

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan



Manual
for the
Ordination Process

The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan Manual for the Ordination Process

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 4 |
| Acronyms and Definitions | 5 |
| Informal Discernment | 7 |
| <i>In the Beginning....</i> | 7 |
| As an APPLICANT.... | 8 |
| <i>You and Your Supervising Cleric</i> | 8 |
| <i>Appointment of a COM Contact</i> | 9 |
| <i>Personal Information Sheet</i> | 10 |
| <i>Writing Your Faith Journey</i> | 10 |
| <i>Formal Discernment</i> | 11 |
| 1) Formation of a Discernment Team | 11 |
| 2) Discernment Team Report | 12 |
| <i>Nominee Determination</i> | 12 |
| As a NOMINEE ... | 12 |
| <i>Background Check</i> | 12 |
| <i>Medical Check-up</i> | 13 |
| <i>Financial Discernment</i> | 13 |
| <i>Postulancy Interview with COM</i> | 13 |
| <i>Psychological Evaluation</i> | 13 |
| <i>Postulancy Determination</i> | 13 |
| As a POSTULANT ... | 14 |
| <i>Theological Formation</i> | 14 |
| <i>Funding for Theological Education</i> | 14 |
| <i>Engagement of a Spiritual Director</i> | 15 |
| <i>Writing Ember Day Letters</i> | 15 |
| <i>Steps towards Candidacy</i> | 15 |
| <i>Interview with Standing Committee</i> | 16 |
| <i>Candidacy Determination</i> | 16 |
| As a CANDIDATE... | 17 |
| <i>Readiness for Ordination</i> | 17 |
| <i>Ordination to the Diaconate</i> | 17 |
| As a TRANSITIONAL DEACON... | 18 |
| <i>Readiness for Ordination to the Priesthood</i> | 18 |
| <i>Call to Serve in a Congregation</i> | 18 |
| <i>Ordination to the Priesthood</i> | 18 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Appendix A: | 19 |
| <i>CHECKLIST FOR THOSE SEEKING HOLY ORDERS</i> | 20 |
| <i>Action Chart</i> | 23 |
| Appendix B: Discernment | 24 |
| Appendix C: Forms | 43 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Information Sheet • <i>Nomination for Ordination</i> • <i>Application for Restricted Funds</i> • <i>Application for Candidacy</i> • <i>Certification for Candidacy</i> • <i>Application for Ordination to the Diaconate</i> • <i>Certificate for Ordination to the Diaconate</i> • <i>Testimonial for Ordination to the Diaconate</i> • <i>Application for Ordination to the Priesthood</i> • <i>Certificate for Ordination to the Priesthood</i> • <i>Testimonial for Ordination to the Priesthood</i> | |

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.

In The Diocese of Eastern Michigan, anyone entering the ordination process after age 65 will be required to receive affirmation from the bishop. Contact a member of the Commission on Ministry or the bishop if you have any questions or concerns about this requirement.

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

- You must be a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, a regular worshipper, and a giver of record to be eligible to participate in any of the licensed ministries, including ordination.
- YOU are responsible for YOUR PROCESS; others will be helping, but **you** must see that the various steps of **your process** are completed.
- There are several documents required to complete the process. The completed documents are filed at the diocesan office. It is **strongly** recommended that **you also retain a copy of all materials** that you send to the diocese.
 - Copies of most of the materials generated by others (Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, your supervising cleric, the bishop, etc.) will be sent to you to maintain in your personal file.
 - The file maintained in the diocesan office is your file which you may review at any time; contact the bishop's assistant for access (877-752-6020). Your file will also be reviewed by the Commission on Ministry and the Standing Committee to assist you in your process.
- 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 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 gives detailed information regarding the process to ordination.
- *Appendix A* - A checklist outlining the major steps in the process and an accompanying “action chart” clarifying responsibilities.
- *Appendix B* - Information about discernment including steps to forming a congregational discernment team and study guides to be used.
- *Appendix C* - Forms necessary to complete the process.

