

Section 4

The Ministry of Vocational Deacons

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.

WHAT IS THE CALLING OF A DEACON?⁴

All Christians by virtue of their baptism, are called to ministry. We are all called to share in the priesthood and ministry of Jesus Christ, and we are also called to be servants and give our lives in service to others. We are joined with each other in this calling as the Church.

It is the responsibility of the Church to help its members discern to which of these ministries they are called. While the call to ordained ministry is largely individual in nature and comes through an individual's prayerful communication with God, the Church reinforces the call. It is the Church, as a corporate body, which must recognize, test, and establish the integrity of an individual's call to ordained ministry, assure the suitability of the individual for the call, and determine that the ordination will help fulfill the needs of the Church for ministry.

As the early Christian community grew, certain persons were given particular roles for the good order of the community and its ministry in the world. Bishops, presbyters (priests) and deacons were ordained to serve the people of God and to support all baptized persons in living out their baptismal promises. These same orders are present today and have distinctive charisms. Diaconal ministry is uniquely aimed at empowering the baptized to live into their baptismal covenant in the life and mission of the church. Specifically, the deacon's role is to link the world and its needs to the worshipping community of the church, and to foster ways in which the church serves the world in the name of Christ.

The deacon is an icon of Christ's bold love of the disenfranchised and his prophetic call for justice. The deacon inspires the baptized to claim their authority as ministers of Christ in the world, especially in places of greatest need. The deacon is to have eyes for the world and a heart to empower the baptized.

In contrast, *the priest is an icon of Christ's self-emptying love*, and should have eyes for the local church and a heart to care for her people. *A bishop is an icon of Christian unity and missional calling*, with eyes for the whole church and a heart to uphold the mystery of the body of Christ.

Deacon, or *diakonia*, comes from the Greek word for "service." Serving and leading are key aspects of a diaconal ministry. Aspirants to this ministry have discovered the joy of serving

⁴ Notes compiled from the websites of the Episcopal Dioceses of Northern California and Ohio.

others and are called to be prophetic leaders. The deacon unites the market place and the altar; the secular and the sacred; the material and spiritual dimensions of life. Deacons are the bridge between the church and the world, interpreting to the church the concerns and needs of the world and interpreting to the world the good news of God in Christ. This interpretive role of the deacon is the prophetic aspect of their unique call.

Ordination to the diaconate is never a validation of one's lay ministry. Neither is the deacon "one step away from a priest." The diaconate is a full and equal order of ministry that embodies the model of the church as a serving community and the deacon's visible participation in the liturgy helps to symbolize the calling of the Church to be a servant community.

While deacons are to have specific and identifiable ministries in the world, they are not necessarily the primary agents of service, social advocacy and justice. They are often the ones who challenge the Church with the world's needs and through teaching, inviting and encouraging, challenge the faithful to fulfill their baptismal promises.

Members of the diaconate are to be role models to the laity by living into a servant lifestyle and by being a resource for the formation of the baptized – inviting, teaching, empowering, and coaching them into meaningful ministry. Deacons are to do this and then get out of the way. Deacons prayerfully seek wisdom and discernment as they empower the laity they serve to minister in the world. To be effective in this role, deacons should be mature in their faith and well schooled in scripture and the traditions of the church. They should also possess leadership ability and demonstrate the capacity to empower others.

Deacons are not here to serve us—they are here to help us to serve the world.

The Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry,
Bishop of North Carolina.

Deacons are fearless and undaunted by the messiness of the human condition; they willingly go into the world to bring God's love to those Jesus called "the least of these." They will be flexible and adaptable, able to move easily into new and strange situations to serve when, where, and as needed.

Those who seek diaconal ordination are answering a call to serve as agents in the mission of God and *serve in their ministries under the direction of the Bishop.*

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF DEACONS

Deacons are called, trained, formed, and ordained into a distinctive ministry in the world.

Deacons animate, nurture, model, enlist, lead and encourage all the baptized in ministries of mercy, justice, and peace. They bring the needs of the world to the Church, and bring the resources of the Church to the world; that is, they are a bridge between the church as a gathered, worshiping community and the pain, needs, and brokenness of the world.

The deacon is an icon – that is, an inviting model and image – of servanthood in the life and

work of the congregation.

Deacons are prophets of social justice and compassionate action, and as with the ancient prophets, have such a love for the Church as to call all the baptized to account when we are silent, complacent, or impervious to the needs of the marginalized.

Deacons function as leaders, teachers, and nurturers of the Church's social ministry. They are resilient and flexible in response to the Spirit's spontaneity and have a willingness to be shaped and transformed by the needs of the Church.

Deacons have a maturing sense of self, centered in God, from which they find affirmation for their lives and ministries.

Deacons, as extensions of the bishop's ministry of unity, call the whole Church into cooperative, collaborative service. They are people *who lead a life worthy of the calling to which they have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* (Ephesians 4:1-4)

Books and other resources that members of the Diaconal Committee have found useful:

Barnett, J. M. (1995) The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order , Harrisburg, Trinity Press.

