

Ordination in the Diocese of Alaska

*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/Priesthood.” Regardless of an individual’s sense of a “personal 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, and as the Church experiences the exercise of an individual’s ministry. Therefore, there are no guarantees of ordination to any office regardless of which ‘track’ an individual follows.*

*In the Diocese of Alaska, Nomination should be to Holy Orders. All nominees will begin the process identified in Title III Canon 6. Once ordained a Deacon, Canon 8 allows for Priestly ordination after further academic preparation.*

## Checklist for Ordination Process

*Use this checklist to track progress in the Ordination Process*

*Any relevant forms or documents that are available to use are noted. Form and documents are available on the Diocesan Website or by contacting the Diocesan Office.*

*The titles of each stage in the process are printed in **Bold**. The required steps are numbered.*

*Enter the Date completed in each numbered step.*

### **Discernment:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Completion of an intentional process of discernment for ordained ministry within the community/Discernment Team. The COM can offer a process for this work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Written report from the Discernment Committee or Team submitted to the COM.

### **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
  - Contact information including: address, phone number, email address, etc.
  - 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. *Completed when you have received a formal letter of Admission to Postulancy from 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.

There is no set length of time one must serve as a Postulant.

**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.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 1-20 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 the 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**