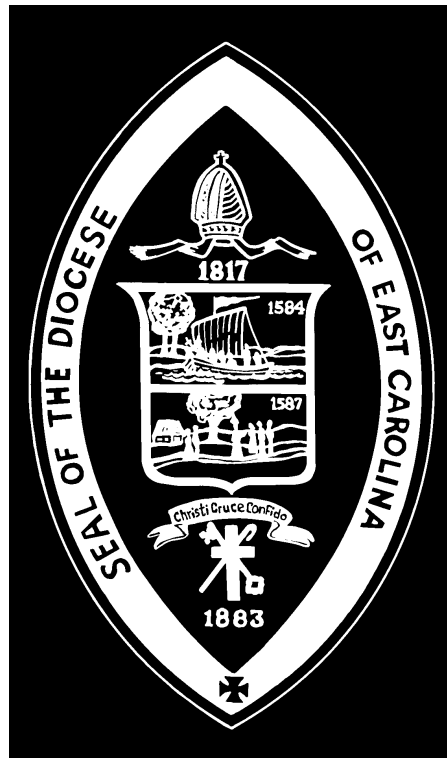


# Steps Toward Ordination to the Diaconate



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**(Revised 5/13/04 by the Commission on Ministry)**

## What is a Deacon

Deacons are servants. The name is derived from the Greek “diakonia,” meaning service. Jesus clearly identifies his ministry as one of service, and since the time of the New Testament, the term has stood for servant ministry.

Christians are ministers by virtue of their baptism, sealed by the Holy Spirit and sent into the world to witness to God’s love. Deacons are ordained servants, called to “a special ministry of servanthood directly under your Bishop...to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely” *The Book of Common Prayer*, p.543, and are required to model that ministry to the Church and on behalf of the Church.

The deacon’s purpose in the Church is to remind Christians of the ministry to which all are called at baptism and “to show Christ’s people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself” (BCP, 543). A Deacon’s service in the world and assistance at the altar bring the needs of the helpless to the altar of the Church, where Christians are renewed in spirit and sent into the world to love and serve.

Deacons are a duly recognized sacred order of the Church. Along with the distinct orders of Bishop and Priest, the order of Deacon completes the ordained ministry of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, a ministry which is recognized and affirmed as “...a gift from God for the nurture of his people and the proclamation of his Gospel everywhere.” (BCP 510). The particular ministry of Deacon is outlined in the Catechism on page 856 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Holy Scriptures, early Christian writers, the history of the Church and *The Book of Common Prayer* include the diaconate as a separate and equal sacred order. The Commission on Ministry of the Diocese of East Carolina supports a Deacon Program to serve the world, the Diocese, and the Bishop. The program educates, trains, and supervises aspirants, creating a community of learning but using individualized study plans to enhance the current ministry of each participant.

## REQUIREMENTS

The Church establishes the following requirements for Deacons (BCP, 543):

- ❖ To study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model their lives upon them;
- ❖ To make Christ and his redemptive love known, by word and example, to those among whom they live, and work, and worship;
- ❖ To interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world;
- ❖ To assist the Bishop and Priests in public worship and in the ministration of God’s Word and Sacraments;
- ❖ To carry out other duties assigned to them from time to time by the Bishop; and
- ❖ To show Christ’s people at all times that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself.

## THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

The Commission on Ministry which oversees the process is convinced that an important service to the Church is the selection and training of persons for ordination; therefore, the Commission recommends close examination of pages 854 -856 of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Commission on Ministry evaluates all applicants and makes recommendations or observations to the bishop who then decides whom to admit as Postulants.

# PROCESS LEADING TO ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

(Note: All provisions of Title III, Canon 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons, shall apply. A copy of this Canon is attached as Appendix 10 to this document. It is the Aspirant's responsibility to read and understand the Title III Canons and to see that all canonical requirements are met.)

## Phase 1: The Nomination Process

This is the time during which one first discerns a call and begins to explore it. Phase I is considered to have begun when a person who is actively and demonstrably engaged in a specific servant ministry and believes he/she has a call to diaconal ministry.

