

Guidelines for Reception of Clergy from other Churches

Title III, Canon 10 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church contains special provisions relating to individuals who have been ordained in other Churches. The guidelines in this section pertain to those who have been ordained to the Priesthood by Bishops in Churches in the Historic Succession but that are not in communion with the Episcopal Church, such as the Roman Catholic Church.

Section 1. An individual seeking to be received into Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a confirmed communicant in good standing in a parish of this Diocese for a minimum of twelve months prior to having Holy Orders received, as certified by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the parish.
2. Be at least age 24.
3. Enter into conversation with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge concerning his or her desire to have his or her Holy Orders received.
4. Meet with a parish evaluation committee to discuss the reasons for having left ordained ministry in the previous Church, the reasons for wanting to serve as an Episcopal priest, and the differences between ministry in the two Churches.
5. At such time as the Rector or Priest-in-Charge determines to be appropriate, meet with the Bishop. If the Bishop determines that the individual should proceed, the Bishop, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, shall assign a mentor Priest to the individual. The mentor and clergy person shall meet regularly for guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about ministry in the Episcopal Church.
6. Follow the provisions contained in “Guidelines for Nominees” chapter of “Discerning and Responding to a Call to Holy Orders” in the following respects: obtain the Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Clearance and Request for Criminal Record Check as specified in “Pre-Internship Requirements” and submit them to the Diocese; and, upon request of the Commission on Ministry, obtain the background check and medical and psychological examinations as specified in “Background Checks” and “Medical and Psychological Examinations.” The costs are to be borne by the individual.
7. Complete and submit evidence of the training program offered periodically by the Commission on Race and Reconciliation.
8. Complete and submit evidence of the training programs offered by the Diocese on prevention of sexual misconduct and child and elder abuse.
9. Complete and submit evidence of training on the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, including particularly Title IV.
10. Submit evidence of previous Ministry and validity of any credentials.
11. Submit evidence of moral and godly character, including an attestation that he or she is free from any vows or other engagements that are inconsistent with the exercise of Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. The attestation form is found on page 6 of this document.
12. Have official transcripts of all academic and theological studies sent to the Diocese.
13. Submit a certificate from at least two Episcopal priests stating that, from personal examination or the review of satisfactory evidence, they believe that your departure from the Communion to which you have belonged did not arise from any circumstance unfavorable to moral or religious character, or on account of which it may not be expedient to admit you to Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church. The certificate is found on page 5 of this document.

14. Have a Letter of Support from the Rector/Priest-in-Charge and Vestry as provided in Section 2 of this document.
15. Submit a statement of the reasons for which you are seeking to enter Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church.

Section 2. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the individual's parish shall meet and discuss with the individual his or her theological training, ministry background and experience, reasons for leaving the individual's previous Church, and reasons for desiring to be received as a priest in the Episcopal Church.

The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall convene a parish evaluation committee to meet with the individual and to review his reasons for having left ordained ministry in the previous Church, his reasons for wanting to serve as an Episcopal priest, and his understanding of the differences between priestly ministry in the two Churches.

After the individual has met with the Bishop as prescribed in Section 1, and being satisfied with the results of the parish evaluation committee and his or her conversations with the individual, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge may seek the approval of two-thirds of the Vestry for the Letter of Support contained in this document. The Letter of Support shall be sent to the Bishop along with a written evaluation from the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the parish evaluation committee.

Section 3. Such individual who has been ordained by a Bishop in the Historic Succession but not in communion with this Church, the regularity of whose ordination is approved by the Presiding Bishop, must apply in writing to the Bishop, using the form provided in this document, and attaching evidence that he or she meets the requirements contained in Section 1, subsections 1, 2, 5 through 13, and 15. This application may not be submitted until the individual's Rector or Priest-in-Charge and parish Vestry have given their Letter of Support.

Section 4. After the application and attached evidence have been submitted, the individual will be interviewed by the Commission on Ministry. The Commission will make a recommendation to the Bishop as to whether the individual shall go forward in the process and be subject to the rest of the Sections of this document. The Commission will also make a recommendation as to whether the individual should serve a parish internship beyond his or her sponsoring parish. Such recommendation may be made before or after interviewing the individual.

Section 5. The Commission on Ministry shall determine whether the individual has had adequate theological training in the previous Church that covers the following areas:

- (1) The Holy Scriptures.
- (2) Church History, including the Ecumenical Movement.
- (3) Christian Theology, including Missionary Theology and Missiology.
- (4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology.
- (5) Studies in contemporary society, including the historical and contemporary experience of racial and minority groups, and cross-cultural ministry skills. Cross-cultural ministry skills may include the ability to communicate in a contemporary language other than one's first language.
- (6) Liturgics and Church Music.

(7) Theory and practice of ministry, including leadership, and the ministries of evangelism and stewardship.