Brown, R. (2005) Being A Deacon Today: Exploring a Distinctive Ministry in the Church and in the World, Harrisburg, Morehouse.

Collins, J.N. (2002) Deacons and the Church: Making Connections Between Old and New, Harrisburg, Morehouse.

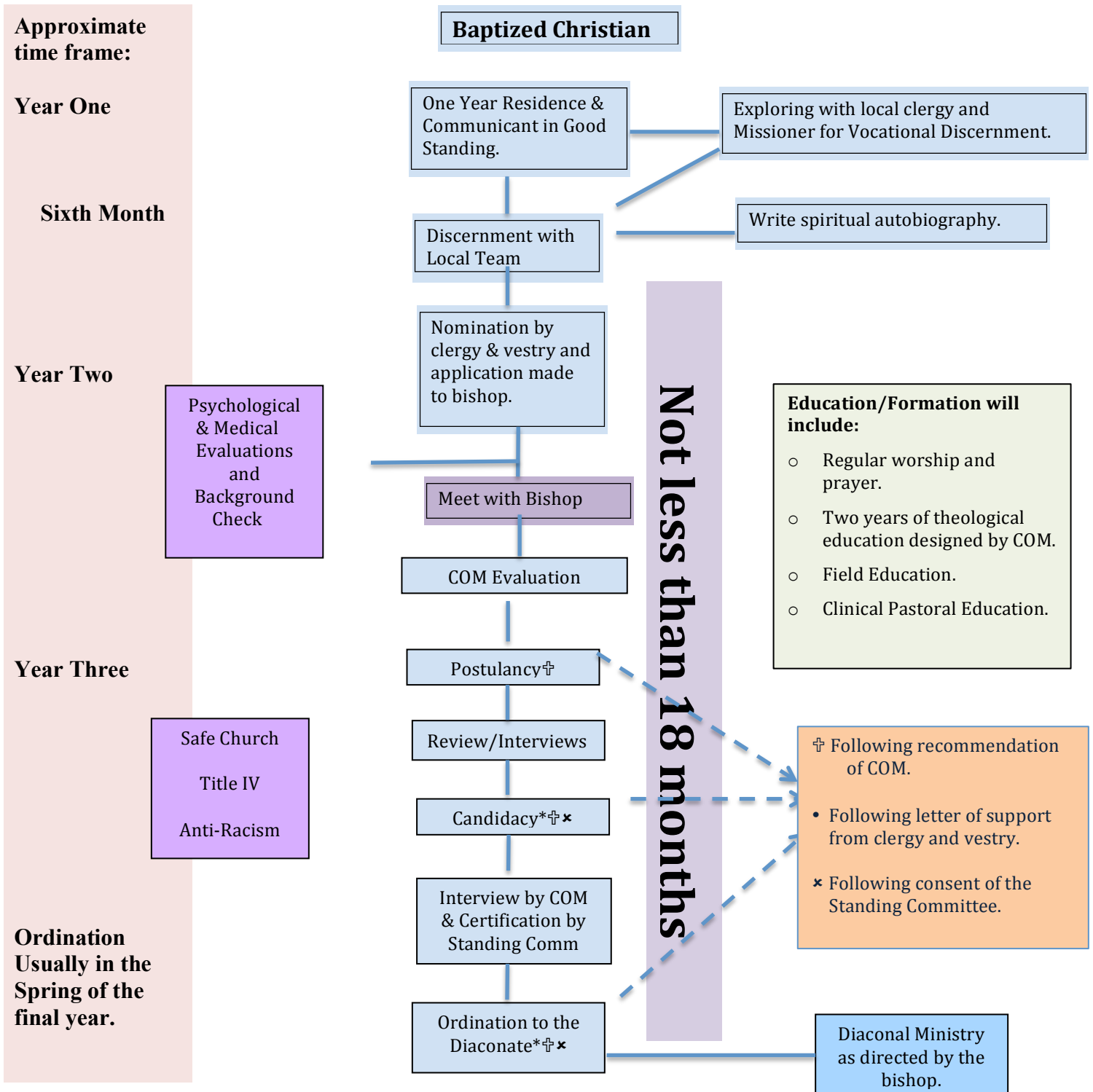
Collins, J.N. (2009) Diakonia: Re-Interpreting the Ancient Sources, New York, Oxford University Press.

Epting, S. W. (2008) Prophetic Voice of the Deacon, Monograph Series No. 19, North American Association for the Diaconate, Providence, RI.

Hearing a Deacon's Call, <http://episdioncmedia.com/?p=123>, School of Ministry, Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

Plater, O. (2004) Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons, Lanham, Cowley

Flow Chart for Ordination to the Diaconate



DISCERNING A CALL TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

Diaconal aspirants will first meet with their rector to explore their call to this ministry. The primary responsibility for recognizing and developing a vocation to ordained ministry lies with the parish. It may seem presumptuous to observe, question, and judge another's call to ordained ministry: however for someone aspiring to Holy Orders in the Church, this is not a private matter, but the proper concern of the entire Body of the Church.

