

The Episcopal Diocese
of
Western North Carolina
The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor, Bishop



The Commission on Ministry Manual
Revised January 2015

Commission on Ministry Manual

The Diocese of Western North Carolina

January 2015

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An Overview of the Revised Discernment and Ordination Process

The Book of Common Prayer states that the ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. (BCP, pg.855) At our baptism, each of us has been commissioned to a life of prayer and service, proclaiming the Good News of God in Jesus Christ as we strive for peace with justice for all. As baptized persons, all followers of Jesus live lives of continual discernment, always listening and testing in community what we might be sensing is God's intention for our life and work. It is in community that we identify our gifts for ministry.

The role of the community in discernment is an important one. Whether an individual is discerning options for lay ministry and leadership or is sensing a call into Holy Orders, discernment is a prayerful, Spirit-filled process that occurs within that person's community of faith. The community helps each member identify their gifts for leadership and for service and by this process the entire Body of Christ is broadened and strengthened.

When an individual senses a call into Holy Orders it is the community, the priest and the laity, who are asked to listen prayerfully to discern whether they, too, hear God's call into ordained ministry. Discernment, particularly in this early stage, is not only whether God is calling an individual into ordained ministry, but how well that individual's gifts and strengths match the demands and challenges of ordained leadership at this time in the life of the church.

The role of the church in our society has changed over the last several decades. Many people are seeking spiritual sustenance but no longer feel the institutional church can meet their longings. Therefore, the demands of ordained ministry have changed. These new demands require different gifts and strengths in our ordained leaders. The church needs priests and deacons who are able to share the Good News in new contexts and in new and creative ways. At the same time, the ordained leaders of the church need to be able to equip the laity to understand the changing needs of our communities.

Given the new landscape the church now inhabits, the Commission on Ministry has revised our diocesan discernment process to strengthen the community, its priest and lay members, in their task of prayerful listening for God's call. As the community engages the spiritual practice of prayerful discernment first and most importantly they will be listening deeply and intentionally in order to hear and understand the movement of the Spirit in an individual's life. At the same time, in order to clarify God's call and help the individual move more deeply into that call, the community will also discern how well that individual's gifts and strengths match the demands of ordained ministry in the church at this time.

To aid in this prayerful discernment, the Commission on Ministry has articulated the qualities that we sense are needed in ordained leaders at this particular time in the life of the church. The qualities are divided into four areas of exploration: Sense of Self, Spiritual Vitality, Relational Maturity, and Capacity to Lead. The COM has developed a survey instrument (Addendum 1: *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry*) to provide the individual and those involved at every level of the discernment process – Rector/Priest-in-Charge, Parish Lay Discernment Committee, Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, Field Placement Supervisor, and Bishop – a way to discern the presence of these qualities in the Aspirant. By ascertaining the presence and development of these qualities at every level throughout the discernment process, increasing clarity will emerge about the shape of ministry that will be the most life-giving both for the Aspirant and for the Church that he or she is seeking to serve.

This manual outlines the steps in the discernment process from Aspirancy through Postulancy, Candidacy and Ordination. On page 38 of this manual is a checklist of the documents, reports and actions that are required at each stage of the discernment process. This checklist is provided as an aid not only for the Aspirant but for all involved in the Aspirant's discernment.

Vocational discernment is exciting and challenging and best done prayerfully and intentionally, in community and over time. We hope that this manual provides clear guidance for those entering discernment as well as those who walk with them on this journey.

Please feel free to contact The Rev. Pattie Curtis, COM Chair, at phcurtis1207@gmail.com with any questions or comments. You are also welcome to contact the Bishop's office with questions or comments.

Faithfully,

Pattie Curtis+
The Rev. Patricia Harris Curtis
Chair, Commission on Ministry/DWNC
January 2015

Aspirancy

Step 1: Initial Conversations between the Rector/Priest-in-charge and Aspirant

- ❖ The Rector/Priest-in-charge will ensure that the Aspirant and the Vestry understand and follow the process from early discernment through Ordination.
- ❖ It is always the Rector's/Priest's-in-charge responsibility to provide pastoral care and guidance to the Aspirant. It is the mutual responsibility of the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Aspirant to make certain that all requirements are met and all forms and documents are submitted in a timely manner.
- ❖ The Aspirant must have been a confirmed communicant in good standing in the local congregation for one year and be able to provide evidence of baptism and confirmation to the Rector/Priest-in-charge. (Title III.6.2(b)(3))
- ❖ Special permission shall be sought from the Bishop to initiate a discernment process when a congregation is in an interim phase.
- ❖ The Rector/Priest-in-charge begins an intentional prayerful conversation with the Aspirant in order to hear the Spirit's movement and God's call. Utilizing the assessment tool *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry* (Addendum 1) the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Aspirant also discern how well that individual's gifts and strengths match the demands of ordained ministry. The Commission on Ministry seeks to offer guidance for these conversations while also granting the Rector/Priest-in-charge generous latitude in how she/he explores these questions in each specific case. Best practices for these conversations include the following:
 - Begin and end in prayer.
 - Establish an environment of trust and acceptance with the assurance that this time together is safe, sacred, and confidential.
 - Help the Aspirant to understand that her/his initial call *is to the process of discernment*. It is through discernment that the more specific call of God will be heard and known.
 - Engage in open-ended questions that prompt the Aspirant to reflect upon and articulate how his/her understanding of God's movement in his/her life at this time.
 - Listen to the stories/narrative the Aspirant shares for evidence of the *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry*.
 - Structure the conversations to explore the four sections of *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry*: Spiritual Vitality, Sense of Self, Relational Maturity, and Capacity to Lead. The definitions provided for each quality can help formulate questions to explore the quality.
 - If the Aspirant has not led anything in the congregation, have them create a ministry project that would involve recruiting, organizing, and leading others. This will help both the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Aspirant gauge his/her capacity to lead.
 - It is important for the Rector/Priest-in-charge to ask the hard questions and any "red flags" be dealt with honestly and openly. Neither the

Aspirant nor the Church are well served when the Rector/Priest-in-charge avoids asking the hard questions.

- ❖ The Aspirant should interview a deacon and a priest, neither of whom should serve in the Aspirant's congregation. See Addendum 2 for questions to be included in the interview and the reflection questions for the Rector/Priest-in-charge and Aspirant to discuss following the interviews.
 - The Rector/Priest-in-charge is seeking evidence that the Aspirant is responding to God concerning the ordained ministry. Is the Aspirant confusing a response to Christian service with a response to ordination? Are the Aspirant's primary interests congruent with the basic function of an ordained ministry? Are the Aspirant's innate abilities commensurate with the demands of the ordained ministry?
- ❖ The Rector/Priest-in-charge shall discuss the financial and time demands of seminary/diaconal education and the potential impact on Aspirant's family. (Addendum 3)
- ❖ The conversations between the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Aspirant should take no less than six months.
- ❖ If the Rector/Priest-in-charge believes that the Aspirant is better suited to lay ministry, assistance is provided in identifying suitable ministries. A Clearness Committee is one resource that may be offered to the Aspirant to assist in clarifying the specific shape of his/her lay ministry. Contact the Center for Spiritual Resources for assistance with a Clearness Committee.
- ❖ If the Rector/Priest-in-charge affirms that the Aspirant should move forward in the discernment process:
 - Recommendation of Rector/Priest-in-charge (Addendum 4) is completed and forwarded to the Bishop;
 - the assessment tool *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry* is completed by the Rector-Priest-in-charge and is forwarded to the Bishop;
 - evidence of baptism and confirmation are provided to the Bishop;
 - a meeting with the Bishop, the Rector/Priest-in-charge, and the Aspirant is scheduled.