A Nominee for the diaconate must:

- ❖ be an active communicant in good standing in a parish in the Diocese of East Carolina for one year
- ❖ have had extensive experience in lay ministry;
- ❖ be regarded as a leader in church and community life;
- ❖ have participated in adult education and/or lay training;
- ❖ be capable of supporting him/herself in secular employment;
- ❖ be engaged in a specific and demonstrable servant ministry in his or her community for a significant period of time;
- ❖ understand that he/she is ordained to the whole Church, not just a particular ministry or parish.

## Steps of Discernment

1. The Nominee, who must be a confirmed adult communicant in good standing and have been active for at least one year in the local community of faith, consults the Rector of the parish and writes a Spiritual Autobiography. This autobiography should be typed, double-spaced and no longer than five single sided pages. It should include basic personal data and answers to questions posed in Appendix 1.
2. The Nominee presents the autobiography to his/her Rector, and the Nominee and Rector meet for a minimum of four spiritual direction sessions, using the attached questions (Appendix 1) as the basic guideline for these sessions. At this time, the Rector and Nominee will review all canonical requirements for ordination. (Appendix 10)
3. The Rector may:
  - a. say no;
  - or, b. instruct nominee to "persevere in his/her intentions."
4. A letter from the Rector endorsing the Nominee should be sent to the Bishop. This letter will include the Nominee's Spiritual Autobiography and a current photograph.
5. A parish Discernment Committee and chair are appointed by the Rector after consultation with the Nominee.

Serving ad hoc to the Vestry, the committee should be constituted of five to seven persons who represent different dimensions of the congregation's life, know the aspirant's ministry within the parish, and are willing to talk about their own pilgrimages and vocations as Christian ministers in the world by nature of their baptism.

The committee is charged with meeting with the Nominee a minimum of six times to:

- share their own life journeys
- assist the Nominee in verbalizing how his or her call seems distinct from others in the church
- help the Nominee look at his or her specific gifts for ordained life and ministry and articulate the Nominee's specific diaconal ministry
- reach a consensus with regard to the suitability of the Nominee for Postulancy and the beginning of skills-training for ordained ministry
- submit Parish Discernment Committee Individual Evaluation forms (Appendix 2) and a written summary of findings (signed by all members of the committee) to the Rector, Vestry and the Bishop.

6. The Nominee receives written endorsement of the Clergy and Vestry of the Nominees faith Community according to Title III, Canon 6.1.a(7) and ensures that they are sent to the Bishop. (Appendix 5)
7. In a personal letter to the Bishop, the Nominee applies in writing under provision of Title III, Canon 6.1(a) providing the information required in the above mentioned Canon. Enclose with the letter the Application for Postulancy. (Appendix 3)
8. ***The Nominee and Rector must see the Bishop prior to July 1st in order to attend the October overnight meeting of the Commission on Ministry (see items 8 & 13).***
9. The Bishop may:
  - a. say no;
  - b. counsel or insist on delay;
  - or, c. say to proceed.
10. The Nominee must complete the Life History Questionnaire, and the Behavioral Screening Questionnaire and mail to designated examining Psychiatrist, sign Authorization and Release to Diocese form, and have a physical and psychiatric examination. Either the individual or the parish shall reimburse the diocese for the cost of these services. Forms for the physical and psychiatric examinations are obtained from the Diocesan Office.
11. The Nominee will write and send to the Bishop one or two pages describing his or her activities within the parish or diocese, areas of personal growth, or insights gained since first speaking with his or her Priest about holy orders. This statement may be thought of as an update of the Nominee's Spiritual Autobiography and should include a description of their specific diaconal ministry.
12. **All required paperwork must be in the Bishop's office by August 31st.**
13. The Bishop considers items 5-12. If all are satisfactory and with the Bishop's agreement, the Nominee meets in October at an overnight interview with the Commission on Ministry, who makes a recommendation to the Bishop. Rectors will attend the first day of the October retreat with the Nominees. (Commission on Ministry will pay overnight expenses of the Nominee and their spouse, should the spouse desire to attend.)
14. The Bishop makes a determination regarding Postulancy.
15. After consultation with the Bishop and being admitted as a Postulant, the Postulant applies to Diaconal School. No one may enroll in North Carolina School for the Diaconate without first securing the Bishop's permission.