The next step is to have the Aspirant along with the Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge arrange for the Aspirant to meet with the Missioner for Vocational Discernment, who will outline the process of local discernment as set forth in the Vocational Discernment Handbook and the requirements for application to postulancy. *See Appendix C.*

If it seems appropriate, the Missioner will then arrange for the Aspirant to meet with the Bishop, who will use this opportunity to forge a pastoral relationship with the Aspirant and convey his/her vision of diaconal ministry. In preparation for meeting with the Bishop the Aspirant will write a **Spiritual Autobiography** of at least 10 pages in length. (*See Appendix D for suggested approach to this exercise.*) In addition to the outline found in this appendix, those aspiring to diaconal ministry should reflect on:

- a) The Aspirant's sense of vocation to the diaconate, giving specific examples of diaconal ministry the Aspirant is doing or developing as a vocation.
- b) Events and experiences which have contributed to the Aspirant's spiritual growth and the development of his/her sense of vocation;
- c) Work experiences, including settings, times, responsibilities, nature of the work done, and the perceived impacts upon his/her vocation to the diaconate;
- d) Other experiences which demonstrate the skills and interests of the Aspirant;
- e) The ways in which the Aspirant envisions his/her vocation will meet the needs of the church and the world.

If the Bishop feels it is appropriate for discernment to continue, then, along with the local clergy person, the Missioner will help to create a local discernment team who will spend several months discerning with the Aspirant.

At the close of the local team's work, the team will prepare reflections on the Aspirant's character, sense of call, gifts, growing edges and appropriateness of the application for diaconal ministry at this time. These reflections should be submitted to the parish clergy and vestry. Should the community agree to nominate the Aspirant these documents will become part of his/her application file.

ROLE OF LOCAL CLERGY AND VESTRY

As the local clergy and vestry move to nominate an aspirant it is expected that they will support their Nominee through the entire ordination process. It is important, therefore,

that the resident clergy person and the vestry members of the Aspirant's congregation affirm the Aspirant if nominated. The Vestry's nomination for postulancy should be based on genuine knowledge of the Aspirant, as well as the discernment group's experience. The vestry should make provision for getting to know the Aspirant and should read the spiritual autobiography as part of the decision-making process.

Following the Local Team's discernment, the vestry will interview the Aspirant to learn of her/his:

- a. **Christian Commitment** – background and evidence of personal faith, past and on-going lay ministry involvement, prayer life, the capacity to care for and respect others, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, intellectual ability or social status, etc. The question to be answered is, "How is Christ present in the life of the Aspirant?"
- b. **Personal Stability** – emotional and psychological stability and balance, sense of proportion, ability to cope with stress. The question to be answered is, "Will the Aspirant, personally and professionally, be able to deal with the typical experiences of diaconal ministry?"
- c. **Intellectual Curiosity** – desire and ability to learn; openness to new information, facts and experiences; willingness to explore life and faith. The question to be answered is, "Is the Aspirant eager to grow and willing to change perspective?"
- d. **Leadership Style** – being part of a community; openness to and supportiveness of the ministry of others; willingness to share leadership. The question to be answered is, "How does the Aspirant view and use authority in ministry and what leadership styles are comfortable for this person?"
- e. **Ability to Communicate** – being able to express himself/herself in speech and written word; to listen; to retain information; to be at ease in speaking to groups or individuals. The question to be answered is, "Can the Aspirant communicate effectively in a wide variety of situations and by using a variety of skills?"
- f. **Personal Characteristics** – showing openness, flexibility, enjoyment of life, including a sense of humor, and demonstrating the ability to empathize with others and to connect with his or her own feelings and the feelings of others. The question to be answered is, "Does the Aspirant relate to us openly and genuinely and seem to be comfortable with him or herself?"

If, after careful evaluation, the resident clergy person and vestry of the congregation decide to nominate the Aspirant for postulancy, they must submit the following to the bishop:

- a. A **letter of nomination** including a statement committing the congregation or community of faith to involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the diaconate and to contribute financially to that preparation. This letter shall be signed and dated by a two-thirds majority of the vestry, and the member of the clergy exercising oversight;

- b. The reflections of the discernment group;
- c. A summary of the vestry interview.

LETTER OF APPLICATION

Once the Letter of Nomination has been sent the Nominee will submit a Letter of Application for Postulancy to the Bishop stating that she/he is in agreement with the nomination and requesting that the Bishop accepts him/her as a Postulant. Included in this letter will be reflections to the Bishop on the insights they gained from the discernment committee. Along with this letter the Nominee will send in their Spiritual Autobiography.

At this time Nominees will also submit a Postulancy Information Form (*Appendix E*), Financial Information Form (*Appendix F*), Educational Transcripts, and arrange for Medical and Psychological Evaluations and request a Background check.

Medical Evaluation – see Appendix G This must be completed and signed by the Aspirant’s regular physician and sent to the bishop’s administrative assistant to be placed in a confidential file.

