



# Episcopal Diocese

— OF CENTRAL FLORIDA —

## Ordination Discernment Process

A Guide for Aspirants to Ordained Ministry

Revised: May 2026

## A note from the Bishop, Standing Committee, and Commission on Ministry

Anyone wishing to pursue ordination in the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida is required to agree with and abide by the historic faith and practice of the Anglican/Episcopal tradition as found in *the Book of Common Prayer (1979)*, especially the orders for Holy Baptism (pp 297-314), The Holy Eucharist (pp 315-409), The Celebration, and Blessing of a Marriage (pp 422- 438), The Burial of the Dead (pp 468-507), and The Catechism (pp 844-862).

At their ordination to the diaconate, priesthood, or episcopacy, every ordinand signs this Oath of Conformity:

"I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church."

*Book of Common Prayer pages 513, 526 & 538*

**Please, read these carefully and consider whether or not you can agree to these  
in their entirety in good conscience.**

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# Introduction

If you are reading this packet, you are either discerning a call to ministry or in a position to assist someone with their discernment. Welcome to the process! We - the Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and Diocesan Staff - are excited for you and the road ahead.

There are quite a few steps in the discernment process, which can make it seem more complicated than it actually is. To make this simple for those who are new to the process, this document is broken down into five sections.

**The first section on page 6 is for those who are entering the discernment process as ASPIRANTS** to ordained ministry. It will walk you through each step. The road ahead may seem overwhelming at first glance but hang in there! There are a lot of people around you who are here to walk through this process with you.

**The second section is for RECTORS/PRIESTS-IN-CHARGE on page 9.** Your role is essential to the development of Aspirants both as leaders and as faithful Christians. This section explores both what you should look for in prospective Aspirants and Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) members, and what your obligations will be in the discernment process.

**The third section is for the Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) members on page 13.** When you form the committee and conduct the meetings, you will rely on **The PDC Orientation Packet**, found in **Appendix C** on page 29. Rather than repeat the same material, this document aims to help you understand your role in discernment and the characteristics of the Aspirant you should take into consideration. For a full guide to the PDC meetings, please consult the PDC orientation packet.

**The fourth section is a guide for the Commission on Ministry (COM) members on page 16.** It describes your responsibilities in the discernment process in general, as well as in your work as a specific Aspirant's COM rep. **Appendix E on page 49** provides a more comprehensive view of the COM's responsibilities according to the Canons.

**The final section of this document is a set of APPENDICES.** They include a Glossary of discernment process terminology and acronyms, guidelines and forms, a flow chart and checklists, and the complete list of COM responsibilities. Documents referenced in this guide are available on the diocesan website at [www.cfdiocese.org](http://www.cfdiocese.org), or may be requested from the Diocesan Discernment Team via email at [discernment@cfdiocese.org](mailto:discernment@cfdiocese.org).

There are a lot of acronyms and abbreviations used throughout this document. As mentioned above, **Appendix A on page 17** is a glossary to help you navigate the terminology. Additionally, to keep things simple, we have used "rector" to refer to the principal priest at any given parish; wherever it says "rector," read "priest-in-charge" or "vicar" (or "Senior Warden" if there is no clergy in-charge) if that would be more accurate to your parish. Similarly, "applicant" and "nominee" are used interchangeably.

No matter which role you have in the discernment process, you are not alone in this! We invite you to contact the Diocesan Discernment Team at [discernment@cfdiocese.org](mailto:discernment@cfdiocese.org) with any questions or concerns you may have.

# Discernment Process Guide for ASPIRANTS to Ministry

## Becoming an Aspirant (The First Step for those who aspire to ordained ministry)

- **Consult with your rector:** The first step is to talk to your rector about your sense of being called to a more intentional ministry, lay or ordained.
- **Conference on Ministry:** You will attend the Conference on Ministry, a day-long event in August/September presented by the Commission on Ministry (COM). There, you will hear talks about the different ministry tracks and have the opportunity to talk to the diocesan staff and the members of the COM. Also, you will obtain a Nomination & Application Form, and a form Letter of Support to be signed by your rector and vestry and submitted along with the completed application. **Please note that this is a mandatory meeting for those sensing a call to ordained ministry.**
- **Nomination and Application:** You will submit your completed Nomination & Application Form for Ordination (accompanied by the Letter of Support form, signed by the Rector/Vestry, entitled "Nomination for the Discernment Process" - Title III.6.2a for diaconate; Title III.8.2a for priesthood) to Bishop Holcomb at the diocesan office no later than the second week in October.
  - If you are applying for a specific licensed lay ministry, nomination forms may be completed and submitted to the bishop's office at any time. Training for Licensed Lay Ministries is overseen by your rector in cooperation with the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS). The COM tracks the training at scheduled COM meetings.
  - The **Letter of Recommendation form** from the Rector/Vestry which accompanies the Nomination & Application Form for Ordination is an endorsement of your entry into the discernment process and is not the required Letter of Support from the Vestry and Rector for admission as a Postulant.
- **"The Call to Ministry":** Around this time, you and your rector, or associate priest will complete "The Call to Ministry: a Workbook for Those Discerning a Call into Ordained Ministry". You will submit a copy of the completed workbook to the diocesan office.
- **Work Learning Agreement:** You and your rector will create a Parish Internship/Work Learning Agreement (WLA) (see **Appendix B on page 19**) and submit it to the diocesan office to be included in your file. The goal is for you and your rector to work together, ensuring that you experience the ministries of the parish, and to assist the Parish Discernment Committee (PDC), rector, and vestry in their early discernment. This WLA should not be confused with the Field Work Assignment that is part of ICS or Field Education (or Mentored Ministry) in seminary.
- Your rector will select PDC members and appoint the chair, prior to first PDC meeting, as soon as convenient but no later than January following the Conference on Ministry.
- **COM REP and PDC:** Upon acceptance of your Nomination & Application Form for ordination, the COM will appoint a COM Representative (COM Rep) who will contact your rector about scheduling an orientation meeting of your Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) and who will walk alongside you throughout the discernment process. You and your PDC will complete all the required PDC meetings, and your PDC chair will submit a report to the diocesan office.
- Your rector will select PDC members and appoint the chair, prior to the first PDC meeting, as soon as convenient but no later than January following the Conference on Ministry.

- Your PDC members will receive an orientation packet and will be trained by your COM Rep at the first PDC meeting.

## Becoming a POSTULANT (The Second Step, for those discerning a call to ordained ministry)

- When the final report from your PDC, recommending that you continue in exploration toward ordained ministry, is received in the bishop's office, you will receive a letter from the bishop, inviting you and your spouse (if you have one) to attend the **BACAM** Conference (Bishop's Advisory Committee for Aspirants to Ministry). The Conference is held in the early spring. At BACAM, you and your spouse will be interviewed and evaluated by clergy and lay persons from the COM.
- **After BACAM:**
  - o At the conclusion of BACAM, the COM will make a recommendation to the bishop regarding your admission to postulancy pending the completion of all canonical and diocesan requirements. The bishop communicates to each BACAM participant, informing him/her of his decision on continuation in the discernment process.
  - o **Releases and Evaluations:** The Diocesan Discernment Team will send you an email with forms for you to sign and return as directed: Authorization & Release form, Background Inquiry Release form, and information with details about the required psychological and medical exams including forms for both of these evaluations. The expense of these exams/evaluations are your responsibility, though COM urges your congregation to help pay for them. These evaluations can take several months to complete, so it is wise to schedule them as soon as possible after you receive your letter from the bishop, approving your continuing in the process.
- **Statement of Support:** If the bishop receives a positive report from your medical and psychological evaluations, then your rector and vestry will send a form Statement of Support endorsing your admission as a Postulant.
  - o The bishop will notify you of your admission as a Postulant for Holy Orders when all the requirements are met. **NOTE:** As a Postulant you will be required to submit Ember Letters to the bishop throughout the remainder of the process until you are ordained. (See *Book of Common Prayer*, page 18 for listing of Ember Days)
- **Planning for Ministry Preparation**
  - o **Priesthood:** If you are an Aspirant to the priesthood, you will schedule an interview with the diocesan Academic Assessment Team to develop a plan for your academic formation and to assess seminary options. The Team presents a recommended plan and the final determination about entering seminary is made by the bishop.
  - o **Diaconate:** If you are an Aspirant to the diaconate who is approved to pursue ordination to the diaconate, you will schedule your training with the Dean of the Institute for Christian Studies.

## Becoming a CANDIDATE (The Third Step, focusing on education and formation for the ordained ministry)

- **Ministry Preparation:** Once you are a Postulant (or if you are an Aspirant who will soon be a Postulant), you will begin (or continue) formal academic training, completing requirements as specified by the Canons of the Episcopal Church.
- **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE):** Though this is not a requirement of the canons, it is the policy of our Diocese that all Candidates for priesthood complete at least one unit (100 hrs.) of CPE, unless this is waived by the Bishop.
- **Admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders:** You will make an application to the bishop for admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders, customarily in the second year of your training.
- **Letter of Support:** Your rector and vestry will submit a letter in support of admission to Candidacy.
- **COM Recommendation:** The COM will make a recommendation to the bishop, regarding your Candidacy.
- **Standing Committee Interview:** The Standing Committee will interview you and, if approved, you will be notified of admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders by a letter from the bishop.

**Canonical Requirements** to be completed at any time during the discernment process and prior to ordination:

- Training in preventing child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation and harassment (Safe Church Safe Community)
- Training in the Canons (church law) of The Episcopal Church (TEC), specifically Title IV
- Anti-Racism Training

**Ordination Exams:** You will complete the DOE (Deacon Ordination Exam) if you are a diaconal Candidate, or GOE (General Ordination Exam) or the Diocesan Ordination Examination if you are a Candidate for priesthood. Your exam will be evaluated, and if you are Not Proficient in any canonical area, you will complete any recommended remediation with the COM Exam Committee.

## Becoming an ORDINAND (The Fourth and Final Step, provided all the requirements of the Canons have been met)

- **Application to be Ordained:** You will make an application to the bishop to be ordained.
- **Letter in Support:** Your rector and vestry will submit a Letter in Support of your ordination.
- **COM Recommendation:** The COM will make a recommendation to the bishop regarding ordination.
- **Standing Committee Review:** The Standing Committee will review your discernment file to ensure you have satisfied all the requirements of the Canons.
- **Notification:** You will be notified of approval for ordination by a letter from the bishop.

# Discernment Process Guide for Rectors

## Guidelines Regarding a Nominee's Call

As the rector, part of your role is to help your parishioners discover and explore the call God has for each of them. Most of them will be called to lay ministry in one form or another, but some will be called to ordained ministry. Each Aspirant's discernment process will begin with you, and you will be the principal person he/she turns to with questions about ministry and discernment. Together with the members of the PDC, you will have the important job of helping the Aspirant appreciate this is the beginning of a period of exploring and testing that may or may not lead to ordination. This cannot be stressed enough; a "no" to ordained ministry must also be understood as a "yes" to lay ministry.

