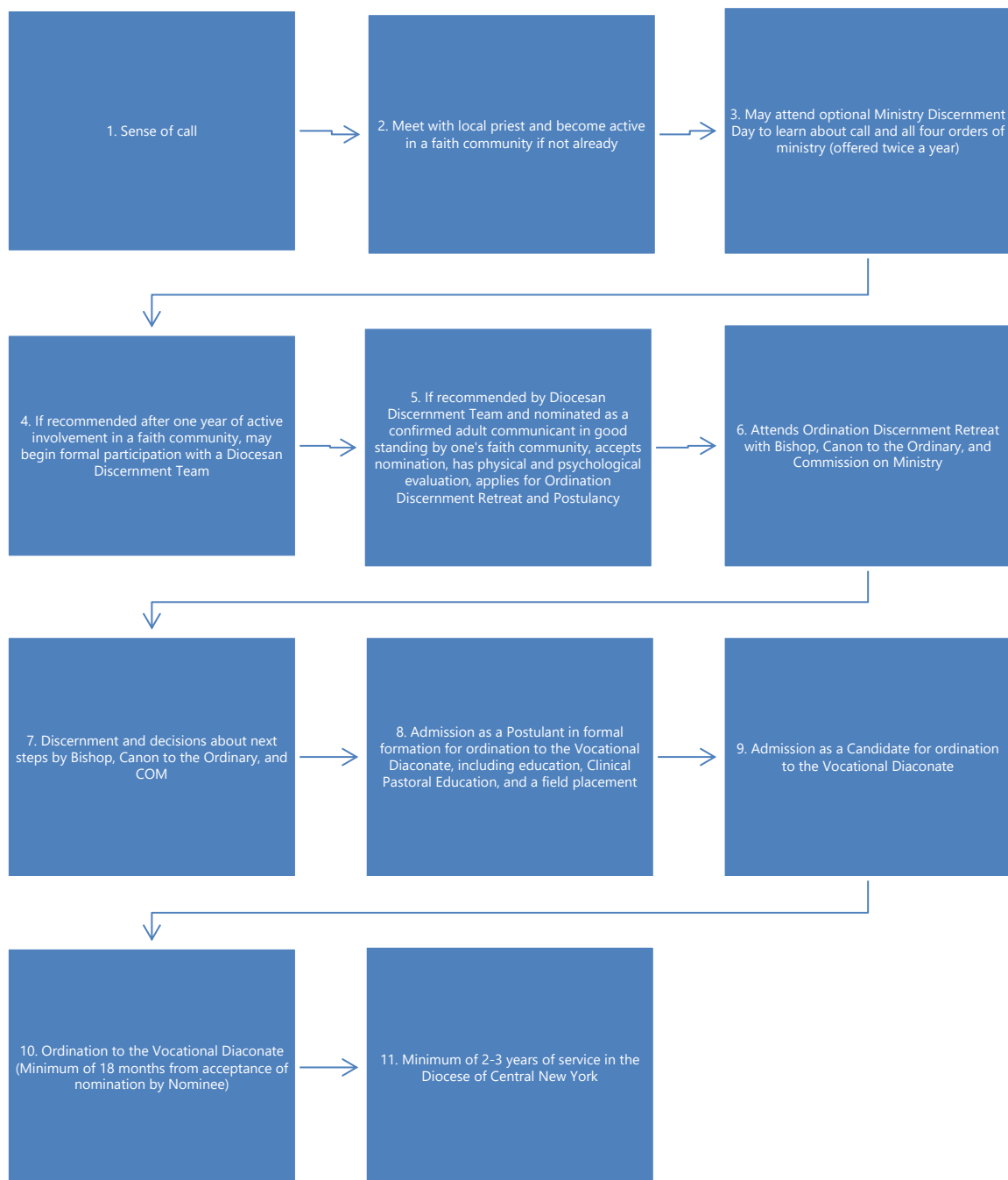


## Overview of the Process for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate



## **Process for the Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate Materials**

### **Step One**

- Qualities for a Vocational Deacon
- Glossary

### **Step Two**

- Expectations of those aspiring to Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate (Aspirants)
- Expectations of clergy guiding Aspirants
- Discernment Process Application

### **Step Three**

- Ministry Discernment Days/Ministry Fairs (Optional)

### **Step Four**

- *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* by Suzanne G. Farnham
- Spiritual autobiography
- Spiritual director
- Letter of recommendation for Diocesan Discernment Team

### **Step Five**

- Letter of recommendation for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate by Diocesan Discernment Team
- Letter of nomination for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate from clergy and vestry
- Letter of acceptance of nomination by Nominee
- Physical and psychological evaluation information obtained through Canon to the Ordinary
- Life history questionnaire
- Behavior screening questionnaire
- Required medical examination
- Application for Ordination Discernment Retreat

