

Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan



Manual for the Ordination Process

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Introduction

Welcome to the process of discernment and preparation for ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. It will be an exciting, long, and sometimes arduous journey, but you will have many people encouraging, supporting, and helping you along the way.

This information is intended to help you visualize the overall process and to answer your questions as you continue through this process.

Anyone entering the ordination process after age 65 in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan will be required to receive affirmation from the Bishop. If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact a member of the COM or the Bishop.

As you go through the process, please keep the following things in mind:

- YOU are responsible for YOUR PROCESS; others will be helping, but **you** must see that the various steps of **your process** are completed.
- There is a large “paper trail” to complete the process, kept in a file for you at the Diocesan Center; we **strongly** recommend that you **keep copies of all materials** that you send to the Diocese in case anything gets lost.
 - Copies of most of the materials generated by others (the Commission on Ministry (COM), the Standing Committee (SC), your Supervising Cleric, the Bishop, etc.) will be sent to you to maintain in your personal file
 - Be aware that the file in the Diocesan Center is your file and you may look at it at any time; contact the Bishop’s Administrative Assistant for access, 877-752-6020
- Discernment of your call will be ongoing throughout the process; be aware that you may be asked to do something not listed in this rather general discussion of the process, or that you may be asked to step out of the process at any time if your call is not validated by others.

There are four parts to the information in this manual:

- The body of the manual that gives detailed information regarding the process to ordination.
- A checklist that outlines the process and what you need to do. *See Appendix A.* This is possibly the part of the manual you will access frequently throughout your process.
- Information about discernment including steps to forming a congregational discernment team and study guides to be used by the discernment team. *See Appendix B.*
- Forms necessary to complete the process. *See Appendix C.*

Acronyms and Definitions

Candidate/Candidacy	Candidacy is the time of education and formation in preparation for ordination. You become a candidate when
Checklist	A summary in list form of the steps toward ordination.
COM	Acronym for Commission on Ministry. The COM advises the Bishop
COM Contact	Your personal contact on the COM. A COM contact will be assigned to you when the Diocese/COM is officially notified of your interest in ordination.
Discernment	Process of reflection that leads a person to understand God's call at a given time or in particular circumstances. Involves listening to God through prayer and meditation, scripture, personal experiences, and other people. See Appendix B for a detailed description of discernment, how to form a congregational discernment committee, and three COM-recommended study guides.
Ember Day Letters	Letters written to the Bishop by Postulants and Candidates four times a year reflecting your academic, personal, and spiritual development. Ember Day dates can be found in the Book of Common Prayer, page 18.
Faith Journey	A description of how and where you have experienced God in and throughout your life.
Nominee	You become a Nominee when you are nominated for ordination by a congregation or faith community AND admitted to the ordination process by the Bishop.

Postulant/Postulancy	Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy in the ordination process. Postulancy involves your continued exploration of and decision about your call to the diaconate or priesthood.
SC	Acronym for Standing Committee. In the ordination process, the SC, after an interview with you, recommends you to the Bishop for Candidacy and Ordination.
Supervising Cleric	Supervises a person in the process towards ordination. Usually the Supervising Cleric is your Rector or the Priest-in-Charge of your congregation.

Informal Discernment

In the Beginning....

You will begin the process toward ordination by meeting with your rector or priest-in-charge to discuss your sense of call. If your congregation does not have a rector or priest-in-charge, contact the Bishop/Bishop's Office.

Items that you and your rector/priest-in-charge or the person appointed to initially discuss this with you include, but are not limited to:

- How and why you were identified (perhaps the person who identified you, if it was someone other than yourself, could be included in this conversation to explain why s/he thinks you are called to ordination).
- What ministries, both within the congregation and outside it, you have been involved with as well as your activities in the Convocation and/or Diocese.
- Your understanding of the role to which you have been called
- A brief discussion of the process leading to ordination, including the financial aspects.

Possible resources for your personal discernment include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979, particularly the ordination service for deacon and/or priest.
- 2) The current *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*.
- 3) *The Ordination Manual for the Diocese of Eastern Michigan*, particularly the checklist.
- 4) *Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts*, Lloyd Edwards.

- 5) *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*, Suzanne G. Farnham, et al, 1991, Morehouse Publishing.
- 6) *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* by William C. Placer.
- 7) *Spiritual Wholeness for Clergy*, Hands, Donald R. & Fehr, Wayne L., 1993, Alban Institute
- 8) *Let Your Life Speak*, Palmer, Parker J, 2000, Jossey-Bass
- 9) *Do I Belong in Seminary?* Parker, Ronald E, 1998, Alban Institute
- 10) *Being a Deacon Today*, Rosalind Brown, 2005, Morehouse Publishing.
- 11) *On Being a Priest Today*, Rosalind Brown and Christopher Cocksworth, 2002, Cowley Publications.
- 12) *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons*, Plater, Ormonde, 1991, revised 2004, Cowley
- 13) *Servanthood*, Sims, Bennett J, 1997, Cowley
- 14) *The Biblical Journey of Faith*, Van Develder, Frank R, 1988, Fortress Press
Calling: A Song for the Baptized, Westerhoff, Caroline A, 1994, Cowley

Once you have decided to pursue ordination, your rector/priest-in-charge/other person appointed by the Bishop becomes your Supervising Cleric.

You and Your Supervising Cleric

As stated above, your Supervising Cleric will usually be the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of your congregation. Where there is Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the congregation is in transition, etc., the Dean of the Convocation in which your congregation is located may supervise your process, or in consultation with you and with the approval of the Bishop may appoint a priest to be your Supervising Cleric during your process.

Normally the Supervising Cleric will remain the same during your process and will provide a pastoral presence to you throughout. (The Supervising Cleric will NOT be your Spiritual Director.)

The Supervising Cleric will:

- Do the initial discussion and discernment with you when you sense a call to ordained ministry.
- Notify the COM of your desire to pursue ordination. (Supervising Cleric: it is suggested that you notify the Bishop's Administrative Assistant who will notify the Chair of the COM.)
- Help you identify possible members for a congregational discernment team, may invite them to participate in the discernment team, and may help set up and attend the first meeting only of said discernment team.
- Help you with your *Faith Journey*, and review it with you before it is sent to the COM.
- Inform and advise the vestry of your progress in your process throughout the journey towards ordination

- Request [and sign] a prompt letter of support (or non-support) to be sent to you and the Bishop from your vestry for the Nomination, and advancement to Candidacy, the Diaconate, and Priesthood if indicated as directed by the canons
- Receive notification from the Bishop of your change in status (Nominee, Postulant, Candidate, etc), and inform the vestry. Meet with you as needed to discuss the process, questions, or concerns that arise during your journey to ordination.
- Keep the congregation informed on the your progress in the process, and encourage involvement of both congregation and vestry members in supporting your throughout the process. For example, he/she may suggest you be in contact with your sponsoring congregation by providing newsletter articles, letters to vestry, etc.
- Receive the quarterly Ember Day letters
- May be consulted by the Bishop regarding your assignment as Deacon.

The Supervising Cleric will NOT:

- Be responsible for your process or keep after you to submit the various requests/letters/forms etc that are a part of the process
- Be your Spiritual Director.

Your Supervising Cleric will notify the COM of your desire to seek ordination.

