

A Process Guide for Those Discerning a Call to the Sacred Order of Deacons



**The Episcopal Diocese of RI
275 North Main Street
Providence RI 02903-1298
401-274-4500
401-331-9430 (Fax)
<http://www.episcopalri.org>**

This Guide
is published by
the Commission on Ministry
on behalf of
The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.

It is based in part on
A Guide For Discernment: The Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate
as developed by
The Episcopal Diocese of Arizona.

January 2014

The Ordination of a Deacon

The Examination

My brother/sister, every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ, serving God the Father, through the power of the Holy Spirit. God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

My brother/sister, do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to the life and work of a deacon?

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 543

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A Pastoral Letter from the Commission on Ministry¹

So you're interested in ordained life? How exciting! Who knows where God might be leading you, but we on the Commission on Ministry are committed to supporting you in your discernment.

It is our belief that the substance of a call to ordained ministry (really any ministry) comes from the Holy Spirit and is affirmed not only within one's heart but also in the context of one's home congregation and the wider Church. Enclosed you will find documents intended to assist you in your personal reflections and guide you through the Diocesan process. Please read through the materials and familiarize yourself with the outlined steps and stages.

As you will discover, this process requires of you not only serious prayer and reflection but also considerable openness. We ask that you be open to sharing with others your story-- what defines you, what you enjoy, what you understand to be both your gifts and growing edges, and what you believe. We ask that you be open to the questions, sometimes exciting, sometimes unsettling, that arise in any real discernment process. And we ask that you be open to the Holy Spirit, who is always full of surprises.

Please know we are keenly aware of the weighty nature of this undertaking. For our part, we promise to share in your journey not only with equal openness but also transparency and compassion. Regardless of the outcome, we hope you will feel held in prayer and affirmed as a faithful disciple who is being called into some new or renewed ministry. Finally, we welcome feedback from you and those who will join you in this journey so that we may ever improve upon the "art" of creating a process that captures the whispers of the Spirit.

May God bless and guide you in the conversations to come.

Faithfully yours,

The Commission on Ministry

¹ The Commission on Ministry (COM) is a body required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church for every diocese, and it is charged with assisting the diocesan bishop in three specific ways: in the implementation of Title III, the general canons dealing with ministry, in the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons, and in the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness therefor. (Canon III.2, Sec. 2)

A Note on Process and Terms

The Bishop and the Commission on Ministry (COM) have outlined the following steps in the hope of bringing clarity, transparency, and encouragement to those involved in the discernment process. The steps outline the process from beginning to end for a lay Episcopalian who feels called to diaconal ministry. Since the Bishop is the one who ordains, some parts of the process may be modified at the Bishop's discretion.

The steps in the ordination process have their own ecclesiastical terminology.

- One begins as an **Aspirant** – someone who is aspiring to be ordained.
- **Nomination** is the formal sponsorship by the worship community of a confirmed adult communicant in good standing to seek ordination.
- **Postulancy** is granted by the Bishop. It is a time for exploration and decision on a call. To be eligible for admission as a postulant, the nominee must complete the Application for Postulancy, interview with the Bishop and the COM, and the Diocese must receive reports from medical and psychological evaluations as well as an initial background screening.
- **Candidacy** is the second stage of approval in the ordination process. It is a time of deeper formation in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. The period of Postulancy and Candidacy must be at least 18 months as provided in the *2012 Canons of The Episcopal Church* (Title III, Canon 6, Section 6.a.1, p. 75) but may vary in accordance to an individual's formation needs. Most postulants are approved for candidacy after the completion of their second year of formal training.
- **Ordination:** the Diocesan goal is to ordain candidates to the Diaconate after the successful completion of the candidate's required educational program and formation and a requisite examination.
- **Post-Ordination** formation is provided to each newly-ordained deacon by a mentor priest assigned by the Bishop for a period of at least one year. Ordination, however, does not guarantee an immediate position in the Diocese of Rhode Island.

A Theological Statement on Ordained Ministry and the Discernment Process in The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island

The Theology of Diaconal Ministry

Through Holy Baptism the people of God are filled with the Holy Spirit and given the power to share in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Through Baptism we are called to servant ministry and to give our lives in service to others. In Baptism we are joined to others who share this vocation, and as members of the Body of Christ, we are servants to one another and to the world. Therefore, everyone baptized into the Body of Christ is a minister of the Gospel.

The ordained deacon is “called to the ministry of service.....to serve the Lord, the church and the world.....the deacon is thrust into a position of leadership.....as a leader who serves” (from The Servant Church by John E. Booty). The vocation of the deacon is not advancement for those who have done “every other” lay ministry. The catechism states:

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. (BCP, p. 856)

During the examination for the ordination of a deacon, the bishop says:

As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God’s Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself. (BCP, p. 543)

While all baptized members of the Church are ministers who care, teach, and support one another, deacons are especially called to proclaim the Gospel and to be ready to help and serve those in need. Therefore, the process of discernment is intended to facilitate identifying those whom God is calling to this particular ministry.

Scripturally, our model for the deacon is rooted in texts such as these:

- *Shared leadership* – Numbers 11:16-17, 24-45a. Deacons work as part of a leadership team with the bishop, priests, other deacons and lay leaders.

- *Call of Jeremiah* – Jeremiah 1:4-10. It is God who works and speaks through the one whom God calls.
- *The Great Commission of Service* – Act 6:1-6. Deacons continue the tradition of Stephen and six others to “wait at tables” as an outward sign of service. The same “*service* Christ put on his ministry and of *servant* on those who minister. He is the embodiment of the first principle of this ministry: *sent to serve.*” (from The Diaconate by James Barnett)
- *Variety of Gifts* – Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13. The Diaconate is a specific ministry, part of the whole body, but no higher or lower than any other.
- *The Bridge Builder* – Matthew 25:31-46. The role of the deacon is to bridge the world to the Church and the Church to the world. To be the radical voice of those living on the margins who are thirsty, who are strangers, who are naked, who are sick and who are imprisoned. To be *transforming agents in the world!*

Introduction to the Discernment Process for the Diocese of RI

The whole Church is responsible for raising up ordained leaders of the highest quality with the particular gifts necessary for leading faith communities into the future. Both the individual and the community are simultaneously participating in a process of discernment and affirmation. To that end, the COM, with the direction of our Bishop, is being proactive in its efforts to *invite* individuals into further discernment about the call to Holy Orders as a Deacon. The COM is prayerful about its active steps to seek out entrepreneurial and holy leaders.

The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island is searching for diaconal candidates with a ministry of service. These are individuals who have manifested a willingness to link the church to the needs of the world and represent the world to the church. Such candidates are engaged in working with people who live at the margins of our society, and are willing to act as agents of God’s justice and mercy. This philosophy is in conjunction to the Book of Common Prayer’s statement (p. 510) “. . . there are deacons who assist bishops and priests in all of this work. It is also a special responsibility of deacons to minister in Christ’s name to the poor, the sick, the suffering, and the helpless.”

Step 1: Initial Discernment at the Congregation Level

It is important to note that according to the *2012 Canons of the Episcopal Church*², in order for a person to enter the ordination process, he or she must be a confirmed adult communicant in good standing (Title III, Canon 6, Section 2, p. 71) in a congregation or faith community of the Diocese of Rhode Island for at least one year before beginning the ordination process. Any individual who has been refused Candidacy or dismissed from formation by other dioceses will

² http://www.episcopalarchives.org/CandC_ToC_2012.html

not generally be eligible for consideration in this diocese without receipt of a letter from the Bishop of that diocese declaring cause of refusal or dismissal (Title III, Canon 6, Section 3c, p. 72). A decision in this matter will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The Bishop and other representatives of the Church strive to exercise prayerful spiritual discernment and pastoral sensitivity with those who believe they might be called to ordained ministry. Any person considering applying for ordination and any clergy person participating in an applicant's discernment should be aware of the following Canon of the Episcopal Church:

No one shall be denied access to the selection process for ordination in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these canons. No right to ordination is hereby established.

Title III, Canon 1, Section 2, p. 67

It is the intention of the Bishop and the COM to encourage those individuals sensing a call into diaconal ministry to enter into a period of discussion and discernment with their Rector or the Priest-in-Charge³ of their congregation in order to hear if God is truly calling them into diaconal ministry. Following a period of discussion and discernment with their Rector or Priest-in-Charge, and if the person feels called, and if their Rector or Priest-in-Charge is convinced of this call, then a letter of introduction and support for that individual should be sent by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to the Bishop for his review and action.

Step 2: Initial Screening by the Bishop

Following the receipt and review of a letter of introduction and support, the Bishop and Rector or Priest-in-Charge will discuss the individual's gifts for ministry and the Bishop will then schedule a meeting with that person. If the Bishop is agreeable, the person will then be *formally invited* by the Bishop to attend *the Holy Orders Day of Discernment* to continue in the discernment process.

Step 3: The Holy Orders Day of Discernment and Information

The Holy Orders Day of Discernment and Information is held annually in the late spring and is *by invitation only*. Invitees will be invited by the Bishop to attend a *Holy Orders Day of Discernment and Information* along with their spouses/partners, their Rectors or Priests-in-Charge, a representative from each of their respective Vestries/Bishop's Committees, and the chairpersons/a member of their respective Discernment Teams, if such a team has been formed. The purpose of this day is to orient individuals interested in exploring a call to the ordination process and to help them with further discernment. The hope is to clarify the differences between lay, diaconal, and priestly ministries, religious orders and to explore the nature of discernment and formation in the ordination process.

³ The person who has canonical responsibility for a congregation.

Step 4: Declaration of Intent

The discernment process is multifaceted. First, it includes an individual's assessment of his/her own gifts and potential call. But other individuals who know the person will participate in the discernment process by providing a safe, intimate environment in which one's gifts, vulnerabilities, suitability and readiness for ordained ministry can be discussed openly. The community, both at the congregational level and at the diocesan level, assists the individual by discerning and evaluating his/her gifts and call. The community should be proactive in identifying those they believe might be called to ordained ministry. As the process moves forward, the community's role becomes increasingly evaluative.

Scripturally, our model for discernment is shaped by texts such as these:

- *Moses' Call* – Exodus 4:10-17. Understanding a call to leadership begins with an honest self-discernment of gifts, vulnerabilities and prayer with God.
- *Samuel's Call* – Samuel 3:1 - 4:1a. Leaders assist in discerning God's call.
- *Elizabeth and Mary* – Luke 1:39-45. Others, including friends and family, also assist in affirming one's call.
- *Matthias' Call* – Acts 2:21-26. The Community establishes criteria for selection and is guided by prayer and the Holy Spirit.
- *Saul's Call* – Acts 9:1-30. God's call is followed by a time of discernment of the call of the community, healing, and spiritual formation.

It is recommended that individuals interested in exploring a call to ordained ministry seek a qualified spiritual director. If guidance is needed in finding a spiritual director, please seek the advice of your Rector or the Priests-in-Charge of your congregation.

The individual who wishes to proceed in the discernment process must complete and submit Form 1: Declaration of Intent to Seek Postulancy and forward it to the Bishop.

NOTE: **Form 1** must be submitted by the declaration deadline date of June 15. Once it has been submitted, the individual exploring a call is now considered an Aspirant.

Step 5: A Continuation of Discernment at the Congregation Level

In preparation for discernment at the congregation level, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge works with the aspirant to appoint a Discernment Team of not less than five and not more than seven mature Christians to discuss the call with the aspirant. Additional information about the formation of a Discernment Team is found in **Appendix A** of this document.

The primary tasks of the Discernment Team are

- to help discern God's call
- to refine the individual's ability to articulate the reason(s) he / she believes they are called to the diaconate, and
- to be a support for the aspirant whether or not the ordination process continues.

It is important to remember that this Discernment Team does not function as a gatekeeper to pass final judgment on the aspirant's sense of call, nor is it an advocacy group whose mission is to push the aspirant toward ordination. The COM finds the book Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community by Suzanne Farnham et al, to be a valuable resource to understanding effective dynamics in a Discernment Team. The COM also recommends Let Your Life Speak by Parker Palmer as a succinct articulation of the experience of discernment. We urge all aspirants and Discernment Team members to utilize these texts.

By November 1, **the Discernment Team will make a written recommendation to the Rector or Priest-in-Charge about the aspirant's call to diaconal ministry (Form 2B: Discernment Team's Report)**. This recommendation is based on the observation by the COM that aspirants who have this depth in discernment are generally better prepared to articulate their sense of call than others who have been in conversation with a Discernment Team for a briefer period.

During this period of discernment, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge provides support and feedback to the aspirant as well as discerns for him/herself whether individuals presenting themselves for discernment are called and prepared to enter into conversation with the COM about the potential for a call to the diaconate. Pastoral guidance and possible redirection in the discernment process may occur at this point. As difficult as it is to say and hear that one is not called to the diaconate, it is almost always easier to have this conversation earlier rather than later so that the individual may focus on what ministry God is calling him/her to pursue.

During the final meeting of the Discernment Team, the COM Consultant⁴ will provide guidance to the Discernment Team in writing their report. The report is shared with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the Vestry/Bishop's Committee although it is recommended that the Discernment Team not share the entire report with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. If the aspirant, Discernment Team, Rector or Priest-in-Charge, and Vestry/Bishop's Committee agree, the person enters the Application/Formation Process. ***The authority to move an aspirant***

⁴ Appointed by the COM to provide information about and guide the Discernment Team in its work with an aspirant.

forward in the ordination process rests with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. If after reviewing the Discernment Team's recommendation the Vestry/Bishop's Committee desires to nominate the aspirant, **Form 2A: Nomination of Aspirant** is signed and submitted to the Bishop by no later than November 15. If the aspirant is nominated by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and makes an application to the Bishop for admission to postulancy, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge will send the Bishop a confidential letter of recommendation by December 15 that includes a copy of the report of the Discernment Team. Once **Forms 2A and 2B** have been submitted, the aspirant exploring a call is now considered a *nominee*. It is the hope of the COM that the Discernment Team will continue to meet with the nominee regularly for as long as he / she continues in the Application/Formation Process.

The COM wishes to remind all those participating in the discernment process as well as members of a Vestry/Bishop's Committee that ***confidentiality is to be strictly adhered to by all who will be involved with an aspirant's journey in seeking ordained ministry.*** The COM Consultant will be emphasizing this important effort frequently to everyone participating in the discernment of a potential call by an aspirant.

Step 6: Nomination and Application for Postulancy

If the sponsoring Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Bishop, and the aspirant feel that there is sufficient reason to continue in the discernment process, the aspirant should formally initiate the process to become a Postulant in the Diocese of Rhode Island. Deadlines for each milestone in the application process will be announced at the *Holy Orders Day of Discernment and Information* and published on the Diocesan Calendar⁵.

Form 2A: Nomination of Aspirant must be completed and sent to the Bishop by November 15. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge must also send a confidential letter of personal recommendation for the nominee addressed to the Bishop by December 15. A copy of the written report from the Discernment Team should be included with this letter.

The nominee must **complete and submit Form 5: The Application for Postulancy.** **NOTE: Answers to Essay Questions 1 – 8 are to be attached to Form 5.**

The cost of the canonically required psychological evaluation and initial background screening will be shared equally between the nominee, the sponsoring church and the Diocese. Canon Law (Title III, Canon 6, Sec. 2a.1, p. 71) requires sponsoring congregations to provide financial support to applicants, and a contribution toward the application fee is an appropriate beginning in this regard. The Vestry/Bishop's Committee is responsible for determining the amount of the congregation's contribution. If financial assistance is required by a congregation, a letter to the Bishop requesting waiver of the Application Fee should accompany the Application in lieu of a check.

⁵<http://www.episcopalri.org/Events/DiocesanHouseCalendar/tabid/389/Default.aspx>

Step 7: Health Related Process

Nominees will schedule all health-related evaluations to be completed in time for reports to reach the Bishop prior to the interviews scheduled for the January/February meetings of the COM, as appropriate. These evaluations and physicals can be scheduled any time after submission of **Form 2A**. The following actions must occur:

- The nominee must **complete and submit a copy of Form 3: Waiver of Confidentiality and Permission to Share Information** by November 15 to be kept on record at the Diocese. The nominee should keep two copies, one for the medical doctor and one for the psychologist.
- The nominee must have a medical exam by his or her physician. He/she must provide his/her physician with a copy of **Form 3**. The doctor must complete the Medical Examination Form and send it to the Bishop by January 1.
- A psychological exam must be completed by a professional named by the Diocese. It is important to note that the Diocese is the client and the Diocese must receive the confidential report by January 1. The nominee must take a copy of **Form 3** to the interview with the psychologist.
- The nominee must **complete and submit a copy of Form 4: HIPAA Compliant Authorization for Release of Medical, Psychological Records** to the Bishop by November 15.
- A background check will be completed for the nominee which is generated through the Diocesan Office.

Step 8: Nominee Interviews with the COM

Once Steps 1 through 7 have been completed and once **Forms 1 through 5** have been processed by either the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the nominee, and / or the Discernment Team, received by the Bishop's Office and reviewed by the Bishop, the nominee will then be directed to make an appointment to meet with the COM. The COM will review **Form 1: Declaration of Intent to Seek Postulancy** and **Form 5: The Application for Postulancy**, and schedule an appointment to meet with, interview, and evaluate the nominee for Postulancy.

Following that meeting, the Bishop will join the COM to continue the process of communal discernment and recommend whether or not the nominee is to continue in the diaconal process as a postulant. The final decision is also based upon the results of a background check and the physical and psychological examinations *which the Bishop may review with appropriate*

health care professionals. The result is followed up by an official letter from COM to the Bishop about their recommendation.

If the nominee is named a postulant, his or her name and the date of admission are recorded in the Diocesan Register. The Bishop then informs the postulant, the postulant's Rector or Priest-in-Charge (or faith community) exercising oversight, the COM, and the Standing Committee⁶. If the nominee is *not* named a postulant, the Bishop will contact the nominee and the Rector or Priest-in-Charge (or faith community) exercising oversight.

Step 9: Postulancy

The Bishop meets with the postulant to recommend a course of study and preparation. The Bishop will consult with the postulant regarding financial resources which will be available for the support of the postulant throughout preparation for ordination. The Episcopal Church Canons note that a postulant may be removed at the sole discretion of the Bishop who, at that point, would give written notification.

The cost of the Diaconal Formation Program will be shared equally between the postulant, the sponsoring congregation and the Diocese. Canon Law (Title III, Canon 6, Sec. 2a.1, p. 71) requires sponsoring congregations to provide financial support to applicants. Currently, the cost of the formation program is \$1,800.00 per year. The Vestry/Bishop's Committee is responsible for determining the amount of the congregation's contribution. If financial assistance is required by a congregation, the Vestry may send a letter to the Bishop requesting a waiver.

Diaconal formation officially begins with Postulancy. The postulant is to pursue a program of preparation developed by the Bishop and COM which includes theological training, practical experience, emotional development, and spiritual formation. If no baccalaureate degree has been obtained by the postulant, additional academic work must be done, as deemed necessary. Prior education and life experience may be considered as part of formation. Formation should take place in community if possible and shall take into account local culture and the postulant's background, age, occupation, and ministry.

Subject areas of study as set forth in the Episcopal Church Canons shall include:

- The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church
- Diakonia and the diaconate
- Human awareness and understanding
- Spiritual development and discipline
- Practical training and experience

(Title III, Canon 6, Section 5f, p. 74)

⁶ The Standing Committee acts as the Bishop's council of advice and assists him in the administration of the ecclesiastical affairs of the diocese.

Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding

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

(Title III, Canon 6, Section 5g, p. 74)

It is customary that one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) be completed before ordination to the Diaconate.

The postulant must send, until ordination, a quarterly report to the Bishop stating academic, personal, and spiritual status and outlining any important changes in these areas since the preceding letter. The Bishop prefers that these letters be sent by e-mail. "Ember Days" have been specified by Canon law (Title III, Canon 6, Sec. 3e, p. 72) as the dates to send these letters. Ember Days are traditionally the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following: the First Sunday in Lent, Pentecost, Holy Cross Day (September 17), and December 13.

The postulant will attend an *Orientation Day* in June. Currently, postulants and candidates from the Diocese of Rhode Island are attending the Diaconal Formation Program of the Diocese of Massachusetts. A Diaconal Formation Handbook will be provided to all Postulants at that time. Please refer to the *Handbook for Diaconal Formation* for step-by-step guidance to the process and requirements.

Step 10: Candidacy

Traditionally, postulancy lasts about two years, but it is important to remember that different people move through discernment at different paces. Some postulants, for one reason or another, may ask or may be asked to hold off from application to candidacy for further discernment as a postulant. As the postulant enters the second semester of his/her second year of training

- The postulant must make application to the Standing Committee to become a candidate (**Form 6: Postulant's Application to Standing Committee for Candidacy**).
- The application must include a letter of support from the sponsoring congregation or faith community and be signed by 2/3 of Vestry and the member of Clergy exercising oversight (**Form 7: Rector or Priest-in-Charge and Vestry Affirmation for Candidacy**).
- The Bishop is to receive a statement from the COM attesting to continuing formation of the postulant.

- **Oxford Document Province One Behavioral Screening**

Oxford Document Company is a firm that conducts background checks to screen the candidates of this diocese. They will receive a number of forms directly from Oxford Documents which should be filled out and returned to them upon receipt. These forms ask for information about them and their life over the past fifteen years. The firm will send questionnaires to references they have identified as employers, educational institutions or Bishops with whom they have been involved in order to receive information about their time there. It is important that they fill out the Oxford Documents forms completely and honestly. Doing so will ensure that there will be no surprises from their past that will hinder or terminate their process to ordination later on. Like the initial background screening and psychological exam, the cost of this background screening will be shared equally between the postulant, the sponsoring church and the Diocese.

- The Bishop is to receive 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.

If the Bishop admits the applicant as a candidate, the Bishop records the candidate's name and date of admission in the Diocesan Register. The Bishop then informs the candidate, the member of Clergy exercising oversight of the congregation (or other faith community), the COM, and the Standing Committee.

If the postulant is not named a candidate, he or she will receive notification from the Bishop. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the COM Liaison should remain in relationship with the postulant long enough for the postulant to be able to process the information he or she has received. For some this will be a time of deep disappointment and it is important that the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the COM Liaison remain in communication with the postulant long enough for the postulant to explore what this decision might mean for his or her vocation and Baptismal calling to serve the Lord. The COM Liaison should also bring back to the COM any issues the postulant might have expressed about the overall process.

Prior to ordination as a deacon, there must have been a thorough medical and psychological examination. If the medical and psychological evaluations or background check have taken place more than 36 months prior, they must be updated. The candidate must continue until ordination to report quarterly to the Bishop, either in person or by letter, stating academic, personal, and spiritual development and outlining any important changes in these areas since the preceding letter. The Bishop prefers that these letters be sent by E-mail. "Ember Days" have been specified by Canon law as the dates to make the quarterly reports. Ember Days are traditionally the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following: the First Sunday in Lent, Pentecost, Holy Cross Day (September 17) and December 13.

The candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate. Combined period for Postulancy, and Candidacy shall be no less than 18 months.

Step 11: Ordination to the Diaconate

Prior to ordination to the Diaconate, the Standing Committee of the Diocese must certify that all canonical requirements have been met and make a recommendation. To do so the Bishop must obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- The application for ordination with **Form 8: Candidate's Application to Standing Committee to be Ordained Deacon**
- Accompanying letter of support from the congregation or other faith community with **Form 9: Rector's or Priest-in-Charge's and Vestry's/Bishop's Committee Affirmation for Ordination**
- A certificate from the Bishop giving dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy.
- A letter from the COM giving a recommendation regarding Ordination.

The Standing Committee, with a majority of members consenting, must certify that all Canonical requirements have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal or spiritual grounds. The Standing Committee will then recommend ordination using the form specified in the canons. This testimonial is presented to the Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the candidate a Deacon.

Step 12 – Post-Ordination Formation

Each newly ordained deacon in the Diocese, whether employed or not, shall be assigned a Mentor Deacon by the Bishop in consultation with the COM. The mentor and new Deacon shall meet regularly for at least a year to provide guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about diaconal ministry.

APPENDIX A: Discernment Team Instructions

Forming a Discernment Team (DT)

The COM Consultant will contact the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and provide that individual with an overview of the DT selection process.

- The Rector or Priest-in-Charge meets with the aspirant to select individuals from the congregation who will make up the DT.
- Working together the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the aspirant form a DT that includes people who know the aspirant at some level and those who do not know the aspirant.
- The appointment of five members is a wise practice, as circumstances sometimes require a group member to withdraw before the process is completed.
- Ideally one member of the discernment group is also a member of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Chapter.
- The COM does not recommend that the Rector or Priest-in-Charge be a member of the DT, although it is helpful if the Priest-in-Charge attends the first meeting of the DT along with the COM Consultant.
- One of the DT members will be designated as the convener or chairperson. Another member of the DT should be appointed scribe so as to keep highlights (not copious notes) and be prepared to construct the first draft of the letter of response to the Priest-in-Charge.

Meetings

It is recommended that the DT meet a minimum of four times with the aspirant. Additional meetings could be called if needed, but only in consultation with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the COM Consultant. The meetings should be held about two weeks apart and should last no longer than 90 minutes.

Recommended Preparation

The COM finds the book [Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community](#) by Suzanne Farnham et al, to be a valuable resource to understanding effective dynamics in a Discernment Team. The COM also recommends [Let Your Life Speak](#) by Parker Palmer as a succinct articulation of the experience of discernment.

NOTE: Discernment is an act of the community, which in this case is experienced in a slice of that community through a discernment team. Together this team listens to the Holy Spirit speak into the soul of one in their midst not only for the sake of one person but for the entire church. While the members of the DT often find themselves focused on the vocational call of one individual, the results of such work enhances the personal discernment of each participant within the team.

Tasks

The primary tasks of the Discernment Team are

- to help discern God's call,
- to refine the aspirant's ability to articulate the reason(s) s/he believes s/he is called to the diaconate, and
- to be a support for the aspirant whether or not the ordination process continues.

NOTE: It is important to remember that this Discernment Team does not function as a gatekeeper to pass final judgment on the aspirant's sense of call, nor is it an advocacy group whose mission is to push the aspirant toward ordination.

Meeting Content

First meeting: This is an organizational meeting only. The COM Consultant will meet with the DT to provide instruction and guidance for the structure of the meetings. The convener and scribe should be appointed. The COM Consultant will outline the meeting organization and construction, provide information regarding discernment and answer any question from the DT or the aspirant.

It is recommended that the aspirant, the Rector or the Priest-in-Charge and the DT use the Examination (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 543) as the baseline, foundation and touchtone for discernment. All parties should answer the question, *how does this charge resonate with the aspirant's sense of call?*

Second meeting: Prior to this meeting, each member of the DT will give thought to and be prepared to share with their fellow DT members a 5 – 10 minute response to the following:

- Tell us about your religious upbringing.
- How do you nurture your relationship with God? What practices (formal / informal prayer, worship, journaling, study, retreat) assist you?
- What person(s) have had a significant influence on your spiritual life? Who you are today is in part due to their influence on you.
- What defining moment (a decision you made, an event you participated in, an experience you had) has shaped your spiritual life.

NOTE: The aspirant will be present as an observer and listener for this meeting.

Third meeting: This meeting is dedicated to the aspirant telling her/his spiritual autobiography to the DT. The spiritual autobiography should be written but not read. After the telling of the story, then copies are distributed. These can be used as reference for later questioning and reflection. The aspirant, if he/she moves forward, will have to submit several essay questions (**Form 5**), and the spiritual autobiography will be helpful in preparing written responses for presentation to the COM.

At the **fourth meeting** the DT members will ask open-ended questions allowing the aspirant to experience self-discovery regarding *their* call. The discussion might focus on the following as initial points of exploration and discussion:

- Tell us about your experience in the Episcopal Church.
- What is your understanding of ministry, the different functions of the laity, deacons, priests, and bishops?
- Why do you seek the diaconate rather than another vocation?
- Who is God to you?
- Describe for us this sense of calling that you have toward the diaconate. What is it about the diaconate that draws you to this vocation and not another?
- Describe for us your prayer life. Who has been particularly significant in helping you grow in your relationship with God?
- Describe for us ways in which you have demonstrated leadership?
- Describe for us an incident in which you experienced and dealt with conflict.
- What is your sense of the world beyond this community? What are the needs of the Church as you understand them?
- Tell us of a time when your passion to serve others has moved you to action.
- What do you do to relax? How do you balance work, leisure, family, and care for self?
- What does it mean to be a *servant leader*?

Subsequent questioning and self-discovery meetings will be held as needed.

Fifth meeting: At some point the DT will want to meet without the aspirant to arrive at a decision about their findings to be included in their report. Several options are available to the DT:

- The DT believes the aspirant is called to the diaconate and is ready to write their report to the Rector or Priest-in-Charge. The report needs to be written, approved by all members and signed by all members of the DT (**Form 2B**).
- The DT is unsure or divided about the aspirants call to the diaconate. A report should be constructed to portray the full spectrum of the DT's observations, concerns, unanswered questions and conclusions. A subsequent meeting of the DT with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, and in absence of the aspirant, needs to be held. How the results of the DT's conclusions will be dispersed to the aspirant is at the Rector's or Priest-in-Charge's discretion.
- The DT does not believe the aspirant is prepared to move forward for a variety of reasons. A subsequent meeting of the DT and the Rector or Priest-in-Charge needs to be held to discuss next steps and how this information will be given to the aspirant.

Subsequent meetings could be held with or without the aspirant depending upon the discretion of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge. The DT could be called upon to continue to meet with the aspirant for support as the person moves through the process. That decision must be made in

consultation with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and may be directed by the COM, the COM Liaison and/or the Bishop. The final report may or may not be shared with the aspirant at the discretion of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge.

The DT's report will be shared with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge on or before November 1 by the facilitator of the DT. Only the portions of the DT report selected by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to omit inappropriate information for dissemination, if any, will be shared with the Vestry, and after Nomination by the Vestry, **Form 2A** will be signed and submitted to the Bishop and the COM by November 15. If the Vestry approves the aspirant, the discernment report will be sent forward with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge's letter of recommendation to the COM by December 15.

Report Content

The content of the report should include:

Use of these prompts in preparing the Report of the Discernment Team is optional but recommended. The Discernment Team may find it helpful to selectively use only some of the prompts, disregarding those that do not seem to fit the aspirant they serve. The Report should be in memo form, addressed to the Rector or Priest in Charge and Vestry/Bishop's Committee. If the aspirant is nominated for Postulancy, the Report will also be read by the Bishop and the Diocesan Commission on Ministry (COM). Recommended length is 500 to 800 words. Generally the report is compiled by one committee member based on input from all committee members. In writing the report, it is helpful to bear in mind that the Bishop and the COM understand the characteristics of the diaconal call to be as described in the Examination from the liturgy for the Ordination of a Deacon which begins on page 537 in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP).

1. A statement indicating how often the Discernment Team met, a list of the team members, and a line or two of what each member does (inside/outside the church) and how long they've known (or not known) the potential nominee.
2. Describe the process of coming together as a Discernment Team. Were there aspects of group-bonding with which the group struggled? Was the material in the book Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community helpful? Are there positive aspects of this group-bonding experience which the group wishes to share?
3. In the view of this group, how important are the Sacraments to this aspirant? How has the group observed the aspirant relating to the Sacraments?
4. Can the group give a specific example of a way in which this aspirant has drawn others closer into community or into closer relationship to Christ?
5. Does the group agree that this aspirant fashions her/his life in accordance with the Good News of Jesus Christ? If so, please give an example to illustrate.

6. Would each member of the group feel comfortable turning to this aspirant in a time of personal crisis? (*NOTE: it is suggested that each group member share their own answer to this question The COM recognizes that some people may have discomfort for reasons not specific to the aspirant; e.g. if someone older than the aspirant has difficulty turning to a younger adult for support or counsel.*)
7. Does the group experience the aspirant as someone ‘reclaiming the Great Commission’ (Matthew 28:16-20)? If so, please give a specific example.
8. Does the group believe that this aspirant is open to formation as a Deacon in this Church?
9. The liturgy for The Ordination of a Deacon includes a vow of obedience to the Bishop (p. 538, BCP). Does your Committee believe that this aspirant can balance dynamic leadership with obedience? Why or why not?
10. Does the group recommend that this aspirant be granted Postulancy, the first step in the ordination process?

The actual recommendation text for the potential nominee should be reflective upon information “heard” by the committee during the meetings – the use of responses to the question prompts on pages 13 and 20 of the “A Guide for Discernment – Vocational Diaconate” are *optional* but *highly recommended*.

This recommendation is for the Diaconate, NOT Priesthood; another resource to interpret what is being heard can be found within “The Examination – Ordination: Deacon” on pages 543 and 544 in the Book of Common Prayer. An additional thought comes from The Diaconate – A Full and Equal Order by James Barnett on page 168:

They [deacons] are to “inspire, promote and help coordinate the service that the whole Church” is to do . . . deacons acting to involve increasing numbers of laity in service ministries. The ministries [serving abused children, homeless, victims of racial and ethnic discrimination, prisoners, etc.] are societal in nature, flowing from Christian love, and are directed both toward those within and without the Church . . . guidelines further state that deacons have “a special responsibility to identify to the Church those who are in need and particularly those who are without power or voice at the margins of our society.

As a committee, does the potential nominee have the “Heart to serve”, “Hands to Prayer”, and the “Voice to lead”?

Structure of the DT's Report

- Content is compiled by one member of the committee (i.e. chairperson) – ALL members must sign the report.
- A statement indicating how often the committee met, a list of the committee members, and a line or two describing what each member does (inside/outside the church) and how long they've known (or not known) the potential nominee.
- It is to be in narrative text?
- It should use a memorandum format addressed to the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the Vestry/Bishop's Committee.
- Approximately 500 to 800 words in length.

APPENDIX B: FORMS

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS – DEACON

Form 1: Declaration of Intent to Seek Postulancy

NOTE:

- For those items appearing in **red**, please **P R I N T** your responses.
- Please attach a recent photograph of yourself to this form.

Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____
First, Middle, and Last name m/d/y

Place of Birth: _____ Gender: ____M ____F
City/Town and State

Permanent Address

Mailing Address

(If different from permanent address)

E-mail Address

Daytime telephone #

Evening telephone #

() - () -

Currently attending _____ Church, _____
City/Town, State

Length of time in the Diocese: ____ year(s) **Former Denomination** (if applicable): _____

Baptized at _____ Church on ____/____/____

Confirmed at _____ Church on ____/____/____

Date received into the Episcopal Church (if applicable): ____/____/____

Check one: ___ Single ___ Married ___ Partnered ___ Separated ___ Divorced ___ Widowed

Spouse's / Partner's Name (if applicable): _____

Child / Children's Name(s)

Date(s) of birth

Age(s)

_____/_____/_____
_____/_____/_____
_____/_____/_____
_____/_____/_____
_____/_____/_____

Have you previously made application for Postulancy in this or any other Diocese? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, in what Diocese? _____ When? _____
(Year)

What level of education have you attained? _____

If any, what degree(s) have you earned? _____

In what areas of specialization have you concentrated? _____

NOTE: Please request that an *official* transcript of your educational record be forwarded to: Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence RI 02903-1298

Please enclose a résumé or outline of your employment history, citing names, addresses, telephone numbers, and dates supporting your employment history and attach it to this form.

Please list 2 references *not* including relatives, active clergy within the supporting congregation, or a Commission on Ministry (COM) member.

1st Reference

2nd Reference

Name: _____ **Name** _____

Address: _____ **Address:** _____

Telephone #: () - - Telephone # () - -

E-mail Address: _____ **E-mail Address** _____

Aspirant's Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS – DEACON

Form 2A: Nomination of Aspirant

We, being a two-thirds majority of the whole Vestry / Bishop’s Committee / Chapter of

_____ in _____, Rhode Island, do hereby
Name of Congregation City / Town

certify that _____ is a confirmed adult communicant in good

P R I N T Aspirant’s full name

standing of this Congregation. We have observed in this person a gift for calling others into a closer relationship with Christ and a deeper communion with one another. And we do judge the applicant, based on personal knowledge, to possess such qualifications as would be fitting for Nomination to the Holy Orders of the Diaconate and we pledge financial support and encouragement in his/her preparation toward ordination.

P R I N T Vestry member’s name

Signature

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

I hereby certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee of

_____ Congregation, in _____, Rhode Island

duly convened at _____ on the ____ day of _____, 20____, and that the names attached are those of all (or two-thirds majority of all) the members of the Vestry / Bishop’s Committee / Chapter.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/_____
Clerk (or Secretary) of the Vestry / Bishop’s Committee / Chapter

_____ Date: ____/____/_____
Aspirant’s Acceptance of Nomination

This acceptance signifies the beginning of the mandatory minimum 18 months of formation toward ordination.

The cost of the canonically required psychological evaluation and initial background screening will be shared equally between the nominee, the sponsoring church, and the Diocese (Title III, Canon 6, Sec. 2a.1, p. 71). A second background screening will be initiated before candidacy the cost of which will be shared in the same manner.

NOTE: Check(s) should be payable to: ***Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island***

MEMO LINE NOTATION: ***Psychological Evaluation and Initial Background Screening***

If the nominee and/or church require financial assistance, please attach a check/s with partial payment and a letter requesting assistance for the remainder of the Fee.

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS – DEACON

Form 2B: Discernment Team’s Report

We, the members of the _____ Discernment Team are reporting on behalf of
P R I N T name of congregation

P R I N T Aspirant’s full name

Having met together _____ times from _____ / _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____ and with consensus, we make the following recommendation, that the Aspirant is called to be a

- Priest
- Deacon
- Lay Minister for the following ministry: _____

Please attach a supporting Report of the Discernment Team along with the Rector’s or Priest-in-Charge’s Confidential Letter of Recommendation. In writing that report, please bear in mind that the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry understand the characteristics of the diaconal call to be described in the Examination from the liturgy for the Ordination of a Deacon which begins on page 543 in the Book of Common Prayer.

P R I N T name	Signature	Date
Chairperson	Chairperson	/ /
_____	_____	/ /
_____	_____	/ /
_____	_____	/ /
_____	_____	/ /
_____	_____	/ /
_____	_____	/ /

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
 Bishop’s Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS – DEACON

Form 3: Waiver of Confidentiality and Permission to Share Information

I, the undersigned, an applicant for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church, give my permission to the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island (the “Diocese”) to share my applications for Nomination, Postulancy, and Candidacy, to be ordained a Deacon and all supporting material supplied by me or my congregation with the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese and the Standing Committee of the Diocese.

I further give permission to the Bishop of Rhode Island to share reports of my physical examination, my psychological examination, my psychological evaluation with appropriate health care professionals with whom he may take counsel as he deems necessary. I also give permission to the psychological examiners, psychological evaluators and medical examiners to exchange information about me with each other for the purposes of a full and comprehensive assessment of me for Holy Orders.

I understand that the results and reports of the psychological examinations, the psychological evaluations and the medical examinations are the property of The Diocese of Rhode Island, subject to the rules of the Diocese and The Episcopal Church for management of personal information, and may be utilized pursuant to agreements between me and the Diocese. I further agree that the Diocese’s psychiatric or psychological evaluator will be held harmless in any action associated with the management of information gathered in the evaluation process.

I understand and agree that written reports of my medical examination, psychological or psychiatric examination and psychological evaluation will be sent directly to the Bishop of the Diocese or his other designees and these reports will remain a part of my permanent record with the Diocese.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

PRINT Full Name: _____

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop’s Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS – DEACON
Form 4: HIPAA Compliant Authorization for Release of
Medical / Psychological / Psychiatric Records

Patient Name: _____ Health Record Number _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____ SSN: ____ - ____ - _____

I authorize the use or disclosure of the above named individual's protected health information as described below:

1. The following named individual or organization is authorized to make the disclosure:

2. The type and amount of information to be used or disclosed is as follows:

- The complete report of my medical records.
- The complete report of my psychological examination.
- The complete report of my psychological evaluation.

3. This information may be disclosed to and used by The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main Street, Providence, RI 02903, for the purpose of processing the patient's application for Holy Orders and retained in the permanent file of the Diocese.

4. I understand that the information in my health record may include information relating to sexually transmitted disease, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It may also include information about behavioral or mental health services, and treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.

5. I understand I have the right to revoke this authorization at any time. I understand if I revoke this authorization I must do so in writing and present my written revocation to the health information management department. I understand the revocation will not apply to information that has already been released in response to this authorization. I understand the revocation will not apply to my insurance company when the law provides my insurer with the right to contest a claim under my policy.

Unless otherwise revoked, this authorization will expire three years from the date below.

6. I understand that authorizing the disclosure of this health information is voluntary. I can refuse to sign this authorization. I need not sign this form in order to assure treatment. I understand I may inspect or copy the information to be used or disclosed, as provided in 45 CFR 164.524. I understand any disclosure of information carries with it the potential for an unauthorized re-disclosure and the information may not be protected by federal confidentiality rules.

7. The physician-patient or other privilege is not waived. You are specifically requested and instructed not to disclose any information, opinions, records or x-rays to any other attorney, physician, insurance company or person without specific additional written authorization from me to do so, unless said disclosure is necessary for health care or health insurance purpose. ARS § 12-2235. All other authorizations are hereby revoked and canceled.

8. Photocopies of this authorization will be considered as valid as the original.

_____ DATED this ____ day of _____, 20____
Signature of Patient or Legal Representative

_____ Signed by Legal Representative, Relationship to Patient Signature of Witness

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS – DEACON

Form 5: Application for Postulancy

To: The Right Reverend Nicholas Knisely

I hereby make application to be admitted by you as a Postulant.

NOTE: For those items appearing in **red**, please **P R I N T** your responses.

Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Today's Date: ____/____/____

With this Form, attach written responses to the following items; each response should be limited to 600 words or less:

1. Please outline a brief history of your involvement with the Church.
2. How does your family view your desire to enter into ordained ministry?
3. Please briefly describe how you practice "care of self" in terms of your physical, mental, and spiritual health.
4. Have you ever had a situation in your life such as a loss or a traumatic event where you have sought the help of a mental health professional? If not, how did you deal with the event and what tools did you use to recover?
5. Describe a ministry of direct service to the world in which you are currently involved.
6. How does your affirmative response to the question in the Baptismal Covenant (BCP, p. 305), "*Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?*" shape your life and ministry?
(Please respond with 750 words or less.)
7. What has been your experience of God?
(Please respond with 750 words or less.)
8. What is your image of God? That is, what metaphors come to mind in how you think about God?
(Please respond with 750 words or less.)

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS - DEACON

Form 6: Postulant's Application to Standing Committee for Candidacy

To: The Standing Committee

Having fulfilled all necessary Canonical Requirements, I hereby apply for Candidacy to the Diaconate in The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.

NOTE: For those items appearing in **red**, please **P R I N T** your responses.

Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Today's Date: ____/____/____

My date of admission to Postulancy was ____/____/____

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS - DEACON

**Form 7: Rector's or Priest-In-Charge's and Vestry's/Bishop's Committee's
Affirmation for Candidacy**

We, being a two-thirds majority of the whole Vestry / Bishop's Committee / Chapter of

_____ in _____, Rhode Island, do hereby
Name of Congregation City / Town

certify that _____ is a confirmed adult communicant in good

P R I N T Aspirant's full name

standing in this Congregation and we do judge the applicant, based on personal knowledge, to possess such qualifications as would be fitting for admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

We pledge financial support and encouragement in his/her preparation for ordination to the Diaconate.

P R I N T Vestry member's name

Signature

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

I hereby certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee of

_____ Congregation, in _____, Rhode Island

duly convened at _____ on the ____ day of _____, 20____, and that the names attached are those of all (or two-thirds majority of all) the members of the Vestry / Bishop's Committee / Chapter.

Signed: _____ Clerk (or Secretary) of the Vestry / Bishop's Committee / Chapter Date: ____/____/____

_____ Postulant's Acceptance of Nomination Date: ____/____/____

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS - DEACON

Form 8: Candidate's Application to Standing Committee to be Ordained Deacon

To: The Standing Committee

Having fulfilled all necessary Canonical Requirements, I hereby apply for Ordination to the Diaconate in The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.

NOTE: For those items appearing in **red**, please **P R I N T** your responses.

Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Signature: _____ Today's Date: ____/____/____

My date of admission to Postulancy was ____/____/____

My date of admission to Candidacy was ____/____/____

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298

APPLICATION FOR HOLY ORDERS - DEACON

**Form 9: Rector's or Priest-in-Charge's and Vestry's/Bishop's Committee's
Affirmation for Ordination**

We, being a two-thirds majority of the whole Vestry / Bishop's Committee / Chapter of

_____ in _____, Rhode Island, do hereby
Name of Congregation City / Town

certify that _____ is a confirmed adult communicant in good
standing of this Congregation and we do judge the applicant, based on personal knowledge, to possess such
qualifications as would be fitting for ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons. .
P R I N T Aspirant's full name

We pledge financial support and encouragement in his/her ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons.

P R I N T Vestry member's name

Signature

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

Rector or Priest-in-Charge

I hereby certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee of
_____ Congregation, in _____, Rhode Island
duly convened at _____ on the _____ day of _____, 20____, and that the
names attached are those of all (or two-thirds majority of all) the members of the Vestry / Bishop's Committee /
Chapter.

Signed: _____ Clerk (or Secretary) of the Vestry / Bishop's Committee / Chapter Date: ____/____/____

_____ Candidate's Acceptance of Nomination Date: ____/____/____

PLEASE NOTE: After completing this form, please mail the *original* to Bishop Knisely:
Bishop's Office, Attn.: Liz Crawley, Diocese of Rhode Island, 275 North Main St., Providence, Rhode Island 02903-1298