Step 2: Meet with the Bishop

- ❖ Rector/Priest-in-charge shares the completed *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry* assessment tool with the Bishop.
- ❖ If the Bishop invites the Aspirant to continue the Aspirant's Information Form (Addendum 5) is completed by the Aspirant and signed by the Rector/Priest-in-charge.
- ❖ The Aspirant contacts the diocesan psychologist and schedules an appointment for the psychological evaluation.
- ❖ The Aspirant makes an appointment with the Archdeacon.
- ❖ Aspirant engages a Spiritual Director and also identifies his/her personality type

using the Enneagram. (www.enneagraminstitute.com)

- ❖ The Rector/Priest-in-Charge contacts a PLDC trainer and, utilizing the guidelines provided by the COM, appoints a Parish Lay Discernment Committee. (Addendum 6)

Step 3: The Parish Lay Discernment Committee

- ❖ The Rector provides copies of the PLDC manual to the members of the PLDC and to the Aspirant. The PLDC manual is available on the Diocesan website.
- ❖ Before the PLDC begins its work, the PLDC, the Rector/Priest-in-charge, the Aspirant and a Vestry liaison meet with a PLDC trainer (appointed by the Bishop and COM) for training.
- ❖ Members of the diocesan Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee may not serve on a PLDC.
- ❖ The work of the PLDC should take no less than six months.
- ❖ At any time after the six month period, the convener of the PLDC provides a written recommendation to the Bishop. (Found in *Guidelines for Parish Lay Discernment Committee*, pg. 26). This recommendation is signed by the PLDC, the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Aspirant.
 - If it is the PLDC's recommendation that the Aspirant continue discernment to identify appropriate lay ministry, the Rector/Priest-in-charge offers to provide a Clearness Committee to assist the individual in his/her continuing discernment.
 - If it is the PLDC's recommendation that the Aspirant possesses qualities necessary for life-giving ordained ministry and should continue discerning his/her call into ordained ministry
 - Rector/Priest-in-charge and Vestry complete the certificate stating their support of the Aspirant's continuing the process toward ordination. (Addendum 7)
 - Aspirant completes the Personal History/Education/Employment Form (available from the Bishop's office) and sends to the diocesan office.
 - Upon completion of above, Aspirant makes an appointment with Bishop. The Aspirant's psychological evaluation must be completed prior to meeting with the Bishop.
- ❖ If the Bishop chooses to invite the Aspirant to the COM/SC overnight meeting, the Aspirant provides Bishop's office **at least one month** prior to the meeting:
 - Completed Authority for Release of Information (available from the Bishop's office); and
 - The Aspirant's spiritual autobiography.
- ❖ The Bishop's office provides the Aspirant the forms to be completed for the medical examination and the background check as described in Title III.6.5 (j) for the Vocational Diaconate and Title III.8.5 (k) for the Priesthood.
 - These forms should be completed and returned to the Bishop's

office as soon as possible. The Aspirant is responsible for the expense of these examinations (see Addendum 3)

- ❖ The Rector provides a letter of support of the Aspirant to the Bishop.

Step 4: Commission on Ministry First Overnight Meeting

- ❖ COM/SC overnight meetings are scheduled in May and October each year.
- ❖ If the Aspirant is discerning a call to the priesthood, he/she must attend the COM/SC overnight meeting in May. If the Aspirant is discerning a call to the vocational diaconate, he/she may attend the COM overnight in either May or October.
- ❖ The Aspirant is responsible for expenses incurred for the overnight meetings and must be paid in full prior to the meeting.
- ❖ At the conclusion of the first overnight meeting with the Aspirant, the COM can recommend to the Bishop any of the following actions:
 - Invite the Aspirant to attend the second COM/SC overnight meeting.
 - Ask the Aspirant to return at a later date.
 - Recommend the Aspirant pursue lay ministry opportunities in the church.
- ❖ If the Bishop asks the Aspirant to attend the second COM/SC overnight meeting the COM assigns a liaison to act as a conduit between Aspirant and COM as the Aspirant moves through the process.
- ❖ The Aspirant will consult with the Bishop regarding Aspirant's financial resources which will be available for his/her support throughout preparation for ordination.
- ❖ Prior to the second COM/SC overnight meeting, the Aspirant, guided by his/her Rector, may submit to the Bishop, **at least one month prior to the meeting:**
 - A letter requesting Postulancy.
 - The Aspirant's Rector/Priest-in-charge submits
 - the Certificate from Rector and Vestry (Addendum 7); and
 - a letter of support for the Aspirant's continuing discernment process.

Step 5: Field Placement

- ❖ If Aspirant has been invited to attend the second COM/SC overnight meeting, the Bishop arranges a field placement for the Aspirant to be completed before the second overnight. See Guidelines for Field Placement (Addendum 8).
- ❖ At the completion of the Field Placement, the supervising Rector/Priest-in-Charge must provide the Bishop's office a completed Field Placement Report (Addendum 8).
- ❖ At the completion of the Field Placement, the Aspirant must provide the Bishop's office a completed Field Placement Report (Addendum 8).

Step 6: Commission on Ministry Second Overnight Meeting

- ❖ If the Aspirant is married or in a committed relationship, his/her spouse/partner must attend the second overnight.
- ❖ At the conclusion of the second COM/SC overnight, the COM will:
 - Recommend Postulancy.
 - Recommend the Aspirant to continue in the discernment process and return to the COM at a later date. (Specific recommendations about time frame and further study and discernment will be communicated.)
 - Recommend the Aspirant pursue lay ministry opportunities in the church. If it is the COM's recommendation that the Aspirant pursue lay ministry opportunities, the Rector/Priest-in-charge will offer to provide a Clearness Committee to assist the individual in his/her discernment to identify the particular shape of his/her lay ministry.
 - Two years will be the length of time required before a person can formally enter a new discernment process.
- ❖ The Bishop, at the conclusion of the second COM/SC overnight meeting:
 - will inform the Aspirant of the COM's recommendation and the Bishop's decision.
 - The Bishop shall also notify the Aspirant's Rector/Priest-in-charge, the COM and the Standing Committee of the diocese of the Bishop's decision.

Postulancy

Postulancy is that time between Aspirancy and Candidacy that involves continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to the Diaconate or the Priesthood. Postulancy is required to enter seminary or the Deacon Formation Program.

When applying for Postulancy, the Aspirant must have all the required documents on file one month prior to the second COM/SC overnight meeting.

If, at the conclusion of the second COM/SC overnight, the COM recommends to the Bishop that the Aspirant's application for Postulancy be granted:

- ❖ the Bishop (or the Chair of the COM at the Bishop's request) communicates the recommendation of the COM and the Bishop's decision to:
 - the Aspirant/Postulant, the Rector/Priest-in-charge, the COM, the Standing Committee and, if the Postulant is pursuing Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate, the Archdeacon of the Diocese.
- ❖ if the Aspirant is seeking Ordination to the Priesthood:
 - Aspirant submits a financial plan to the Bishop. The Bishop may request a financial plan at an earlier date if there are concerns about the Aspirant's financial situation. A copy of this form is available from the Bishop's office.
- ❖ During the time of preparation for Holy Orders, all Postulants are expected to

communicate with the Bishop by letter four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting upon academic, personal, and spiritual life and development.

Candidacy

Candidacy is a time of education and formation in preparation for ordination. A Postulant may apply for Candidacy status after successfully completing one half of his/her Seminary studies or Deacon Formation Program and a minimum of six months after being granted Postulancy status.

- ❖ Halfway through seminary or, when applicable, Deacon Formation Program, the Postulant may be invited by the Bishop to attend a third COM/SC overnight meeting. This third COM/SC overnight meeting requirement may be waived at the Bishop's discretion.
- ❖ The Postulant submits a request for Candidacy in the form of a letter to the Bishop and it is kept on file. The request must include:
 - the date Postulancy was granted; and
 - A letter of support from the Rector/Priest-in-charge of the Postulant's congregation.
- ❖ The Postulant's Rector/Priest-in-charge also submits:
 - Certificate of support from the Rector and the Vestry. (Addendum 7)
- ❖ A report is submitted from the seminary or Deacon Formation Program related to the Postulant's suitability for Holy Orders. All required documents must be on file prior to the Bishop issuing an invitation to the COM/SC overnight meeting. All fees for the COM/SC overnight meeting must be paid in full prior to attending the overnight meeting.

The COM will review all requests for Candidacy at the COM/SC overnight meeting or, if requested by the Bishop, at a designated meeting of the COM, and will make a recommendation to the Standing Committee. The COM can recommend to the Standing Committee the following:

- ❖ The Postulant be granted Candidacy.
- ❖ The Postulant continue discernment through additional studies or programs as clearly outlined by the COM.
- ❖ The Postulant's request for Candidacy be denied.

