

Ordained Ministry Process

Discernment, Formation & Canonical Steps for
Ordination to the Priesthood and the Diaconate

A Document of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota

Approved by Commission on Ministry June 10, 2017.
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Hello,

In the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, it's our dream that all the baptized have been given the opportunity to discern and be equipped to use their gifts in partnership with others in their neighborhood.

The life that God is calling us to live together as Episcopalians requires something of each of us. Phrased another way, God uses each of us to bring to life God's good will and way in the world.

According to the Book of Common Prayer, "the Mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ," and we do this work together.

We all hold a piece of this restoration and unity work in us. We have been given gifts by God, and we are called to discern what those gifts are, to put them to use in our life in a way that glorifies God and brings God's kingdom closer.

If your gifts are leading you to explore a possible call to the diaconate or the priesthood, this handbook outlines all of the steps from further discernment to formation and the canonical steps towards ordination.

The information and numerous steps can feel overwhelming at times and my invitation to you is to keep saying your prayers as you embark on this journey. The Church needs gifted ordained leaders whose hearts are all about ministry development – about inviting others to continue to use their gifts for the sake of God's mission in our myriad contexts and cultures.

Today's Church needs ordained leaders who are innovative, creative, collaborative and willing to follow Jesus into a very uncertain world. I am grateful to your ongoing and lifelong discernment around this call to ordained ministry.

Blessings,

The Rt. Rev. Brian N. Prior

IX Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota

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Questions to ask...

1. What are some of the gifts God has given me?
2. Am I using them to the best of my ability?
3. Are there ways I can deepen and form those gifts even more fully?
4. What gifts does my faith community most need?

The Foundations of Discernment

Where is God in this process? What do the sacraments have to do with it? Why is mission so central to the work of the Body of Christ? What does it mean to be “sent out?”

Baptism is the doorway through which all Christians are received fully into the household of God. As the Book of Common Prayer states, “Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.” Confirmation is one’s acceptance — one’s confirmation — of that vocation, declared as an adult. The invitation to go deeper into one’s expression and articulation of ministry is inspired by the fire of the Holy Spirit, whether it is a still, small voice, a booming voice from on high (just possibly) or simple hints along the way.

The sacrament of ordination is for those entering the diaconate or priesthood, and the act of commissioning is for those who are choosing to lift up a lay ministry.

As Christians, we are sent into the world with distinct skills and gifts to engage God’s mission of restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. With reflection, prayer and conversation, we discern how best our passions and gifts might be used.

Whether you use your gifts as someone who is an ordained or lay person – God needs you to bring his Kingdom just that much nearer. We are always looking for what we hear God saying “yes” to you in best using your gifts for mission and ministry.

Beginning of Formal Discernment for Holy Orders

The first step in discernment is for an individual to approach his or her sponsoring priest to say that he or she is wondering about a potential call to ordained leadership. (Your faith community may not have a priest regularly on-site, so it's absolutely fine to identify a priest or deacon from another community.) One begins with clear willingness to enter into a period of discernment. In some cases, a sponsoring priest may initiate a contact with someone who might be open to a call. The timing will be as wide as God's mercy and will begin at the moment an interest in exploring a call is expressed. At that juncture, several things are set into motion.

The sponsoring priest or deacon, as the first point of contact, commits to walking with the individual through prayer and conversation through several meetings with the individual.

The sponsoring priest/deacon contacts the Missioner for Ministry to indicate that an individual is interested in leadership discernment and is regarded as an engaged, active participant in the sponsoring faith community for at least a year.

The Missioner for Ministry meets with the sponsoring priest and individual to review the entire process of discernment and formation, including:

- reviewing the hallmarks for leadership in ECMN
- assuring the individual's commitment to engage in a relationship with a spiritual director
- defining the numerous roles involved in process: the individual, sponsoring priest, companion, sponsoring faith community, Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee and the Bishop.
- defining the three primary components of the discernment process:
 - in context (in the sponsoring faith community),
 - in community (in a group of trained discernment facilitators with peers engaged in discernment), and
 - in early formation (gatherings with others in your cohort for learning opportunities). The three components are not sequential, but rather, concurrent.
- describing the Assessment of Readiness for Formal Discernment, a Commission on Ministry established process for members of the faith community and the individual to undertake together

Discernment Components

I. In a Local Faith Community (*discernment in context*)

Canon III.3.1 of the Episcopal Church states: The Bishop and Commission (on Ministry) shall provide encouragement, training, and necessary resources to assist each faith community in developing an ongoing process of community discernment appropriate to the cultural background, age, and life experiences of all persons seeking direction in their call to ministry.

The sponsoring priest and individual will brainstorm about the best contextual experience for local discernment, including the following components:

1. Completing the **Assessment of Readiness for Formal Discernment**, a guided process that involves the individual, sponsoring priest, a few vestry members and a companion for the individual. The process is a time for the aforementioned people to gather in assembly to fill out the Discernment Wheel and discuss the individual's readiness for ongoing discernment, resulting either in further work in the faith community and/or the creation of a covenant between the individual and faith community. This document is available separately and also included as Appendix XXXX.
2. **Undertaking Leadership Project(s)** with written and verbal reflections. Depending upon the gifts of the individual and his or her needs for development, and the needs of the sponsoring faith community, you may set up one or more experiential projects that explore various dimensions of integrated leadership in the Church, ensuring that there are clear action steps, goals, out-comes, and intentional reflection. It's also very likely that an additional leadership project is not necessary because you've already demonstrated yourself as a leader in numerous ways. If the individual isn't well known within the faith community, this can be an excellent way for people to get to see their leadership potential. Possible leadership categories include:
 - a. Pastoral care
 - b. Administration
 - c. Preaching
 - d. Teaching
 - e. Catechesis
 - f. Formation
 - g. Liturgy
 - h. Social Justice
 - i. Outreach
 - j. Evangelism
 - k. Communication
 - l. Other