Acronyms and Definitions

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| Applicant | The initial step in the process beginning with your decision to seek holy orders. This step ends when you either stop the process or become a nominee. |
| Candidate/Candidacy | Candidacy is the time of education and formation in preparation for ordination. You become a candidate when you complete the requirements of postulancy and the bishop confers candidacy. |
| Checklist | A summary in list form of the steps toward ordination. |
| COM | Acronym for Commission on Ministry. COM oversees the ordination process and advises the bishop throughout the process. |
| COM Contact | Once COM is officially notified of your interest in pursuing the ordination process, a COM member will be assigned to you and will be available to you throughout the process. |
| CPE | Acronym for Clinical Pastoral Education. CPE is education to teach pastoral care to clergy and spiritual care providers. |
| 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. |
| Ember Day letters | Ember Day letters are written to the bishop by postulants and candidates four times a year reflecting academic, personal, and spiritual development. |

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| Faith Journey | A description of how and where you have experienced God in and throughout your life. |
| Field Work/Education | Practical training and experience a person in the ordination process is expected to complete. (Canon III.6.5.f.5) |
| MBST | Acronym for Ministry of the Baptized Support Team. These exist in parishes where licensed lay members lead the worship and administrative duties in a parish. |
| 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. |
| Rule of Life | A set of practices developed specifically to deepen our spiritual lives. |
| SC | Acronym for Standing Committee. The SC certifies to the bishop that all canonical requirements have been met for admission to the diaconate/priesthood. Additionally, after an interview with you, the SC makes a recommendation to the bishop concerning your candidacy. |
| Supervising Cleric | Supervises a person in the process towards ordination. The supervising cleric may be the rector, the priest-in-charge of the sponsoring congregation, a member of the MBST, or the dean of the convocation, etc., as determined by the bishop. |

Informal Discernment

In the Beginning....

It is strongly recommended that you begin working with a spiritual director (who is not your rector, priest-in-charge, MBST member, etc.) to discern your sense of call.

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*.
- 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: A New Psychology of Intimacy with God, Self and Others*, Donald R. Hands & Wayne L. Fehr, 1993, Alban Institute.
- 8) *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*, Parker J. Palmer, 2000, Jossey-Bass.
- 9) *Do I Belong in Seminary?* Ronald E. Parker, 1998, Alban Institute.
- 10) *Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed*, Susanne Watson Epting, 2015, Church Publishing.
- 11) *On Being a Priest Today*, Rosalind Brown and Christopher Cocksworth, 2002, Cowley Publications.
- 12) *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons*, Ormonde Plater, 1991, revised 2004, Cowley.
- 13) *Servanthood: Leadership for the Third Millenium*, Bennett J. Sims, 1997, Cowley.
- 14) *The Biblical Journey of Faith: The Road of the Sojourner*, Frank R. Vandevelder, 1988, Fortress Press.
- 15) *Calling: A Song for the Baptized*, Caroline A. Westerhoff, 1994, Cowley.

If you continue to discern a call to an ordained ministry, the process begins by meeting with your rector, priest-in-charge, or MBST member, to discuss your sense of call. Contact the bishop/bishop's assistant if you are unsure of who to contact for this meeting.

Topics to be discussed include, but are not limited to:

- How and why you believe you are called to ordained ministry (perhaps the person who identified you, if it was someone other than yourself, could be included in this conversation to explain why they think you are called to ordination).
- The ministries you have been involved in, both within the Church (congregation, convocation and/or diocese) and external activities.
- Your understanding of the role to which you have been called.
- Your rule of life.
- A brief discussion of the process leading to ordination, including the financial aspects.
- Church financial support.
- Spousal support if applicable.

As an APPLICANT....

Once you have decided to pursue further discernment, meet with your rector, priest-in-charge, or MBST member who will become your supervising cleric. 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 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.

You and Your Supervising Cleric

Normally the supervising cleric will remain the same during your process and will provide a pastoral presence to you throughout. It is important for you to maintain close communication with your supervising cleric throughout your process.