Section 6. The Commission on Ministry shall assure that appropriate training for the individual be provided that covers the following areas:

- (1) Church History: the history of the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church.
- (2) Doctrine: the Church's teaching as set forth in the Creeds and in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism.
- (3) Liturgics: the principles and history of Anglican worship; the contents of the Book of Common Prayer.
- (4) Practical Theology: (i) The office and work of a Deacon and Priest in this Church. (ii) The conduct of public worship. (iii) The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. (iv) The use of voice in reading and speaking.
- (5) The points of Doctrine, Discipline, Polity, and Worship in which the Church from which the applicant has come differ from this Church.

The preferred method of training for these areas would be a one-academic-year program resulting in a certificate or diploma of Anglican studies from an Episcopal seminary or other seminary approved by the Bishop. Alternatives such as a combination of on-line or local seminary classes, mentoring, and prescribed reading may be approved by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

Section 7. The Commission on Ministry or its representatives shall examine the individual and determine his or her proficiency in the five subjects listed in Section 6. The examination of item (5) concerning points of Doctrine, Discipline, Polity, and Worship shall be conducted, at least in part, by written questions and answers, and the replies kept on file for at least three years.

The Commission on Ministry may also, with the consent of the Bishop, examine the individual for proficiency in any of the subject matters listed in Section 5, or in any of the following:

- (1) prevention of sexual misconduct.
- (2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
- (3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.
- (4) the Church's teaching on racism.

The Commission on Ministry shall make a recommendation to the Bishop following such examination concerning the individual's proficiency.

Section 8. Prior to any examination under Section 7, the individual shall be interviewed by the Bishop and the Standing Committee, and have received certificates from the Bishop and Standing Committee that he or she is acceptable as a Priest of this Church, subject to the successful completion of the examination prescribed in Section 7.

Section 9. Prior to being received into Holy Orders in this Church, the Bishop shall require a promise in writing to submit in all things, to the Discipline of this Church without recourse to any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction or foreign civil jurisdiction, and shall also require the

individual to subscribe and make in the presence of the Bishop and two or more Presbyters the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution, as follows:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

Section 10. If satisfied with the individual's theological qualifications and successful completion of the examination specified in Section 7 and soundness of faith, the Bishop shall receive, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, the person into this Church as a priest.

Following reception, the Bishop, in consultation with the Commission on Ministry, shall assign a mentor Priest, which may be the same individual as assigned under Section 1. The mentor and newly received priest shall meet regularly for guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about ministry in the Episcopal Church.

Certificate of Moral and Religious Character

Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (a) (5)

I, _____, an Episcopal priest in good standing in the Episcopal Diocese of _____, hereby state that _____, from personal examination or from satisfactory evidence presented to me, that the departure of _____ from the Communion to which this person has belonged has not arisen from any circumstance unfavorable to moral or religious character, or on account of which it may not be expedient to admit the person to Holy Orders in this Church.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Attestation Concerning Vows or Engagements

Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (a) (3)

I do hereby attest that I am free from any vows or other engagements that are inconsistent with the exercise of Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Letter of Support for Receiving Holy Orders, Priesthood
Title III, Canon 10, Sec. 3 (a) (6) and Title III, Canon 8, Sec. 7 (b) (2)

To: The Bishop of Pittsburgh
325 Oliver Avenue, Suite 300
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

We, whose names appear below, certify that we support the reception of Holy Orders, Priesthood, of _____.

Rector/Member of Clergy in charge of parish

Date

ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry of _____ parish, duly convened on the _____ day of _____, 20____, and that the signatures above are those of at least two-thirds of the members of the Vestry, the number of Vestry members being _____.

Signature of Clerk or Secretary of the Vestry

Application for Reception of Holy Orders

Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (a)

I, _____, a communicant in good standing of
_____ parish, having previously been ordained
as a Priest in the _____ Church, hereby apply to be received
as a Priest in the Episcopal Church. I have attached all of the information required by the
Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh as outlined in Section 3 of Guidelines for Reception of Clergy
from other Churches as contained in “Discerning and Responding to a Call to Holy Orders.”

Print Name

Signature

Date

Certificate of Acceptability, Standing Committee

Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (e)

To: The Right Rev. _____, Bishop of Pittsburgh

We, the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, having been duly convened at _____ do testify that we find

_____, desiring to be received as a Priest in the Episcopal Church, acceptable as a Priest of this Church, subject to the successful completion of the examination of his proficiency as provided in Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (c) and (d).

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord 20____.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Members of the Standing Committee

Certificate of Acceptability, Bishop
Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (e)

I, the Right Rev. _____, Bishop of Pittsburgh, hereby declare that I find _____, desiring to be received as a Priest in the Episcopal Church, acceptable as a Priest of this Church, subject to the successful completion of the examination of his proficiency as provided in Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (c) and (d).

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord 20____.

Episcopal Bishop of Pittsburgh

Advice and Consent of Standing Committee

Title III, Canon 10, Section 3 (g) (1)

To: The Right Rev. _____, Bishop of Pittsburgh

We, the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, having been duly convened at _____ do testify that we give our advice and consent to your receiving the Holy Orders of _____.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord 20____.

Members of the Standing Committee