Appointment of a COM Contact

When the Diocese/COM are notified that you are pursuing ordination, a COM Contact will be appointed for you.

The COM Contact will:

- Be available to you and your Supervising Cleric throughout the process to answer questions clarifying the process for ordination
- Stay in contact with you and report to the COM on your progress
- Present the recommended discernment study guides to you and your Supervising Cleric.
- Be part of the COM interview for Postulancy.
- May organize and be a part of a meeting with the COM for evaluation and certification of readiness for ordination

The COM Contact will NOT:

- Be in any way responsible for your process or keep after you to submit the various requests/letters/forms etc that are a part of the process
- Be a mentor or Spiritual Director

Formal Discernment

Discernment is a process of reflection that leads a person to understand God's call at a given time or in particular circumstances. Discernment involves listening to God through prayer and meditation, scripture, personal experiences, and other people.

Your COM Contact will set up a meeting with you and your Supervising Cleric to discuss congregational discernment and the three recommended discernment resources. (See Appendix B)

Your Supervising Cleric will help you form a Discernment Team made up of people from your congregation and others as seems appropriate.

Formation of a Congregational Discernment Team

The purpose of discernment team is to help you hear more clearly God's call to you and how this call has been and is currently played out in your life. You will meet with this team three to six months or possibly longer if needed. This time of discernment must not be hurried! A recommended size for a discernment team is three to six persons. You will want to select people who are open to God's movement in their lives, people who know you, people who will challenge you. Most of the people on your discernment team will be from your own congregation but you may also want to consider people from another Episcopal Church and possibly from another denomination!

Once you begin meeting with your discernment team and share your sense of call, it is time to begin writing your faith journey if you haven't already done so.

Writing Your Faith Journey

A Faith Journey is told with the purpose of discerning and proclaiming how your life experiences have shaped your relationship with God. Your call, discernment, vocation, and ministry are embedded in your faith journey.

As you begin work on your Faith Journey, be assured that there are no right or wrong answers. You are giving your discernment team and the COM a tool to help them work with you on your discernment. The more honest you are about your feelings and perceptions, the more likely your discernment is going to help you find where God is calling you.

A Faith Journey is not a biography. ***What the COM really wants to hear is where and how you have experienced God in and throughout your life.***

Below are some questions to consider as you write. Choose any or all that you feel apply to your faith story. Answer them as a part of your greater narrative, however, not one at a time.

- As you consider the most significant events of your life, in which ones were you most aware of God's presence
- Is there a "spiritual thread" or image that runs through your life?
- What Biblical story or character do you most closely identify with?
- When has your relationship with God most changed and what have you learned about God and about yourself in these times?
- When have you felt God has been absent in your life?
- How have you experienced that absence and what did you do?
- What do you mean when you say God?
- How has your devotional/prayer life changed and developed over time?
- How do you talk to God and how does God talk to you?
- How do you know it is God talking to you and not something or someone else?
- How have you revealed your relationship with God or shared it with others?

Your Faith Journey should be approximately 3-5 pages, using 12-14 point type and appropriate margins. Your Supervising Cleric and your Discernment Team are available to help you with your Faith Journey. It is not uncommon to have done several revisions before you are ready to send it to the COM!

Personal Information Sheet and Transcripts

One of the many forms for the ordination process is a Personal Information Sheet. See Appendix C: Process Forms. If you've not completed this form, now is the time to do so. You will also need to assemble educational transcripts and records. If you do not have a Bachelor's degree, you will be contacted by the COM for some form of an educational equivalency assessment.

Discernment Team Report

When your discernment committee has completed its work – you have reached the clarity you were seeking – the discernment team reports its findings to the supervising cleric and the vestry.

This "report" is a letter stating a description of the process used during the discernment, who was on the team and their relationship to you, and the outcome of your time together. The discernment team will (1) determine that

you are called to ordination and recommend that you formally enter the process, or (2) determine that more time or a different process is needed, or (3) determine that you are not called to ordained ministry.

If the discernment team determines that you are not called to ordination, you will meet with your supervising cleric and possibly the COM to consider future steps. If the discernment team determines that you are called to ordained ministry, a copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Diocesan COM to be kept in your file.

The Nomination

If your supervising cleric and your sponsoring vestry agree to nominate you for holy orders, they complete the *Nomination for Ordination* form (see Appendix C: Process Forms) and send it along with the discernment team's report to the Bishop and to you.

You reply to the vestry with a letter accepting the nomination and send a copy of that acceptance to the Bishop.

You will become a Nominee when the Bishop receives a copy of the acceptance you sent to the vestry. You will receive a letter from the Bishop attesting to your status as a Nominee for Holy Orders.

As a Nominee ...

While your theological education may begin at any time, the expectation is that your formation will have begun or plans for doing so will be in place at this time.

Once you have received notification that you are a nominee for holy orders, email your *revised* Faith Journey, personal information form, and educational transcripts to the COM in care of the Diocesan Center.

Your Faith Journey will be sent to the members of the COM and discussed at the next regularly scheduled COM meeting and you will be invited for a Postulancy interview.

If, when the COM discusses your nomination, additional discernment is warranted, you will be notified and asked to meet with your COM Contact, other COM representatives, and your supervising cleric to design a supplemental discernment plan. After you implement and complete that supplemental plan you will need to write a 2-3 page review/reflection of the work you did.

Medical Check-up

A full medical check-up of all nominees is required by national canon. The form to be completed for this medical exam is available from the Diocesan Office (it does not transfer well electronically); please call the Bishop's Administrative Assistant (877-752-6020) to acquire this form. The completed form will be kept in your file at the Diocesan Center. At a reasonable time after the check-up contact the Bishop's Administrative Assistant to be sure the form has been sent to the Diocese; if it has not arrived, **you** are responsible for following up with the doctor who performed the exam.

Background Check

A background check will be instituted once you are accepted as a Nominee; the Diocesan Administrator will send you a release-of-information form to sign and return to the Diocese. This should be done promptly because the check takes some time and the ordination process will be held up if the background check is not complete. The Diocese will have the background check conducted and will pay for it. You will be informed when the background check has been completed and the results have been placed in your file.

Postulancy Interview with COM

After you have had a medical check-up and begun the required background check, you will meet with the COM for a Postulancy interview at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

Members of the COM will ask questions primarily formulated from your Faith Journey, the discernment report, and educational progress reports that may be available. The COM will send a report from the interview to the Bishop.

Meeting with the Bishop

Following the postulancy interview, see or call the Bishop's Administrative Assistant to schedule a meeting with the Bishop.

Psychological Evaluation

If the COM has recommended Postulancy and the Bishop concurs, you will be asked to have a psychological evaluation. Contact the Bishop's Administrative Assistant for information about how and where this evaluation is to be done. The Diocese will pay for the psychological evaluation.

The Bishop may request another meeting with you once he receives the report from the psychologist.

Postulancy Conferred

When all these evaluations have been completed the Bishop may or may not award postulancy. You will receive a letter attesting to your status as a postulant. If you are not to be made a postulant you will also be notified.

As a POSTULANT ...

Engagement of a Spiritual Director

If you do not already have a spiritual director, once you are accepted as a Postulant you will need to engage one. A spiritual director is a person who has a gift for, and training in helping others grow spiritually and in their relationship with God. You may acquire a list of local and recommended Spiritual Directors from the Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry.

