

Checklist of documents required for Ordination Process

*In the Episcopal Church the canons provide two distinct but parallel ordination ‘tracks.’ It is common to understand the first track (Title III Canon 6) to be for individuals who will not be considered for ordination to the Priesthood. This is often called the track for the “Vocational Diaconate.” The other track (Title III Canon 8) is for individuals who, after serving as a Deacon in this Church, **may** be considered for ordination to the Priesthood. This is often called the track for the “Transitional Diaconate.” However, one of the specific purposes of both ‘tracks’ is discernment of individual vocation. Regardless of “personal call”—one’s internal spiritual sense of call to a specific order, the community of the faithful, the Church, ultimately must test and affirm an individual’s vocation. The process of vocational discernment is fluid and may develop or change as an individual engages the steps and requirements of ordination. Therefore, there are no guarantees of ordination to any office regardless of which ‘track’ an individual follows.*

My ‘theology’ of the process is that a person is called to ordained ministry in general, not to a specific ordained ministry. While it may be possible to recognize some charisms of the Diaconate and/or the Priesthood in an individual’s gifts and life before ordination, it always remains to be determined by the exercise of one’s ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit’s guidance through the processes of the Church, how an individual’s vocation will evolve. For these reasons, I resist approaching the process of Ordination as a matter predetermined at the outset: where an individual is said to be “called to the Vocational Diaconate” or “called to the Priesthood.” Nevertheless, the process recognizes and provides a specific track that for those individuals who ‘show’ gifts or charisms that may lead the Church to determine, once serving as a Deacon, he or she should be ordained a Priest. The ‘track’ for the “Transitional Diaconate”, or what I call: “Deacon remaining in Discernment” is specifically for those individuals who should be considered for further discernment for the Priesthood (and then, perhaps, the Episcopate?).

In the Diocese of Alaska, Nomination should be to either: ‘Ordination as a Deacon’ or ‘Ordination as a Deacon remaining in Discernment.’

Nomination:

- _____ 1. Nomination letter and pledge of support by community of faith/congregation.
 - Must be signed by two-thirds of the vestry/church council
 - Must be signed by Rector or Priest-in-charge. If there is not Rector or Priest-in-charge, letter must be signed by a Priest of the Diocese familiar with the nominee and the congregation

- _____ 2. Acceptance letter by Nominee including elements required by Title III. Canon 6. 2(b) *for Deacons* and Title III Canon 8.2 (b) *for Deacons remaining in Discernment*.
 - Full name and date of birth
 - Length of time resident in the Diocese
 - Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation/Reception
 - Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese
 - A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee was identified for ordination
 - Description of the level of education obtained, degrees earned, areas of specialization, copies of transcripts (if applicable)

- _____ 3. Initial review by Commission on Ministry and report on Nominee’s qualifications to pursue program of preparation for ordination.

- _____ 4. Evidence that Postulant is a Confirmed Communicant in Good Standing.

- _____ 5. Personal Consultation with the Bishop.

Postulant:

- _____ 6. Official Admission to Postulancy by the Bishop.

Begin/continue working on education/formation plan and exercising ministry as described in COM program of preparation for ordination.

Each Postulant for ordination shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter (email), four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant’s academic experience and personal and spiritual development, including ministry development. The Postulant will, at the same time, provide the bishop a report from the COM that describes the Postulant’s progress.

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Candidate:

- _____ 7. A Postulant desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination shall apply to the Bishop in writing.
- Application must include date of admission to Postulancy
 - Letter of support by Postulant's congregation signed and dated by a least two-thirds of the vestry/council and by the member of the clergy or other leader exercising oversight
- _____ 8. Recommendation of the COM in writing that sufficient progress is being made on Formation Plan/Educational process.
- _____ 9. Interview with the Standing Committee and receipt of approval in writing.
- _____ 10. Official Letter of Admission to Candidacy from the Bishop.

Each Candidate for ordination shall continue to communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter (email), four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidates academic experience and personal and spiritual development, including ministry development. The Candidate will, at the same time, provide the bishop a report from the COM that describes the Candidate's progress.

- _____ 11. Within thirty-six months prior to Ordination the Candidate will complete a back-ground check, according to criteria approved by the bishop and standing committee.
- _____ 12. Within thirty-six months prior to Ordination the Candidate will provide a medical and psychological evaluation by a professional approved by the bishop.
- _____ 13. Safe Church training.
- _____ 14. Review of Title IV (provided by COM or member of Clergy of sponsor congregation or a member of the Clergy of the Diocese).

Ordination as a Deacon:

- _____ 15. Application, in writing, after at least 18 months from the time of written acceptance of **Nomination**, requesting ordination to specific order.
- _____ 16. Letter of support from Candidate’s congregation or community of faith signed and dated by two-thirds vestry/council and member of clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- _____ 17. Written evidence of admission of Postulancy and Candidacy giving dates.
- _____ 18. Report from COM or Seminary or other program showing progress, competency in the required areas of study.
- _____ 19. Recommendation from the Commission on Ministry.
- _____ 20. Consent of the Standing Committee.

Set a Date for Ordination Service in consultation with the Bishop

For Ordination to the Priesthood

Steps 1-18 must be accomplished. The Academic/Formation requirements are different for individuals preparing for the Priesthood. The COM must approve and monitor formation/educational plan (see Title III Canon 8.5(g)).

All Candidates MUST read carefully the current edition of the “The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church” (available online). Candidates for the Priesthood shall be knowledgeable of the provisions, requirements, and regulations of Title III Canons 8 through 10.

- _____ 21. Served faithfully as a Deacon for at least six months.

Title III Canon 8.7 (e): *“No Deacon shall be ordained to the Priesthood until having been appointed to serve in a Parochial Cure within the jurisdiction of this Church, or as a Missionary under the Ecclesial Authority of a Diocese, or as an officer of a Missionary Society recognized by General Convention, or as a Chaplain of the Armed Services of the United States, or as a Chaplain in a recognized hospital or other welfare institution, or as a Chaplain or instructor in a school, college, or other seminary, or with the opportunity for the exercise of the office of Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop.”*

- _____ 22. Written application from the Deacon requesting ordination as a Priest.
Application must include:
- Dates of admission to Postulancy, Candidacy and ordination as a Deacon
 - Details of appointment to serve in a Parochial Cure or explanation of how the Deacon will exercise the office of Priest as designated in Title III Canon 8.7(e)
- _____ 23. Medical and Psychological evaluations are within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Priest.
- _____ 24. A letter of support from congregation or community of faith, signed by two-thirds of the Vestry/Committee/Council and the member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- _____ 25. A certificate (letter) from the seminary or other program of preparation as approved by the COM and the Bishop, showing academic record and evidence of study in the subjects required by Canon Title III.8.5 (g).
- _____ 26. A certificate from the Commission attesting to the successful completion of the program of formation and study, proficiency in the required areas of study designated in Title III Canon 8.5 (g), understanding of the provisions, requirements and regulations of Title III Canons 8-10 and Title IV, and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood. *N.B In some cases this requirement may be satisfied in the same certificate submitted for Item 23.*
- _____ 27. Consent of the Standing Committee received by the Bishop.

Set a date for Ordination Service with the Bishop