “No,” but rather “Wait.”

However, if and when the Rector and Applicant both agree to proceed, the process of *Intermediate Discernment* begins. It is at this point that the Rector writes his/her Confidential Letter to the Bishop, and the Letter of Support signed by 2/3 of the members of the sponsoring Vestry is submitted.

The sponsoring Rector may be consulted further on particular questions raised during the Commission on Ministry’s deliberations and may be called directly to review impressions before a decision by the Commission is made. The sponsoring Rector maintains a primary pastoral role with the Applicant and keeps a pastoral connection throughout the process. If the Applicant is not admitted to Postulancy, the Rector is responsible for helping the person in his/her local discernment to find other ways of using his/her personal gifts for baptismal ministry. The parish Lay Committee, under the guidance of the Rector or designated Member of the Clergy, should also maintain a supportive role after the conclusion of VDP or DDP.

D. Spouses and Families

The discernment process, the transition to seminary, and the work of an ordained person is demanding in ways that can put a great deal of strain and tension on marriages and families. For this reason, questions about present and anticipated challenges in a marriage and about how tough questions are dealt with together are not only appropriate but essential. Intentional conversation about these stresses should take place within families before a decision is made to apply for the discernment process.

The Rector in the home parish can offer guidance and pastoral care in these conversations and will include comments related to the level of support and any problems this might suggest in the Confidential Letter to the Bishop. Among the issues to be discussed are the expectations each marriage partner has about the role of spouses and family members in a “clergy family” setting and the willingness to deal together positively at the prospect of relocation during seminary and following ordination. The Applicant must have the support of his or her spouse in order to go through the discernment process. Marriage vows take precedence over ordination vows in this time of family discernment.

E. The Role of the Commission on Ministry

The Commission on Ministry (COM) assists the Bishop in selecting persons for ordination and in examining and guiding them in their training. The COM is responsible for designing and implementing all four of our discernment programs, for recommending Applicants for Postulancy and Candidacy, and for notifying the Standing Committee that all requirements for Candidacy and Ordination have been satisfied. With Postulancy, the Applicant begins a period of intensified formation and is assured of support, care and individual attention by the COM. In sum, the COM is charged with the difficult task of recommending to the Bishop from among the many who apply those few persons who are especially needed by the Church at this particular time to accomplish the mission of the Church in West Tennessee.

F. The Role of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee of the Diocese must give its approval for Candidacy and consent for ordination for the Diaconate and Priesthood. Upon receiving the Commission on Ministry certification that all requirements for Candidacy have been satisfied, the Standing Committee will review documentation of the Postulant’s application for Candidacy and conduct an interview with the Postulant. The Committee will document its decision in writing to the Bishop and to the Postulant. The Standing Committee also interviews Candidates for ordination, examines all canonically required documents, and determines whether there is any sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal or spiritual grounds to the Candidate’s ordination. Assuming none is found, the Standing Committee will certify such to the Bishop.

III. Intermediate Discernment

The process of Intermediate Discernment begins when the Applicant has completed the Parish Discernment Process, and the Applicant and the Rector agree to proceed. Or for those 26 years of age or younger, the process of discernment begins here.

All diocesan Applicants and their sponsoring Rectors, who have indicated in writing to the Diocesan Office an interest on the part of the Applicant in entering a Diocesan Level Discernment Process (DYVE, VDP, or DDP), will be mailed an information packet several months before the start up of annual programs. These forms must be submitted to the Diocesan Offices by May 1 of each year.

It is during this period of intermediate discernment that the necessary paperwork is submitted to the Diocesan Office.

- For the Rector, this means submitting his/her Confidential Letter to the Bishop and the Letter of Support signed by 2/3 of the members of the sponsoring Vestry, as well as a copy of the report of the Parish Discernment Committee for those over 26 or discerning for the Diaconate.
- For the Applicant, this means submitting his/her application to enter the formal Diocesan Discernment Process, all necessary waivers, questionnaires, and other materials and examinations contained in the Checklist found in the Appendix of this document.

All of the aforementioned must be submitted by May 1 of each year in order to begin a Diocesan Discernment Process in that year.

After all forms are submitted, the Applicant will then be required to have a psychological exam. All testing reports become the property of the Bishop. Written copies are not provided to the Applicants. Psychological examinations are paid for by the sponsoring parish as part of their support for the Applicant through the process. This may include three or more examinations as deemed appropriate by the Bishop in consultation with the designated diocesan psychologist.

All testing must be completed by the deadline prior to the Commission on Ministry Retreat in order for the applicant to enter a Diocesan Discernment Process. (Normally, the Retreat is held in early September.)

When testing and other reports are received by the Bishop's office, they will be reviewed by the Bishop and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry. Additional interviews of the Applicant may be required to discuss any issues that arise in the reports. If issues do arise, it will be the Bishop's decision on whether or not the issues are sufficient to merit removing the Applicant from the program. The Bishop's decision is final.

IV. Diocesan Discernment Tracks

A. Track One: Discerning Young Vocations Experience (DYVE)

The Discerning Young Vocations Experience (DYVE) seeks to raise up young adults for the ordained ministry through the places they are often most active, on college campuses, and will begin in September of each year.

DYVE is designed for college students, and in some cases, young adults in graduate school, or for those who have just graduated who are considering the Priesthood as a vocation. Participants must be recommended by either their Rectors or their Campus Chaplains as persons with demonstrated qualities of Christian commitment and potential for leadership and vision that mark them as desirable nominees for positions of leadership in the Church. Participants must be under the age of twenty-six to be considered. The size of the group is limited. In the case of more applicants than there are openings, seniors are given priority. For purposes of planning, DYVE meetings are likely to be held monthly, usually at the Diocesan House or at St. Mary's Cathedral. Every effort is made to accommodate the college students' schedules and needs, while also providing quality time for the discernment process.