Your spiritual director meets regularly with you to listen to and share your spiritual journey. S/he helps you discern how God is working in your life and where God may be calling you. The relationship between you and your director is respected as a privileged one.

Your Spiritual Director should not be your rector/priest-in-charge, your Supervising Cleric or a close friend. Direction should be an ongoing gift you give yourself...through the ordination process and continuing on through your ordained life.

Writing Ember Day Letters

Once you have been accepted as a Postulant, you must send – until final ordination – an Ember Day letter to the Bishop stating your academic, personal, and spiritual status and outlining any important changes in these areas since the preceding letter. Ember Days occur four times a year: the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays after

- The First Sunday in Lent,
- The Day of Pentecost,
- Holy Cross Day (September 14), and
- December 13.

The Bishop prefers that these letters be sent by e-mail, and, if possible without leaving out anything critical, be kept to one page.

Ember Day Letters are also to be sent to the Supervising Cleric; these letters may be the same as the ones sent to the Bishop or may include different or additional information as directed by your Supervising Cleric and your own preferences.

Theological Formation

While the formal education/formation process can begin earlier, at Postulancy you are expected to have begun your theological formation/education.

If you are called to the diaconate, the Diocese of Eastern Michigan's recommended formation is through the Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry.

If you are called to the priesthood, you may, with the Bishop's input/recommendation, attend any of the Episcopal seminaries or the Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry.

Required Training

Anti-Racism
Safeguarding God's Children; Safe Church

Contact the Diocesan Administrator for information about this training. Prior to ordination you must provide proof of completion.

Funding for Theological Education

The Diocese of Eastern Michigan has a limited number of funds that generate income available for various purposes including the education of prospective and ordained clergy. These funds are administered by the bishop; any clergy or lay person may make application for available funds by completing the Application for Restricted Funds (see Appendix C: Process Forms). Application may be made at any time during the year. If requests outnumber the available funds, partial, no, or delayed funding may be offered. Additional information, including documentation of personal income, may be requested for certain funds with income restrictions.

When requesting funds please be conscious of the following guidelines for specific funds:

<u>Expense type</u>	<u>Guideline for financial assistance</u>
Background checks for Nominee	Covered 100% by McElroy
Psychological exam for Nominee	Covered 100% by McElroy
Seminary Expenses	\$5,000 scholarship per person/semester by McElroy
Coppage-Gordon Grant	One-third of annual tuition by McElroy

Seminarians must apply for the scholarship by completing the “Diocese of Eastern Michigan Application for Restricted Funds”, to be received no later than August 1st and December 1st each year.

Canonically resident clergy pursuing graduate studies in theology also may apply for the above level of funding under the restricted Kleinpell Fund. Approval for graduate study funding will be on an individual case basis. To determine eligibility for funding, the Bishop will consider past and future service of the cleric to the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

If you have any questions about these funds or the application procedure, please call the Diocesan Administrator, at 1-877-752-6020.

Steps towards Candidacy

When you are half way through your formal formation/education, including field work and CPE, you may apply for candidacy. Complete an *Application for Candidacy* form (see Appendix C: Process Forms). A report from your theological school is required at this point; your COM contact will attest to the Standing Committee (SC) about the progress you are making or have made in your formal education.

Request support of your Vestry and Supervising Cleric with the *Certification for Candidacy* form (see Appendix C: Process Forms). Copies of both these forms should be sent to the Bishop and to your COM Contact. Your COM Contact will see that a letter is sent from the COM to the Standing Committee indicating your progress in your educational program, how that is continuing, and the need for an interview. You will be sent a copy of that communication.

Interview with SC

The SC will review the letter from the COM and will check that the documentation in your file is up-to-date. The SC will then conduct your Candidacy interview during its next regularly scheduled meeting. After your interview the SC will send a communication to the Bishop supporting your request for Candidacy.

Candidacy Conferred

The Bishop will confer candidacy and record in the register. You will receive a letter from the Bishop attesting to your status as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

As a Candidate...

Readiness for Ordination

Once you have completed your formal education, request that a report from your theological institution be sent to the COM. This evaluation will show your scholarship record in the subjects required by the Canons and your overall readiness for ordination. You also need to be sure you have evidence of having completed anti-racism/diversity training and the Safe-Guarding God's Children and Safe Church modules.

You will then complete the *Application for Ordination to the Diaconate* form and request that your Vestry and Supervising Cleric complete the *Certification for Ordination to the Diaconate* forms. Both forms should be sent to the COM and to the Bishop. The COM will also send a copy of its certification to the SC.

The COM determines that you are ready for ordination and notifies the SC by sending a copy of its completed/signed *Certification for Ordination to the Diaconate*. (You may be asked to meet with the COM again at this time.)

The SC then certifies that you have met the requirements for ordination and completes the *Testimonial for Ordination to the Diaconate* form (see Appendix C: Process Forms).

At the time of ordination you must be at least 24 years of age and, if you expect to be a Deacon, at least 18 months from the written acceptance of Nomination.

If the medical, psychological, or background checks were performed more than 36 months prior to ordination they will need to be updated.

When the Standing Committee receives the certification(s) of readiness for ordination, they shall certify that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met; that there are no objections on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds; and they recommend ordination. (Members of the Standing Committee may have access to your file as needed for this certification.)

A majority of all members of the Standing Committee must sign the form indicating consent to ordination. ([Testimonial for Ordination to Diaconate](#))

Ordination to the Diaconate

The Bishop, you, and your Supervising Cleric will consult to schedule a date for ordination.

The Bishop will consult with you regarding your diaconal assignment. On occasion there are “Diocesan” ordinations of more than one person held at a specifically chosen location.

As a TRANSITIONAL Deacon...

Readiness for Ordination to the Priesthood

You must have spent at least six months as a Transitional Deacon and it must have been at least 18 months since your nomination for holy orders.

Complete the *Application for Ordination to the Priesthood* and have the vestry at the church where you’ve been serving as a Deacon complete the *Certification for Ordination to the Priesthood*. Send both forms to the Bishop.

If it has been more than 36 months since your medical, psychological, and background checks were performed, you will need to update them.

NOTE: If you are ordained Transitional Deacon after seminary, oversight for this last phase of formation will be done by the priest or other cleric in charge of the congregation or organization into which you have been called to serve.

If you are ordained a Transitional Deacon while still in seminary, the existing relationships with your sponsoring parish and supervising cleric still apply; in addition the Bishop and the seminary will create a plan for your supervision as a Transitional Deacon at the seminary.

If it has not already been requested/received, the Bishop’s office will request a certificate verifying that your educational program has been completed. and competency is demonstrated in the subjects required by Canon. This certification will also include a recommendation for your ordination to the priesthood. Copies of this certificate will go to the Bishop and the COM.

The COM will send to the Bishop and Standing Committee a letter attesting to your successful completion of the program of formation, your proficiency in the required areas of study, and a recommendation for ordination.

When the Standing Committee receives the certificates of readiness for ordination, they shall certify that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met, that there are no objections on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, and that they recommend ordination.

Members of the Standing Committee may have access to the Candidate's file as needed for this certification.