You, your parish, and the nominee are entering into a decision-making process that is both personal and communal. This is a distinctive and essential characteristic of the Anglican and Episcopal tradition and understanding of calling. This process is not a training course in ministry for one person, but the education of the whole parish about ministry and faith development.

To assist you as you help your parishioners explore their callings, below are qualities that are important for Aspirants in the discernment process. Remember, most Aspirants will not have all of these at the beginning of the process; however, these qualities need to be present overall.

### **Some Qualities to look for in Aspirants in the Discernment Process**

#### *Spirituality:*

Does this person have a:

- Clearly articulated personal commitment to Christ
- Clearly articulated sense of call to leadership in ministry
- Rule of life that includes regular/daily practices of private study and prayer
- Clearly articulated understanding of his/her own giftedness

#### *Ministry Experience:*

Does this person have:

- Demonstrated leadership gifts and a passion for leading and equipping God's people
- A history of being used by God to lead others to Christ? For example:
  - o Teaching experience: taught Bible Study/Sunday School, etc.
  - o Pastoral experience: visitation of sick, bereaved, lapsed, etc.
  - o Administrative experience: vestry, stewardship, etc.
  - o Program experience: youth ministry, Sunday School program development

#### *Education:*

Does this person have a(n):

- Associate's degree (preferred, but not required for vocational diaconate)
- Baccalaureate's Degree (preferred, but not required for priesthood)

#### *Maturity*

Does this person have:

- Spiritual and emotional maturity
- The ability to relate well to people

- The ability to listen and to control their need to "have the last word"

## Rector's Responsibilities in the Discernment Process

- You and your vestry will submit a **Rector and Vestry Nomination for Discernment Process** form signifying your support of the Aspirant entering the discernment process. This form is available on the diocesan website: [www.cfdioocese.org](http://www.cfdioocese.org)
- In addition to the form from your Vestry, you (the Rector) will submit a **Letter of Recommendation to the Bishop**, including your reasons for supporting the Aspirant entering the discernment process. Please include how long you have known the applicant and in what capacity, and address at least these eight points: The Aspirant's...
  1. Faith
  2. Leadership
  3. Emotional maturity
  4. Spiritual maturity
  5. Competence in ministry skills
  6. Passion for the Gospel
  7. Commitment to the Church's mission, and
  8. Wholesome example.
- You or your associate rector will go through "**The Call to Ministry**" workbook with the Aspirant. The workbook is available on the Diocesan website.
- You and the Aspirant will create a **Work Learning Agreement (WLA)** to be fulfilled by the Aspirant in the context of the parish discernment training (see **Appendix B on page 19**) and submitted to the Diocesan Discernment Team at the diocesan office to be included in the file. The goal is for you and the Aspirant to work together, ensuring that he/she experiences the ministries of the parish, and to assist you, the PDC, and your vestry in your early discernment.
- This WLA should not be confused with the Field Work Assignment as part of ICS or Field Education (or Mentored Ministry) in seminary.
- You will meet with the Aspirant by phone or in person at least once a month for emotional and spiritual support.
- If the PDC recommends the Aspirant continue in the process, you and your vestry will send a **Letter of Support** endorsing the Aspirant's admission as a Postulant.
- You and your vestry will submit a **Letter of Support** endorsing their admission to Candidacy.
- When a Candidate makes application to the bishop to be ordained, you and your vestry will submit a **Letter of Support** of his/her ordination.
- You should be available to the Aspirant for pastoral care, mentoring, coaching, and basic support throughout his/her process.
- The sponsoring parish will provide financial support for seminarians residing at out-of-state seminaries to travel to diocesan events, such as Diocesan Convention.

- When the Aspirant is ordained to the diaconate (vocational or transitional), the parish will appoint a reception coordinator, and the parish will provide a reception at the service.

## Guidelines Regarding the Parish Discernment Committee (PDC)

After an Aspirant submits his/her Nomination & Application Form for Ordination, the COM will appoint a COM representative to "walk alongside" the nominee throughout the process of discernment. The COM rep will contact you (either by telephone, email, or in person) to review the PDC process, stressing the importance of the Work Learning Agreement, and to answer any questions you may have.

After that consultation, you will appoint a PDC to work with the nominee in his/her discernment process.

### Considerations in Selecting PDC Members

- The Parish Discernment Committee should be comprised of 5-7 lay people
- NOTE:** It is not appropriate for a clergyperson (deacon or priest), family members of the Aspirant, other nominees currently in the discernment process, or more than one set of spouses to be members of a PDC.
- At least one member of the committee must be a member of the vestry
  - Members should be communicants in good standing of the Episcopal Church, attending worship regularly and taking part in the activities/programs of the parish
  - Members must have a basic understanding of the faith, with the ability to express that faith and relate their own spiritual journey
  - Members must demonstrate communication skills/assertiveness and openness with a caring manner
  - Members should be people who work well with you
  - Members should be sensitive and observant
  - Members should have demonstrated reliability in previous parish work
  - Members need a basic understanding of the "group process", including commitment to attend all meetings
  - Members should be people who will abide by a commitment to maintain confidentiality

Parishioners accepting the commitment to serve on a PDC may ask you, "What do I have to offer? Who am I to judge?" The simple truth is that we depend on every member's gifts and discernment. The basic qualifications are within each of us in our life experience and in the Christian commitment we offer. This task calls for a willingness to be open, honest, and candid in the context of a caring community; to both support and confront the nominee. While the principal purpose lies in helping the nominee clarify a call, the process will result in a mutual journey for all involved.

The nominee will ask: "Is ordained or lay ministry the form my ministry should take?"

The PDC and ultimately you and the vestry will ask: "Does this individual sufficiently understand the ministry of all baptized persons, and appreciate the opportunities for his or her lay ministry?" "Does ordained ministry seem to be the leadership role to which God is calling this person?" "Can we in good faith send this person to become an

ordained leader of other congregations?"

We recommend close communication between the PDC chair and COM representative in every stage of the discernment process and especially in the early stages. With the exception of pastoral care or supplying specific information, you will not be supervising or directing the work of the PDC, but rather you and the PDC will have parallel and complementary discernment roles.

During the course of their work together, the time may come when it seems proper to the nominee to decide not to proceed, or the committee may decide not to recommend to you and the vestry that the nominee continue in the process leading to ordination. Should the vestry concur with their recommendation, the PDC should be prepared to assist the nominee in finding a suitable lay ministry.

Should any pastoral or ethical concerns arise in the course of the PDC meetings, the chair should inform you.

***NOTE:** The Parish Discernment Committee RECOMMENDS; you (the Rector), your vestry and the diocese ultimately have the canonical responsibility to DECIDE on behalf of the church whether to affirm the call of the Aspirant or not.*

## Guidelines Regarding the Parish Internship/Work Learning Agreement

After the nominee has submitted a Nomination Form to enter the Discernment Process, you will meet with the nominee to set up a Parish Internship and develop a "Work/Leaming Agreement" (see **Appendix B on page 19**). The intent of the internship is to provide a ministry environment that complements the nominee's skills and experience. For example, if the nominee has been involved in youth ministry, the work agreement may highlight ministry to the elderly or nursing home ministry. Some nominees may not have led in public worship, and this is an excellent opportunity to do so under your supervision. The 6-12-month internship gives the nominee opportunities to develop his/her skills as a leader under the mentorship of an experienced supervisor.

# Discernment Process Guide for the PDC Members

As members of the PDC, your job will be to help the nominee identify, discover, and explore the varieties of ministry in the Lord's service. Most of all, the PDC represents the parish family in helping individuals affirm their special gifts of ministry.

You are not a support group *per se* but should attempt to create a caring and questioning environment in which a nominee can risk testing his/her vocational aspirations. As you facilitate exploration for the individual, you also carry the discernment process into the larger community.

You are asked to enter into a special relationship with the nominee on behalf of the parish (especially the vestry) and the larger church. This requires a commitment of time, energy, sharing of yourselves, as well as a commitment to ask difficult and challenging questions of one another. In the course of your work, you may enter spiritual depths in your life as a group and individually that will reward and challenge you.

You will be asked to meet six times, sometimes with the Aspirant and sometimes without him/her. It is important to open and close your meetings with prayer, always mindful that this is a spiritual quest. You may wish to consider the Prayer Book as a primary resource, especially pages 814-841 as well as various scriptures including I Corinthians 12:1-11, Ephesians 4:7, 11-16; Romans 12:1-8; Acts 4:13.

Your work will culminate in a final report (form **on page 41**) arrived at by diligence in the discernment process and ardency in prayer. As members, you will have a sustained and intimate contact with the nominee and develop a personal bond with him/her. It is important to encourage openness, candor, and support, but it is also important to balance these qualities with objectivity. It is difficult to say "no" to ordination and "yes" to lay ministry because, to a nominee, this may sound like a rejection of his/her perceived gifts. If the nominee is redirected, you will be affirming the nominee's other ministries, and your members will help him/her deal with his/her feelings about the outcome. It is important to understand that the rector, vestry, or bishop may choose to accept or to modify your recommendation.

The PDC Orientation Packet will give you exact instructions on each stage of the PDC process. As you review the packet, go through the process, and get to know the Aspirant, we encourage you to consider the areas listed below. Remember that the discernment process is also one of personal growth. Each nominee does not have to have mastered all of the following categories by the time of the PDC; however, they remain important considerations as you help the nominee discern his/her call.

## **What are we seeking to discern in an Aspirant for Holy Orders?**

To begin with the obvious, successful Aspirants are healthy, sane individuals. They will be emotionally intelligent, reasonably bright, able to connect meaningfully with others, possess sound character, and exhibit an appropriate confidence and leadership potential. The deeper work of discernment will look for a familiarity with Holy Scripture, a steadfast belief in the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith (Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, bodily resurrection, etc.), and a commitment to our doctrinal inheritance as expressed in *the Book of Common Prayer*; it will look for evidence of a life of prayer (both corporate and individual), a servant's heart, a love of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, and an unusually strong affinity for the sacraments and the altar. The Aspirant need not be perfectly formed or knowledgeable at this point; but the right commitments, character, and talents must be

present from the very beginning. Your role is to discern whether or not these are in place, and whether or not the Aspirant is likely to grow into a vocation as an ordained minister in Christ's Church.

## Spiritual Life

This is obviously an essential area of consideration throughout the discernment process. While it is our hope that all Aspirants will experience growth in their spiritual life during that time, if they have not already grown to a certain level of spiritual maturity, then he/she will not be ready to enter the process. It may be an indication that he/she is not called to ordained ministry, or it may indicate that the Aspirant needs more time for growth before he/she is ready to pursue that call.

- Can the Aspirant clearly articulate his/her personal commitment to Christ?
- Can the nominee clearly articulate a sense of call to leadership in ministry?
- Is the Aspirant able to explain the Gospel clearly?
- How is the Aspirant living out his/her faith in daily life?
- Does the Aspirant regularly spend time in God's Word?
- Is the Aspirant financially generous to God and the Church?
- What are areas of spiritual struggle for the Aspirant?
- How has the Aspirant handled personal crises of faith in the past?
- Would you feel comfortable seeking the Aspirant's advice on spiritual matters?