Psychological Evaluation - Aspirants should contact the Missioner for Vocational Discernment or the Bishop’s Executive Assistant to get the list of psychologists being used by the diocese and then make an appointment with the psychologist. In preparation for this evaluation please complete:

- Life History Questionnaire – Appendix H
- Behavior Screening Questionnaire – Appendix I

And mail the completed forms **directly** to the psychologist.

The results of the psychological evaluation is first shared with the Aspirant and then, after authorization, forwarded to the bishop. *If these evaluations are not shared with the bishop, the process will stop.* Once the evaluations are received, the bishop may discuss them with the Aspirant. These reports will remain in a confidential file in the bishop’s office, and the contents may be shared with the Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, or any other persons only with the written permission of the Aspirant.

It is expected that the Postulant, the Aspirant's congregation, and the diocese will each pay one third of the expense of these examinations.

Background Check – Nominee is expected to request that the Canon for Deployment initiate a Background Check as described on page 28.

Note: *The results of all evaluations are kept in a separate confidential file in the Bishop's office and will not be part of the file read by the Commission on Ministry or anyone else on the diocesan staff. The contents will be shared with the Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, or any other persons only with the written permission of the Nominee. If any of these questionnaires are not submitted, or are incomplete, the process will stop.*

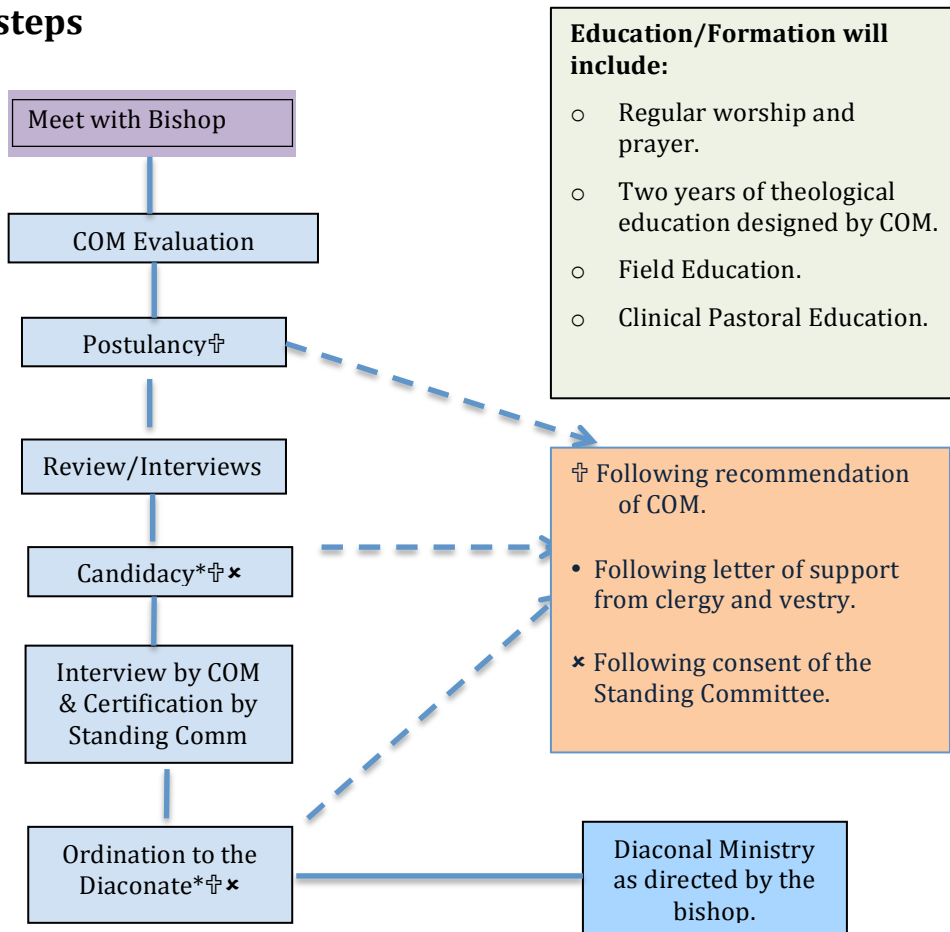
If more than three years pass from the time of these evaluations and a date set for ordination candidates may be asked to take these evaluations a second time.

The time from nomination to ordination must be at least eighteen months.

Summary of Preliminary requirements – check off as you proceed:

Write down date of completion as appropriate:
_____ Regular participation in the life and worship of your community.
_____ Meet with Rector/Priest-in-charge.
_____ Meet with Missioner for Vocational Discernment.
_____ Meet with Bishop.
_____ Engage in Local Discernment Process and write a Spiritual Autobiography
_____ Interview with the Vestry
_____ Letter of Nomination from Clergy and Vestry along with:
• Aspirant's Spiritual Autobiography
• Reflections from the local discernment team
• A summary of the Vestry's interview.
_____ Letter of Application from the Nominee to the Bishop along with:
• Postulancy Information Form – Appendix E
• Financial Information Form – Appendix F
• Educational Records and Transcripts.
_____ Medical and Psychological Evaluations – Appendices G - J
_____ Background check requested.