A majority of all members of the Standing Committee must sign the *Testimonial for Ordination to Priesthood* form indicating consent to ordination.

Call to Serve in a Congregation

You may not be ordained to the Priesthood until you have received a call to serve in a parish, a missionary society, the armed services, an educational facility, or some other opportunity judged appropriate by the Bishop.

Once you have a call to serve as priest, you and the Bishop will consult to schedule a date for ordination.

Ordination to the Priesthood

You and the Bishop choose a date and place for your ordination. If you have been serving in a congregation as Deacon your priesthood ordination may be there. On occasion there are "Diocesan" ordinations of more than one person held at a specifically chosen location.

Appendix A: Checklist for Those Seeking Ordination

CHECKLIST FOR THOSE SEEKING HOLY ORDERS

This is only a “checklist;” additional details for the various steps are provided in the manual itself

and

- _____ 1. Meet with your rector or priest-in-charge to discuss your sense of call. He/she will also give you a copy of the Diocesan Ordination Manual go through it with you. If your congregation does not have a rector/priest-in-charge, contact the Bishop/Bishop’s Office.
- _____ 2. Once you decide to seek holy orders, your rector/priest-in-charge will become your Supervising Cleric, notify the Commission on Ministry (COM) via the Diocese, and with your help and that of the COM, form a Congregational Discernment Committee.
- _____ 3. Meet with your Congregational Discernment Committee for 3-6 months. (See Discernment Section of the Diocesan Ordination Manual.)
Begin writing your *Faith Journey*.
- _____ 4. Fill out your Personal Information Sheet, and assemble educational transcripts.
- _____ 5. Continue working on your Faith Journey.
 - ___ a. Discuss with Discernment Committee,
 - ___ b. Go over it with your Supervising Cleric,
 - ___ c. Revise your Faith Journey based on what you have learned from your discernment and discussions with your Supervising Cleric.
- _____ 6. Discernment Committee and Supervising Cleric complete their respective reports and submit them to the Vestry.
- _____ 7. If the Vestry and Supervising Cleric agree to nominate you for holy orders, they complete the Nomination for Ordination Form and email it to the Bishop, along with the discernment reports, and to you. If the answer is no, the Supervising Cleric will meet with you to discuss next steps.
- _____ 8. You reply to the vestry with a letter accepting the nomination and send a copy of that acceptance letter to the Bishop.
- _____ 9. You will become a Nominee when the Bishop receives a copy of the acceptance you sent to the Vestry. You will receive a letter from the Bishop attesting to you status as a Nominee for Holy Orders.

NOMINEE

- _____ 10. Email your revised Faith Journey to the COM at the Diocesan Center.
- _____ 11. Complete and send your Personal Information Sheet with copies of official education transcripts to the COM at the Diocese.
- _____ 12. After reading your Faith Journey, the COM will meet, assign you a COM Contact, and determine what additional discernment, if any, be appropriate.

may

- ___ a. If additional discernment is needed, meet with your COM contact, other COM representatives, and your Supervising Cleric to design a supplemental discernment plan.
 - ___ b. Implement your discernment plan.
 - ___ c. Write a 2-3 page review/reflection of the work you did in your discernment plan and send it to your Supervising Cleric, your COM contact, and your Vestry.
- ___ 13. Have a medical check-up and begin the background check process.
 - ___ 14. Meet with COM during a regularly scheduled COM meeting for a Postulancy interview. COM sends report to the Bishop.
 - ___ 15. When all previous steps are completed, meet with Bishop.
 - ___ 16. Have a psychological evaluation. The Bishop may ask to meet with you again after this evaluation.
 - ___ 17. Bishop awards postulancy and records event in register. You will receive a letter from the Bishop attesting to your status as a Postulant for Holy Orders.

While your theological education may begin any time, the expectation is that your formation will have begun or plans for doing so will be in place at this point time in the process.

POSTULANT

- ___ 18. Begin your formal formation (education) if you haven't already done so.
- ___ 19. Begin Spiritual Direction (if you haven't already done so) and begin writing/sending Ember Day letters to Bishop and Supervising Cleric. (Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday after First Sunday in Lent, the Day of Pentecost, Holy Cross Day, and December 13. Maintain contact with your COM Contact. This will continue until ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood.
- ___ 20. No earlier than half-way through your formal education including field work, fill out your Application for Candidacy and request the completed Certification for Candidacy from vestry and Supervising Cleric—both to be sent to the Bishop and your COM contact.
- ___ 21. COM writes letter to Standing Committee attesting to your continuing education.
- ___ 22. Standing Committee reviews your documentation, interviews you during at one of its regularly scheduled meetings, and writes a letter to the Bishop supporting your Candidacy.
- ___ 23. Bishop confers Candidacy and records event in register. You will receive a letter from the Bishop attesting to your status as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

CANDIDATE

- _____ 24. Complete your formal formation and request that a report of your readiness be sent to the COM by your theological institution.
- _____ 25. Provide evidence of completion of anti-racism/diversity training and sexual abuse prevention training to the Diocese.
- _____ 26. Complete the Application for Ordination to the Diaconate form and request the vestry and Supervising Cleric to complete the Certificate for Ordination to the Diaconate—both to be sent to the Bishop and COM contact.
- _____ 27. COM certifies that you are ready for ordination. (You may be asked to meet with COM again at this time.)
- _____ 28. The Standing Committee then certifies that the canonical requirements have been met (Certification for Ordination to the Diaconate).
- _____ 29. Bishop schedules ordination to diaconate.

In the case of those seeking ordination to the diaconate, step 29 is the final step. The following is for those who are transitional deacons and are seeking ordination to the priesthood.

TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE

- _____ 30. Fill out your Application for Ordination to the Priesthood and send to the Bishop's office.
- _____ 31. Request Certification for Ordination to the Priesthood from vestry and "Priest in Charge" of congregation to which you have been called, to be sent to the Bishop's office.
- _____ 32. The Bishop's Office acquires a certificate from the seminary or other training source.
- _____ 33. COM provides letter attesting to successful completion of formation and proficiency in required areas of study and recommending ordination to the priesthood.
- _____ 34. Standing Committee certifies to the Bishop that all canonical requirements have been met (Testimonial for Ordination to the Priesthood).
- _____ 35. You have a call from a congregation or other organization acceptable to the Bishop.
- _____ 35. Bishop will schedule ordination to priesthood not sooner than 6 months after ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.

Appendix B: Discernment

(Forming a Congregational Discernment Team and
Three Recommended Discernment Study Guides)

Part One: Discernment

The People of God, infused with the Holy spirit and assisted by resources and training provided by the Bishop and Commission on Ministry, seek persons whose demonstrated qualities of Christian commitment and potential for leadership and vision mark them as desirable candidates for positions of ordained leadership in the Church. Such persons must be confirmed adult communicants in good standing (TEC Canons III.3.1).

Discernment is a process of reflection that leads a person to understand God's call at a given time or in particular circumstances. Discernment involves listening to God through prayer and meditation, scripture, personal experiences, and other people.

Initial Discernment

A person interested in entering into the discernment process for ordained ministry, first meets with the rector or priest-in-charge of his or her congregation for advice and guidance. Where there is no Rector or Priest-in-charge, the congregation is in transition, etc., the Dean of the Convocation in which your congregation is located will supervise your process, or (in consultation with you and with the approval of the Bishop) will appoint a priest to be your Supervising Cleric during your process.

