



Episcopal Diocese
of San Diego

FEARLESS LOVE

DISCERNMENT
&
FORMATION HANDBOOK

The Commission on Ministry
Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO

Discernment and Formation Handbook

Grace to you and peace!

This is the Discernment and Formation Handbook of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, written for those considering the vocation of Deacon or Priest in this diocese. While discernment of God's call to each of us is a lifelong process, the steps that accompany the call to ordained ministry are specific and particular, guided by local custom and the Canons of the Episcopal Church. In addition to a descriptive account of the steps in the process we have included an outline in checklist format that also identifies a broad timetable, specific deadlines, and the inevitable variables and exceptions that may be encountered along the way.

As we listen for the guidance of the Spirit, the discernment of the individual, and the will of the Church, discernment and formation rarely move in a perfectly linear fashion. That said, we hope you will find this Handbook useful as you contemplate God's call, and plan for the months and years ahead.

Discernment and formation are the heart and soul of the ordination process in the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego; these are, and should be, in ongoing dialogue with one another, each shaping and informing the ways in which the other unfolds. **Discernment**, broadly understood, refers to ways in which the inquirer and the Church listen together for the nature and shape of God's call, specifically for the ways in which God is calling the inquirer to use her/his gifts in service of all God's children. The process of discernment involves the inquirer and the Church in a mutual relationship of spiritual reflection. **Formation** refers to the many ways in which the inquirer may be trained and "formed" for this service, including (but not limited to) spiritual reflection and discernment, academic formation, theological field education, and hands-on ministerial skill-building.

Even as these two terms describe the overarching movement of a process, there are four distinct stages that mark an individual's journey toward ordination: inquirer, aspirant, postulant, and candidate. Each is briefly described below.

Inquirer: We use this term to describe the individual in the earliest stages of the discernment and formation process, from early awareness of God's call, through exploratory conversations and meetings, and the beginning of a formal application process. Each of the steps on this part of the journey are described in this handbook in Stage 1: Inquiry and Stage 2: Application to Aspirancy. With each of these steps completed, the inquirer will meet with the Commission on Ministry which will make a recommendation to the Bishop concerning admission to Aspirancy. This part of the process will generally span a year, or more.

Aspirant: An aspirant will continue the process of discernment and formation, completing a second, more comprehensive psychological evaluation, and attending a day-long Discernment Retreat with the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop. Following this retreat the COM will

make a recommendation to the Bishop concerning admission as a postulant; the Bishop has sole authority to act on that recommendation.

Postulant: A postulant continues the process of discernment begun as an aspirant, after a meeting with the Bishop and engagement with the kind of academic and spiritual formation appropriate to their call. Again, the postulant meets with the Commission on Ministry prior to the commission making a recommendation to the Bishop concerning the postulant's admission as a candidate; the Bishop and Standing Committee of the diocese determine admission to candidacy.

Candidate: Candidacy encompasses the final stages of educational and field-based formation, and evaluation of readiness for ordination. As with each previous step, the candidate will receive endorsements from her/his sponsoring priest and Vestry/Bishop's Committee and interview with the Commission on Ministry for its recommendation before receiving final approvals from the Bishop and Standing Committee for ordination.

Commission on Ministry (COM): The Commission on Ministry is one of the councils mandated by the Canons of The Episcopal Church; its mission is to nurture the ministry of all baptized persons, with specific responsibility for shepherding the ordination process of the diocese and making recommendation to the Bishop of those called and prepared to serve God in the Church.

As much as the steps in this process point to a standard sequence and timetable for the unfolding of events, each individual who embarks on this journey will experience it differently according to what they bring to the journey and how they respond to its unfolding. It is sometimes the case that aspects of an inquirer's formation are already underway when the individual begins to hear a call to ordination; this may prompt changes in the sequence and the timetable of the process outlined here. It is one of several important roles of the Commission on Ministry to explore when, and in what way, these changes might make sense, and to recommend a course of action to the Bishop. All final decisions rest with the Bishop, as do all decisions concerning an inquirer's advancement through each subsequent stage in the process.

It is our hope that you will feel free to ask questions about the handbook and checklist by contacting the Chair of the commission at com@edsd.org.