Upon receipt of a statement from the COM attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having had the opportunity to review the documentation, the Standing Committee will then make a recommendation to the Bishop:

- ❖ The Postulant be granted Candidacy.
- ❖ The Postulant continue discernment through additional studies or programs as clearly outlined by the COM.

- ❖ The Postulant's request for Candidacy be denied.

The decision to admit the Postulant as a Candidate for Ordination resides solely with the Bishop. At the conclusion of the COM/SC overnight meeting or designated meeting, the Bishop may:

- ❖ Admit, deny or defer the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination; and
- ❖ Communicate the decision regarding Candidacy to the Postulant. At the request of the Bishop, the Chair of the Standing Committee may communicate the Bishop's decision to the Postulant.
- ❖ If Candidacy is granted, and the Candidate is in the process for the Priesthood, the Bishop registers the Candidate for the GOE.

A Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate, except, for reasons acceptable to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate. Title III.6.4(c)

Each Candidate for Ordination shall continue to communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic, human, spiritual and practical development.

Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate at the sole discretion of the Bishop.

- ❖ The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate, the Candidate's Rector/Priest-in-charge, the COM, the Standing Committee and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or the director of the Deacon Formation Program.

Ordination to the Diaconate (Vocational Deacons)

A Candidate for the Diaconate (Vocational Deacon) may apply for Ordination at least six (6) months after being granted Candidacy and upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

- ❖ The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:
 - An application from the Candidate requesting Ordination to the Diaconate, including evidence of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy.
 - Certificate of Approval from the Rector and Vestry (Addendum 7).
 - Covenant Agreement with the Internship Parish, as presented in the Diaconate Manual; and
 - Certificate from the Deacon Formation Program.
 - A letter from the COM giving a recommendation regarding Ordination to the Diaconate.

- ❖ If the medical, psychological examination and the background check have taken place more than thirty-six months prior to Ordination, they must be updated as stated in Title III.6.5 (j).

Upon review of the required documents the COM:

- ❖ The COM presents a letter of recommendation to the Standing Committee regarding the Candidate's request for Ordination to the Diaconate.
- ❖ The Standing Committee, if a majority of the members consent, shall certify that the canonical requirements for Ordination to the Diaconate have been met, that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend to the Bishop approval of the Candidate's request for Ordination to the Diaconate.
- ❖ The Bishop informs the Candidate and the Candidate's Rector/Priest-in-charge of his decision.
- ❖ A date for Ordination is set with the Bishop.

Ordination to the Diaconate for those called to the Priesthood

A Candidate for Ordination to the Diaconate for those called to the Priesthood may apply for Ordination no less than 6 months after being granted Candidacy and upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- ❖ An application from the Candidate requesting Ordination to the Diaconate. The application shall include evidence of the admission to Postulancy and Candidacy.
- ❖ the Certificate from the Rector and Vestry (Addendum 7).
- ❖ A certificate from the COM giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate.
- ❖ A certificate from the seminary, showing
 - the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons; and
 - giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination;
- ❖ If the medical, psychological examinations and the background check have taken place more than thirty-six months prior to Ordination, they must be updated as stated in Title III.8.5 (k).

Upon review of the required documents, the Standing Committee, a majority of all the members consenting, shall certify that the canonical requirements for Ordination to the Diaconate have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination.

- ❖ The Bishop informs the Candidate and the Candidate's Rector/Priest-in-charge of his decision. A date for Ordination to the Priesthood is set with the Bishop.

Ordination to the Priesthood

A person may be ordained a Priest at least six months after Ordination as a Deacon.

The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- ❖ A letter from the Deacon requesting Ordination to the Priesthood and including evidence of the Deacon's dates of admission to Postulancy, Candidacy and Ordination as a Deacon;
- ❖ the Certificate of support from the Rector and Vestry (Addendum 7); and
- ❖ results of the GOEs and results of any GOE follow-up if necessary; and
- ❖ a certificate from the COM attesting to the successful completion of the program of formation designed during Postulancy (Canon III.8.5) and proficiency in the required areas of study, and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood.

The Bishop may require reports from other persons attesting to the readiness of the Deacon for Ordination to the Priesthood.

On receipt of the letters and certificates, the Standing Committee, a majority of all the members consenting, shall certify that the canonical requirements for Ordination to the Priesthood have been met and there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination.

The Bishop informs the Deacon and a date for Ordination to the Priesthood is set with the Bishop.

Addendum 1
Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry

Aspirant's Name: _____

Person completing the survey: _____

Date: _____ **Role:** _____

Introduction

As the Commission on Ministry, we have attempted to articulate the qualities that we sense are needed in ordained leaders at this particular time in the life of the church – a time of great change, a time when the way of Jesus is vibrant, vital and life-giving, and a time when the Body of Christ in its institutional expression is under great stress. These qualities naturally fall into four areas of exploration: Spiritual Vitality, Sense of Self, Relational Maturity, and Capacity to Lead. These qualities exist in a wide range of personalities – for instance, introverts and extraverts may possess them, all nine of the enneagram types may possess them, or those who fit the frames of any of the other ways we understand human beings may possess them. We understand that no one person may possess all of these qualities, but at this point in the church's life, we believe these qualities point both toward the types of leaders we need and toward the capacities one needs for one's own sake to thrive in this work. We are aware that these capacities may not be fully developed at the early stages of the discernment process, especially if the Aspirant is younger. In this instance, we are attempting to discern whether or not these qualities exist in some nascent form.

Discernment is the spiritual practice of listening deeply and intentionally to a person's life in order to hear and understand the movement of the Spirit, clarify God's call, and move more deeply into that call. In the Episcopal Church, we believe that discernment is best done in community over time. We have developed this survey instrument to provide the Aspirant and the others involved at every level of the discernment process – Rector/Priest-in-Charge, Parish Lay Discernment Committee, Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, Field Placement Supervisor, and Bishop – a way to discern the presence of these qualities in the Aspirant. In our experience, as we circle back to these qualities at every level throughout the process, increasing clarity emerges about the shape of ministry that will be the most life-giving both for the Aspirant and for the Church that he or she is seeking to serve.

Instructions

The qualities are divided into four areas of exploration: Spiritual Vitality, Sense of Self, Relational Maturity, and Capacity to Lead. Below each quality, there is a brief statement that articulates how the Commission on Ministry understands this quality.

Some of us think more concretely, some of us think more narratively. We have provided both a rating scale and a place for narrative to capture as fully as possible your sense of these qualities in the Aspirant. Though you may favor one approach over the other, please attend to both the rating scale and the narrative.

Rating Scale

Next to each quality, you will find a rating scale from 0-6. Please mark the scale to indicate the extent to which you see this quality in the Aspirant, with 0 being Undeveloped and 6 being Strongly Developed. Your sense of this quality may be gathered through listening to the Aspirant as they speak of their life and ministry up to this point and/or through direct observation and experience of the Aspirant's life and ministry.

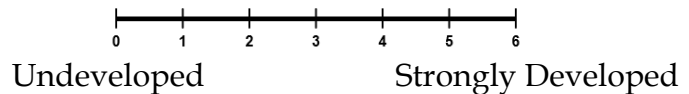
Narrative

Directly below each quality, are three lines. Please provide a brief narrative to express more fully your sense of this quality as it relates to the Aspirant.

SPIRITUAL VITALITY

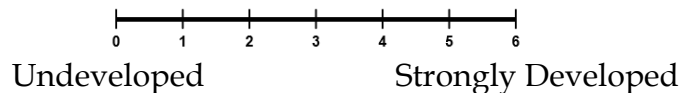
Our ordained leaders need to have a compelling spirituality because a tangible connection with the Living God is at the heart of all ministry. These qualities support and reveal such a spirituality.

- **Holiness and wholeness of life**



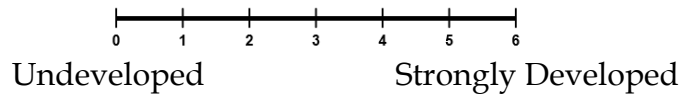
Has a lived experience of the presence of God and dedicates his/her life both to being a conduit of that presence as well as to growing in that presence. Drinks from the wellspring of faith, hope, love, and mercy.