Items that you and your Supervising Cleric may discuss include, but are not limited to:

- How and why you were identified (perhaps the person who identified you, if it was someone other than yourself, could be included in this conversation to explain why s/he thinks you are called to ordination).
- What ministries, both within the congregation and outside it, you have been involved with as well as your activities in the Convocation and/or Diocese.
- Your understanding of the role to which you have been called
- A brief discussion of the process leading to ordination, including the financial aspects.
- Writing a Faith Journey.

Formation of a Congregational Discernment Team

After you have met with your rector/priest-in-charge and discussed your sense of call to ordained ministry you and your supervising cleric will form a Congregational Discernment Team (Step 2 of the Checklist).

Purpose of a Discernment Team:

- To help the discerner hear more clearly God's call and how this call is played out in the discerner's spiritual journey.
- To be a sounding board for the thoughts and questions being raised.
- To know the person, his/her background, his/her present ministry, his/her understanding of a call and where he/she feels led by this call.
- To help the discerner identify whether or not their call is to ordained or lay ministry and to help them verbalize this call.

Note: The congregational discernment team is NOT a support group or an advocacy group lobbying for the discerner. The team is rather a group interested not only in the discerner but in the life and ministry of the Episcopal Church.

Size and Composition of a Discernment Team:

A recommended size for a discernment team is three to six persons. The discerner suggests some people and the clergy person suggests some. All persons suggested must be acceptable to both the discerner and the supervising cleric. The team should reflect the diversity of the congregation and its ministries. They can have varying degrees of relationship with the discerner. People do not have to have had prior experience with discernment.

It is wise to think of the following as you and the clergy person build the team:
You may want to include:

- Someone from outside the congregation, another denomination or faith.
- Someone from another Episcopal Church.
- Some people who know you.
- Someone who represents the interest of the congregation (Vestry person, etc.).
- People who will challenge you.
- People of integrity – can keep confidentiality.
- A clergy person on the team might be helpful – example, a pastor from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) or the United Methodist Church (UMC).–The clergy person from your congregation doesn't have to be on the team.
- People open to God's movement in their lives.
- People who have the gifts of frankness and courage.

- People who have the welfare of the larger Church always in mind.
- Persons of prayer, humility, confidentiality, and openness to the working of the Holy Spirit within the Church.
- Someone who may have experience in the type of ministry to which you are feeling called.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important issue to consider. It will be necessary to keep this in mind when you are choosing team members. The team will need to have a conversation about confidentiality and make a covenant with one another about keeping the content of the discernment sessions confidential. Why?

Discernment is very personal. The topics discussed can and even should be very sensitive. The team needs to balance sensitivity with inquiry. It is unfair to accept a conversation at a level that does not ask the group and the discerner to struggle. This struggle with and the expression of the deep sense of personal relationship with God and others is central to the practice of creative ministry.

Discernment Team Sessions

Orientation

The first session (2-3 hours) is for introductions and orientation. Team members will introduce themselves and the overall ordination process, including discernment, will be presented. The team is expected to invite a member of the diocesan COM to help with this. The supervising cleric should also be part of this initial meeting. This is a time to get process questions answered and agree on session format. For this first meeting of the discernment team, everyone will need the following materials:

- Diocese of Eastern Michigan Ordination Manual
- A copy of pertinent canons
- A copy of the particular discernment program/plan/guide the group will be using. The discerner and supervising cleric will decide on which discernment process, offered by the COM, best suits the discerner's situation. They may choose to include some or all of the committee in making this decision. The COM of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan recommends one of the following. There is additional information on these three programs later in this appendix.
 1. A study guide using *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* by Suzanne Farnam et al)
 2. A study guide written by Elaine Nocks based on *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* by William C. Placer. This study guide was developed in cooperation with the Fund for Theological Education. The study guide is available online at www.ptev.org/images/uploads/news/Callings%20Study%20Guide.pdf.

Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation is available on Amazon.

3. A discernment process used by other dioceses in Province V (Chicago, Minnesota, and Iowa)

Understanding discernment

It is important that the team understand what discernment is and what type of discernment process the team will use. Some time will need to be spent in dialogue about the general topic of discernment in order to make sure all members are familiar with what is expected and what will happen.

Working as a team

The team will need to spend some time on deciding how to function together as a team. What are the roles that will be helpful to the process with this group of people? Having this discussion at the beginning helps keep the focus of the team on the work to be done rather than on group dynamics that can arise and interfere with the process. There are various roles described below. The team will decide which are important to use.

Possible Roles in a Discernment Team

In the orientation session, the team will also need to discuss and decide upon the structure of the team and how it will operate together. It may be advisable to have defined roles. The roles could rotate through the team or remain with one person for the duration. The team will decide if it needs all of the following roles or just some of them. At the very least, it would be advisable to have a facilitator. The team may be willing to share all the rest of the responsibilities during each of the sessions.

Convener

- Notify people of the sessions.
- Make sure the meeting place is reserved.
- Assign roles for each gathering.

Facilitator

- Keep the session on track and schedule.
- Make sure everyone who wants to speak has the opportunity to speak.
- Observe the tone and spirit of the gathering.
- Know if and when to take a break.

Worship Leader

- Select prayers/devotional material for the session.
- Lead prayers for the session.
- Lead Bible study

Recorder

- If the team decides it needs notes, take the official notes of the session.

- Prepare the report to the clergy and Vestry with agreement from the team.

Process Observer

- Is aware of positive and negative dynamics in the group.
- Calls a break to discuss group dynamics, if necessary.
- Observes the behaviors in the group and suggests changes if necessary.

Setting meeting times and dates

With the exception of the first orientation session each discernment session will be 1½ to 2 hours in length. A discernment process can take from 3 to 6 months.

There is no minimum or maximum time for a discernment process. The team and discerner follow the direction of the Holy Spirit in deciding when discernment is complete. However, if the COM thinks that the process has been rushed they may ask the individual to repeat it or take other additional steps.

This length, of course, may vary depending on the individual and the team. In smaller congregations, people may know each other well enough that some of the discernment has already happened through interactions in daily life. In larger congregations, the team will likely not know each other well enough and the length of time may be longer. It is important that the team decide when the discernment is finished. A consensus will generally emerge and the group will sense when it is finished.

A Suggested Session Outline

1. Gather and check in with each other. This is a brief updating, couple of minutes per person, so that the group knows what is going on with each person.
2. Prayer, meditation, Bible study. The person assigned for this role may decide how the group will pray together.
 - Prayers for self and others.
 - Meditation on scripture or devotional reading and/or
 - Brief Bible study such as the “African” bible study

The use of Scripture has long been a traditional way of helping us to become aware of God’s action and will. Various methods have been used. Be present and open to the scene and to that person’s experience, being sensitive to the insights and movements given by the Holy Spirit. How do these insights increase your awareness of the meaning and role of the Church, the ordained ministry, and prayer and ministry as Christians? How does all this relate to the vision and call of this individual to ministry?
3. Focus for the study session
4. Reflection on the session

5. Closing prayers
6. Reminder about the next session

Asking Reflective Questions, Listening, and Observing

Reflective questions provide the opening for deeper conversation. (List some examples of reflective questions) Asking reflective questions is a technique that the team can develop. This type of reflective dialogue also requires listening in a way to draw conclusions from examples.