Next steps



BECOMING A POSTULANT

Once the bishop has been able to review all of the written material and has received the medical and psychological evaluations, the bishop’s Executive Assistant will make an appointment for the Nominee to meet with the bishop, who will then indicate if she/he should proceed to the next step. With the bishop’s approval, the Nominee will meet with the whole COM and be interviewed by the Diaconal Committee of the COM for postulancy and then, with the concurrence of the COM, the bishop will admit the Nominee as a Postulant for holy orders.

Participation in the COM Interview:

When the bishop has approved a Nominee, he/she will request the Chair of the Commission on Ministry for an interview by the Commission. This interview gives the Commission on Ministry the opportunity to meet the Nominee in person. In preparation for a formal interview, the Diaconal Subcommittee will review the materials from the Nominee's congregation and do its own assessment of the Nominee's suitability for Holy Orders.

- During the interview, the Aspirant may be asked to prepare some materials for presentation and should be ready to communicate their sense of call to ordained ministry as well as reflections on the discernment process and way forward.

Following the conference:

- The Diaconal subcommittee presents its reflections on the interview and presents their recommendation which the COM, which will then vote on and sign the formal letter of recommendation to be forwarded to the Bishop.
- The Chair of the COM will then inform the Bishop, with a copy to his Executive Assistant, of the COM's recommendation
- The bishop will meet with/share the recommendations of the Commission on Ministry and may admit the Aspirant as a Postulant, recording this action in the Register and informing the Rector of the Nominee's congregation, the COM, and the Standing Committee.
- The COM chair then informs the Postulant of their assigned **mentor** from the COM and outlines the relationship. The mentor provides a means of communication between the Postulant and the Commission. It is the Postulant's responsibility to keep the mentor informed of progress, problems, issues and any changes that may be occurring in the preparation process. This may be done through letters, telephone conversations or through personal meetings. The mentor's primary responsibility is to receive information from the Postulant and be a resource for information about the process toward ordination. Being a mentor does not commit a Commission member's vote in any decision affecting the Postulant. Since COM members' terms are limited, a Postulant may be assigned a different mentor from time to time.
- *In cases where the Commission declines to give its consent to a Nominee or a Postulant the Commission will appoint one of its members to help create, with the Nominee's or Postulant's priest, a local discernment team who will help the person to discern just what God's "yes" is for their sense of calling.*

DURING POSTULANCY

Education/Formation

Aspirants will continue to participate in the worship and formation programs of their local congregation.

Until appointed by the bishop to some other ministry, Postulants will meet regularly with their own priest to review their experiences in diaconal ministry.

COM will design an educational and formation plan for the Aspirant who will sign an agreement to undertake this course of study. It is expected that people in the ordination process make contact with their mentor on a regular basis, at least monthly.

Aspirants for diaconal ministry will typically complete the three-year educational program offered through Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. Classes meet one weekend a month, nine months a year for three years.

In addition, once they have become Postulants, and later Candidates, the applicants will attend the Community of Deacons meetings. They will also complete a modified program of Clinical Pastoral Education in the second year of the program designed by the COM.

A field education placement in a parish or community outreach ministry, other than their sponsoring parish, is required during the third year of their training. After ordination, they will continue to meet in the Community of Deacons and will commit to participation in the regular continuing education requirement of the diocese.

Summary – check off as you proceed:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular in worship and formation in local community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regular meeting with local clergy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with the Bishop.
<input type="checkbox"/>	COM Diaconal Committee.
<input type="checkbox"/>	COM Mentor appointed _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sign a commitment to the course of study designed by COM.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Enrolled in School for Christian Leadership.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting with Community of Deacons.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Field education placement _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ember Day Letters to Bishop.

POSTULANCY TO CANDIDACY

During postulancy the Postulant will remain a faithful member of his/her community, write regular Ember Day Letters to the Bishop, (there are four Ember Days on the Liturgical Calendar and these letters are intended to convey to the bishop the Postulants joys and

sorrows and their growth in their ongoing discernment of their call.) and make regular contact with their COM mentor.

Prior to ordination the Postulant/Candidate demonstrate competence in these five areas:

- (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.

In addition, prior to ordination, Postulants/Candidates are expected to include the following training with certification submitted for their files:

- (1) Safe Church.
- (2) Title IV (Canons of the Episcopal Church)
- (3) Anti-Racism

After a further period of discernment, and usually past the mid-point of their educational program, Postulants may apply to the bishop to become a Candidate for ordination. This application needs to include:

- a. Postulant's date of admission to postulancy.
- b. A further letter of support from the Postulant's clergy and at least two thirds of the vestry.

At this time, Postulants will consult with their COM mentor to see that all the necessary documents have been filed. Their mentor will arrange with the Chair of the COM a time for the Postulant to interview with the Diaconal Committee of the COM.

