



Institute for Christian Studies
— EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA —

— Year One —

ICS Courses: Descriptions and Sequence

The following courses are offered in sequence for those discerning a call to the diaconate. For individuals pursuing Licensed Lay Ministry, courses will be assigned according to the specific license sought. A “TM” designation indicates that online coursework and a quiz must be completed prior to attending the corresponding in-person practicum. Upon successful completion of Year 1, students will receive a Foundations Certificate.

Prerequisites for Courses:

Attend Conference on Ministry in August (contact discernment@cfdiocese.org to register) or if not able to attend. Contact Archdeacon Julie Altenbach (jaltenbach@cfdiocese.org) or Archdeacon John Motis (jmotis@cfdiocese.org)
Tuition covers the cost of online courses, in-person courses, and Christian Education courses offered throughout the year.

Course Y1.1 - Orientation

This course supports individuals discerning a call to ordained diaconate or lay licensed ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida. It offers a thorough introduction to the theological, spiritual, and practical aspects of these vocations, including orientation on requirements and steps in the discernment process for effective ministry.

Course Y1.2 - Understanding the Call: Ministers and Their Roles in the Episcopal Church

This course explores the nature of vocation and discernment within the Episcopal tradition. Students will learn about the roles of lay people, bishops, priests, and deacons. Participants will investigate their call to ministry through engaging discussions, collaborative group activities, and reflective individual exercises.

Course Y1.3 - Biblical Foundations

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Bible Foundations, students will participate in a practicum designed to demonstrate their understanding of God's purpose and the unity of the Old and New Testaments. This practicum will provide hands-on experience, allowing students to apply their knowledge and showcase their ability to connect theological concepts across both testaments. Students will also learn how to apply these teachings in their personal lives and ministry, enhancing their practical and spiritual growth.

Course Y1.4 - Theological Foundations

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Theological Foundations, students will participate in a practicum designed to demonstrate their understanding of how theology flows from Scriptures and changes our hearts and lives. Students will learn how to analyze theological expressions, taking into account aspects of orthodoxy and being able to articulate this understanding.

Course Y1.5 - Old Testament Foundations

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Old Testament Foundations, students will participate in a practicum designed to demonstrate their understanding of the Pentateuch, their original audiences, and how we should respond to these teachings today. Students will learn how to apply the teaching of the Pentateuch to living a life of faith and how to help others do the same.



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Course Y1.6 - Evangelism and Sharing the Gospel

Students will examine the essential elements of presenting the Gospel, with particular attention to the roles of deacons and licensed lay ministers. They will discuss and practice sharing their own testimony as part of that presentation.

Course Y1.7 - Understanding the Liturgical Year, Book of Common Prayer, and Sacraments

This course introduces the central role of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) in shaping Episcopal worship, belief, and structure. Students will explore its historical development, theological foundations, and guidance on liturgy and sacraments, with attention to how the BCP informs the ministry of deacons and licensed lay ministers.

Course Y1.8 - New Testament Foundation

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on New Testament Foundations, students will participate in a practicum designed to demonstrate their understanding of the New Testament as foundational texts. By the end of this course, participants will not only gain a thorough understanding of the Gospels and Acts but also be inspired to actively participate in the growth and extension of God's kingdom, especially as it relates to ministry.

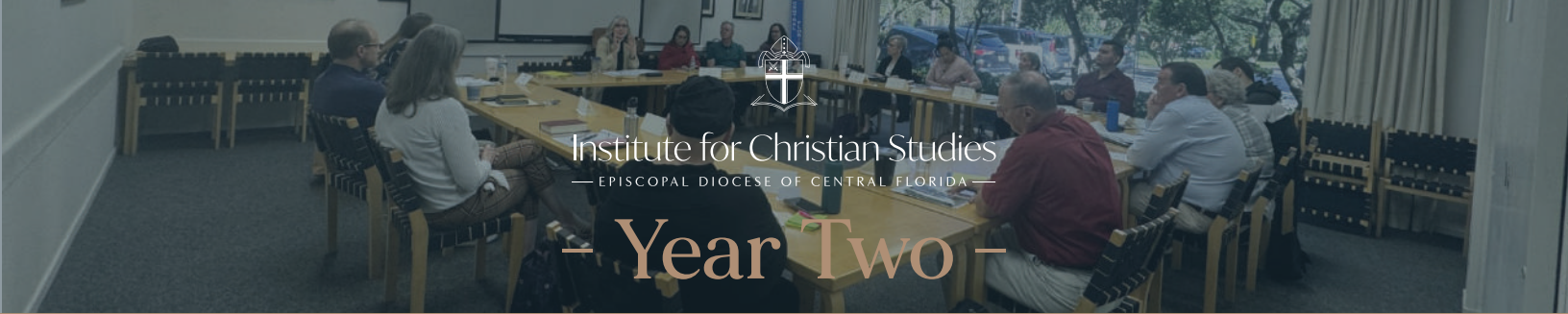
Courses Y1.9 and Y1.10 - Church History Part I and Part II