The supervising cleric will:

- Discuss your initial sense of call to ordained ministry with you.
- Encourage you to develop and follow a rule of life if you do not already do so. A helpful resource to develop a rule of life can be found at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/living-intentionally.pdf>
- Notify the bishop and the vestry of your desire to pursue ordination.
- Consult with you on your faith journey and review your written document before sending it to the vestry.
- Meet with you, the vestry, and COM contact to review the overall ordination process and the role of the vestry.
- Help you identify members for a congregational discernment team, may invite them to participate in the discernment team, and may help set up

the initial meeting of the discernment team. The supervising cleric will also attend the first meeting only of the discernment team.

- Submit reports and letters of support (or non-support) to you, the vestry, and the bishop as required throughout the process.
- 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 vestry and congregation informed on your progress in the process and encourage involvement of both the congregation and vestry members in supporting you throughout the process. For example, they may suggest you be in contact with your sponsoring congregation by providing newsletter articles, letters to vestry, etc.
- Upon request, discuss your assignment as deacon with the bishop.

The supervising cleric will NOT:

- Be responsible for your process or prompt you to submit the various requests/letters/forms etc. that are a part of the process.
- Be your spiritual director.

Appointment of a COM Contact

After the supervising cleric notifies the bishop, the bishop will inform COM of your intent to continue to discern a call to ordination. COM will then assign a member to work with you throughout this process (“COM contact”).

The COM contact will:

- Be available to you and your supervising cleric throughout the process to answer questions clarifying the process for ordination.
- Meet with you, the supervising cleric, and the vestry to discuss the overall ordination process and the role the vestry.
- Attend the first discernment team meeting and review the roles/purpose of the discernment team.
- Stay in contact with you and report to COM on your progress, including scheduling times for you to meet with COM.

The COM contact will NOT:

- Be responsible for your process or prompt you to submit the various requests/letters/forms etc. that are a part of the process.
- Be a mentor or spiritual director.

Personal Information Sheet

Fully complete the Personal Information Sheet (Appendix C) and submit all requested documents to the bishop's assistant. Your SSN and a copy of your driver's license should be submitted on a separate document which will be stored in a locked safe separate from your personal file. You will also need to submit educational transcripts and records. If you do not have a bachelor's degree, you will be contacted by COM for some form of an educational equivalency assessment.

The Personal Information Sheet and all related documentation must be completed in full for COM or the bishop's assistant to take any further action on your progression through the ordination process.

After submitting your Personal Information Sheet, work with your supervising cleric and COM contact to schedule a group meeting with the vestry. During this meeting, your COM contact will present the ordination process and vestry responsibilities. This meeting may take up to 1½ hours.

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.

Your written Faith Journey should be approximately 3-5 typed pages. Your supervising cleric and your discernment team are available to help you. It is not uncommon to be asked to revise this document several times as you move through discernment and other phases of the ordination process.

As you begin documenting your faith journey, be assured that there are no right or wrong answers. This document provides your supervising cleric and vestry, (and later, your discernment team and 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, rather it 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.

- When and how has your understanding of your relationship with God changed and what have you learned about God and yourself during those times?

- As you consider the most significant events of your life, where 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 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 shared your relationship with God with others, including your spouse, partner, significant other(s)?
- Describe your rule of life. Has it changed over time?

Formal Discernment

Discernment is a process of reflection that is done in community 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. The discernment team should discuss spousal/partner support of your call and may request to meet with your spouse/partner. Appendix B provides detailed information regarding the formal discernment process.

1) Formation of a Discernment Team

Your supervising cleric will help you form a discernment team made up of people from your congregation and others as seems appropriate.

The purpose of the discernment team is to help you hear more clearly God's call to you and how this call has been and is currently playing out in your life. The discernment team will help you to identify if your call is to ordained ministry or another licensed or lay ministry in the Church. 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, and people who will challenge you. Most of the people on your discernment team will be from your own congregation but you may want to consider people from another Episcopal church and possibly another denomination.

Your COM contact and supervising cleric should attend the initial meeting of the discernment team to discuss their roles/responsibilities.