May the Lord bless and keep you always,

The [Commission on Ministry](#) of the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

Stage 1: Inquiry

As with the beginning of any journey where planning, preparation, and packing are essential to launching the trip successfully, the inquiry stage – along with the Application for Aspirancy stage – is designed to ensure that the journey begins purposefully and well. Taken together, these stages are dedicated to discernment of God’s will in calling you to an ordained vocation in the Church and to the pledging of various supports for your journey. Although you may be the one who first perceives the call, discernment of an ordained vocation is not your purview alone; the Church – the people of God – always discern with you.

Initial Discernment

You have likely already spoken to your priest at this point; this is an essential first step as her/his letter of recommendation will be required for you to continue this journey. You will have lived and worshipped in this diocese for at least one year and, ideally, your sponsoring priest will have known you during this time. You will have had one or more conversations with him/her about your perceived call by God to ordained ministry. With your mutual agreement, one of you will contact the coordinator of Listening Hearts ministries in this diocese (currently Susan Ward - susanward961@sbcglobal.net) to request a Listening Hearts conversation where a small group of trained discerners sit with you for a several-hour meeting, to pray, to listen, and to explore with you your call to serve God in God’s Church. Upon completion, you will return to your priest for continued conversation about what you are hearing; together, you may decide the next step is for you, your spouse/partner/significant other, and your priest to attend a Commission on Ministry Day of Information held annually in the early Fall.

Commission on Ministry (COM) Day of Information

You will need to register in advance of this meeting by contacting the Executive Assistant to the Bishop (Keren Mondaca, kmondaca@edsd.org, 619-481-5454). The purpose of this meeting is to introduce you to the journey of discernment and formation, its expectations, and to describe the commitment you and others will be making along the way. After this meeting you should continue the conversation with your priest and, if you are in mutual agreement, move forward with the next steps.

Sponsoring Priest Letter of Recommendation

Your sponsoring priest will next write a letter to the bishop, copying the chair of the Commission on Ministry, recommending you to continued discernment about ordination. His/her letter should reflect some measure of the conversations you have had together to this point in time, including (but not limited to) his/her knowledge of you, your past and current ministries in the Church, and his/her reasons for believing your call to be from God and appropriate for further discernment at this time. This letter should be submitted concurrently with your spiritual autobiography and initial application.

Spiritual Autobiography

All of us traveling this life have a spiritual autobiography to tell and no two people's stories are the same; neither are any of our stories complete yet. You are to write a concise account of your spiritual journey to date, with particular attention to those moments when you felt God

leading/inviting you to the call you are now discerning. This spiritual autobiography should be submitted concurrently with your priest's Letter of Recommendation and should be accompanied by your initial application ([Form 1](#)).

Stage 2: Application for Aspirancy

From your initial inquiry and discernment, you now move with greater intentionality – you “aspire” – motivated by a longing to further explore a call from God. With the submission of your sponsoring priest's Letter of Recommendation and your Spiritual Autobiography and application form, you now enter a very full 8-10 months of engagement with the process, including your Parish Discernment Committee, establishing a connection with a Spiritual Director, the design and completion of a Ministry Project, and the completion of application materials; each of these is detailed in what follows. This is a time that will invite you to deeper discernment, and it will require organization, advanced planning, and diligence from you, with a final completion date of May 31 for this stage. It will be your responsibility to meet this completion date for all materials within your control; issues or concerns about your ability to do so should be discussed with the COM chair as soon as you become aware of them.

Waiver of Information (Form 2) and Background Check

As you begin the application process, first complete two administrative tasks as soon as you are able: the Waiver of Information ([Form 2](#)), and a background check, initiated with the Executive Assistant to the Bishop to whom you will submit all required forms (Keren Mondaca, kmondaca@edsd.org, 619-481-5454). The cost of the background check is \$200 (checks made payable to: EDSD). You are encouraged to discuss the payment of this fee, or cost-sharing, with the sponsoring priest of your parish/mission.

Parish Discernment Committee

Upon receipt of the sponsoring priest's Letter of Recommendation and your Spiritual Autobiography, the bishop will direct the chair of the COM to convene a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC). It cannot be overstated that all discernment of ordained ministry in God's Church occurs in partnership with the Church – the people of God; it is never the individual's call alone. The chair of the Commission on Ministry will ask two Listening Hearts-trained conveners to join with several members of your parish/mission in a series of guided meetings, to pray and to listen with you for the discernment of your call. The participating members of your parish/mission will be identified by your sponsoring priest (with input from you), and should be invited with a focus on their capacity to engage in faithful, objective listening. It is typically not helpful to identify those who are your closest friends and supporters; there is a tendency in their good intentions to anticipate the outcome of this stage of discernment. The purpose of the PDC is to discern with you whatever ministry it may be to which God is calling you, even if that is not what you currently understand your calling to be. Participants in the PDC must approach this discernment with open hearts and minds, not foregone conclusions. The committee will produce a final report of your deliberations and their conclusions and submit that report to the chair of the Commission on Ministry who will, in turn, share the report confidentially with the bishop and the COM members.