Students will understand the origins and organization of The Episcopal Church, and trace the history of the Church from Apostolic times to the present, including the Judaic roots of the church. Students will learn to describe the beliefs, worship, and structure of the Episcopal Church.

Courses Y1.11 - Homiletics

Students will learn to interpret Scripture within its context and prepare sermons that are both faithful to the text and relevant today. They will understand the distinction between a rector's and a deacon's sermons, develop a clear process for sermon preparation, practice effective delivery, and learn the ethical responsibilities of preaching.

- End of Year One -



— Year Two —

ICS Courses: Descriptions and Sequence

The following courses are offered in sequence for individuals discerning a call to the diaconate or pursuing licensed lay ministry. Students taking these courses will earn credits toward Biblical and Theological Studies Certificates.

Prerequisite for courses:

Successful completion of Year One classes
Tuition covers Thirdmill online courses, in-person courses,
and Christian Education courses offered throughout the year.

Course Y2.1 - Biblical Studies: Old Testament Narratives

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course, Old Testament Narratives, students will learn how to demonstrate an understanding of the instructional elements of the course, such as background, purpose, and content, and be able to apply these for future use as a deacon or lay minister in the church.

Course Y2.2 - Theological Studies: Doctrine of God

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course, Doctrine of God, students will participate in a practicum designed to demonstrate their understanding of what theologians call theology proper or the doctrine of God. Students will explore questions such as: Who is God? What are his attributes? What is his eternal plan? What are his works in history? They will also learn to analyze systematic theology.

Course Y2.3 - Articulating Your Call to the Diaconate, Licensed Lay Ministry and Understanding Spiritual Gifts for Ministry

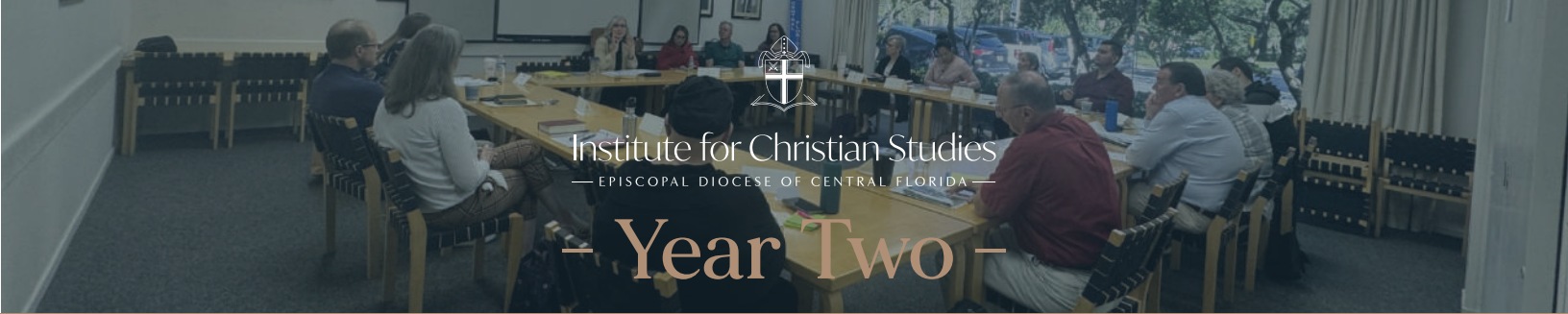
This course is designed to help participants articulate their call to ministry by identifying and utilizing their spiritual gifts. Through a combination of self-assessment, interactive workshops, and guided reflections, participants will gain a deeper understanding of their unique strengths and how they can be applied in various ministry contexts. This hands-on experience will empower individuals to confidently express their calling and develop a personalized plan for effective ministry.