The discernment team will want to keep the following attributes and dispositions of the discerner in mind throughout the entire process. These attributes and dispositions will be revealed in a variety of ways in the conversations rather than by asking direct questions about them.

- Communication skills
- Ability to relate to others
- Personal integrity and self-esteem
- Physical health and energy
- Intellectual gifts and strengths
- Sense of own strengths and limitations

Knowing when to end the discernment

There are several ways the team knows the discernment is finished.

- The discerner has reached the clarity he/she was seeking.
- The team feels any progress has stopped and it may be necessary to stop meeting or to take an extended break.
- There seems to be an impasse due to personalities on the team.
- It is discovered that the discerner needs to seek a different type of help.

There should be a consensus before proceeding to the next step. The discerner may:

- Decide to pursue the strengthening of a more clarified call to his/her lay ministry.
- Decide to pursue a call to an ordained ministry.
- Decide to take some time in study and practice in a variety of ministries.
- Decide that there are other issues in his/her life that need more resolution before proceeding.

In any case, the team and the supervising cleric may want to help the discerner develop whatever plans seem to be emerging.

Reporting to clergy and to the Vestry

It is expected that the team will keep the supervising cleric and vestry informed of the process and some sense of what progress is being made. When the process is completed a report will be submitted.

Closure: The Report to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee

When a congregational discernment team reaches closure, a letter needs to be written to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. This letter may be kept in the discerner's file. If the discerner is called to Holy Orders, a copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Diocesan COM to be kept in the discerner's file at the diocesan office.

The team includes the following information in this letter:

- A statement of the outcome of the discernment process; the conclusion reached about the ministry to which the discerner is called.
- A description of the process used for discernment.
- A statement indicating the relationship between the discerner and the members of the team – how long each member has known the discerner and in what capacity.

Part Two:

Three Discernment Programs Recommended by the Commission on Ministry

The COM of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan recommends one of the following:

1. A study guide using *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* by Suzanne Farnam et al). *Listening Hearts* is available on Amazon. There is also a copy at the Resource Center at the Diocesan Center.
2. A study guide written by Elaine Nocks based on *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* by William C. Placer. This study guide was developed in cooperation with the Fund for Theological Education. The study guide is available online at www.ptev.org/images/uploads/news/Callings%20Study%20Guide.pdf. *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* is available on Amazon. There is also a copy at the Resource Center at the Diocesan Center.
3. “Province V” Discernment Process currently or previously used by other dioceses in Province V (Chicago, Minnesota, and Iowa).

Recommendation 1:

A Study Guide for *Listening Hearts—Discerning Call in Community*

Each member of the Discernment Committee will need a copy of *Listening Hearts*. The appendices include guidelines for discernment groups (similar to what the COM suggests earlier in this appendix). In addition there is an appendix with questions to raise when serving on a discernment committee.

Below are outlines for 7 sessions.

Session One: Listening

Focus: During this first session the structure of the meetings is introduced, including its educational and reflective styles. If members of the group do not know each other, this is a good time to do some basic introductions.

Introductions

Prayer: A Prayer for Quiet Confidence, BCP page 232

Review “Listening Hearts”

What is Ministry? What is the ministry of each member of the Discernment Group? What is the current ministry of the Seeker?

What is Listening? How do you listen for God? How do you know what God wants of you? What are the impediments to the discernment of listening for God? What conditions help us discern God’s call?

You may want to invite visitor(s) who are deacons, priests, and active lay people doing ministry to give a presentation about their ministry and answer questions. Ask them also to share their story of how they discerned their call into this ministry.

Review Appendix 1 Guidelines for Discernment Groups, pages 77-78. The Facilitator should present a schedule of meetings at this point. End the session with five minutes of silence.

Closing Prayer: Prayer of Thomas Merton, *Listening Hearts*, pg. 145.

Session Two: Service

Focus: This session answers in more depth, “What is Ministry from Session One.

Opening Silence closing with
Prayer of Vocation in Daily Work, BCP pg 261

Exercise A

Have individuals in the group list on newspaper print priestly leadership skills & responsibilities as they perceive them. Compare this list with the “Examination of Priest” from the Book of Common Prayer (page 531). The goal of this exercise is to clarify our understanding what priests are really ordained to do. This exercise may be repeated focusing on all of the baptized, deacons, and bishops.

Exercise B

Read aloud with one member of the group taking the role of “celebrant” the Renewal of Baptismal Vows, BCP pages 292-294.

Which of these vows are easy for each member of the group to fulfill? Which are harder, if not impossible? When do you succeed in “seeking and serving Christ in all persons?” Where do you (and the Church) fail? Share personal stories. How do you proclaim by word and example the Good News? Which is easier for you, word or example?

Who have been examples in your local community of servanthood? What qualities do they exhibit? When do you feel called to serve? Whom do you feel you are not called to serve?

Reflect on the Examination in the service of ordination: of a deacon (BCP page 543); of a priest (BCP page 531).

Closing Prayer: Prayer for Social Service, BCP page 260.

Session Three: Mission

Focus: This session continues with the question from Session One “What is the ministry of each member of the Discernment Group” and expands it to include future ministry possibilities.

Opening Silence closing with

Prayer for the Mission of the Church, BCP page 816

Exercise A

Read together Matthew 28

How do you know the Resurrection of Jesus? Who was your Mary, the one who told you of Jesus rising from the dead? Review the three mission questions on the top of page 855 in the BCP.

What is Good News for you? How do you share it? In what ways do you exhibit an Easter attitude?

Exercise B

Reflect on the Seeker’s vision statement. The vision statement is a brief outline of what the Seeker believes God’s calling into ministry is for him/her. This may be vague or detailed, but it gives the group a brief introduction as to where the Seeker is in discernment.

Exercise C

The spouse or partner of the Seeker may be invited to this session to explore future ministry possibilities. This may be a good time to talk with the partner/spouse of the Seeker regarding his/her call to ordained ministry and what that means to the family.

Silence closing with

Collect for the Second Sunday of Easter, BCP page 224.

Session Four: Growth, Transformation, Transfiguration

Focus: This session focuses on spiritual formation and attention to self-health.

Opening Silence closing with

Collect for the Last Sunday of Epiphany

Our Baptismal vows call upon us to “continue in the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in all the prayers.” (BCP page 304). In what ways has each member of the group sought to edify themselves and their faith in Christ? Bible Study? Holy Reading? Retreats? Daily Office? Spiritual Direction? How has your prayer life changed/deepened since your baptism or confirmation? How do you deal with periods of spiritual crisis, dryness, and tedium?

At ordination the ordained promises to “be diligent in the reading and study of Holy Scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ.” (BCP page 532)

How does your parish support your priest in fulfilling this vow? Why is this vow necessary for the life and health of the Church?

How have you experienced failure in this life? Disappointment? Tragedy and Grief? Regardless of the completeness of your healing, how have you been changed into someone more resembling Christ through this experience?

