
DISCERNING AND RESPONDING TO A CALL TO HOLY ORDERS

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



MAY 23, 2023
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL**

Contents

Introduction	1
Where are you called?.....	2
Brief Summary of the Steps toward Ordained Ministry.....	4
Timeline for Holy Orders.....	6
Outline of Process and Documents to be Submitted	9
Guidelines for the Rector's "Careful Inquiry"	18
Guidelines for the Parish Discernment Committee	20
Guidelines for the Vestry	27
Guidelines for Nominees.....	29
Guidelines for Postulants	35
Guidelines for Candidates.....	38
Guidelines for Ordination to the Diaconate.....	40
Guidelines for Ordination to the Priesthood	42
FORM A: Ordination Process Commitment Form.....	45
FORM B: The Rector's "Careful Inquiry"	46
FORM C: Personal History Questionnaire	47
FORM D Self-Reflection Questionnaire.....	53
FORM E: Report of the Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) to the Vestry ...	56
FORM F: Vestry Nomination & Vestry Financial Commitment.....	59
FORM G: Rector/Sponsoring Priest Recommendation of Nominee.....	61
FORM H: Financial Statement.....	62
FORM I: Nominee Agreement	64
FORM J: Background Check.....	66
FORM K: Vestry Reaffirmation for Candidacy for Holy Orders.....	67
FORM L: Letter of Application for Candidacy for Holy Orders	69
FORM M: Vestry Reaffirmation for Ordination to the Diaconate.....	70
FORM N: Letter of Application for Ordination to the Diaconate.....	72
FORM O: Vestry Endorsement for Ordination to the Priesthood	73



***THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL***

FORM P:	Letter of Application for Ordination to the Priesthood	75
FORM Q:	Behavior Screening Questionnaire.....	76
FORM R:	Required Medical Exam	79
FORM S:	The Shepherding Process	80



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL**

Introduction

This document describes the process for discernment and ordination in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. It is faithful to the requirements of the Canons of the Episcopal Church (Title III, Canons 6 and 8), and covers both the diaconate and priesthood. The Commission on Ministry assists the Bishop in overseeing the discernment and ordination process. The Bishop and Commission intend for the process to be transparent, collegial and supportive.

The journey from initial inquiry to ordination is a long process with several stages involving many people – some in your parish and others from across the diocese. Many questions, some of them very difficult questions, have to be raised and answered fully and honestly. The shape of this process reflects the seriousness with which we take Christian ministry, and the great importance of the discernment needed to provide the Church with able and well-trained ministers, both lay and ordained.

No handbook can tell you everything. Questions may be addressed to the Chair of the Commission on Ministry, the Rev. Dr. Julie L. Smith, at jlsphone1@gmail.com or 412-995-0915.

In addition, we urge you to find and consult those who can support you as you begin to discover more clearly where God may be leading you.

Wherever you are led, you have our blessings.



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL**

Where are you called?

Part of the discernment process is to help you clarify where you are called. For some, that may be the priesthood, for others it may be the diaconate, and for others it may be lay ministry. This is both an internal question for you to answer and externally validated by others around you and the committees, commissions, and opportunities you have during your process. The Diocese of Pittsburgh has robust and active lay ministries which cannot exist without the contributions of lay ministers.

The Role of a Deacon

This is an exciting time for deacons in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The Diocese has recently ordained several deacons and we have had several others move here with experience from other dioceses. Our deacons are the hands and feet of the church and serve to help draw the Church into the life of the community in which it resides. Deacons serve an individual congregation, taking part in the liturgy and life of the congregation, but their charge is to use their specific skills in service to the needs of the community and to lead and equip the Church to bring the ministry of Christ to those outside their doors. We are looking for deacons who are ready to challenge the Church to understand and address needs in places where the Church may not have gone before. Deacons are called:

- to be bold community agents who make their Christian faith visible where they live and work
- to interpret “the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world” to the Church (*BCP*, p. 543)
- to serve as catalysts and guides for people engaged in the outreach work of the Church
- to assist bishops and priests in proclaiming the Gospel and administering the sacraments (*BCP*, p. 856)
- to “equip the saints,” and to inspire and challenge them to fulfill their Baptismal Covenant through their work in the world

The Role of a Priest

The priest exercises the ministry of Christ on behalf of the local community, “particularly as pastor to the people” (*BCP*, p. 856). Priests are called:

- to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to life by word and deed
- to teach the faith, administer the sacraments, and bless and declare pardon in the name of God
- to share with the bishops in building up the Church
- to “equip the saints,” and to inspire and challenge them to fulfill their Baptismal Covenant through their work in the world



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

While most of our priests serve local congregations, we also seek those with particular gifts for ministries in non-parish settings including academic institutions, hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, public advocacy organizations, and overseas missions. Priests create new and vital ministries for our congregations and those with satisfying careers may consider becoming bi-vocational priests.

Attending Seminary

The Bishop and Commission on Ministry believe firmly that inquirers should not attend seminary before beginning the discernment process. Those who have attended or graduated from seminary before admission to postulancy for the diaconate will be required to participate fully in the formation program.

For nominees to the priesthood, the nominee chooses a seminary in consultation with the Diocesan Bishop that will offer the best setting for that postulant's formation, taking into account all circumstances that need to be considered. Those who have attended or graduated from seminary before admission to postulancy for the priesthood may be required to take additional courses and will be expected to supplement academic formation with field education internships during the formation period. In particular, graduates of non- Episcopal seminaries may be asked to complete a program in Anglican studies at a seminary of the Diocesan Bishop's choosing.

Inquirers already Ordained in other Denominations

Clergy from other denominations and from Anglican Churches that are not in full communion with the Episcopal Church are required to be confirmed or received in the Episcopal Church, become active members of a congregation, and seek discernment and nomination in that congregation in the same manner as any other inquirer. When such a previously-ordained person is admitted as a postulant in the Episcopal Church, the length of time before ordination may be shortened, depending on how much additional formation is required.

Spouses, Partners, and Families

The work of ordained ministry can be exhilarating and joyful. It can also be a source of strain, confusion and sometimes anger for deacons and priests and their immediate families. The bishops and the Commission on Ministry urge everyone who considers ordination to include spouses, partners and families in the discernment process from the very first. We strongly recommend conversation with professional counselors and with experienced members of the clergy.



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL**

Brief Summary of the Steps toward Ordained Ministry

Discernment Working Groups and Individuals

1. **Rector's Careful Inquiry** – An individual interested in pursuing ordination must discuss their interest in discerning a call to ordained ministry with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of their congregation. The Rector may also approach parishioners whom they believe may have a call to ordination. In addition, any parishioner or committee may recommend a person showing extraordinary ministry gifts to the Rector for follow up. The Rector may proceed with a careful inquiry of the person's heart for ministry, skills, interest in ordination, and availability.
2. **Parish Discernment Committee** – A parish with a person exploring ordained ministry will need a committee to assist in the initial discernment process. This can be a committee already formed and on hand, or one which is formed just for the current situation. These parish representatives will meet with the potential nominee over a period of several months and will make a recommendation to the Rector and, if appropriate, to the Vestry.
3. **Vestry** – A Vestry member is one of the members of the Parish Discernment Committee. If the Rector recommends that an individual continue in the discernment process, the Vestry will also meet with the individual. If the individual is to become a Nominee, the Rector and two-thirds of the Vestry must forward their favorable recommendation to the diocese. If the individual accepts the nomination, at this point they become a Nominee.
4. **Commission on Ministry** – The Commission on Ministry is a group of lay persons, priests, and deacons. Some are elected at the annual diocesan convention and others are appointed by the Bishop to represent the wider body of the diocese. The Commission on Ministry assists the Bishop in the discernment process. Historically, the Commission holds an annual event to interact socially with those in the process, and their significant others, and also conducts periodic interviews during its regular meetings.
5. **Bishop and Commission on Ministry** – Following the recommendation of the Rector, Vestry, and Commission on Ministry, the Bishop decides whether to admit the Nominee as a Postulant for ordination.
 - a. Postulancy is usually the time in which the individual begins formation for the diaconate or priesthood through forms of study approved by the Bishop.
 - b. The Postulant will continue to meet periodically with the Commission and the Bishop.
 - c. Progressively, the Postulant may apply to the Bishop for consideration to become a Candidate for ordination.
 - d. Ultimately the individual, if approved for ordination, is ordained as deacon.



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL**

- e. If the individual is a candidate for priesthood, if approved, the individual is later ordained priest not less than six months later.
- f. The Postulant or Candidate's parish continues to be involved in supporting the individual and must favorably recommend the individual to continue to move forward to ordination at all stages.

In collaboration with the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry, aligning themselves with the Canons of the Church, candidates for ministry will follow the Bishop's instruction as to their academic and theological formation.

- 6. **Standing Committee** – the Standing Committee is also canonically required to consent to the ordination of all those to ordained ministry. The Commission on Ministry currently has a liaison from the Standing Committee meeting with us and at various stages of your process, the Standing Committee will meet jointly with the Commission on Ministry and candidates. Candidates for Ordination may also have an additional, separate meeting with the Standing Committee.
- 7. **Spiritual Director** - In spiritual direction the focus is on the experience of God in daily life. With your Spiritual Director, you will have a safe space for reflection and for listening to God. It is an unhurried time which may include conversation, silence, readings, prayers. You are encouraged to have a Spiritual Director early in your process to help you on your journey to ordained ministry. You are required to have a spiritual director once you are a postulant.



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL**

Timeline for Holy Orders

INQUIRER							NOMINEE			
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Meet with parish priest or priest in charge, complete questionnaires, write initial theology essay, meet with Bishop, Background clearances AND Safe Church Training completed									Convention	
							With Bishop's approval begin Seminary or Diaconate Training		Completed Postulancy Package & Application Due by 4th Tuesday in November	
Discernment Committee Meetings							Vestry completes nomination form			
Year 1 - Postulant										
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Postulancy Interviews	Notification of Postulancy				Ordinations		Seminary or Diaconate Training	Standing Committee Interviews	Convention	Ordinations
		Ember Day Letter			Ember Day Letter		Ember Day Letter			
		Application for Candidacy								
				Complete One Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (Priesthood)						
				Field Education or Internships						
YEAR 2 - Candidate										
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Candidacy Interviews			Standing Committee interviews	Notification of Candidacy	Ordinations		Seminary or Diaconate Training	Standing Committee interviews	Convention	Ordinations
		Ember Day Letter			Ember Day Letter		Ember Day Letter			Ember Day Letter
Anti-Racism Training/Sacred Ground				Oxford Background Check			Medical/Psychological Evaluation			
				Complete One Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (Priesthood)						
				Field Education or Internships						
YEAR 3 - Candidate										
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
General Ordination Exams	Application for ordination to the Diaconate		Standing Committee interviews	Complete Seminary or Diaconate Training	Ordination to the Diaconate		Application for Ordination to the Priesthood	Standing Committee interviews	Convention	Ordinations
		Ember Day Letter			Ember Day Letter		Ember Day Letter			Ember Day Letter



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Application Checklists

All forms, applications and letters are in the Manual

Application for Postulancy: Due August 1 In your Manual for Holy Orders

- ☐ Ordination Process Commitment Form (FORM A)
- ☐ Sponsoring Priest's Careful Inquiry (FORM B)
- ☐ Personal History Questionnaire (FORM C)
- ☐ Self-Reflection Questionnaire (FORM D)
- ☐ Discernment Committee Report to the Vestry (FORM E)
- ☐ Vestry Endorsement & Financial Commitment Form (FORM F)
- ☐ Financial Statement/Disclosure Form (FORM H)
- ☐ Sponsoring Priest's Letter of Recommendation (FORM G)
- ☐ Letter of Recommendation (Clergy—not Sponsoring Priest)
- ☐ Letter of Recommendation (Lay Person—not a member of discernment committee or sponsoring parish's vestry)
- ☐ Letter of Recommendation (either Clergy or Lay Person)
- ☐ Copy of Baptism Certificate
- ☐ Copy of Confirmation Certificate
- ☐ Autobiographical Statement
- ☐ Ministry Statement
- ☐ Resume
- ☐ Transcripts
- ☐ Nominee Agreement (FORM I)

First Year of Postulancy In your Manual for Holy Orders

- ☐ Complete and Submit Background Check Paperwork (FORM J)
- ☐ Initial and Follow-up Psychiatric Examinations/Psychological Testing (FORM Q)
- ☐ Medical Exam (FORM R)
- ☐ One Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (Priesthood)

Application for Candidacy: Due September 30

- ☐ Updated Autobiographical Statement
- ☐ CPE Evaluation (Priesthood)
- ☐ Vestry Endorsement for Candidacy Form (FORM K)
- ☐ Seminary Evaluation (Priesthood) or Diaconal Training Program Evaluation (Diaconate)
- ☐ Updated Seminary Transcripts (Priesthood)
- ☐ Field Education/Internship Evaluations
- ☐ Letter of Application to Candidacy for Holy Orders (FORM L)



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Application for Ordination to the Diaconate: Due February 28

- ☐ Letter of Application for Ordination to the Diaconate (FORM N)
- ☐ Updated Autobiographical Statement
- ☐ Vestry Endorsement for Ordination to the Diaconate Form [FORM O
- ☐ Updated Medical Exam (if older than 36 months)
- ☐ Updated Psychological Exam (if older than 36 months)
- ☐ Updated Background Check (if older than 36 months)
- ☐ Recommendation from Seminary or Diaconal Training Coordinator
- ☐ Safe Church Training Certificate
- ☐ Anti-Racism Training Certificate
- ☐ Field Education/Internship Evaluations
- ☐ General Information Sheet Updated [FORM D)

Application for Ordination to the Priesthood: Due September 15

- ☐ Letter of Application for Ordination to the Priesthood (FORM P)
- ☐ Updated Autobiographical Statement
- ☐ Vestry Endorsement for Ordination to the Priesthood [FORM O
- ☐ Seminary Recommendation for Ordination to the Priesthood (if necessary)

Required Every Year

- ☐ Ember Day Letters to the Bishop (the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after St. Lucy's Day (Dec. 13), Ash Wednesday, the Day of Pentecost, and Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14) typically these letters are sent to the Bishop in December, March, June, and September.
- ☐ Attend Postulants and Candidates Day/Retreat – if held
- ☐ Attend Diocesan Convention
- ☐ Meet with Commission on Ministry Shepherd regularly
- ☐ Meet with your Spiritual Director regularly
- ☐ Serve as Bishop's Chaplain as assigned



Outline of Process and Documents to be Submitted

The following is a list of events and material to be submitted and maintained in the official file of each Nominee/Postulant/Candidate in the diocesan office and virtually for the Commission on Ministry. This outline is approximately in chronological order. For a more detailed discussion of each step in the Process, see the relevant sections. As referenced above, the process takes at least three years and you are responsible for tracking the steps, initiating letters, maintaining contact with appropriate Commissions, Committees, Shepherds, and Clergy.

ASPIRANT

Discernment begins with those who know you best: your family and friends, your priest, and other members of your parish. When the time is right, you begin your first steps as an inquirer as follows:

Have an intentional conversation with your rector/sponsoring priest about beginning formal discernment.	<u>Date:</u>
Your rector/sponsoring priest submits a letter of careful inquiry to the Bishop describing the discerning conversations held with you before you meet with the Bishop (no specific Form).	<u>Date:</u>
Rector/Sponsoring priest notifies Bishop and the CoM of your interest to enter into discernment.	<u>Date:</u>
Rector/Sponsoring Priest forms a Parish Discernment Committee or a District Discernment Committee.	<u>Date:</u>
Schedule a meeting with the Bishop.	<u>Date:</u>
You become an aspirant if/when the Bishop approves you to engage in formal discernment.	<u>Date:</u>



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PREPARATION FOR NOMINATION

Once you've been made an aspirant, discernment begins at the congregational/ community of faith level. A Discernment Committee will work with you to determine whether to nominate you to pursue Holy Orders at the diocesan level. Your relationship with this group is a vitally important part of the work of discernment, and you will need their support to continue formal discernment. Generally, this period will take several months (typically six months).

Your rector/sponsoring priest, in consultation with a Commission on Ministry (CoM) liaison, convenes a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC), or the Bishop convenes a District Discernment Committee (DDC) (depending on parish size).	Date:
Provide a concise spiritual autobiography (not to exceed 2500 words) for the Discernment Committee before they meet.	Date:
Meet with your Congregational or Community Discernment Committee. Discernment Committees meet for a period of regular sessions (length and time determined by the chair) before making its recommendation.	Dates: Begun Completed
When their meeting process is complete, your Discernment Committee submits a report along with their final recommendation to the parish vestry (See FORM).	Date
If they decide to nominate you, the vestry submits their nomination to the Bishop through contact with the Bishop's executive assistant. (See Documents for FORM F) along with a copy of the nomination form (FORM F).	Date
Your rector/sponsoring priest also submits a recommendation (See Documents Manual for form).	Date
If you are nominated by your parish and supported by your rector/sponsoring priest, you write a letter to the Bishop accepting their nomination (See Documents Manual for form) and you become a nominee. Our church canons require that your letter contains the following information:	Date



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. your full name and date of birth 2. length of time you have been resident in the diocese 3. evidence of your baptism and confirmation 4. whether or not you have previously been nominated or applied for postulancy in any other diocese 5. description of your discernment process thus far from your point of view, and indication of all degrees you have earned and certified areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts and/or certifications awarded 	
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Once you become a nominee, discernment moves from the parish/congregation to the diocesan level, where you discern with and gain the support of the COM. The COM is made up of both clergy and lay members from across the Diocese, and their role is 1) to discern for themselves and confirm your vocation sensed by the Bishop and affirmed by your vestry, and 2) to observe whether you are internalizing all that you are learning and experiencing in discernment and formation. Their role is to make a recommendation to the Standing Committee and Bishop that you be approved for the various stages leading up to ordination and ultimately for ordination itself. While their function is to advise the Bishop, your time in discernment with the COM is a vital part of the process and should be engaged accordingly. The first step in progressing towards ordination is, again, being granted postulancy.

Once you are granted postulancy, you will need to formalize a relationship with a Spiritual Director. While your time with your spiritual director is private, you need to keep a record of the dates you have contact (and indicate face to face, online – email or online-zoom/alternative to face to face).

PREPARATION FOR POSTULANCY

Postulancy is a time of more intense and focused discernment. You will need to do the following – all forms, releases, application are in the FORMS section of this manual:

Complete the Application – this is extensive and requires several essays. Please allow considerable time to complete them prayerfully.	Date:
Complete the Financial Statement	Date:
Complete Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance.	Date:
Complete Pennsylvania Criminal Record	Date:



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Check. If you have been a resident of PA for less than 5 years, you will also need to have a fingerprint FBI check	
Complete Safe Church Training and provide certificates.	Date:
Complete the Oxford Background. The cost is borne by the diocese.	Date:
Mental Health Examination [psychological] (scheduled through the Bishop's executive assistant). The cost for this exam is shared between the individual, the parish, and the diocese.	Date:
Meet with the Bishop after the Bishop receives and reviews the results of the background check and psychological examinations. The Bishop decides whether you proceed to meet with the Commission on Ministry	Date:
Recommended: Postulants complete Diocesan Anti-Racism Training	Date:
The chair of the COM will send you a date for an interview. Your rector/ sponsoring priest may accompany you in this interview. It is strongly encouraged you bring your supporting clergy.	Date:

Scheduled Date for Postulancy Interview with the COM: _____

Only the Bishop receives and reviews the results of the background check and psychological examinations and the COM's recommendation on your status. It is recommended you complete these requirements prior to being made a postulate. If you are made a postulant, the Bishop may invite you to discuss any developmental recommendations the COM may have given.

After your interview, if the COM recommends and the Bishop grants postulancy, you will be directed to complete the canonically required medical examination.

- Medical Examination. To be scheduled with your own doctor. Date of Submission: _____

Note: The canons of the Episcopal Church require the background check and the mental and medical health examinations to have been completed within thirty-six months (three years) of your ordination to the priesthood and/or diaconate. Any



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

of these more than three years old at the scheduled date of your ordination will need to be done again.

If you are not accepted into postulancy, a letter will be sent to you and a private meeting with the Chair of the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop will be scheduled to discuss the circumstances.

Date Postulancy Granted by the Bishop: _____

- Note: Once you become a postulant, your relationship with the Bishop becomes closer and more formal. The Bishop will need to be made aware of any significant life changes, including things such as a new job, a desire to get married, etc., as these can have a significant impact on discernment and formation. You will need to write ember day letters four times a year (dates found in the Book of Common Prayer). Do not neglect these letters. These letters are canonically required and are an important way of informing the Bishop as to your progress and well-being. Moreover, the letters serve as an indicator of your active engagement in the ordination process. These letters allow you to engage in a professional and pastoral relationship with the Bishop and should not be forgotten. Not submitting these letters may be taken as an indicator of your wish to disengage from the process.

As postulant, you are expected to cease participation, if any, on the Standing Committee or Commission on Ministry during your formation.

The postulant will enroll and attend a program of preparation approved by the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry, and the Standing Committee that fosters the formation toward the Holy Orders sought. If the postulant attended a seminary not affiliated with the Episcopal Church or has a Master of Arts Degree, additional coursework may be required in consultation with the Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and the Standing Committee. Basic competencies include academic studies of 1) The Holy Scriptures; 2) church history, including the ecumenical movement; 3) Christian theology; 4) Christian ethics and moral theology; 5) studies in contemporary society, including racial and minority groups; 6) liturgics and church music; Christian worship and music according to the contents and use of the Prayer Book and The Hymnal; and 7) theory and practice of ministry; diakonia and the diaconate; human awareness and understanding; spiritual development and discipline, practical training and experience.

You will also be assigned a member of the COM as a Shepherd, to provide support and encouragement along the way.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PREPARATION FOR CANDIDACY

The road to candidacy is a time focused on your continued theological and spiritual formation. The interview for candidacy is an opportunity to check in with you, the discernor, making sure you are 1) demonstrating the same qualities that were evident at your postulancy interviews, 2) still confident and growing in your sense of vocation, and 3) receiving suitable formation.

- Complete any supplemental requirements or conditions specified by the COM and the Bishop that may have been given, including information about Parish and Clinical Internships. Internship information includes: Internship Supervisor Evaluation, Nominee's Parish Internship Reflection Paper, and Nominee's Clinical Internship Reflection Paper.
 - Those who completed field education at Seminary may have fulfilled the requirements for an internship
 - Those who have not completed field education at Seminary are required to complete an internship at a local parish for a minimum of three (3) months or a minimum of 144 hours.
 - In addition, for all candidates to have a sense of the varieties of parishes in our diocese, candidates will visit six (6) congregations and meet with the Priest-in-Charge/Vicar or representatives of the Parish leadership.

Before your interview with the Commission on Ministry, submit the following if you have not already done so:

- Documents/evaluations from your completion of one unit of an Association for Clinical Pastoral Education program (ACPE-CPE is preferred). The Bishop and the Commission on Ministry must approve any alternative before candidacy.)
- Letter of reference and any other relevant documentation from a ministry practicum or field education experience or parish internship.
- Proof of anti-racism training. Date Submitted: _____

In your second year of seminary, your parish vestry completes and submits their Reaffirmation for Candidacy for Holy Orders. Please consult with the COM regarding the timing of your application for candidacy. Date: _____

- Submit an update to your spiritual autobiography, reflecting on your development and growth since your application for postulancy. Date: _____
- Note: All materials need to be submitted prior to your interview for ordination; if you are in the process of completing a requirement (i.e.,



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

finishing a class) the date of completion should be indicated, and provisional approval may be given until the completion of the requirements.

Scheduled Date for Interview with the COM: _____

If the COM recommends you for candidacy, the Standing Committee will interview you as well. Their approval is required before you can be made a candidate. Beyond getting to know you, their canonical responsibility is to ensure that you are being adequately and properly prepared for ordained ministry according to the canons of the church and according to our Bishop's standards and expectations.

Scheduled Date for Interview with the Standing Committee: _____

Note: You will be notified who may accompany to your interview.

If the Bishop accepts the recommendation of the COM and the certification of the Standing Committee, you will be made a candidate for Holy Orders.

Date Candidacy Granted by the Bishop: _____

If you are not accepted into Candidacy, a letter will be sent to you and an individual meeting with Chair of the Commission on Ministry, a representative from the Standing Committee, and the Bishop will be scheduled to discuss the circumstances.

Preparation for Ordination – Transitional Diaconate

As a candidate,

- Complete any supplemental requirements or conditions specified by the COM and the Bishop.
- Continue to write the Bishop four times a year during the Ember Days.
- Continue your formation, which should be at or nearing completion.
- Submit your most recent seminary transcript(s) or record from the educational program recommended for your formation by the Bishop.
- Date: _____
- Submit any outstanding items related to ministry practicum/field education/internship, and CPE/mission experience, etc. Date: _____
- Complete and pass the General Ordination Exams (GOE) Date: _____



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

- Participate in any remediation (if necessary, per guidance from the Bishop and CoM) For example:
 - Rewriting essays
 - Additional internship(s) and reflections with selected clergy in the diocese
 - Additional coursework
- Request endorsement for ordination to the diaconate from your sponsoring congregation/parish. Date: _____
- Notify Bishop and Chair of the Commission on Ministry that your sponsoring congregation has endorsed your ordination to the diaconate (this may be completed with an email using the appropriate letter/form). Date: _____
- The COM will schedule an interview and notify you within three weeks of receiving the email from the candidate. Scheduled Date: _____
- The Standing Committee will schedule an interview with you once they have received the endorsement for ordination from the Commission on Ministry. Scheduled Date: _____

If the Bishop concurs with the recommendation and approval of the COM and Standing Committee, the Bishop will approve you for ordination to the diaconate and schedule your ordination.

Diaconal ordinations are typically performed at the Cathedral.

Date Approved by the Bishop for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate:

Date: _____

Scheduled Date for Ordination to the Diaconate: _____



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

ORDINATION - PRIESTHOOD

If you are seeking ordination to the priesthood, you must be a deacon for an absolute minimum of six months. If you are ordained a deacon and are in a parish, the parish in which you currently minister as a deacon takes over as your sponsoring parish, as they are in the best position to observe your ministry and continued discernment towards the priesthood.

- Request endorsement for ordination to the priesthood from the vestry of your sponsoring parish (See Documents Manual for form). Date: _____
- Your rector/sponsoring priest writes a final letter of recommendation. Date: _____
- Notify Bishop and Chair of the Commission on Ministry that sponsoring congregation has endorsed your ordination to the priesthood (this may be completed with an email). Be sure to include the date you were made a deacon (See Documents Manual for form). Date: _____
- The COM will schedule an interview and notify you within three weeks of receiving the email from the Deacon. Scheduled Date: _____
- The Standing Committee will schedule to interview you once they have received endorsement for ordination from the Commission on Ministry. Scheduled Date: _____

If the Bishop concurs, the Bishop will schedule your ordination to the priesthood in consultation with your rector/sponsoring priest (if applicable). You and your rector or sponsoring priest are responsible for the planning of your ordination service. Again, consult the Bishop regarding guidelines for ordinations.

Date Approved by the Bishop for Ordination to the Priesthood: _____

Scheduled Date for Ordination to the Priesthood: Date: _____

Each newly ordained priest, whether employed or not, shall be assigned a mentor priest by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry. The mentor and new priest shall meet regularly for at least a year to provide guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about priestly ministry.



Guidelines for the Rector's "Careful Inquiry"

The discernment process of a potential nominee begins with the "Careful Inquiry" of the Rector (or Priest-in-Charge) of the individual's parish. This consists of a series of interviews with the potential nominee inquiring into the individual's background and suitability for ministry. It concludes with a summary recommendation from the Rector as to whether or not the process should continue to the next step, namely to the Parish Discernment Committee. **The potential nominee should be a confirmed or received member in good standing in the parish for at least one year.**

During the interviews, the Rector should encourage the individual to share her/his life journey. The Rector should determine the following about the potential nominee:

- What is the person's relationship with Christ?
- Who or what has shaped them as a person?
- Would the potential nominee be described as a person of stable character?
- What is the potential nominee's physical and emotional health?
- How does the person engage in positive self-care?
- What are the potential nominee's moral and religious principles upon which they act and what is the main source of authority for these principles?
- To what extent has the person been shaped by individual and corporate devotional disciplines?
- Is the person well acquainted with the Bible and the Prayer Book?

Cautions to be Shared with the Individual

The Rector should stress the importance of the background check that will be conducted on the potential nominee upon applying for postulancy and encourage the potential nominee to share anything that may be brought to light by such a check. Background checks are routinely conducted and are a matter of diocesan and Episcopal Church policy. The Rector should stress that if the person goes forward in the process:

- their life becomes an "open book" with the Rector, Parish Discernment Committee, Vestry, Bishop, Commission on Ministry, and the Standing Committee
- they will be asked repeatedly to describe and defend their perceived call to ordained ministry, and why the person's ministry could not be fully valid as lay ministry.

The journey into ordained ministry, being necessarily thorough, is often long. The individual or the church is not served by trying to hasten the process. If



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

discernment is to be effective, the journey must be undertaken with deliberation. The Rector should be careful, therefore, to explain to the potential nominee a realistic schedule of the events and time required to go through the process.

Additional documents aspirant prepares for the Rector's inquiry:

At some stage during the Careful Inquiry, the Rector will ask the potential nominee to prepare the following three documents: (see FORMS)

- Personal History Questionnaire
- Self-Reflection Questionnaire
- Theological Reflection Paper on Ministry (One to two pages)

The Theological Reflection Paper may serve as a point of departure for the Rector's exploration of the potential nominee's understanding of ministry.

Questions such as the following should be answered by the potential nominee:

- Who or what exemplifies what ministry is all about?
- How does the potential nominee understand the church in relationship to their concept of ministry?
- How does the potential nominee live out the Baptismal Covenant?
- What would happen if the potential nominee were not put forward for ordination?

As the Rector puts the responses to all of these questions together, along with the two questionnaires, they will be seeking to determine whether or not the potential nominee is suited for ordained ministry and, if so, whether as a deacon or a priest. One of the questions the Rector must address at this point is whether the potential nominee is capable of acquiring the needed body of knowledge and skills for the ministry under consideration. Beyond the necessary academic ability, does this person give evidence of an intellectual curiosity and openness to growth and change?

Does this person lead and/or motivate others? Is this person's call really to *ordained* ministry?

The Rector shall also request that the individual obtain and submit two letters of recommendation, one from someone in a professional relationship, and one from someone in a personal (e.g., friend) relationship.

If the Rector is supportive of the potential nominee continuing the journey through the discernment process, the Rector will need to write a summary of the Careful Inquiry for the Parish Discernment Committee. This summary becomes part of the parish documentation. The next steps are described in the Guidelines for Parish Discernment Committees.



Guidelines for the Parish Discernment Committee

Background

The Parish Discernment Committee helps the Rector and Vestry assist persons in responding to a possible call to ordained ministry. The report prepared by the Committee also informs the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop. The Committee's charge is to explore and challenge an individual's call to ministry and to provide an in-depth report of this assessment.

The Committee conducts a thorough and probing inquiry into all aspects of the Inquirer's life and calling. It explores the Inquirer's call to ordained ministry by exploring the Inquirer's ministry in the parish and community as well as their life experiences and character. The Committee considers knowledge gained through interviews, from communication with the Rector, and from observing the Inquirer in parish ministry.

The call to ordination is both personal and communal. Priests and deacons are ordained for the whole of the Episcopal Church and the Parish Discernment Committee is asked to enter into an intentional relationship with the Inquirer on behalf of both the parish and the larger church. This requires a commitment of time and energy, a willingness to share of oneself and to ask difficult and challenging questions of the Inquirer.

Committee membership

The Committee is appointed by the Rector. It should have approximately five to seven members, including at least one Vestry member. The Rector appoints its Chair and may consult with the Inquirer concerning members appropriate for the Committee. The Committee may have one or more members from neighboring parishes, especially if they have relevant insights about the nominee and experience with the discernment process.

Those appointed to the Committee should, when possible, reflect diverse backgrounds, have differing perspectives, and the ability to listen and to learn from others. Parish employees or relatives of the Inquirer may not be members of the Discernment Committee. Close friends of the Inquirer should generally not be asked to serve on a Discernment Committee but may be interviewed as a reference in the process.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Prerequisites

The Discernment Committee must involve the Commission on Ministry before beginning its work by filling out and submitting the Ordination Process Commitment Form. A representative from the Commission on Ministry (a liaison) will arrange to meet with the Committee, the Rector, the Inquirer, and a member of the Vestry to review the ordination exploration process within the Diocese, emphasize the importance of discernment at each phase, offer support, and respond to questions. The Discernment Committee should not proceed until this orientation has been conducted.

The COM Liaison is available to the Parish Discernment Committee for consultation during its entire process and should be kept informed about its progress. The role of the liaison is to support the Committee rather than the Inquirer. Ordinarily, consultations occur through the Committee's Chair although the Rector may ask for help on behalf of the Inquirer if major problems arise. Before the Committee submits its report to the Vestry, it must give a copy to the Liaison for review. The Committee will also meet with the Liaison at the end of the parish discernment process to review its experience.

Before any session with the Inquirer, the Parish Discernment Committee should meet initially to plan for future sessions and review the necessary documents. These include:

- Summary of the Rector's Careful Inquiry
- Theological Reflection Essay on Ministry
- Personal History Questionnaire
- Self-Reflection Questionnaire (including the Spiritual Autobiography)
- Two letters of recommendation (Personal and Professional)

These documents will help to guide the Committee's conversations concerning facts most relevant to the discernment process. Members of the Committee are expected to address these issues in the report that will be submitted to the Vestry and to the Commission on Ministry.

Organization

The Parish Discernment Committee should plan to meet with the Inquirer for a minimum of six sessions, which will typically be completed within six months.

The Committee should:

- Devote time during the first session to the purpose of members getting to know one another and clarifying rules of confidentiality.
- Acknowledge from the start that the Committee may decide after its due deliberations not to affirm the Inquirer's call to ordained ministry and



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

discuss what will happen then.

- Open and close each session with prayer.

Additional suggestions that others have found helpful:

- Identify a scribe who will keep a record of discussions and draft the final report.
- Structure each meeting around some of the topics that will be addressed in the report.
- End each session by giving the Inquirer questions to consider or work to do either before the next session or before the final report. Committee members are encouraged do their own homework by exploring the issues in their own lives and prayers.
- When the situation warrants, request that the Inquirer develop and complete a ministry project in the parish, especially if they have not been deeply involved in the life of the parish.

Meeting with the Inquirer

The purpose of the discernment meetings is to put together a profile of the individual in ministry and to assess the suitability of the Inquirer for ordained ministry. The chair of the committee should report to the Rector after each meeting about the status of its discernment. The chair should also remain in contact with the Commission on Ministry liaison.

The committee should aim to create a caring environment where the Inquirer is encouraged to test their sense of call. The committee should be aware that its inquiry is intensely personal and therefore places the individual in a vulnerable position dependent upon the trust placed in the committee members. The committee should provide the Inquirer with an assurance of confidentiality and share its findings with them openly upon the conclusion of the interviews.

The committee should be willing to ask questions that challenge, but also affirm the Inquirer's gifts of ministry, lay or ordained, and prayerfully assess the Inquirer's call. This process is a very important step in the church's exploration and testing the Inquirer's vocation, which may or may not eventually result in ordination. The committee may discern that the individual is better suited to a wider lay ministry. This is an equally valid outcome of the committee's work.

During the earlier meetings with the individual, the committee should seek to understand the Inquirer's relationship to God, their devotional life and exercise of the Christian disciplines, prayer, Scripture reading, etc. In the later discussions, the committee might focus more specifically on questions pertaining to ministry and ordination, with particular attention to the question of whether the ministry envisioned must be ordained to be effective. The Parish



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Discernment Committee should help the Inquirer to grow in their understanding of how they can best minister and how identified opportunities for growth can be pursued.

The committee's conversations with the Inquirer should probe the question of their call to ordained ministry. If the Committee decides to recommend the Inquirer for ordination, it should express explicitly in its written report the ways in which ordination will serve the Inquirer's sense of call and address their future needs as perceived by the Committee. If there are serious considerations that might prevent the Inquirer from serving effectively as an ordained leader, the Committee should discuss these with the Inquirer and address them in the report.

It is likely that the Committee will discover information that reflects poorly on the nominee. The Committee needs to consider all aspects of the individual's life and ministry with openness and transparency to prepare a resulting report that provides a balanced, fair and comprehensive assessment. The Commission on Ministry and Bishop are not looking for an unrealistic portrait of a "perfect" nominee.

When the meetings with the Inquirer are complete, the committee should meet to review all the information and prepare a detailed report of its findings. The Discernment Committee must make a recommendation as to whether the individual should be nominated for postulancy. This determination must be part of the final report to the Vestry.

Report preparation

This report will inform the Rector and Vestry of the Parish Discernment Committee's process and content as well as its conclusion. It will also be reviewed by the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop to inform their decision making.

The Committee's collective voice is an important source of assessment about the Inquirer and their discernment. since the members are the people who have first-hand experience with and knowledge of the Inquirer's participation in the Parish and the broader community. The Committee is expected to be honest, thorough and transparent in its assessment of this person's call to ordained ministry and identification of areas for growth and further development. No one comes to discernment or ordained ministry fully formed.

The report should include an overview of the process undertaken by the Committee. This should include the number of meetings held, the names of committee members, significant points of disagreement, if any, the final consensus of the Committee, whether the report is endorsed by all members of



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

the committee, and the concerns of any members opposing the consensus.

The report should provide sufficient detail about the nature of the Committee's interaction with the nominee in the discernment process to demonstrate that a full, fair and informed process was conducted. This would include key questions asked of the nominee, their responses and new insights learned about the nominee and their spiritual journey.

Report topics

The following clusters of questions are intended to serve as a guide to the subjects that the Committee should explore with the Inquirer.

Spiritual: In what discernible ways is the Inquirer already engaged in the disciplines of prayer and worship? How does the person's life reflect the love of God? What has the Committee learned about the person's devotional life and discipline? Is the person regular in attending worship and participating in the liturgy?

Family: What is the nature of the Inquirer's significant relationships? How has the Inquirer tested or explored this call with family and friends? If they have a spouse/partner, how does that person feel about this call? Does the Inquirer understand they might need to relocate for part of the process if they are discerning for the priesthood?

Personal: How do they spend Sabbath time? Leisure time? Does the Inquirer have a stable employment history? What else did the Committee learn from the person's employment history? What unusual gifts, skills, or experiences does the Inquirer bring to ministry?

Parish & Church: Describe the Inquirer's ability to develop and maintain relationships in the parish. Is the Inquirer encouraging and enabling of other people's ministries? How has the Inquirer demonstrated leadership in the parish community? Can they accept the authority of others? What experiences does the Inquirer have in ministry and service in the Church and in the community?

Outlook: Does the person think theologically, giving evidence of an awareness of God's involvement as much in the ordinary and the everyday as in the sacred? How has the Inquirer experienced and integrated loss, change or adversity? How might the Inquirer respond to the stresses and expectations of formation for ordained ministry?

Call: How does the Inquirer understand their call? How is it expressed in their current ministry? In what specific ways does the Inquirer believe that ordination would serve their sense of call? Does the Inquirer understand that



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

ordained ministry generally requires leaving the sponsoring congregation to serve the wider Church under the direction of Bishops?

Concerns: Does the Committee have any concerns about the Inquirer's fitness for ministry? Is there defensiveness or other evidence of insecurity? Are the person's expectations of themselves, and of others, realistic? In what areas does the Inquirer need particular care and guidance for further growth?

Past: Does the Inquirer have a history of problematic substance use or any other situation that might be revealed in a background check that needs to be addressed before entering into formation for ordained ministry? If so, how has the Inquirer attended to it?

Learning: Describe the Inquirer's attitude to learning. Are they teachable and able to learn from other perspectives? What evidence did the Committee see of the Inquirer's skills in crossing barriers of class, race, culture, education and age? Does the Committee believe this person is capable of meeting the challenges of seminary or diaconal formation, and of the ministry?

Deacon: All ordained clergy in the Episcopal Church are ordained a Deacon. Does the Inquirer have a deacon's character, being able to serve without the need for recognition? For additional guidance on a deacon's specific role, please refer to the liturgy for Ordination to the Diaconate in the Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 537.

Timing: How is the Inquirer experiencing **now** their call to ordained ministry? In what ways is the Inquirer currently engaged in service to the church through leadership, pastoral care, community service or other specific involvement? What new ministries do they imagine undertaking in the future? Why is this the right time to pursue a call to ordained ministry?

Alternatives: If the Inquirer is **not** invited into the ordination process, where might they be called to serve? What steps might they take to discern and prepare for these lay ministries?

The Parish Discernment Committee should use part one of the *Report of the Parish Discernment Committee to the Vestry* (see *FORM E*) as a guide in this process.

Report preparation

This report will inform the Rector and Vestry of the Parish Discernment Committee's process and content as well as its conclusion. It will also be reviewed by the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop to inform their decision making. The Committee must review the final report with the Commission on Ministry liaison before it is submitted to the Vestry.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

The Committee's collective voice is an important source of assessment about the Inquirer and their discernment. since the members are the people who have first-hand experience with and knowledge of the Inquirer's participation in the Parish and the broader community. The Committee is expected to be honest, thorough, and transparent in its assessment of this person's call to ordained ministry and identification of areas for growth and further development. No one comes to discernment or ordained ministry fully formed.

If the Rector agrees that this individual should become a nominee, it is the Rector's responsibility to provide all of the documentation to the Vestry.

The next step is to consult the Guidelines for the Vestry.



Guidelines for the Vestry

It is the Vestry's responsibility to attest to the potential nominee's suitability for ordained ministry. In order for an individual to be nominated for postulancy, both the Rector and two-thirds of the Vestry must sign the *Vestry Nomination of an Aspirant for Holy Orders* form (see Form F). Before recommending the potential nominee for postulancy, the Vestry must ascertain to its satisfaction that the Parish Discernment Committee has been responsible in its work and that the potential nominee is trustworthy and of good character. On the Vestry's behalf, the Parish Discernment Committee conducts a thorough and probing inquiry into all aspects of the aspirant's life and calling and prepares a report for the Vestry. The Vestry relies on the Parish Discernment Committee to carry out its inquiry with care and deliberation.

If, based on their Careful Inquiry and the results of the Parish Discernment Committee evaluations, the Rector agrees that the potential nominee should go forward in the process, the Rector forwards copies of all relevant documents to the Vestry and schedules a meeting with the Vestry and the potential nominee. This meeting could either be a separate meeting of the Vestry for this purpose only, or possibly be part of a regular Vestry meeting. If included within a regular Vestry meeting, this portion should be held in Executive Session and closed to any non-Vestry members except for the potential nominee and their spouse or significant other.

Costs Associated with the Ordination Process

In addition to recommending postulancy, the Vestry must also "pledge to contribute financially" to the nominee's preparation for ordination. The issue of financial support for the nominee should be discussed and decided by the Vestry. Possibilities include providing support through the parish operating budget and/or taking up special offerings throughout the ordination process. Individuals seeking ordination to the priesthood will face very difficult financial challenges, particularly if the individual attends seminary on a full-time basis. The Diocese will provide support as possible, the parish must provide support, and the individual will be required to bear a portion of the costs. The following lists the usual expenses related to the ordination process, and who is responsible for them:



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

From the individual

- Costs of seminary (for the priesthood) or deacon formation
- Travel costs to Diocesan events and to and from seminary, if applicable
- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), if applicable
- Medical Examination

From the parish

- Support for costs of seminary or deacon formation as the parish is able.

From the Diocese

- Child Abuse History Clearance
- State Background Check
- Oxford Document Background Check
- Support for costs of seminary or deacon formation

Expenses shared equally among the individual, the parish, and the Diocese

- Psychological examination

The Vestry Interview

In most situations, the Vestry would have one meeting with the potential nominee and spouse or significant other before making its evaluation. However, there may be circumstances in which more than one session is necessary. The Vestry must keep everything that is said in confidence and should request that the potential nominee also maintain confidentiality. The Vestry must share its findings and decision with the individual.

If the Vestry and Rector agree to nominate the individual, a minimum of two-thirds of its members and the Rector must sign the Rector/Sponsoring Priest Recommendation of Nominee (SEE FORM F and G). All the nominee's paperwork should then be sent to the Bishop's office. If the Vestry and Rector decide not to nominate the individual, they shall provide a written explanation to the Bishop as to why they have rejected the recommendation of the Parish Discernment Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Rector to provide an appropriate pastoral response to the individual.



Guidelines for Nominees

The Bishop's Interview

Once the Rector and Vestry have given their recommendations, the potential nominee's file is sent to the Bishop.

The potential nominee is now ready to meet with the Bishop and shall contact the Bishop's office to schedule an interview. Following a satisfactory interview, the Bishop will then forward the individual's file, including the Bishop's recommendation, to the Commission on Ministry. Upon formal acceptance of the nomination, the individual will be informed that they are now a Nominee.

Spiritual Direction

Spiritual Direction in its simplest form is the ministry of one member of the body of Christ acting as support, companion and guide to another along the pilgrim's way. A trained spiritual director should be competent in assisting a person in seeing where God is at work in the person's life and helping to improve that person's prayer life.

Conversation between the director and the individual is absolutely confidential. Spiritual directors who are also members of the Commission on Ministry, the Standing Committee or otherwise involved in the assessment of the nominee, will not share any information learned in direction with their colleagues and will recuse themselves from any votes.

From Postulancy on, monthly meetings with a spiritual director are required. This practice is required through ordination and is strongly recommended beyond it.

If the postulant (or candidate) is away from the diocese attending seminary, they should have a local spiritual director. The person's seminary should be helpful in finding a local director.

The nominee is required to keep a record of the dates of meetings with their spiritual director.

Mentoring for Nominees Seeking Diaconal Ordination

The Commission on Ministry will endeavor to match the nominee with a Deacon to serve as a mentor throughout the entire discernment and ordination process. The mentor may be serving as Deacon in the parish where the nominee will be assigned to serve a parish internship. The mentor will also collaborate with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the nominee to develop a



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

clinical internship that would be appropriate for diaconal ministry.

Mentoring for Postulants Seeking Priestly Ordination

If the postulant is local to the Pittsburgh area, the Commission on Ministry will endeavor to match the postulant with a mentor. The mentor will normally be the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the parish in which the postulant will serve an internship, and who is willing to supervise the postulant during the internship, and to serve as mentor throughout the entire discernment and ordination process. The Commission may meet with the postulant as necessary in order to effectively pair the person with an appropriate mentor. If the postulant attends an out-of-town seminary, the mentor relationship may necessarily be curtailed to the duration of their field education experience.

Pre-Internship Requirements

The postulant must complete the *Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance* and *Request for Criminal Record Check*. The online links to these are found on the Diocesan website at the safeguarding tab. The diocese will reimburse any expenses associated with these background checks. The results of these clearances should be forwarded to the Diocese immediately upon receipt and they will be placed in the nominee's file.

The postulant must also complete Safe Church Training. This may be done online, also at the Safeguarding tab on the Diocesan website.

Internships for those seeking Ordination to the Diaconate

As mentioned previously, the postulant will serve a parish internship under the supervision of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge in which the postulant's mentor serves as Deacon. The internship should be developed by the Rector and Deacon in collaboration with the postulant and should provide the postulant with exposure to life in a different parish setting and the work of the Deacon in that parish. The length and timing of the parish internship should be the same as that described previously for postulants seeking ordination to the Priesthood.

The mentor will work with the Rector and postulant to develop a appropriate clinical internship for the diaconate which may be served concurrently or consecutively with the parish internship. The length of the clinical internship should be approximately 80 hours.

Upon completion of the internships, the following should be submitted to the Diocese for the nominee's file: an evaluation by the Rector and mentor of the nominee's parish internship; an evaluation by the mentor of the nominee's



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

clinical internship, and an evaluation by the supervisor of the clinical internship (if different than the mentor); and reflection papers from the nominee on both internships. The reflection papers should describe the nominee's experiences at both internships and also include theological reflection: where was God in the internships, and how did they inform the nominee's perceived call to diaconal ministry.

Internships for those seeking Ordination to the Priesthood

The postulant should experience six different congregations prior to interviewing with the Commission on Ministry for candidacy. These experiences will include four (4) visits to a Sunday Service in various sized congregations and a parish internships internship. It is also recommended that the postulant take the opportunity to visit as many parishes as practicable during this period.

One parish internship will take place in the mentor's parish. The internship will be an opportunity for the postulant to gain experience serving in a parish setting other than their home parish. The nominee will also benefit from the guidance of their mentor throughout the internship process.

During the internship process the postulant should plan to attend services, Vestry meetings, serve at the altar, assist with pastoral care, and other activities as determined by the mentor. As part of the internship, the postulant must plan, organize, and execute a ministry project in the parish or surrounding community. The type of project undertaken will be up to the postulant and mentor to agree upon. It should take into consideration the gifts and interests of the nominee as well as the needs of the parish and surrounding community.

The postulant is expected to meet with the mentor on a regular basis throughout the parish internship for direction and encouragement. The internship should last a minimum of three months. The length will depend on the ministry project and the recommendation of the mentor. Appropriate periods for internships would usually be the fall or spring semester; summer would normally not be an effective time for a parish internship.

The clinical internship, an accredited CPE program, will take place in a hospital, long term care facility, or similar setting. The postulant will be supervised by one of the resident chaplains at the facility, if possible. The internship should last approximately three months and the nominee is expected to complete 80 hours of supervised care. The clinical internship may be completed concurrently with the parish internship or subsequently.

Upon the completion of the internship process, four items must be submitted to the Diocese for the postulant's file: an evaluation from the mentor, an



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

evaluation from the clinical supervisor and two reflection papers from the nominee. The reflection papers should describe the postulant's experiences at both internships. The parish reflection should include a description of their ministry project. Both papers should include theological reflection: where was God in the internships, and how did the internships inform the postulant's perceived call to priestly ministry.

Background Checks

The Diocese of Pittsburgh is strongly committed to protecting persons from sexual and professional misconduct by Episcopal clergy. Before the nominee interviews with the Commission on Ministry for postulancy, a series of background checks must be completed in order to determine if there is any history of criminal behavior, child abuse, financial difficulty or serious motor vehicle violations.

The Diocese contracts with Oxford Document Management Company, Inc. to conduct these background investigations. Oxford Document Management is an entity created by a Certified Public Accountancy firm in Minneapolis, MN, for the purposes of assisting the Episcopal Church in its inquiries. Individuals should be assured that confidentiality is of utmost importance to the Diocese and is written into its contract with Oxford Document Management.

Individuals are contacted directly by the company. The individual will be requested to complete and return all forms and can expect to provide the identity of teachers, employers, congregational leaders and bishops who have had oversight of the individual in the five years prior to entering the Diocese's ordination process. The individual will be asked to authorize, on a form provided, the release of any relevant information held by these authorities.

The Diocese pays for the Oxford Document Management Company's background checks for all individuals needing a background check of the diocese.

If any information concerning misconduct or conviction is reported, the information will be given directly to the Bishop to determine what action should be taken. If such a report is made, the nominee will be given the opportunity to respond.

The nominee will be asked to sign a separate form authorizing the release of credit and motor vehicle records.

Medical and Psychological Examinations

Title III, Canon 6, Section 5 (j) of the National Canons requires that all applicants for postulancy take comprehensive medical and psychological



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

examinations administered by competent professionals.

Medical examinations should be arranged by the nominee with a physician of their own choosing. The required form is available on the Diocesan website at www.episcopalpg.org/about/commission-on-ministry/ and should be submitted upon completion to the Bishop. Any costs associated with the medical exam will be paid for by the individual.

Psychological examinations for the Diocese of Pittsburgh are conducted by Samaritan Counseling Center, Lancaster Pennsylvania. Currently, examinations are conducted online and require an entire day for testing and another time for evaluation and meeting with a Ministry Assessment Counselor.

The cost of the consultation will be shared between the individual, their home parish and the Diocese.

Prior to ordination, an update to this examination may be required, depending on the length of time since the first evaluation and the judgment of the Bishop.

Meetings and Interviews with the Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee

For the past several years, the Commission on Ministry has scheduled interviews on a rolling basis to provide an opportunity for those in the ordination process to meet individually with the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop. Periodically we try to schedule social gatherings along with the Standing Committee and Bishop to help lower the anxiety of formal interviews and allow us to meet in a less formal environment. Attendance is expected when these events are scheduled throughout the entirety of the ordination process and spouses (or significant others) are encouraged to attend. An overnight retreat for those in the process may be scheduled to build relationships and community among those in the discernment and ordination process.

Although the Standing Committee is not involved in the decision on Postulancy, their approval is required for Candidacy and Ordination. Thus, we try to familiarize the members of the Standing Committee with Nominees and Postulants (hopefully in social situations) so that the Candidacy interview is not their first encounter with those in the ordination process.

Postulancy interviews are held at regular meetings of the Commission



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

throughout the year. Postulancy interviews are normally scheduled upon completion of the internship process and after completion of background checks and medical/psychological evaluations. Nominees should come to their interview accompanied by their mentor and Rector/Priest-in-Charge of their home parish. After interviews are completed, the Commission will make a recommendation to the Bishop regarding Postulancy.

If approved by the Bishop, the Nominee becomes a Postulant and those interviewed are notified within two weeks of the interview.



Guidelines for Postulants

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy, and usually is the time when academic and spiritual preparation for ordination begins. It also involves continued exploration and decision about the Postulant's call to the Diaconate or Priesthood.

Upon admission as a Postulant, the individual and their Rector or Priest-in-Charge will be informed of the decision on Postulancy, in addition to the Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee. For Postulants seeking ordination to the Priesthood, the decision will also be communicated to the Dean of the Seminary the Postulant may be attending or proposes to attend, if applicable.

Ember Day Letters

Postulants are required to communicate in writing to the Bishop four times each year in the Ember Weeks. Postulants seeking ordination to the Diaconate are to reflect on their academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development. Postulants seeking ordination to the Priesthood are to reflect on their academic experience and personal and spiritual development. In the Episcopal Church, Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the following days: the first Sunday in Lent, the Day of Pentecost, Holy Cross Day (September 14), and December 13.

These letters are between you and your Bishop - they are confidential. Typically, the first one is the longest as you are in some ways still introducing yourself to the Bishop. The letters are a reflection on where you are on your journey, where you are finding joy, what struggles you may be having, where you are serving, how you are practicing your faith, with whom you are sharing your journey most intimately, and if and where you are having any problems or concerns. Reflect on what is calling to you in your ministry and try to shape a letter around that thought or passage. Remember, as ordained clergy, the Bishop is your pastor and needs to know who you are and what matters to you at this time.

Ember Day letters are a requirement for all those who are postulants or candidates for Holy Orders. There are no exceptions to not submitting an Ember Day letter.

Preparation for Ordination

Usually, Postulancy is the time for preparing for ordination, which would normally continue through candidacy if the Postulant is in fact approved for



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

candidacy. The Bishop and the Commission will work with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood and ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.

For those seeking ordination to the Diaconate, the Bishop may assign the Postulant or Candidate to any congregation of the Diocese after consultation with the appropriate member of the clergy.

Formation will take into account the local culture and each Postulant or Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry. Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination. Whenever possible, formation for the Diaconate and Priesthood will take place in community, including other persons in preparation for ministry.

Formation for the Diaconate includes entering a Deacon Formation Program, whereas formation for the Priesthood normally involves seminary training. Currently the Bishop refers candidates to a number of programs – in person, online, and hybrid for their formation in consultation with the Commission on Ministry and the individual. In both models, the courses and spiritual formation are specifically designed for persons seeking ordination to the Diaconate or the Priesthood. Successful completion of a program is required prior to students taking the General Ordination Examinations.

The Deacon Formation Program

Academic course offerings for those in Diaconate formation are typically offered in a rotating course sequence over a two- or three-year cycle covering all canonically required areas of preparation. The Canons of the Episcopal Church at Title III, Canon 6, Section 5 (f) and (g) specify the following required areas of preparation and training for ordination to the diaconate:

- 1) Academic studies, including The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church;
- 2) Diakonia and the diaconate;
- 3) Human awareness and understanding;
- 4) Spiritual development and discipline;
- 5) Practical training and experience;
- 6) prevention of sexual misconduct;
- 7) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse;
- 8) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV;
- 9) the Church's teaching on racism.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

The Guidelines for Vestries discuss the costs associated with discernment and ordination. The annual cost of participation in the School for Deacons would be paid by the individual participant with assistance from the sponsoring parish and assistance as available from the Bishop's office.

Formation for the Priesthood

Formation for the priesthood includes theological training, practical experience, emotional development, and spiritual formation. Customarily, training takes place in an Episcopal seminary or other accredited seminary. The Postulant must discuss seminary options with the Bishop before applying for seminary. If the individual is approved to attend a non-Episcopal seminary, ordinarily there is additional work required in Anglican studies.

General Ordination Exams (GOEs)

All Postulants or Candidates will be required to take the General Ordination Exams administered by the General Board of Examining Chaplains of the Episcopal Church. GOEs are normally taken in January of the senior year of seminary, or for those in another type of formation program, when determined ready by the Commission on Ministry. GOEs are administered online over the course of several days in early January each year.

Removal

Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop must give written notice of the removal to the Postulant and their Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Commission on Ministry, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.



Guidelines for Candidates

Candidacy is a time of education and formation in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate or the Priesthood, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, Bishop, Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, and the individual's congregation or other faith community. To become a Candidate, the Postulant must apply to the Bishop, using the appropriate form (found in Forms). Furthermore, the application must be accompanied by a letter of support from the Vestry and Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Postulant's congregation, using the form found in Forms.

Time of Application for Candidacy

If a Postulant is pursuing seminary education, normally the Postulant would be asked to apply for Candidacy after completing approximately two-thirds of the course of study.

Role of the Standing Committee

The Standing Committee shall interview the Postulant and review the documentation related to the application for Candidacy. In order for the application to be approved, the Standing Committee must approve in writing the Postulant's application for Candidacy.

Role of the Commission on Ministry

The Commission on Ministry shall interview the Postulant and provide a statement to the Bishop attesting to the continued formation of the Postulant, and a recommendation as to whether the Postulant should be admitted as a Candidate.

Role of the Bishop

The Bishop, after receiving the statement from the Commission and the approval of the Standing Committee, may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood. The Bishop will inform the Candidate, the Candidate's Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Commission, the



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposing to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

Removal

Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop must give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Candidate's Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending, or the director of the program of preparation.

Ember Day Letters

Candidates shall continue to communicate in writing to the Bishop as described in the section on Postulants.

Anti-Racism Training

We recommend Anti-Racism training during Postulancy, but if the Candidate has not yet completed the Diocesan Anti-Racism training, or such other training as meets the canonical requirement for training regarding the Church's teaching on racism, the Candidate must comply with this requirement for Ordination and submit evidence of such training.



Guidelines for Ordination to the Diaconate

These guidelines apply to Candidates who are seeking ordination as vocational Deacons and to those Candidates who are seeking ordination as Deacons prior to being ordained to the Priesthood (sometimes referred to as transitional Deacons).

Evaluation of Candidate's readiness for ordination

Each Candidate shall be evaluated from time to time by the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop. When the person responsible for the Candidate's program of preparation certifies that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination will be prepared. This report will include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the Candidate's readiness. Records of all evaluations, assessments, and the Commission's recommendations shall be maintained and be made available to the Standing Committee.

Ordination as a transitional Deacon could take place following the completion of the Candidate's second year of seminary when in a three-year program, or prior to completion of such other approved course of study, depending on the recommendation of the Commission on Ministry and Bishop and the approval of the Standing Committee.

Application for Ordination to the Diaconate and Letter of Support from the congregation

Upon being notified that they have been determined ready for ordination, the Candidate shall submit an application requesting ordination to the Diaconate (see Forms). There must also be a letter of support submitted by the Candidate's congregation or other faith community, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight (see Forms).

Other requirements applicable to Ordination to the Diaconate

- The individual being ordained must be at least 24 years of age.
- At least 18 months must have elapsed since the date of written acceptance of Nomination by the Nominee as provided in the



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Application for Postulancy for Holy Orders.

- Candidacy has been granted by the Bishop.
- A background check by Oxford Management must have been accomplished within 36 months prior to ordination.
- A medical and psychological examination as described in these guidelines and using the forms provided in the Forms must have been accomplished within 36 months prior to ordination.
- Safe Church and Anti-racism training

Role of the Standing Committee

The Bishop shall provide information to the Standing Committee as prescribed by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, summarized as follows:

- The Candidate's Application for Ordination.
- A letter of support from the Candidate's congregation.
- Copies of the letters granting Postulancy and Candidacy.
- A certificate from the Candidate's program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the canonically required subjects, an evaluation of the Candidate's personal qualifications, and a recommendation regarding ordination.
- A recommendation from the Commission on Ministry regarding ordination.

If a majority of all members consent, the Standing Committee shall certify that the canonical requirements for ordination have been met, that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination. The Standing Committee shall send a certification to the Bishop using the appropriate forms and testimonies for those seeking ordination as permanent Deacons, and the testimonial for those who are preparing for the Priesthood.

Ordination

Having received the testimonial, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate to the Diaconate. At the time of ordination, the Candidate shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church.



Guidelines for Ordination to the Priesthood

These guidelines apply to individuals who have been ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.8 of the Episcopal Church, sometimes referred to as transitional Deacons.

Application for Ordination to the Priesthood and Letter of Support from the congregation

Upon notification by the Bishop, the Deacon shall submit an application requesting ordination to the Priesthood, using the appropriate form. There must also be a letter of support submitted by the Candidate's congregation or other faith community, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, using the appropriate form.

Other requirements applicable to Ordination to the Priesthood

- At least six months must have elapsed since ordination as a Deacon
- The individual being ordained must be at least 24 years of age.

Role of the Standing Committee

The Bishop shall provide information to the Standing Committee as prescribed by the Canons of the Episcopal Church, summarized as follows:

- The Deacon's Application for Ordination.
- A Letter of Support from the Deacon's congregation.
- Copies of the letters granting Postulancy and Candidacy, and evidence of ordination to the Diaconate.
- A certificate from the Deacon's program of preparation showing the Deacon's scholastic record in the canonically required subjects, an evaluation of the Deacon's personal qualifications, and a recommendation regarding ordination to the Priesthood.
- A recommendation from the Commission on Ministry regarding ordination to the Priesthood.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

If a majority of all members consent, the Standing Committee shall certify that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Priesthood have been met, that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination. The Standing Committee shall send a certification to the Bishop using the appropriate testimonial for those seeking ordination to the Priesthood.

Ordination

Having received the testimonial, the Bishop may ordain the Deacon to the Priesthood. At the time of ordination, the Deacon shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church.

Nature of Appointment required for the Priesthood

A Deacon may not be ordained to the Priesthood until appointed to serve in one of the following positions:

- A Parochial Cure within the jurisdiction of the Church
- A Missionary under the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese
- An officer of a Missionary Society recognized by General Convention
- A Chaplain of the Armed Services of the United States
- A Chaplain in a recognized hospital or other welfare institution
- A Chaplain or instructor in a school, college, or other seminary
- Or such other opportunity for the exercise of the office of Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop.

Vocational Deacon called to the Priesthood

If a person who has been ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 of the Episcopal Church should be subsequently called to the Priesthood, the Deacon must fulfill the Postulancy and Candidacy requirements of these guidelines. Only upon completion of these requirements could the Deacon be ordained to the Priesthood.



Forms

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH Commission on Ministry

All forms, unless otherwise indicated, are returned to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry,
jlsphone1@gmail.com



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM A: Ordination Process Commitment Form

This form serves as notification to the Bishop's Office and the Commission on Ministry that the following person will be entering the formal time of inquiry and discernment for Holy Orders (*please print clearly*).

Inquirer's Name: _____

Inquiring about (*check one*): ☐ Diaconate ☐ Priesthood ☐ Undecided

Address: _____

Telephone: (home) _____ (work) _____ (cell) _____

Email address: _____

Sponsoring parish: _____

Sponsoring priest: _____

Chair of Parish Discernment Committee: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Signatures

Inquirer: _____ Date: _____

Sponsoring Priest _____ Date: _____

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry, jlsphone1@gmail.com



FORM B: The Rector's "Careful Inquiry"

There is no form, but a careful inquiry will result in a letter or report sent to the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry. (see also page 13, Guidelines for Rector's Careful Inquiry) and a summary to be used by the Parish Discernment Committee. This summary becomes part of the parish documentation as the inquirer moves forward in the process and becomes an aspirant.

Because you as the rector will have read and discussed the inquirer's personal history questionnaire, self-reflection questionnaire, and theological reflection paper, and know the individual, you are in the best position to begin an exploration of the potential nominee's understanding of ministry.

The inquiry report should address the following questions reflecting your times together:

- Who or what exemplifies what ministry is all about?
- How does the potential aspirant understand the church in relationship to their concept of ministry?
- How does the potential aspirant live out their Baptismal Covenant?
- What would happen if the potential aspirant were not put forward for ordination?

One of the questions the Rector must address at this point is whether the potential nominee is capable of acquiring the needed body of knowledge and skills for the ministry under consideration. Beyond the necessary academic ability, does this person give evidence of an intellectual curiosity and openness to growth and change? Does this person lead and/or motivate others? Is this person's call really to ordained ministry?



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM C: Personal History Questionnaire

General Information

Date of Application: _____

Full Name (including original or initial): _____

Clergy Order that applicant is seeking _____ Permanent Deacon; _____ Priest

Have you previously applied for admission as a nominee for Holy Orders?
Yes _____ No _____

In what diocese?

Address: _____

Best Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Marital Status: _____ If Married, Date of Marriage: _____

Additional Marital Information (Divorced, Widowed, Remarried; give dates):

Spouse's name: _____

Spouse's Telephone: _____

Children (names and ages):



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Church History

Sponsoring Congregation: _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest: _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest Cell Telephone: _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest Office Telephone: _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest Email: _____

Have you been a confirmed member in good standing at a congregation within the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh? _____ Yes _____ No

Present Parish: _____

How long have you been a member: _____

Parish Based Ministries (please provide parish, place, dates and services):

BAPTISM *(please provide documentation if you haven't already)*

Date of Baptism: _____

Name of Church: _____

City, State: _____

Denomination: _____

Officiant's Name: _____



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

CONFIRMATION *(please provide documentation if you haven't already)*

Date of Confirmation or Reception in the Episcopal Church: _____

Name of Church: _____

City, State: _____

Officiant's Name: _____

EDUCATION

	Name of school	Location	Major/degree	Dates attended
High School				
College*				
Business or Trade School*				
Seminary &/or Post Graduate Work*				

*please request official transcripts to be sent to the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh at the address shown at the end of this form.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

WORK EXPERIENCE *(list the last two paid positions you have held, or the two most relevant to ministry if within the last ten years)*

Employer: _____

Address: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Dates Employed: _____

Describe the job you held and duties you performed. _____

WORK EXPERIENCE

Employer: _____

Address: _____

Supervisor's Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Dates Employed: _____

Describe the job you held and duties you performed. _____

During the last ten years, were you fired from any position for any reason?

Did you ever resign after being told you would be fired? _____



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Did you leave any job by mutual agreement because of specific problems? _____

If yes to any of the above, give the name and address of the employer, the date you left and the circumstances surrounding your departure:

Financial Situation

If pursuing a call to the priesthood, what do you perceive would be the financial impact of going to seminary?

Social and Recreational Life

How do you maintain a healthy balance between your social/recreational activities and professional responsibilities?

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

What are some of your favorite books?



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Background Information

Have you ever been convicted of a crime? If yes, give details of each violation providing the date, place, charges, court and action taken.

Are you engaged in any current or pending civil or criminal litigation? If yes, provide details.

I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that all my statements herein are true, correct, complete, and in good faith.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM D

Self-Reflection Questionnaire

Name: _____

Date: _____

(Use as much space as necessary to respond to all questions.)

1. Self Description

- a. Describe your present life circumstances.
- b. Describe your personal strengths and weaknesses.
- c. Describe a conflict situation in which you were involved, how you reacted, what you might have done differently and what you learned about how you react to conflict.
- d. Describe your usual reaction to stress.
- e. Describe your family's religious affiliation and church attendance during your childhood and adolescence.

2. Perceived Call to Ordained Ministry

- a. Do you feel called to the priesthood or the diaconate? Why?
- b. Describe how you have felt drawn to the ordained ministry as a vocation. When did you first entertain the idea, what events and people most influenced you and in what specific ways have you experienced this call?
- c. Describe your spiritual life and discipline.
- d. What are the major differences between a lay person and an ordained person?
- e. List five things you see yourself doing as an ordained person that you cannot do as a layperson.
- f. In what ways have others affirmed your perceived call to ordained ministry?
- g. What special skills and talents will you bring to ordained ministry?
- h. What is most attractive to you about ordained ministry?
- i. What specific forms of ordained ministry are most attractive to you? (parish, chaplain, teacher, counselor, diaconal)

3. Relationship with your Family

- a. Describe your relationship with your parents and siblings.
- b. If applicable, describe your relationship with your spouse and children.
- c. What effect will pursuing a call to ordained ministry have on your family?
- d. How does your immediate family feel about your perceived call to ordained ministry?

4. Summary

- a. What barriers do you see for yourself in pursuing your ministry aspirations?
- b. What are your greatest fears and reservations about pursuing ordination?
- c. What is your greatest hope about pursuing ordination?
- d. What will you do if you are not approved to continue the process?



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Spiritual Autobiography

Please write a brief history (2,500 words or less) of your faith journey, including significant events, persons, etc. that have influenced you. You may include the autobiography here or attach it as a separate document. If you submit a separate document, please include your name and date at the top of the first page of the document.

Your autobiography should cover the most important aspects of your spiritual, emotional, and professional development and resulting self-awareness. While this essay gives you great latitude, it should include the following elements: the facts of your life that inform your calling to ordained ministry, the circumstances around you becoming a Christian, consideration of times of growth and change (including, if applicable, details of any counseling you have undertaken), any experience you have had participating in religions other than Christianity, and an honest discussion of your strengths and weaknesses.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Submitted by:

Signature of Applicant

Printed Name of Applicant

Date

Approved by:

Signature of Rector/ Sponsoring Priest

Printed Name of Rector/ Sponsoring Priest

Date

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry, jlsphone1@gmail.com



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM E: Report of the Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) to the Vestry

Name of Aspirant _____

Report Date _____

Starting Date of PDC _____ Ending Date _____

Sponsoring Congregation _____ City _____

PDC Chair Name _____

PDC Chair Cell Number _____

PDC Chair Email Address _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest Name _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest Cell Number _____ Office _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest Email Address _____

As each parish and PDC are unique, the report should include an overview of the process undertaken by the Committee. This should include the number of meetings held, the names of committee members, significant points of disagreement, if any, the final consensus of the Committee, whether the report is endorsed by all members of the committee, and the grounds for any voices opposing the consensus.

The report should provide sufficient detail about the nature of the Committee's interaction with the nominee in the discernment process to demonstrate that a full, fair, and informed process was conducted. This would include key questions asked of the nominee, their responses and new insights learned about the nominee and their spiritual journey.

Report topics: The following clusters of questions are intended to serve as a guide to the subjects that the Committee should explore with the Inquirer.

Spiritual: In what discernible ways is the Inquirer already engaged in the disciplines of prayer and worship? How does the person's life reflect the love of God? What has the Committee learned about the person's devotional life and discipline? Is the person regular in attending worship and participating in the liturgy?

Family: What is the nature of the Inquirer's significant relationships? How has the Inquirer tested or explored this call with family and friends? If they have a spouse/partner, how does that person feel about this call? Does the Inquirer understand they might need to relocate for part of the process if they are discerning for the priesthood?

Personal: How do they spend Sabbath time? Leisure time? Does the Inquirer have a stable employment history? What else have did the Committee learn from the person's



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

employment history? What unusual gifts, skills, or experiences does the Inquirer bring to ministry?

Parish & Church: Describe the Inquirer's ability to develop and maintain relationships in the parish. Is the Inquirer encouraging and enabling of other people's ministries? How has the Inquirer demonstrated leadership in the parish community? Can they accept the authority of others? What experiences does the Inquirer have in ministry and service in the Church and in the community?

Outlook: Does the person think theologically, giving evidence of an awareness of God's involvement as much in the ordinary and the everyday as in the sacred? How has the Inquirer experienced and integrated loss, change or adversity? How might the Inquirer respond to the stresses and expectations of formation for ordained ministry?

Call: How does the Inquirer understand their call? how is it expressed in their current ministry? In what specific ways does the Inquirer believe that ordination would serve their sense of call? Does the Inquirer understand that ordained ministry generally requires leaving the sponsoring congregation to serve the wider Church under the direction of Bishops?

Concerns: Does the Committee have any concerns about the Inquirer's fitness for ministry? Is there defensiveness or other evidence of insecurity? Are the person's expectations of themselves, and of others, realistic? In what areas does the Inquirer need particular care and guidance for further growth?

Past: Does the Inquirer have a history of problematic substance use or any other situation that might be revealed in a background check that needs to be addressed before entering into formation for ordained ministry? If so, how has the Inquirer attended to it?

Learning: Describe the Inquirer's attitude to learning. Are they teachable and able to learn from other perspectives? What evidence did the Committee see of the Inquirer's skills in crossing barriers of class, race, culture, education and age? Does the Committee believe this person is capable of meeting the challenges of seminary or diaconal formation, and of the ministry?

Deacon: All ordained clergy in the Episcopal Church are ordained a Deacon. Does the Inquirer have a deacon's character, being able to serve without the need for recognition? For additional guidance on a deacon's specific role, please refer to the liturgy for Ordination to the Diaconate in the Book of Common Prayer, beginning on page 537.

Timing: How is the Inquirer experiencing now their call to ordained ministry? In what ways is the Inquirer currently engaged in service to the church through leadership, pastoral care, community service or other specific involvement? What new ministries do they imagine undertaking in the future? Why is this the right time to pursue a call to ordained ministry?

Alternatives: If the Inquirer is not invited into the ordination process, where might they be called to serve? What steps might they take to discern and prepare for these lay ministries?



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

We, the undersigned, as members of the PDC, recommend to the vestry of (*parish name*)

_____ that (*name of aspirant*)

_____ be nominated to continue to discern

his/her/their call to Holy Orders in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh under the COM.

PARISH DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Submitted by:

Signature of PDC Chair

Printed Name of PDC Chair

Date

Approved by:

Signature of Rector/ Sponsoring Priest

Printed Name of Rector/ Sponsoring Priest

Date

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry, jlsphone1@gmail.com



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM F: Vestry Nomination & Vestry Financial Commitment

*To the Rt. Rev. Ketlen A. Solak, Bishop
and to the Commission on Ministry
of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh*

Date: _____

NOMINATION OF AN ASPIRANT FOR HOLY ORDERS

WE, whose names are hereunder written as duly elected members of the vestry of (*print name of congregation*) _____, testify to our belief that (*print name of aspirant*) _____, has lived a sober, honest, and godly life, and is a communicant of this congregation in good standing of this parish. We do furthermore declare that, in our opinion, they possess such qualifications befitting admission into the discernment process following the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and the standards put forth in the Outline of the Process to Holy Orders under the Commission on Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.

WE declare that our judgment is based upon (select all that apply):

- _____ Personal knowledge of the aspirant on the part of the vestry
- _____ Evidence concerning the aspirant presented to the vestry
- _____ A combination of personal knowledge of the aspirant and other evidence

WE commit our congregation to support this person for three or four years of theological education in the following ways:

- Payment of one-third (1/3) of the cost of the psychological exam
- We further commit to involving our congregation in the preparation of the aspirant for Holy Orders



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

VESTRY SIGNATURES

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

(Must be signed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the vestry.)

Signed: _____
(Rector/Sponsoring Priest of the congregation to which the aspirant belongs)

ATTESTATION OF THE FOREGOING CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the vestry of
(*print name of congregation*) _____ duly convened in the city of
(*city name*) _____ on (*date*) _____ and that the signatures
shown are those of a two-thirds majority of the members of the vestry.

Signed _____
(clerk of the vestry)

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry, jlsphone1@gmail.com



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FORM G: Rector/Sponsoring Priest Recommendation of Nominee

As the rector/sponsoring priest or vicar most familiar with the individual requesting discernment for Holy Orders, your input is vital. As this recommendation follows a discernment committee's meeting with a candidate, the recommendation may be substantially similar (or identical) to the Rector's careful inquiry. The Commission on Ministry (CoM) recognizes that the recommendation we request of you is detailed and time-consuming. The COM appreciates very much your willingness to meet our request, confident that your efforts will yield fruit in the individual's discernment.

Your recommendation is confidential to the COM and the bishop's office. Consequently, please be direct in your comments and observations. As always, the COM is available to answer any questions you might have in the preparation of this recommendation.

Please be sure to include your nominee's name in this letter – there is no form to complete.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM H: Financial Statement

Date of Application: _____

Full Name (including original or initial): _____

Address: _____

Best Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

Dependent(s) (Please list by name and give ages of children.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Sponsoring Congregation _____ City _____

Rector/Sponsoring Priest _____

In answering these questions, please state specific sources and amounts. It is important to be realistic about the costs of your possible seminary education. The cost will be your responsibility. Diocesan aid is quite limited. Most seminaries do have scholarship funds; however, you should consult with your seminary regarding availability and alternative sources of aid.

How will you pay for three (3) years of seminary?



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Anticipated Annual Expenses

Anticipated Annual Income

School _____
(Tuition, Books, Supplies, Fees, etc.)

Earnings _____

Living _____
(Housing, Food, Insurance, Transportation, etc.)

Personal Savings & Investments

Other (specify) _____

Spouse's Employment

Other (specify) _____

Parent/Relatives

Other (specify) _____

Sponsoring Congregation

Annual Total _____

Annual Total _____

Total for Three (3) years

Total for Three (3) years

Signature of Applicant

Printed Name of Applicant

Date

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

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Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM I: Nominee Agreement

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Ordination process: the whole series of steps provided by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church as defined and applied by the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh which, all requirements being satisfied, may lead to the ordination of an individual to the Sacred Orders of Priest and/or Deacon. In summary, these steps may be grouped under four headings:
 - a. Aspirancy is the period between being permitted by the bishop to discern, up until the acceptance of the nomination by one's home parish. During this time the discernor is called an aspirant.
 - b. Nomination covers the time beginning with a letter from the individual to the bishop accepting his/her/their nomination by the congregation, continuing up until the time that the individual is admitted to postulancy by the bishop. During this stage, the discernor is called a nominee.
 - c. Postulancy covers the period from admission to postulancy up until the time the individual is admitted to candidacy by the bishop, upon the favorable recommendation of the Commission on Ministry and approval of the standing committee. One is called a postulant.
 - d. Candidacy covers the period from admission to candidacy to ordination by the bishop upon the favorable recommendation of the Commission on Ministry and approval of the standing committee. One is called a candidate
2. Ordination: The sacramental conferral of authority on an individual by the bishop, under the Book of Common Prayer, to carry out the ministry of the Church consistent with this Church's understanding of the specific Order to which they are ordained.
3. Cure: The ecclesiastical position to which an ordained person is called, and for which the ordained person is authorized by the bishop to carry out the ministry belonging to their Order.

FAITH AND DISCIPLINE

Anyone wishing to pursue ordination in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh 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), and conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge the foregoing definitions and agree to the following:

1. That I understand that permission to enter the ordination process in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh does not carry with it an assurance that I will be ordained, or that I have any claim to be appointed to a cure.
2. That I acknowledge and understand that, in the event, I become a candidate for Holy Orders, I will not be ordained without a cure. Further,
3. I have read, understood, and acceded to the policy concerning sexual misconduct.
4. I understand that failure to live by these standards will result in my removal from the ordination process.

Submitted by:

Signature of Applicant

Printed Name of Applicant

Date

Witnessed by:

Signature of Witness

Printed Name of Witness

Date

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM J: Background Check

OVERVIEW

The background check is conducted by Oxford Documents Company. You will receive a packet in the mail from their representative, and you should complete the information and return it as instructed.

THE RESULTS

The results of the check will be sent to the bishop for evaluation. The results are kept in the discernment file and labeled as confidential.

PAYMENT

The cost of the Oxford Background check is borne by the diocese. The cost of the State and FBI background checks are borne by the diocese, initiating these background checks is the responsibility of the discerner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand the requirements of the background check and agree to participate by fully disclosing the information that will be requested of me and to reimburse the diocese for the full cost.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

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Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM K: Vestry Reaffirmation for Candidacy for Holy Orders

*To the Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak, Bishop and
Commission on Ministry and
the Standing Committee of
the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh*

Date _____

We, whose names are hereunder written as duly elected members of the vestry of (print name of congregation) _____, testify to our belief that (print name of postulant) _____ possesses such qualifications as would fit him/her/them to be admitted a **CANDIDATE FOR HOLY ORDERS.**

We declare that our judgment is based upon:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | Personal knowledge of the postulant on the part of the vestry |
| _____ | Evidence concerning the postulant presented to the vestry |
| _____ | A combination of personal knowledge of the postulant and other evidence |

VESTRY SIGNATURES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(The Form must be signed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the vestry.)



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

ATTESTATION OF THE FOREGOING CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the vestry of
(*print name of congregation*) _____, duly convened in the
city of (*city name*) _____ on (date) _____
and that the signatures shown are those of a two-thirds majority of the members of the
vestry.

Signed _____
(*clerk of the vestry*)

I HEREBY certify that I am personally acquainted with (*print name of postulant*)
_____ and that I believe him/her/them to be
well qualified to be made a CANDIDATE in the discernment process.

Signed _____
(*Rector/Sponsoring Priest of the congregation to which the postulant belongs*)

(Rector/Sponsoring Priest of the congregation to which the postulant belongs.)

Note: Should the congregation be without a Rector/Sponsoring Priest, it shall suffice that
in his/her/their place the certificate from the vestry be signed by some presbyter of the
diocese (sponsoring priest) in good standing to whom the postulant is personally known,
the reason for the substitution being stated in the attesting clause.

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM L: Letter of Application for Candidacy for Holy Orders

Date

Your Name

Address

Email

Telephone

The Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak
The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

In accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh [pick one: Title III, Canon 6, Section 4 (2015) for Ordination to the Diaconate or Title III, Canon 8, Section 4 (2015) for Ordination to the Priesthood], I respectfully submit this application to become a candidate for Holy Orders.

I am providing you with the following information as required under the above canon:

Full Name _____

Date Granted Postulancy _____

Personal remarks here, if any.

Sincerely yours,
Your name printed

*Cc: Chair of the Commission on Ministry
Your Rector/Sponsoring Priest*

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM M: Vestry Reaffirmation for Ordination to the Diaconate

*To the Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak, Bishop and
Commission on Ministry and
the Standing Committee of
the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh*

Date _____

We, whose names are hereunder written as duly elected members of the vestry of (*print name of congregation*) _____, testify to our belief that (*print name of candidate*) _____ has lived a sober, honest, and godly life and that he/she/they is loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church, and does not hold anything contrary thereto. Moreover, we think he/she/they is a person worthy to be admitted the **SACRED ORDER OF DEACONS**.

VESTRY SIGNATURES

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(The Form must be signed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the vestry.)



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

ATTESTATION OF THE FOREGOING CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the vestry of
(*print name of congregation*) _____, duly convened in the
city of (*city name*) _____ on (date) _____
and that the signatures shown are those of a two-thirds majority of the members of the
vestry.

Signed _____
(*clerk of the vestry*)

I HEREBY certify that I am personally acquainted with (*print name of candidate*)
_____ and that I believe the candidate to be
well qualified to minister in the Office of Deacon, to the glory of God and the edification of
the Church.

Signed _____
(*Rector/Sponsoring Priest of the congregation to which the postulant belongs*)

*Note: Should the congregation be without a Rector/Sponsoring Priest, it shall suffice that in
their place the certificate from the vestry be signed by some presbyter of the diocese
(sponsoring priest) in good standing to whom the postulant is personally known, the reason
for the substitution being stated in the attesting clause.*

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM N: Letter of Application for Ordination to the Diaconate

Date

Your Name

Address

Email

Telephone

The Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak
The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

In accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh [Title III, Canon 6, Section 6 (2015) for Ordination to the Diaconate], I respectfully request ordination as a deacon in Christ's Church.

I am providing you with the following information as required under the above canon:

Full Name _____

Date Granted Postulancy _____

Date Granted Candidacy _____

Personal remarks here, if any.

Sincerely yours,
Your name printed

*Cc: Chair of the Commission on Ministry
Your Rector/Sponsoring Priest*

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or electronically to arath@episcopalpg.org

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THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM O: Vestry Endorsement for Ordination to the Priesthood

*To the Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak, Bishop and
Commission on Ministry and
the Standing Committee of
the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh*

Date _____

We, whose names are hereunder written as duly elected members of the vestry of (*print name of congregation*) _____, testify to our belief that (*print name of deacon*) *the Reverend* _____ since the _____ day in the year _____, being the date of his/her/their ordination to the Diaconate, has lived a sober, honest, and godly life, and has not written, taught, or held anything contrary to the doctrine, discipline, or worship of this Church, and we think he/she/they is a person worthy to be admitted to the SACRED ORDER OF PRIESTS.

VESTRY SIGNATURES

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(The Form must be signed by a two-thirds majority of the members of the vestry.)



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

ATTESTATION OF THE FOREGOING CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the vestry of
(*print name of congregation*) _____, duly convened in the
city of (*city name*) _____ on (date) _____
and that the signatures shown are those of a two-thirds majority of the members of the
vestry.

Signed _____
(*clerk of the vestry*)

I HEREBY certify that I am personally acquainted with (*print name of candidate*)
_____ and that I believe the candidate to be
well qualified to be ordained to the Office of Priest, to the glory of God and the edification
of the Church.

Signed _____
(*Rector/Sponsoring Priest of the congregation to which the postulant belongs*)

*Note: Should the congregation be without a Rector/Sponsoring Priest, it shall suffice that in
their place the certificate from the vestry be signed by some presbyter (priest) of the diocese
in good standing to whom the postulant is personally known, the reason for the
substitution being stated in the attesting clause.*

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry, jlsphone1@gmail.com



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

FORM P: Letter of Application for Ordination to the Priesthood

Date

Your Name

Address

Email

Telephone

The Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak
The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

In accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh [Title III, Canon 8, Section 6 (2015) for Ordination to the Priesthood], I respectfully request ordination as a deacon in Christ's Church.

I am providing you with the following information as required under the above canon:

Full Name _____

Date Granted Postulancy _____

Date Granted Candidacy _____

Date Ordained a Deacon _____

Personal remarks here, if any.

Sincerely yours,
Your name printed

*Cc: Chair of the Commission on Ministry
Your Rector/ Sponsoring Priest*

Completed original forms should be submitted to:

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh
Attention: Executive Assistant to the Bishop
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Or electronically to arath@episcopalpgh.org

Copies scanned/sent/emailed to Chair, Commission on Ministry, jlsphone1@gmail.com



FORM Q: Behavior Screening Questionnaire



BEHAVIOR SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE (BSQ)

Applicants for Holy Orders convey the completed form both to the examining mental health clinician(s) and to the diocese sponsoring the evaluation. This questionnaire remains in the clinician's custody and in the applicant's permanent diocesan file.

The examining clinician(s), diocese or any of its agents reserve the right to verify independently any information provided in this questionnaire.

All questions must be answered.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

Do NOT skip questions. If a question does not apply to you, type "Does Not Apply" or "N/A." items.

DIRECTIONS: This questionnaire contains a series of items regarding your background and experiences. Please read each carefully. For each question, type a response.

If you opt to handwrite this questionnaire, please use an ink pen.

1. Has disciplinary action of any sort ever been taken against you by a licensing board, professional association, ecclesiastical body, or educational or training institution? Have there been formal complaints against you that did not result in discipline? Are there complaints pending against you before any of the above-named bodies? If yes, please explain in the space below.
2. Have you ever been asked to resign or been terminated by a training program or employer? If yes, please explain in the space below.
3. Have you ever had a civil suit brought against you relative to your professional work, or is any such action pending? Have you ever had professional malpractice insurance suspended or revoked for any reason? If yes, please explain in the space below.
4. Have you ever been charged with any ethics violations, or sexual harassment? Are any such actions pending against you? If yes, please explain in the space below.
5. Are you now or have you ever had sexual contact or attempted sexual contact (sexual intercourse of any kind, intentional touching, or conversation for the purpose of sexual arousal) with persons that you were/are seeing in any professional context (i.e., a parishioner, a client, a patient, an employee, a student)? If yes, please explain in the space below.
6. Since the age of 21, are you now or have you ever been engaged in sexual behavior (sexual intercourse of any kind, genital contact, intentional touching, or conversation for the purpose of sexual arousal) with persons under 18 years of age? If yes, please explain in the space below.
7. Are you now or have you ever been involved in the production, sale, or distribution of pornographic materials? If yes, please explain in the space below.



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

8. Have you ever been charged, arrested, or convicted for any crimes or misdemeanors? Have you ever been charged with moving traffic violations? Has your driver's license ever been revoked or suspended? If yes, please explain in the space below.
9. Have you ever had a restraining order, injunction, order for protection or the like issued against you as a result of allegations of domestic violence, abuse or the like? Have you ever had your parental rights restricted, suspended or terminated or have any of your children ever been in foster care? If yes, please explain below.
10. Have you ever misappropriated funds or otherwise breached fiduciary duties in any professional capacity? If yes, please explain below.

STATEMENT OF THE APPLICANT: (Please read carefully before signing.)

All information submitted by me in this questionnaire is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any significant misstatement in, or omission from, this questionnaire may be cause for denial of acceptance for postulancy or cause for dismissal from postulancy or the ministry.

I understand and agree that I will notify the Commission on Ministry of any changes in the status of my licensure, censure, or sanction by professional bodies and of any other information relating to my ability to act as a member of the ordained ministry.

Name (please type or print)

Signature

Date

Sponsoring Diocese



FORM R: Required Medical Exam



REQUIRED MEDICAL EXAMINATION

This report should be mailed by the examiner directly to the Bishop, and the information should be treated as strictly confidential. By submitting to this examination, the candidate consents to the use of the information herein in connection with his/her candidacy.



FORM S: The Shepherding Process

Purpose of the Shepherd

A primary function of the Commission on Ministry is to provide guidance to each person throughout the process to ordination. The expectation is that these candidates will be ordained as strong, capable, faithful deacons and priests. The Shepherd is one of the primary persons responsible for seeing that the time of formation is used for that purpose.

At the time of formal acceptance, each postulant is assigned a member of the Commission on Ministry as an advisor/shepherd. That relationship continues until ordination, unless the Shepherd's term on the Commission ends; in that case, a replacement is named. The Chair of the CoM will not serve a shepherd during the time they are chair.

The Shepherd's assignment is to pay close attention to the candidate's formation and provide confidential support and guidance as needed. The Shepherding process will allow for a more personal connection and can help to strengthen the communication between the candidate and the CoM members.

1. **Explore:** Meet with the candidate and further explore any issues that surfaced during the initial discernment process or questions the CoM may have.
2. **Inform:** Share progress and any needs identified with the CoM. The commission can help to find resources if necessary. By raising concerns early both the candidate and CoM members will together be able to problem solve and address issues in a timely manner.
3. **Report:** Shepherds report on their advisees as a regular part of Commission on Ministry meetings. Regular reports will help all members of CoM to be familiar with, support, and uphold each candidate in the process.

Shepherding Logistics

Once assigned, the Shepherd calls to arrange a first, get-acquainted meeting. After that, it is the advisee's responsibility to call and meet with the Shepherd at least three times a year, or more often, at the discretion of the advisor, desire of the candidate or request from the CoM members.

Questions/Inquiries

The following questions should be asked, a number each time, when meeting with the candidates.

SPIRITUAL LIFE:

- Do they have a spiritual director?
- How is that relationship working?
- Do they seem to be growing spiritually?
- How are they continuing to discern a call to ordained ministry and how do they feel about that call right now?

EDUCATION/WORK:

- How is the seminary/training experience going?
- What areas of study seem most relevant? Most challenging?
- What other areas of training are they involved in?
- How do these things contribute to their discernment and development?



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH ~ COMMISSION ON MINISTRY MANUAL

PERSONAL/FAMILY LIFE:

- Have there been any significant changes in their personal life?
- How have significant relationships been developing and/or contributing to ongoing discernment?
- Do they seem to balance the various demands of health, family, etc.?

OTHER:

- What other aspects (if any) of their continued growth and development seem relevant or significant?

Notes and Report

The Shepherd will report verbally on their advisee at CoM meetings. As seems relevant, basic written notes may be maintained to facilitate transitions between shepherds if a CoM member's term ends. These notes are confidential and are not kept by the CoM or in any diocesan files.