## **Phase II: Postulancy and Academic Work**

(Academic work begins in September, following the October approval for Postulancy and lasts two years, which includes Postulancy and application for Candidacy)

**The Commission on Ministry will assign one of its members to act as a mentor who intentionally guides and advises the Postulant over these three years, doing theological reflection where necessary.**

- 1. Spiritual Direction:** The Postulant shall meet regularly with a Spiritual Director approved by the Bishop. The role of the Spiritual Director will be to assist the Postulant in evaluating the varied experiences both inside and outside of the parish, i.e., how does the person's ministry relate to the whole Church.
- 2. Servant Ministry:** The Postulant shall be regularly engaged in service to the community outside of the parish.
- 3. Parish Placement:** The Postulant is to be assigned work in a parish other than his/her sponsoring parish. Recognizing possible geographical difficulties, this experience could occur on a monthly basis. This parish experience shall include a focus on the liturgy and exploration of their ministry in the world.
- 4.** The Postulant will enroll in the Diocese of North Carolina Deacon Formation Program in order to receive academic instruction in those areas required by Title III, Canon 6 Sec. 3 (b)(1-5) (see Appendix 10). Academic work is normally scheduled for Saturdays, twelve times each academic year. Sessions include two two-hour classes and a continuing seminar on servant ministry, in which the Postulant's vision of diaconal ministry is enlarged and clarified. Weekend conferences and retreats are scheduled from time to time. Between class sessions, Postulants are expected to engage in private reading, study, and writing. Postulants may also be required to attend gatherings with Deacons and Candidates in the Diocese of East Carolina.
- 5.** Communicate with the Bishop by letter four times a year in the Ember Weeks. (See BCP p. 18) Also, notify the Bishop regarding life changes, i.e. engagement, death of spouse, or a child, loss of employment, etc.

**Note: A Postulant or Candidate may be removed at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notification of removal to the above. The Bishop shall also not consider accepting as a Postulant any person refused admission as Candidate in any other Diocese, or who having been admitted, ceased to be a Candidate, until receipt of letter from the Bishop who refused admission, declaring cause. If the Bishop decides to proceed, a letter of intent is sent to the Commission.**

### **Phase III: Candidacy**

At the end of the first semester of the second year of academic work, the Postulant may apply for Candidacy. This application shall include:

1. Written Application (Appendix 4)
2. Reaffirmation by the congregation or local faith community according to Title III, Canon 6 . 2(c). Written recommendations must be sent to the Bishop (Appendix 6).
3. Written evaluation from Spiritual Director.
4. Written evaluation from North Carolina Deacon Formation Program Supervisor.
5. A further update of the Postulant's Spiritual Autobiography (one or two pages discussing areas of spiritual, emotional, and academic growth; important experiences and insights gained since last appearing before the Commission on Ministry.)
6. The Postulant must meet with the Commission on Ministry in February, the day prior to the start of Diocesan Convention. The Postulant must be recommended for Candidacy by the Commission on Ministry.

**The Postulant may then be accepted as a Candidate by the Bishop.**

**The Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop at his discretion may remove a person from the process at any point along the way Canon 6. 2(c).**

### **Phase IV: Ordination**

1. By Canon, one must have been a Candidate for at least one year and be at least 24 years old
2. The Candidate must have completed the North Carolina Deacon Formation Program, and successfully completed Canonical examinations as required by Title III, Canon 6.3(b)(1-5)
3. The Candidate must be recommended by the Commission on Ministry. In order to secure this recommendation, the Candidate must complete all necessary items as listed on the Checklist for Steps to Ordination (page 10) and send to the Diocesan House by December 31.
4. The Standing Committee certifies that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met and presents the proper document to the Bishop. If the Bishop agrees to ordain, the Bishop then proceeds to set the ordination date.