Discernment Components

3. Under the coaching of the sponsoring priest, the individual will engage in an intentional **prayer, scripture, and reflection** process with a small group of members from the local faith community in order to develop a discipline of prayer and the study of scripture in relationship with others. (e.g., Gospel Based Discipleship, Moment by Moment, Morning/Evening Prayer, other)
4. Sends the **Covenant agreement** to the attention of the Missioner for Ministry as in indication of readiness to begin the discernment in peer community, which commences in the fall of each year

II. In a Peer Community (*discernment in community*)

In the fall of each year, those who have begun the discernment in context will be invited to participate in a wider discernment with peers. The individual and sponsoring priest will identify a Companion from the local faith community to join the individual in this part of the process. The contextual experience is critical and will be ongoing throughout the community process. The individual and companion will be invited to join three to four other teams of individuals and companions from other faith communities to reflect further on their discernment. A team of trained facilitators, always composed of one priest, one deacon, one lay person, and one spiritual director, will lead this process. The discernment in community process will take place over the span of about 8 months, meeting from early fall through late spring.

III. In Early Formation (*discernment in theological content*)

Those in discernment take two courses in the School for Formation to gain a deeper sense of self-awareness, deepen their Episcopal identity, and explore the reality of further coursework.

- The Four Orders of Ministry
- Christian Spirituality

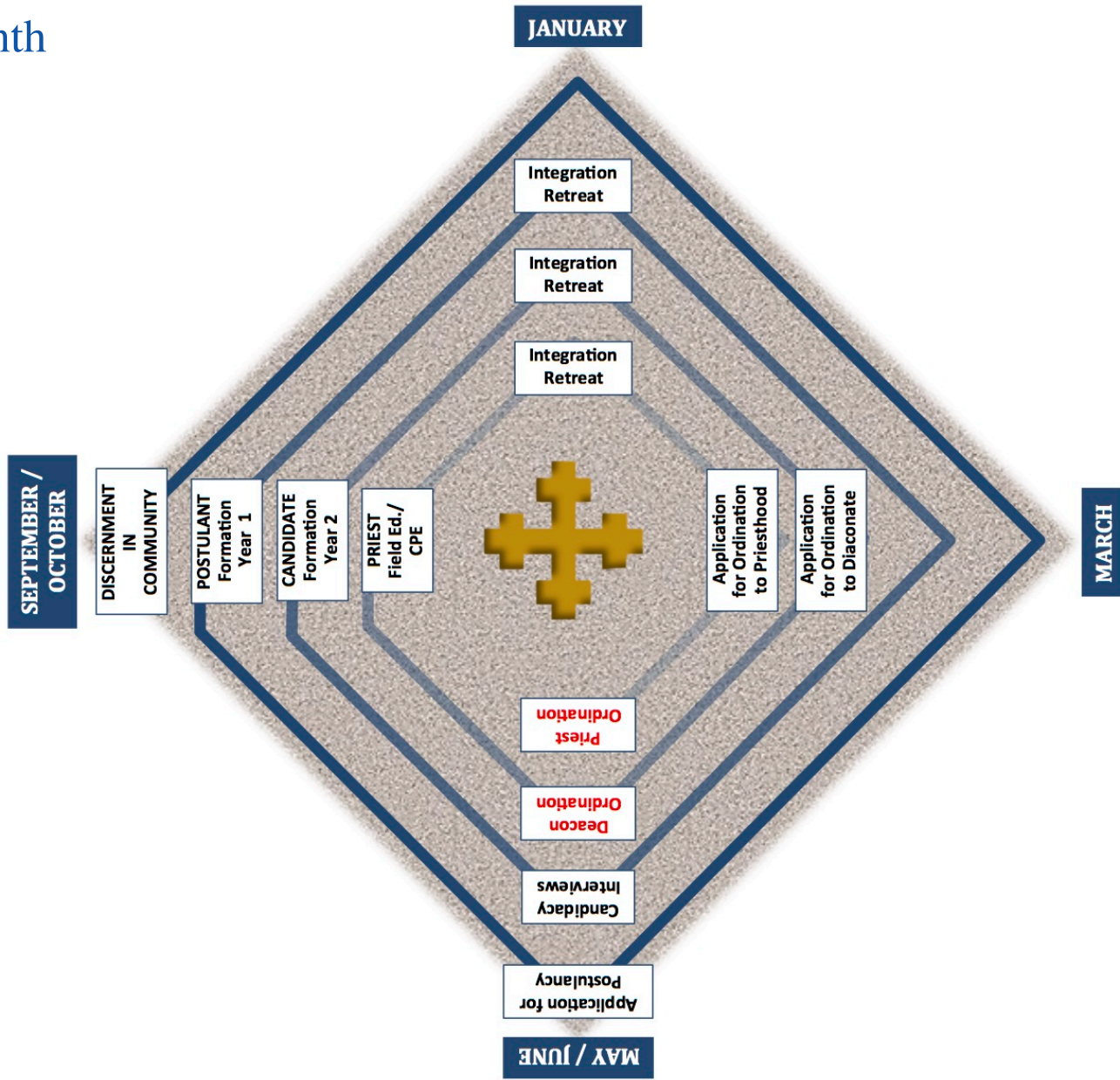
Conclusion of the Leadership Discernment Process

Discernment never really concludes — we are all engaged in it throughout our lives — but processes must clearly start and conclude so we have clarity and accountability.

In the spring of each year, the discernment facilitation team will consult the sponsoring priest, companion, and any other people the sponsoring priest believes were integral parts of discernment in the sponsoring faith community. Together this group will consider the outcome of the sense of call for the individual and send a specific recommendation to the Bishop in written form. The Bishop has sole authority for approving or modifying the recommendation, which will set in motion any canonical steps and formation towards licensed, commissioned, or ordained leadership, as warranted by the recommendation.

