



Exploring Calls to Ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska Commission on Ministry

Who are the ministers of the Church?

The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.

-Book of Common Prayer, page 855

- Read *Outline of the Faith* (“Catechism”) in Book of Common Prayer, pages 845-862, especially “The Ministry,” pages 855-856
- Contact a clergy person in your congregation, asking to meet with them to discuss exploring your call to ministry. The appropriate person to contact, in order is
 - Rector, where there is one
 - Priest in charge, where there is one
 - Deacon assigned to the congregation, where there is one
 - Bishop or Chair of Committee of Ministry
- What to expect in this conversation
 - A time of prayerful listening and thinking together
 - Discussion of your current ministries
 - Discussion of what calls to ministry you are experiencing
 - Discussion of orders of ministries in The Episcopal Church (lay, deacon, priest, bishop)
 - Discussion of what a discernment process in the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska may look like
 - Expect that the clergy person you speak with will NOT have an immediate response during this meeting, but that they will spend time in prayer and discernment, and will arrange for another meeting to discuss ways to proceed
- Questions to begin thinking about
 - What are the needs of the Church, as you experience it?
 - Where have you found joy in ministry?
 - Where has your congregation encouraged you toward specific kinds of ministry?

- What are realistic expectations for you in terms of time to spend in formation? (Studying, meeting, leading, etc.)
- The clergy person that you talked with should contact you for another meeting within one month. At this meeting, there **MAY BE** a plan made to form a discernment committee.
 - The role of discernment committees is to help individuals determine, define, assist, and clarify their ministries within the church and the world.
 - The time that this part of the discernment process takes varies, but normally takes *at least* six (6) months, and includes at least six meetings.
- If you do not hear back from the clergy person, contact them to find out when they will have a response for you.

Some Suggested Resources for Use During this Time

- [*The Episcopal Way: Church's Teachings for a Changing World Series: Volume 1 \(Church's Teachings for a Changing World\)*](#), by Stephanie Spellers and Eric Law
- [*Living on the Border of the Holy: Renewing the Priesthood of All*](#), William Countryman
- [*Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*](#), by Farnham, Gill, McLean, and Ward
- [*Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church*](#), by Danny E. Morris and Charles M. Olsen
- [*Before Theological Study: A Thoughtful, Engaged, and Generous Approach*](#), edited by Harry O. Maier, Ashley John Moyse, Richard R. Topping