Course Y2.4 - Biblical Studies: Old Testament Prophets

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Old Testament Prophets, students will build on that foundational knowledge and interpretive skills developed in the online course. The class will provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding, enhance their teaching abilities, and apply the teachings of the prophetic books of the Bible. The students will be given scenarios that require applying prophetic teachings to contemporary issues.

Course Y2.5 - Biblical Studies: New Testament

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on New Testament, students will participate in a practicum designed to provide a hands-on, immersive experience unpacking the content learned. The participants will engage in practical exercises and reflective activities to deepen their understanding and application of the teachings in the New Testament.



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- Year Two -

Course Y2.6 - Theological Studies: Christology

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Christology, students will participate in a practicum designed as an advanced follow-up. This course will offer hands-on experience that will help students deepen their theological understanding, enhance their ability to teach crucial doctrines, and apply biblical teachings. They will discuss and clarify their understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Course Y2.7 - Conflict Resolution and Healthy Boundaries

Participants will acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate conflicts and establish healthy boundaries in their ministry. This will enable them to manage conflicts gracefully and maintain healthy boundaries, ensuring effective and sustainable ministry leadership, all grounded in a thorough understanding of scriptural principles.

Course Y2.8 - Effective Bible Study Preparation and Leadership

Participants will develop skills and knowledge necessary to effectively prepare and lead a Bible study. The course will cover essential aspects of Bible study, leadership, including exegesis, lesson planning, group facilitation, and application of biblical principles. Participants will create an engaging and meaningful Bible study that fosters spiritual growth and community within their congregations. Participants will lead a Bible study before the beginning of their third year of classes at ICS.

Course Y2.9 - Biblical Studies: Pauline Studies

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Pauline studies, participants will engage in a practicum designed to provide a practical application of the knowledge gained from the course that focuses on the apostle Paul and his letters. Participants will deepen their knowledge and understanding of Paul's theology and teachings as they apply these insights to their future ministry.

Course Y2.10 - The Deacon and Lay Leader in Authorized Worship

This course introduces the Daily Offices of the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Occasional Services, exploring their history, theology, and role in the worship life of the Episcopal Church. Students will learn the structure and rubrics of these services, develop practical skills for planning and leading them, and consider how they may be adapted in various ministry contexts. Special attention will be given to the roles of deacons and licensed lay ministers in leading and supporting these services in collaboration with clergy and laity.

Year Two Externship:

The Externship will take place at a nonprofit or organization of the student's choosing. Students will volunteer and learn all aspects of the organization's operations, gaining insight as they begin to formulate their ministry in the world. The Externship will consist of at least 15 hours and a written reflection will be the first class of Year Three.

- End of Year Two -



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— Year Three —

ICS Courses: Descriptions and Sequence

The following courses are offered in sequence for individuals discerning a call to the diaconate or pursuing licensed lay ministry. Students taking these courses will complete the remaining credits required to earn the Biblical Certificate and the Theological Studies Certificate.

Prerequisite for courses:

Successful completion of Year One and Year Two Classes and Externship
Tuition covers Thirdmill online courses, in-person courses,
and Christian Education courses offered throughout the year.

Course Y3.1 – Theological Studies: Pneumatology

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Pneumatology, students will participate in a practicum designed to build upon the foundational knowledge from that course. The class will offer hands-on experience and application of the Holy Spirit's dynamic work in the world, the church, and individual believers, as well as the principles of biblical theology. Participants will engage in practical exercises, ministry projects, and reflective discussions designed to deepen their understanding and reliance on the Holy Spirit, and to effectively utilize biblical theology in their ministry contexts.

Course Y3.2 Theological Studies: Biblical Ethics

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Biblical Ethics, students will participate in a practicum designed to teach participants how to apply the ethical principles and biblical foundations learned in the online course to real-life ministry scenarios. Through guided discussions, hands-on activities, and reflective assignments, participants will develop the skills necessary to navigate complex ethical situations with biblical wisdom and pastoral sensitivity.