Discernment, Formation & Ordination

Episcopal Church in Minnesota



A Guide for Walking the Labyrinth

— including steps, deadlines, and documents

Preparing to Enter

Before August 1 of each year, people who are interested in entering the formal discernment process in the wider ECMN community will have 1) met with the Missioner for Ministry to discuss the process and, 2) attained a Spiritual Director and 3) completed the Assessment for Readiness for Formal Discernment and sent the signed Covenant between the Faith Community and the Individual to the Bishop.

The First Year – September through August

Starting on the Path: Discernment in Community

In September of each year, those who have accomplished the above enter the labyrinth and begin the Discernment in Community. This is a facilitated process that runs from September through May or June of each year, including opportunities for all in discernment to meet together in a large group in September and June and several small group meetings throughout the other months in the time frame. Discerners take two courses in the School for Formation: The Four Orders of Ministry, and Christian Spirituality.

Arriving at May/June - By May 31 of each year, the Discernment Facilitation Team submits the Outcome of Discernment Form (Form C) and an accompanying letter from the team to the Bishop's Office that describes the discernment experience and briefly assesses each individual's gifts and skills for ministry.

Walking Between Application for Postulancy and Becoming a Postulant:

For those discerned for Holy Orders, either priesthood or diaconate, several steps will be undertaken during the summer months to be completed and sent to the Bishop's Office by August 15:

Application for Holy Orders/Postulancy (Form D)

1. Waiver of Information (Form F)
2. Authorization and Informed Consent Form for Background Checks for Holy Orders (Form
3. Sense of call document
4. Spiritual autobiography document
5. Current resume
6. Picture of self
7. Transcripts from most recent education
8. Evidence of confirmation and/or reception into the Episcopal Church

10. Evidence of baptism

11. Discerned Individual meets with Vestry/Bishop's Committee inviting them to fill out the Nomination for Postulancy by Vestry/Bishop's Committee (Form E). Form is then sent to the Bishop's Office. The Sponsoring Priest includes his/her own letter of recommendation with the Form.
12. Set up an appointment for a psychological evaluation with LeaderWise at 651-636-5120. (Note: the fee is approximately \$1100 which is paid directly by ECMN and then is invoiced as follows – 1/3 by individual, 1/3 by local faith community, 1/3 by Episcopal Church in Minnesota). Call in early June to make this appointment as both the scheduling and the test itself will require some time. The evaluation will be sent directly to the Bishop's Office and it must be received by August 15.
13. Set up an appointment for a medical evaluation. Bring your Medical Examination (Form G) and the four-page CPG Medical Evaluation form. If you have had an annual exam within the last year, you do not have to have an additional exam but simply ask the doctor to provide a letter attesting to your health based on the most recent exam. Send the forms or letter to the Bishop's Office by August 15.
14. The Missioner for Formation will invite all recently discerned for the priesthood to a meeting with the Commission for Formation by mid July to discuss each person's desired formation path. A written formation plan will be created for each person. All discerned for the diaconate will enter the School for Formation, courses begin in August..
15. After August 15, the Bishop will review of all of the information that has been sub- mitted (as above) and will set up an interview with each person by the end of August. *All Forms* can be downloaded from www.episcopalmn.org.

Note: Each person in the Holy Orders process has a physical file that is kept at the Bishop's Office. All of the materials that are submitted are kept in hard-copy form and they are also uploaded to an electronic file where all paper documents are uploaded and linked to a tracking record. Each person will be given the ability to access their unique tracking record on-line without viewing anybody else's records. In terms of confidentiality, it is important to note that the psychological and medical evaluations and the background check are NOT uploaded to the electronic file — they are merely recorded as to the date they were taken. Similarly, Social Security numbers are not kept in any file. Once the background check has been administered, any evidence of SSN's are either shredded or blacked out. The Bishop, Missioners, Standing Committee and Commission on Ministry do access the electronic file in order to do the work with which they have been entrusted and for which they have responsibility.

The Second Year – September through August

Establishing Date of Postulancy and beginning Year 1 of Formation in September

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy, and it also initiates the formal preparation for ordination. Postulancy involves continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to Holy Orders.

Postulancy is a time for learning and growth in the skills and abilities you will need as a deacon or priest, but it is not just a matter of taking classes or meeting competencies. It is also a liminal time, standing on the threshold of a significant change, when you are asked to do the spiritual work of claiming and growing into your emerging identity as a deacon or priest.

Before Formation begins, a Date of Postulancy Established by the Bishop in the form of a letter is sent to each person in early September.

Each Postulant for ordination to both the priesthood and diaconate will communicate with the Bishop by letter or email, four times a year in the Ember Weeks [Lent 1, Pentecost Sunday, Holy Cross Day which is September 14 and Advent 1], reflecting on the Postulant's academic and personal and spiritual development. These letters should be sent quarterly up until the time of ordination.

Postulant remains in spiritual direction.

Expectations throughout the Formation Process

Postulant enters the School for Formation cohort for Holy Orders, and begins coursework either via Seminary or the School for Formation according to the formation plan outlined by Bishop Prior with the Commission for Formation. Formation canons stipulate theological training, practical experience, emotional development and spiritual formation. The Canons of the Episcopal Church outline subject areas for study during the program of preparation for ordination over the course of the next two-three years.

For those in the preparation for the diaconate:

- Academia: Holy Scriptures, theology and the tradition of the church
- An understanding of diaconate and diaconia
- Human Understanding
- Personal spiritual discipline
- Practical training and experience

For those in preparation for the priesthood:

- Holy Scripture
- History of the Christian Church
- Christian Theology
- Christian Ethics and Moral Theology
- Christian Worship
- Practice of Ministry in contemporary society

Episcopal Church Canonical Requirements of:

- The Church's teaching on racism
- MN and TEC Constitution and Canons
- Safe Church Training – Child and Adult; and Mandatory Reporting

While providing evidence of having taken the above three trainings is required in advance of ordination to the diaconate, at any time one of these trainings have been taken, the certification of that training should be sent to the Bishop's office for the file.

