

## **One Hope in God's Call to Us: Discernment for Ministry in the Diocese of Washington**

In Holy Baptism, the Holy Spirit gives to us the gift of life as the community of God's faithful people. In the promises and vows we make at baptism, we acknowledge that we have heard from God a call, a vocation, to serve the world in Christ's name. At baptism we are joined to others who share this vocation, the body of Christ, the priesthood of all believers, the servants of the Servant of God. All who are baptized are ordained into the ministry of the Church, and God confers on us gifts for mission and ministry in the work of prayer and worship in the community.

These gifts are given so that all our work, our occupations, and our labors become opportunities to show God's reconciling love for the created world. Prayer, care and support, charity, reconciliation, love, consolation, forgiveness, comfort, service, discernment, teaching, wisdom, and compassion are our faithful offerings to one another, to the world, and to God. Our gifts and talents are part of God's call to each of us, given in baptism, to participate in the reconciling of the world to God, and God to the world.

This call to ministry is too often thought to be limited to what is done within the confines or sponsorship of the Church. While the work of ministry we offer within the Church is vital for the life of the body of Christ, it is equally important that we consider our vocation in the world outside of the Church. Since the resurrection, the challenge of Christian people has been to integrate what we do on Sunday with the rest of our lives, to show that in any and all circumstances the merciful and loving God will act through us. The witness of Scripture, especially in the Christian Testament, is that there is no distinction between the various orders of the Church as we accept them: laity, deacons, priests, and bishops. All, as disciples of Jesus Christ, are called in various ways to mediate the relationship of God to humanity. It is principally through the laity that the grace and truth of God, proclaimed and celebrated on Sunday, reaches directly into the life of the world.

The following was written in the 1954 report of the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches:

*"The real battles of faith today are being fought in factories, shops, offices and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio and television, in the relationship of nations. Very often it is said that the Church should 'go into these spheres'; but the fact is that the Church is already in these spheres in the persons of its laity."*

A recent Gallup Poll showed that 80% of people in the work force do not believe that they are doing what they are equipped to do. It has never been more urgent that the Church to fulfill its mission: to equip all people to discern and embrace their God-given vocations. The Church is the gathered community in which we tell the stories and share the experiences of life that, when reflected in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, become the context for how we live and interpret our lives and relate to other people. While it is not the only place in which a call may be discerned and developed, the body of Christ, the Church, is the community in which we most often think about and discuss the great issues of the day, including how faith shapes our response to those issues. The Church is the priesthood of believers, with whom we practice our prayers and worship of the living and loving God so that we can enter all other spheres of our lives empowered by God's merciful and reconciling Spirit.

Discernment of vocation is a significant action of the followers of Jesus Christ. It is vocation, understood, accepted, and lived, that is our true work in the world. While each of us is called, we understand that it is only in the context of the Church that this call is fully discerned and identified as a God-given vocation. The Episcopal Diocese of Washington holds a number of principles as the foundation of all discernment processes.

## Principles of Ministry

- Holy Baptism is where all Christian people are joined in relationship with one another in the body of Christ.
- Holy Baptism unites us with Christ's death and resurrection, raises us to new life, and binds us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to a vocational ministry of reconciliation of the world to Christ.
- The baptismal covenant shapes all mission and ministry of the people of God.
- All baptized people are sent forth to proclaim the good news of God in Christ.
- Discernment is an intentional and prayerful exploratory process that is an essential element in seeking God's will in our lives and God's call to us.
- Discernment takes place within one's congregation, the wider Christian community, and the world.
- Discernment occurs continuously over the course of one's life and is essential to the exploration of one's baptismal ministry at home, at work, at school, at church, and in the wider community.
- It is a sign of the spiritual health and vitality of a faith community when it creates ongoing means of discernment to identify the vocation, gifts, and ministries of all its members.

## The Ministry of the Laity

*"This is what the Church is all about, to bring into being that vision, that ideal community of love in which we are all equally valuable and in which we equally share."*

Verna Dozier and Celia Hahn

A recent significant change in the canons of the Episcopal Church has been to move from canons that only specified the process of discernment for those considering ordination, to canons that invite all of God's people into the process of discernment of our ministry in the world as well as the Church. The Commission on Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington ("COM") is committed to empowering congregations to create a process for lay people to discern their call to ministry in their daily life and work. It is the goal of the COM to offer, at the diocesan level and within congregations, more structured opportunities to recognize and respond to those ministries to which God is calling us. A traditional African American spiritual seems to summon our attention to a process of quiet discernment:

*Hush, Hush, Somebody is calling my name.  
Hush, Hush, Somebody is calling my name.*

*Hush, Hush, Somebody is calling my name.  
Oh my Lord, Oh my Lord what shall I do?  
Sounds like Jesus, sounds like Jesus.  
Somebody is calling my name.*

## **Becoming a Discerning Community**

While discernment can take place through individual prayer and retreat, discernment within the community is also an important element of identifying each person's gifts for ministry and God's call. Such a process is grounded in the Catechism of the Book of Common Prayer, based on the response to the question, "What is the ministry of the laity?"

*"The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church."*

The phrase, "according to the gifts given them" establishes the foundation for developing a congregational discernment process. When the community discerns gifts for ministry, and how God calls those gifts to be used, it can best further God's reign.

A small group who can, through prayer and conversation, provide assistance, support, and response, is one of the best ways an individual can discern the call to lay ministry within the Church and to the wider world. Those who are interested in a discernment process in pursuit of a more focused and enhanced life of lay ministry are encouraged to:

- Convey their intention to the rector or other parish leaders;
- Engage in a group-oriented discernment process to explore and identify their spiritual gifts, passions, and goals, and how these are lived in daily life outside the Church, in the home, the community, and work;
- Enlist others in dialogue and in asking the difficult questions that guide ongoing discernment;
- Use the tools of the faith (Scripture reading, prayer, worship, Christian formation, and acts of charity) to enhance self-awareness and better to understand God's call;
- Be introspective and truthful about themselves to others;
- Be open to the wisdom and counsel of the discernment group and others;
- Attend workshops, conferences, and other forums that offer a broad exposure to work and ministry in the world; and
- Be open to licensed lay ministries within the Church.

## **Gifts for Ministry**

Author Frederick Schmidt, in writing about vocational discernment and about our gifts from God, said that our "natural business is to be the people we were born to be." It is essential to the discernment process to pay careful attention to the gifts we are given and to how we nurture and use these gifts. Gifts for ministry may be found in our experiences, abilities, strengths, skills, temperaments, and dispositions.

There are several biblical lists of spiritual gifts, notably Romans 12:7-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-10. It is clear from Saint Paul's writings that spiritual gifts belong to God and to the Church, that the bearer of any particular gift does not have a special status because of that gift, and that no gift is more important than any other. In baptism, we are given by the power of the Holy Spirit three overarching gifts: faith, hope, and love. These create and sustain our relationship and companionship with Christ, the Church, and the world.