2) Discernment Team Report

When your discernment team has completed its work and you have reached clarity regarding your calling – the discernment team reports its findings to the supervising cleric, the vestry, and you.

This report is a document describing the process used during the discernment, team membership and their relationship to you, and the outcome of your time together. The discernment team will either (1) support your sense of call to ordained ministry, (2) determine that more time is needed, or (3) discern that you are called to another ministry.

If the discernment team discerns a call to a ministry other than ordained ministry, your supervising cleric and COM contact will discuss licensed and other ministries to which you may be called. (Canon III.4.3-9)

Nominee Determination

If your supervising cleric and sponsoring vestry agree to nominate you for holy orders, they will complete the Nomination for Ordination form (Appendix C) and send it and the discernment team report to you and the bishop.

You must reply to the vestry with a letter accepting the nomination and send a copy to the bishop.

After all the documentation has been received by the bishop, the bishop will determine your status as a nominee. A letter will be sent to you concerning that determination.

As a NOMINEE ...

Update your faith journey based on your discernment process and send it to the bishop's assistant who will forward it to COM. Your COM contact will arrange for you to meet with COM for an introductory meeting.

If, after the COM meeting, it is determined that additional discernment is needed, 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. Upon completing the supplemental plan, you will be asked to write a 2-3-page review/reflection of this additional work.

Background Check

Immediately after becoming a nominee, contact the bishop's assistant to obtain the release-of-information form to sign and return it to the bishop's assistant. This should be done promptly because the check takes time, and the ordination process will be held up if the background check is not complete. The bishop's assistant will then arrange to have the background check

conducted and will bear the expense. You will be informed when the background check has been completed and the results have been placed in your file.

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 by contacting the bishop's assistant (877-752-6020). The completed form will be kept in your file at the diocesan office. At a reasonable time after the medical check-up contact the bishop's 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.

Financial Discernment

Before continuing this process, it is critical that you and your spouse, if applicable, understand the financial implications of a call to ordained ministry. A tool to assist in this understanding is the Church Pension Group's (CPG) "Postulant Cash Flow Analysis Worksheet". This worksheet is available for free download from the CPG website (www.churchpensiongroup.org). Using this worksheet requires putting together a spending plan to calculate the potential amount of debt you may incur and/or the potential changes in lifestyle habits that may need to be made during and after attending seminary/The Academy for Vocational Leadership. The use of this CPG tool is highly recommended, but you should expect your supervising cleric, the bishop, and/or the COM to ask you and your spouse about your understanding of the financial implications of such a call.

Postulancy Interview with COM

The COM contact will arrange for a postulancy interview with COM. COM members will ask questions primarily formulated from your faith journey, the discernment report, and educational progress reports that may be available. COM may also request to speak with your spouse regarding your call to ordained ministry. If COM recommends postulancy status, they will send a report to the bishop.

Psychological Evaluation

Contact the bishop's assistant for information about how to initiate the psychological evaluation. The diocese will pay for this evaluation.

Postulancy Determination

When the background check, medical examination, and psychological evaluation have been completed the bishop will meet with you to determine if you will become a postulant. You will receive a letter notifying you of the bishop's decision.

As a POSTULANT ...

Theological Formation

If you are discerning a call to the diaconate, The Diocese of Eastern Michigan's recommended formation is through The Academy for Vocational Leadership.

If you are discerning a call to the priesthood, you may, with the bishop's input/recommendation, attend any of the Episcopal seminaries or The Academy for Vocational Leadership.

Funding for Theological Education

The Diocese of Eastern Michigan has limited funds that generate income available for various purposes including the education of prospective and ordained clergy and lay ministries. These funds are administered by the bishop; any clergy or lay person may make application for available funds. 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 aware 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 Fund |
| Psychological exam for nominee | Covered 100% by McElroy Fund |
| Seminary expenses | \$5,000 scholarship per person/semester by McElroy Fund pending fund availability. |
| Coppage-Gordon grant | One-third of annual tuition by McElroy Fund |

Seminarians must apply for the scholarship by completing the Application for Restricted Funds (Appendix C), 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. Your parish has pledged to support your process financially. It is expected that you will have a discussion with your vestry regarding the amount of support they are able to offer.