Integration Retreat

In January, those in formation for Holy Orders take part in an Integration Retreat. The Integration Retreat allows participants to gather a portfolio of their work demonstrating competence in the areas outlined by canon (see pp. 11 – 12, above), to bring their learning to collaborative projects with their peers, to receive feedback about how their formation is progressing, and to develop an ongoing learning plan with support from the COM to address any concerns.

Planning for Applied Learning

Over the course of the first year, those in formation for the vocational diaconate should have a plan to begin their internship, which should begin at Pentecost and run one full year.

By the end of the first year, those in formation for the priesthood should have a plan for how they will accomplish one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and one full program year of an internship placement. **One of these applied experiences must be complete prior to ordination as a transitional deacon.**

Walking towards Candidacy

By May 1*, the Postulant submits the following material to the Bishop's Office:

- Postulant's Application for Candidacy
- Recommendation for Candidacy. *Remember to ask for this to be considered and filled out at a Vestry/Bishop's Committee meeting in March or April in order to make the deadline.*

The Commission for Ministry reviews the Postulant's file and writes a statement attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant by May 15.

**Please confirm this date as it approaches. Candidacy interviews are scheduled by the Standing Committee, and may take place from May – December of this year.*

Candidacy Interview with the Standing Committee in June

The Standing Committee interviews each Postulant at their regularly scheduled meeting in June. The Standing Committee will have reviewed the Postulant's file in advance of the interview. Among the topics to be discussed by the Postulant are: Her/his sense of call, and previous experience that led them to this point in their spiritual journey.

Upon completion of the interview with the Standing Committee, they write a letter to the Bishop attesting to the preparedness of the Postulant for candidacy.

A Date of Candidacy Established by the Bishop in the form of a letter is sent to each person in June.

The Third Year – September through August

Candidacy and Year 2 of Formation in September

Candidacy is a time of continued education and formation in preparation for ordination to the diaconate/priesthood, established by the Bishop the Commission for Ministry, the Standing Committee and the sponsoring faith community. **Internship and/or Clinical Pastoral Education (for priesthood) are key components for formation during this time in addition to ongoing coursework.**

Integration Retreat

In January, those in formation for Holy Orders take part in a second Integration Retreat. This Integration Retreat allows participants to expand their portfolio, to address any concerns named in the previous retreat, and to continue working with peers in experiential workshops to address urgent concerns and opportunities related to God's mission. If the second Integration Retreat reveals areas that need further attention, an ongoing learning plan will be created to address those concerns prior to diaconal ordination.

Preparing for Application to Diaconal Ordination in January and February

By February 1, the Candidate submits the following material to the Bishop's Office:

- Candidate's Application for Ordination to Diaconate (Form K)
- Recommendation for Ordination to the Diaconate (Form L). *Remember to ask for this to be considered and filled out at a Vestry/Bishop's Committee meeting in December or January in order to make the deadline.*
- Internship Supervisor's Evaluation
- Evidence of the Church's teaching on racism
- Evidence of Safe Church training
- Evidence of MN and TEC Canons and Constitution training
- Candidate asks a leader in position to evaluate his/her formation experience (Seminary, School for Formation or Other) to send an assessment of the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and to give an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination to the Diaconate. The evaluator should be asked in January so that it can be received by February 1.
- Candidate also requests that transcripts be sent by February 1.
- The Commission for Ministry reviews the Candidate's file and writes a statement attesting to the recommendation for ordination by February 15.

Recommendation for Diaconal Ordination in March

The Standing Committee reviews the file of the Candidate at their regularly scheduled meeting in March. In some cases, the Candidate may be asked to come for an in-person interview, but adequate advance notice would be given if that will be requested.

Upon completion of the review of the Candidate's file by the Standing Committee, the Standing Committee will write a letter to the Bishop attesting to the recommendation of the Candidate for Ordination.

A Date of Ordination to the Diaconate in the form of a letter is sent by the Bishop to each candidate.

Preparing for Diaconal Ordination in April and May

The Bishop and Missioner for Formation will work with all who have been approved for Ordination in March regarding details for Ordination in June.

Ordination in June

Go in peace and love and be Christ's hands and feet in the world!

Those who are ordained as vocational deacons will await a placement from the Bishop. The Bishop welcomes the Deacon's input as to where a good fit may be.

Those who are ordained to the Transitional Diaconate prepare to enter their final year in formation for the Priesthood.

The Fourth Year – September through August

Ongoing formation for the Transitional Deacon continues in September

Internship and/or Clinical Pastoral Education (for priesthood) are key components for formation during this time, in addition to ongoing coursework.

Integration Retreat

In January, those in formation for Holy Orders take part in a third Integration Retreat. This Integration Retreat allows participants to expand their portfolio, to address any concerns named in the previous retreat, and to continue working with peers in experiential workshops to address urgent concerns and opportunities related to God's mission. If the second Integration Retreat reveals areas that need further attention, an ongoing learning plan will be created to address those concerns prior to priestly ordination.

Preparing for Application to Priesthood in January and February

By February 1, the Transitional Deacon submits the following material to the Bishop's Office:

- Application for Ordination to Priesthood (Form M)
- Recommendation for Ordination to the Priesthood (Form N). *Remember to ask for this to be considered and filled out at a Vestry/Bishop's Committee meeting in December or January in order to make the deadline.*
- Internship Supervisor's Evaluation
- CPE evaluation

Transitional Deacon asks a leader in position to evaluate his/her formation experience (Seminary, School for Formation or Other) to send an assessment of the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and to give an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination to the Diaconate. The evaluator should be asked in January, so that it can be received by February 1.

Transitional Deacon also requests that transcripts be sent by February 1.

The Commission for Ministry certifies to Standing Committee that formation is complete, citing there is proficiency in the required areas of study, and recommends for Ordination by February 15.

Recommendation for Ordination to the Priesthood in March

The Standing Committee reviews the file of the Transitional Deacon at their regularly scheduled meeting in March. In some cases, the Transitional Deacon may be asked to

come for an in-person interview, but adequate advance notice would be given if that is requested.