The community of faith that creates discernment processes for vocation must also address the identification and development of gifts for mission and ministry. In the rite of Holy Baptism, the Church vows to develop the gifts of inquiry, strength, courage, perseverance, discernment, knowledge, joy, and wonder. In addition, the body of Christ is charged with building confidence in its members, so that through presence, vulnerability, hospitality, leadership, humility, and simplicity they may bring others into the company of Christ, and bring Christ to the world. This is what it means to serve the world in witness to the Gospel.

Discernment of gifts for ministry directs us to God, the source of all good gifts. According to Frederick Schmidt, such discernment requires us to be accountable and responsible for the use of God's gifts. We must not only rely on God's gifts to affirm what we already believe to be our particular gifts for ministry, but also to experience the variety of life's unexpected goodness and grace that God has in store for us. The Christian life is full of challenge and risk, and God's gifts are a means by which we walk through that life with perseverance, patience, and sacrifice.

## **The Vocational Retreat**

Each year, the COM sponsors four overnight Vocational Ministry Retreats. These retreats are designed for those who seek to discern lay vocations within the Church and the world, and for those who seek to discern a call to ordained ministry. Each retreat focuses on vocation, gifts for ministry, and discernment. Participants then return to their congregations to continue the conversation begun at the retreat.

The Vocational Ministry Retreats are designed to address the following questions:

- Where and to what is God calling you at this time in your life?
- What, specifically, is God's call to ministry for you, and what is your response to that call?
- In what ways are you using your gifts to serve God's?
- How can your faith community guide and help you as you continue to clarify your life's call?

Participants in these retreats will be offered training in the creation of discernment groups within their congregations or within their regions. In addition, the COM will offer an annual opportunity, at one of the retreats, to explore the religious life in the Episcopal Church.

## **Resources**

There are many models for discernment in small groups and for identification of gifts and talents. A partial list of resources includes:

Listening Hearts Ministries, Baltimore, Maryland, [www.listeninghearts.org](http://www.listeninghearts.org).

St. Columba's Church, Washington, DC, has a discernment ministry. Information can be found at [www.columba.org/community/education/discernment](http://www.columba.org/community/education/discernment).

Wellspring, a conference center and ministry in the tradition of the Church of Our Savior, offers events such as "Becoming the Gospel" (how to live the baptismal covenant). Programs are offered on site at their Germantown location or in host parishes. 1411 Neelsville Church Road, Germantown, MD 20876; 301-428-3373; [www.wellspringministry.org](http://www.wellspringministry.org).

The Valparaiso Project, [www.practicingyourfaith.org](http://www.practicingyourfaith.org).

Upper Room Ministries, [www.methodx.net](http://www.methodx.net).

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's program, SPLASH! explores ministry in daily life, [www.elca.org/dailylifeministry/splash](http://www.elca.org/dailylifeministry/splash).

St. John's Church in Barrington, Rhode Island, has developed a gifts discovery course entitled, "What in God's Name Are You Doing?" It is available at [www.stjohnsbarrington.org](http://www.stjohnsbarrington.org).

Three Episcopal dioceses, in conjunction with LeaderResources, Inc., have developed a training program for lay ministry, "Life Cycles." Information on this program can be found at <http://www.leaderresources.org>.

The Diocese of Olympia has done extensive work on lay ministry, found in the Ministry Canons section of the article, "The Essential Elements of Discernment in Community in Congregations." Their website is [www.ecww.org](http://www.ecww.org).

The Diocese of Texas has created Vocare, a spiritual formation and renewal ministry for young adults, focused on discerning spiritual vocation. Information on this program can be found at <http://www.vocaretx.com>.

The Anglican Church of Canada has published "The Ministry of All the Baptised," at [www.anglican.ca/faith/ministry/baptised/index.htm](http://www.anglican.ca/faith/ministry/baptised/index.htm).

The Alban Institute has a number of publications on ministry (including many by the authors listed below). Among the recommended are the Spring 2006 issue of their quarterly journal, "Congregations," and *The Authority of the Laity* by Verna J. Dozier and Celia Hahn. The website is [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org).

Marjoire Bankson's article, "The Call to the Soul," in Faith@Work magazine, <http://www.faithatwork.com/CallToTheSoul/index.html>.

Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*.

The Center for Courage & Renewal has helped foster personal and professional renewal through retreats that offer the time and space to reflect on life and work. The retreats are based on the work of Parker J. Palmer and the Fetzer Institute. Information at <http://www.couragerenewal.org>.

In addition, works by Dorothy Bass, Diana Butler Bass, Suzanne Farnham, Parker J. Palmer, and Frederick Schmidt offer considerable information on discernment and lay vocations.

*“Lay people have power. They have power in the secular world. And lay people often lose their power in the world when they feel they need to be ordained in order to have a significant ministry.”*

Verna Dozier and Celia Hahn

## **One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism: From Pew to Postulancy in the Diocese of Washington**

### **Theology of the Priesthood**

*“We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood.”*

Book of Common Prayer, p. 308

Ministry is our response to our baptism. There is no theological test, no credentialing, and no ecclesial limit to Christ’s call to follow. By virtue of baptismal grace, all are ordained, literally, as ministers of the gospel.

The COM in the Diocese of Washington is charged with equipping the baptized for ministry. This charge is a sacred trust. Believing that the Holy Spirit lives and moves among us, the COM makes no pretense of knowing all about God’s call. Nevertheless, it falls to the COM, in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, to help order the Church’s ministry in the Diocese of Washington. This is done carefully, prayerfully, and with a healthy dose of humility.

“From Pew to Postulancy” is a description of a discernment process for a particular kind of ministry: the priesthood. (See Appendix A for an outline of the process.) Because the Episcopal Church is an ordinal Church, we recognize lay people, deacons, priests, and bishops as particular incarnations of one baptismal ministry. The orders of ministry are hierarchical only in terms of institutional authority; they are not hierarchical with respect to importance. In fact, orders of ministry become more limiting and specific at each successive level. While it is true that a bishop’s ministry is representatively powerful, the bishop, the priest, the deacon, and the lay person share in one ministry, with differing roles and responsibilities within communities of faith.

In the Church, moving from the lay to the priestly order of ministry is a communal matter. There cannot be a private call to priesthood, because the priest serves the diocese and the wider Church. Our polity is clear: the process toward priestly ministry must remain open and accountable to congregation, vestry, standing committee, and bishop. While it is challenging to create intimate, respectful, mutual, and individualized accountability with so many constituencies, the canons are clear that such diligence is essential to the integrity of the process. No process can be perfect, and there are many steps in this journey, but it is our intent to provide a sound foundation and suitable framework to build up a Church that appreciates, articulates, and encourages varieties of gifts rooted in the same Spirit.