The facilitators of the process are diocesan clergy. Using autobiographies and verbatim as a means for exploring personal and theological issues, participants interact with each other and the group leaders. They examine their strengths and limitations as related to the gifts required for effective priestly ministry. The goal is to reach a mutual understanding of each participant's potential for either lay or ordained ministry. While DYVE is geared to young people whose life issues are still unresolved, it is those who are willing to examine and explore who they are and how they relate to themselves, to others and to God who will benefit most from the program.

Applicants for DYVE may include the following:

- Episcopal students from The Diocese of West Tennessee who are in school in Tennessee or in a school close enough to make the monthly meetings possible
- Episcopal students from other dioceses who are in school in West Tennessee or close enough to make the monthly meetings. These students must have the permission of their Bishop to participate.
- All participants must have the recommendation of their Rectors, their Campus Ministers (or an Episcopal Member of the Clergy in charge of another current Community of Faith if applicable) and one other person of their choice other than a parent or guardian.

There is no financial cost to participants for the program itself. After the completion of the DYVE process, those who are recommended to the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry must then fulfill all canonical requirements, including psychological testing, medical examination, and recommendation from the Vestry and Member of the Clergy of his or her home parish. The psychological exam is paid for by the sponsoring parish. Scheduling of the exam is done by the Applicant as guided by the Diocese. The medical examination is paid for by the Applicant. (Contact the Bishop's office of required medical forms.)

B. Track Two: Vocational Discernment Program

To enter this process the Applicant must:

- hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- be a confirmed member of a parish in good standing in The Diocese of West Tennessee for at least one year
- have the support of his or her parish Rector and Vestry following the Parish Discernment process's completion.

If the Applicant decides to enter the Diocesan Discernment Process and obtains his or her Rector's recommendation and assurance of recommendation by the Vestry, he or she should contact the Chair of the Commission on Ministry for an interview and an overview of the process.

Once the Intermediate Discernment Process has been completed, if there are no obstacles presented in the information submitted by the Applicant and the Applicant's Rector, he/she may be invited by the Bishop to enter the Vocational Discernment Program, provided openings are available. Those accepted into VDP are known as "Applicants." The number of Applicants admitted each year will be limited. If an opening is not available, the Applicant applies again in a year to enter the Vocational Discernment Program. The Applicant's registration in the program will be coordinated through the Bishop's office.

The Applicant should expect to spend approximately four hours a week participating in the program, which currently runs approximately 9 months. The program is designed to be compatible with full-time employment. The tuition for the Vocational Discernment Program is paid for by the Diocesan budget. The only expense to the Applicant is the cost of their travel.

Field Experience/Reflection Groups

In any given year, there are approximately 9 months of work involved in the completion of the Vocational Discernment Program (VDP). The detailed timeline is attached as an appendix.

Prior to entering the Diocesan VDP, the Parish Lay Committee is the first phase of the program. The Commission on Ministry provides to the sponsoring Rector and sponsoring Parish Lay Committee detailed agendas and guidelines to focus their meetings, and a written report from the Parish Lay Committee is required at the conclusion of this phase. This report is not evaluative but reflective, and becomes part of the applicant's file.

For those who are invited to continue in the process, the third phase of the program involves Field Placement and Reflection Group meetings. For field placements, Applicants will be asked to visit churches that are unfamiliar, along with outreach settings and other locales that will change periodically over the course of the VDP program. The goal of this placement is not to "try on being a priest," but to give the Applicants experiences that will test their perceptions of ministry and of themselves, and give participants experiences that are appropriate material for their verbatims presented to the group.

The Reflection Group phase of the program will begin its work with an orientation with the group leaders. Reflection Group leaders have access to copies of the Applicant's application, the Parish Lay Discernment Committee report and testing summaries as deemed useful to share by the Bishop. The Reflection Group will use issues arising from assigned field experience to gain focus in the reflections. Verbatims are completed and presented twice monthly at Reflection Group meetings.

The purpose of the Reflection Group is to evaluate the Applicants' suitability for ordination in The Episcopal Church. *This is a primary evaluative portion of the discernment process.* The Reflection Group supervisors will complete both mid-term and final evaluations on each Applicant, which will be discussed with the Applicants, be provided to the Commission on Ministry, and become part of the Applicants' files.

In writing final evaluations, the Reflection Group leaders will make one of two recommendations to the Commission on Ministry:

- Recommend that the Applicant be considered for Postulancy.
- Recommend that the Applicant *not* be considered for Postulancy.

The Reflection Group Leaders will present these recommendations to the Commission on Ministry and answer any questions that arise from the COM's review of the recommendations. Please see Section IV below, "Postulancy," for the role of the COM following recommendations

for all three discernment programs.

C. Track Three: Diaconal Discernment Program

As an icon of Christ the servant, Vocational Deacons in West Tennessee are that order of ordained ministry particularly charged to interpret with courage the needs of the world to the congregation and to point the Church's resources toward those people being overlooked and underserved. Deacons work under the authority and direction of the bishop and the persons to whom they are assigned in the Church and/or the world. Deacons have unique liturgical roles in assisting the Bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's word and sacraments.

In addition to those attributes listed on pages 4 and 5 of this manual, the Church is seeking the following attributes in those who would be called to the Vocational Diaconate:

- An awareness of and commitment to the community outside the Church
- An awareness of needs in various places and the willingness and ability to participate to bring about change
- An ability to respect authority, even when it is difficult
- An ability to be flexible
- A willingness to speak out boldly about injustice and poverty

Additionally, for the sake of the mission of the Church, Church leaders must be willing and able to serve where needed. Those called to the Vocational Diaconate are placed in a parish by the Bishop after formation, and work directly under his authority. It is usual that a deacon will be placed in some place other than his or her "home parish." Those seeking ordination as deacons must be willing to accept this norm as part of their discernment for ordination.