## Character

Integrity is essential in ordained ministry. The Bible is clear that anyone seeking to serve as a leader in the church must be "above reproach."

- Is the Aspirant a person of integrity?
- Would I trust the Aspirant to keep secrets (such as in confession)?
- Where do you see evidence of the Aspirant's character in his/her life?
- What areas in the Aspirant's character could use some growth?

## Leadership

Ordained ministry in any order is, by nature, a leadership role in the church. Good leadership skills are important for healthy, successful ministry. This includes interpersonal skills more broadly as well as abilities specific to leadership.

- How well does the Aspirant communicate?
- Do people feel comfortable with the Aspirant?
- Is the Aspirant compassionate?
- Has the nominee held any leadership positions? If so, how did he/she experience that? How did others experience his/her leadership?

## Physical and Emotional Health

Although not strictly a physical job, ordained ministry can be physically taxing. Similarly, ordained ministry is frequently emotionally taxing. An Aspirant in poor health - either physical or emotional - will have a much harder time coping with the demands of the process, let alone ministry.

- Does the nominee take care of his/her physical health?
- Are there physical health considerations that would be wise for the Aspirant to note?
- Would the Aspirant's physical health impede his/her ability to carry out the ministry to which he/she feels called?
- How does the Aspirant manage his/her emotional health?
- Does the Aspirant have a support system?
- If the Aspirant is married, is his/her spouse supportive of this call to ministry?
- How healthy are the relationships in the Aspirant's family?

## Education

The discernment processes for both the priesthood and the diaconate require extensive academic work. There are also academic requirements for eligibility for either order of ministry.

- Does the Aspirant have the ability to meet the academic and intellectual requirements of the level of education involved in the process?
- What is the highest degree of education the Aspirant has already achieved?
- Recognizing that the Aspirant has probably not had extensive theological training yet, does he/she have the ability to teach others? For example, can the Aspirant clearly explain things in an audience-oriented way?

## Finances

Especially if the nominee is in the priesthood track, he/she is likely to be in a financial decision-making position in a church someday. It is important that he/she is able to manage money responsibly.

- What is the state of the Aspirant's personal finances?
- How much debt does the Aspirant carry? And what kind?
- Has the nominee ever been in a position of financial responsibility aside from his/her own finances before? If so, how did the Aspirant handle that responsibility? What feedback did the Aspirant receive?
- Does the Aspirant give generously to the Lord and to the Church or other charities?
- Would I trust the Aspirant to be involved in financial decision-making in this parish?

# Discernment Process Guide for COM Members

Your overall responsibilities as COM members are laid out in the Canons and Constitutions of The Episcopal Church and of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida. A full description of the duties of COM Members based on the Canons can be found in **Appendix E on page 49**. With regard to the discernment process in general, you are expected to:

- Actively solicit the names of people with Christian leadership qualities and potential from discernment communities.
- Assist those in the process of discerning to determine where they are called: ordained or lay ministry.
- Participate in the Conference on Ministry, usually held in August or September.
- Attend and participate in all COM meetings, unless excused by the bishop or in case of emergency.
- Participate in BACAM, usually held in February or March.

In your work with an Aspirant as his/her COM rep, you have some specific responsibilities:

- When an Aspirant is assigned to you, you will reach out to him/her to begin building a relationship.
- You will contact the Aspirant's rector to collaboratively build a PDC for the Aspirant and to schedule the first meeting of the PDC. For more information on the PDCs, see **Appendix C on page 29**:
- You will attend the first meeting of the Aspirant's PDC to provide orientation to the PDC members and answer any questions they may have.
- Throughout the discernment process, you will contact the Aspirant, by phone, in person, or email, at least once a month to provide emotional and spiritual support, keep updated on his/her progress and status, and serve in a mentoring role to him/her.
- At COM meetings you will offer any updates on your Aspirants as you are invited.
- You will attend the ordinations of the Aspirant if he/she is ordained within the diocese.

# Appendix A – Glossary of Terminology and Acronyms

**Applicant (Nominee)** - Aspirant who has submitted a nomination form and has begun the discernment process.

**Aspirant** - person who "aspires" to ordained ministry

**BACAM** - Bishop's Advisory Committee on Aspirants to Ministry

**Candidacy** - Period of continued formal academic formation and preparation for ordination including:

- In the diaconal track, supervised field education
- In the priest track, a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)
- In both tracks, the completion of canonically required training in anti-Racism, the canons of the Episcopal Church, child sexual abuse prevention and adult sexual misconduct prevention

**Candidate** - Candidate for Holy Orders

In order to be made a Candidate a Postulant:

- applies to the bishop for Candidacy
- receives a Letter of Support from the community of faith to the bishop
- receives a recommendation from the Commission on Ministry attesting to his/her continuing formation
- is interviewed by and receives a positive recommendation from the Standing Committee

**COM** - Commission on Ministry: A body of at least 20 members (lay members and clergy members) appointed by the bishop and confirmed by the Diocesan Convention in accordance with Diocesan Canon XII, who assist the Bishop in recruiting Aspirants to consider ordained ministry and help the Bishop, and the Aspirants discern their call.

**COM Rep** - Member of the Commission on Ministry appointed to walk alongside an Aspirant during the discernment process and to serve as a liaison between the Aspirant/Postulant/Candidate and the COM.

**Deacon Ordination Examination** - An examination diaconal students must successfully complete

**Diocesan Ordination Examinations** - An alternative to the General Ordination Exam (see below), which Candidates for the Priesthood must satisfactorily complete to show proficiency in the Holy Scriptures, Church History, Theology, Ethics and Moral Theology, Worship (liturgy and music), and the Practice of Ministry in Contemporary Society. This exam is an option for those not at an Episcopal seminary that offers the General Ordination Exam.

**Ember Letters** - Postulant/Candidate/Transitional Deacons' correspondence with the bishop four times a year on Ember Days (*Book of Common Prayer*, page 18)

**Field Work/Field Education** - An assignment to a congregation (or other ministry setting) other than the sponsoring congregation occurring in Year 3 of those ICS students working toward becoming deacons or for Aspirants to the priesthood as part of their seminary education.

**GOEs** (General Ordination Examinations) - A four-day Examination which Candidates for the Priesthood must satisfactorily complete to show proficiency in the Holy Scriptures, Church History, Theology, Ethics and Moral Theology, Worship (liturgy and music), and the Practice of Ministry in Contemporary Society. This exam is an option for seminarians attending an Episcopal seminary that offers the GOEs at the seminary. A seminarian at an Episcopal seminary may take the Diocesan Ordination Exam, if they prefer and with the Bishop's approval.

**ICS** - Institute for Christian Studies, the diocesan school for laypersons and deacons and continuing education for deacons and priests.

**Parish Internship Program** - A work/learning program within the discernment process designed to give the rector and discernment committee a chance to expose the Aspirant to various ministries within the life of the congregation.

**PDC** - Parish Discernment Committee

**Postulancy** - Period of exploration and discernment about the Postulant's call to ordained ministry and the beginning of formal education to prepare for ordination. The Postulant enters into correspondence with bishop via Ember Day Letters, which continues until ordination as a deacon or priest.

**Postulant** - Postulant for Holy Orders

In order to be made a Postulant, a nominee:

- Completes a Nomination/ Application Form for ordination
- Is received into the ordination process
- Attends a BACAM conference with his/her spouse
- Receives a positive recommendation from the PDC
- Receives a Letter of Support from the community of faith to the bishop
- Receives a positive recommendation from psychological and medical evaluations
- Is recommended to the bishop for admission as a Postulant by the Commission on Ministry

**School of Diaconal Training (SDT)** - A two-year course of study within ICS for newly ordained Deacons.

**Standing Committee** - The Standing Committee is a 7-member body elected by Diocesan Convention in accordance with Diocesan Canon IX to serve as a Council of Advice to the Bishop. In the discernment process, the Standing Committee must endorse a Postulant before they become a Candidate, and, at the end of the process, certifies that all Canonical requirements for ordination have been met, and that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral or spiritual grounds to ordination.

# Appendix B – Work/Learning Agreement

## Parish Internship Program

### **Guidelines for Supervisors and Nominees**

The purpose of the Parish Internship Program is to assist the nominee in identifying his/her gifts for ministry and to provide the PDC and vestry with significant insight into the leadership gifts that the nominee brings. The Work/Learning Agreement is a kind of contract between the nominee and the Supervisor (usually the rector or someone designated by him/her). It is also an excellent opportunity to build the collegial relationship between the nominee and the supervisor.

These guidelines are designed to provide a framework for supervisors (rector or his/her designee) and nominees participating in the Parish Internship Program. This 6-to-12-month program is an important and significant step in the Diocesan process especially for those seeking to be ordained. It is recognized that a nominee may not be able to do everything suggested in these guidelines in such a brief period of time, so choices need to be made, often based on areas that are relatively untested by the nominee. The internship should serve to broaden the nominee's experience in ministry and further test his/her calling.

## Work-Learning Agreement

### **For Aspirants to the Vocational Diaconate**

The primary focus of the work-learning agreement is to provide some tools for the rector, vestry, and possibly Parish Discernment Committee to do the work of discerning a call to the ordained diaconate. It is very important to keeping in mind Bishop Holcomb's focus on raising up effective leaders, Therefore, it is imperative at this juncture to be able to identify if there are any leadership qualities present.

This time offers visibility within the parish, if Aspirants are not already involved in the worship and outreach ministry, and it addresses these questions: Are they passionate about the marginalized in the world and how the Church might reach out to address these needs? Do they participate in the leadership of the parish at present? Do they exhibit a servant's heart? Are they involved in leading groups that require additional training and certification such as (like OSL, Walking the Mourner's Path, etc.)?

To discern their leadership qualities, Aspirants should each be challenged to start a ministry or enlarge an existing ministry. This could be in any area of ministry in the community. Encourage them to determine an area of need, such as backpack program within the local schools, Jobs Partnership, community garden etc. Invite them to explore creative ways to fund the outreach programs. Suggest that the Aspirant define how they would use this ministry to make Christ's love known in the world and further illuminate the cares of the world to the Church.

Consider the depiction of the Diaconate in the liturgy for the Ordination of a Deacon (BCP, 543):

*My brother, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.*

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them,

and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's

Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

After consideration the Aspirant shall summarize the new ministry or the expansion of an existing ministry in writing to include the following:

- **Vision:** A brief description of their vision for the ministry and how they see it impacting the spread of the Kingdom.
- **Organization/Administration:** What steps are necessary to put in place - possible timeline, resources needed, funding etc.?
- **Discerning gifts, empowering and equipping others:** Have them identify lay people in the congregation who could be invited to participate in the ministry, get them to grasp the vision, and empower them to help (and eventually lead) the ministry.
- **Communications:** How will they communicate to the congregation/community about the ministry when they are ready to start it?
- **Feedback:** An opportunity for parish leadership and for the rector to give feedback on how well the person fulfilled each of the above areas.