### **Discerning the Call to Ordained Ministry**

At this point in your journey, you may feel, think or believe that you are called to the priesthood. However, the discernment process continues, building on your belief with respect to your call. An essential component of discernment is openness to the voices in the Church and the world around you and the willingness to listen, even when those around you hold a different opinion about your vocational call. As Elijah hearing God in the cave, we must be willing to move beyond ourselves and our expectations to listen to God’s voice in the Church and the world. The COM hopes that you will not

rush to judgment regarding your life's work. We all live and move in God's time, and if God wills a certain vocation for any of us, it will come to be.

## **Prerequisites to the Discernment Process**

There is no deadline for entering this process or completing this work. In order to enter the discernment process, one must have been a confirmed or received member in good standing of a congregation in the Diocese of Washington (one's "home congregation") for at least two years. One may be recruited by a clergy member, or may self-identify his/her desire to the clergy-in-charge of his/her home congregation (the "sponsoring cleric").

(Note: The COM will sponsor clergy training sessions to familiarize clergy with this discernment process. Additional information regarding such training may be obtained through the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries.)

The following steps are designed for a person's spiritual and psychological formation prior to entering the discernment process with the COM:

- The individual should spend one year in at least monthly conversations with his/her sponsoring cleric about lay and ordained ministries.
- The individual should make an effort to experience a variety of lay ministries in his/her home congregation and daily life.
- The individual should visit at least five congregations in the Diocese of Washington (or elsewhere in the Episcopal Church). Such congregations should be chosen to reflect characteristics that differ from his/her home congregation; the purpose of this exercise is to expose the individual to the variety of congregations that make up the Diocese.
- Two weekend retreats are required during this initial year. One of the two must be a Vocational Ministry Retreat, held quarterly and sponsored by the COM.
- Committed participation in individual or group spiritual direction for a period of one year is required, with no less than one meeting per month. The sponsoring cleric, or any other clergy person associated with the individual's home congregation, may not serve as his/her spiritual director. (A resource list of spiritual directors is available from the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries.)
- At the end of the year, the individual must submit a short spiritual autobiography to the Officer for Deployment and Vocational Ministries (see Appendix B for guidelines). This spiritual autobiography will include a reflection on events, people who have influenced the formation of the individual or who are models of service; and experiences, both joyful and sorrowful, that have shaped the individual's desire to participate in the discernment process. The spiritual autobiography will be a resource to the discernor as he/she moves forward through the internship year.

## **The Discernment Process: Becoming a Nominee**

After the prerequisites outlined above are fulfilled, the individual should meet with the sponsoring cleric for the next step. If the two discern that the individual should continue in the discernment process, the spiritual autobiography must be submitted to the Office for Deployment and Vocational Ministries, along with a letter from the sponsoring cleric to the Bishop and the COM, on behalf of the home

congregation, nominating the individual to postulancy. This letter is the sponsoring cleric's introduction of the potential nominee to the Bishop and the COM.

Before any further action is taken, the potential nominee must complete and submit the Psychological and Physical Reports required by the Canons of the Episcopal Church (see Appendix C for the required forms). The potential nominee may use his/her own physician for the Physical Report; however, for the Psychological Report, he/she must use a psychologist or psychiatrist from the list of authorized examiners chosen by the COM in consultation with the Bishop. The potential nominee must also submit all college transcripts to the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries. A background check, through Oxford Document Services, Inc., must be completed (see Appendix D). No potential nominee will become a nominee in the discernment process until the Psychological and Physical Reports and the background check are completed.

When all the paperwork has been submitted, the potential nominee will meet with the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries and the Chair of the COM. Next, the potential nominee, along with the sponsoring cleric, will meet with the Bishop and the Chair of the COM. Those meetings will be scheduled through the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries.

The Bishop and the COM will review all of this information and will determine if the potential nominee is spiritually, psychologically, and physically ready to become a nominee in the formal discernment process. The Bishop then makes a decision.

The Bishop may decide to halt a potential nominee's discernment process. If the Bishop decides a definite "no" is warranted, the individual may not reapply in the diocese. The Bishop may also decide to delay the process for a potential nominee, pending the completion of assigned tasks related to spiritual, psychological, and/or physical health; that potential nominee may reapply after one calendar year. If the Bishop decides the discernment process should continue, the potential nominee becomes a nominee.

### **The Discernment Process: The Nominee's Discernment Year**

The Bishop, the Chair of the COM, and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries will meet to choose five possible sites ("discernment congregations") for the nominee's discernment year. Arrangements are made in advance with the clergy-in-charge of these sites (the "supervising cleric"). The purpose of the discernment year is to assist the nominee in deepening his/her ability to articulate his/her call in a congregation that is different from the home congregation. The nominee will have the opportunity to experience, function within, and reflect upon a new community and how its members live out their faith in their unique setting. These differences will offer new insights for the nominee. The list of five potential sites is given to the nominee, and he/she then begins interviews with potential supervising clerics at these sites.

After the site for the discernment year is selected, the Discernment Committee is formed. This Committee consists of three members from the discernment congregation and a COM liaison, who serves as chair of the Committee. The Committee meets monthly with the nominee. It must provide a means for prayerful reflection on the nominee's discernment process. This Committee also provides the nominee with feedback on issues such as how he/she is perceived within the discernment congregation. A summary of the content of the regular Committee meetings is found in Appendix E.

In addition to monthly meeting with the Discernment Committee, the nominee must meet monthly with the supervising cleric to discuss his/her progress in the congregation. The nominee and the supervising

cleric will create a plan for the nominee's discernment year. This written ministry plan must be sent to the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries, and will become part of the nominee's file.

During the discernment year, the nominee will meet twice with the Bishop and will maintain periodic contact with the sponsoring cleric at his/her home congregation. The spouse/partner of the nominee is encouraged to participate in one of the meetings with the Bishop. In addition to these meetings, the nominee must give verbal and written updates of his/her process to the vestry at his/her sponsoring congregation. These reports to the sponsoring congregation's vestry are very important; that vestry is canonically responsible for signing the nominee's petition for postulancy.

At the completion of the discernment year, the Discernment Committee must submit a written report to the Bishop and COM, through the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries (see Appendix F). A copy of the report will be sent to the vestry of the sponsoring congregation, which then completes the canonically required Nominee's Recommendation for Postulancy Form (see Appendix G).

A group consisting of the COM chair, two lay members of the COM, and two clergy members of the COM reviews these reports and documents. That group and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries then interview the nominee. After the interview, the group makes a written recommendation to the Bishop to deny, delay, or confirm admittance of the nominee as a postulant.