The Diaconal Discernment Program (DDP) for the ordination of Deacons is much like the Vocational Discernment Program. However there are some differences. As with the Vocational Discernment Program (for Priesthood), DDP begins with discernment for the diaconate begins with a Parish Discernment Committee.

To enter this process the Applicant must:

- be a confirmed member of a parish in good standing in The Diocese of West Tennessee for at least one year
- have the support of his or her parish Rector and Vestry following the parish discernment process's completion.

If the Applicant decides to enter the discernment process and obtains his or her Rector's recommendation and assurance of recommendation by the Vestry, he or she should contact the Chair of the Commission on Ministry for an interview and an overview of the process.

Once the Intermediate Discernment Process has been completed, if there are no obstacles presented in the information submitted by the Applicant and the Applicant's Rector, he/she may be invited by the Bishop to enter the Diaconal Discernment Program, provided openings are available. Those accepted into DDP are known as "Applicants." The number of Applicants admitted each year will be limited. If an opening is not available, the Applicant applies again in a

year to enter the Diaconal Discernment Program. The Applicant's registration in the program will be coordinated through the Bishop's office.

The Applicant should expect to spend approximately four hours a week participating in the program, which currently runs approximately 9 months. The program is designed to be compatible with full-time employment. The tuition for the Diaconal Discernment Program is paid for by the Diocesan budget. The only expense to the Applicant is the cost of their travel.

Field Experience/Reflection Groups

In any given year, there are approximately 9 months of work involved in the completion of the Diaconal Discernment Program (DDP). The detailed timeline is attached as an appendix.

Prior to entering the Diocesan DDP, the Parish Lay Committee is the first phase of the program. The Commission on Ministry provides to the sponsoring Rector and sponsoring Parish Lay Committee detailed agendas and guidelines to focus their meetings, and a written report from the Parish Lay Committee is required at the conclusion of this phase. This report is not evaluative but reflective, and becomes part of the Applicant's file.

For those who are invited to continue in the process, the third phase of the program involves Field Placement and Reflection Group meetings. For their field placements, Applicants will be asked to visit churches that are unfamiliar, along with outreach settings and other locales that will change periodically over the course of the DDP program. The goal of this placement is not to "try on being a deacon," but to give the Applicants experiences that will test their perceptions of ministry and of themselves, and give participants experiences that are appropriate material for their verbatims presented to the group.

The Reflection Group phase of the program will begin its work with an orientation with the group leaders. Reflection Group leaders have access to copies of the Applicant's application, the Parish Lay Discernment Committee report and testing summaries as deemed useful to share by the Bishop. The Reflection Group will use issues arising from assigned field experience to gain focus in the reflections. Verbatims are completed and presented once monthly at Reflection Group meetings.

The purpose of the Reflection Group is to evaluate the Applicants' suitability for ordination in The Episcopal Church. *This is a primary evaluative portion of the discernment process.* The Reflection Group supervisors will complete both mid-term and final evaluations on each Applicant, which will be discussed with the Applicants, be provided to the Commission on Ministry, and become part of the Applicants' files.

In writing final evaluations, the Reflection Group leaders will make one of two recommendations to the Commission on Ministry:

- Recommend that the Applicant be considered for Postulancy
- Recommend that the Applicant *not* be considered for Postulancy.

The Reflection Group Leaders will present these recommendations to the Commission on Ministry and answer any questions that arise from the COM's review of the recommendations.

Please see Section IV below, “Postulancy,” for the role of the COM following recommendations for all four discernment programs.

D. (See Appendix A for Track Four: Of Clergy Previously Ordained in Other Denominations)

V. Postulancy

A. The Commission on Ministry and Postulancy

Reflection Group leaders will make a written yes or no recommendation to the Commission on Ministry concerning Postulancy for each Applicant which reflects a consensus of the mind of the Reflection Group. A copy of the recommendation will be provided to the Applicant as well. The Commission on Ministry will interview each person who is recommended for Postulancy by their Reflection Group leaders. Any persons who are not recommended for Postulancy by their Reflection Group leaders may also meet with the Commission to respond to the recommendation, but are not required to do so. It is the responsibility of the Applicant, if not recommended for Postulancy, to contact the Chair of the Commission on Ministry to request such a meeting. The COM takes the recommendations of the Reflection Group supervisors seriously and weighs the significant amount of time the Reflection Group supervisors spend with the Applicant. In evaluating the recommendations of the Discernment Group leaders, the COM may do one of the following in making its recommendation to the Bishop:

- State and affirm the decision of the Discernment Group Leaders
- State and reverse the decision (extenuating circumstances would generally need to be present for this to be a possibility)
- State the recommendation and recommend the person continue in discernment, with specific requirements for further work, as appropriate, to be reconsidered for Postulancy at a later date. *In such cases, the Applicant’s progress will be monitored by the Chair of the COM or other person appointed by the Chair from among the COM membership, and if and when the time is right, a recommendation will be made by the Chair or the Chair’s designee to the COM.*

If a person’s negative recommendation from his or her Discernment Group is sustained by the COM, the Applicant will not be eligible for continuation in the process and may reapply for the discernment process only at the discretion of the Bishop and the Chair of the COM, normally after at least two years. If a participant in DYVE receives a “no” recommendation, their reentry into the process is at the discretion of the Bishop, the DYVE leaders, and the Chair of the COM. If they are outside the age requirements for DYVE after such a recommendation, they may apply for the VDP process.

Applicants that receive a positive recommendation will need to submit required paperwork to the Bishop’s office. This includes a Letter of Recommendation from the Member of the Clergy and Vestry of the Applicant’s parish in support of the Applicant’s Postulancy and stating their continued support of the individual. When the required paperwork has been received, the Commission on Ministry will review the Applicants’ file, conduct an interview

with the Applicant, and then make a recommendation to the Bishop in accordance with canonical requirements.

B. The Bishop and Postulancy

After reviewing the Applicant's application, all accompanying documents and the recommendation of the COM, the Bishop may admit the Applicant as a Postulant. A recommendation by the COM does not mean that the Bishop will automatically concur. The Bishop will meet with the Applicant and send the Applicant a letter documenting his decision. The Bishop's decision is final.

C. After Admission to Postulancy

If the Applicant is accepted as a Postulant, the Bishop will talk with him/her regarding seminary placement. It is essential once one is made a Postulant for Holy Orders (Priesthood or Diaconate) for the Postulant to make the Bishop aware of, and consult with him or her, concerning any major life changes or major decisions, and keep the Bishop a part of those conversations. The Bishop will be happy to discuss the Postulant's preference of seminaries, but the final choice is the Bishop's. If the Postulant has come from another denomination, the Bishop requires the Postulant to spend a year at an Episcopal seminary.

Finances and Seminary

When the Applicant has been accepted as a Postulant and met with the Bishop, the Postulant applies to the agreed-upon seminary. The Bishop will also consult with the Postulant regarding diocesan financial resources available for his or her support throughout preparation for ordination. All Postulants, whether requesting aid or not, will be asked to update the Financial Statement (form available from the Bishop's office), which will be reviewed by the Bishop every year prior to the Postulant re-enrolling in seminary for the upcoming year. The Postulant may not attend seminary until the Bishop is satisfied that adequate financial support is available for completion of the degree process. Student loan debt should be accrued carefully and only in consultation with the Bishop's office. Because the burden of excessive debt can cause stress in personal, family and professional settings, a ceiling of \$25,000 in total seminary debt is not to be exceeded without written permission of the Bishop. The annual Lenten Ember Day letter will inform the Bishop of changes in the student's financial circumstances, but the Postulant should feel free to contact the Bishop's office at any time. The Financial Aid office of each seminary is an excellent source of information regarding aid. It is the responsibility of the seminarian to manage his/her finances and seek scholarships and other support adequate to accomplish his/her education in a responsible manner. Please consult the Bishop's office with questions.

Ember Days Letters

Once admitted as a Postulant, the Postulant must report to the Bishop by letter four times a year at the Ember Days. The Ember Days are four series of Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays which correspond to the natural seasons of the year. Autumn brings the September, or Michaelmas, Embertide; winter, the Advent Embertide; Spring, the Lenten Embertide; and in summer, the Whit Embertide (named after Whitsunday, the Feast of Pentecost). See Prayer Book, page 18 and a calendar of the church year.) The Lenten letters must include a current financial report using the diocesan provided form. Ember Day letters must be sent as long as the

Postulant or Candidate is in the process leading to ordination. They need not be elaborate. They should be an account of the Postulant's spiritual and educational process and the Postulant's financial situation as appropriate. The question, "If I were the Bishop, what would I want to know about me?" is helpful.

Courses Requirements

For Postulants for Priesthood:

- Greek and Hebrew *All Diocese of West Tennessee seminarians are required to take at least one semester of Greek. It is also desirable to take Hebrew. In order to lighten the seminary load, Greek may be taken before entering seminary.*
- General Ordination Examinations (GOE) *All Diocese of West Tennessee seminarians are required to take GOE's in their senior year unless otherwise notified by the Bishop.*
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) *The Diocese of West Tennessee requires completion of a unit of CPE. It must be completed after the first year of seminary.*

For Postulants for the Diaconate:

- Formation via classes at Memphis Theological Seminary
- Formation via classes with The Diocese of West Tennessee Deacon Formation Program
- CPE, or an accredited pastoral education program, approved by the COM

For All Postulants

Sexual Misconduct, Child Protection and Anti-racism Training

The Canons require that all persons complete Episcopal Church approved Anti-Racism Training, Training in Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse Prevention, and in Title IV (the "disciplinary canons") of The Episcopal Church Canons prior to ordination as a Transitional or Vocational Deacon. The Diocese of West Tennessee regularly holds such trainings; Episcopal seminaries also regularly offer such training. It is the responsibility of the Postulant or Candidate to make sure such training is approved by the Bishop's office and completed. If training is completed outside of The Diocese of West Tennessee and approved by the Bishop for ordination, those who exercise ministry in the Diocese after ordination will need to complete additional local training if required by the Bishop.

Grades

Seminary course work must be taken for "grades" and not on a "pass/fail" basis except for an occasional course that is not offered on any other basis than pass/fail. These exceptions must be approved by the Bishop in advance of their being selected.

Support While in Seminary

While seminary provides many resources for spiritual/psychological support, Postulants or Candidates (see below) should never hesitate to call upon the Bishop, the Chair of the Commission on Ministry, or the Bishop's office staff in any time of distress or confusion.

Because seminary can be an intense experience, it may be helpful to speak with someone removed from that context. Discernment does not end with Postulancy, nor does diocesan support.

VI. Candidacy

The formal status between Postulant and Ordination is designated as Candidate for Holy Orders. The Commission on Ministry must certify a Postulant's readiness for Candidacy. It is the responsibility of the Standing Committee to recommend the Postulant to the Bishop for Candidacy. Both the COM and the Standing Committee will interview the Postulant before making a recommendation for Candidacy.

For the Priesthood, it is normative that the review for Candidacy occurs during the second year of seminary. A letter from the Postulant to the Bishop requesting Candidacy must be sent in the second semester of the Postulant's second year in seminary. The Postulant's Rector and Vestry must send to the Bishop a letter reaffirming their support of the Postulant and recommending him or her for Candidacy. (See Appendix A.)

For the Diaconate, it is normative that the review for Candidacy occur one year prior to the anticipated completion of required coursework for the Diaconate.

After receiving the necessary applications and recommendations, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for Holy Orders. The Bishop will notify the Postulant of the decision by letter.

VII. Ordination to the Diaconate

Before the Candidate can be ordained Deacon, the Candidate must be twenty-four years old. Those seeking ultimately to be ordained Priest, must be in good standing in their senior year at the approved accredited seminary. All requirements of Canon III.8.6 must be satisfied, including an updating of psychiatric testing and background checks. (Appendix B.) Those seeking ultimately to be ordained Deacon, must have successfully completed all educational requirements, and all requirements of Canon III.6.6 must be satisfied, including an updating of psychological testing and background checks. (Appendix C.)

In addition, the Candidate must interview with the Standing Committee. The Bishop will announce the Candidate's Ordination date after the Standing Committee approval of the Candidate's Ordination. Invitations and/or other notifications will be sent following the Bishop's announcement. Most ordinations to the Diaconate are held at St. Mary's Cathedral, Memphis. However, ordinations to the Vocational Diaconate for a single Candidate may be scheduled by the Bishop at another location as the Bishop deems appropriate. The decision is the Bishop's. The Bishop's office coordinates the ordination, invitations and the service.

Once ordained, the Transitional Deacon is expected to return to the Diocese to begin a two-year internship as part of the Priest-in-Training program. A Vocational Deacon will be

placed by the Bishop for service in the Diocese at the Bishop's direction.

Should a person in seminary seek to leave The Diocese of West Tennessee without release of the Bishop, to do so, that individual is responsible for repaying the Diocese any costs for health-related insurances and any other financial assistance given by the Diocese in anticipation that the seminarian would return to the Diocese for at least two years following diocesan sponsorship.

VIII. Ordination to the Priesthood

A person may be ordained Priest after at least six months since ordination as a Transitional Deacon under Canon 8.6, must be at least twenty-four years old, and receive the approval of the Standing Committee. All requirements of Canon III, 8.7 must also be satisfied. (See Appendix A.)

To be ordained a Priest, the Transitional Deacon must have a specific placement to exercise a priestly ministry in a parish or chaplaincy judged appropriate by the Bishop. The Deacon must discuss his/her placement with the Bishop. Deacons are expected to remain in the Diocese for at least two years of supervision through the Priest-in-Training internship period unless released by the Bishop to search for other placement. The candidate for Priesthood will discuss his/her placement with the Bishop. After consultation with the Bishop, the candidate may be interviewed by diocesan priests and/or parishes where there are appropriate openings. Candidates cannot accept a position on their own. The Bishop will make the assignment. A standard Letter of Agreement is available from the Bishop's office and must be approved by the Bishop before acceptance. In no case will the salary package of a person serving in the Priest-in-Training program exceed the basic minimum package as specified by the Bishop and Council for that given year.

Before the Transitional Deacon's desired priestly ordination date, he/she applies for ordination to the Priesthood by sending a letter to the Bishop. The Deacon must include all information required by Canon III.8.7. The Deacon's supervising Rector and Vestry also must send a letter of approval to the Standing Committee. (See Appendix A.) The Bishop will forward this information to the Standing Committee. The Deacon may be asked to meet with the Standing Committee. The Bishop will announce the Deacon's Ordination date after receiving approval from the Standing Committee. Invitations/notifications must not be sent before this announcement.

IX. Post Ordination Formation

Education and formation continues after ordination and is a life-long expectation of the Church's clergy. In The Diocese of West Tennessee, post-ordination formation for newly ordained clergy involves meeting once a month with other new ordinands, new clergy members of the Diocese, and with facilitators in the Fresh Start program. The format is designed to further the new ordinand's formation as well as to inform them and support them in learning and integrating the challenges of their new work and the specific policies and opportunities of The Diocese of West Tennessee. Participation in this group is required by the Bishop and is

considered to be an important part of the Priest-in-Training internship expectation. It will be part of the internship Letter of Agreement.

X. Keeping Up with Canonical Requirements

Checklists are included in Appendix B for each step of the Ordination Process: Discernment, Postulancy, Candidacy, Diaconate, and Priesthood. They serve as guides to assist individuals participating in the process of ordination and are in keeping with diocesan and canonical requirements.

APPENDIX A

Track 4: Christian Clergy Previously Ordained or Licensed in Churches Not in the Historic Succession and Priests and Deacons Ordained in Churches in the Historic Succession but Not in Communion with This Church

When persons ordained in other churches desire to be ordained or received as priests of The Episcopal Church through The Diocese of West Tennessee, they must fulfill the requirements of the Canons of The Episcopal Church that pertain to them, normally Title III, Canon 10 or Title III, Canon 11. In order to facilitate this, they are required to:

1. Begin with a conversation with one's Rector who may then choose to convene a Parish Discernment Committee, following completely the Parish level discernment process.
2. Apply for admission to the process by making an appointment to have an interview with the Bishop. Before the interview with the Bishop, the following documentation should be forwarded to the Bishop's office:
 - a. a letter stating fully his/her reasons for applying to enter this process and reasons for desiring to leave the ministry of his/her present affiliation;
 - b. transcripts of all college, graduate school, seminary degrees, significant continuing education experiences, etc.
3. After the interview, the Bishop will decide whether or not to admit him/her to the process. The Bishop's decision is final.
4. If the Bishop admits a person to the process, the Chair of the Commission on Ministry is notified and, together with the Bishop, appoints a Discernment Committee of five persons (three priests and two lay persons) who will be responsible to the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry for the discernment part of the process. One of the priests on the Discernment Committee will be appointed to serve as its convener.
 - a. The Discernment Committee will meet with the candidate for conversation and discernment for no less than six two-hour conversations over a six month period; the focus of the discernment process will be set by the Bishop and the Chair of the COM, the Canon for Congregational Ministry, and the Convener of the Discernment Committee.
 - b. At the conclusion of the Discernment Committee's work, the Convener will report to the Bishop, the Chair of the COM, and the Canon for Congregational Ministry the committee's recommendation concerning the person's continuance in the process. If the recommendation is unanimously negative, the person will not be allowed to continue in the process. If the committee's recommendation is mixed, further conversations will be scheduled with the Bishop, the Chair of the COM, and the Canon for Congregational Ministry, after which the Bishop will determine if the person moves on in the process.
 - c. If the person is approved for continuance, he/she must then present evidence of his/her confirmation and affiliation with a parish of The Diocese of West Tennessee; testimony that he/she has served his/her previous denomination "with diligence and good reputation" together with evidence from the head of his/her previous judicatory that there are no disciplinary charges against him/her, present or past; and a complete background check as administered by The Diocese of