### **Steps Six and Seven**

- Sample schedule for Ordination Discernment Retreat with and without Standing Committee

### **Step Eight**

- Checklist for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate Process

### **Step Nine**

- Checklist for Postulants applying to be Candidates for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate
- Application for Consideration as a Candidate for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate

### **Step Ten**

- Checklist for Candidates applying for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate
- Application from a Candidate requesting Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate

## **Qualities for a Vocational Deacon**

- Belief in Jesus and an ability to share it with others
- A servant heart—compassion for others, especially those who are marginalized and disempowered, and a desire to alleviate suffering
- A passion for making the love of Christ known in the world
- A knowledge and love of the Holy Scriptures, and a commitment to study and model one's life upon them
- A desire for ministry that creates a bridge between the Church and the world
- A love of empowering others to grow in their faith
- Maturity—personal authenticity, healthy boundaries, flexibility, a willingness to grow, a sense of humor, and the capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses, and financial responsibility
- An ability to work under, and be accountable to, those with authority
- A sense of curiosity and wonder

## **COM Glossary of Terms Frequently Used During the Process of Discernment for Ordination**

The following definitions may prove useful as you participate in the Ordination Discernment Process of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Central New York. Please bear in mind that this list is not exhaustive.

**Aspirant:** A person who is exploring a sense of call.

**Call:** A sense or feeling that one is drawn or sent to do God's work.

**Candidate:** A person who, with the approval of the Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, and Bishop, has progressed past Postulancy toward Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate and Priesthood.

**Canon to the Ordinary:** Provides counsel to the Diocesan Bishop. With the Bishop, the Canon oversees the ordination process and works with the clergy and laity of the Diocese. The Canon may also be involved in parish development.

**Canons:** *The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church* are the laws of The Episcopal Church that must be followed during the process toward Ordination to the Priesthood. You can [download a free pdf of \*The Constitution and Canons\*](#) from The Episcopal Church or [order a printed copy of the book for \\$35](#).

**Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE):** A form of theological education that takes place not exclusively in academic classrooms but also in clinical, community care, geriatric and rehabilitation, workplace, and congregational and parish-based settings. CPE includes in-depth study of both the people who receive care as well as the CPE participant, as a giver of care. CPE involves the practice of ministry and the reflection thereon with supervisor and peers.

**Commission on Ministry (COM):** Advises and assists the Bishop in matters of ministry for all baptized persons, including the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment for readiness.

**Discernment:** A process during which a perceived call is evaluated by a larger circle of people.

**Diocesan Discernment Team:** This Team's task is to assist in the discernment of God's will for the Aspirant through a series of meetings with the Aspirant. The Team submits a formal report to the Aspirant, the Bishop, and the Aspirant's priest and vestry.

**Ember (Day) Letters:** Letters written to the Bishop four times a year and that reflect on personal development and situation as well as academic and field experience. The Canons prescribe that Ember Day Letters are required of all Postulants, Candidates, and Transitional Deacons.

**Field Education:** A supervised practicum in ministry, based in a site (usually a parish but also may be an agency or chaplaincy), in which the student learns hands-on ministry.

**Financial Responsibilities:** The commitment of financial resources necessary for preparation for ordination, including a pledge of canonically-required contributions of financial support

when a faith community nominates a confirmed adult communicant in good standing for ordination, dedication of financial resources by the Nominee, and financial support from the Diocese. The degree of financial support from each source will vary by circumstance.

**General Ordination Exam:** A proficiency exam in the Canonically-required areas of study including:

(1) The Holy Scriptures. (2) History of the Christian Church. (3) Christian Theology. (4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology. (5) Christian Worship according to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts. (6) The Practice of Ministry in contemporary society, including leadership, evangelism, stewardship, ecumenism, interfaith relations, mission theology, and the historical and contemporary experience of racial and minority groups.

**“In the Process:”** A person who is “in the process” is formally working towards ordination (as a Deacon or Priest) under the sponsorship of a parish, a diocese, and a bishop. At all times, the Person-in-Process (PIP) is examining and discerning his/her/their vocation.

**Liaison:** The member of the Commission on Ministry that acts as the Person-in-Process’s “point person” and who communicates regularly with the Person-in-Process. The Liaison is available to answer questions regarding individual discernment process for each Person-in-Process.

**Mutual Discernment:** The process of discernment may begin by the Aspirant contacting the clergy, the clergy speaking first to the Aspirant, through members of the congregation speaking to the Aspirant or the clergy, or any combination of the above. The journey towards ordination is one of shared, mutual discernment—the Spirit speaking both within an individual and within the congregation—throughout the process.

**Nominee:** A person recommended by the Diocesan Discernment Team and nominated as a confirmed adult communicant in good standing by one’s faith community who attends a Discernment Retreat with the Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, and Commission on Ministry.