# CHECK LIST

## Phase I - Steps to Postulancy

**To attend the October overnight meeting of the Commission on Ministry, you and your clergy must meet with the diocesan Bishop prior to July 1 and submit all required paperwork to the diocesan office by August 31.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Nominee is resident in congregation or faith community a minimum of 1 year before discernment begins
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spiritual Autobiography
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minimum of 4 sessions with Rector for spiritual discernment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minimum of 6 sessions with discernment committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letter to Bishop from Rector endorsing Nominee, including:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ current photograph,
  - \_\_\_\_\_ autobiography,
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Vestry endorsement,
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Discernment Committee letter with commitment to assist with formation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nominee letter to Bishop, including Application with all necessary documentation  
*Canon 6.1(a)(1-3,8)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interview with the Bishop prior to July 1 - *Canon 6. 1*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education level with accompanying official transcripts when applicable -*Canon 6:1(a)(6)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Physical examination forms  
(Check with Bishop's Secretary for these forms)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Psychiatric examination forms, including Life History Questionnaire (sent to examining psychiatrist) and Behavioral Screening Questionnaire (Check with Bishop's Secretary for forms)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Authorization and Release form signed (Check with Bishop's Secretary for these forms)
- \_\_\_\_\_ A Background Check will be initiated through the Bishop's Office
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interview with COM - *Canon 6. 1(b)(2)* - Overnight meeting in October
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notification sent of admittance *Canon 6. 1*

# CHECK LIST

## Phase II & III – Steps to Candidacy

*No minimum length of time as postulant required Canon 6. 1(b)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Course of study/formation determined and underway *Canon 6:3(a & b)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ember Day letters sent to Bishop *Canon 6. 3(f)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Service to community outside of parish
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parish placement
- \_\_\_\_\_ Application of request for Candidacy sent to Bishop
- \_\_\_\_\_ Re-affirmation from local faith community *Canon 5. 2(c)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written evaluation from Spiritual Director
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written evaluation from North Carolina Deacon Formation Program Supervisor
- \_\_\_\_\_ One to two page statement (update of Spiritual Autobiography)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interview with Bishop *Canon 6. 1 (b)(2)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interview with COM *Canon 6. 1 (b)(2)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notification from Bishop sent to Nominee *Canon 6. 1(b)(3)*

# CHECK LIST

## Phase IV – Steps to Ordination to the Diaconate

- \_\_\_\_\_ A minimum of 1 year since Candidacy granted *Canon 6. 2(a)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate at least 24 years of age
- \_\_\_\_\_ If more that 36 months has elapsed since admission as Postulant
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Physical\* *Canon 6. 1(b)(1)(ii)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Psychological\* *Canon 6. 1(b)(1)(ii)*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Background check\* *Canon 6. 1(b)(1)(i)* all to be paid by the Postulant and/or parish
- \_\_\_\_\_ Application for ordination
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate of sexual misconduct prevention training *Canon 6.3(C)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate of training regarding Title IV training *Canon 6. 3 (c)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certificate of anti-racism training *Canon 6. 3 (c)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Internship outside of sponsoring parish *Canon 6. 2(b)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Certification that course of study/formation completed *Canon 6.3(b)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ordination exams *Canon 6. 3(b and g)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Re-affirmation from local faith community *Canon 5. 2(c)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interview with COM and Bishop *Canon 6. 3(g)*
- \_\_\_\_\_ Standing Committee certification that all is in order *Canon 5. 2(b), Canon 6. 3(j)*

## **GUIDELINES FOR DEACONS IN THE DIOCESE OF EAST CAROLINA**

1. The Deacon is to hold forth before the Church the servant character of all baptized persons and to enable servant ministry in others.
2. The Deacon is directly accountable to the Bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work. The Deacon is at all times subject to the pastoral direction and supervision *of* the Bishop.
3. The servant ministry of the Deacon will be carried out on behalf of either a local congregation or the Diocese but always under the direction of the Bishop and other ministers who may have authority over the Deacon (BCP 538).
4. Deacons will wear proper vestments and symbols of their office when performing liturgical functions. Street clothing is the norm for Deacons. Deacons will wear clerical attire when exercising their servant ministry *only when authorized by the Bishop*.
5. The only title or verbal form of address for the Deacon is the word “Deacon,” either as prefix or suffix. The title “The Reverend Deacon” is proper in written correspondence only. (This usage should be adopted in diocesan and parish publications and newsletters).
6. Deacons will preach under the supervision of a local parish Priest.
7. Unless employed by the Church on a stipendiary basis, the Deacon’s parish is exempted from assessments for and the Deacon is ineligible for benefits from the Church Pension Fund. It is recommended that parishes provide annual continuing education, ministry outreach funds, and reimbursement for ministry expenses.
8. The Bishop expects that Deacons will participate in clergy conferences, clergy days, regional clericus meetings and convention, where they have seat, voice and vote.
9. The Deacon will be assigned to a parish chosen by the Bishop with the approval of the Rector as entered into by a Letter of Agreement. The Letter of Agreement will be renewed annually by the Deacon, Rector and presented to the Bishop for his signature of approval.
10. The “Celebration of a New Ministry” (BCP, 559) is appropriately used in the parish upon the assignment of a new Deacon, and is usually incorporated into a Sunday morning celebration of Holy Eucharist.
11. The Community of Deacons will gather annually at the direction of the Bishop for prayer, worship and conversation.
12. Each Deacon will prepare an annual report of both their parish and diaconal ministry to be mailed to Diocesan House for review by the Bishop.
13. Any Deacon who comes to the belief that his/her proper vocation is to the priesthood must enter the ordination process for priesthood at the beginning of that process with the understanding that a person must have an undergraduate degree and attend three years of seminary.

## DISCERNING A CALL TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

1. How long have you been an intentional Christian? In what ways have you tested your faith? How do you feel about what you are doing now?
2. Why do you want to be ordained? What can you do as a priest or deacon that you believe you cannot do otherwise? What are some reasons you may have for not seeking ordination? What sacrifices will have to be made if you enter this process? Who would have to make them? What effect will the transitions that will occur have on your personal and family life? To what extent have you discussed and evaluated all of this with other persons? How openly have the members of your family been in expressing their opinions and feeling about your decision?
3. How certain are you that you have the ability (intellectual, financial, etc.) to do the academic preparation that the Church expects for the ordained Diaconate of Priesthood? How has your life experience prepared you for ordained ministry? How do your abilities, talents and skills match those that are expected of and needed by an ordained person? In what ways are you perceived by others as having the "people skills" required of ordained persons? What leadership experiences have you had?
4. Give some examples of tough decisions you have made in the past. Give evidence of having made some good decisions. Discuss how you have been able to follow through on some of your decisions. Give examples of how you have exercised leadership.
5. What about you should your Bishop know so that the Church is not surprised? What are some of your weaknesses? Where and when are you the most vulnerable? How willing are you to allow your personal life to be other people's business? What experience have you had living a public life?
6. What are some of your thoughts about the priesthood or the Diaconate for which you aspire? How many Priests/Deacons do you know well? Who are your role models, and why? How well do you know the Church? What are some things you would like to change about the Church?
7. The "call" to the ordained ministry is not an individual decision; it is a communal process. We are called by and through the Church. Have you talked with your Rector, with the Bishop, with someone on the Commission on Ministry, with someone outside your parish? To what extent have you sought the opinions, advice and evaluation of others in this process?

8. The process of seeking ordination to the Priesthood or Diaconate will challenge many of your opinions and beliefs. The Gospel, when truly engaged, never allows one to remain comfortable. To what extent do you believe yourself to be flexible and open to be challenged and changed? What do you do with people who hold different beliefs and/or convictions from yours?

9. Do you think of yourself as a self-starter, or do you depend more upon others to motivate and keep you to a task? Do you tend to get work done ahead of schedule, or do you work better under the pressure of the last minute? Discuss your level of self-discipline. What effect does the authority of others have upon you and how do you respond to external discipline?