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

Engagement of a Spiritual Director

If you do not already have a spiritual director, once you are a postulant you will need to engage one. A spiritual director is a person who has a gift for, and formal 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 Academy for Vocational Leadership.

A spiritual director will meet with you regularly to listen to and share your spiritual journey. The spiritual director helps you discern how God is working in your life and where God may be calling you. The relationship between you and your spiritual 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. Spiritual direction should be an ongoing gift you give yourself throughout the ordination process and continuing through your ordained life.

Writing Ember Day Letters

Once you have been accepted as a postulant, you must send – until final ordination – Ember Day letters 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. The letter should always include your name and the date of your letter.

Steps towards Candidacy

During your second year of theological education, you may apply for candidacy. Complete an Application for Candidacy form (Appendix C). Also request that your vestry and supervising cleric complete the Certification for Candidacy form

(Appendix C). Both forms should be sent to the bishop's assistant who will forward a copy to COM.

A report from your theological school is also required. This report should be sent to the bishop's assistant who will forward it to COM. After receiving the completed forms and the report from your theological school COM will send a letter to the SC attesting to the progress you are making or have made in your formal education.

Interview with Standing Committee

The SC will review the letter from COM and will check that the documentation in your file is up to date. The SC will then contact you for your candidacy interview. After your interview, the SC will send a communication to the bishop regarding your request for candidacy status.

Candidacy Determination

The bishop will determine your candidacy status. 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 received readiness for Ordination, request that the report from your theological institution including CPE and field education be sent to the bishop's assistant. This evaluation will show your scholarship record in the subjects required by the canons and your overall readiness for ordination.

You also need to provide evidence of having completed Dismantling Racism workshop(s) and Safe Church training.

You will then complete the Application for Ordination to the Diaconate form (Appendix C) and request that your vestry and supervising cleric complete the Certificate for Ordination to the Diaconate form (Appendix C). Both forms should be sent to the bishop who will forward them to the SC.

According to the canons, at the time of ordination to the diaconate...

- you must be at least 24 years of age,
- at least 18 months must have transpired from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the nominee, and
- medical, psychological and background checks must have been completed within the last 36 months.

At the time of ordination to the priesthood...

- you must be at least 24 years of age,
- you must have been a transitional deacon for at least 6 months,
- at least 18 months must have transpired from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the nominee, and
- medical, psychological and background checks must have been completed within the last 36 months.

When the SC receives these forms from the bishop, they shall complete the Testimonial for Ordination to the Diaconate (Appendix C) certifying 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. SC members may have access to your file as needed for this certification. A majority of SC members must sign the form consenting to ordination.

Ordination to the Diaconate

The bishop, you, and your supervising cleric will consult to schedule a date for ordination. On occasion, there are diocesan-wide ordinations of more than one person held at a specifically chosen location.

The bishop will consult with you regarding your diaconal assignment.

As a TRANSITIONAL DEACON...

Readiness for Ordination to the Priesthood

To be ordained to the priesthood, you must have been a transitional deacon for at least six months (see above for additional criteria).

Complete the Application for Ordination to the Priesthood (Appendix C) and have the vestry at the church where you've been serving as a deacon complete the Certification for Ordination to the Priesthood (Appendix C). Send both forms to the bishop who will forward them to the SC.

NOTE: If you are ordained transitional deacon after seminary, oversight for this last phase of formation will be provided 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.

When the SC receives the Application for Ordination to the Priesthood and the Certificate for Ordination to the Priesthood, they shall complete the Testimonial for Ordination to Priesthood form (Appendix C) certifying that the canonical requirements for ordination to the priesthood have been met, that there are no objections on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, and that they recommend ordination. SC members may have access to your file as needed for this certification. A majority of SC members must sign the form consenting 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.