**Parochial Cure:** A specific placement approved by the Bishop.

**Physical Examination:** Required examination by a physician of the Nominee’s choice, at the Nominee’s expense. The report of the exam must be received in the bishop’s office before the interview for Postulancy. If the original physical examination was performed more than 36 months prior to the anticipated date of ordination to the Vocational Diaconate/Transitional Diaconate, the exam must be repeated at the expense of the Nominee and a report of the repeat exam must be submitted to the bishop’s office.

**PIP:** An acronym for “Person-in-Process.” This term applies from Postulancy through Ordination to the Priesthood.

**Postulant:** An individual who has obtained the Bishop’s approval to begin the formal diocesan Process of Discernment for Ordination.

**Psychological (or Psychiatric) Examination:** This examination by a psychologist or psychiatrist appointed by the Commission on Ministry is required prior to the Ordination Discernment Retreat. A follow-up exam and report will be needed if the original examination was performed

more than 36 months prior to the anticipated date of ordination to the Diaconate. See Financial Responsibilities section regarding the cost of this exam.

**Spiritual Autobiography:** The story of significant events, people, and places that have influenced one's relationship with God. It is a resource for connecting one's life story with the story of the people of God.

**Spiritual Director:** A trained and usually certified person, lay or ordained, with whom one communicates on a regular basis concerning his/her/their spiritual life. A Spiritual Director listens and, when appropriate, responds by giving "direction" which may include spiritual advice, help with discernment, suggested reading or action, or a question to ponder.

**Standing Committee:** Council of advisors to the Bishop required by the Episcopal Church Canons. The Standing Committee interviews the Postulant prior to Candidacy and reviews paperwork prior to Diaconal and Priesthood ordinations. Approval of the Standing Committee must be received before Candidacy, ordination to the Diaconate, and ordination to the Priesthood.

**Training:** Preparation for ordination shall include canonically required training regarding (1) prevention of sexual misconduct. (2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse. (3) *The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*, particularly Title IV thereof. (4) the Church's teaching on racism.

**Transitional Diaconate:** The ordination preceding that to the Priesthood. Transitional Deacons serve in the manner of all deacons, but for a set term (minimum of six months) before being ordained to the Priesthood.

**Vocational Diaconate:** Ordination to "a special ministry of servanthood" directly under the bishop, serving all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely. At the Eucharist a deacon proclaims the Gospel, may lead the Prayers of the People, bids the confession, prepares the Eucharistic table, and gives the dismissal.

## **Expectations of those aspiring to Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate (Aspirants)**

- The ability to articulate sense of call
- Active engagement in the parish through regular attendance, pledging, and involvement in ministry for at least one year
- Familiarity with the Discernment and Ordination process as set forth by the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry
- Awareness of the qualities the Diocese of Central New York is seeking in a vocational deacon
- Awareness of the length of time the discernment process may take
- Awareness of the financial costs of education and formation for the ministry
- Willingness to follow the Bishop's direction in training and placement for ministry
- Commitment to serve in the Diocese of Central New York for a minimum of 2-3 years following ordination to the vocational diaconate
- Commitment to communicating with one's sponsoring parish and the Bishop throughout the Discernment and Ordination process

At the direction of the local priest, the Aspirant may complete the Discernment Process Application form and submit it to the Diocesan office. At the direction of the Canon to the Ordinary, the discernment process may continue.

The process of discernment may begin by the Aspirant contacting the clergyperson, the clergyperson speaking first to the Aspirant, through members of the congregation speaking to the Aspirant or the clergyperson, or any combination of the above. The journey towards ordination is one of shared discernment—the Spirit speaking both within an individual and within the congregation—throughout the process.

An Aspirant who has been confirmed or received after being a member of another denomination must be active in an Episcopal community or church for at least two years before entering the discernment process.

As the Chief Pastor, the Bishop directs and approves all theological education before Postulancy is granted. Aspirants and Nominees should not pursue theological education without prior approval from the Bishop.

## **Expectations of Clergy Guiding those Seeking Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate**

- Familiarity with the diocesan process for Ordination as set forth by the Bishop and Commission on Ministry
- Through discussion and prayer, help the Aspirant discern whether and when to move forward
- Be willing to pledge financial support and continuing involvement by the parish if the Aspirant is nominated and applies for Postulancy (if granted) and Candidacy
- Communicate honestly with the Diocese about the Aspirant's readiness to move forward at each step in the process
- Fulfill all canonical requirements for letters of support: recommendation at the beginning of the discernment process, nomination for Postulancy, recommendation for Candidacy, and recommendation for Ordination to the Diaconate

When the clergyperson feels the Aspirant is ready to move from the parish into a more formal discernment process, the clergyperson contacts the Canon to the Ordinary and instructs the Aspirant to complete the Discernment Process Application form. Clergy should also let the Aspirant know that she/he/they should begin write a spiritual autobiography, begin reading *Listening Hearts*, and engage a spiritual director.