- Following their interview, the committee will bring reflections and a recommendation to the whole COM for a vote.
- The chair or a member of the COM will prepare a report using the report form found in Appendix L giving reflections and results of the COM vote for submission to the Bishop with a copy to the Executive Assistant.
- The Standing Committee is required to interview and to certify that the Postulant's application for candidacy meets all of the canonical requirements for ordination. Where possible, this will occur at the same time of the COM interview. The Standing Committee will then submit a written recommendation to the Bishop.
- With recommendation of the COM and the approval of the Standing Committee, the bishop may then admit the Postulant as a Candidate and inform her/him and her/his clergy by formal letter with a copy to the chair of the COM. The Bishop will then record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose, and inform the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission

Summary of process

_____	Faithful at worship and participation in their community.
_____	Active in some form of diaconal ministry.
_____	Regular Ember Letters.
_____	Regular contact with COM mentor.
_____	Completion of Education/Formation plan.
_____	Completion of Safe Church Training
_____	Completion of Title IV Training
_____	Completion of Anti-Racism Training
_____	Application for Candidacy.
_____	Supporting letter from clergy and vestry.
_____	Interview with COM
_____	Interview with Standing Committee
_____	Bishop admits to Candidacy

CANDIDACY TO ORDINATION AS A VOCATIONAL DEACON

Length of Candidacy - There is no maximum or minimum length for candidacy: however there must be at least eighteen months from the date of nomination to the date of ordination.

Ember Day letters are expected during candidacy.

Letter of Application to the Bishop: A Candidate shall make an application for ordination, including written evidence of the dates of admission to postulancy and candidacy and a letter of support from his or her congregation or community of faith.

Letter of Support from Clergy and Vestry: The congregation or community of faith of the Postulant must submit a letter of support signed by two-thirds of the vestry and the member of the clergy providing oversight.

Written evidence of Theological Education: As required by canon, the theological school will prepare a certificate showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by canon together with an evaluation of the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination and a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate.

Medical and Psychological Evaluations: If more than three years has passed since the earlier evaluations, new evaluations may be required. Such a determination will be made by the bishop in consultation with the Candidate.

Background Checks: Since standard background checks are valid for only six months a second background check may be required before the Candidate may work as a Deacon.

This background check will be accomplished in the same manner as the first. (see p. 28)

Commission on Ministry: When the requirements of Canon III.6.5 and of this Handbook have been met:

- The Postulant will contact their mentor who has been monitoring their file and the status of all requirements to be met.
- When all forms and requirements have been submitted, the mentor arranges with the Chair of the COM and Postulant for the interview with the Diaconal committee of the COM.
- The committee will bring reflections and a recommendation to the whole COM for a vote.
- The chair or a member of the COM will prepare a report using the form found in Appendix J giving reflections and results of the COM vote for submission to the Bishop with a copy to the Executive Assistant and the President of the Standing Committee.

Testimonial by the Standing Committee: The Standing Committee shall certify in writing that all the canonical requirements have been met and that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal or spiritual grounds and that they recommend the Candidate for ordination. The Standing Committee may interview the Candidate at this time during its regular monthly meeting. (Canon III.6.6(c)) Upon receipt of such testimonial, the bishop may ordain the Candidate a Deacon and shall inform them of this decision by written letter with a copy to the COM.

Summary of process

_____	Faithful at worship and participation in their community.
_____	Active in some form of field education.
_____	Regular Ember Letters.
_____	Contact with COM mentor.
_____	Evaluation and recommendation from theological school.
_____	Application for Ordination.
_____	Check re time lapse since medical, psychological, and background.
_____	Supporting letter from clergy and vestry.
_____	Interview with COM.
_____	Certification by Standing Committee

Once all of the requirements for candidacy have been completed and the bishop has admitted the Postulant to candidacy, the Candidate may apply to the bishop to be ordained so long as:

- It will have been at least eighteen months from the date of nomination to the date of ordination.

- If more than thirty-six months have passed since their background check and their psychological and medical evaluation the bishop may require these items to be taken again.

NOTES ON THE LITURGICAL FUNCTIONS FOR DIACONAL ASPIRANTS/POSTULANTS/CANDIDATES

During the period of preparation for ordination, deacon postulants and candidates are to continue to engage in liturgical ministries appropriate to laity. *They are not to prepare the Eucharistic table, proclaim the gospel or do the dismissal prior to ordination.* They may serve as acolytes, chalice bearers, Lay Eucharistic Ministers and Lay Eucharistic Visitors. During their postulancy and candidacy, they may be invited to preach occasionally as part of their preparation for ordination.

DEPLOYMENT UPON ORDINATION

Deacons report to the Bishop. They may be placed back in their sponsoring parish upon ordination, or they may be sent to serve another parish or community outreach ministry where their particular gifts are needed. The Bishop in consultation with the Canon for Mission and Ministry will determine assignments for deacons. Deacons' assignments will be reviewed at least every three years.