Ordination to the Priesthood

Once you have a call to serve as a priest, you and the bishop will determine a date and place for your ordination. If you have been serving in a congregation as deacon your priesthood ordination may occur there. On occasion, there are diocesan-wide ordinations of more than one person held at a specifically chosen location.

Appendix A:

- Checklist for Those Seeking Ordination
- Action Chart

APPENDIX A

CHECKLIST FOR THOSE SEEKING HOLY ORDERS

This checklist outlines the major steps in the ordination process. Refer to the “Manual for the Ordination Process” for additional details. The accompanying “action chart” outlines the role responsible for initiating each step and the roles responsible for taking action to complete the step.

Date _____
Completed _____

Name: _____

STATUS: INFORMAL DISCERNMENT

- _____ 1. Meet with your rector, priest-in-charge, or MBST member to discuss your sense of call.
Contact the bishop’s assistant if unsure of who to contact.

STATUS: APPLICANT

- _____ 2. Once you decide to pursue further discernment, meet with your rector, priest-in-charge, or MBST member, who will become your supervising cleric.
- _____ 3. The supervising cleric will notify the bishop and the vestry of your desire. The bishop will then notify COM. You will be assigned a COM contact.
- _____ 4. Complete the Personal Information Sheet (see Appendix C, Forms), assemble educational transcripts and send them to the bishop’s assistant. The Personal Information Sheet must be fully completed for the ordination process to proceed beyond this step.
- _____ 5. Schedule and meet with the vestry, the supervising cleric, and COM contact to review the overall process and the responsibilities of the vestry.
- _____ 6. Write your faith journey.
- _____ 7. Form a discernment team with the help of the supervising cleric, utilizing Appendix B. Your COM contact and supervising cleric should be present for the first discernment team meeting. You will meet with the discernment team for 3-6 months.
- _____ 8. Discernment team completes their report and submits it to the supervising cleric, the vestry, and you.
- _____ 9. If the vestry and supervising cleric agree to nominate you for holy orders, they complete the Nomination for Ordination form and send it and the discernment reports to the bishop and to you.
- _____ 10. Reply to the vestry with a letter accepting the nomination and send a copy of the acceptance letter to the bishop.
- _____ 11. The bishop will review and determine your status as a nominee; a letter will be sent to you informing you of your status.

STATUS: NOMINEE

- _____ 12. Update your faith journey based on your discernment process and email it to the bishop's assistant who will forward it to COM.
- _____ 13. Your COM contact will arrange an introductory meeting with you and COM.
- _____ 14. Contact the bishop's assistant to begin the medical and background check process.
- _____ 15. Your COM contact will arrange a postulancy interview with the COM. COM will then follow up with you regarding next steps. If COM recommends postulancy, a report will be sent to the bishop.
- _____ 16. Contact the bishop's assistant for information about how to initiate the psychological evaluation.
- _____ 17. When the background check, medical examination and psychological evaluations have been completed, the bishop will meet with you.
- _____ 18. You will receive a letter from the bishop attesting to your status as a postulant for Holy Orders.

STATUS: POSTULANT

- _____ 19. Begin your theological education.
- _____ 20. Begin spiritual direction (if you haven't already done so).
- _____ 21. Begin sending Ember Day letters to the bishop.
- _____ 22. During your 2nd year of theological education, (A) complete the Application for Candidacy.
 - _____ (B) request the completed Certification for Candidacy from the vestry and supervising cleric.
 - _____ (C) Obtain a report from your theological school.
 - _____ (D) Send all documents to the bishop's assistant who will forward it to COM.
- _____ 23. COM writes a letter to the SC attesting to the progress you have made in your ongoing education and confirming that all documentation has been completed.
- _____ 24. SC reviews your documentation, interviews you and writes a letter to the bishop regarding your request for candidacy.
- _____ 25. The bishop determines candidacy status and will inform you of that status via letter.