- **Compassion**



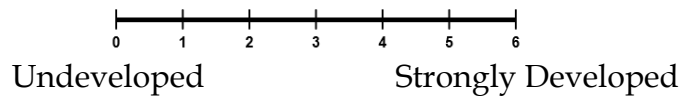
Exhibits a passionate awareness of God's connectedness with all creation. She/he exhibits an awareness of God's mercy in her/his life and has a capacity to extend that mercy.

-
- **Committed to the way of Jesus**



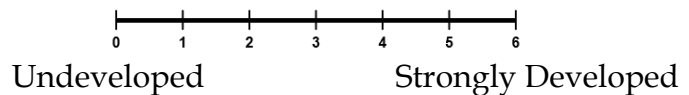
One has a sense in how she/he lives and in how she/he speaks that Jesus and his way are central to her/his being and life.

- **Exhibits paschal living (cycle of death and resurrection)**



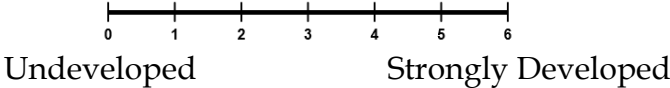
Can identify the cycle of death and resurrection in the pattern of her/his life, in the lives of those around them, in the life of the community of faith, and in the life of the world.

- **Genuine love of the Body of Christ in all of its manifestations**



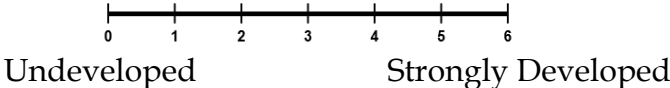
Has a capacity to love the Body of Christ, in all of its manifestations, even when it is necessary to critique/challenge it. *Note:* The Body of Christ is to be found in the body of the Church, at the congregational/local level, diocesan level, church-wide level, and global level, *and* the Body of Christ is broader than any one institutional expression of the Church.

- Spiritual practice**



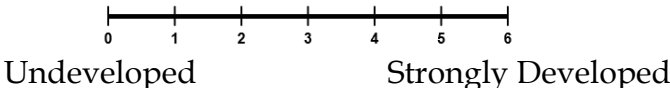
One senses in his/her presence that he/she walks the talk and that his/her spiritual practices give witness to the grace/faith that undergirds those practices.

- Vulnerability**



She/he is willing to risk letting her/himself be known. She/he is willing to live the baptismal life publically so that those entrusted to her/his care can see what this life looks like. She/he is willing to risk exposure to reveal some aspect of the Gospel that may not be comfortable.

- Willingness to question/grow/engage**



Has a learning stance toward life/self/vocation/the Church. Exhibits curiosity. Likes to be engaged with the process of growing as a human being and as a follower

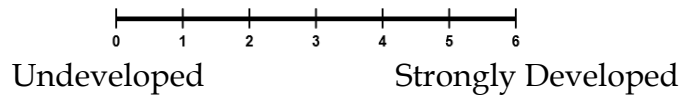
of Jesus.

Additional comments:

SENSE OF SELF

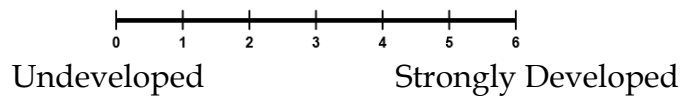
Our sense of self is given in our baptism. At this time in the Church's life, these are the qualities of the self that we believe are needed in ordained leaders in order that they and the communities they serve may thrive.

- **Authentic/real**



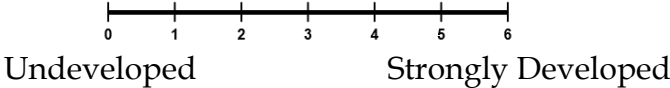
Has a capacity to allow her/himself to be truly seen and to let her/his True Self be present. Her/his life is congruent. Words and actions, being and doing, line up.

- **Honesty**



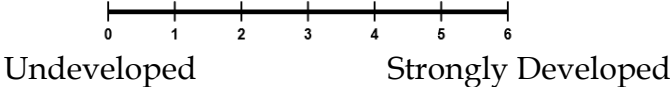
What he/she says and how he/she lives are congruent. One senses an integrity about the person, his/her actions, and his/her words.

- **Integration of mind, heart, body and spirit**



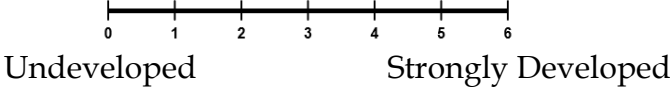
One senses in his/her presence that the mind, the heart, the body, and the spirit are all hooked up.

- **Playful**



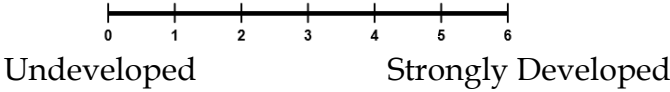
Doesn't take her/himself too seriously. Has a capacity to have fun and to laugh.

- **Resilience**



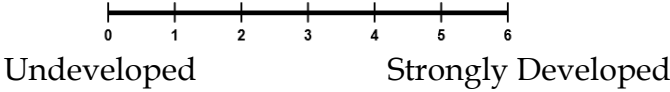
Has the capacity to come through a difficult circumstance/season. Has a capacity to find a way forward when he/she hits a wall.

- **Rooted**



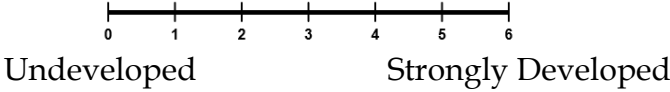
Conveys a sense of rootedness, groundedness, stability. Knows who he/she is, even while knowing that he/she is always growing/changing/evolving.

- **Self-awareness**



Knows her/himself. Has a capacity to observe her/himself and to know what is her/his piece in an encounter with another and what is not. Has a capacity to understand what other people/situations trigger in her/him. Knows her/his demons or Achilles heel, as well as her/his gifts.

- **Self-care**



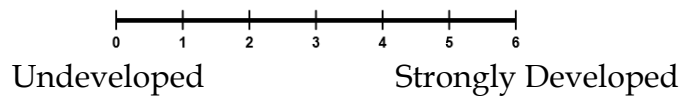
Has clear practices to care for his/her body, mind, heart, and spirit. Exhibits healthy rhythms of rest, work, and play. Tends to one's intimate relationships with care.

Additional comments:

RELATIONAL MATURITY

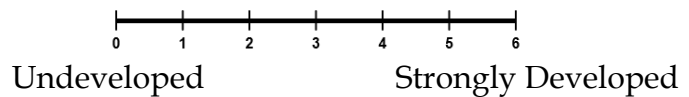
Life in Christ is inherently relational. We believe these qualities are needed for relationships in the Body of Christ to be life-giving.

- **Ability to connect/interact**



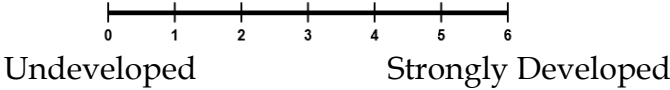
Has a capacity to connect and interact with a wide range of people in a wide range of settings.

- **Emotionally engaged, even in conflict**



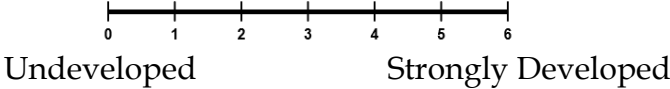
Has a capacity to stay present in the face of conflict, anxiety, anger, fear, grief, and the other emotions from which we generally run. Has a capacity to step out of the immediacy of strong emotion, his/hers or others, and has the capacity to know when and how to re-engage in a more life-giving way.

- **Empathy**



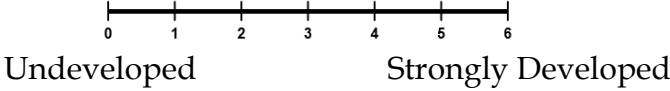
Has the capacity to be *with* another without discounting their experience (because their experience makes us uncomfortable) and without trying to fix them (because their experience makes us uncomfortable). Has the capacity to connect with the emotion that someone is experiencing (Brené Brown’s definition).