Course Y3.3 Pastoral Listening

This course focuses on the critical skill of pastoral listening. Effective listening is fundamental to pastoral care, enabling deacons to serve their communities with empathy, understanding, and compassion. Participants will explore the theology and practice of pastoral listening, develop skills to engage deeply with those they serve, and learn to create a supportive and healing environment. Through lectures, role-playing exercises, and reflective discussions, this course will equip future deacons with the tools needed to listen well and respond appropriately to the needs of their congregations and communities.

Course Y3.4 Theological Studies: Anthropology and Eschatology

After successfully completing the Thirdmill courses on Anthropology and Eschatology, students will participate in a practicum designed to provide practical application and deeper exploration of these critical theological areas. Participants will engage in hands-on activities, ministry projects, and reflective discussions to integrate the teachings into their personal lives and ministry contexts. The practicum builds on the foundational knowledge from the Third Millennium Ministries video series "What is Man?" and "Your Kingdom Come: The Doctrine of Eschatology."



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— Year Three —

Course Y3.5 Biblical Studies: Interpretation

After successfully completing the Thirdmill course on Biblical Interpretation, students will participate in a practicum designed to offer hands-on experience in applying biblical interpretation principles to real-world ministry contexts. Participants will engage in practical exercises, collaborative projects, and reflective discussions designed to deepen their understanding of hermeneutics and enhance their ability to interpret Scripture responsibly and effectively.

Course Y3.6 The Catechism and Outline of Our Faith

This course explores the Catechism and Outline of Our Faith in the Book of Common Prayer as foundational guides to Anglican belief and practice. Students will examine how these texts shape personal discipleship and ministry, with particular focus on their role in forming deacons and licensed lay ministers. Participants will learn to articulate the faith clearly, connect doctrine with daily practice, and ground their ministries in the enduring truths of the Church.

Course Y3.7 – Faithful Presence: Spiritual Care for Those in Ministry

This course equips students with practices and disciplines essential for sustaining spiritual health and effective ministry. Emphasizing self-awareness, emotional resilience, and pastoral empathy, students will explore tools for personal reflection and strategies for providing compassionate care to others. The course integrates theological insights with practical exercises to foster a deep, enduring connection to God and the communities served.

Course Y3.8 – Parish Leadership and Ministry Planning for Episcopal Deacons

This course is designed for individuals in the formation process for ordination as Episcopal deacons, focusing on developing leadership skills for parish ministry and formulating an initial plan for outside ministry. Through a combination of theological reflection, practical training, and strategic planning, participants will learn how to define their ministry roles, lead effectively within their parishes under the direction of a priest, and create impactful ministry plans for service beyond the church walls.

Course Y3.9- Canons & Title IV Training and Tools for the Task

This course is an integral part of the Episcopal Diaconate training program, providing a practical foundation in the Canons of the Episcopal Church, with special attention to Title IV and the canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida. Students will gain an understanding of the Church's processes for accountability, reconciliation, and discipline, and explore how these canons guide ethical conduct in ministry. The course also includes training in the Episcopal Church's work of dismantling racism, equipping future deacons and licensed lay ministers to lead with integrity, justice, and faithfulness. Through lectures, discussion, and reflection, participants will develop the tools needed to serve effectively and responsibly in the life of the Church.

Course Y3.10- Diaconate Ordination Exam

Diaconate students will take an exam to assess the candidates' knowledge, skills, and readiness for ordained ministry. A passing score on this comprehensive exam is required for ordination, ensuring that candidates are well-equipped for their roles as deacons in the Episcopal Church. The exam will demonstrate Theological, Canonical, Biblical, and Historical understanding. This exam aims to ensure that candidates are thoroughly prepared, confident, and capable of fulfilling their roles as deacons in the Episcopal Church.



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Course Y3.11- Next Steps

Diaconate Candidates who have successfully completed all requirements for ordination will meet with the Archdeacon to offer a comprehensive overview of the essential next steps towards ordination and placement. The course provides a structured approach to navigating the final stages of diaconal formation, focusing on both personal and professional development.

Year Three Internship:

Students seeking ordination to the diaconate will be placed at a parish under the supervision of a priest for an internship. The internship will begin on Advent I and end on Pentecost. The internship will provide hands-on experience setting the table, leading Morning, Noonday, and Evening Prayer, preaching, and other duties unique to the role of a deacon.

— End of Year Three —