

ECMN Discipleship Hallmarks for Leadership: The Four Orders of Ministry

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PREAMBLE

In the Episcopal Church...we seek to see and serve Christ in all people, to love our neighbors as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being. In the Episcopal Church in Minnesota we seek to embody that by

- the daily practice of prayer as disciples,
- the courage to take risks and innovate for the sake of the Gospel,
- the belief that Beloved Community calls for healing and reconciling the 'isms' that confront us, and
- the audacity to grow where we are planted, leading to vitality in any and all contexts.

The Church (from the Book of Common Prayer, Catechism, p. 855)

Q: What is the mission of the Church?

A: The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Q: How does the Church pursue its mission?

A: The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace and love.

Q: Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?

A: The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

The Ministry

Q: Who are the ministers of the Church?

A: The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons.

Q: What is the ministry of the laity?

A: The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given to them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world' and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

Q: What is the ministry of a bishop?

A: The ministry of the bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

Q: What is the ministry of a priest or presbyter?

A: The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.

Q: What is the ministry of a deacon?

A: The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.

Q: What is the duty of all Christians?

A: The duty of all Christians is to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God.

LAITY

CALL:

Called by God to recognize that gifts have been given by the grace of God and to use those gifts by making a faithful impact in our daily lives: in our homes and families, our vocations in work and volunteer opportunities, and our places of worship and service to others.

COMMITMENT:

- Commit to deepen relationship with God and to grow in faith with prayer, reading scripture, and commitment to worship and study
- Regular habit to practices of discipleship, modeling the rigor and discipline of prayer as a primary vehicle to walking the Way of Jesus
- Participate in existing lay ministries and discern with others about new ways the Holy Spirit might be calling us to meet the needs of the community inside and outside the church
- Discern where God is already at work and intentionally seek to join God's mission in the world
- Live lives marked by integrity, compassion and Jesus' call to love one another; treating others with respect regardless of human differences such as race, gender, social status, theological viewpoint and orientation
- Commit to deepening relationships with others in the congregation and to understand our mutual obedience to one another
- Take responsibility for creating a culture of openness to the stranger and a willingness to be a part of the Beloved Community
- Commit to lifelong discernment for discovering what God is inviting us for our ensuing chapters of faithful living
- Live lives of faith in thought, word and deed and intentionally pursue spiritual growth and renewal of body, mind, and spirit
- Trust the Holy Spirit is leading

You might be called to exercise leadership as a lay person if you can show evidence that the commitments above and the promises below are already showing up in your life.

Promises taken from Baptismal Vows: (Book of Common Prayer, pp. 304-305)

Continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship

Break bread

Pray

Resist evil and repent when you haven't

Tell about God's Good news in Christ by what you say and do

Seek and serve Christ in all people

Love your neighbor as yourself

Strive for justice and peace among all people

Respect the dignity of every human being

Diaconate

CALL:

Called by God and the church to lifelong, well-trained, sacrificial service in Christ's name to all people in need. Working directly under the bishop and in partnership with other clergy, a deacon embodies servant ministry, encouraging the church in its ministry to the world, following Christ already at work in the world, empowering others to discern their gifts and ministries, and interpreting the needs of the world to the church.

COMMITMENT:

- Commit to deepen relationship with God and to grow in faith with prayer, reading scripture, and commitment to worship and study
- Regular habit to practices of discipleship, modeling the rigor and discipline of prayer as a primary vehicle to walking the Way of Jesus
- Approach innovation and transformation as servant-leaders, advocates, witnesses and prophets, forming partnerships and relationships with others to build capacity for God's mission, and leading and inspiring all people into the servant ministry of all believers.
- Respond to God's call to service, justice, mercy, compassion, love, and peace for all creation.
- Believe that we are serving Christ as we serve particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, the lonely, the marginalized, the forgotten, and the unseen.
- Live out God's ministries in the community and world with courage, tenacity, vision and hope.
- Dance on the edge of what is and what's possible, bearing the light of Christ, proclaiming truth, and blurring boundaries.
- Articulate and preach the diaconal invitation to join God at work in the world

You might be called to the Diaconate if you can show evidence that the commitments above and the promises below are already showing up in your life.