Reflect on the Seeker’s Spiritual Journey. What key situations, people, events shaped the Seeker’s journey? What might be the influences of the Seeker’s current vocational passion? Where has growth and transformation occurred?

Silence closing with

Prayer – “O God of Unchangeable Power...” BCP page 291

Session Five: Holiness

Focus: This session focuses on self-awareness and openness. Church leaders sometimes have public roles that force them into living in a “fish bowl.” Church leaders are often faced with issues of conflict management and interpersonal communication styles.

Opening Silence closing with

Collect at Baptism, BCP page 254

Read together Matthew 5:48 and Philippians 3:7-13

What is the Holy Life? What does it look like? Who is perfect? What does it mean to “pattern your life (and that of your family in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?” How is life in the Church a “school for holiness?” Married life? Describe someone in your life who is an example of holiness.

How well do you know yourself? Share a time when you were brought up short and an unattractive part of yourself was disclosed to you.

Are you, the Seeker, aware of your effect on the people around you?

How do you perceive the others in your group? In what ways do they exhibit godliness? To what extent do you buy into the myth that ordination is the ticket to holiness?

How tolerant are you of ambiguity and uncertainty? What is your taste for mystery? In other words, how big is your box for God? How big is your box for your neighbors who differ from you due to race, economic class, health, sexual orientation or gender?

Silence closing with

Collect for the Second Sunday after Christmas Day, BCP page 214.

Session Six: Leadership

Focus: This session focuses on self-awareness and leadership style. There are many leadership styles and there are many settings for ministry. What leadership style matches the leadership needs of a particular ministry setting (e.g. Rector of a corporate-size congregation, a family-size congregation, a hospital chaplain, etc)?

Silence closing with

Collect for the Church, BCP page 816

Read together Numbers 11:16-17, 24-25 and Matthew 9:35-38

How do these lessons characterize leadership? What is the nature of Christ's leadership? Directive? Non-directive? Builder of consensus? Democratic?

How would you characterize the relationship of Jesus to his disciples?

Does your congregation find a focus in its priest? Does it derive its identity from the priest, or its inspiration? Is your church more accustomed to a "top-down" style of leadership or a combination of both? Does the authority of the priest derive from the position/status to him/her by the church or does the authority come from the person? How anxious is the seeker when placed in leadership roles?

What qualities does each member of the discernment group demonstrate that either exhibits leadership or enhances it in others both in the church and in the world?

Silence closing with

Collect for Prayer 29, BCP page 236

Session Seven: Obedience

Focus: During this session, the group, including the Seeker, is wrapping up the previous six sessions. Listening deeply is the focus.

Opening silence closing with

Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter, BCP page 225

The word obedience derives from the Latin word “to hear or listen deeply.”

Name/explore some persons in the Bible who are examples of this kind of obedience. Abraham, Sarah, Ruth, Samuel, Jesus, Peter, Paul. In each case, there were some heavy prices to pay for their obedience that preceded whatever reward came to them.

What are the limitations, restrictions, and other realities in the person’s life that must be reckoned with and obeyed? These may take the form of responsibilities and obligations (to marriage, commitments, children, family, self) that must be honored prior to making the sacrifices of the ordained ministry. Ordination never rescues a person from these more fundamental places of faithfulness.

Have the Seeker, the members of the group been faithful in their sacrificial giving to the church in time, talent, and treasure? What challenges and what blessings have resulted in such exercises of obedience?

How has the Seeker displayed commitment in the face of hardship?

Silence closing with

Prayer of St. Chrysostom, BCP page 126.

Recommendation 2:

A Study Guide for use with *Callings—Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*

The Commission on Ministry is presently working toward obtaining a copy of this study guide for inclusion in this manual. For now, this study guide is a PDF file available at

www.ptev.org/images/uploads/news/Callings%20Study%20Guide.pdf.

Callings is divided into four large chapters based on historical epochs in Christian religious thought. The study guide follows the same chronology but clusters the readings into eight lessons based on selected readings from the text.

1. Called to a Christian Life: Vocations in the Early Church
 - a. Lesson 1: Christian Calling as Heroic Commitment
 - b. Lesson 2: Giving Up Worldly Things
2. Called to Religious Life: Vocations in the Middle Ages
 - a. Lesson 3: The Vocation of Daily Discipline
 - b. Lesson 4: Contemplation, Charity and Obedience
3. Every Work a Calling: Vocations after the Reformation
 - a. Lesson 5: Acquiring a Christian Character
 - b. Lesson 6: Personal and Social Awakenings
4. Christian Callings in a Post-Christian World
 - a. Lesson 7: Faith and Work in a Modern World
 - b. Lesson 8: Costs, Courage and Commitment

There is a copy of *Callings* at the Resource Center at the Diocesan Center to look at for those considering this program.

Recommendation 3:

Province V* Discernment Process

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

1. Discerner distributes a written draft of his/her spiritual journey and call.
2. Group establishes overall organization and schedule for the meetings.
3. Group (including discerner) discusses what it is to have a sense of “call” in one’s life – how it is known, sensed, experienced, heard, learned, etc. and how we respond to it.
4. Group becomes sensitive to the following characteristics (especially in the discerner, but also in each other):
 - Communication skills
 - Ability to relate to others
 - Personal integrity and self-esteem
 - Physical health and energy
 - Intellectual gifts and abilities

Session 2: Biography of Discerner

1. Discerner reflects on his/her spiritual journey, giving insight into personality, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Group discusses (with discerner) the significant life experiences that have shaped the discerner’s present identity and life direction.
3. Group becomes sensitive to the discerner’s sense of strengths and weaknesses (limitations).
4. Discerner re-writes autobiography after the session.

Session 3: Insights into Ministry

1. Discerner distributes his/her re-written spiritual journey.
2. Group discusses the distinctions between the ministries of the laity, deacons, priests, and bishops.
3. Group (with discerner) discusses the meanings and differences that distinguish the various ministries.
4. Group becomes sensitive to new ideas, concerns and points of confusion, discovering each other’s understanding of ministry.

**This discernment process was originally from the Diocese of Iowa and used by the Dioceses of Chicago and Minnesota. The Commission on Ministry in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan renamed it the Province V Discernment Process.*

Session 4: Discerner's Present Ministry and Theology

1. Discerner presents a description of his/her current ministry.
 - How is this ministry being validated?
 - How is this different from the ministry of deacon, priest or bishop?
 - Would the discerner's ministry be enriched by ordination?
2. Discerner shares and group discusses how they relate to
 - Prayer
 - The sacraments
 - Scripture
 - Authority
 - Obedience

Session 5: Discerner's Sense of Call

1. Discerner distributes a description of his/her sense of "call".
 - From God
 - From the community
 - In the context of his/her family and friends
2. The group (with discerner) sensitively discusses what had been written, recognizing that the ability to struggle with and express the deep sense of personal relationship with God and others is central to creative ministry. The discerner is challenged to risk and speak deeply about his/her call.

Session 6: What does the Discerner Bring to this Call

1. Discerner presents written insights and reflections on "moral character"
 - What that means to the discerner
 - How what that means shows in his or her life.
 - How the discerner copes with failure to live up to his/her standard of behavior.
2. Discerner's work experiences – how these experiences relate to the discerner's sense of call?
3. What vision does the discerner bring to the future ministry? (To what extent is it open-ended?)
4. Does the discerner have any burdensome financial obligations?