Clergy also oversee the expectations of the vestry for those seeking ordination:

- Write letters of recommendation as canonically required
- If made a Postulant, support through prayer and financial contributions

If there is no clergyperson in charge of an Aspirant's parish, the Aspirant may work with the local district dean.

The process of discernment may begin by the Aspirant contacting the clergy, the clergy speaking first to the Aspirant, through members of the congregation speaking to the Aspirant or the clergy, or any combination of the above. The journey towards ordination is one of shared discernment—the Spirit speaking both within an individual and within the congregation—throughout the process.

An Aspirant who has been confirmed or received after being a member of another denomination must be active in an Episcopal community or church for at least two years before entering the discernment process.

As the Chief Pastor, the Bishop directs and approves all theological education before Postulancy is granted. Aspirants and Nominees should not pursue theological education without prior approval from the Bishop.



## **Discernment Process Application**

**Title, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name:**

**Email:**

**Address (street, city, state, zip code):**

**Primary Phone Number:**

**Birthdate:**

**Sex:**

**Are you a citizen of the USA? ☐yes ☐no**

**Social Security Number:**

**Present Congregation Affiliation (name and city):**

**Length of time affiliated with congregation:**

**Name of sponsoring priest:**

**Sponsoring priest phone number:**

**Baptized (date, denomination, name and city of congregation):**

**Confirmed/Received (date, name and city of congregation):**

**Length of time in residence in the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York:**

**Please list where you have gone to college, year of graduation(s)/completion(s), and what undergraduate and or graduate degree(s) were earned (attach to this application if necessary):**

**Present Occupation/Employer (job title and mailing address):**

**How long employed with present employer:**



**Previous Occupation/Employer (job title and mailing address):**

**How long employed with previous employer:**

**Current Marital Status:** ☐single ☐married ☐separated ☐widowed ☐divorced

**If married, name of spouse:**

**Date married:**

**Please give date if separated, widowed, or divorced:**

**If married, divorced, widowed more than once, please list separately name(s) and date(s):**

**Children: Provide name and age of each child:**

**Have you ever been arrested for a misdemeanor or felony?** ☐yes ☐no

**If so, please describe/explain:**

**Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony?** ☐yes ☐no

**If so, please describe/explain:**

**Have you ever been treated for any alcohol or drug addiction?** ☐yes ☐no

**If so, when and where, explain:**

**Have you ever participated in another discernment process for ordination in a different Christian denomination?** ☐yes ☐no

**If so, please describe/explain:**



**Have you ever participated in another discernment process for ordination in this diocese or any other diocese of the Episcopal Church?** ☐yes ☐no

**If so, please explain and include dates:**

**Were you ordained and did you serve in a capacity as an ordained minister in a different denomination?** ☐yes ☐no

**If so, please explain and include dates:**

**Please include names, contact information, phone number, email, and relationship for two personal references, who could be contacted by us:**

1.

2.

**Please include the names, contact information, phone number, email, and relationship for two professional references, who could be contacted by us:**

1.

2.

**I attest that I have answered all the above information truthfully and have not falsified any information. I also authorize the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York to call references and do a criminal background check to verify the above information.**

---

Signature

Date

*When complete: print form, sign, date, and mail to:*

The Diocese of Central New York  
Attn: Discernment Committee  
1020 7<sup>th</sup> North Street  
Suite 200  
Liverpool, NY 13088

*Revised 3/21/19*

## Ministry Discernment Days/Ministry Fairs (Optional)

The Diocese of Central New York offers opportunities for all parishioners to learn about the four orders of ministry and their responsibilities.

We discuss the four orders of ministry and the importance of each as described in our Catechism:

“The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.” *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 855.

All baptized people are called into ministry. In the Baptismal Covenant we pledge to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ,” to “...seek and serve Christ in all persons...” and to “...strive for justice and peace among all people, respecting the dignity of every human being...” *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 305.

Beyond this commitment, one might discern an additional call:

- To a specific licensed lay ministry of Worship Leader, Lay Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, or Eucharistic Visitor, or service on a board or commission
- To the Vocational Diaconate
- To the Priesthood

Want to know more? Check the diocesan calendar at [cnyepiscopal.org](http://cnyepiscopal.org) to find the next scheduled Discernment Day or Ministry Fair. Participation in a Ministry Discernment Day is an **optional** part of the Ordination and Discernment Process.