The rector could help with pointing them towards resources to help put the ministry in place - especially where any teaching is concerned so that the resources are in line with the theology of the rector.

Suggested Checklist (modify as needed)

- 1) Meet with rector to discern his/her view of the role of the deacon
- 2) Discuss with rector his/her sense of what is needed in the community and how the church might address these needs.
- 3) Meet with community leaders to help identify needs
- 4) Create a "business plan" to develop the ministry
- 5) Build a team to work with the Aspirant
- 6) Communicate the plan clearly to the rector and vestry
- 7) Lead small groups within the Church to raise awareness of needs in the world
- 8) Clearly articulate the liturgical symbolism of worldly ministry
- 9) Meet with rector on a regular basis to review progress

### **For Aspirants to the Priesthood**

The primary focus of the work-learning agreement is to provide some tools for the rector, vestry, and possibly Parish Discernment Committee to do the work of discerning a call to ordained ministry. It is very important to

keeping in mind Bishop Holcomb's focus on raising up effective leaders, Therefore, it is imperative at this juncture to be able to identify if there are any leadership qualities present.

This time offers visibility within the parish. If Aspirants are not already involved in the worship ministry, becoming a Lay Eucharistic Minister would be the first step. Can they read God's word with understanding as a lector - Perhaps even submitting in writing a brief one paragraph understanding of each of the Scriptures they have read? How quickly do they become familiar with what is going on liturgically? Do they grasp the flow? How much instruction do they need? How quietly and prayerfully do they enter into this ministry? And do they understand the focus of worship (God not us!)?

They should also be licensed as Lay Eucharistic Visitors and be put on the schedule to take the sacrament to any shut-ins or hospitalized parishioners. If the parish has an important ministry that requires training and certification (like Order of St. Luke, Stephen Ministry, Walking the Mourner's Path, etc.), they should be required to do that training and receive the certification.

For discernment on leadership qualities, Aspirants should each be challenged to start a ministry or enlarge an existing ministry. This could be in any area of parish life: pastoral (setting up a prayer group if there isn't one, organizing or training LEVs, setting up a prayer shawl ministry, etc.); outreach backpack program within the local schools, Jobs Partnership, community garden, identify the particular needs of the local community and see what the parish can do to speak to that need); evangelism/newcomers (is there a newcomer incorporation program, what are some on-ramp events that might bring people onto the campus that could be organized); stewardship (do they have any ideas for a fundraiser, or could they lead a stewardship campaign); Christian formation (challenge them to teach an adult Christian formation class on a topic they are interested in, lead a Bible study either for adults or youth, organize a Vacation Bible School or some other children's Christian formation activity).

Consider the depiction of the Priesthood in the liturgy for the Ordination of a Priest (BCP, 531):

*My brother*, the Church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the renewing of his world. Now you are called to work as pastor, priest, and teacher, together with your bishop and fellow presbyters, and to take your share in the councils of the Church.

As a priest, it will be your task to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you.

In all that you do, you are 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.

After consideration the Aspirant shall summarize the new ministry or the expansion of an existing ministry the

following in writing to include:

- **Vision:** A brief description of their vision for the ministry and how they see it impacting the spread of the Kingdom.
- **Organization/ Administration:** What steps are necessary to put it in place - possible timeline, etc.
- **Discerning gifts, empowering and equipping others:** Have them identify lay people in the congregation who could be invited to participate in the ministry, get them to grasp the vision, and then empower them to help (and eventually lead) the ministry.
- **Communications:** How will they communicate to the congregation/community about the ministry when they are ready to start it?
- **Feedback:** An opportunity for parish leadership and the rector to give feedback on how well the person fulfilled each of the above areas.

The rector could help with pointing them towards resources to help put the ministry in place - especially where any teaching is concerned so that the resources are in line with the theology of the rector.

Suggested Checklist (modify as needed)

- 1) Serve in weekly worship as scheduled
- 2) Lead Way of the Cross/ Stations of the Cross during Lent
- 3) Become familiar with work of the Altar Guild, especially the basic setup for Holy Communion
- 4) Become familiar with work of acolytes, esp. the role of server in Holy Communion
- 5) Observe a staff meeting and vestry meeting
- 6) Attend ordination services
- 7) Be trained and deployed as a lector
- 8) Be trained and deployed as a Lay Eucharistic Minister
- 9) Be trained and deployed as a Lay Eucharistic Visitor
- 10) Be trained and deployed as a Pastoral Visitor
- 11) Meet with rector on a regular basis to review progress

### **Training Tasks for Visibility in the Parish:**

#### **1) Worship**

This might include some or all of the following:

- a. Reading of all parts of the service allowed by canon on a reasonably regular basis (Possibly preparing and/or delivering a sermon at the direction of the rector)
- b. Assisting regularly with the administration of the chalice at Holy Communion
- c. Opportunity to assist at baptisms, weddings, burials, communion for the homebound
- d. Regular feedback by the supervisor (and lay group) on use of voice, mechanics of worship, poise and appearance of "up-front" leadership of worship
- e. Sharing by the supervisor with the nominee his/her own discipline of prayer/meditation
- f. Working with those responsible for selection of music for a service
- g. Having a priest instruct the student in ceremonial acts of liturgy

- h. Organization of Sunday bulletin and/or outline of worship services
- i. Participation on liturgy or worship planning committee
- j. Observing or participating in acolyte training sessions
- k. Instruction in mechanics of Altar Guild duties
- l. Leadership of prayer or study groups
- m. Creating PowerPoint or other presentation slides for liturgies projected on a screen

## 2) Christian Education

The supervisor should arrange for orientation and introduction to the total educational program of the parish. If there are parish programs or conferences which concentrate on the training of laity, the nominee should be given an opportunity to attend.

If the nominee has never taught children or youth, an opportunity should be provided to do so for an adequate period of time in order to get a feel for it. All nominees, regardless of past experience, should be given the opportunity to lead an adult class or group. This may be within a Sunday morning program, on a weekday night, etc. In addition to teaching or leading such an adult group, related experiences such as recruiting members for the group and dealing with pastoral concerns of individuals arising from the group are valuable learning experiences.

Nominees should avail themselves of the opportunity to investigate and become familiar with curriculum resources for church school, youth work and adult education.

## 3) Pastoral Care

- a. **Calling:** Introduce the nominee to pastoral calling, review priorities, timing of calls, etiquette and mechanical procedures. Take the nominee with you on a hospital, newcomer and shut-in call. Let the nominee experience calls on:

- New people Sick and shut-in
- Patriarchs and Matriarchs of the Church Bereaved (death, divorced)
- Recruiting (church school, Every Member Canvass) Crisis (death, conflict, tragedy)
- Place of business or business luncheon Celebration (birth, anniversary, promotion)

- b. **Counseling:** Introduce the nominee to the kinds of counseling which clergy do in the parish. Review with the nominee the community resources for pastoral care: professional agencies and persons, special groups (AA, etc.), legal assistance agencies, institutions for special care (clinics, etc.) and lay ministry assistance in the parish.

Insofar as the opportunities arise or can be arranged, allow the nominee to observe (with the permission of the counselee) a limited amount of pastoral counseling. Include the nominee in pre-baptism and pre-marital counseling sessions, if possible.

## 4) Parish Organization and Administration

The nominee should be given orientation in the routine matters of parish organization and administration.

Specifically, the nominee should understand the purpose and function of all major organizational groupings such as the Vestry, Episcopal Church Women, and task committees such as Every Member Canvass, Christian Education, Social Concerns and Worship. The following experiences would be helpful:

- a. Attend vestry meetings.
- b. Make some calls as a canvasser for Every Member Canvass.
- c. Work in the church office with the secretary.
- d. Attend some important meetings of committees, having been briefed on the purpose and context of the committee and the meeting.
- e. Attend Annual Parish Meeting, if held during the internship.
- f. Attend staff meetings when possible.

# Guidelines for Work/Learning Agreement between Supervisor and Nominee

The following guidelines are offered to assist supervisors and nominees in the formulation of a Work/Learning Agreement. The signed agreement should be submitted to the Diocesan Office (to the attention of COM Secretary) for the discernment file. **The agreement should be evaluated at the end of the Program by the supervisor and the nominee.** Work/Learning Agreements are essential in order to have a clear understanding of learning goals and a clear statement of duties to be performed. The value of this agreement cannot be overemphasized.

The total time spent each week in this program should be 10-15 hours. This includes travel and preparation time.

The essential components of a Work/Learning Agreement are:

## The Learning Agreement

Although the work done by the nominee for the parish is important and has its own validity, the heart of the Parish Internship Program is in the Learning Agreement. Nominees may go through many experiences, but unless adequate reflection under supervision is made on those experiences, much of the educational value of them is lost. In this view, both negative and positive experiences can be of equal learning value. A "training situation" exists where tasks are chosen in relation to a nominee's vocational objectives and where he/she is supervised by a competent ordained person and concerned lay persons to whom he/she can look for help in learning from his/her work experience.

The nominee should formulate learning goals or objectives with the assistance and consultation of the supervisor. A goal should be stated in a way so that it can be reviewed at the end of the Program to see if there is any measurable way of knowing whether or not the goal has been met.

Learning goals can be job related *i.e.*

- to learn to teach a sixth grade Sunday School class
- to learn to conduct an every-member canvass or other stewardship effort
- to learn to train laity to be youth group advisors

Or goals can be oriented toward personal growth *i.e.*

- to gain poise and confidence in leading public worship
- to continue to grow in listening to ideas of others without becoming defensive

Or goals may focus on the Aspirant's relationship with God and his Church *i.e.*

- to see a better understanding of God's presence through the healing ministry of the Church
- to understand the relationship between the concept of the "*laos* of God" and those people who seem to have only a passive interest in the Church

Once goals or objectives are determined, state them in measurable terms. For instance, even with something as ethereal as God's presence in healing, the Work/Learning Agreement can include such things as your participation

in the healing services, calling on parishioners who attended such services and/or participation in a group which concerns itself with healing. From these experiences, review with your supervisor and PDC your evaluation of what was going on with the healing ministry. Unless learning goals are set, it is difficult to evaluate anything beyond outward performance in the job.