Spiritual Director

No later than the convening of the Parish Discernment Committee, you are to begin a confidential relationship with a spiritual director if you have not already done so. This individual should be trained in spiritual direction and is not your sponsoring priest (who serves a distinct and separate role in your discernment). While spiritual direction may, at times, intersect with the exploration of your call to ordained ministry, it is first and foremost about the deepening of your life of faith, regardless of the ministry you exercise.

Initial Psychological Evaluation

Please schedule an initial psychological evaluation with Dr. Marjorie Coburn (858-456-5065) at your earliest mutual convenience (with a deadline of completion not later than mid-May). The initial appointment consists of a one-hour conversation; the psychologist will produce a confidential, written report for the bishop and chair of the COM, providing initial impressions about your pursuit of a vocation to ordained ministry. The Life History Questionnaire ([Form 4](#)) and the Behavioral Screening Questionnaire ([Form 5](#)) should be completed and provided to the psychologist prior to your scheduled meeting. You should also provide a copy of your completed Form 5 to the Executive Assistant to the Bishop (Keren Mondaca, kmondaca@edsd.org, 619-481-5454). The inquirer is responsible for the cost of this evaluation although it may be shared by the sponsoring parish/mission by mutual agreement.

Ministry Project

The Ministry Project provides an opportunity for you to envision and implement a short-term ministry, either in your parish/mission or in the surrounding community. Your project will allow you to:

- Demonstrate the practice of ministry and leadership
- Explore strengths and growth edges in planning and implementing a ministry project
- Facilitate ongoing discernment about ordination

Your Ministry Project should involve the exercise of both Christian faith and leadership; it should include other people in its implementation; and it should be something that you and your congregation have not tried before.

You design this project with the support and approval of your sponsoring priest. You then submit a written proposal to the COM chair for the COM's final approval before implementing the project. When the project is complete you submit a final, written report to the COM, signed by your sponsoring priest along with his/her observations about the process and the project's outcome.

While this project may be envisioned as one step in the development of a larger, long-range ministry, it is to be manageable enough to be completed in three-to-six months, from envisioning to final report. If you have recently completed a comparable project, please provide details to the chair of the COM; although a written report would still be required, the COM and the bishop will determine if the previously-completed project may qualify in lieu of designing a new project.

Additional application materials (completed by May 31)

The following materials should also be submitted; some of them may take time to track down and/or complete and should not be left to the last minute:

- Photocopies of Baptism and Confirmation certificates (or parish records certifying them)
- Official transcripts for all post-secondary education

- Personal Financial Statement – [Form 3](#). The purpose of this form is to assess current expenses relative to the costs of additional study.
- Budget for Formation – [Form 9](#). The purpose of this form is to assess the potential cost of formal study required for ordination.
- Responses to the following essay questions (submitted to the bishop and COM chair)
 - Who is Jesus Christ to you, and what is the good news of Christ that we are called to proclaim by word and example?
 - How do you envision that good news of Christ being shared with others through your ministry as an ordained person? How would that be different from your ministry as a lay person?
 - What is your vision of spiritual leadership for the church and for the world? How have you seen that kind of leadership enacted in your own life and ministry?
 - Describe your spiritual practices, and how you maintain and enrich your relationship with Christ.

Letter of Nomination and Inquirer Acceptance Letter

Your sponsoring priest will present your Nomination to Aspirancy to the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee of your parish/mission in time for their Nomination letter ([Form 8](#)) and your Acceptance Letter to be received by the COM chair on or before May 31. This will mean your sponsoring priest puts your nomination on the agenda of the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee in April, or certainly no later than early May.

Inquirer Interview with COM and Bishop in September

After receipt of all application materials by May 31, and with receipt of a final report of your initial psychological evaluation (if that is still pending), the COM and the Bishop will review all materials. If all is in order, the COM chair will invite you to a formal interview at the Commission’s September meeting (typically scheduled the second Tuesday of the month); this is an opportunity for the COM and the Bishop to reflect with you on all that you and the Church have discerned in your process to date. Following this meeting, the COM will make a recommendation to the Bishop concerning your admission as an Aspirant and you will be notified shortly thereafter of the Bishop’s decision.