The Bishop then decides whether the nominee will become a postulant. He may decide to grant postulancy, to delay postulancy pending further formation work, or not to grant postulancy. The Bishop will deliver this decision to the nominee in a meeting with the sponsoring cleric, the Chair of the COM, and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries.

The COM has prayerfully and carefully designed this discernment process to be a positive experience for anyone who seeks to discern his/her life's work and vocation. We hope all who seek to discern a call to ministry will see this as an opportunity for spiritual and personal formation, regardless of the outcome of this process. We will continue to pray for all seekers of God's call throughout the process: May God bless them with open and discerning hearts.

## **Appendix A: Outline of the Discernment Process**

1. Must be a confirmed/received member in good standing in the Episcopal Church for at least two years and a member of a Diocese of Washington congregation for at least one year prior to making inquiries into the discernment process.
2. Prerequisites for the Diocesan Discernment Process
  - a. One year is spent in no less than monthly conversations about lay and ordained ministries with the sponsoring cleric at the home congregation.
  - b. The individual during this year seeks to experience a variety of lay ministries in his/her congregation and his/her daily life.
  - c. The individual visits five congregations in the Diocese of Washington (or elsewhere in the Episcopal Church) that are distinct from his/her home congregation.
  - d. Two weekend retreats are required during this initial year. One must be a Vocational Ministry Retreat sponsored by the Diocese through the COM.
  - e. Committed participation in individual or group spiritual direction for a period of one year with no less than one meeting per month. The priest-in-charge or other clergy person associated with the individual's home congregation may not serve as the spiritual director.
  - f. At the end of this year, the individual must submit a short spiritual autobiography to the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries. (see Appendix B for guidelines).
3. Diocesan Discernment Process: Applying to Become a Nominee
  - a. Submit application forms (available through the Office of Vocational Ministries).
  - b. Submit spiritual autobiography to Office of Vocational Ministries.
  - c. Letter of Support/Introduction is submitted from the sponsoring cleric of the home congregation.
  - d. Psychological and Physical Health Reports (see Appendix C) are submitted.
  - e. All college transcripts are sent to Office of Vocational Ministries.
  - f. A background check (see Appendix D) is completed.
  - g. Meeting with the potential nominee, the Chair of COM, and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries.
  - h. Meeting with the potential nominee, the Bishop, the sponsoring cleric, and the Chair of the COM.
  - i. The Bishop decides on admittance to status of nominee.
4. Diocesan Discernment Process: Nominee's Discernment Year
  - a. The Bishop, the Chair of COM, and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries meet to discuss discernment year placement.
  - b. Nominee meets monthly with the Discernment Committee, and the Discernment Committee makes monthly reports (see Appendix E).
  - c. The nominee meets twice with the Bishop during the Discernment Year.
  - d. The Discernment Committee submits a year end report (see: Appendix F).
  - f. Sponsoring Congregation's Vestry submits "Nominee's Recommendation for Postulancy Form (see Appendix G).

- g. Nominee interviews with the COM subgroup and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries.
- h. The COM subgroup and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries makes recommendation to the Bishop.
- i. The Bishop meets with the nominee and sponsoring cleric to give his decision.

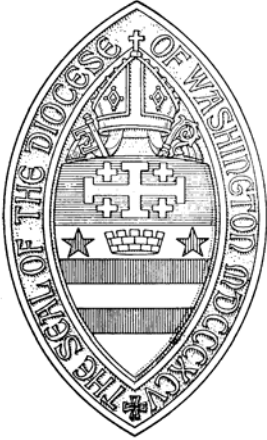
## **Appendix B: Guidelines for the Spiritual Autobiography**

1. The paper is to be double-spaced and three to five typed pages.
2. This spiritual autobiography should include reflections on events; people who have influenced the formation of the individual or who are models of service; and experiences, joyful and sorrowful, that have shaped the individual's desire to participate in the discernment process. The spiritual autobiography will be a resource to you as you move forward through the internship year. In addressing these issues you may wish to reflect upon the following:
  - What is discernment and how do you discern options in your life?
  - Have you used a discernment process where a community was involved in testing out an idea of yours?
    - What was the experience like?
    - What did you learn about yourself from that experience?
  - Are you comfortable with the need to have a community validate or substantiate your vocational options?
  - What are your hopes and fears relative to this discernment process?
  - Reflect upon the meaning of the "ministry of the baptized"?
  - When did you first begin your particular lay ministries and what paths have your ministries taken over the years?
  - How have your experiences in ministry enriched your life?
  - What experiences in ministry have given you the most joy and the most concern?
  - Who has encouraged you in your ministry and whose ministry have you admired? Why?
  - How do you see this ministry changing or expanding if you are discerned to the priesthood?
3. Please attach a current resume to the reflection paper. The resume will not count toward the page limit.

Once you have completed and edited your spiritual autobiography, send it to:

EPISCOPAL CHURCH HOUSE  
 OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL MINISTRIES  
 MOUNT ST. ALBAN  
 WASHINGTON DC

**Appendix C**



**REQUIRED MEDICAL EXAMINATION  
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON**

**THIS REPORT SHOULD BE MAILED BY THE EXAMINER DIRECTLY TO THE ADDRESS GIVEN BELOW. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM IS TO BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. BY SUBMITTING TO THIS EXAMINATION, THE NOMINEE CONSENTS TO THE USE OF THIS INFORMATION BY THE BISHOP AND HIS/HER AGENTS IN DETERMINING THE INDIVIDUALS SUITABILITY FOR HOLY ORDERS.**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, HAVING READ THE ABOVE STATEMENT GIVE MY CONSENT TO THE BISHOP OF WASHINGTON AND HIS/HER AGENTS TO UTILIZE THIS MATERIAL IN DETERMINING MY SUITABILITY FOR HOLY ORDERS.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(NOMINEE'S SIGNATURE)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(DATE)**

**PHYSICIANS PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY THAT YOUR SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED IN SEVERAL PLACES ON THIS FORM. PLEASE PRINT OR WRITE LEGIBLY OR STAMP YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAST PAGE.**

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:**

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH HOUSE  
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL MINISTRIES  
MOUNT ST. ALBAN  
WASHINGTON DC 20016  
202-537-6536**



Check the appropriate box for disorders you have or have had in the past.

	YES	NO		
<u>Infectious Diseases</u>			Sinus infection	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Pneumonia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asthma	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Frequent Sore Throat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hay fever	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Dysentery (Chronic)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bronchitis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Infantile Paralysis (Polio)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pleurisy	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Syphilis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tuberculosis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Gonorrhea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic cough	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
HIV/AIDS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic hoarseness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Skin diseases or eczema	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coughing up blood	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Recurrent Chills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tobacco use	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Enlarged lymph nodes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	YES	NO		
<u>Heart &amp; Blood Vessels</u>			<u>Nervous System</u>	YES NO
High or low blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Epileptic or other fits	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Heart disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Migraine	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Pain in chest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meningitis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Rheumatic fever	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental or nervous diseases (family)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Heart murmur	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental or nervous diseases (self)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Palpitations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dizzy spells	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Shortness of breath	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fainting spells	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Swollen ankles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visual problems	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Anemia or blood disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Deafness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Coagulation disorder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ringing ears, hearing difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Elevated cholesterol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paralysis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	Weakness of limbs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Digestive System</u>			Numbness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Ulcers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Jaundice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Miscellaneous</u>	YES NO
Hepatitis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cancer	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Recurrent diarrhea	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lymphoma or	
Bloody stools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other blood diseases	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Marked over or underweight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diabetes (familial)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Recent weight loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diabetes (self)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Gall bladder disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thyroid disease	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Hernia (rupture)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Foot problems	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
	YES	NO	Back pain	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Genitourinary System</u>			Joint pain	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Kidney disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Allergy to food, medicine or environmental agents	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Kidney stones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Blood transfusions	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Prostate disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arthritis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Bladder disease	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use of nicotine on daily basis in the past five years.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Blood in urine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you ever been habitual user of habit forming drugs or received treatment for alcoholism or drug abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Pain in passing urine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you ever had any illnesses (mental or physical) or accidents other than those mentioned?	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Urinary tract infection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	YES	NO		
<u>Respiratory System</u>				

I hereby declare that my answers to the above questions are full and true. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Nominee)

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_

in my presence, this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Physician)

**OUTLINE FOR PHYSICAL EXAMINATION:**

1. How long have you known the nominee? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Height without shoes: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ lbs.  
 underweight       normal range       obese       morbidly obese

4. Vital Statistics:

Temperature \_\_\_\_\_

Pulse \_\_\_\_\_

Respiration \_\_\_\_\_

Blood Pressure \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Right or Left Arm)

**Physical Examination: Check for within normal limits. Note positive findings in space below.**

**Head**

- Eyes:** vision   
 conjunctivae & sclerae   
 pupil size   
 reaction   
 equality   
 appearance
- Ears:** hearing   
 air & bone conduction   
 tympanic membranes
- Nose:** obstruction to breathing   
 septal deviation   
 septal perforation   
 discharge
- Mouth:** sores   
 dental status   
 appearance of palpation of  
 mucosa, tongue, gums, floor  
 of mouth   
 tonsils, pharynx   
 uvula, palate   
 gag reflex

**Lymph Nodes:**   
 Enlargement, consistency and/or tenderness  
 of cervical, axillary, epitrochlear, political,  
 and inguinal glands.

**Chest:**

Appearance & function of  
 chest wall

Breasts: appearance, asymmetry  
 masses, nipple discharge

Lungs: type of respiration,  
 Character of breath, sounds;  
 presence of rales, rhonchi,  
 wheezes or rubs

**Heart:**

Apex location, precordial  
 movement or thrills

**Auscultation:**

Heart sounds: S1, S2, S3, S4

Presence of murmurs, clicks,  
 rub, split sounds

radiation of murmurs

**Neck**

- Palpable masses
- Thyroid
- Location of trachea
- Venous engorgement
- Bruits
- Flexibility

**Pulses**

- Carotids
- Brachials
- Radials
- Femorals
- Dorsalis pedis
- Posterior Tibials

**Spine**

- Mobility
- Tenderness
- Curvature

**Abdomen**

- Appearance (distended, flat, etc.)
- Abnormal movements
- Dilated veins
- Striae
- Auscultation:
  - Bowel sounds
  - Bruits
  - Rubs
- Percussion:
  - Distention
  - Organ Size (Liver, Spleen)
- Palpation:
  - Resistance
  - Tenderness
  - Rebound
  - Organs (Liver, spleen)
  - Masses
  - Hernia (type)

**Neurological**

- Mental Status
- Cranial Nerves
- Cerebellar Function
- Muscle Strength
- Reflexes
- Gait & Station
- Rapid Sensory exam

**Extremities**

- Skin color
- Temperature
- Texture
- Varicosities
- Clubbing
- Edema
- Joint Motions
- Muscular Abnormalities
- Circumference

**Genital, Prostate or Pelvic Examination**  
(list any abnormal findings)

**Rectal Exam and Stool Sample**  
(list positive findings)

**LABORATORY**

- CBC \_\_\_\_\_
- Fasting Chem Profile \_\_\_\_\_
- U/A \_\_\_\_\_
- EKG (if indicated) \_\_\_\_\_
- PPD \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of positive findings:**

On the basis of your examination, is the nominee free from any medical condition or other impediment that would render him/her unsuitable for the tasks of ordained ministry? Ordained Life is extremely stressful and can result in periods of sleep deprivation and constant activity can the nominee's health sustain these potential periods of extreme stress? **(THIS QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED FOR THE FORM TO BE COMPLETE!)**

---

**Examiner's Signature**

---

---

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**Address**

---

**Phone Number**



## REQUIRED MENTAL HEALTH Evaluation EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

THIS REPORT SHOULD BE MAILED BY THE CLINICIAN DIRECTLY TO THE ADDRESS GIVEN BELOW. THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM IS TO BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. BY SUBMITTING TO THIS EXAMINATION, THE NOMINEE CONSENTS TO THE USE OF THIS INFORMATION BY THE BISHOP AND HIS/HER AGENTS IN DETERMINING THE INDIVIDUAL'S SUITABILITY FOR HOLY ORDERS.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, HAVING READ THE ABOVE STATEMENT GIVE MY CONSENT TO THE BISHOP OF WASHINGTON AND HIS/HER AGENTS TO UTILIZE THIS MATERIAL IN DETERMINING MY SUITABILITY FOR HOLY ORDERS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(NOMINEE'S SIGNATURE)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(DATE)

CLINICIAN: PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY THAT YOUR SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED ON THIS FORM. PLEASE PRINT OR WRITE LEGIBLY OR STAMP YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAST PAGE.

\*The Behavior Screening Questionnaire and the Life History Survey can be obtained by contacting the Office of Vocational Ministries.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED TO:

EPISCOPAL CHURCH HOUSE  
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL MINISTRIES  
MOUNT ST. ALBAN  
WASHINGTON DC 20016  
202-537-6536

<p><b>EVALUATION SUMMARY</b>  <b>FROM THE PSYCHIATRIST OR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST</b>  <b>FOR ORDINATION IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH</b></p>
--

To: The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane  
 Bishop of the Diocese of Washington

Name of Nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Length of Examinations: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is there any serious maladjustments or limitations of the personality that, in your opinion, would disqualify the nominee for ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church?  Yes  No
2. Are there any signs in the present behavior of the nominee that suggest that, in your opinion, this person may become ill under the presence of clergy life?  Yes  No
3. What is your impression of the nominee's ability to respond adequately and appropriately to the emotional and physical demands of ordained ministry?  
 Good  Fair  Doubtful  Poor  No Comment
4. What is your impression of the likelihood of the nominee becoming unstable or dysfunctional as a result of the emotional and physical strain engendered by the role of the ordained minister?  
 Good  Fair  Doubtful  Poor  No Comment
5. Are there any problematic or unresolved familial issues that would adversely affect the nominee's ministry as an ordained person?  Yes  No
6. Does the nominee possess appropriate mechanisms for stress relief?  Yes  No
7. Does the nominee have unresolved issues or concerns around his/her sexual identity?  Yes  No
8. Have you reviewed a signed Behavior Screen Questionnaire (BSQ) completed by the nominee?  
 Yes  No
9. Are your conclusions based in part on review of the Life History Questionnaire (LHQ) or other instruments (please list: \_\_\_\_\_ )?  
 Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Signature of Examiner)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Address)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Phone)

## **AUTHORIZED EXAMINERS**

### **Psychologists**

Jennifer Crumlish, Ph.D.  
Washington Psychological Ctr.  
5225 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 513  
Washington, DC 20015  
202-364-1575

Katharine Bethell, M.S.W.  
Washington Psychological Ctr.  
5225 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Suite 51  
Washington, DC 20008  
202-364-1575

Dorothy Holmes, Ph.D.  
4601 Connecticut, NW, Ste 20  
Washington, DC 2000  
202-966-7437

Robin A. Rudd, Ph.D.  
4915 St. Elmo Ave., Suite 404  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-652-3290

Debra A. Neuman, Ph.D.  
4809 St. Elmo Avenue  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-320-4446

### **Psychiatrists**

Lindsay Clarkson, M.D.  
4701 Willard Ave. Suite 204  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
301-654-5072

Kent Ravenscroft, M.D.  
4710 30<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
202-966-4091

Martha Brown Martin, M.D.  
12106 Whippoorwill Lane  
Rockville, MD 20852  
301-881-4050

### **Please Note:**

1. Psychological/Psychiatric Interview: Applicants may choose any of the above psychiatrists or psychologists. Three one hour visits are required. Please complete and forward the attached forms to the doctor prior to your appointment. The doctor will prepare a written report as well as the evaluation summary. Total cost will be about \$1000 (including three sessions and the report writing). For the psychological exams, the applicant must pay one-third, the sponsoring parish must pay one-third, and the diocese will pay one-third of the cost. The applicant must pay the entire fee and seek reimbursement from the parish and the diocese. Invoices may be sent to the Office of Vocational Ministries for reimbursement of the diocesan portion of the fee. **DOCTORS WILL NOT ISSUE REPORTS UNTIL FEES ARE PAID.**
2. The second round of psychological examinations which are required when applying for ordination to the Diaconate should be with the same doctors as the first round and will be paid for by the Diocese of Washington.

Questions: If you have questions, please call George McConnell in the Deployment Officer's office 202-537-6536 or contact him at gmcconnell@edow.org.

## Appendix D: Oxford Background Check

**I understand that for the successful granting of postulancy in the Diocese of Washington a background check must be completed according to the policies of the Diocese** concerning sexual misconduct, protection of children, extended counseling relationships and spiritual direction.

I further understand that, among other things, the purpose of a background check is to attempt to identify current or past sexual misconduct allegations, criminal records or paraphiliac behavior (e.g. pedophilia, pederasty, exhibitionism, or voyeurism). The background check includes inquiries of all schools attended in the past five years and all employers during the past five years. The background check may also include routine checks for information regarding credit, criminal, and motor vehicle records.

To be a nominee, I understand that I will be required to supply the Diocese or its agents with the information needed to perform such a background check.

**Is there anything in your experience in these areas (or in any others) which might be considered potentially embarrassing—to the Church? To you? To your family, community or household?** If “yes” please explain. (Use the reverse side if needed.) If “no,” please write the word “no” in the blank below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security#: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Driver License#: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

State of License: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix E: Discernment Committee Meetings**

1. The Discernment Committee should have a prayerful standard to be used at the beginning of each meeting to help ground all discussion in the Spirit.
2. The meetings should have enough time set aside for all members to participate.
3. The first few meetings should be a time for the participants to get to know each other and gain clarity as to the purpose and procedure of the meetings.
4. By the third meeting, the nominee should present his/her understanding of the discernment congregation and its history. This can be crafted by observation, speaking with the lay leadership of the parish, speaking with the rector, and interviewing some members of the congregation.
5. The nominee's spouse or partner is encouraged to participate in at least one of the meetings.
6. Any of the following questions are suggested for conversations at subsequent meetings:
  - a. How is the nominee perceived within the parish/congregation?
  - b. Discuss the nominee's entry experiences. What did the nominee learn about himself/herself and the congregation?
  - c. How is the nominee adapting to the worship in the discernment congregation? What has been most surprising? What has been most exciting and life giving?
  - d. How is God utilizing this time and experience to inform or enlighten the nominee's vocation in the Church and the world?
  - e. In coming to a new congregation, what are the "rubs" (difficulties, issues, tensions, etc.) in the nominee's life?
  - f. Through the experience in the discernment congregation, where does the nominee find joy?
  - g. What scripture passages has the nominee heard with new enlightenment or awareness in light of his/her experience in the discernment congregation?
  - h. How is the nominee experiencing his/her new ministries within the congregation? What challenges are being presented by these ministries?
  - i. How has the nominee's understanding of the priesthood changed since arriving in the discernment congregation?
  - j. How has the nominee's interaction with people shown him/her God's grace?
  - k. How and where is God calling the nominee to grow?
  - l. What has the nominee learned about himself/herself when it comes to pastoral interactions with parishioners?
  - m. Where is the balance being challenged in the nominee's life? What has the nominee learned from these challenges?

## **Appendix F: Written Report from the Discernment Committee**

By the eleventh meeting of the Discernment Committee, the group should begin to turn its focus to issues of leave taking. As part of that process, a reflection report will be written that will discuss the group's impressions of the nominee, his/her strengths, and areas in which he/she needs to grow. The committee is encouraged to take their time to prayerfully develop comprehensive answers to these questions. **The COM Liaison should not be the author of this report.** There is no page limit.

1. Have you been able to formulate a clear sense of the nominee's vocational call, not necessarily as the nominee perceives it, but how you as individuals and a group have heard God speaking to the nominee in regard to his/her life ministry?
2. How would you describe the nominee's experiences in the congregation? How have you heard God's voice regarding the nominee in these experiences?
3. What are the nominee's strengths for ministry? Where does the nominee need to explore further growth?

**Appendix G: Recommendation for Postulancy in the Diocese of Washington**

To the Bishop and the COM of the Diocese of Washington:

PLACE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

The procedures of the COM of the Diocese of Washington require a recommendation from the Rector and Vestry of the Parish of which the Nominee is a communicant, setting forth the grounds upon which they judge him/her to possess such qualifications as would fit him/her to begin the process towards ordination. In addition, this congregation commits itself to taking part in the nominee's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood.

The grounds for our judgment are as follows:

Therefore, we, whose names are hereunder written testify to our belief that

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of Nominee)

is sober, honest, and godly, and that he/she is a communicant of this Church in good standing. We do furthermore declare that, in our opinion, he/she possesses such qualifications as fit him/her to be admitted as a Postulant for Holy Orders and we commit our support to this person's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood.

(signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Rector of the Nominee's Home Parish)

VESTRY OF SAID PARISH  
(signatures)

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

(or a two-thirds majority of all members thereof)

ATTESTATION OF THE FOREGOING

I hereby certify that the foregoing certificate was signed at a meeting of the Vestry of

\_\_\_\_\_ Parish, duly convened at  
\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_

and that the names attached are those of all (or a two-thirds majority of all) the members of the Vestry.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk/Secretary of Vestry

## **Appendix H: Guidelines for Postulants, Candidates, and Deacons**

### **The Next Few Years**

The discernment process regarding ordained ministry does not end with the granting of postulancy by the Bishop. Throughout the next several years you will be participating in academic and community formation at a seminary, in Clinical Pastoral Education, field education, and many other opportunities unique to this time of preparation for ordination. Each of these activities forms you for Christian service in the Church as a deacon and a priest. The following is your guide to what you need to share with the Bishop, the COM, the Standing Committee, and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries, as you move forward in this time of preparation for ordination.

### **Seminary**

Typically postulants for the priesthood spend their initial months of postulancy preparing to be admitted to an Episcopal seminary. The expectation of the Bishop and the COM is that postulants in the Diocese of Washington will attend an Episcopal seminary full-time. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. All postulants/candidates are expected to take the General Ordination Examination in their senior year, and it has been our experience that those prepared by an Episcopal seminary perform better than those prepared in other academic environments.

You must consult with the Bishop, the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries, and your COM liaison as you make application decisions related to seminary. When you have been accepted in seminary please notify George McConnell, the Assistant Deployment Officer, about your acceptance. A limited amount of financial aid is available from the Diocese of Washington and this is awarded to postulants and candidates based on financial need.

The Bishop and the COM require that seminary faculty evaluations for the middler and senior years be sent to the Diocese, as well as seminary transcripts for the junior, middler and senior years. All students are required to take one semester of Greek or Hebrew.

The Bishop and the COM also require these additional courses and /or training of all preparing for ordination to the priesthood:

1. Spanish language courses are required. Those preparing for holy orders are expected to be able to lead worship in Spanish and to converse cordially with Spanish speakers.
2. A conflict management seminar/course and a human interaction lab or community organization training are required. These courses are frequently offered in the January term at seminaries and through such organizations as the Alban Institute and the Cathedral College of the Washington National Cathedral. If a significant number of postulants/candidates are interested in taking these seminars/labs together, the COM may sponsor sessions within the diocese.
3. Resolutions of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church require that all seminarians complete anti-racism training. This training is offered at seminaries, through Clinical Pastoral Education, and through the Diocesan Task Force on Racial Reconciliation.
4. The canons require that all who are preparing for ordained ministry complete training in Title IV. This is training in prevention of adult sexual misconduct and in prevention of child abuse (Safeguarding God's

Children). These courses are offered at seminaries and, in the case of Safeguarding God's Children, by the Diocese of Washington.

Evaluations from Clinical Pastoral Education and field education must be sent to the Diocese. These evaluations are often given directly to the student; it is your responsibility to insure that they arrive at the Office on Deployment and Vocational Ministries.

## **Ember Day Letters**

One of the most important ways that postulants, candidates, and deacons sustain their relationship with the Bishop is through Ember Day letters. These are letters written four times a year – in September, December, February, and May. (The Book of Common Prayer gives precise directions for calculating these dates, and you should have a liturgical planning calendar that provides this information.) These letters are opportunities for you to reflect on your work in seminary, field education, and in other areas of your life and ministry. These letters are confidential. However, if you make specific requests to the Bishop, you should send copies to the Office on Deployment and Vocational Ministries so that we have a record, for the COM and the Standing Committee, of any permissions given by the Bishop for special classes or ministry opportunities.

Ember Day letters may be sent by email or by U.S. mail. Please observe the deadlines and provide your letters in a timely manner.

## **The COM and the Standing Committee**

Each postulant/candidate will be assigned a liaison with the COM and a liaison with the Standing Committee. It is your responsibility to make the initial contact with each of these liaisons and set out the best means for meeting and communicating, at least three times a year with the COM liaison, and at least twice a year with the Standing Committee liaison. Every member of the COM and Standing Committee has been given these guidelines. While the COM and Standing Committee liaisons take their roles very seriously, you should take the initiative to contact your liaisons if you have not heard from them in a while. Contact the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries if you are not hearing from your liaisons.

## **Clinical Pastoral Education**

All postulants/candidates are required to take 400 hours of clinical pastoral education in a hospital, nursing home, or psychiatric facility. Interviewing and registration for this chaplaincy program is usually done through the seminary you attend. The best time to fulfill this requirement is the summer between the junior and middler years. No postulant will be allowed to interview for candidacy until clinical pastoral education is complete and the evaluation for this program is submitted to the Office of Deployment and Vocational Ministries.

## **Spiritual Direction**

It is expected that all postulants/candidates will be in spiritual direction throughout their time in seminary. Spiritual directors may be chosen from among those provided by the seminary or from others outside of the seminary environment. Members of the COM, Standing Committee, and diocesan staff may not serve in this capacity, nor may sponsoring clerics.

## **General Ordination Examinations**

The General Board of Examining Chaplains administers this examination every year, usually in the first week of January. This four day examination covers the canonical areas of scripture, liturgy and music, theory and practice of ministry, Church history, Christian ethics, contemporary society, and theology. It is an essay examination. The Diocese registers postulants in the fall of their senior years for the examination. Select members of the COM are asked annually to serve as examining chaplains in the Diocese. Along with the Bishop and the Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries, they read all examinations taken by the students in this Diocese and recommend remedial work for those who do not write satisfactory examinations.

## **Candidacy**

Sometime during the middler year you will be interviewed for candidacy by the Standing Committee. The following information must be in the Diocesan office 45 days prior to the candidacy interview: Application for candidacy in the form of a letter to the Bishop per Canon III.8.4; CPE Report from the postulant and supervisor; field education reports; and Endorsement of Candidacy for Holy Orders signed by the sponsoring cleric and at least two thirds of the vestry of the home congregation. After the interview, the candidate will be notified by the Standing Committee of his/her recommendation to the Bishop. The Bishop makes all final decisions about candidacy, and a letter will be sent by the Bishop to the postulant granting or denying candidacy.

## **Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood**

In the spring of your senior year you must provide the following materials to the Diocesan office before you are interviewed by the Standing Committee: Application for ordination in the form of a letter to the Bishop; GOE results; letter of support for ordination signed by the sponsoring cleric and at least two thirds of the vestry of the home congregation; certificate from the seminary that the candidate meets all required educational components for ordination; second physical examination; second psychological examination; background check, and COM testimonial for candidacy. Before ordination to the priesthood the following must be in the file: final seminary transcript; evidence of anti-racism training, evidence of Title IV training (certificates for the completion of prevention of adult and child sexual misconduct courses); and final testimonials of support from the sponsoring congregation, or the congregation of employment for the deacon.

During the early spring of the senior year there will be one planning meeting for preparation of the ordination liturgy for the diaconal ordination. During the following fall there will be one planning meeting to prepare for the ordination to the priesthood. All ordination liturgies are held at the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, the Washington National Cathedral. It is expected that all will attend these meetings to plan this important celebration in the life of the Diocese.

## **Placement of Those to be Ordained**

The canons require that all deacons have a position within the Church in which they can exercise priestly ministry before ordination to the priesthood. The Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries will assist all seniors in preparing CDO's (data forms for the Church Deployment Office in New York) and resumes. The Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries will also introduce all candidates at the annual diocesan convention so that diocesan clergy are aware of their availability. However, the Diocese does not place deacons. Diocesan candidates are interviewed along with those from other dioceses. While the Diocese does all in its power to encourage the calling of local candidates, and candidates are kept abreast of all available positions, it is up to each candidate to initiate a conversation with a rector about an assistant's position and with a Head of School about a chaplain's position.

## Other Events

The Bishop and Mrs. Chane host an annual spring supper for postulants and candidates. This is an opportunity for postulants, candidates, and their spouses or partners, to have a relaxed and informal conversation with each other, members of Diocesan staff, the Bishop and Mrs. Chane, and the members of the COM and the Standing Committee. Just prior to the ordination to the diaconate, Bishop and Mrs. Chane host a dinner for those to be ordained and their spouses or partners.

The Canon for Deployment and Vocational Ministries hosts a fall and spring lunch for local postulants and candidates. She also arranges to meet at least annually with those postulants and candidates who are at seminaries outside of the Washington metropolitan area.

The Diocese of Washington arranges for two pre-ordination retreats for all those to be ordained. The first takes place in late May, prior to the diaconal ordination, and the second takes place in early January, prior to the ordination to the priesthood. Retreat leaders have included, among others, Esther De Waal, Eugene Sutton, and Margaret Guenther. These retreats are generally held at local retreat centers.

## Important Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call:

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## **Appendix I: General Financial Costs of Seminary Education**

Costs for seminary education vary by seminary and by the life situation of the seminarian. Below you will find a brief range of the cost of tuition and living expenses as reported by the eleven Episcopal Seminaries' websites. Please remember that additional living costs will apply and that these are rough estimates.

Tuition	\$9,000 to \$17,600
Living (room, board, books, fees)	\$7,200 to \$18,036
Total	\$16,200 to \$35,636

The Diocese is aware of the cost of seminary and tries to assist seminarians financially as well as with resources necessary to apply for other scholarships. The average financial assistance the Diocese was able to give in the 2006-2007 academic year was \$3,000.

It is the expectation of the COM that parishes will also assist parishioners who are sent to seminary. Conversations with the sponsoring cleric as to what the individual might be able to receive should occur during the year of conversation.

To be of further assistance the COM will offer the opportunity for nominees to meet with a financial advisor during the discernment year. This time will be spent on general information, financial planning as well as conversation about the Church Pension Fund and what the average pensions are that one could anticipate receiving when average salary and years of service are calculated.

## Appendix J: Check List for Discernment to the Priesthood

- One year in monthly or biweekly conversations with sponsoring cleric
  - Beginning Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- One year with Spiritual Director. Name of Spiritual Director: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Beginning Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Visits to five congregations (different and distinct from your home parish)
  - Dates and Locations:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Two Retreats: (Date and Location)
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Submission of spiritual autobiography: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Letter of Support/Introduction from sponsoring cleric: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Psychological Report submitted: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Physical Health Report submitted: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Background Check completed: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Submission on all college/university transcripts: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting with Bishop and sponsoring cleric: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting with COM Chair and Canon for Vocational Ministries: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting with Bishop on status as nominee: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting about discernment placement: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Discernment Year: Beginning Date: \_\_\_\_\_, Location: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meetings with Bishop: Dates: \_\_\_\_\_
- Update meetings with sponsoring Vestry: Dates: \_\_\_\_\_
- Discernment Year final report submitted: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sponsoring Congregations Vestry submission of "Recommendation for Postulancy Form"
  - Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Interview with COM subcommittee: Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Meeting with Bishop and sponsoring cleric: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix K

### Examining Chaplains, a committee of the Commission on Ministry

The canons of the Episcopal Church have given the responsibility for the ongoing formation of postulants, candidates and ordinands to the Commission on Ministry as a key part of its work and ministry. In addition the canons make it possible for the COM to create committees that can aid the implementation of its work and ministry. To aid in the academic formation of those seeking ordination the COM has created a committee of examining chaplains at the diocesan level. This committee consists of three examining chaplains, two outside of the COM and one from within the COM who serves as the chair of the committee. All are appointed by the Bishop of Washington. All members are appointed for a three year term with the possibility of serving a second consecutive term. Special concern is given to appointing a committee that is diverse and sensitive to multicultural, multiethnic needs and concerns of postulants and candidates for holy orders.

The tasks of this committee include the following:

The creation and implementation of a policy on follow-up of General Ordination Examination results;

The creation and implementation of a policy of response to poor academic work in seminary;

The development of appropriate programs of study and formation for those entering the ordination process who were ordained in other Christian traditions;

The development of appropriate programs of study and formation for those entering the ordination process who already have graduate degrees from seminary;

and

The development of appropriate programs of study and formation for those entering the ordination process from other provinces in the Anglican Communion.

The committee reports to the Commission on Ministry as needed. Any policies or guidelines developed by the committee are presented to the COM for their approval and are posted on the website as part of the overall guidelines for vocational discernment