STATUS: CANDIDATE

- _____ 26. Complete your formal education, including CPE and field education. Request that the theological institution send a report of your readiness to the bishop's assistant.
- _____ 27. Provide to the bishop's assistant evidence of completion of a Dismantling Racism workshop and Safe Church training.
- _____ 28 A) Complete the Application for Ordination to the Diaconate.
- _____ B) Request the vestry and supervising cleric complete the Certificate for Ordination to the Diaconate.
- _____ C) Send both documents to the bishop who will forward them to the SC.
- _____ 29. COM writes a letter to SC attesting to the progress you have made in your ongoing education and confirming that all documentation has been completed.
- _____ 30. If in agreement, the SC completes the Testimonial for Ordination to the Diaconate certifying that the canonical requirements have been met, there are no objections and ordination is recommended.
- _____ 31. The bishop, you, and your supervising cleric consult to schedule the ordination date which must be at least 18 months from the time of your written acceptance of nomination status.
- _____ 32. The bishop will consult with you regarding your diaconal assignment.

STATUS: TRANSITIONAL DIACONATE

- _____ 33 A) Complete the Application for Ordination to the Priesthood
- _____ B) Request the Certificate for Ordination to the Priesthood from the vestry of the church where you are serving.
- _____ C) Send both documents to the bishop; they will be forwarded to the SC.
- _____ 34. The SC reviews the information and if majority agrees, completes the Testimonial for Ordination to the Priesthood certifying that all canonical requirements have been met, there are no objections, and that ordination is recommended. This is sent to the bishop.
- _____ 35. You and the bishop will schedule ordination to priesthood not sooner than 6 months after ordination to the transitional diaconate.

CHECKLIST FOR THOSE SEEKING HOLY ORDERS

| <u>Action Chart</u> | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|--------|------------------|--------------------|
| | Responsible for Initiating and Performing Actions | | | | | | |
| Step # | Person in Process | Priest* / Supervising Cleric | Bishop/ Bishop's Assistant | COM | Vestry | Discernment Team | Standing Committee |
| 1 | Initiates | X | | | | | |
| 2 | Initiates | X | | | | | |
| 3 | | Initiates | X | X | X | | |
| 4 | Initiates | | X | | | | |
| 5 | Initiates | X | | X | X | | |
| 6 | Initiates | | | | | | |
| 7 | Initiates | X | | X | | X | |
| 8 | X | X | | | X | Initiates | |
| 9 | X | Initiates | X | | X | | |
| 10 | Initiates | | X | | X | | |
| 11 | X | | Initiates | | | | |
| 12 | Initiates | | X | X | | | |
| 13 | X | | | Initiates | | | |
| 14 | Initiates | | X | | | | |
| 15 | X | | | Initiates | | | |
| 16 | Initiates | | X | | | | |
| 17 | X | | Initiates | | | | |
| 18 | X | | Initiates | | | | |
| 19 | Initiates | | | | | | |
| 20 | Initiates | | | | | | |
| 21 | Initiates | | | | | | |
| 22 | Initiates | X | X | | X | | |
| 23 | | | | Initiates | | | X |
| 24 | X | | X | | | | Initiates |
| 25 | X | | Initiates | | | | |
| 26 | Initiates | | X | | | | |
| 27 | Initiates | | X | | | | |
| 28 | Initiates | X | X | | X | | |
| 29 | | | | Initiates | | | X |
| 30 | | | X | | | | Initiates |
| 31 | X | X | Initiates | | | | |
| 32 | X | | Initiates | | | | |
| 33 | Initiates | | X | | X | | X |
| 34 | | | X | | | | Initiates |
| 35 | X | X | Initiates | | | | |

* Rector, Priest-in-charge or MBST member
Initiates = Responsible for initiating this step

X = Responsible for performing some action in this step

Appendix B: Discernment

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

Part One: 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.

Applicant Discernment

Once you have decided to pursue discernment as an Applicant, meet with your rector, priest-in-charge, or MBST member who will become your supervising cleric. 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 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.

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

Size and Composition of a Discernment Team:

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

It is wise to think of the following as you and your supervising cleric 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 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 you or the team 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 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. You and your supervising cleric will decide on which discernment process, offered by COM, best suits your situation. They may choose to include some or all of the committee in making this decision. COM 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 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 has the opportunity to speak.
- Observe the tone and spirit of the gathering.
- Know when to take a break.