Stage 3: Application for Postulancy

The next steps in your journey of discernment and formation include several important conversations: a second, more comprehensive Psychological Evaluation, a meeting with the Bishop, and a full-day retreat with the Commission on Ministry (COM). Because the calendars of some of these individuals are often full, schedule these conversations right away, even if they don’t occur for some weeks or months.

Medical examination

You should schedule a routine physical exam with your physician, including the completion of [Form 6](#); submit this form by December 1.

Psychological evaluation

You should schedule your second, more comprehensive (full day) psychological evaluation as soon as you are accepted as an Aspirant (Dr. Marjorie Coburn, 858-456-5065). This evaluation must be completed by December 1 as some of the evaluative instruments are sent away for scoring. The psychologist will submit a confidential, written report to the bishop and COM chair by mid-February. The cost of this evaluation is shared by the aspirant, the sponsoring parish/mission and the diocese.

Appointment with the Bishop

This appointment provides an opportunity for the bishop to come to know you more fully, and to share in the discernment of your call with you. Make this appointment well in advance so your meeting can occur by mid-February. To make an appointment, contact the Bishop's Executive Assistant (Keren Mondaca, kmondaca@edsd.org, 619-481-5454).

Discernment Retreat with Commission on Ministry

The COM and the Bishop extend an invitation to those Aspirants whose materials are in order to attend an annual Discernment Retreat in mid-February. Prior to the retreat, the COM will have reviewed all the application materials of each Aspirant (except those materials that are confidential, read only by the bishop and the COM chair). This day is spent in quiet, in worship, and in discernment conversations with the members of the COM, the bishop, and others as invited. Following the retreat, the COM will make a recommendation to the bishop concerning each Aspirant's admission to Postulancy; the Bishop's decision will be communicated by the Bishop to each Aspirant shortly thereafter.

Plans for Formation

With admission to Postulancy, the bishop will be in conversation with you in order to solidify and approve a plan of study and formation; this plan will consider your particular life circumstances and formation background, and account for your discerning for the vocational diaconate or the priesthood. Recent examples of particular courses of study have included:

Three-year residential seminary (Master of Divinity degree)

EDSD School for Ministry

Programa del Centro de Estudios Teológicos San Andrés, Diocese of Western Mexico

Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) –

Center for Anglican Learning and Leadership (CALL) online courses

Bloy House, The Episcopal Theological School at Los Angeles

Field Education and Clinical Pastoral Education

All priest and deacon postulants will be required to take two semesters of field education, either at the School for Ministry or at another approved seminary. Field Education involves a placement at a congregation and ministry work under the supervision of the congregation's priest, as well as classroom work, reading, and theological reflection on church leadership and ministry experiences.

Postulants will also be required to meet a community placement requirement. Priest postulants will take a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (which involves a supervised placement in a hospital or other community ministry). In some circumstances, the Bishop and COM may approve a priest postulant meeting this requirement through two summer placements in

community service organizations. Deacon postulants may meet this requirement with a summer placement in a community service organization or with a unit of CPE.

A Word about Postulancy

Even as discernment of God's voice continues, this time as a Postulant focuses on your formation through academic study, your ongoing relationship with a spiritual director, theological field education, and other experiential training. You are canonically required to submit **Ember Letters** to the Bishop four times each year on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after the following days: St. Lucy's Day (Dec. 13), Ash Wednesday, the Day of Pentecost, and Holy Cross Day (Sept. 14). These letters are intended for you to reflect on your academic, spiritual and personal development.

The COM chair will also appoint a member of the commission to be your liaison. You and your liaison share mutual responsibility to check in with each other monthly. This is not a confidential relationship, rather an avenue to ensure good communication between you and the COM, sharing updates, joys, and challenges.

The time you spend as a Postulant may vary as it reflects the pace of your course of study and preparation; typically, the Bishop and COM will invite you to apply for the next step, Candidacy, approximately one year before projected ordination.

Stage 4 – Application for Candidacy (by invitation of the Bishop and COM)

Upon invitation by the Bishop and COM, you submit the Application for Candidacy ([Form 10](#)). Concurrently, the Vestry/Bishop's Committee of your sponsoring parish/mission will submit the Letter of Support for Candidacy ([Form 11](#)).