### **The Work Agreement**

- a. **Sunday** - Three to three and one-half hours on Sunday is adequate, although many parish Sunday programs cover a longer period of time. The nominee should be exposed (on a regularly scheduled basis) to different services and programs on Sunday.
- b. **Weekday and Saturday Responsibilities** - This would include any work with groups or classes which meet regularly; monthly meetings of vestry, parish calling, counseling, social concerns, outreach and administrative duties. A variety of things can be done only if the supervisor and the nominee are willing to accept the principle that some assignments are short term and others, by nature, benefit from a longer period of continuous involvement by the nominee. As an example, teaching in a sixth-grade class for a period of two months may be sufficient, if at the end of that period other teachers customarily rotate out of the job. On the other hand, a nominee assigned to work with a parish task group which meets monthly to concern itself with the outreach of the church in the community, may best benefit by staying with such a planning group for six months.
- c. **Preparation Time** - Should be kept in reasonable relation to the work to be done and with regard to the nominee's other work and family responsibilities.
- d. **Staff Time** - Either in a staff meeting or on a one-to-one basis the nominee needs some time each week with the supervisor to discuss the details of "what's going on?"
- e. **Supervision** - A nominee should receive one hour of one-to-one supervision a week with the supervisor. On occasion additional time may be needed, but a disciplined use of a regular schedule makes for better supervision. A regular time and place is highly recommended. There should be a clear distinction between "Supervisory time" and "staff time" in the mind of the nominee and supervisor. For example: To review the weekly bulletin is not supervision.
- f. **PDC Committee Meetings** - As part of the work learning agreement the nominee is, of course, committed to meetings with the PDC as outlined in these guidelines.
- g. **Travel** - The nominee's participation in parish life should be so structured as to keep to a minimum the number of round trips necessary each week between home and the parish. Three round trips per week should be adequate.

**THIS PAGE IS BLANK ON PURPOSE**

**Diocese of Central Florida**  
Form for Work/Learning Agreement

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

**I. Learning Agreement**

Goals:

1.

2.

3.

**II. Work Agreement**

**Average Weekly Time**

Sunday

(outline duties and time)

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Other than Sunday Responsibilities

(outline specific duties & responsibilities)

(indicate when, i.e. "Monday afternoon")

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Preparation Time

(specify for what purpose)

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Staff time

(staff meeting or instruction time for the nominee)

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Supervision \_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

(indicate when, i.e. Sundays at 1:00 p.m.)

Lay Committee Meeting

(indicate when, i.e. 3rd Monday at 8:00 p.m.)

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Travel - to and from parish

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Parish Discernment Committee Meetings

\_\_\_\_\_ hours/week

Any specific agreements between Supervisor and the Nominee:

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The above agreement will be evaluated at the end of the program by the supervisor and the nominee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Supervisor is Responsible for seeing that a Copy of this Agreement is forwarded to the Diocesan Office (to the attention of the Diocesan Discernment Team) for the Commission on Ministry files.**

**(Note: If this Work/Learning Agreement totals more than 15 hours per week, it is too much).**

# Appendix C – PDC Orientation Packet

## ORIENTATION PACKET for Parish Discernment Committees in the Diocese of Central Florida

**THANK YOU for agreeing to serve on this Parish Discernment Committee (PDC). You and your fellow members play a vital role in helping the Church identify and develop the leaders we need to be healthy in the years to come.**

These are the steps you and the PDC will follow in this adventure.

### **Meeting #1 - In Attendance: COM Representative, Rector/Vicar, PDC, Aspirant (and Spouse)**

1. **Open with prayer by Rector.**
2. **Rector introduces COM Rep and PDC Chair.**
3. **Appointment of secretary** to keep notes on all PDC Meetings
4. **All briefly share who they are**, their history at the church, etc.
5. **COM Rep distributes copies of this ORIENTATION PACKET** to PDC members, Rector/Vicar, Aspirant, and spouse and walks the group through this document, hitting the highlights, to orient them to their task.

**This Process consists of at least six meetings over a period of several months.** The PDC may feel the need to meet more than six times, with or without the Aspirant. (In some instances, the bishop may allow a PDC to reduce the number of meetings.) Each committee will need to decide how many meetings are required. All tasks must, however, be completed in sufficient depth to allow:

- A. **The PDC to come to the point of being able to make a recommendation to the Rector and Vestry**
- B. **The Rector/Vicar and Vestry to be able to decide whether to endorse the Nominee for Postulancy to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry.**

### **PLEASE read this entire OUTLINE before the next meeting.**

**The role of the PDC:** the PDC should be comprised of 5 to 7 members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the Vestry of the congregation. It is the particular function of the PDC to help Nominees identify, discover, and explore the varieties of ministry in the Lord's service. Most of all, the PDC represents the parish family in helping individuals affirm their special gifts of ministry. It is not a support group *per se* but should attempt to create a caring and questioning environment in which a Nominee can risk testing his or her vocational aspirations. As the PDC facilitates exploration for the individual, it also carries the discernment process into the larger community.

**The PDC is asked to enter into a special relationship with the Nominee on behalf of the parish (and especially the Vestry) and the larger church. This requires a commitment of time, energy, sharing of themselves, as well as a commitment to ask difficult and challenging questions of one another.** In the course of their work they may enter spiritual depths in their life as a group and individually that will reward and challenge them.

You may be wondering: "What do I have to offer? Who am I to judge?" The simple truth is that we depend on every member's gifts and discernment. The basic qualifications are within each of us in our life experience and in the Christian commitment we offer. This task calls for a willingness to be open, honest, and candid in the context of a caring community, to both support and confront the Nominee.

While the principal purpose lies in helping the Nominee clarify a call, the process will result in a mutual journey for all involved.

The Nominee will ask himself/herself: "Is ordained or lay ministry the form my ministry should take?"

**The PDC and ultimately the Vestry and Rector/Vicar will ask:**

- A. **"Does this individual sufficiently understand the ministry of all baptized persons, and appreciate the opportunities for his or her lay ministry?"**
- B. **"Does ordained ministry seem to be the role to which God is calling them?"**
- C. **"Can we in good faith send this person to become an ordained leader of other congregations?"**
- D. **Can I see this person being MY deacon or priest?**

**Some Qualities to look for in Aspirants in the Discernment Process**

**Spirituality** - Does this person have:

- Clearly articulated personal relationship with and commitment to Christ
- Clearly articulated sense of call to leadership in ministry
- Rule of life that includes regular/daily practices of private study and prayer; regular interaction with clergy advisor or mentor; and financial generosity to God and the Church.
- Clearly articulated understanding of their own giftedness

**Ministry Experience** - Does this person have:

- History of being used by God to lead others to Christ? For example:
  - Teaching experience: taught Bible studies, Sunday School
  - Pastoral experience: visitation of sick, bereaved, lapsed
  - Administrative experience: Vestry, Stewardship
  - Program experience: youth ministry, Sunday School program development

**Education** - Does this person have:

- Associate's Degree (preferred, but not required for vocational diaconate)
- Bachelor's Degree (preferred, but not required for priesthood)

**Maturity** - Does this person have:

- Spiritual and emotional maturity
- Ability to relate well to people
- Ability to listen and is able to control their need to "have the last word"

# Confidentiality

In the Discernment Process, confidentiality is crucial because we are dealing with very sensitive issues in people's lives.

## **What should be kept confidential?**

- **all proceedings of the committee meetings**
- **personal spiritual journeys of the members**
- **individual evaluations**
- **vote tallies**

When asked by a member of the congregation, "How are things going with the PDC?" A member might respond: "We are enjoying getting to know one another and working together." If further questions ensue, this may be an appropriate response: "I appreciate your concern, but since our work is confidential, I prefer not to talk about it. I hope you understand."

*After the PDC Report has been filed with the Rector/Vicar, Bishop Holcomb, COM Rep, Diocesan Discernment team in the Diocesan Office, and Chair of Commission on Ministry, it would be wise to shred individual evaluation forms*

**Information about someone may be public or private.** For example: If a parishioner asks how many children the Nominee has, it is OK to say "Two." This is public knowledge. If a parishioner asks if the Nominee has ever suffered from depression, this is private knowledge. If there is any doubt whether an issue is in the private or public domain, then treat the information as confidential.

**Under no circumstances should a member of the committee take it upon himself or herself to discuss with the Nominee any problem or observation which has arisen during a meeting where the Nominee is not in attendance. Such observations are only shared with the Nominee within the committee meeting or by the convener if so directed by the committee as a whole.**

**If any pastoral or ethical concerns arise in the course of the PDC meetings, the Chair should inform the Rector/Vicar.**

The work by the PDC culminates in a final report arrived at by diligence in the discernment process and ardency in prayer. Members have a sustained and intimate contact with the Nominee and develop a personal bond with him/her. Openness, candor and support are encouraged, but it is also important to balance these qualities with objectivity. It is difficult to say "no" to ordination and "yes" to lay ministry because this sounds to a Nominee like a rejection of his or her perceived gifts. If the Nominee is redirected, the PDC affirms the Nominee's other ministries, and its members deal with their feelings about the outcome. It is important to understand that the Rector/Vicar, Vestry or Bishop may choose to accept or to modify the recommendation of the PDC.

**NOTE: The Parish Discernment Committee RECOMMENDS - the Rector/Vicar, Vestry and Diocese ultimately have the canonical responsibility to DECIDE on behalf of the church whether to affirm the call of the Aspirant or not.**

## General Suggestions for all meetings:

*It is important to **open and close your meetings with prayer**, always mindful that this is a spiritual quest. You may wish to consider the Prayer Book as a primary resource especially pages 814-841 as well as various scriptures including I Corinthians 12:1-ff, Ephesians 4:7,11- 16; Romans 12:1-8; Acts 4:13.*

*Throughout this process evaluations are most helpful, and we suggest that you use some method of evaluation at the end of each meeting. A simple method is to use newsprint or some other tool and gather information about what was good and what was not so good, or what helped and what hindered.*

*Although the recorder will gather responses to the questions explored during PDC meetings **each member of the PDC will be asked to evaluate not only the Nominee, but also the work of the PDC itself.** (For example: "How are we doing as a discernment committee?") **Each member might wish to keep personal confidential notes for future reference.***

Build a climate that encourages risk taking, trust, vulnerability, sharing, caring and discourages judgment, competition, and advice. Discuss the issue of confidentiality at the first meeting.

All tasks must, however, be completed in sufficient depth to allow:

- **The PDC to come to the point of being able to make a recommendation to the Rector and Vestry**
- **The Rector/Vicar and Vestry to be able to decide whether to endorse the Nominee for Postulancy to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry.**

## **PLEASE read this entire document before the next meeting.**

6. **The COM Rep reads pp. 543 & 544 (examination of deacons) or 531 & 532 (examination of priests) in the Book of Common Prayer and discusses what is involved in the ministry of a deacon or priest.**
7. **Time for questions**
8. **An agreeable meeting place and meeting agenda is set up.** Weekly meetings are the norm and faithful attendance is essential. Please allow about 2 hours per meeting.
9. **Members of the PDC and the Aspirant's spouse are asked to prepare a brief summary of his/her own faith story for sharing at the next meeting, and the Aspirant's spouse is asked to include in his/her story:**
  - a. How do you feel about the possibility of being a clergy spouse?
  - b. How do you see yourself involved in your spouse's ministry?
  - c. And what do you see as your spouse's gifts?