- **Having a heart for people**



Genuinely likes people. Has a curiosity about people. Has a capacity to love the people entrusted to his/her care and to receive their love.

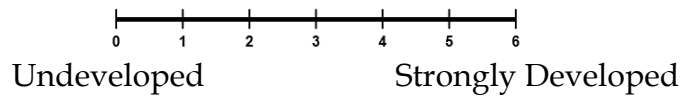
- **Humbleness**



Has a sense of her/his own humanity and the humanity of others. Is in touch with and has a comfort with her/his limits and the limits of others because she/he is aware

of God's grace. Has a capacity to see that others may be right. Approaches life as a learner, even when she/he has some experience under her/his belt. Has a sense of groundedness.

- **Trustworthiness**



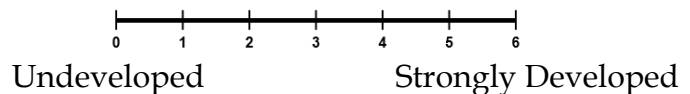
Her/his presence invites trust. One senses that she/he can be trusted.

Additional comments:

CAPACITY TO LEAD

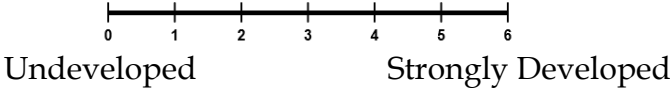
In a time of great change in the Church and in the world, we believe these qualities are needed to lead communities such that they may thrive and flourish.

- **Ability to articulate**



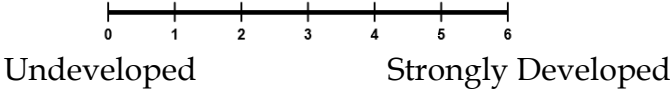
Has a capacity to convey faith, ideas, and the tradition in ways that people can understand. Has a capacity to communicate clearly verbally and in writing.

- **Accountability**



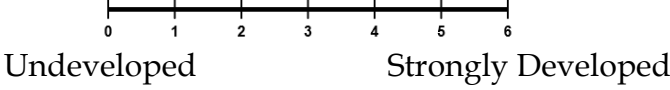
Has a capacity to admit when he/she has made a mistake/messed up, is willing to do what he/she needs to do to make it right, and when the fabric of a relationship has been strained, is willing to make amends to mend the threads that have been broken. Has a willingness to be held accountable by others. Has a willingness to hold others accountable.

- **Authority**



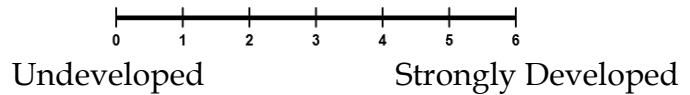
Has a clarity and a willingness to claim her/his voice and to be decisive in action once appropriate action has been discerned. Has a capacity to help others claim their authority.

- **Capacity to inspire**



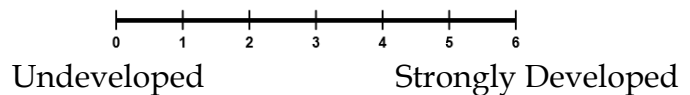
Has a capacity to rally others to a vision or course of action that has been discerned. He/she is someone you would want to follow.

- **Comfort with change**



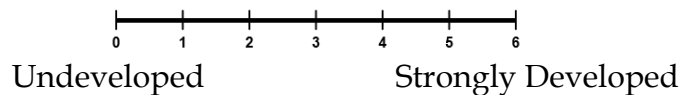
Has a capacity to stay anchored in the midst of change. Has a capacity to stay present when the people and environment around her/him are anxious.

- **Contextual awareness of the Church, cultures, and the world**



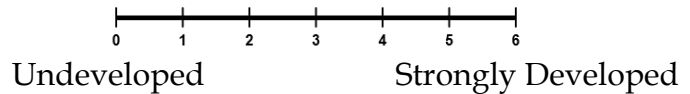
Has an awareness of the changes flowing through the Church, cultures, and the world.

- **Courage**



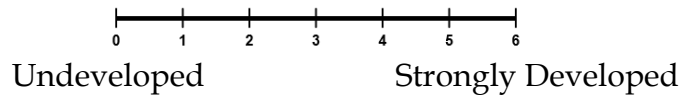
Has a capacity to speak, act, and take risks for the sake of truth.

- **Creativity**



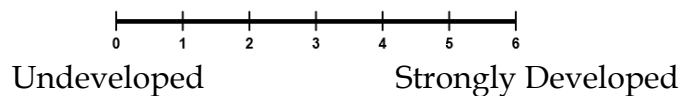
Has some practice that embodies the process of creating/creation. Has a capacity to make something new, or to take something that is and see something new in it.

- **Imaginative**



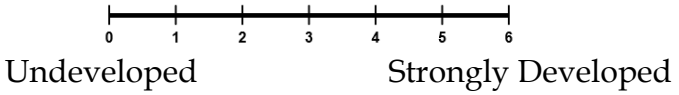
Has a capacity to see possibilities and alternatives. Has a capacity to see a third way forward in the midst of either/or options.

- **Intellectual curiosity**



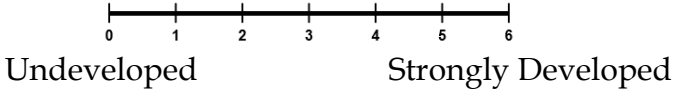
Exhibits a curiosity about people, ideas, the tradition, her/his faith, and the world.

- **Resourceful**



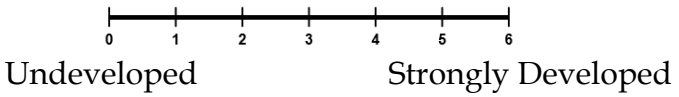
Has a capacity to assess a situation and bring appropriate skills/gifts/competencies of self or others to that situation.

- **Sacrifice**



She/he exhibits a willingness to offer her/himself. She/he exhibits a willingness to yield for the sake of another and has the capacity to discern when such yielding is called for.

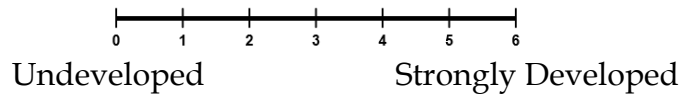
- **Vocational flexibility**



He/she is open to a variety of ways that ministry might be expressed. He/she is open

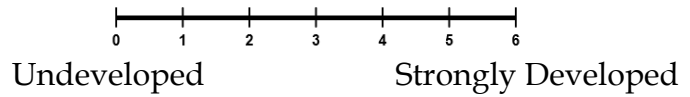
to a variety of locations/situations in which ministry might be expressed.

- **Willingness to ask for help**



Exhibits a willingness to ask for help. He/she seeks out counsel from appropriate sources. He/she works best in collaboration with others, and not as a lone ranger.

- **Willingness to experiment**



Exhibits a capacity to try new things as an experiment. Has a capacity to risk failure and to learn from it.

Additional comments:

Addendum 2

Aspirant's Interview with a Deacon and a Priest

The Aspirant should interview a deacon and a priest (neither of whom should serve in the Aspirant's congregation) and ask them the questions listed below. The answers will not be shared with the Rector/Priest-in-charge but rather the Aspirant's reflections on what was learned. It would be good for the Aspirant to explain how the interviews are being used when making arrangements for the interviews. Please allow one to two hours.

Interview Questions:

1. How did you experience your call to ordained ministry and how has your understanding and experience of that call changed, grown, or focused over time?
2. Describe the ministry of a deacon, as you understand it.
3. Describe the ministry of a priest, as you understand it.
4. Describe the process of vocational discernment that led to your ordination. What in/during that process helped clarify for you and the Church that your call to ordained ministry was that of the diaconate/priesthood?
5. Tell me about a few of your experiences of greatest learning and growth while you were preparing for ordination.
6. Tell me about a few of your experiences of greatest learning and growth since you were ordained.
7. What is the most difficult aspect of ordained ministry for you? For your household?
8. What has been the "cost" of ordination for you and your household? What have you and your household sacrificed in order to respond to this vocational call?

The Rector/Priest-in-charge should follow up with the Aspirant, asking the following questions (In the event the Aspirant continues in the process and a PLDC is formed for further discernment, the PLDC will also want to follow up with these questions):

- Ask the Aspirant to reflect (not report) on his/her interviews. What was stirred up as they listened and remembered the interview?
- Ask the Aspirant to reflect on the public nature of ordained ministry and the stresses that ordination will put on his/her household.
- Ask the Aspirant to reflect on his/her age, i.e., its positives and its negatives for ordination.

Addendum 3

Expected Financial Costs of Discernment, Seminary or Diaconal Training

It is the hope and expectation of the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry (COM) that the Aspirant and the Aspirant's congregation will begin a conversation early in the process to discuss the realistic sharing of these expenses. If a congregation lifts up a member of their congregation for Holy Orders, the congregation should be willing to offer that person significant financial support.

If the Aspirant is invited by the Bishop to continue in discernment:

- ❖ The psychological evaluation is scheduled (paid to the diocesan-appointed psychologist): \$750
- ❖ A PLDC is formed and trained for their work by a consultant appointed by the Bishop and the COM.
(Note: this fee plus mileage [2015 IRS reimbursement rate of \$.57.5/mile] is paid by the congregation to the Diocese who pays the consultant) **\$150 (plus mileage)**

If the Rector and the PLDC affirm the Aspirant's call to Holy Orders and the Bishop invites the Aspirant to attend the overnight meeting with the COM and the Standing Committee of the Diocese: (Note: This meeting begins on Friday morning and ends on Saturday which would require the Aspirant to take time from work to attend the entire session.)

- ❖ Oxford Background Check (paid to the Diocese): \$350
- ❖ Medical examination (paid to physician; cost is dependent upon Aspirant's health insurance) \$350
- ❖ Cost of room and board at COM/SC overnight meeting \$125

If the Aspirant is invited by the Bishop to return for a second overnight meeting with the COM and SC, the following expenses will be incurred: (Note: This meeting begins on Friday morning and ends on Saturday which would require the Aspirant to take time from work to attend the entire session.)

- ❖ Cost of second overnight meeting (covers cost of room and board for Aspirant and his/her spouse, if applicable) \$125 - \$250

If the Aspirant receives Postulancy, the costs of seminary or diaconal training:

- ❖ Deacons: Diaconal Formation Program: (2-year program @ \$600/year, plus books, vestments, travel, etc.) \$1200
- ❖ Priests:
 - GRE \$150
 - Seminary application fees (estimated) \$150
 - Three years of seminary (estimated) \$60,000 - \$125,000+

(**Note:** this is calculated based on annual costs of \$20,000-\$35,000/year depending on which of the approved Episcopal seminaries one attends. This estimate does not include the cost of books, vestments, or other incidental living expenses. It also does not take into consideration scholarships which may be available through the seminaries that would reduce the cost.)

- Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) fees **\$500**

If the Postulant receives Candidacy:

- ❖ Updated psychological and medical examinations may be required again per the Canons prior to Ordination.

Addendum 4
Recommendation of Rector/Priest-in-Charge

Date _____

Aspirant's Name _____

Rector's/Priest's-in-charge Name and Parish _____

I, the undersigned, have met with the above-named Aspirant beginning (date) _____ and ending (date) _____, for the purpose of discerning his/her call into ordained ministry.

As a result of our prayerful conversations and the completion of the assessment survey *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry*, I find that this individual exhibits the requisite spiritual vitality, sense of self, relational maturity, capacity to lead, and strong sense of God's movement and intention for his/her life that are needed for ordained ministry.

Therefore, I strongly affirm the Aspirant's proceeding in the discernment process in the Diocese of Western North Carolina.

Rector/Priest-in-charge

Additional comments:

Addendum 6

Guidelines for PLDC Membership

Discernment Committee membership (ideally 5-7 members) should include:

- ❖ Vestry Liaison
- ❖ Members of the congregation who know the Aspirant
- ❖ Members of the congregation who do not know the Aspirant (these might be members of a nearby congregation if the parish is small in number)
- ❖ A member who has served on another discernment committee (optimal, not always possible)
- ❖ No clergy, active or retired and no member of the Rector's/Priest's-in-charge family
- ❖ Members of the diocesan Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee may not serve on a PLDC.

Roles of those involved in the Discernment Process:

- ❖ Convener:
 - Makes sure meeting times are set and PLDC is notified.
 - Makes sure all areas of discussion are covered.
 - Makes sure meetings begin and end on time.
 - Makes sure PLDC stays on task and each member has opportunity to share.
 - Keeps PLDC Trainer informed and asks for help when needed.
 - Reminds PLDC of confidentiality of discussions.
 - Leads the PLDC in setting group norms/covenants.
 - Invites Aspirant's family member as appropriate to be involved in a meeting.
- ❖ Chaplain:
 - Makes sure the meeting begins and end with prayer.
 - May share role with other members of the PLDC.
 - Can invite the PLDC to pause in discussion for silent or oral prayer and discernment.
- ❖ Recorder:
 - Takes notes of the meetings.
 - Distributes note to the PLDC.
 - Reminds the PLDC of confidentiality of discussions
- ❖ PLDC Member:
 - Prayerfully agrees to participate fully
 - Willing to be open, honest, able to confront, supportive and candid in the context of a caring community.
 - Will not ask any question that she/he is not willing to answer.

- ❖ Aspirant
 - Prepares her/his Spiritual Autobiography.
 - Reviews Spiritual Autobiography with the PLDC.
 - Prepares for each meeting with assigned reflection topic from prior meeting.
 - Agrees to the involvement of appropriate family members when asked by PLDC.
 - Answers questions from PLDC with open, honest, candid answers understanding that sometimes there is no answer.

- ❖ Rector/Priest-in-charge:
 - Invites the members of the Discernment Committee.
 - After the PLDC has completed its work, if appropriate, with the Vestry, makes a recommendation to the Bishop.
 - May include the work of the PLDC in the prayers of the congregation
 - Provides pastoral care for the Aspirant during the discernment process.

- ❖ Vestry
 - Keeps informed of the process of the PLDC through the committee's Vestry Liaison.
 - Receives the recommendation from the PLDC and, if the process has been properly followed, completes the letter of support. (They are not a second discernment committee.)

- ❖ Vestry Liaison:
 - Makes a monthly report to the Vestry about ongoing work of the PLDC, not content, just that group continues to meet.
 - Educates the Vestry about its role in the PLDC process.

- ❖ Commission on Ministry:
 - Educates the clergy on the PLDC process and recommendation for types of PLDC members.
 - Keeps up-to-date with the progress of the PLDC through the PLDC Trainer.
 - Provides support for the Rector/Priest-in-charge, the Aspirant, and the PLDC through the PLDC Trainer.

- ❖ PLDC Trainer:
 - Meets with the PLDC, Aspirant, and Rector/Priest-in-charge to review the PLDC in detail and to answer questions, with an emphasis on the process, not a timeline.
 - Provides support for the PLDC as needed with the process.

- ❖ Bishop:
 - Maintains a pastoral relationship with the participants in the process.
 - Authorizes a local PLDC.
 - Reviews the reports and recommendations of the PLDC, the Rector/Priest-in-charge and Vestry.
- ❖ Parish:
 - All members of the parish are encouraged to keep the Aspirant and the PLDC and the discernment process in prayer.

Addendum 7
Certificate from Rector/Priest-in-charge and Vestry

A certificate from the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Vestry of the congregation of whom the Aspirant is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, setting forth the grounds upon which they judge the Aspirant to possess such qualifications as would be fitting for admission as a Postulant, Candidate or Ordinand shall be submitted to the Bishop, the Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry according to Title III, Canon 6, for Aspirants to the Diaconate; and Title III, Canon 8, Section 2 for Aspirants to the Priesthood according to the form given below, signed by the Rector/Priest-in-charge and no less than two-thirds of the Vestry.

To the Bishop, the Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Western North Carolina:

We, the Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Vestry of

Church, located in _____, North Carolina, do certify that, after due inquiry, we are well assured and believe that

_____ is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing and is possessed of such qualifications as are fitting for a person to be admitted to (check one):

____ Priesthood

____ Diaconate

We pledge to contribute financially to that preparation and be involved in his/her preparation for: (Check the appropriate step. This form will be submitted as the Aspirant moves forward in the discernment and ordination process.)

____ **The Discernment Process in the Diocese of Western North Carolina**

____ **Postulancy for the Diaconate**

____ **Candidacy for the Diaconate**

____ **Ordination to the Diaconate**

____ **Postulancy for the Priesthood**

____ **Candidacy for the Priesthood**

____ **Ordination to the Diaconate**

____ **Ordination to the Priesthood**

We hereby certify the above and this certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry duly convened on the _____ day of _____, _____, and that the names attached are those of all or at least two-thirds majority of all the members of the Vestry.

Signed: _____, Rector/Priest-in-charge

Vestry:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Addendum 8 Aspirant's Field Placement

If the Aspirant is invited to attend the second overnight meeting with COM, the Bishop will arrange a field placement for Aspirant to be completed prior to the second overnight.

- ❖ If Aspirant is discerning the vocational diaconate, the field placement congregation will have an active deacon.
- ❖ The supervising Rector/Priest-in-charge and the Bishop will create a field placement plan that both challenges and supports the Aspirant in his/her continuing discernment.
 - The supervising Rector/Priest-in-charge will meet regularly with the Aspirant during the field placement
- ❖ The supervising Rector/Priest-in-charge will convene a small group of lay persons from the congregation to meet regularly with the Aspirant to provide feedback.
- ❖ At the conclusion of the field placement, and no later than one month prior to second COM/SC overnight meeting, the Rector/Priest-in-charge will provide the Bishop's office a report that includes:
 - The tasks/projects undertaken by Aspirant
 - An assessment of Aspirant's experience in the congregation (what worked well, what didn't work well; what were the growth areas for Aspirant)
 - A completed *Qualities for a Life-Giving Ordained Ministry* survey.
- ❖ At the conclusion of the field placement, and no later than one month prior to second COM/SC overnight meeting, the Aspirant will provide the Bishop's office a report that includes:
 - The tasks/projects undertaken by Aspirant.
 - His/her assessment of the field placement in the congregation (what worked well, what didn't work well; what was learned, what was challenging? How have you grown?)
 - A completed *Qualities for a Life-Giving Ordained Ministry* survey.

The Discernment and Ordination Process Checklist

Name _____ Parish: _____

Aspirancy

- _____ Aspirant is confirmed communicant in good standing in local congregation for at least one year and provides evidence of baptism and confirmation.
- _____ Rector/Priest-in-charge meets with Aspirant for a minimum of six months utilizing the assessment tool *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry*.
- _____ Aspirant interviews a priest and a deacon.
- _____ Rector/Priest-in-charge discusses financial and time demands of seminary/ diaconal training and impact on Aspirant's family.

- _____ If Rector/Priest-in-charge feels Aspirant is better suited to lay ministry, a Clearness Committee is offered to assist in clarifying his/her lay ministry.

- _____ If Rector/Priest-in-charge affirms that Aspirant should move forward:
 - _____ Recommendation of Rector/Priest-in-charge is completed.
 - _____ the completed assessment tool *Qualities for a Life-giving Ordained Ministry* is completed by the Rector/Priest-in-charge and forwarded to the Bishop;
 - _____ a meeting with the Bishop, the Rector/Priest-in-charge, and the Aspirant is scheduled.

- _____ If Bishop invites the Aspirant to continue:
 - _____ the Aspirant's Information Form is completed by the Aspirant and signed by the Rector/Priest-in-charge.
 - _____ Aspirant contacts the diocesan psychologist to schedule psychological evaluation.
 - _____ Aspirant makes an appointment with the Archdeacon.
 - _____ Aspirant engages a spiritual director
 - _____ Aspirant identifies his/her personality type using the Enneagram.
 - _____ Rector/Priest-in-charge contacts a PLDC trainer and appoints PLDC.

- _____ PLDC, Rector/Priest-in-charge, Aspirant and Vestry liaison meets with PLDC trainer.
- _____ PLDC meets with Aspirant for no less than six months.
- _____ At the completion of their discernment with the Aspirant, the convener of the PLDC provides written recommendation to the Bishop.
- _____ If the PLDC recommends the Aspirant pursue lay ministry, the

_____ Rector/Priest-in-charge offers to provide a Clearness Committee.
If the PLDC recommends the Aspirant continue discernment of ordained ministry:

_____ Rector/Priest-in-charge and Vestry complete and sign the certificate (Addendum 7).

_____ Aspirant completes Personal History/Education/Employment Form available from the Bishop's office.

_____ Aspirant makes an appointment with the Bishop.

_____ If the Bishop chooses to invite Aspirant to the COM/SC overnight meeting, the Bishop's office provides Aspirant with forms to be completed for

_____ the background check and the medical examination.

_____ **At least one month prior** to the overnight, the Aspirant provides the Bishop's office:

_____ Completed Authority for Release of Information (available from Bishop's office); and

_____ the Aspirant's spiritual autobiography.

_____ Aspirant pays expenses in full prior to the first COM/SC overnight meeting.

_____ Aspirant is not invited to continue.

_____ Aspirant is asked to return at a later date.

_____ Aspirant is invited to attend the second COM/SC overnight meeting.

_____ Aspirant may submit to the Bishop, **at least one month prior to the second overnight meeting**

_____ A letter requesting postulancy.

_____ Rector/Priest-in-charge submits certificate (Addendum 7);

_____ Rector/Priest-in-charge submits letter of support.

_____ Aspirant consults with Bishop regarding financial statement.

_____ COM assigns a liaison. Name _____

_____ Bishop arranges a field placement for the Aspirant.

_____ Supervising Rector/Priest-in-charge completes Field Placement Report and sends to the Bishop's office.

_____ Aspirant completes Field Placement Report and sends to the Bishop's office.

- _____ Aspirant attends second COM/SC overnight with spouse/partner.
- _____ COM recommends postulancy.
- _____ COM recommends Aspirant continue discernment and return at a later date.
- _____ COM recommends Aspirant pursue lay ministries.
- _____ Bishop notifies Aspirant of COM's recommendation and the Bishop's decision.
- _____ Bishop notifies Aspirant's Rector/Priest-in-charge, the COM and the SC of Bishop's decision.

Postulancy

- _____ If in discernment for the priesthood, Postulant submits a financial plan to the Bishop.
- _____ Postulant researches and discusses seminary options with Bishop.
- _____ Postulant attends seminary or Deacon Formation Program.
- _____ Date begun: _____ Date completed: _____
- _____ Postulant submits Ember Day letters to the Bishop.

Candidacy

- _____ Postulant submits request for Candidacy.
- _____ Postulant's Rector/Priest-in-charge submits Certificate of Support.
- _____ Report submitted by Postulant's seminary or from Deacon Formation Program.

- _____ The COM submits a recommendation to SC that Candidacy:
 - _____ be granted.
 - _____ be deferred.
 - _____ be denied.

- _____ The SC submits a recommendation to the Bishop that Candidacy:
 - _____ be granted.
 - _____ be deferred.
 - _____ be denied.

- _____ The Bishop may
 - _____ admit Postulant as a Candidate for ordination.
 - _____ defer the Postulant's request for Candidacy.
 - _____ deny the Postulant's request for Candidacy.
- _____ The Bishop communicates the decision regarding Candidacy to Postulant.

_____ For Candidates in the discernment process for the priesthood, the Bishop registers the Candidate for the GOE.

Ordination to the Diaconate for Vocational Deacons

_____ Documents provided to the Bishop and SC (COM manual, pg. 9)
_____ Medical, psychological and background checks updated.
_____ COM recommendation submitted to SC.
_____ SC recommendation submitted to the Bishop.
_____ Candidate and Rector/Priest-in-charge informed.
_____ Date for ordination set with the Bishop.

Ordination to the Diaconate for those called to the priesthood.

_____ Documents provided to the Bishop and SC (COM manual, pg. 9)
_____ Medical, psychological and background checks updated.
_____ COM recommendation submitted to SC.
_____ SC recommendation submitted to the Bishop.
_____ Candidate and Rector/Priest-in-charge informed.
_____ Date for ordination set with the Bishop.

Ordination to the Priesthood

_____ Documents provided to the Bishop and SC (COM manual, pg.10).
_____ Certificate from COM submitted to SC.
_____ SC certification submitted to the Bishop.
_____ Candidate and Rector/Priest-in-charge informed.
_____ Date for ordination set with the Bishop.

Commission on Ministry Policies and Guidelines

A. Terms of COM Membership

The Commission on Ministry is composed of up to 18 members who are appointed by the Bishop and ratified by Diocesan Convention.

Members will serve a three-year term with the option for the Bishop to appoint a Member to a second term. Three people rotate off and on each year.

Terms end at year end.

It is the norm that, except where the Bishop has cause to make an exception, two (2) years will pass before a person can be reappointed to the Commission. Officers will include a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary, all appointed by the Bishop. The length of Officers' service will be determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Chair.

B. Meeting Dates and Times

The Commission on Ministry meets twice each year for an Overnight meeting with the selected Aspirants, Postulants and Candidates. The exact days and times and locations change each year.

The Commission on Ministry also meets monthly, when necessary, or unless otherwise rescheduled due to the volume of business to be done. Meetings are usually scheduled in concert with the Standing Committee and according to the Bishop's schedule. Scheduled meetings typically occur at the Bishop Henry Center.

C. Attendance

Members are expected to make attendance at meetings an important priority. Guiding a person's discernment requires developing relationships not only with Aspirants but also with other members of the COM. **Attendance is most important at COM/SC overnight meetings.**

D. Voting

When voting during the discernment process, a majority of the combination of negative responses and/or abstentions will be interpreted as a "no". Those voting "no" or abstaining should be prepared to share with the group why they voted as they did.

New members to the Commission can "pass" on a vote if they feel they don't know enough about the Aspirant/Postulant/Candidate.

E. Purpose of Psychological Testing

The psychological evaluation will be scheduled before the Aspirant meets with the Parish Lay Discernment Committee.

The purpose of the psychological evaluation is to provide the Bishop with information that will:

1. help clarify the call the Aspirant is sensing and identify Aspirant's strengths, weaknesses and gifts.
2. identify any psychological and relational patterns that, while not significantly impairing one's interpersonal relationships, need to be addressed for the health and wholeness of one's life and work, i.e., the identification of growing edges.
3. identify any acute psychological distress under which the Aspirant may be operating.
4. identify any enduring personality characteristics which can significantly impair interpersonal relationships. Of particular concern are issues of authority, sexuality, self-esteem/direction and potential for caring for others.

In the event that serious problems are revealed during the psychological evaluation, the Bishop may refer the Aspirant to another health-care professional for further examination or therapy.

Format of testing:

In order to accomplish the purpose of the testing, the components of the examination may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. MMPI, a personality inventory test which is structured and standardized.
2. A Rorschach, a non-structured personality test which presents the individual with stimuli and records the projected information.
3. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.
4. Any other testing components the psychologist, in consultation with the Bishop, select.

Two interviews will be held, totaling around three-and-one-half hours, preferably with a shorter intake interview and a longer post-test evaluation session.

The professional doing the interviews conducts and scores/studies the test and submits a written report to the Bishop following the final interview. Aspirants are responsible for payment and can seek help from their parish if necessary. The Diocese can offer assistance in the case of extreme need.

Appeal process:

It is hoped that questions and concerns of the psychological evaluation can be addressed in the feedback interview. It is expected that, if an Aspirant has a question or controversy with the final report, the Aspirant will first talk with the professional who conducted the interviews and testing. Should this not be resolved to the Aspirant's satisfaction, the Aspirant should address her/his concerns to the Bishop.

F. COM Overnight Meetings

People in the discernment process will not be assigned to rooms with COM/SC members at the COM/SC overnight meetings.

G. Seminarian Assistance

Each Seminarian receives regular financial assistance in a very modest amount from the Bishop twice a year. Other financial assistance should be discussed with the bishop.

H. Discernment Processes During Interim Periods

It is the norm that a Parish does not initiate a discernment process during an Interim Phase in the Parish. Requests for exceptions are to be addressed to the Bishop.

I. Application for Candidacy

Before a Postulant can apply for Candidacy, he/she will have completed one and a half years of Seminary or be at least halfway through the Diaconal Formation Program.

J. Deployment of Seminary Graduates

In early December of a Seminarian's final year, if the Bishop does not know of a specific placement for that person within our Diocese, he or she may be given permission to look at places and to be in communication with the Deployment Officers or Bishops of other Dioceses. However, before one makes a commitment to another Diocese, he or she must be back in touch with the Bishop. Permission to talk to others is only a conditional release, not an absolute or full release. It is done to give the Seminarian an opportunity to be in touch with the greater job market and to become informed of possibilities, but acceptance of another job is not possible without the full release from the Bishop.

During a time of conditional release the Seminarian ought to from time to time be in touch with the Deployment Officer of the Diocese to see what developments might have occurred in Western North Carolina.

When one, with the Bishop's approval, enters into an agreement for placement in a Parish within our Diocese or within another Diocese, and when the Standing Committee and the Bishop have given their consents for the Candidate to be ordained, he or she should contact the Canon to the Ordinary in order to make plans for the Service of Ordination to the Diaconate.

Canons of The Episcopal Church
TITLE III MINISTRY

CANON 2: Of Commissions on Ministry

Sec. 1. In each Diocese there shall be a Commission on Ministry ("Commission") consisting of Priests, Deacons, if any, and Lay Persons. The Canons of each Diocese shall provide for the number of members, terms of office, and manner of selection to the Commission.

Sec. 2. The Commission shall advise and assist the Bishop:

(a) In the implementation of Title III of these Canons.

(b) In the determination of present and future opportunities and needs for the ministry of all baptized persons.

(c) In the design and oversight of the ongoing process for recruitment, discernment, formation for ministry, and assessment of readiness therefore.

Sec. 3. The Commission may adopt rules for its work, subject to the approval of the Bishop; *Provided* that they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of this Church and of the Diocese.

Sec. 4. The Commission may establish committees consisting of members and other persons to report to the Commission or to act on its behalf.

Sec. 5. The Bishop and Commission shall ensure that the members of the Commission and its committees receive ongoing education and training for their work.

The Diocese of Western North Carolina

Canon 19 The Commission on Ministry

SECTION 1.

(a) At each Annual Convention, the Bishop shall nominate and the Annual Convention shall members of the Commission on Ministry, to consist of not less than five nor more than eighteen persons divided among clergy and lay persons, and their term of office shall be six years; provided, however, should there be no nomination and confirmation at an Annual Convention, the incumbent Commissioners shall continue in office until their successors are nominated and confirmed.

(b) At the discretion of the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry may join with like Commissions of other diocese in performing the duties hereinafter prescribed.

SECTION 2.

(a) It shall be the duty of the Commission on Ministry to assist the Bishop: (1) in matters pertaining to the enlistment, selection, examination, education, training, pastoral care, deployment and continuing development of those in process for the ordained ministry: (2) in matters pertaining to the continuing development of the Clergy of the Diocese: and (3) in providing guidance and pastoral care for professional church workers.

(b) Subject to **Canons of General Convention** and of this **Convention**, and subject further to the approval of the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry shall have authority to appoint such committees from and beyond its membership as it may find necessary to act in its behalf.

(c) The Commission on Ministry shall provide for the conduct of those canonical examinations assigned by the **Commission by General Convention Canons: provided that** the Bishop shall always appoint the persons who are to conduct said examinations, **and provided further that** a report of such examination shall be forwarded to the **General Convention's Board for Theological Education.**

(d) In the presence and under the guidance and oversight of the Bishop, the Commission on Ministry shall provide that each Candidate be interviewed before ordination, alike to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood, to ascertain the candidate's personal readiness for such ordination, and shall without delay report in writing the findings of such interview to the Standing Committee of the Diocese.