Upon receipt of these materials the COM will schedule an interview with you, typically during one of its regularly-scheduled, monthly meetings (the second Tuesday of the month). Following this interview, the COM will make a recommendation to the Bishop concerning advancement to candidacy. The Bishop will then request the approval of the Standing Committee of the diocese. You will have an interview with the Standing Committee, typically, on the third Tuesday of the month. Thus, it is likely that these two interviews will take place in back-to-back weeks. The Bishop will then notify you of her/his decision concerning your appointment as a Candidate for ordination.

Stage 5 – Candidacy

Candidacy encompasses continued discernment and formation, including the culmination of your academic program of study and theological field education. The Canons of The Episcopal Church require the completion of four additional areas of study which, if not yet completed, must be completed during this stage of your journey. They are:

- Prevention of sexual misconduct training
- Civil requirements for report and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse
- The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church
- The Church's teaching on racism

[Canon III.6.5(g)]

Candidates for Ordination to the Vocational Diaconate

During Candidacy the Bishop will require you to complete a final project reflective of the deacon's call to represent the needs of the world to the Church; this project may have begun during postulancy and already be nearing completion. You may meet this requirement with a summer placement in a community service organization or with a unit of CPE.

Candidates for Ordination to the Priesthood

As described earlier in the sub-heading Field Education and Clinical Pastoral Education, priest postulants/candidates will take a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (which involves a supervised placement in a hospital or other community ministry). In some circumstances, the Bishop and COM may approve a priest postulant/candidate meeting this requirement through two summer placements in community service organizations.

You will sit for the General Ordination Exams (GOE) in January. This national exam, administered locally on behalf of the General Board of Examining Chaplains of The Episcopal Church, will evaluate your proficiency in six areas of preparation:

- History of the Christian Church
- Christian Theology
- The Holy Scriptures
- Christian Worship
- Christian Ethics and Moral Theology
- The Practice of Ministry

A Note Counseling Patience and Humility

It is common, and understandable, that you may feel a growing sense of excitement and eagerness as you anticipate the fulfillment of the call to ordination which you and the Church have been exploring and anticipating together in this process. It bears remembering that there are still final recommendations and approvals to be received, each of which represent the Church's best efforts to faithfully enact God's will for God's people, the Church. We encourage you to remain patient and humble in the face of God's call to serve.

Stage 6 - Application for Diaconal Ordination (vocational and transitional)

In anticipation of a projected ordination date (to be envisioned by the Bishop), two documents must be completed at least six months prior to that date:

- You complete the Application for Ordination to the Diaconate ([Form 12](#))
- Your Vestry/Bishop's Committee will complete the Letter of Support for Ordination to the Diaconate ([Form 13](#))

It is also your responsibility to be certain that these additional reports have been submitted when complete:

- Certification of course of study completion
- Community organizing supervisor's report, Field placement and/or Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) supervisors' reports

Before any ordination date is set, the COM will interview you and make its recommendation concerning your ordination to the Bishop. The Standing Committee will do the same. The

Bishop will then notify you of her/his decision concerning your ordination to the diaconate; only at this point should you expect the finalization of plans for your ordination.

Stage 7 – Application for Priesthood

Canon III.8.7. (a). (1) states that ordination to Priesthood may take place “...at least six months from ordination as a Deacon...”. As you approach this time, the COM will request your reflection, in writing, on several questions. The focus will be on your understanding and experience of diaconal ministry. Your supervisor(s) will also evaluate that experience in writing. With this material in hand, the Bishop and COM will invite you to submit the following materials:

- You will complete the Deacon’s Application for Ordination to the Priesthood ([Form 14](#))
- Your Vestry/Bishop’s Committee will complete the Letter of Support for Ordination to the Priesthood ([Form 15](#))

Before an ordination date is set, the COM will interview you and make its recommendation concerning your ordination to the Bishop. The Standing Committee will do the same. The Bishop will then notify you of her/his decision concerning your ordination to the priesthood; only at this point should you expect the finalization of plans for your ordination.