Deacons are expected to undertake an annual **mutual ministry review** with a committee from the congregation out of which their ministry is taking place and should initiate this with their supervising priest. The Canon for Deployment can supply a list of resources/persons to assist in a mutual ministry review.

Upon reaching age 72, deacons are required to apply to the Bishop annually to request an extension of their ministry.

LITURGICAL FUNCTIONS OF DEACONS

When the Deacon is assigned to a congregation, he/she serves at the pleasure of the Bishop, and is under the supervision of the priest in charge. The following addresses the function and role of the Deacon in the Eucharist and various other special liturgies.

The Function of the Deacon in the Eucharist

When a Deacon is present, he/she will vest and participate in the liturgy. When a Deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the Deacon shall:

- Read the Gospel.
- Lead or be responsible for the Prayers of the People.
- Read the exhortation to confession and lead the Confession.
- Pronounce the dismissal.

The Deacon shall stand at the altar with the celebrant. If more than one Deacon is present, it is appropriate that the other(s) also be at the altar with the celebrant.

When a Deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist, the Deacon shall prepare the altar. This includes:

- Preparing the vessels.
- Receiving the offerings and oblations from the laity.
- Attending to a second chalice and/or paten before the administration.
- Removing the vessels after communion and performing or supervising ablutions.
- Elevate the cup at the doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer and at the celebrant's words, "The gifts of God for the People of God," while the celebrant elevates the paten.

When a Deacon is one of the ministers at the Eucharist the Deacon shall either:

- Assist in administering the Communion, offering either the bread or the cup, or
- Attend the altar by performing such functions as refilling the patens, refilling the chalices and preparing the Eucharistic home communion kits.

It is appropriate and recommended that the Deacon be responsible for assuring that those communicants who are unable to come forward have the sacraments brought to them.

When a Deacon administers the bread during Communion and comes to a child or adult who does not receive, it is appropriate for the Deacon to sign them with the cross and greet them with an appropriate liturgical phrase, assuring that person of God's love for them.

Deacons may be invited to preach on occasion by the priest in charge of the congregation.

In an emergency, where a Eucharistic service is scheduled and no priest is available, an available Deacon may, at the request of the parish priest, conduct a daily prayer service instead. At no time in the Diocese of Rochester are Deacons to preside at a "Deacon's Mass."

The function of the Deacon in Holy Baptism

When present, Deacons shall vest and participate as ministers at Baptism. The Deacon shall:

- Read the Gospel.
- Read or be responsible for the prayers for the Candidates(s).
- May assist the celebrant by pouring the water into the font, holding towels, oil stock or Prayer Book, lighting candles from the Paschal Candle, and otherwise being of service.
- May present the newly baptized with the baptismal candle saying, " _____, receive the light of Christ and carry it forth into the world."

In this diocese Deacons are not customarily the sole officiant at baptisms, and MUST have the Bishop's permission to do so in each case. A Deacon may not bless the baptismal water.

The function of the Deacon in Proper Liturgies for Special Days

Ash Wednesday

It is appropriate and recommended for the Deacon to read the Invitation on page 264 of The Book of Common Prayer and to assist in the imposition of ashes. It is also appropriate for the Deacon to sing or say the Great Litany at any time it is used.

During Lent

When it is used, it is appropriate for the Deacon to read the Exhortation.

Palm Sunday

If the Deacon is one of the ministers on Palm Sunday, the Deacon shall read the Gospel in the Liturgy of the Palms and bid the people to procession. It is traditional to have the Deacon act as the narrator if the Passion Gospel is read or sung in parts.

Maundy Thursday

If a Deacon is one of the ministers on Maundy Thursday, the Deacon should participate in the washing of feet according to the local custom of the parish.

Good Friday

If a Deacon is one of the ministers of the Good Friday liturgy, the Deacon shall read or sing the biddings included in the Solemn Collects, tailoring them as appropriate.

Easter Vigil

If a Deacon is one of the ministers during the Easter Vigil, the Deacon shall lead and bear the paschal candle in procession and shall sing or say the Exsultet.

Bishop's Visitations and in a Diocesan Eucharist

All of the Customary above applies when the Bishop is the celebrant. In addition, the Bishop's chaplain should be a Deacon, if possible. If two Deacons are available, it is appropriate that both attend the Bishop.

In processions, the Deacon(s) precede the Bishop.

The dalmatic is the proper liturgical vestment for Deacons corresponding to the chasuble for priests and bishops. In this diocese, dalmatics are customarily worn at a Diocesan Eucharist. It is appropriate that Deacons wear dalmatics at bishop's visitations to parishes, if available.

At all diocesan services, the roles of Deacons shall be filled by Deacons.

The function of the Deacon at the Marriage Rite

When assisting a priest at a marriage ceremony, the Deacon may:

- Deliver the charge.
- Request the Declaration of Consent.
- Perform those assisting functions previously outlined in the section on the Eucharist.
- In this diocese a Deacon shall not preside at a marriage ceremony.

Holy Orders as Deacon -- Checklist

Name: _____

Nomination and Application for Postulancy: Journey of an Aspirant

Before Application:

To be completed:

- A confirmed communicant in good standing
- Resident in faith community for one year
- Consultation with resident clergy person
- Exploratory meeting with Missioner for Vocational Discernment / /
- Spiritual autobiography
- Introductory meeting with Bishop / /
- Group discernment process.
- Interview with Vestry

Color Chart of person tracking process or tagged:

- Missioner for Vocational Discernment (MVD)
- Executive Assistant to Bishop (EAB)
- Canon for Mission & Ministry (CMM)
- COM Chair (COM)

To Apply:

Date received or completed:

- / / Letter of nomination from priest and vestry (packet)
- / / a. Vestry Interview notes/discernment description
- / / Letter of application to Bishop (packet) (tag CMM)
- / / a. Postulancy Information Form
- / / b. Financial Information Form
- / / c. Level of education achieved/ official transcripts
- / / d. Date of Previous Application or Nomination if any
- / / e. Medical Exam
- / / Initiate Background Check
- / / Background Check completed
- / / Aspirant to contact Psychologist
- / / Psychological Exam
- / / Meeting between Psychologist and Aspirant
- / / Meeting between Psychologist and Bishop (tag MVD/EAB)
- / / Formal nomination meeting with Bishop (tag EAB)
- / / Letter from Bishop to Aspirant to proceed (tag CMM)
- / / COM Discernment Conference
- / / COM Chair notifies Bishop by phone or email (tag EAB)
- / / Bp contacts aspirant/priest if process has been stopped
- / / Enroll as postulant by letter from Bishop (tag COM/MVD)
- / / COM Mentor: _____
- / / (Mentor is identified by COM Chair [tag EAB])
- / / Copy of checklist is sent to Mentor (tag EAB)
- / / Learning Agreement/SCL-CRCDS (tag EAB)

Application for Candidacy: Journey of a Posulant

Before Application:

To be completed:

- Faithful at worship and in prayer
- Function in assigned community as appropriate
- Regular contact with COM Mentor
- Communication with Bishop during Ember Weeks
- Request theological education support from the Bishop's office (tag EAB)

Color Chart of person tracking process:

- COM Mentor
- Executive Assistant to Bishop (EAB)
- Canon for Mission & Ministry (CMM)
- COM Chair
- Standing Committee Chair

To Apply:

Date received or completed:

- / / Letter of support from priest and vestry
- / / Letter of application to Bishop (tag EAB/COM/SC)
- / / Interview with COM- progress in formation (tag EAB)
- / / Certificate of Recommendation from COM
- / / COM Chair phone Standing Committee Chair
- / / Interview with Standing Committee (tag EAB)
- / / Certificate of Recommendation from Standing Committee
- / / Standing Committee Chair phone Bishop (tag EAB)
- / / Enroll as Candidate by letter from Bishop (tag CMM*)
- / / COM Mentor: _____
- / / (Mentor is identified by COM Chair [tag EAB])
- / / Copy of checklist is sent to Mentor (tag COM)
- / / (*Tag CMM for Transitions and OTM Profile)

APPLICATION FOR DIACONATE: Journey of a Candidate

Before Application:

To be completed:

- 18 Months since date of letter from Bishop to proceed as an aspirant in the process
- Faithful at worship and in prayer
- Function in assigned community as appropriate
- Completion of formation program
- Regular contact with COM mentor
- Communication with Bishop during Ember Weeks
- Meeting with Canon for Mission & Ministry re: possible placement
- Safe Church Training
- Title IV Training (The Very Rev. Jim Adams)
- Anti-Racism Training
- Participation in New Clergy Peer Support Group __/__/__
- Letter from Clergy Facilitator of Peer Support Group to the Bishop validating participation for at least 6 months __/__/__

Color Chart of person tracking process:

-  COM Mentor
-  Executive Assistant to Bishop (EAB)
-  Canon for Mission & Ministry (CMM)
-  COM Chair (COM)
-  Standing Committee Chair (SC)
-  Chief Financial Missioner (CFM)

To Apply:

Date received or completed:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| _/_/_ | Letter of support from priest and vestry |
| _/_/_ | Letter of application to Bishop (tag EAB/CMM/COM/SC) |
| _/_/_ | Background Check 2 if over three years |
| _/_/_ | Medical/Psychological updates if over three years |
| _/_/_ | Interview with COM (tag EAB) |
| _/_/_ | Certificate of Recommendation from COM |
| _/_/_ | COM Chair phone Standing Committee Chair |
| _/_/_ | Interview with Standing Committee (tag EAB) |
| _/_/_ | Certificate of Consent from Standing Committee |
| _/_/_ | Standing Committee Chair phone Bishop (tag EAB) |
| _/_/_ | Phone call from Bishop to candidate |
| _/_/_ | Letter from Bishop to candidate (tag EAB/CMM/CFM) |
| _/_/_ | Ordination Date (decided by Bishop and Candidate) |

Journey in the process is complete