10. **The Aspirant is given the following assignment for homework:**

Prepare a comprehensive "spiritual resume" which should include: his/her family background, church background, education, job experience, significant (high and low) spiritual experiences, how he/she sees her call to ministry, his/her intended plan for service in his/her church now and after ordination if it occurs, identification of his/her gifts as he/she sees them, and his/her expectations for the future (ICS, seminary, whatever), and information about any relevant medical or psychological issues. **The Aspirant is instructed to bring this spiritual resume to the next meeting along with copies for every PDC member.**

11. **COM Rep, PDC members, and Aspirant share phone numbers and email addresses**

12. **Conclude with prayer, after which the Aspirant is excused from the meeting.** The PDC may wish to meet briefly after the Aspirant leaves to discuss any concerns, insights, etc. **This brief meeting would not normally include the COM Rep.**

13. **HOMEWORK TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT MEETING:**

- a. Please read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest this entire document.
- b. **PDC MEMBERS AND ASPIRANT'S SPOUSE:** Prepare a brief summary of your faith story to share aloud at the next meeting, with the spouse sharing answers to the 3 additional questions above.
- c. **ASPIRANT:** Prepare a comprehensive "spiritual resume" which includes: your family background, church background, education, job experience, significant (high and low) spiritual experiences, how you see your call to ministry, your intended plan for service in your church now and after ordination if it occurs, identification of your gifts as you see them, and your expectations for the future (ICS, seminary, whatever), and information about any relevant medical or psychological issues. At the end, as a separate paragraph, please write a 1 or 2 sentence summary of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. **Please bring this spiritual resume to the next meeting with enough copies to give one to each PDC member.**

## Meeting #2 - In Attendance: PDC, Aspirant (and Spouse)

1. Begin with prayer
2. Everyone shares their prepared faith stories, including the Aspirant summarizing his/her spiritual resume assigned in Session #1, and the spouse sharing the answers to their 3 additional questions.
3. Aspirant is asked to briefly summarize how he/she understands the gospel message; if time permits and the committee is so inclined, the Aspirant may be asked to demonstrate how he/she might share this message with some or all of the following people:
  - a. a child under 10
  - b. an elderly person near death
  - c. a teenager
  - d. a person of another faith tradition
4. The Aspirant distributes his/her prepared spiritual resume as assigned in Meeting #1. PDC members are asked by PDC leader to read Aspirant's spiritual resume carefully in preparation for the next meeting and note any questions which arise.
5. Discuss with the Aspirant and spouse their understanding and practice of stewardship as it relates to time, money and talent. Ask about their current debt load, and, if they have significant debt, how they intend to pay it off.
6. Invite Aspirant and spouse to share their marital history and current family issues.
7. Remind the Spouse he/she doesn't need to attend the next Meeting.
8. Close with prayer. The Aspirant and spouse are excused from the meeting. The PDC may wish to meet briefly after the Aspirant leaves to discuss any concerns, insights, etc. Some questions to consider:
  - a. Did the Aspirant talk about himself primarily, or about ways to serve others? Does he/she express a desire for personal fulfillment, or for the health and well-being of the Body of Christ? These two foci probably should not stand alone... if so, something could be amiss. Rather, they should inform and invigorate one another.
  - b. Is there any mention of a desire to be obedient to our Lord, or does the vocation seem more self-generated, i.e., a 'logical step' or a 'good idea'?
  - c. In what ways does the Aspirant currently serve their parish? Do these ministries seem well-suited and satisfying? (If the Aspirant isn't currently engaged in at least a volunteer ministry, take note!)

## Meeting #3 - In Attendance: PDC and Aspirant

1. Begin with prayer.
2. Discussion of the Aspirant's spiritual resume  
*Suggested questions for discussion:*
  - a. What does the Aspirant see as his/her gifts? How do you view and use the Bible?
  - b. Do you have a rule of life for your spiritual growth?
  - c. Discuss any issues of concern or need for clarification arising from the Aspirant's spiritual resume.
3. The PDC should review with the Aspirant the Work Learning Agreement
  - a. What is going well?
  - b. What is especially challenging?
  - c. What questions arise from these ministry experiences?
  - d. Are there areas of ministry that have not been explored and how can this be facilitated?
  - e. What has been your ministry experience outside the walls of the church?
  - f. What have you learned about leadership from your work in the congregation and beyond?
4. Remind Aspirant not to attend Meeting 4.
5. Close with Prayer. The Aspirant is excused from the meeting.
6. The PDC may wish to meet briefly after the Aspirant leaves to discuss any concerns, insights, etc. Some questions to consider:
  - a. Does the Aspirant talk about his/her sense of vocation in terms of Word and Sacrament?
  - b. Does she/he look forward to all the aspects of priestly work, such as preaching, teaching, liturgy, pastoral care, and parish leadership?
  - c. Are there any areas of ministry for which he seems to be especially reluctant? It is important to note his/her disposition to the altar and pulpit.
  - d. Does the Aspirant demonstrate an awareness and sensitivity to those not yet in the family of God or who have "dechurched?" And does he/she seem interested in loving and serving them?

## Meeting #4 - In Attendance: PDC members only

1. Open with prayer
2. At this meeting, the PDC should take all the time it needs to assess and evaluate the Aspirant based on his/her spiritual resume and their previous meetings. Review any of the significant insights or concerns that might have emerged. If there are lingering questions which the PDC feels must be answered, be sure to ask them at the next meeting with the Aspirant.
  - a. Have we been able to adequately observe the Aspirant in ministry?
  - b. Have we been able to reflect with the Aspirant about their ministry enough to be satisfied with their leadership and servant qualities?

If the answers to either of these questions is "No," what would we need to do to expand our experience of the Aspirant? (More meetings, more opportunities to observe them doing ministry, etc.)

- c. What can we affirm about their ministry in the parish and beyond?
- d. What concerns are we left with about their fitness for ordained ministry?
- e. Does the Aspirant demonstrate a servant's heart?
- f. Does the Aspirant demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5:22-23 (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control)?
- g. Does the Aspirant demonstrate a track record of leadership skills?
- h. Are there subjects the Aspirant seems to want to avoid?
- i. Did the Aspirant become overwrought over anything? What and why?
- j. Would the Aspirant be a good pastor?
- k. Is the Aspirant touchy or defensive?
- l. Does the Aspirant have any traits which would make him/her an unsuitable ordained representative of the Episcopal Church?
- m. Is there anything of a spiritual nature that might cause you to doubt or affirm his/her suitability for ordination?
- n. Do you discern any ulterior motive (financial issues, self-importance, pride, political agenda, etc.) that the Aspirant might have for wanting ordination that he/she has not shared?

3. Chair distributes **Parish Discernment Committee Member's Individual Evaluation** forms (see pages 36 & 37) for the PDC members to look over in preparation for filling out those forms for next week's meeting with the Aspirant. Members discuss anything about the forms that they do not understand. They should be reminded that it is the PDC's job to offer an opinion as to whether the Aspirant should continue in the process of ordination to the priesthood or diaconate or continue serving the church as a lay minister.

**Note:** The PDC may make a recommendation which has qualifications, *such as:* "recommend the Aspirant continue with the ordination process as long as he/she prepares a plan for paying off his/her extensive student loans," **or** "recommend the Aspirant continue with the ordination process only if his/her spouse gets on board with it " **or** "recommend the Aspirant continue with the ordination process only if he/she gets more involved in this church," etc. **OR** "The PDC does not recommend the Aspirant continue with the ordination process because: he/she does not in our opinion have the depth of spiritual commitment or the theological understanding ... or the clear sense of divine call ... necessary in someone seeking ordination."

4. Remind everyone that the next meeting is very important. It involves meeting with the Aspirant for the last time before the final recommendation is made.
5. Close with Prayer.

## Meeting #5 - In Attendance: PDC and Aspirant

1. This meeting offers a time for careful reflections, sharing PDC members' positive observations as well as concerns with the Aspirant and giving the Aspirant an opportunity to consider and respond to them.
2. When the Chair believes that all issues have been adequately discussed or time is critical, he/she will pray and dismiss the Aspirant from the meeting.
3. PDC members will discuss anything further that they feel must be discussed among themselves, and then they will each fill out an **Individual Evaluation** (page 36 & 37) and hand it in to the Chair who will prepare a statement of recommendation based upon the forms received from PDC members.
4. When the Chair has prepared a draft **Report of the Parish Discernment Committee** (page 38), a copy of it will be sent by email to each PDC member for a "yes" or "no" vote, with opportunity to make changes if necessary. This should be returned to the Chair within 24 hours of receiving it.
5. The Chair will put together a final recommendation report and send each PDC member a copy and make a copy to be given to the Aspirant at the final meeting. Each member is asked to bring his/her copy of the final recommendation report to the final meeting.
6. The Chair is encouraged to complete the final recommendation report quickly, mindful that the Aspirant is likely to be anxious about this particular part of the process.
7. Close with Prayer

## Meeting #6 - In Attendance: PDC members and Aspirant

1. Open with Prayer
2. The PDC will share its final recommendation with the Aspirant. If the Chair wishes to include a brief explanation of it, he/she may do so. If there are concerns on the part of the Aspirant these should be taken to heart, though this is not necessarily a time to reconsider the recommendation.
3. The Aspirant is to be encouraged to continue in his/her current ministry, whether or not he/she has received the recommendation hoped for.
4. Close with Prayer
5. The Chair will send copies of the PDC recommendation to the Rector, Bishop Holcomb, the COM Rep, COM Secretary at the Diocesan Office, and the Chair of the COM.

# Confidential

## Parish Discernment Committee Member's Individual Evaluation

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you known this Nominee and in what contexts have you known the nominee?

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It is a high calling to serve God and the church in any intentional ministry, either as a Lay Person or in Holy Orders. The Nominee, Vestry and Diocese share in discerning this Call. The following information, giving your thoughts and impressions, will assist in this process. Please answer prayerfully and to the best of your knowledge. Circle your answer. 1 = poor, 3 = adequate, 5 = superior.

- Can he/she be described as a person "with evident gifts and fitness for ordination" ? 1 2 3 4 5
- Does this person exhibit demonstrated skills as a leader? 1 2 3 4 5
- Does this person exhibit emotional maturity? 1 2 3 4 5
- Does this person have a stable family life? 1 2 3 4 5
- Does this person have stable relationships? 1 2 3 4 5
- Does this person have a stable employment history? 1 2 3 4 5
- Does this person have a regular and mature prayer and worship life? 1 2 3 4 5
  
- What experience does this person have in lay ministry and service within the church **and** outside the church?

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- After hearing this person share his/her spiritual journey and desire for a more intentional ministry, briefly state your understanding of this person's spiritual journey and desire.

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- Would you want this person to serve and represent you, your parish and the Episcopal Church as an ordained leader?                      Yes                      No

What do you consider to be three positive and three negative character traits of this person?

Positive: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can you, in good conscience, support this person in his or her journey toward ordination??

Yes

No

Please explain the reasons for your response above:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Report of the Parish Discernment Committee

**Re:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Nominee's Name)

**To:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parish Name and Location)

The Parish Discernment Committee recommends as follows:

- Recommend for Lay Ministry** (please add specific recommendations if possible)
- Recommend continuing exploration toward the Vocational Diaconate**
- Recommend continuing exploration toward the Priesthood**
- Recommend Other Alternatives at this time** (*please be specific*)

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Please attach a narrative explaining your recommendation using these questions as guidelines (including additional information/impressions as deemed appropriate)

1. What is the Nominee's understanding of the Christian ministry?
2. Describe the current ministries of this person.
3. In what ways do you see/experience the Nominee growing in his/her Christian faith?
4. What further growth is needed, and does this Nominee have the capacity for that growth?
5. Describe this person's emotional health.
6. Describe this person's leadership skills.
7. In what ways does this person envision his/her diaconate/priesthood?

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair of the Parish Discernment Committee*

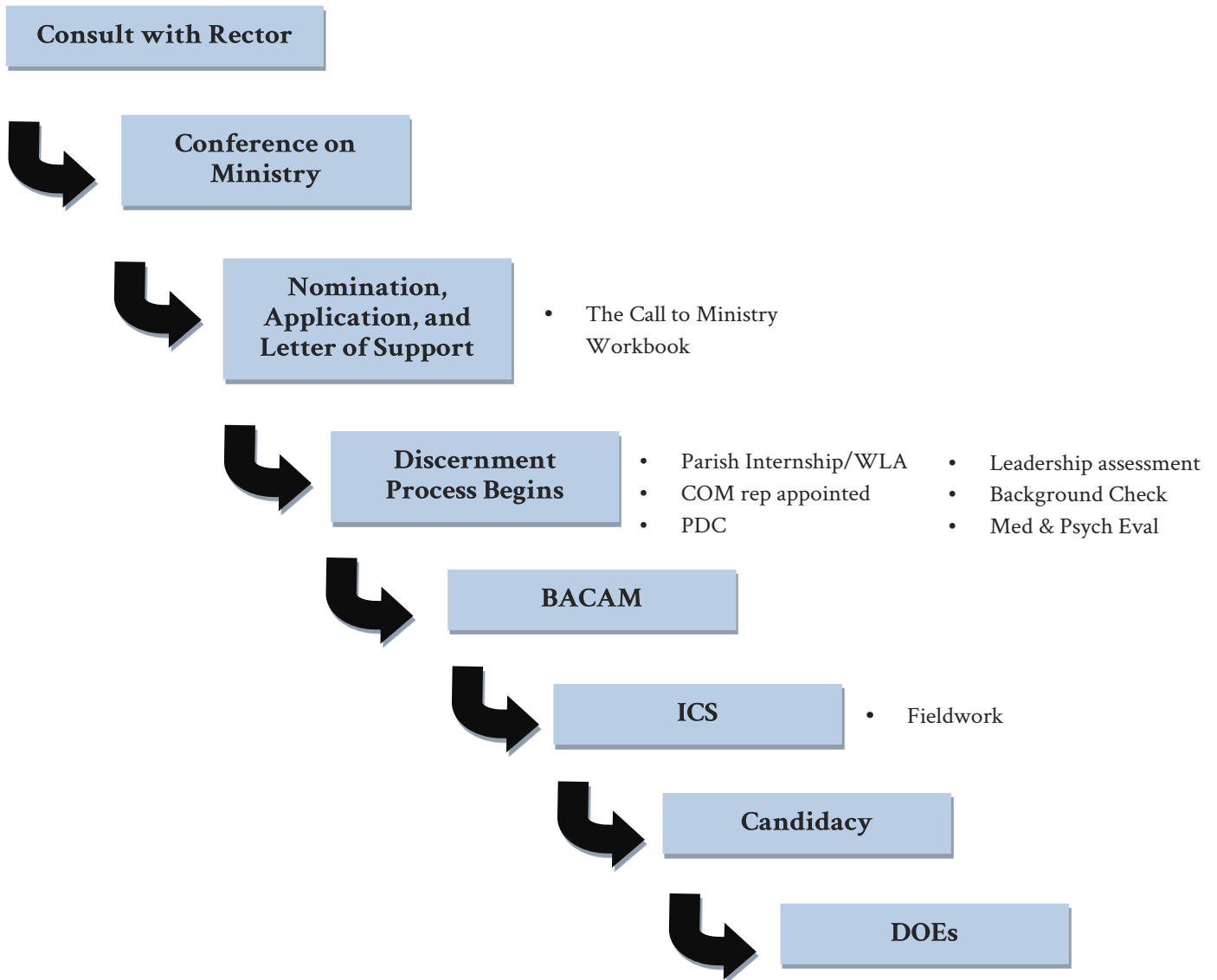
Number of Concurrences \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Dissents \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Abstentions \_\_\_\_\_  
(If possible please attach comments explaining dissents or abstentions)

*Please send copies of this Report to: Rector/Vicar, Bishop Holcomb, COM Rep, Diocesan Discernment Team at Diocesan Office, and Chair of Commission on Ministry.*

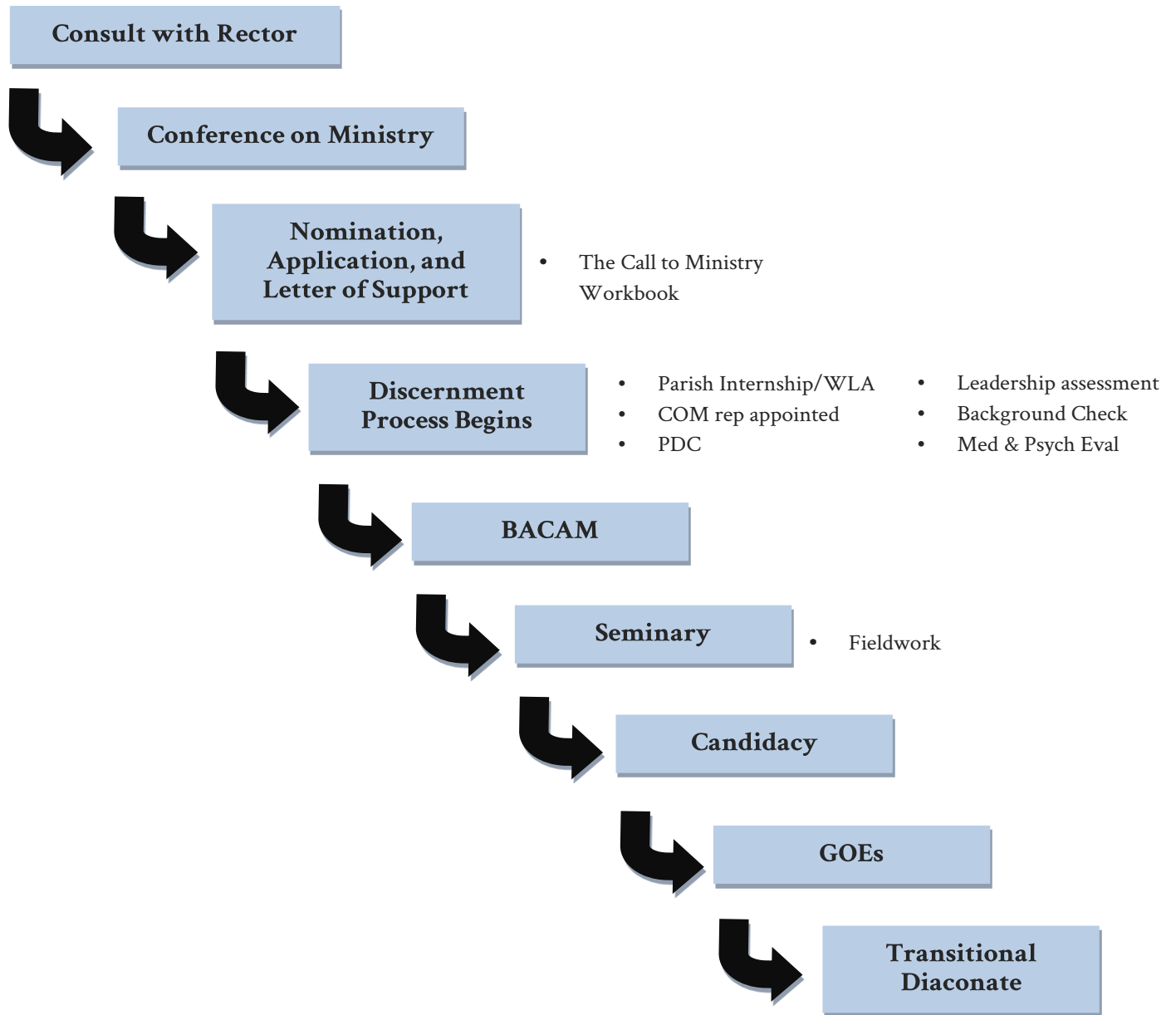
# Appendix D – Flow Charts and Checklists

This appendix contains flow charts and checklists for the standard process of discernment for both the priesthood and the diaconate. They do not necessarily reflect the process for aspirants who have been previously ordained in other traditions, or other less common situations.

## Diaconate Flow Chart



# Priesthood Flow Chart





**CANDIDACY**

- 13. \_\_\_ Application for admission as a Candidate for Ordination to the Diaconate (III.6.4.a)
- 14. \_\_\_ Letter of Support from the Congregation or community of faith (III.6.4.a.2)
- 15. \_\_\_ Recommendation from COM as to continuing formation of Postulant (III.6.4.b)
- 16. \_\_\_ Interview by and approval of Standing Committee (III.6.4.b)
- 17. \_\_\_ Admission as a Candidate (Letter from the Bishop) Date\_\_\_\_\_
- 18. \_\_\_ Letter communicating Admission as a Candidate sent to:
  - \_\_\_ Postulant
  - \_\_\_ Rector
  - \_\_\_ COM Chair
  - \_\_\_ COM Rep
  - \_\_\_ Standing Committee
  - \_\_\_ Dean of ICS
- 19. \_\_\_ Ember Day letters sent by email to the Bishop (III.6.5.h.)

**PREPARATION FOR ORDINATION**

[Steps # 21, 22, 23, 24 may be completed out of sequence and at any time before Ordination]

- 20. \_\_\_ Enrollment in ICS
- 21. \_\_\_ Supervised Field Education (III.6.5.b)
- 22. \_\_\_ Safe Church Safe Community Training (III.6.5.g.1,2) Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. \_\_\_ Training in the Canons, especially Title IV (III.6.5.g.3) Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. \_\_\_ Dismantling Racism Training (III.6.5.g.4) Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

**ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE**

- 25. \_\_\_ At least 18 months since acceptance of Nomination (Step #3 above) (III.6.6.a.1)
- 26. \_\_\_ At least 24 years of age (III.6.6.a.2)
- 27. \_\_\_ Application for Ordination by the Candidate (III.6.6.b.1)
- 28. \_\_\_ Letter of Support from the Congregation or community of faith (III.6.6.b.2)
- 29. \_\_\_ Proof of admission as a Postulant Date\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ and as admission as a Candidate (III.6.6.b.3) Date\_\_\_\_\_
- 30. \_\_\_ Certificate of Completion from ICS (III.6.5.f)
- 31. \_\_\_ Certificate from COM recommending ordination (III.6.6.b.5)
- 32. \_\_\_ Certification by the Standing Committee to the Bishop (III.6.6.c)
- 33. \_\_\_ Declaration (Article VIII) and Ordination as Deacon (III.6.6.d) Date\_\_\_\_\_

# Priesthood Checklist

## SELECTION

1.  Attend Conference on Ministry Year: \_\_\_\_\_
2.  COM Rep/Consultant appointed by COM Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## NOMINATION

3.  Nomination by congregation or other community of faith (III.8.2.a)
  - Evidence of Baptism (III.8.2.b.3)
  - Evidence of Confirmation (III.8.2.b.3)
  - Confirmed adult communicant in good standing (III.8.2)
  - Letter of Support from the Congregation or community of faith (III.8.2.a)
  - Letter of Support from Rector/Priest-in-Charge
  - Review of Academic Credentials (III.8.2.b.6)
  - Degrees Earned/Year \_\_\_\_\_
  - Acceptance of nomination (III.8.2.b) Date \_\_\_\_\_
4.  Discernment Process (III.8.1)
  - Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) appointed and trained
  - Parish Internship – Work/Learning Agreement
  - PDC recommendation to Rector/Vestry (copy to Bishop)

## POSTULANCY

5.  Attend BACAM Conference (III.8.3.a.2 & III.8.3.b) Year \_\_\_\_\_
6.  Financial Consultation (III.8.3.a.3)
7.  Send evaluation forms to nominee
  - Authorization and Release
  - Behavior Screening Questionnaire
  - Report from psychological testing
  - Report from psychiatrist
  - Medical Evaluation
8.  Background check of aspirant (III.8.5.k.1)
9.  Medical/Psychological evaluations (III.8.5.k.2)
  - Dates: Med \_\_\_\_\_ Psych \_\_\_\_\_
10.  Letter of Support from Rector/Vestry for Admission as a Postulant (III.8.3.a.1)
11.  Admission as a Postulant (Letter from the Bishop) Date \_\_\_\_\_
12.  Letter communicating Admission as a Postulant sent to:
  - Aspirant
  - Rector
  - COM Chair
  - COM Rep
  - Standing Committee
  - Seminary Dean
13.  Ember Day letters sent by email to the Bishop (III.8.3.e.)

## CANDIDACY

14. \_\_\_ Application for admission as a Candidate for Ordination to the Priesthood (III.8.4.a)
15. \_\_\_ Letter of Support from the Congregation or community of faith (III.8.4.a.2)
16. \_\_\_ COM recommendation (III.8.4.b)
17. \_\_\_ Interview by and approval of Standing Committee (III.8.4.b)
18. \_\_\_ Admission as a Candidate Date\_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_ Letter communicating Admission as a Candidate sent to:
  - \_\_\_ Postulant
  - \_\_\_ Rector
  - \_\_\_ COM Chair
  - \_\_\_ COM Rep
  - \_\_\_ Standing Committee
  - \_\_\_ Seminary Dean
20. \_\_\_ Ember Day letters sent by email to the Bishop (III.8.5.i.)

## PREPARATION FOR ORDINATION

[Steps # 21, 22, 23, 24 may be completed out of sequence and at any time before Ordination]

21. \_\_\_ Enrollment in seminary or other course of study (III.8.4)
22. \_\_\_ Safe Church Safe Community Training (III.8.5.h.1.2) Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_
23. \_\_\_ Training in the Canons, especially Title IV (III.8.5.h.3) Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_
24. \_\_\_ Dismantling Racism Training (III.8.5.h.4) Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_
25. \_\_\_ Seminary (or formation program) reports (III.8.5.j)
  - \_\_\_ Year 1
  - \_\_\_ Year 2
  - \_\_\_ Year 3
  - \_\_\_ Year 4 (if applicable)
26. \_\_\_ Ordination Exam (III.15.2-4) Submitted

## ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

27. \_\_\_ At least 24 years of age (III.8.6.b)
28. \_\_\_ At least 12 months since acceptance of Nomination (Step #3 above), (III.8.7.a.1)
29. \_\_\_ Application for Ordination as a Deacon (III.8.6.c.1)
30. \_\_\_ Letter of Support from the Congregation or community of faith (III.8.6.c.2)
31. \_\_\_ Proof of admission as a Postulant Date\_\_\_\_\_
- and as admission as a Candidate (III.8.6.c.3) Date\_\_\_\_\_
32. \_\_\_ Certificate from seminary or program of formation (III.8.6.c.4)
33. \_\_\_ Certificate from COM recommending ordination as a Deacon (III.8.6.c.5)
34. \_\_\_ Certification by the Standing Committee to the Bishop (III.8.6.d)
35. \_\_\_ Declaration (Article VIII) and Ordination as Deacon (III.8.6.a) Date\_\_\_\_\_

## ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

36. \_\_\_ At least 6 months since ordination as a Deacon (III.8.7.a.1)
37. \_\_\_ Remediation of Ordination Exam (if necessary) regarding proficiency in 6 Canonical areas (III.8.5.g.1-6)
38. \_\_\_ No more than 36 months since Background Check (III.8.7.a.3) Date\_\_\_\_\_ Medical Exam Date\_\_\_\_\_ and Psych Exam Date\_\_\_\_\_
39. \_\_\_ Application requesting ordination as a Priest (III.8.7.b.1)
40. \_\_\_ Letter of Support from the Deacon's Congregation or community of faith (III.8.7.b.2)
41. \_\_\_ Proof of admission as a Postulant (Date)\_\_\_\_\_, as a Candidate (Date)\_\_\_\_\_ and Ordination as a Deacon (Date)\_\_\_\_\_ (III.8.7.b.3)
42. \_\_\_ Certificate from Seminary or program of education showing deacon's scholastic record in the 6 canonical areas and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the deacon's other qualifications for ordination, together with a recommendation regarding Ordination to the Priesthood. (III.8.7.b.4)
43. \_\_\_ Certificate from COM recommending ordination as a priest (III.8.7.b.5)
44. \_\_\_ Certification by the Standing Committee to the Bishop (III.8.7.c)
45. \_\_\_ Certification of parochial cure or opportunity to exercise ministry as a priest (III.8.7.e)
46. \_\_\_ Declaration (Article VIII) and Ordination as a Priest (III.8.7.d) Date\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix E – COM Member Responsibilities

## General The COM:

- "shall advise and assist the Bishop:
  - In the implementation of Title III of these Canons.
  - In the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons.
  - In the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness therefor." (III.2.2)
- Creates rules for its operation, subject to the bishop's approval and in accordance with the Canons of The Episcopal Church and the diocese. (III.2.3)
- Establishes committees to act on their behalf or report to the COM (III.2.4)
- Ensures that all COM members and members of COM committees receive continuing education and training for their work (III.2.5)
- Provides encouragement, training, and resources to congregations to assist them in the ongoing process of raising up leaders and discerning their call (III.3.1)
- Provides consultation to the bishop on the use of other groups (such as universities) as additional discernment communities (III.3.2)
- Actively solicits the names of people with Christian leadership qualities and potential from discernment communities (III.3.3)
- Assists those in the process to determine where they are called: ordained or lay ministry (III.3.4)
- Provides consultation to the bishop as he establishes guidelines for lay licensure (III.4.1.a)

## Diaconate The COM:

- Provides consultation to the bishop as he establishes the discernment process procedures for the ordination of deacons (III.6.1)
- Evaluates nominees for the diaconate and present their evaluation to the bishop (III.6.3.b)
- Provides a written statement "attesting to the continuing formation" of the Postulant before he or she can be admitted to Candidacy for ordination to the diaconate (III.6.4.b)
- Together with the bishop, shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to create a program of preparation for ordination, ensuring ongoing pastoral guidance for the duration of preparation (III.6.5.a)
- "During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination." (III.6.5.a.i)
- Provides the Standing Committee with a certificate giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the diaconate. (III.6.6.b.5)

- Provides consultation to the bishop on the assignment of newly ordained deacons to mentor deacons. (III.7.4.g)
- Together with the bishop, requires, provides for, and keep a record of deacons' continuing education (III.7.5)

## **Priesthood The COM:**

- Provides consultation to the bishop as he establishes the discernment process procedures for the ordination of priests (III.8.1)
- Evaluates nominees for the priesthood and present their evaluation to the bishop (III.8.3.b)
- Provides a written statement "attesting to the continuing formation" of the Postulant before he or she can be admitted to Candidacy for ordination to the priesthood (III.8.4.b)
- Together with the bishop, shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to create a program of preparation for ordination, ensuring ongoing pastoral guidance for the duration of preparation (III.8.5.a)
- If the Postulant/Candidate does not have a baccalaureate degree, the COM shall work with the bishop and the Postulant/Candidate to create a plan of additional study to prepare the Postulant/Candidate for theological education. (III.8.5.b) (Further guidelines on the preparation can be found in III.8.5)
- Together with the bishop, requests reports on the academic progress and personal qualifications of the Postulant/Candidate from the seminary at least once per year (III.8.5.j)
- Provides the Standing Committee with a certificate giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the transitional diaconate. (III.8.6.c.5)
- Provides the Standing Committee with "a statement from the Commission attesting to the successful completion of the program of formation designed during Postulancy under Canon III.8.5, and proficiency in the required areas of study, and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood." (III.8.7.b.5)
- Together with the bishop, requires, provides for, and keeps a record of priests' continuing education (III.9.1)
- Provides consultation to the bishop on the assignment of newly ordained priests to mentor priests. (III.9.2)

## **Reception or Ordination of Clergy from Other Traditions The COM:**

- Provides consultation to the bishop on the assignment of clergy persons to mentor priests prior to the clergy persons' reception or ordination (III.10.1.e)
- Provides consultation to the bishop on the assignment of newly received or ordained priests to mentor priests. (III.10.2.c, III.10.3.m, III.10.4.a.5)
- Examines applicants previously ordained in traditions in historic succession but not in full communion for proficiency in Church history, doctrine, liturgics, practical theology, and points of difference between their previous tradition and the Anglican tradition (III.10.3.c)
- Examines applicants from Churches not in historic succession and report to the bishop on: the diligence and reputation of the applicant in the previous Church, the causes for the applicant's desire to leave the previous Church and seek ordination in the Episcopal Church, and the applicant's previous education and theological training (III.10.4.a.2)
- Determines whether or not to recommend to the bishop and Standing Committee that the applicant be allowed to be ordained to the transitional diaconate earlier than 12 months after becoming a Candidate

(III.I0.4.a.3)

- Examines the applicant for proficiency in Church history, doctrine, liturgics, practical theology, and points of difference between their previous tradition and the Anglican tradition (III.10.4.a.3)