Upon completion of the review of the Transitional Deacon's file by the Standing Committee, the Standing Committee will write a letter to the Bishop attesting to the recommendation of the Candidate for Ordination to the Priesthood.

A Date of Ordination to the Priesthood in the form of a letter is sent by the Bishop to each person.

Preparing for Ordination to the Priesthood in April and May

The Bishop and Missioner for Formation will work with all who have been approved for Ordination in March regarding details for Ordination in June.

Ordination in June

Go in peace and love and be Christ's hands and feet in the world!

Remember, Lifelong Formation: See Appendix F.

Appendix

Appendix A: Glossary of Terms *(in alphabetical order)*

Bishop – person elected by the Episcopal Church in Minnesota to serve as Bishop

(diocesan), which confers authority for approving the various canonical steps involved in discernment, formation, and licensing, commissioning or ordination.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) – An intensive learning experience, required for those in formation for priesthood. Typically involves chaplaincy in a hospital. Find out more about CPE programs at acpe.edu.

Cohort – In the School for Formation, a monthly gathering with those in formation for Holy Orders for shared worship, fellowship, mentorship, and learning. All those in formation for Holy Orders take part in this experience.

Companion — person from a sponsoring faith community, identified by the individual and sponsoring priest, who has gifts for listening and synthesizing, and will accompany individual to the Discernment in Community part of the process. This is a key ministry of presence — and gifted companions may meet with the individual between formal meetings to debrief, pray, wonder aloud and serve as a sounding board and mirror — reflecting back to the individual what they hear.

Commission for Formation — a subcommittee of the Commission on Ministry, this group assists in creating/affirming formation plans for all in Holy Orders tracks, and is a resource to the Bishop, Standing Committee and Formation Chaplains in terms of providing evaluation and progression of each individual.

Commission on Ministry — a canonical body consisting of twelve people, lay and ordained, appointed and elected by Convention who assist the Bishop in implementing the Title III (or Ministry) Canons of the Episcopal Church, determining present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons, and designing and overseeing the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation and assessment of readiness for ministry.

Discernment Facilitators — a specific group of people consisting of one priest, one deacon, one lay person, and one spiritual director who lead the Discernment in Community process.

Hallmarks for Leadership — set of characteristics set forth by the Bishop and Commission on Ministry as considered preferential for those seeking discernment for leadership positions

Individual — person discerning a call for leadership in mission and ministry

Integration Retreat: Each year, those in formation for Holy Orders compile a portfolio of their work prior to a weekend-long Integration Retreat. The retreat offers an opportunity to work together with peers to bring academic and personal learning to bear on questions of urgent importance to God's mission, developing tools together to address those issues, and making a plan for their own continued learning. ECMN uses this process to address the canonical requirement for assessment in key subject areas. ECMN does not use the General Ordination Exam.

Internship – An applied learning experience in which a person in formation for Holy Orders serves in a faith community other than their sending faith community for integration, discovery, mentorship, and practice in their new ordained role. The typical expectation is 8-10 hours per week for at least one program year, including involvement in liturgy, leadership and other activities in the internship site.

Leadership Projects — one or several projects done at the local faith community level with the mentorship and tutelage of the sponsoring priest that will help provide contextual, experiential learning in terms of ministry discernment. The projects are chosen in conversation among sponsoring priest, individual, and mentor taking into account functions not yet experienced by the individual, opportunities for development, or capabilities that are already strong and may be enriched.

Sense of Call Statement — a paper created by the individual that articulates their sense of call, which is created while in discernment and may be modified as their awareness evolves. Ideally, it is no longer than two pages.

Spiritual Autobiography — a paper created by the individual that outlines their spiritual journey. This can be prose or outline in form, starting at the point of awareness of a spiritual connection and continuing up to the present time. While there is no length constraint, being concise is its own spiritual discipline!

Spiritual Director — a person who is called and trained to help the individual become more aware of God's presence in his or her daily life — to begin to see God's action in the here and now — and then to help seekers see how his or her life is a response to that initiative.

Sponsoring Faith Community — the local faith community where the individual is a member. Most likely, it will be the location where the leadership project(s) is undertaken. The Vestry or Bishop's Committee will need to be in support of the individual throughout the discernment and formation process in terms of making recommendations and, if possible, offering financial support.

Sponsoring Priest — the priest who serves at the sponsoring faith community who is willing to guide the individual in terms of helping him or her to discern, create and undertake the leadership project(s), spiritual autobiography and sense of call statement, and generally serving as a spiritual guide and advisor throughout their process of discernment and formation.

Standing Committee — a canonical body consisting of twelve individuals, half lay and half clergy, all elected by Convention, who oversee and authorize the canonical steps towards ordination.

Appendix B: Hallmarks for Leadership

Created by the Bishop and Commission on Ministry, August 2012, revised March 2013

The Episcopal Church in Minnesota expresses the following hallmarks for those seeking discernment for lay and ordained leadership positions. No one person will exhibit all of these hallmarks. They are offered as a lens with which to self-examine and provide context for the sponsoring priest and faith community, discernment facilitation team, Bishop, Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee and Examining Chaplains to offer guidance and feedback. All of the hallmarks point towards discerning leaders who are innovative, creative and open to redefining the role of leaders based on the needs of the Church.

- A follower of Jesus
- Faith in a loving and forgiving God made known in Christ
- An inquiring and discerning heart
- Ability to articulate one's own beliefs
- Recognition of, and ability to live within, the tension between our historic church teachings and our contextual experiences of God
- Openness to varied expressions of belief or doctrine
- A lack of rigidity around concepts, images, or ideas about God.
- Ability to elicit and inspire in others faith in a loving and forgiving God
- Recognition of themselves as being perpetually transformed by the Holy Spirit
- Commitment to their own ongoing spiritual growth and development
- Dedication to ongoing self-awareness – an articulated understanding of strengths and growing areas
- A commitment to collaboration as a mode of teaching, learning and leading
- Ability to build consensus
- Ability to articulate one's own voice pastorally and prophetically.
- Ability to assist others to discern / equip / use their own gifts for ministry Continuous openness to the invitation to engage God's mission
- Willingness and capacity to recognize and go where God calls Capacity for compassion/empathy, both for oneself and others
- Ability to talk to people of differing ages and backgrounds
- Openness to learn and experiment with technology, social media
- Willingness to risk being changed and formed by the Holy Spirit

- Willingness to be flexible in liturgical styles
- Capacity to envision the evolution of the Church of today and tomorrow
- Commitment to self-care: physically, emotionally and spiritually
- Understanding and appreciation of boundaries – both one's own and others
- Willingness to make sacrifices and an ability to name that which can be sacrificed and that which cannot
- Capacity to be inspired and to be inspiring
- Understanding the brokenness of the church system, not seeing it as something perfected but rather evolving
- Psychological maturity to be grounded in reality, and the capacity to hope for a realization of God's kingdom on earth.
- Willingness to listen to others, hear others, and communicate in dialogue that is respectful, open and clear – both verbally and in writing.

Appendix C: Assessment for Readiness for Formal Discernment

To the Rector/Priest-in-Charge/Ministry Developer/Warden:

This Covenant Process has been designed to provide the Faith Community a spiritual, structured, and collaborative way to identify individuals within their community to discern possible vocations to the ordained life in the Episcopal Church. It also gives the Faith Community and the Discerner an opportunity to enter into a Covenant of prayer, support, and guidance.

A call to ministry, or vocation, is much wider than the ordination of a priest or deacon. Everyone is called to something - to be engaged in some sort of ministry to others. This Covenant Process is the first step to understanding one's call. *Some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.* [Ephesians 4:11-12] There is much work to do in building up the body of Christ and the discernment for ministry — both lay and ordained — is a critical step for a faith community to explore with those wondering how God may be calling them to use their gifts for engaging God's mission.

This Covenant Process takes place at the very genesis of a person's discernment process, soon after the individual has indicated his/her desire to pursue such a call from God. It happens within the context of the Discerner's Faith Community, which is, and should always continue to be, a nurturing people who pray to God for whatever is best for the Discerner and God's Church.

When someone from your Faith Community comes forward seeking discernment, a meeting of a group of individuals representing the diversity of your Faith Community should be called. This meeting, known as "The Assembly", will include:

The Discerner/Individual is a person from your faith community who is expressing an interest in discerning for a possible vocation to ordained life in the Episcopal Church.

The Rector/Priest-in-Charge/Ministry Developer serves at the Discerner's Faith Community and will become the Sponsoring Priest if the Individual is recommended to take part in Discernment in Community in ECMN. The Sponsoring Priest must be willing to guide the Individual through a Leadership Project, the writing of his/her Spiritual Autobiography and Sense of Call Statement, and generally serve as a spiritual guide and advisor throughout the process of discernment and formation.

The Vestry Members represent the Faith Community in a leadership role; people who have been recognized for their good judgment, management skills, and dedication to the Church. As such, they have a unique role in helping to discern for a spiritual vocation. It is preferable that the entire Vestry take part in The Assembly, but if this is not possible, a good showing of the Vestry of the Faith Community, plus the Senior Warden is desired.

The Companion is a member of the Faith Community who has gifts for listening and synthesizing, and will accompany individual to the Discernment in Community part of the process. This is a key ministry of presence — and gifted companions may meet with the individual between formal meetings to debrief, pray, wonder aloud and serve as a sounding board and mirror—reflecting back to the individual what they hear

THE DISCERNMENT WHEEL

What should I do? Who should I be?

How can I integrate my faith and my understanding of what God wants of me with what I do?

Each of us is created, unique, in God's image. Each of us came into this world with God-given specific gifts, passions, values, and skills. Each of us has developed skills and has been called on to perform certain tasks repeatedly, simply because we are good at them.

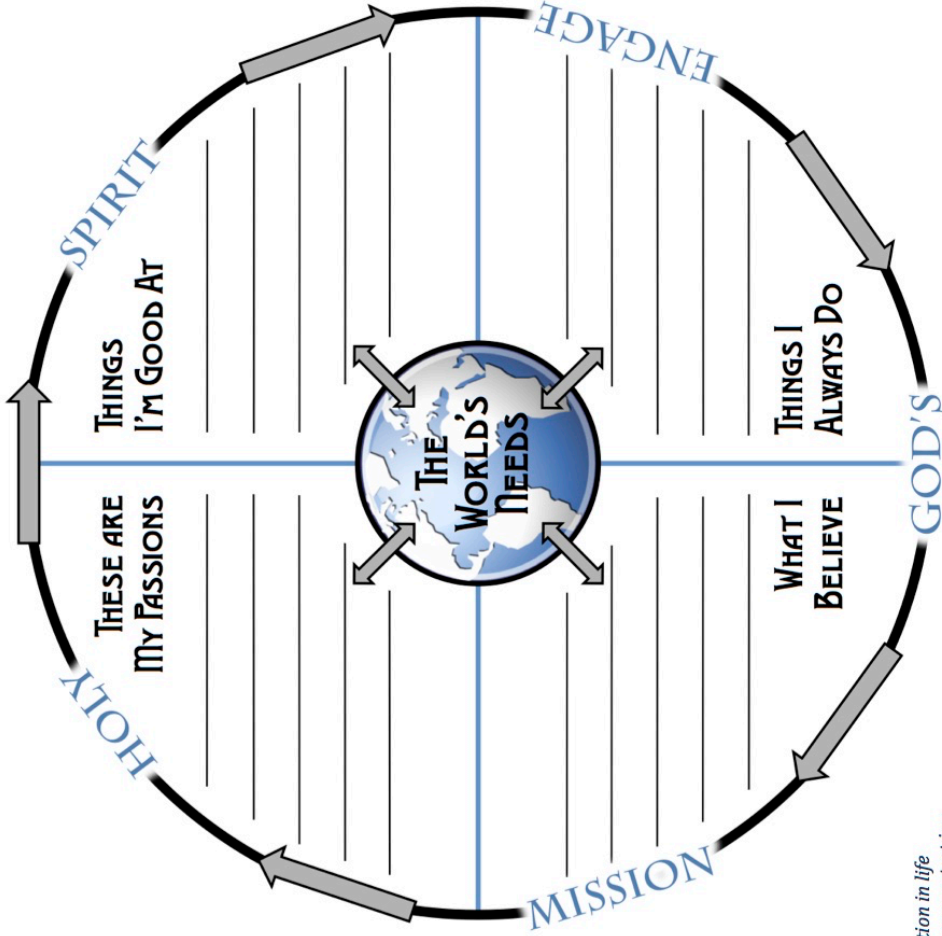
Four simple lenses help to answer the big question:

"What does God want to do with me?"

Ask yourself or others close to you what they observe about you:

- What are you really passionate about? What do you love to do and never tire doing?
- What are you really good at doing? What feels effortless to you?
- What do you find yourself always doing? What do others always ask you to do?
- What do you believe in your heart of hearts? What do you truly value in yourself and in others?

The information you gather in this process is an important indicator of the path God might be encouraging you to pursue. Where do your passions, values and that which you always do and are good at meet the world's needs? When the Holy Spirit connects those things, you are experiencing transformation. For there, you are truly engaging God's Mission. For there, the Kingdom of God is in the present.



"Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world's greatest need."
 —Frederick Buechner, theologian

The Assembly

The *Discernment Wheel* exercise should be sent out in advance to all persons who will participate in The Assembly, so they have adequate time to contemplate the questions, and can give well thought out answers on behalf of the Discerner.

The Assembly should be led by the Sponsoring Priest/Ministry Developer. Begin The Assembly by taking time for prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to descend upon those gathered.

If not done beforehand, all participants fill out the Discernment Wheel. The Discerner fills out the Wheel in the first person [of his/her own talents, etc.], while all the others in The Assembly fill out the Wheel with a focus on what they see in the Discerner. Study and discuss each member's findings.

Someone in The Assembly will ask the Discerner, "How and where have you experienced 'The Holy' in your life?" The Discerner will then be asked to describe a particular Spiritual Experience in his/her life.

[The Discerner is excused from the room at this point.]

Examine the question: "How is the Discerner living out his/her Baptismal Vows both inside and outside the Faith Community context?"

In what ways does this individual manifest a spiritual presence in this Faith Community?

At the end of all discussion concerning the Individual, all of the Discernment Wheels will be collected and kept by the Ministry Developer. The Ministry Developer then gives his/her assessment of the Individual's readiness to advance to the Discernment in Community for the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. This simple format may be used to record this assessment:

- We recommend this person for Discernment in Community for ECMN.
- We recommend this person continue to be an active member in this Faith Community for a time. While doing so, we expect this individual to meet regularly with a spiritual director, and engage in a Leadership Project commissioned by the Ministry Developer. We will meet again on behalf of this person in _months.

If it is determined that this person is recommended to advance to the Discernment in Community, then proceed with the Covenant Service.

Note: Discernment in Community takes place in small groups throughout the ECMN for about nine months each calendar year. Each small group is made up of a priest, a deacon, a spiritual director, a lay leader, and usually 2-4 discerners. At the end of Discernment in Community, an assessment is made of the Individual's readiness to advance to Formation for an ordained vocation.

The Faith Community & Individual Discernment:
A Covenant
"We Promise"

In the Discernment of [PRINT NAME]_____,
This Faith Community, [NAME]_____, commits itself to:

- ___ pray for, and in all other ways support and encourage this Discerner as she/he pursues a possible vocation to ordained life in the Episcopal Church;
- ___ work with the Discerner on a Leadership Project within the Faith Community;
- ___ [under the coaching of the Sponsoring Priest,] engage in an intentional prayer, scripture and reflection process with a small group of members of this faith community, from time to time;
- ___ assist the Discerner financially by paying a portion of the Evaluations, and any other costs that may be agreed upon by this Faith Community and the Discerner.

I, [SIGNATURE]_____, identify this person for discernment, and will commit to being her/his Sponsoring Priest.

I, [SIGNATURE]_____, identify this person for discernment, in a supportive manner, in my role as Vestry Member.

I, [SIGNATURE]_____, identify this person for discernment, and will commit to walk beside her/him as her/his Companion.

Signature of the Discerner: _____

Date:_____.

Appendix D: School for Formation www.schoolforformation.org

If you have discerned a call to serve, or if you have a longing to deepen your understanding of God and of our tradition, then you can find in the School for Formation the preparation and the learning you need. All are welcome!

Key commitments of the School for Formation:

Leaders as ministry developers: We empower leaders, lay and ordained, to see themselves as ministry developers who will facilitate deepening faith in the Good News of Jesus Christ, and go with God's people into the world to join in God's work.

Knowledge for the sake of mission: Participants will be asked how they might teach, preach, or design learning experiences for others with the content learned, rather than writing graduate papers.

Learning in context: All course content will be encountered in the light of opportunities and challenges facing the participant's own faith community.

Learning online and face-to-face: Because we are spread throughout Minnesota, most of our courses take place online: participants connect via the internet to submit assignments, take part in discussions, and engage with one other. But formation doesn't happen without face-to-face connection. Each course will meet for an in-person gathering with the instructor at least once.

Learning Objectives of the School for Formation

Developed in partnership with the Church Divinity School of the Pacific

At the conclusion of the initial course of study, students will be equipped to continue in their own discipleship, to make new disciples, and to equip those disciples to live in service to the Gospel, engaging God's mission in the world around them.