Worship Leader

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

Recorder

- Takes the official notes of the session, if needed.
- Prepares 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

Except for 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. You and the team will follow the direction of the Holy Spirit in deciding when discernment is complete. However, if COM thinks that the process has been rushed they may ask you to repeat it or take other additional steps.

This length, of course, may vary. 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 in mind throughout the entire process. These 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.

- You reach the clarity you are seeking.
- The team feels progress has stopped and it may be necessary to stop meeting or take an extended break.
- There seems to be an impasse due to personalities on the team.
- It is determined that you need to seek a different type of help.

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

- Decide to pursue the strengthening of a more clarified call to your 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 your life that need more resolution before proceeding.

In any case, the team and the supervising cleric may want to help you 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 provide some sense of what progress is being made. When the process is completed a report will be submitted.

Discernment Team Report

When your discernment team has completed its work, they will report their findings to the supervising cleric, the vestry, and you. The Ordination Manual provides more detail about this report.

Part Two:
Three Discernment Programs
Recommended by the Commission on
Ministry

COM 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.
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 and 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. “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 Team will need a copy of *Listening Hearts*. In addition to including guidelines for discernment team, similar to what was outlined above, the book includes 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 team 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 Team? 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 the group list 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 Team” 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 your vision statement. The vision statement is a brief outline of what you believe God’s is calling you to do. This may be vague or detailed, but it gives the group a brief introduction as to where you are in discernment.

Exercise C

Your spouse or partner, if any, may be invited to this session to explore future ministry possibilities. This may be a good time for the team to talk with your partner/spouse regarding your 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 team 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 your spiritual journey. What key situations, people, events have shaped your journey? What might be the influences of your 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 “fishbowl.” 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?” 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 aware of your effect on the people around you?

How do you perceive the others in your team? 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 are you when placed in leadership roles?

What qualities does each member of the discernment team 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 you, 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 your 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 main the sacrifices of the ordained ministry. Ordination never rescues a person from these more fundamental places of faithfulness.

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

How have you 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*

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

Recommendation 3:

Province V* Discernment Process

Session 1: Getting Acquainted

1. Discerner distributes a written draft of their 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 their 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 their revised 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 discerners' 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 family and friends
2. The group (with discerners) 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 discerners are challenged to risk and speak deeply about their 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 discerners
 - How what that means shows in their life.
 - How the discerners cope with failure to live up to their standard
 - of behavior.
2. Discerner's work experiences – how these experiences relate to their sense of call?
3. What vision does the discerners bring to the future ministry? (To what extent is it open-ended?)
3. Does the discerners have any burdensome financial obligations?

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

1. Discerner's spouse/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 Seminary/Academy 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 discusses areas they feel/think 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 ☐ Undecided

IMPORTANT: Attach a separate paper with your name, social security number, and a copy of the front and back of your driver's license. This will be kept safely locked in a separate file. No action will be taken on your ordination process until these are presented to the diocesan office.

Date _____ Birthdate _____

Name _____ Preferred Pronouns _____

First Middle Last

Present Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Primary Phone(s) _____

E-Mail Address _____

Current Congregation/Location _____

Supervising Cleric _____

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 _____

Church Name/Location _____

Date confirmed/received into the Episcopal Church: _____

By Whom/Location _____

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: Mail official transcript(s) from your college/university to the Bishop's Assistant:
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, 124 N. Fayette 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: (state reasons)

We pledge to support this person financially and by being involved in their 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

Date: _____

Information about the person completing this application:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Work: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

Describe the nature of your request on a separate sheet of paper and 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, 124 N. Fayette 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

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 this 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 this person for ordination to the Diaconate. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord 20_____.

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]

Date: _____

To: Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

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 20_____, 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 this 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 20_____, 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 this person for ordination to the Priesthood.

In witness whereof, we hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord 20____ .

Signatures of Standing Committee Members:

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |