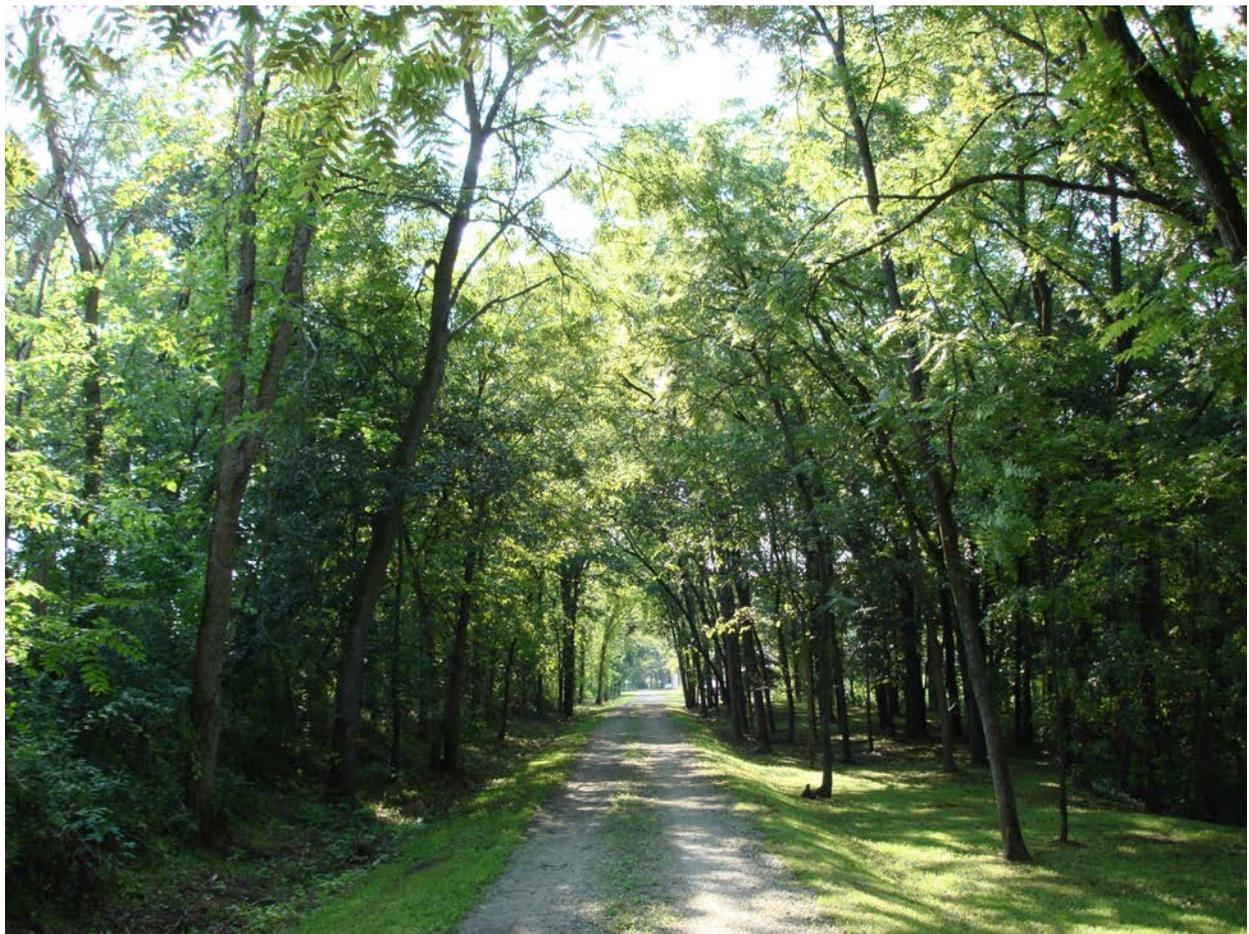


DISCERNMENT AND FORMATION FOR MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP



A Document of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota

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All Photography used in this document: Rev Jim Shoulak

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MINNESOTA

1730 Clifton Place, Suite 201

Minneapolis MN 55403

(612) 871-5311 (800) 596-3839

Website: episcopalmn.org

Email: info@episcopalmn.org

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The Foundations of Discernment

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

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

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

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

This document invites people to think about how God is working in them. It also asks them to consider responding to God’s invitation to be Christ in this world by entering into discernment and formation for leadership – either lay or ordained.

What does God want to do with me?

¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

– *Ephesians 4:11-13*

You may be in your teens wondering what to do after high school: go to college or technical school, start working immediately, enter the military, get married, etc. You may be between jobs, degrees, careers, or returning to paid employment after having stayed home to raise children. You may be at the cusp of retirement, or well into retirement. All of us, at some juncture in life's adventure, wonder what it is all about. What should I do? Who should I be? How can I integrate my faith and my understanding of what God wants of me with what I do?

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

Four simple lenses help to answer the big question:

What does God want to do with me?

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

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

THE DISCERNMENT WHEEL

*What should I do? Who should I be?
How can I integrate my faith and my understanding
of what God wants of me with what I do?*

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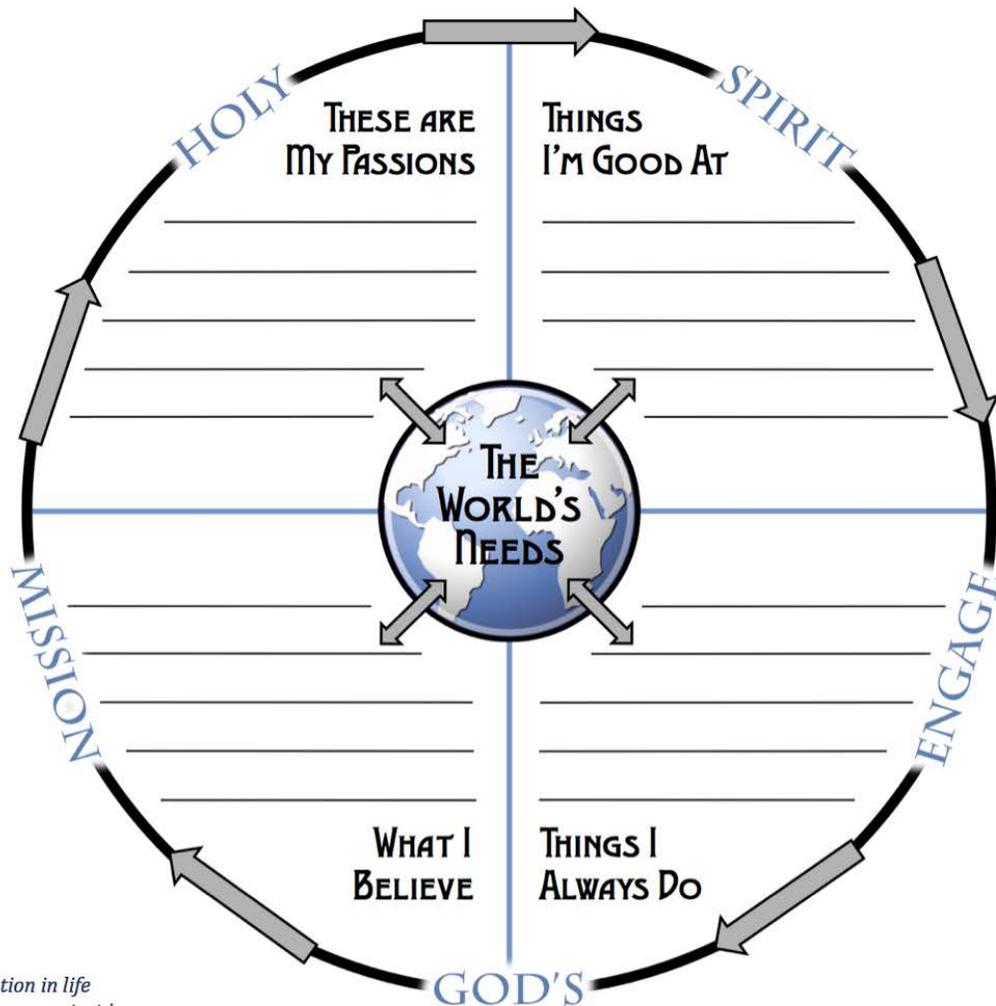
Four simple lenses help to answer the big question:

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- What are you really good at doing? What feels effortless to you?
- What do you find yourself always doing? What do others always ask you to do?
- What do you believe *in your heart of hearts*? What do you truly value in yourself and in others?

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



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

Following this inner work, some may feel called to dive deeper into further discernment. The discernment and formation process outlined in this document is designed for individual work. A separate but similar process is available for faith communities who are exploring team ministries.

Beginning of Formal Discernment

The first step in discernment is for an individual to approach his or her sponsoring priest to say that he or she is wondering about a potential call to leadership, lay or ordained. One begins with clear willingness to enter into a period of discernment. In some cases, a sponsoring priest may initiate a contact with someone who might be open to a call. The timing will be as wide as God's mercy and will begin at the moment an interest in exploring a call is expressed. At that juncture, several things are set into motion.

1. The sponsoring priest, as the first point of contact, commits to walking with the individual through prayer and conversation through several meetings with the individual.
2. The sponsoring priest contacts the Missioner for Ministry to indicate that an individual is interested in leadership discernment and is regarded as an engaged, active participant in the sponsoring faith community for at least a year.
3. The Missioner for Ministry meets with the sponsoring priest and individual to review the entire process of discernment and formation, including:
 - a. reviewing the hallmarks for leadership in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota (Appendix B)
 - b. assuring the individual's commitment to engage in a relationship with a spiritual director
 - c. defining the numerous roles involved in process for the individual, sponsoring priest, sponsoring faith community, and mentor on behalf of Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, Missioner for Ministry and the Bishop.
 - d. defining the three primary components of the discernment process:
 - 1) in context (in the sponsoring faith community),
 - 2) in community (in a group of trained discernment facilitators with peers engaged in discernment), and
 - 3) in theological content (gatherings of others for learning opportunities) — all as outlined below. The three components are not sequential, but rather, concurrent.
 - e. describing the Assessment of Readiness for Formal Discernment, a Commission on Ministry established process for members of the faith community and the individual to undertake together. (Appendix C)

Discernment Components

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

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

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

1. Completing the **Assessment of Readiness for Formal Discernment**, a guided process that involves the individual, sponsoring priest, vestry members and a companion for the individual. The process is a time for the aforementioned people to gather in assembly to fill out the Discernment Wheel and discuss the individual's readiness for ongoing discernment, resulting either in further work in the faith community and/or the creation of a covenant between the individual and faith community.
2. **Undertaking Leadership Project(s)** with written and verbal reflections. Depending upon the gifts of the individual and his or her needs for development, and the needs of the sponsoring faith community, set up one or more experiential projects that explore various dimensions of integrated leadership in the Church, ensuring that there are clear action steps, goals, outcomes, and intentional reflection. Possible leadership categories include:
 - a. Pastoral care
 - b. Administration
 - c. Preaching
 - d. Teaching
 - e. Catechesis
 - f. Formation
 - g. Liturgy
 - h. Social Justice
 - i. Outreach
 - j. Evangelism
 - k. Communication
 - l. Other . . .

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

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

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

III. In Content Competency (*discernment in theological content*)

Additional learning opportunities will be offered throughout the time of discernment with peers to learn about foundational aspects of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota's ethos and teachings related to mission and ministry. Such topics may include missional theology, gifts, the Baptismal Covenant, and Anglican/Episcopal identity. The primary goal is to gain both a deeper sense of self-awareness and Episcopal understanding.

Conclusion of the Leadership Discernment Process

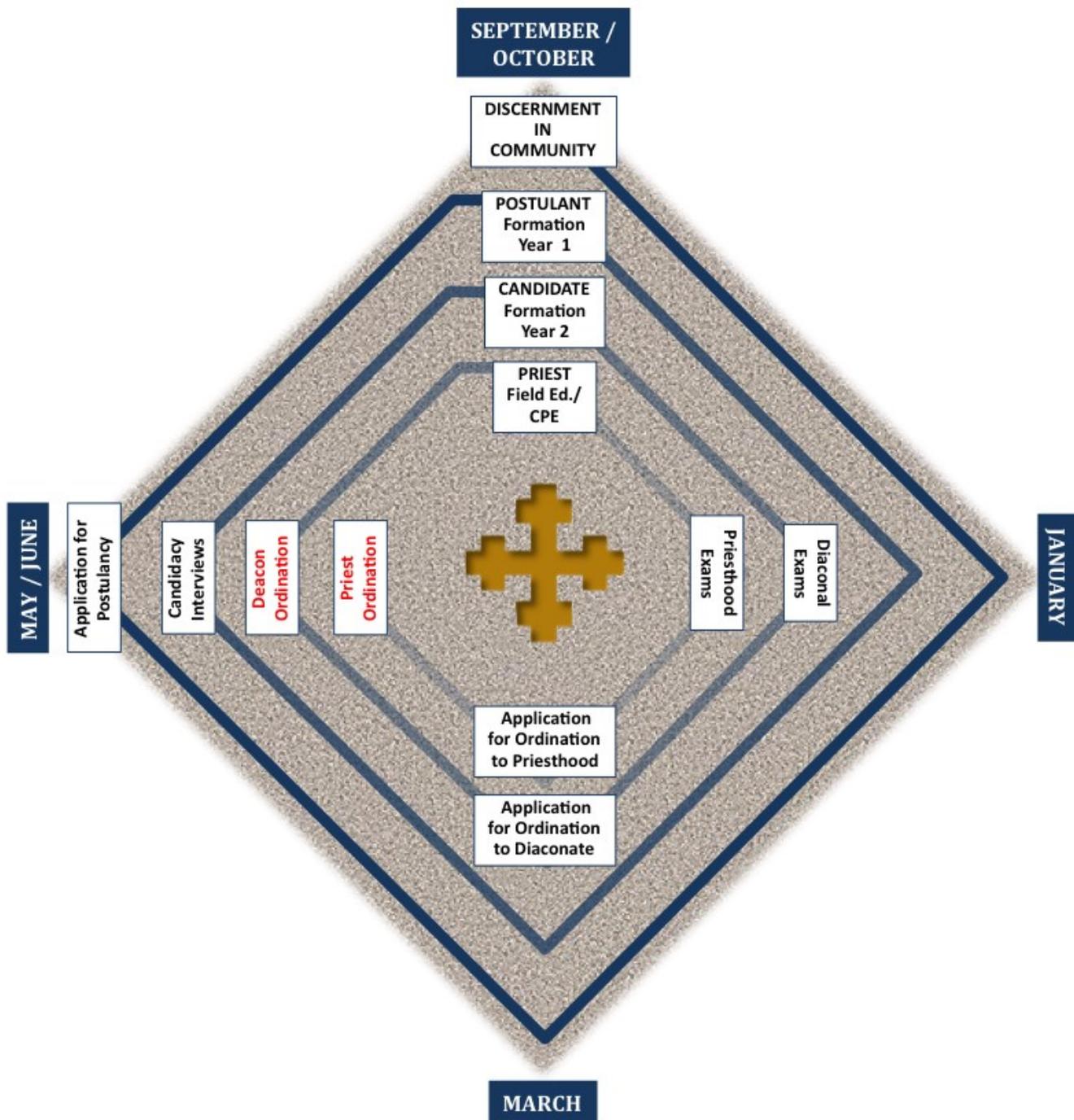
Discernment never really concludes — we are all engaged in it throughout our lives — but processes must clearly start and conclude so we have clarity and accountability.

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

THE LABYRINTH

FORMATION & ORDINATIONS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MINNESOTA



A Guide for Walking the Labyrinth

— including steps, deadlines, and documents

Walking the Labyrinth

Preparing to Enter

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

The First Year – September through August

Starting on the Path: Discernment in Community

In September of each year, those who have accomplished the above enter the labyrinth and begin the Discernment in Community. This is a facilitated process that runs from September through May of each year, including opportunities for all in discernment to meet together in a large group in September and January and several small group meetings during throughout the other months in the time frame.

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

Walking Between Application for Postulancy and Becoming a Postulant:

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

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

(continued next page)

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

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

The Second Year – September through August

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

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

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

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

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

Postulant remains in spiritual direction.

Expectations throughout the Formation Process

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

For those in the preparation for the diaconate:

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

For those in preparation for the priesthood:

- Holy Scripture
- Church History
- Christian Theology
- Ethics
- Contemporary society studies
- Liturgy
- Theory and practice of ministry

Episcopal Church Canonical Requirements of:

- Anti-Racism Training
- MN and TEC Constitution and Canons
- Safe Church Training – Child and Adult; and Mandatory Reporting

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

Walking towards Candidacy

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

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

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

Candidacy Interview with the Standing Committee in June

The Standing Committee interviews each Postulant at their regularly scheduled meeting in June. The Standing Committee will have reviewed the Postulant's file in advance of the interview.

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

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

The Third Year – September through August

Candidacy and Year 2 of Formation in September

Candidacy is a time of continued education and formation in preparation for ordination to the diaconate/priesthood, established by the Bishop the Commission for Ministry, the Standing Committee and the sponsoring faith community.

Walking toward Examinations in January

In January of the second year of formation, the Candidate for the Vocational Diaconate will be evaluated on the subject areas as outlined in the Expectations throughout the Formation Process (pp 4-5). An exam is created based on the information learned in the School for Formation that covers the five canonical areas. A written component is handed out in January with one month for completion that is followed up by an in-person oral interview.

The results are rendered satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If unsatisfactory, additional work can be arranged with the Formation Chaplains to help satisfy the requirements.

Note that for those in formation for the Priesthood, the examination is the following January, in the fourth year.

Preparing for Application to Diaconal Ordination in January and February

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

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

Recommendation for Diaconal Ordination in March

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

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

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

Preparing for Diaconal Ordination in April and May

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

Ordination in June

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

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

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

The Fourth Year – September through August

Ongoing formation for the Transitional Deacon continues in September. Along with ongoing coursework, the third year adds a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit and a diaconal internship experience.

Walking towards Examinations in January

In January of the third year of formation, the Transitional Deacon preparing for ordination to the Priesthood will be evaluated on the subject areas as outlined in the Expectations throughout the Formation Process (pp. 4-5). An exam is created based on the seven canonical areas.

The results are rendered satisfactory or unsatisfactory. If unsatisfactory, additional work can be arranged with the Formation Chaplains to help satisfy the requirements.

Preparing for Application to Priesthood in January and February

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

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

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

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

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

Recommendation for Ordination to the Priesthood in March

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

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

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

Preparing for Ordination to the Priesthood in April and May

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

Ordination in June

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

Remember, Lifelong Formation: See Appendix F.

APPENDIX

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

Bishop – person elected by the Episcopal Church in Minnesota to serve as Bishop (diocesan), which confers authority for approving the various canonical steps involved in discernment, formation, and licensing, commissioning or ordination.

Companion — person from a sponsoring faith community, identified by the individual and sponsoring priest, who has gifts for listening and synthesizing and will accompany individual to the Discernment in Community part of the process.

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

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

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

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

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

Missioner for Ministry — member of the team of missioners who works closely with the Bishop to help guide all areas of ministry in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, and specifically those of discernment, formation, sending forth, and transitions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix B: Hallmarks for Leadership

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

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

A follower of Jesus

Faith in a loving and forgiving God made known in Christ

An inquiring and discerning heart

Ability to articulate one's own beliefs

Recognition of, and ability to live within, the tension between our historic church teachings and our contextual experiences of God

Openness to varied expressions of belief or doctrine

A lack of rigidity around concepts, images, or ideas about God.

Ability to elicit and inspire in others faith in a loving and forgiving God

Recognition of themselves as being perpetually transformed by the Holy Spirit

Commitment to their own ongoing spiritual growth and development

Dedication to ongoing self-awareness – an articulated understanding of strengths and growing areas

A commitment to collaboration as a mode of teaching, learning and leading

Ability to build consensus

Ability to articulate one's own voice pastorally and prophetically.

Ability to assist others to discern / equip / use their own gifts for ministry

Continuous openness to the invitation to engage God's mission

continued

Hallmarks of Leadership, *continued*

Willingness and capacity to recognize and go where God calls

Capacity for compassion/empathy, both for oneself and others

Ability to talk to people of differing ages and backgrounds

Openness to learn and experiment with technology, social media

Willingness to risk being changed and formed by the Holy Spirit

Willingness to be flexible in liturgical styles

Capacity to envision the evolution of the Church of today and tomorrow

Commitment to self-care: physically, emotionally and spiritually

Understanding and appreciation of boundaries – both one's own and others

Willingness to make sacrifices and an ability to name that which can be sacrificed and that which cannot

Capacity to be inspired and to be inspiring

Understanding the brokenness of the church system, not seeing it as something perfected but rather evolving

Psychological maturity to be grounded in reality, and the capacity to hope for a realization of God's kingdom on earth.

Willingness to listen to others, hear others, and communicate in dialogue that is respectful, open and clear – both verbally and in writing.

Appendix C: Assessment for Readiness for Formal Discernment

The Faith Community & Individual Discernment: The Assessment of Readiness for Formal Discernment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Companion is a member of the Faith Community who agrees to walk with the Discerner through Discernment, serving as confidant and guide, one who both supports and challenges the Individual.

The Assembly

The Discernment Wheel exercise (on Page 3 of this **Discernment and Formation for Missional Leadership** document) should be sent out in advance to all persons who will participate in The Assembly, so they have adequate time to contemplate the questions, and can give well-thought out answers on behalf of the Discerner.



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

1. If not done beforehand, all participants fill out the Discernment Wheel. The Discerner fills out the Wheel in the first person [of his/her own talents, etc.], while all the others in The Assembly fill out the Wheel with a focus on what they see in the Discerner. Study and discuss each member's findings.
2. Someone in The Assembly will ask the Discerner, "How and where have you experienced 'The Holy' in your life?" The Discerner will then be asked to describe a particular Spiritual Experience in his/her life.

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

3. Examine the question: "How is the Discerner living out his/her Baptismal Vows both inside and outside the Faith Community context?"
4. In what ways does this individual manifest a spiritual presence in this Faith Community?

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

___ We recommend this person for Discernment in Community for the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

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

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

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

Sealing of the Covenant Service

Representatives of the Faith Community and the Discerner sign the Covenant (next page).

Close The Assembly with prayer, and a blessing of the Discerner by the now-Sponsoring Priest.

Suggested Scripture & Prayers from the Book of Common Prayer for the Sealing of the Covenant Service:

The Calling of Samuel: 1 Samuel 3:1-10
Jesus sends the 70 disciples: Luke 10:1-20
You are the Light of the World: Matt. 5:14-16

A Collect for Guidance (p. 100)
General Thanksgiving (p. 101)
All Christian Vocations (p. 256)
58. For Guidance (p. 832)
62. Peace Prayer (p. 833)

Mission Prayer I (p. 100)
Fit Persons for Ministry (p. 256)
57. For Guidance (p. 832)
61. Of Self-Dedication (p. 832)
A Litany of Thanksgiving (p. 837)

The Faith Community &
Individual Discernment:
A Covenant

“We Promise”

In the Discernment of [PRINT NAME] _____ ,

This Faith Community, [NAME] _____ , commits itself to:

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

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

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

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

Signature of the Discerner: _____

Date: _____ .

Appendix D: School for Formation

The Ordination Track of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota's School for Formation provides training for those preparing for ordination to the diaconate or the priesthood, with courses that take place online and in person, overnight on the first Saturday of the month. Coursework covers the required canonical areas of study and prepares leaders to be equipped for the opportunities and challenges our faith communities face today. Time spent in worship and cohort groups allows for deepening relationships with God, self, and others. Internships allow for active learning and experimentation with experienced mentors.

Those preparing to serve as vocational deacons complete their coursework and internship in two years.

Those preparing to serve as priests complete the program in three years, including field education and pastoral training.

Our courses are open to anyone. Those in preparation for ordained ministry receive priority registration.

The School for Formation will meet overnight on the first Saturday of the month, September – May, at the new ECMN Retreat Center at Shattuck-St. Mary's School. Friday evenings will be spent in cohort groups and worship; most coursework will take place on Saturdays. Ordination-track students spend the night on Friday night.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES*

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

Specifically, students will be able to:

- tell, reflect upon, and use the stories of Scripture, Christian practices, and Anglican tradition to inspire, heal, and form disciples for God's mission. [FORMATION]
- assist individuals and faith communities to listen to their cultural contexts, discern their particular gifts, and bring these together in a sustainable way to meet the needs of the world. [DISCERNING AND EVANGELIZING IN CONTEXT]
- gather and equip faith communities to join God's work in their neighborhoods and in the world. [EQUIPPING, PROCLAIMING, AND SENDING]
- design and implement a long-range plan for their own development as faithful Christian disciples and leaders. [SELF-CARE]

** Statement prepared in consultation with faculty at Church Divinity School of the Pacific*

KEY COMMITMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Open to all

Courses are open to all. Those in formation for diaconal and priestly ordination in ECMN require priority registration, but remaining available space will be offered on a first-come basis.

Partnership and instruction

The School for Formation may partner with the Center for Anglican Learning and Leadership at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific for 2 – 3 course units each year. Other units will be taught in partnership with leaders and instructors who are in relationship with the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

Pricing and Scholarships

Each unit will cost \$200 per student, including overnight accommodations and meals. Scholarships will be available.

Knowledge for the sake of mission

Students will be asked, in assessments for each unit, how they might teach, preach, or design learning experiences for others with the content learned. Assessments are to be opportunities to craft tools for later use in ministry rather than graduate papers per se.

Learning in context, Internship

All course content will be encountered in the light of opportunities and challenges facing the student's faith community. Students will spend at least one year in supervised field work in a faith community during their time at the School for Formation.

Certificates

Completion of certain groups of courses may earn non-ordination-track students a certificate (ex. Missional Leadership, Missional Preaching, Missional Administration). Members of ministry teams working toward a commissioned role may find such certificate courses useful in preparing for their roles.

Cohorts

Those in preparation for ordination to the diaconate or priesthood will gather for separate time in cohort groups on Friday night for reflection, prayer, and support.

Worship

Shared worship will be open to all, expected of all in formation for ordained ministry, and will serve as an opportunity for experiential learning.

Example Course of Study for the School for Formation

YEAR ONE

- 9/2014 Learners and Teachers [Local]
- 10/2014 Anglican Approach to the Bible [CALL Fall Semester course]
- 11/2014 Bible: Old Testament [Local]
- 12/2014 Missional Leadership I [Local]
- 1/2015 Christian Spirituality and Practices [Local]
- 2/2015 Anglican Approach to Theology [CALL Winter semester]
- 3/2015 Prayer Book Studies I: The Sacraments [Local]
- 4/2015 Liturgical Practicum I, The Canons of the Church, Deacons: Introduction to the Internship Year [Local]
- 5/2015 Bible: New Testament and Synoptic Gospels [CALL Spring Semester]

YEAR TWO

- 9/2015 The Creeds and Practical Theology: We believe; so what? [Local]
- 10/2015 Homiletics: Preaching the Bible [CALL Fall Semester]
- 11/2015 Practical Christian Ethics, Incl. Anti-Racism, Safe Church Training [Local]
- 12/2015 Prayer Book Studies II: The Role of the Deacon, Priest and Call and Identity [Local]
- 1/2016 Missional Leadership II [Family Systems Theory, Conflict & Change] [Local]
- 2/2016 History: Wisdom for Mission Today [CALL Winter semester]
- 3/2016 Prayer Book Studies III: Holy Week and the Liturgical Year [Local]
- 4/2016 Missional Management [Local]
- 5/2016 Education & Formation, Faith Development [CALL Spring semester]

Training in Pastoral Competency for both deacons and priests will also be part of the first two years, either in cohort groups or in another format.

YEAR THREE / PRIEST TRACK

In the third year, students in the priestly ordination track will focus on practicums and colloquy reflections on their experiences in faith community internships and pastoral training.

Appendix E: Contextual Studies Internship

Theological contextual studies offer the opportunity for guided practice in the skills of ministry with attention to formation for the priesthood or the diaconate. Under qualified supervision, a student focuses on developing pastoral skills, knowledge, and boundaries.

Contextual studies programs include the following components:

1. Training by theologically educated instructors
2. A minimum of 400 hours of work (10-15 hours/week for the program year) in a parish setting
3. Weekly meetings with a mentor with an M.Div. and/or ordination
4. Monthly peer group with other field education students

If the student is enrolled in a seminary that offers structured contextual studies (sometimes called field education), s/he may engage in the seminary's program. Otherwise, contextual studies is available through the School for Formation, which has a contextual studies director who oversees the program, trains mentors, and leads the monthly peer groups. The monthly peer group meeting includes both didactic and reflection with a group of those in formation for both the diaconate and the priesthood; in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, we form all ordained persons for true partnership with faith communities.

The student may engage in the contextual studies experience in any parish outside of his/her home parish, where a qualified mentor is amenable to being trained. In finding a placement, the student is first encouraged to identify areas in which s/he discerns a need for growth and greater experience (modified from the General Theological Seminary guidelines for field education):

1. Education, spiritual formation, and new program development
2. Church administration, management, and stewardship/finances
3. Preaching and liturgical leadership/planning
4. Pastoral care and counseling
5. Public leadership, social ministries, and community organizing

Based on his/her identified goals, the student engages in a written Learning Agreement with the parish and mentor. In addition to the time spent in ministry, mentor meetings, and peer group, the student documents and reflects on his/her experience in written mid-unit and final evaluations to be evaluated by the program director.

Notes for COM and Bishop consideration: cost, director position? how many supervisors? offered on an as needed basis? every other year? minimum of 4 students, maximum of 12-ish?

Appendix F: Commitment to Lifelong Formation

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

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

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

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

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

What are some ideas for lifelong learning?

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

Seminars, Conferences or Workshops offered through community colleges or museums (e.g. learning more about databases, excel spreadsheets, publishing — whatever would be useful to enhance what you do).

Courses in the School for Formation or a seminary could be in person or distance learning (e.g. Scripture, ethics, preaching, missional theology, etc.).

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

Appendix G: Ember Letters to the Bishop

Title III, Canon. 4 Sec. 8 from the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church:
“Every Postulant and Candidate for Holy-Orders shall communicate with the Bishop personally or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the individual’s academic experience and personal and spiritual development.”

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

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

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

Appendix H: Holy Orders Forms

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Readiness for Discernment & Covenant
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Application for Holy Orders - Postulancy

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Waiver of Information

CPG Medical Exam Form
Medical Examination
Psychological Examination

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Recommendation for Candidacy

Candidate's Application for Ordination to Diaconate
Recommendation for Ordination to the Diaconate

Application for Ordination to the Priesthood
Recommendation for Ordination to the Priesthood





1730 Clifton Place, Suite 201
Minneapolis MN 55403

(612) 871-5311 (800) 596-3839
Website: episcopalmn.org
Email: info@episcopalmn.org