West Tennessee;

d. Complete the normal battery of psychological, psychiatric and medical examinations as required by the Canons;

e. When the above certificates are complete, the person will be presented to the Commission on Ministry. If the person receives a positive endorsement, then the Bishop determines the necessary requirements for further education, Anglican Studies, and examination.

f. At the appropriate point, the person's records, together with the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry, is forwarded to the Standing Committee for their action.

g. If the Standing Committee approves and the Bishop consents, the ordination(s) is set in accordance with the timelines established by the Canons.

APPENDIX B – CHECKLISTS

I. CHECKLISTS - DISCERNMENT PROCESSES FOR PRIESTHOOD

Option I - CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANT FOR PRIESTHOOD

(To enroll in the Discerning Young Vocations Process [DYVE])

Phase I

(All items are required for enrollment in DYVE and must be submitted prior to entering the program)

To be submitted to the Diocesan Office, attention Canon Stephanie Cheney

- ___ 1. Waiver – “Ordination Not Guaranteed” (**Form 1**)
- ___ 2. Application (Information Form for Applicants to Holy Orders) (**Form 2**)
- ___ 3. Color photo
- ___ 4. Letter of recommendation from sponsoring clergy to bishop accompanied by Comment form. (Sent in by the Rector). The letter should attest to the applicant’s status as a confirmed communicant clarifying when and where the applicant was baptized and confirmed.

Phase II

- ___ 5. Participation in DYVE which includes:
 - ___ 6. Participation in Reflection Group meetings
 - ___ 7. Completion of assigned autobiography
 - ___ 8. Completion of assigned verbatims
 - ___ 9. Participation in field assignments.
 - ___ 10. Final evaluations and recommendation by Group Leaders

Phase III

To be submitted to the Diocesan Office, attention Canon Stephanie Cheney

- ___ 11. Autobiography (not just Spiritual). (Should be the one used in DYVE. The norm is 5-7 pages double-spaced in length.)
- ___ 12. Signed “Release of Information” Waiver (**Form 3**)
- ___ 13. The Report of the Parish Discernment Committee (Submitted by the Rector)
- ___ 14. Letter of support signed by 2/3 of the vestry and the parish rector (**Form 4-P**) (Submitted by the Secretary or Clerk of the Vestry)
- ___ 15. Life History Questionnaire (**Form 5**)
- ___ 16. Behavior Screening Questionnaire (**Form 6**)
- ___ 17. Applicant submits copies of official transcripts, which document level of education achieved (**A Bachelor’s degree is the minimum requirement.**)
- ___ 18. Medical Exam (Applicant’s physician to perform physical and report on Church Pension Group form.) (**Form 7**)
- ___ 19. Medical Information Form (**Form 8**)
- ___ 20. Financial Statement (**Form 9**)
- ___ 21. Thorough psychological testing and an interview with psychologist designated by the Diocese.
- ___ 22. Background Check Release Waiver (**Form 10**)

- _____ 23. Background Check through a diocesan approved agency to include education and job references, credit, DMV and criminal checks.
- _____ 24. Applicant is made a Nominee

(Checklist to become a Postulant for Priesthood continues on the following pages)

Option II - CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANT FOR PRIESTHOOD (To enroll in the Vocational Discernment Process [VDP])

Phase I (All items are required following the Parish Discernment Process, but prior to entering VDP)
To be submitted to the Diocesan Office, attention Canon Stephanie Cheney

- ___ 1. Participation in Parish Discernment Committee
- ___ 2. Waiver – “Ordination Not Guaranteed” (*Form 1*)
- ___ 3. Application (Information Form for Applicants to Holy Orders) (*Form 2*)
- ___ 4. Resumé and color photo
- ___ 5. Autobiography (not just Spiritual). (Should be the one used in Parish Discernment. The norm is 5-7 pages double-spaced in length)
- ___ 6. Signed “Release of Information” Waiver (*Form 3*)
- ___ 7. The Report of the Parish Discernment Committee (Submitted by the Rector)
- ___ 8. Letter of Recommendation submitted from home parish Rector to the Bishop accompanied by Comment form. The letter should **attest to the Applicant’s status as a confirmed adult communicant in good standing clarifying when and where the applicant was baptized and confirmed.**
- ___ 9. Letter of support signed by 2/3 of the vestry and the parish Rector (*Form 4-P*) (Submitted by the Secretary or Clerk of the Vestry)
- ___ 10. Life History Questionnaire (*Form 5*)
- ___ 11. Behavior Screening Questionnaire (*Form 6*)
- ___ 12. Applicant submits copies of official transcripts, which document level of education achieved (*A Bachelor’s degree is the minimum requirement*)
- ___ 13. Medical Exam (Applicant’s physician to perform physical and report on Church Pension Group form.) (*Form 7*)
- ___ 14. Medical Information Form (*Form 8*)
- ___ 15. Financial Statement (*Form 9*)
- ___ 16. Thorough psychological testing and an interview with psychologist designated by the Diocese.
- ___ 17. Background Check Release Waiver (*Form 10*)
- ___ 18. Background Check through a diocesan approved agency to include education and job references, credit, DMV and criminal checks.

Phase II

- ___ 19. Participation in VDP which includes:
 - ___ 20. Participation in Reflection Groups
 - ___ 21. Completion of assigned verbatims
 - ___ 22. Participation in field assignments.
 - ___ 23. Final evaluation and recommendation by Group Leaders
- ___ 24. Applicant is made a Nominee

CHECKLIST TO BECOME A POSTULANT FOR PRIESTHOOD (*Canon III.8.3*) (*DYVE and VDP*)

Nominee is to see that each item on this list is completed and submitted to the Bishop's Office before becoming a Postulant.

- ___ Completion of all requirements outlined in Enrollment for the Discernment Process.
- ___ Letter of Commitment to the Diocese to repay any costs for health related insurances and any other financial assistance given by the Diocese while in seminary if one should leave the Diocese prior to serving for two full years. (*Form 11-P*)
- ___ An interview with, and recommendation from, the Commission on Ministry [Sec. Canon III 8 (b)]
- ___ Letter of Application for Postulancy written to the Bishop. [Canon III 8 3 b] (*Form 12-P*)
- ___ Interview with the Bishop [Sec. 3 (a) (2)]
- ___ Admission by the Bishop to Postulancy [Sec. 3 (d)]

CHECKLIST FOR A POSTULANT TO BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR PRIESTHOOD (*Canon III.8.4*) (*DYVE and VDP*)

Postulant is to see that each item on this list is completed and all necessary documentation submitted to the Bishop's Office before becoming a Candidate.

- ___ Communication with the Bishop during Ember Weeks
- ___ Completion of C.P.E. after the first year of seminary and a written evaluation
- ___ Annual report from the Postulant's seminary on his/her academic performance and personal qualifications for Candidacy. [Section 5 (j)]
- ___ Letter of support signed by 2/3rds of the vestry and submitted by the Rector. [Section 4 (a) (2)] (*Form 13-P*)
- ___ Letter of Application from the Postulant to the Bishop requesting Candidacy. Date of Postulancy must be included in the letter. [Section 4 (a)] (*Form 14-P*)
- ___ Letter from the Commission on Ministry to the Bishop stating that requirements have been met and attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant. The Commission may interview the Postulant. [Section 4 (b)]
- ___ Approval in writing from the Standing Committee to the Bishop, stating the Committee has interviewed the Postulant and reviewed the documentation related to the application of the Postulant. [Section 4 (b)]
- ___ Interview with the Bishop who may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for Holy Orders. Postulant will receive a letter of notification from the Bishop.
- ___ Updated medical and psychological exam and background check if previous reports are older than 36 months
- ___ Documentation of training in adult issues of sexual misconduct, issues of child abuse, anti-racism training and Title IV training. [Section 5 (h)]

CHECK LIST FOR ORDINATION TO THE “TRANSITIONAL” DIACONATE

(Title III, Canon 8.6) (DYVE and VDP)

Candidate is to see that each item on this list is completed and all necessary documentation submitted to the Bishop’s Office before being ordained a Deacon.

- ___ **Candidate:** Not less than 24 years of age [Sec. 6. (b)]
- ___ **Candidate:** Communicated with the Bishop during Ember Weeks, including annual written Lenten financial report update
- ___ **Candidate:** Written application to the Bishop requesting ordination as a Deacon. [Section 6(c)(1)]. (*Form 15-P*)
- ___ **Candidate:** Completion of required General Ordination Exams.
- ___ **Bishop:** Certificate of dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy submitted to Standing Committee [Section 6(c) (3)]
- ___ **Rector and Vestry:** Letter of support signed by 2/3 of the vestry and the rector. [Section 6(c)(2) (*Form 16-P*)
- ___ **Seminary:** Certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, showing the Candidate’s scholastic record in the subjects required by the canons, and giving an evaluation and recommendation of the Candidate for ordination to the diaconate. [Section 6(c)(4)]; [Section 7(b)(4)]
- ___ **COM:** Certificate giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the diaconate to the Standing Committee and the Bishop. [Section 6(c)(5)]
- ___ **COM:** May interview the Candidate
- ___ **Standing Committee:** May interview the Candidate
- ___ **Standing Committee:** Written testimony to the Bishop by a majority of all members consenting, certifying that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met and there is no sufficient objection [Section 6(d)]

CHECK LIST FOR ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

(Title III, Canon 8. 7) (DYVE and VDP)

Deacon is to see that each item on this list is completed and all necessary documentation is submitted to the Bishop’s Office before ordination to the Priesthood

- ___ **Deacon:** Not less than 24 years of age [Sec. 7(a)(2)]
- ___ **Deacon:** Has served as Deacon **at least 6 months.** [Sec. 7(a)(1)]
- ___ **Deacon:** Written application to the Bishop requesting ordination. [Sec. 7(b)(1)] (*Form 17*)
- ___ **Deacon:** Documentation supporting a cure, per requirements of Canon III.8.7e, satisfactory to the Bishop and Standing Committee and a Letter of Agreement on approved diocesan form laying out the terms of the call.

- _____ **Bishop:** Certificate to Standing Committee stating terms of Postulancy, Candidacy, and Diaconate have been completed [Sec. 7(b)(3)]
- _____ **Rector and Vestry of Deacon's home parish:** Letter of support to the Bishop, signed by at least 2/3 of the vestry and the Rector [Sec. 7(b)(2)] (*Form 18*)
- _____ **COM:** Statement from the Commission on Ministry to the Bishop attesting to the successful completion of the program of formation designed during Postulancy and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood. [Sec. 7(b)(5)]
- _____ **Standing Committee:** May interview the Deacon
- _____ **Standing Committee:** Written testimony to the Bishop by a majority of all members consenting, certifying that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met and there is no sufficient objection [Sec. 7(c)]
- _____ **Bishop:** Approves place to exercise office of priest [Sec. 7(e)]
- _____ **Bishop:** Takes order for ordination [Sec. 7(d)]

II. CHECKLISTS – DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR DIACONATE

CHECKLIST FOR APPLICANT FOR DIACONATE TO ENROLL IN THE DIACONAL DISCERNMENT PROCESS (DDP)

Phase I (All items are required following the Parish Discernment Process but prior to entering DDP)

To be submitted to the Diocesan Office, attention Canon Stephanie Cheney

- ___ 1. Participation in Parish Discernment Committee
- ___ 2. Waiver – “Ordination Not Guaranteed” (*Form 1*)
- ___ 3. Application (Information Form for Applicants to Holy Orders) (*Form 2*)
- ___ 4. Resumé and color photo
- ___ 5. Autobiography (not just Spiritual). (Should be the one used in Parish Discernment. The norm is 5-7 pages double-spaced in length)
- ___ 6. Signed “Release of Information” Waiver (*Form 3*)
- ___ 7. The Report of the Parish Discernment Committee (Submitted by the Rector)
- ___ 8. Letter of recommendation from home parish Rector to the Bishop accompanied by Comment form. (Submitted by the Rector). The letter should **attest to the applicant’s status as a confirmed adult communicant in good standing clarifying when and where the applicant was baptized and confirmed.**
- ___ 9. Letter of support signed by 2/3 of the vestry and the parish rector (*Form 4-D*) (Submitted by the Secretary or Clerk of the Vestry)
- ___ 10. Life History Questionnaire (*Form 5*)
- ___ 11. Behavior Screening Questionnaire (*Form 6*)
- ___ 12. Applicant submit copies of official transcripts, which document level of education achieved (*A Bachelor’s degree is the minimum requirement*)
- ___ 13. Medical Exam (Applicant’s physician to perform physical and report on Church Pension Group form.) (*Form 7*)
- ___ 14. Medical Information Form (*Form 8*)
- ___ 15. Financial Statement (*Form 9*)
- ___ 16. Thorough psychological testing and an interview with psychologist designated by the Diocese
- ___ 17. Background Check Release Waiver (*Form 10*)
- ___ 18. Background Check through a diocesan approved agency to include education and job references, credit, DMV and criminal checks.

Phase II

- ___ 19. Participation in DDP which includes:
 - ___ 20. Participation in Reflection Groups
 - ___ 21. Completion of assigned verbatims

- _____ 22. Participation in field assignments.
- _____ 23. Final evaluation and recommendation by Group Leaders
- _____ 24. Applicant is made a Nominee

**CHECKLIST TO BECOME
A POSTULANT FOR THE DIACONATE
(Canon III.6.3)**

Nominee is to see that each item on this list is completed and necessary and all necessary documentation is submitted to the Bishop's Office before becoming a Postulant.

- _____ Completion of all requirements outlined in Enrollment for the Discernment Process.
- _____ Letter of commitment to the Diocese to repay any costs for financial assistance given by the Diocese while in seminary if one should leave the Diocese prior to serving for two full years. (*Form 11-D*)
- _____ Interview with, and recommendation from, the Commission on Ministry [Sec. 3(b)]
- _____ Letter of application for Postulancy to the Bishop. [Sec. 3(b)] (*Form 12-D*)
- _____ Interview with the Bishop [Sec. 3(a)(2)]
- _____ Admission by the Bishop to Postulancy [Sec. 3(d)]

**CHECK LIST FOR A POSTULANT TO BECOME
A CANDIDATE FOR THE DIACONATE
(Canon III.6.4)**

Postulant is to see that each item on this list is completed and all necessary documentation submitted to the Bishop's Office before becoming a Candidate.

- _____ Communicate with the Bishop during Ember Weeks including annual written Lenten financial report update
- _____ Postulant is one year from the completion of their educational requirements.
- _____ Letter of Support signed by 2/3rds of the vestry and submitted by the Rector [Section 4(a)(2)] (*Form 13-D*)
- _____ Letter of Application for Candidacy to the Bishop. Date of Postulancy must be included in the letter. [Section 4(a)] (*Form 14-D*)
- _____ Letter from the Commission on Ministry to the Bishop stating that requirements have been met and attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant. The Commission may interview the Postulant. [Section 4(b)]
- _____ Approval in writing from the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had the opportunity to review the documentation related to the application of the Postulant. [Section 4(b)]
- _____ Interview with the Bishop who may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for Holy Orders. Postulant will receive a letter of notification from the Bishop.
- _____ Updated medical and psychological exam and background check if reports are older than 36 months

_____ Documentation of training in adult issues of sexual misconduct, issues of child abuse, anti-racism training and Title IV training. [Section 5(h)]

CHECK LIST TO BE ORDAINED DEACON (Title III, Canon 6.6)

Candidate is to see that each item on this list is completed and necessary documentation submitted to the Bishop's Office before being ordained a Deacon.

- _____ **Candidate:** Not less than 24 years of age [Sec. 6.(a)2]
- _____ **Candidate:** Communicated with Bishop during Ember Weeks
- _____ **Candidate:** Written application to Bishop requesting ordination as a Deacon. [Sec. 6(b)(1)] (*Form 15-D*)
- _____ **Bishop:** Certificate of dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy submitted to Standing Committee [Section 6(b)(3)]
- _____ **Rector and Vestry:** Letter of support signed by 2/3 of the vestry and the rector. [Section 6(b)(2)] (*Form 16-D*)
- _____ **Seminary:** A certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the canons, and giving an evaluation and recommendation of the Candidate's for ordination to the Diaconate. [Section 6(b)(4)]
- _____ **COM:** Certificate required by Sec. 6(d)(3) giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate to the Standing Committee and the Bishop. [Section 6(c)(5)]
- _____ **COM:** May interview the Candidate
- _____ **Standing Committee:** May interview the Candidate
- _____ **Standing Committee:** Written testimony to the Bishop by a majority of all members consenting, certifying that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met and there is no sufficient objection [Section 6(c)]