## Listening Hearts

*Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* by Suzanne Farnham [purchase book] is the primary resource the Diocesan Discernment Teams in the Diocese of Central New York use for the process of discernment. The ministry and book are described below:

*Listening Hearts Ministries, directed by Episcopalian Suzanne Farnham of Baltimore, relies on a deeply prayerful discernment process to help people and communities determine their call.*

*"You have a vocation in the church beyond what you understand it to be, and it's up to you to figure out what it is." When Farnham, wife of a retired Episcopal priest, heard that from her spiritual director, she began a journey that led indirectly to Listening Hearts. But not right away.*

*What Farnham realized, in time, was that she needed to find a way to discern her own call to ministry. Farnham decided to begin a project that would help members of her parish, Memorial Episcopal Church, Baltimore, to answer similar questions.*

*Listening Hearts draws on many kinds of spirituality: Carmelite, Benedictine and Ignatian, Quaker and Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox.*

*The process is simple but not easy. A discernment group meets, asks questions drawn from the book, sits for long periods in silent, contemplative prayer. The goal is to evoke the signs of the Spirit.*

Source: Episcopal Life (<http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal-life/LHearts.html>), edited.

## **Spiritual Autobiography**

The Spiritual Autobiography required of Aspirants should include a description of significant events, people, and things that have influenced how the Aspirant sees himself/herself/themself as a person of faith, and how the Aspirant has felt drawn to the ordained ministry as a vocation.

The Spiritual Autobiography might include, but is not limited to, responses to the following questions:

Is there a character in the Bible with whom you identify? Why?

When have you experienced God working in your life? Please describe how you have come to know God and Jesus personally? Were those experiences transformative and if so, how?

How and when do you pray? Has there been a retreat experience or workshop that has influenced your routine and prayer practice?

Discuss your call to ordained ministry addressing the following questions:

- What is your understanding of Christian Ministry?
- How do you distinguish between the role of the laity and that of the ordained?
- How are you suited for ordained ministry?
- How might God use your gifts for the kingdom if you enter ordained ministry?
- When did you first entertain the idea of ordained ministry?
- What events and people have most influenced you in thinking about your call?
- In what specific ways have you experienced this call?
- How have you seen your call confirmed?
- How has your sense of call changed you?

How would you describe your spiritual life and discipline?

How do you decide what your annual giving will be to the Church?

How do you care for yourself in the areas of exercise, rest, and recreation?

What leadership qualities do you possess?

How do you anticipate using those gifts in ministry?

Describe your weaknesses/growing edges.

Why are you an Episcopalian? How has this Church impacted your call to ministry?

Have you been a servant outside the context of your parish?

What rewards have you found in your Christian service?

What is your vision of yourself as a minister?

## **Spiritual Director**

A Spiritual Director is a trained and usually certified person, lay or ordained, with whom one communicates on a regular basis concerning his/her/their spiritual life. A Spiritual Director listens and, when appropriate, responds by giving “direction” which may include spiritual advice, help with discernment, suggested reading or action, or a question to ponder.

Contact the Canon to the Ordinary for a current list of trained Spiritual Directors. If you know a Spiritual Director with whom you wish to work, please confirm that this person meets with the approval of the Canon to the Ordinary.

## Letter of Recommendation for Diocesan Discernment Team

When the Clergy person and Vestry believe that an Aspirant is ready to work with a Diocesan Discernment Team, a letter should be sent to the Canon to the Ordinary. This letter should be an introduction of the Aspirant by the Clergy and should include information about the Aspirant in the eight areas listed below:

**Background Information:** The name and contact information of the Aspirant, how long a member of the parish, how long and in what ways has the Aspirant has been involved in activities and ministries in the parish, your relationship with them, and how other parishioners view the Aspirant.

**Spirituality:** What have you seen of the Aspirant's faith life? Is this person able to speak of his/her/their faith and God's call? Is his/her/their work or ministry grounded in his/her/their faith? In what ways? What is your overall impression of this person's spiritual health?

**Leadership:** Describe the leadership style of the Aspirant. How and where has this person exercised leadership in the parish? Is this person able to claim his/her/their strengths? Is this person aware of his/her/their weaknesses? How does the Aspirant handle conflict? Describe a conflict and how this person was able to resolve (or not) the situation.

**Character and Mental Health:** What is your impression of the health and stability of this Aspirant? His/Her/Their maturity and judgment? Is this person able to make long-term commitments to people and projects? Is this person able to balance work and life, family and church activity?

**Pastoral Abilities:** Describe the Aspirant's pastoral sensitivity—how does this person respond to another's pain? What kinds of pastoral ministry has this person been involved in? What conflicts or fears might get in the way of this Aspirant's ability to reach out to or sit with another person?

**Gifts and Strengths:** What gifts and strengths does this Aspirant bring to the priesthood? Where might this person best serve the Church and what might not be a good fit? Please explain.

**Motivation for Ministry:** Why is this Aspirant seeking ordination? How will this person function as a colleague, as a member of the Diocese, and in the larger Church? What does the Aspirant think of the Ordination Vows?

**Growth and Discipline:** In what areas might this Aspirant need further work spiritually, emotionally, or intellectually? Would the Aspirant agree with your assessment? Please describe one major area of struggle for this person and the work this person has done to address it.



## **Letter of Recommendation for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate by Diocesan Discernment Team**

When the Diocesan Discernment Team believes that an Aspirant has a call to the vocational diaconate, a letter should be written to the Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary. This letter should include a description of the discernment process taken with the Aspirant and should include information about the Aspirant in the eight areas listed below:

**Background Information:** The name and contact info of the Aspirant, how many conversations/meetings were held and the general impression of the Diocesan Discernment Team.

**Spirituality:** What have you seen of the Aspirant's faith life? Is this person able to speak of their faith and God's call? Is this person's work or ministry grounded in his/her/their faith? In what ways? What is your overall impression of this person's spiritual health?

**Leadership:** Describe the leadership style of the Aspirant. How and where has this person exercised leadership in the parish? Is this person able to claim his/her/their strengths? Is this person aware of his/her/their weaknesses? How does the Aspirant handle conflict? Describe a conflict and how this person was able to resolve (or not) the situation.

**Character and Mental Health:** What is your impression of the health and stability of this Aspirant? His/her/their maturity and judgment? Is this person able to make long-term commitments to people and projects? Is this person able to balance work and life, family and church activity?

**Pastoral Abilities:** Describe the Aspirant's pastoral sensitivity—how does this person respond to another's pain? What kinds of pastoral ministry has this person been involved in? What conflicts or fears might get in the way of this Aspirant's ability to reach out to or sit with another person?

**Gifts and Strengths:** What gifts and strengths does this Aspirant bring to the vocational diaconate? Where might this person best serve the church and what might not be a good fit? Please explain.

**Motivation for Ministry:** Why is this Aspirant seeking ordination? How will this person function as a colleague, as a member of the Diocese, and in the larger Church? What does the Aspirant think of the Ordination Vows?

**Growth and Discipline:** In what areas might this Aspirant need further work spiritually, emotionally, or intellectually? Would the Aspirant agree with your assessment? Please describe one major area of struggle for this person and the work they have done to address it.

## **Letter of Nomination for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate from Clergy and Vestry**

According to the Canon III.6.2 of *The Constitution and Canons* of the Episcopal Church, Adopted and Revised in General Convention 2015:

*A confirmed adult communicant in good standing may be nominated for ordination to the diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith.*

*(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to: (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.*

*(b) The Nominee, if in agreement with the nomination, shall accept the nomination in writing, and shall provide the following to the Bishop: (1) Full name and date of birth. (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese. (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation. (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese. (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Priesthood. (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.*

The Letter of Nomination shall be mailed to the Bishop, with copies sent to the Canon to the Ordinary, the Chair of the Commission on Ministry, and the Nominee.

## **Letter of Acceptance of Nomination by Nominee**

According to the Canon III.6.2 of *The Constitution and Canons* of the Episcopal Church, Adopted and Revised in General Convention 2015:

*A confirmed adult communicant in good standing may be nominated for ordination to the Diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith.*

*(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to: (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.*

*(b) The Nominee, if in agreement with the nomination, shall accept the nomination in writing, and shall provide the following to the Bishop: (1) Full name and date of birth. (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese. (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation. (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese. (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate. (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.*

The Letter of Acceptance of Nomination shall be mailed to the Bishop, with copies sent to the Canon to the Ordinary, the Chair of the Commission on Ministry, and the Clergy and Vestry of the Nominee's Faith Community.

The date of Ordination to the Diaconate is set by Canon III.6 (a)(1) "*after at least eighteen months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2(b).*"

## **Life History Questionnaire (for Aspirants for Ordination)**

The Life History Questionnaire is to be completed prior to meeting with the Psychologist designated by the Diocese of Central New York.

Aspirants for ordination receive this questionnaire for self-examination and preparation for the mental health evaluation required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church. This completed, confidential document is conveyed by the applicant directly to the mental health professional(s) conducting the clinical examination in whose custody it exclusively remains.

The Questionnaire may be downloaded at [cnyepiscopal.org/discernment](http://cnyepiscopal.org/discernment).

## **Behavior Screening Questionnaire (for Aspirants for Ordination)**

The Behavior Screening Questionnaire is to be completed prior to meeting with the Psychologist designated by the Diocese of Central New York.

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

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

All questions must be answered.

The Questionnaire may be downloaded at [cnyepiscopal.org/discernment](http://cnyepiscopal.org/discernment).

## **Required Medical Examination (for Aspirants for Ordination)**

The Required Medical Examination form is to be completed for use by the physician conducting the physical examination in preparation for the Ordination Discernment Retreat in the Diocese of Central New York.

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

The form may be downloaded at [cnyepiscopal.org/discernment](http://cnyepiscopal.org/discernment).

## **Application for Ordination Discernment Retreat**

**Date:**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone number(s):**

**Email:**

Having met the following requirements as indicated, I now apply for permission to attend an upcoming Ordination Discernment Retreat of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York.

*Please supply dates of completion for the following:*

Diocesan Discernment Team recommendation

Nomination by faith community and clergy

Acceptance of nomination

Life history questionnaire

Behavior screening questionnaire

Medical examination

Psychological evaluation

## **Schedule for Ordination Discernment Retreat (including Standing Committee)**

### **Friday**

**2:00 p.m.** The Commission on Ministry (COM) meets to discuss paperwork for each Nominee (Nominee's paperwork sent to each COM member the week prior by diocesan staff). Questions are discussed and plans are made. Prepared questions are discussed ahead of time with copies for COM members. COM members will discuss who will keep time, who will ask which questions, who will open and close in prayer during the Saturday breakout sessions. During this time the Standing Committee can conduct business.

**4:00 p.m.** While the COM meets, the Nominees, Postulants, Candidates and Transitional Deacons arrive, get copy of the schedule, meet each other, and get settled into their rooms.

**5:00 p.m.** The Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, COM, Standing Committee, Nominees, Postulants, Candidates, and Transitional Deacons meet for a social hour. Spouses/significant others and children living at home are included during this time.

**6:00 p.m.** Dinner is served with everyone present and a more formal introduction is done. Guests/family leave after dinner, including Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary.

**9:00 p.m.** Compline is held and led by a Person in Process (PIP) with the COM, Standing Committee, Nominees and others; instructions for the following day are given.

### **Saturday**

**7:00 a.m.** Morning Prayer lead by a COM member or PIP.

**7:30-8:30 a.m.** Breakfast

**9:00 a.m.** Breakout sessions: Each Nominee or PIP that needs to be interviewed will meet with a group of three, four, or more COM members. The Nominee is invited in and the session begins with prayer. The same primary questions are asked of each Nominee. The session closes in prayer and the Nominee leaves the room when time is called (usually 30-45 minutes). A discussion will take place reflecting the COM's impressions of the conversation, the strengths and weaknesses seen, and any further questions they might have about the Nominee. The note keeper fills out a form after the discussion on each Nominee. PIPs who need to meet with the Standing Committee will do so during breakout sessions.

**12:00 p.m.** Noonday Prayer together led by a PIP.

**12:30 p.m.** Grace and Lunch. During lunch, the Nominees are encouraged to meet any COM members they may not be meeting during the breakout sessions.





**1:30 p.m.** The PIPs have free time. The COM gathers again to discuss the breakout sessions: what surprises were encountered, what questions still need to be asked, and what stories were told that need to be told to additional COM members.

**2:30 p.m.** More breakout sessions, if needed.

**2:30 p.m.** If there are no further breakout sessions, everyone meets for a simple Eucharist. Each Nominee, Postulant, Candidate and Transitional Deacon will have been assigned a reading or prayers for one or more of the worship services.

**3:00 p.m.** Nominees, Postulants, Candidates and Transitional Deacons leave after the Eucharist and the COM meets again to go over each Nominee and PIP. Each breakout group will report on each person interviewed and then spend time in prayer before voting to recommend or not recommend moving that individual forward in the process toward ordination.

Recommendations and ALL individual reflections on each Nominee will be given to the Bishop for her decision. All paperwork sent to us by the Diocese will be collected and shredded.

## **Schedule for Ordination Discernment Retreat (not including Standing Committee)**

### **Friday**

**2:00 p.m.** The Commission on Ministry (COM) meets to discuss paperwork for each Nominee (Nominee's paperwork sent to each COM member the week prior by diocesan staff). Questions are discussed and plans are made. Prepared questions are discussed ahead of time with copies for COM members. COM members will discuss who will keep time, who will ask which questions, who will open and close in prayer during the Saturday breakout sessions.

**4:00 p.m.** While the COM meets, the Nominees, Postulants, Candidates and Transitional Deacons arrive, get copy of the schedule, meet each other, and get settled into their rooms.

**5:00 p.m.** The Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, COM, Nominees, Postulants, Candidates, and Transitional Deacons meet for a social hour. Spouses/significant others and children living at home are included during this time.

**6:00 p.m.** Dinner is served with everyone present and a more formal introduction is done. Guests/family leave after dinner, including Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary.

**9:00 p.m.** Compline is held and led by a Person in Process (PIP) with the COM, Nominees and others; instructions for the following day are given.

### **Saturday**

**7:00 a.m.** Morning Prayer lead by a COM member or PIP.

**7:30-8:30 a.m.** Breakfast

**9:00 a.m.** Breakout sessions: Each Nominee or PIP that needs to be interviewed will meet with a group of three, four, or more COM members. The Nominee is invited in and the session begins with prayer. The same primary questions are asked of each Nominee. The session closes in prayer and the Nominee leaves the room when time is called (usually 30-45 minutes). A discussion will take place reflecting the COM's impressions of the conversation, the strengths and weaknesses seen, and any further questions they might have about the Nominee. The note keeper fills out a form after the discussion on each Nominee.

**12:00 p.m.** Noonday Prayer together led by a PIP.

**12:30 p.m.** Grace and Lunch. During lunch, the Nominees are encouraged to meet any COM members they may not be meeting during the breakout sessions.

**1:30 p.m.** The PIPs have free time. The COM gathers again to discuss the breakout sessions: what surprises were encountered, what questions still need to be asked, and what stories were told that need to be told to additional COM members.

**2:30 p.m.** More breakout sessions, if needed.



**2:30 p.m.** If there are no further breakout sessions, everyone meets for a simple Eucharist. Each Nominee, Postulant, Candidate and Transitional Deacon will have been assigned a reading or prayers for one or more of the worship services.

**3:00 p.m.** Nominees, Postulants, Candidates and Transitional Deacons leave after the Eucharist and the COM meets again to go over each Nominee and PIP. Each breakout group will report on each person interviewed and then spend time in prayer before voting to recommend or not recommend moving that individual forward in the process toward ordination.

Recommendations and ALL individual reflections on each Nominee will be given to the Bishop for her decision. All paperwork sent to us by the Diocese will be collected and shredded.

## Commission on Ministry

### Checklist for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate

*NOTE: Responsibility for timely attention to all deadlines and documentation remains with each PIP.*

#### Postulancy

1. ☐ Date of Postulancy \_\_\_\_\_

#### Candidacy

2. ☐ Application for consideration as a Candidate sent to Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary (CO) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ☐ Clergy/Vestry letter of support sent to Bishop and CO \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Seminary/Formation transcript/report requested \_\_\_\_\_  
received: \_\_\_\_\_
5. ☐ Standing Committee interview \_\_\_\_\_
6. ☐ Date accepted as Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

#### Vocational Diaconate

7. ☐ Application for Ordination as a Deacon sent to Bishop and CO \_\_\_\_\_
8. ☐ Clergy/Vestry letter of support sent to Bishop and CO \_\_\_\_\_
9. ☐ Education/Formation transcript/report requested \_\_\_\_\_  
received \_\_\_\_\_
10. ☐ [Safe Church training](#) completed \_\_\_\_\_
11. ☐ [Dismantling Racism training](#) completed \_\_\_\_\_
12. ☐ Title IV training completed \_\_\_\_\_
13. ☐ CPE evaluation requested \_\_\_\_\_
14. ☐ Theological Education and Formation Review \_\_\_\_\_
15. ☐ COM interview \_\_\_\_\_
16. ☐ Standing Committee review \_\_\_\_\_
17. ☐ Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate \_\_\_\_\_

## **Checklist for Postulants Applying to be Candidates for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate**

1. ☐ Date of Postulancy: \_\_\_\_\_
2. ☐ Application for consideration as a Candidate for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate sent to Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary (date): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ☐ Clergy and Vestry letter of support sent to Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary (date): \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Seminary/Formation transcript/report sent to the Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary (date requested): \_\_\_\_\_
5. ☐ Standing Committee interview (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Date accepted as Candidate for Ordination: \_\_\_\_\_

*This date can be no less than 12 months after the date of admission to Postulancy.*

## **Application for Consideration as a Candidate for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate**

According to Canon III.6.4 of *The Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church*:

- (a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following: (1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and (2) a letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.*
- (b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a written statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having received approval in writing of the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate...*

## Checklist for Candidates

### Applying for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate

1. ☐ Application for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate sent to Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary (date): \_\_\_\_\_
2. ☐ Clergy and Vestry letter of support sent to Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary (date): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ☐ Seminary/Formation transcript/report sent to the Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary (date requested): \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ [Safe Church training](#) completed: \_\_\_\_\_
5. ☐ [Dismantling Racism training](#) completed: \_\_\_\_\_
6. ☐ Title IV training completed: \_\_\_\_\_
7. ☐ CPE Evaluation sent to the Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary (date requested): \_\_\_\_\_
8. ☐ Theological Education and Formation review completed and results sent to the Bishop and copied to the Canon to the Ordinary: \_\_\_\_\_
9. ☐ COM interview and recommendation (dates): \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_
10. ☐ Psychological/medical/background reports (updates needed if current reports are older than 36 months) (dates):  
P: \_\_\_\_\_ M: \_\_\_\_\_ B: \_\_\_\_\_
11. ☐ Standing Committee certification (date): \_\_\_\_\_

Date for Ordination: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Application from a Candidate Requesting Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate**

According to Canon III.6.6 of *The Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church*:

*(b) The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee: (1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon. (2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight. (3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the date of admission. (4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon. (5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.*