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO
Commission on Ministry
Discernment and Formation Process Checklist

Stage 1 Inquiry

- Inquirer initiates meeting with sponsoring priest
- Discernment (initial Listening Hearts session, if available)
- Inquirer completes Registration for COM Day of Information (Due 9/15)
- Inquirer attends COM Day of Information (September/October)
- Inquirer continues to meet with sponsoring priest in vocational discernment
- Sponsoring Priest writes Letter of Recommendation to Bishop
- Inquirer submits Spiritual Autobiography and Initial Application (Form 1) to Bishop at same time as Letter of Recommendation
 - Spiritual Autobiography copies shared with Sponsoring Priest, Vestry/Bishop's Committee, and COM chair

Stage 2 Application for Aspirancy (Approximately 10 months)

- **Inquirer begins application for Aspirancy as soon as Letter of Recommendation/Spiritual Autobiography are submitted:**
 - Complete Form 2 - Waiver of Information
 - Original to diocesan office; copy to psychologist
 - Inquirer authorizes Background Check
- Inquirer engages in spiritual direction
- COM Chair initiates Parish Discernment Committee (PDC)
 - PDC submits written report to Sponsoring Priest, Vestry/Bishop's Committee, COM, and Bishop (Due May 1)
- Inquirer contacts diocesan psychologist for Initial Psychological Evaluation (Evaluation to be completed by no later than mid-May)
 - Complete Form 4 - Life History Questionnaire (take to psychologist)
 - Complete Form 5 - Behavioral Screening Questionnaire (take to psychologist; copy to ESDS)
 - Psychologist submits written report prior to July/August COM meeting (Form 7)
- Initiate Ministry Project with written proposal to COM chair
 - COM approves
 - Inquirer submits completed Ministry project report (Due May 31)

Additional materials required (all materials are due no later than May 31):

- Inquirer submits:
 - Baptism and Confirmation certificates
 - Official transcripts for all post-secondary education

- Form 3 – Personal Financial Statement
- Responses to essay questions submitted to COM chair and Bishop
 - See Handbook for essay questions
- Form 9 – Budget for Formation
- Vestry/Bishop’s Committee Letter of Nomination (Form 8) and Nominee Acceptance Letter
- COM/Bishop interview for Aspirancy: September COM meeting

Stage 3 Application for Postulancy (Approximately 5 months)

- Aspirant completes Form 6 – Medical examination (due December 1)
- Aspirant schedules and completes second Psychological Evaluation (by December 1)
 - Psychologist submits written report prior to February 15
- Aspirant initiates and attends appointment with Bishop prior to February 15
- Aspirant attends COM Discernment Retreat (mid-February)
 - COM makes recommendation concerning postulancy to Bishop
- Bishop determines postulancy by March 1
- Bishop approves formation plans

(Timetable from here depends on ministry formation status)

Stage 4 Application for Candidacy - by invitation of the Bishop and COM (Typically, one year before projected ordination)

- Postulant completes Form 10 – Application for Candidacy
- Vestry/Bishop’s Committee submits Letter of Support for Candidacy – Form 11
- COM interviews Postulant and makes Candidacy recommendation to Bishop
- Standing Committee interviews Postulant for approval to Candidacy

Stage 5 Candidacy

- Candidate continues discernment and formation
- Candidate completes requirements of Canon III.6.5(g) [if not already completed]
 - Prevention of sexual misconduct training
 - Civil requirements for report and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse
 - The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church
 - The Church’s teaching on racism
- Candidate successfully passes General Ordination Exam (priest) OR project (deacon)

Stage 6 Application for Diaconate

- Candidate completes Application for Ordination to the Diaconate – Form 12
 - Due six months before projected ordination date

- Vestry/Bishop's Committee Letter of Support for Ordination to the Diaconate – Form 13
 - Due six months before projected ordination date
- Candidate submits Seminary/School for Ministry certification to COM
- Candidate confirms all reports for community organizing, field education and/or CPE have been submitted to COM
- COM interviews Candidate and makes Diaconate recommendation to Bishop
- Standing Committee interviews Candidate for approval
- Bishop completes Certificate of Bishop
- Bishop sets Ordination Date

Stage 7 Application for Priesthood

- Deacon completes Application for Ordination to the Priesthood – Form 14
 - Vestry/Bishop's Committee submits Letter of Support for Ordination to the Priesthood – Form 15
 - Commission on Ministry interviews Deacon and makes Priesthood recommendation to Bishop
 - Standing Committee interviews Deacon for approval
 - Bishop completes Certificate of Bishop
 - Bishop sets Ordination Date [Canon III.8.7. (a). (1) – “...at least six months from ordination as a Deacon...”]
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