Session 7. Whom Does the Discerner Bring to the Call?

1. Discerner's spouse or partner also attends the session.
2. How does the discerner's family relate to the call?
 - Realistic vision?
 - What is the role of the family in the decision to explore ordination to the priesthood?
 - What about the potential personal and financial stress with the seminary training?
3. Are there other family pressures involved in the decision?

Session 8: Committee Reflection

1. Group meets without discerner.
 - Each committee member brings written observations/reflections to share.
 - An outline of the reflections is prepared to share with the discerner.
2. Group meets with discerner
 - Outline is shared with the discerner
 - Discussion
 - Discerner has the opportunity to discuss areas he/she feel/thinks have been discovered or unexplored.
3. Committee chair drafts letter for the Vestry following the outline prepared in this session; the draft is circulated among committee membership before

Session 9: Final Meeting of the Committee

Committee meets, possibly, over dinner to review comments and suggest improvements for the letter drafted by the chair.

Final Task. Chair presents the letter to the Vestry and responds to their questions.

Appendix C: Forms Used in the Process to Ordination

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET

Present Goal: Diaconate Priesthood Sacramentalist Undecided

Date: _____

Name _____ Birthdate: _____
First Middle Last

Present Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

Cell _____ Present Occupation _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Supervising Cleric: _____

Family Information: Marital Status Single, Married, Spouse name _____
 Divorced/Separated-# of marriages _____, Widow(er)
 Children: Ages and genders _____

Religious history: Length of time in diocese? _____, Length of time in congregation? _____
Ministries in current congregation with dates (use additional space if necessary):

Baptism: Date _____ Denomination _____
By Whom? _____

Confirmed/received into the Episcopal Church: Date _____
By Whom? _____ Where _____

Previous application for admission as Postulant for Holy Orders ____ Yes, ____ No
If yes, explain _____

Education:

High School _____ Graduation date _____

College _____ Graduation date _____

Major _____ Degree _____

Graduate Work _____

Other Training or Education _____

NOTE: Please mail official transcript(s) from your college or university as appropriate to the Diocesan Center:

Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, 924 N Niagara St, Saginaw MI 48602

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

Nomination for Ordination

Date:

To: The Bishop and Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

We, whose names appear below, certify that _____ (name) is an adult communicant in good standing of _____ (congregation).

We declare that, in our opinion, this person is qualified to seek Ordination in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan because: (herein the reasons are stated)

We pledge to support this person financially and by being involved in her/his formation both individually and as a congregation.

Signed, Supervising Cleric

Signatures of Vestry Members (at least two-thirds required)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I hereby certify that the forgoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry of _____ Congregation, _____, duly convened on the _____ day of _____, 20____, and that the names attached are those of all or 2/3rds members of the Vestry.

Signed, Clerk of the Vestry

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

Application for Restricted Funds

Today's Date: _____

Information about the person completing this application:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Information about the recipient of funds (if different from above):

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Please describe the nature of your request on a separate sheet of paper. Please attach any documentation that would be helpful in explaining your request. Additional information, including documentation of personal income, may be requested for certain funds with income restrictions. If you have any questions about the funds, their availability, or the application procedure, please call the Diocesan Administrator (877-752-6020).

Please mail completed form and attachments to:

The Bishop
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan
924 N. Niagara Street
Saginaw, MI 48602

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

To: The Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

I, _____, a Postulant for Holy Orders in the Diocese of Eastern Michigan, respectfully apply for admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

Signature

Date

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Congregation _____

Rector _____ Date accepted as Postulant _____

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

CERTIFICATION FOR CANDIDACY

To: The Bishop and Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

We, whose names appear below, certify that _____ (name) is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing of _____ (congregation). We declare that, in our opinion, this person is qualified for admission to Candidacy in the Diocese because: (herein the reasons are stated)

Signed, Priest of Congregation

Signatures of Vestry Members (at least two-thirds required)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I hereby certify that the forgoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry of _____ Congregation, _____, duly convened on the _____ day of _____, 20____, and that the names attached are those of all or 2/3rds members of the Vestry.

Signed, Clerk of the Vestry

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

APPLICATION FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

To: The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

I, _____, a Candidate in Good Standing of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan respectfully apply for ordination to the Diaconate.

Date of Birth _____

Date accepted as Postulant _____

Date accepted as Candidate _____

Signature

Date

[If you are applying as a Vocational Deacon, please include a statement stating how you intend to exercise the ministry of Deacon both in the Church and in the world and that there is no intent to apply for ordination to the Priesthood.]

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

CERTIFICATE FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

To: The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

We do certify that, after due inquiry, we are well assured and believe that (candidate) _____ for the last three years has lived a sober, honest, and godly life, and is loyal to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of this Church, and does not hold anything contrary thereto. And, moreover, we think _____ a person worthy to be admitted to the Sacred Order of Deacons.

Signed, Priest of Congregation

Signatures of Vestry Members (at least two-thirds required)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I hereby certify that the forgoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry of _____ Congregation, _____, duly convened on the _____ day of _____, 20____, and that the names attached are those of all or 2/3rds members of the Vestry.

Signed, Clerk of Vestry

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

TESTIMONIAL FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

To the Right Reverend _____ Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

The Standing Committee, having been duly convened at _____, do testify that _____ (candidate) has lived a sober, honest, and godly life, and is loyal to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of this Church, and does not hold anything contrary thereto.

Accordingly, we hereby recommend _____ for ordination to the Diaconate.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this ____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord _____

Signatures of Standing Committee Members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

APPLICATION FOR ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

I, _____, a Deacon in the Episcopal Church, do hereby apply for ordination to the Sacred Order of Priests in the Episcopal Church.

Date of Birth _____

Date of Ordination to the Diaconate _____

Signature

Date

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

CERTIFICATE FOR ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD

[From the Parish to which the Deacon is assigned]

To: Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

Date: _____

We do certify that, after due inquiry, we are well assured and believe that the Reverend _____, Deacon since the _____ day of _____ in the year of _____, being the date of ordination to the Diaconate, has lived a sober, honest and godly life, and has not written, taught, or held anything contrary to the Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship of this Church. And, moreover, we think the Reverend _____ a person worthy to be admitted to the Sacred Order of Priests.

Signed, Priest of Congregation

Signatures of Vestry Members (at least two-thirds required)

I hereby certify that the Reverend _____ is a resident of _____ Parish in _____; that the forgoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry of _____ Congregation, _____, duly convened on the _____ day of _____, 20____, and that the names attached are those of all or 2/3rds members of the Vestry.

Signed, Clerk of the Vestry

Diocese of Eastern Michigan

TESTIMONIAL FOR ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

(From the Standing Committee to the Bishop)

To: the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan:

We, being a majority of all the members of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan, and having been duly convened at _____, do testify that the Reverend _____, Deacon, desiring to be ordained Priest, has presented to us satisfactory certificates that since the ____ day of _____ in the year _____, being the date of ordination to the Diaconate, has lived a sober, honest and godly life, and has not written, taught, or held anything contrary to the Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship of this Church. And we hereby recommend the Reverend _____ for ordination to the Priesthood.

In witness whereof, we hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord _____

Signatures of Standing Committee Members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____