Specifically, students will be able to:

- Tell, reflect upon, and use the stories of Scripture, Christian practices, and Anglican tradition to inspire, heal, and form disciples for God's mission.
- Assist individuals and faith communities in listening to their cultural contexts, discerning their particular gifts, and bringing these together in a sustainable way to meet the
- needs of the world.
- Gather and equip faith communities to join God's work in their neighborhoods and in the world.
- Design and implement a long-range plan for their own development as faithful Christian disciples and leaders.

Courses and Workshops

The School for Formation offers hybrid courses and workshops for all who want to grow as leaders in ECMN. Most of the courses take place over seven weeks online using a weekly, asynchronous format of readings, videos, and discussion forums. Most courses meet once for an in-person gathering. The School for Formation also offers some one-day workshops. SFF

exemplary grading scale and generous qualitative feedback to support the ongoing growth and development of each learner. A full list of course offerings can be found on the School for Formation website.

Formation for Holy Orders

Those in formation for Holy Orders integrate the learning they find in courses into context with these additional elements :

- **Formation Cohorts:** After being admitted to postulancy, those in formation for Holy Orders meet with others in their formation cohort one Friday night a month. Cohort gatherings offer the opportunity to engage the soft skills of being a deacon or priest, and to build relationships with others on this journey that can last well beyond ordination – a key practice for healthy clergy.
- **Internship:** Everyone in formation for Holy Orders spends at least one program year serving 8 – 10 hours per week in a faith community other than their sponsoring faith community. The internship allows the participant to work toward self-defined learning goals in a supportive context, with opportunities for trying on new skills, abundant mentoring, and collaborative leadership.
- **Integration Retreat:** Each year, those in formation for Holy Orders bring a portfolio of their work to a weekend-long Integration Retreat. The retreat offers an opportunity to work together with peers to bring academic and personal learning to bear on questions of urgent importance to God’s mission, developing tools together to address those issues, and making a plan for their own continued learning. ECMN uses this process to address the canonical requirement for assessment in key subject areas. ECMN does not use the General Ordination Exam.

Formation for the Diaconate takes place over at least two years, including coursework, cohort, and internship.

Formation for the Priesthood takes place over at least three years, and includes coursework, cohort, internship, and at least one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (see www.acpe.edu/ for more information).

Fees & Financial Aid

Most online courses cost \$300. That cost includes lunch at the in-person gathering.

Pending approval, ECMN’s School for Formation offers matching grants to ordination-track students with financial need who receive supporting funds from their sending parish, up to 1/3 the cost of the course. **Go to the School for Formation website.** Complete the Matching Grant Form found on the School for Formation site and mail within seven days of registering for your courses.

For more information, contact the Rev. Susan Daughtry, ECMN Missioner for Formation, susan.d@episcopalmn.org.

Appendix E: Commitment to Lifelong Formation

Statement from the Bishop, Commission on Ministry & Council's Committee on Ministry regarding Lifelong Learning/ Continuing Education Invitation, January 16, 2013

In order to more fully engage God's mission, all leaders in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota are invited to commit to lifelong learning and continuing education/growth on an annual basis. Leaders are defined as all in active ministry who are charged with any kind of interaction with the baptized — priests, deacons, missionaries, wardens, faith formation leaders, evangelists, administrators, preachers, pastoral care givers, ministry area team – anyone who serves in a leadership role in the church.

The goal is to identify an area in which you would like to grow and to explore opportunities for additional learning. Consider this an invitation more than a mandate. Believe that you and your ministry are worth investing in.

Please imagine finding one or two opportunities each year to expand your knowledge, feed your soul, inspire your leadership capacities, or learn a new way of doing or thinking about something. Remembering that the mission of the Church (BCP 855) is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ, you are invited to find a way to respond to that call to mission by nurturing your ability to serve through lifelong learning.

As a means of holding one another accountable to one another, all clergy are asked to send an annual note to Bishop Prior outlining the learning opportunity that has been accomplished, all lay people are asked to send a note to whomever serves as the leader in your area of ministry. Consider sharing what you have done as building an information database rather than fulfilling a requirement.

What are some ideas for lifelong learning?

Engaging in **book studies** with others (e.g. Bible Challenge, books by current theologians such as Barbara Brown Taylor, Diana Butler Bass, Dwight Zscheile, Randy Ferebee, Alan Roxburgh, etc.) **Retreats** through spirituality centers and/or regular engagement with a **Spiritual Director** (e.g. House of Prayer, Loyola Spirituality Center, Holy Spirit Retreat Center, Sacred Ground, etc.)

Seminars, Conferences or Workshops offered through community colleges or museums (e.g. learning more about databases, excel spreadsheets, publishing — whatever would be useful to enhance what you do). **Courses in the School for Formation** or a seminary could be in person or distance learning (e.g. Scripture, ethics, preaching, missional theology, etc.).

You are invited to be bold, imaginative, creative and diligent in investing in your leadership — so together, we might build a Church that truly engages in God's mission with leaders who are inspired and equipped to carry out their calling.

Appendix F: Ember Letters to the Bishop

Title III, Canon. 4 Sec. 8 from the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church:

“Every Postulant and Candidate for Holy-Orders shall communicate with the Bishop personally or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the individual’s academic experience and personal and spiritual development.”

From the time of acceptance as a Postulant until ordination to the diaconate or priesthood, the Postulant is required to communicate with the Bishop four times a year in Ember weeks. The Canons ask for a letter “...reflecting on the individual’s academic experience, personal and spiritual development,” including any matters one desires to share with the Bishop.

Please send your Ember Letter to the Bishop the week following each event in the church year calendar:

1. Lent 1
2. Pentecost Sunday
3. Holy Cross Day (September 14)
4. Advent 1

Appendix G: Holy Orders Forms

All canonically required forms needed for Discernment, Formation and Ordination are available at the Episcopal Church in Minnesota website: www.episcopalmn.org/resources/forms/.

Ordained Ministry Process

For more information, contact your Missioner for Ministry, Karen Olson.

Karen.o@episcopalmn.org | 612-870-3312