Promises taken from Ordination Vows (Book of Common Prayer, p.543)

Serve all the people, especially the poor, weak, sick, and lonely

Study Scripture – seek nourishment from them; model your life on them

Make Christ's love known by your word and example to those with whom you live, work, and worship

Interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world

Assist the Bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments

Show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself

See the COM's questions for those seeking ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood for further discernment [here](#).

Priesthood

CALL:

Called by God and the Church to provide spiritual nourishment in thought, word, and deed for God's people. Working with the Bishop, a priest is a ministry cultivator who inspires people in Word and Sacrament, engages in the holy and unrelenting work of reconciliation and seeks to recruit people with gifts and skills to share in the labor of God's vineyard.

COMMITMENT:

- Commit to deepen relationship with God and to grow in faith with prayer, reading scripture, and commitment to worship and study
- Regular habit to practices of discipleship, modeling the rigor and discipline of prayer as a primary vehicle to walking the Way of Jesus
- Have a listening heart, open to listening to God, the community, the congregation, and differing views.
- Be a catalyst for discerning vision and identifying sparks of the Holy Spirit's movement
- Be a faithful pastor who is intentional, prayerful and always listening to the hopes and concerns of God's people and finding ways to accompany them in their lives
- Earnestly seek God's will for the church, and work diligently, with tenacity and respect for the views, thoughts and suggestions of others, to bring about needed transformational and iterative change
- Serve as a ministry developer and seek to identify, nurture, encourage, and support leadership in others
- Be lifelong learners and commit to your own intercultural development and practice of Beloved Community
- Lean into learning specialized skills such as fluency in another language, church planting, missional practices, etc.
- Articulate and preach the priestly invitation to be people of reconciliation, forgiveness, hope and blessing

You might be called to the Priesthood if you can show evidence that the commitments above and the promises below are already showing up in your life.

Promises taken from Ordination Vows (Book of Common Prayer, p.531)

Proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts

Love and serve the people with whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor

Preach

Declare God's forgiveness

Pronounce God's blessing

Share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood

Perform the other ministrations entrusted to you

Respect and be guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of your bishop

Episcopate

CALL:

Called by God and the Church to serve as the shepherd of all the people of the diocese, its laity, deacons and priests, in ways that are public, prophetic and pastoral.

COMMITMENT:

- Commitment to deepen relationship with God and to grow in faith with prayer, reading scripture, and commitment to worship and study
- Regular habit to practices of discipleship, modeling the rigor and discipline of prayer as a primary vehicle to walking the Way of Jesus
- Be future-oriented, willing to take risks, yet encouraging others to celebrate the past while moving toward and embracing the future
- Practice as a role model and invite all others into building the beloved community
- Treat others with respect and seek justice, healthy accountability, and reconciliation
- Serve as chief pastor to the clergy and to all the congregations
- Commitment to regular and consistent relationships to congregations and leaders in the diocese
- Hold the systems and people accountable to transparency and canonical functioning
- Practice of courageous accountability
- Stand up for the poor and marginalized and speak truth to oppressive systems
- Articulate and preach the episcopate invitation to be people of proclamation and agents of Jesus' witness in today's world

You might be called to the Episcopate if you can show evidence that the commitments above and the promises below are already showing up in your life.

Promises taken from Consecration Vows:

Be faithful in prayer and in the study of Holy Scripture

Boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of your people

As chief priest and pastor, encourage and support all baptized people in their gifts and ministries, nourish them for the riches of God's grace, pray for them without ceasing, and celebrate with them the sacraments of our redemption

Guard the faith, unity and discipline of the Church

Ordain priests, sustain and take counsel with them

Ordain deacons, guide and strengthen them

Join in ordaining bishops and share with them in the governance of the whole Church

Be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers, and defend those who have no helper