10. What does "success" mean to you? How do you define and measure success? How do you deal with failure or the lack of success? What is your level of need to control things, events, others? How much toleration do you have over others' attempts to control you?

11. Are you more a "people person," or do you prefer to be alone? To what extent can you tolerate being alone? Being lonely? To what extent do you see yourself living on the edge of the prevailing culture? What experiences have you had in being "different" from those around you?

12. Do you prefer certainty, or are you more comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty? How do you feel about issues, people, problems that cannot be fixed? How do you deal with questions for which there are no clear answers?



- After hearing this person share his or her spiritual journey and desire for Holy Orders, briefly state your understanding of this person's spiritual journey and desire.

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- Would you want this person to serve and represent you, your congregation or faith community and the Episcopal Church as an ordained person?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

- What do you consider to be three positive and three negative character traits of this person?

Positive: \_\_\_\_\_

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Negative: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Can you in good conscience support this person in his or her journey to ordination?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No                      \_\_\_\_\_ Uncertain

If "No" or "Uncertain", please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

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Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPLICATION FOR POSTULANCY

To: The Rt. Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop of East Carolina,

I \_\_\_\_\_, a nominee, request admission to Postulancy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

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

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Rector \_\_\_\_\_ Parish \_\_\_\_\_  
(or Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight)

Length of time in Diocese \_\_\_\_\_ Length of time active in Parish \_\_\_\_\_  
(or other faith community)

Date of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Baptism \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Confirmation \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Attach a photocopy of baptismal and confirmation certificates or parish records)*

Have you previously made application for Postulancy or been nominated in another Diocese?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

**\*If yes, please list the Diocese and date** \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the process of discernment by which you have been identified for ordination.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Education *(Please list schools address, dates attended; diplomas, certificates and or degrees received. Use additional space if needed.)*

High School \_\_\_\_\_

College \_\_\_\_\_

Graduate School \_\_\_\_\_

**Please be sure to attach a letter of support by the congregation or other faith community.**

## APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

To: The Rt. Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop of East Carolina,

I \_\_\_\_\_, a Postulant from the Diocese of East

Carolina, request admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Rector \_\_\_\_\_ Parish \_\_\_\_\_  
(or Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight)

Date admitted as a Postulant \_\_\_\_\_

**Please be sure to attach a letter of support by the congregation or other faith community.**

**Parish Endorsement for Postulancy**  
**Canon III.8.3(a)(7)**

To: The Rt. Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop of the Diocese of East Carolina

From: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parish or faith community's name)

We do support \_\_\_\_\_ to be admitted as a Posulant.

We declare that, in our opinion, this person possesses such qualifications as would be fitting for admission as a Postulant. This judgment is based on our personal knowledge or other evidence.

We do pledge to be involved in \_\_\_\_\_ (Nominee) ongoing process in preparation for ordination to the Priesthood. The Vestry (or other faith community) duly convened at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, and that the names attached are those of at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clerk of Vestry)

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clergy or Community Leader)

**To be signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and a Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.**

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**PARISH ENDORSEMENT FOR CANDIDACY**

**Canon III.8.5(a)(2)**

To: The Rt. Rev. \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop of the Diocese of East Carolina:

From: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parish or faith community's name)

We do support \_\_\_\_\_ to be admitted as a Candidate for Holy Orders. We declare that, in our opinion, this person possesses such qualifications as would be fitting for admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders. This judgment is based on our personal knowledge or other evidence. The Vestry (or other faith community) duly convened at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, and that the names attached are those of at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clerk of Vestry)

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clergy or Community Leader)

**To be signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and a Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.**

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**APPLICATION FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE**

**[Canon III.8.6 (d)(1)]**

To: The Rt. Rev. \_\_\_\_\_, Bishop of the Diocese of East Carolina.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, a Candidate in Good Standing of the Diocese of East Carolina, respectfully apply for ordination to the Diaconate.

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

Date Admitted as a Postulant \_\_\_\_\_

Date Admitted as a Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

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

**PARISH ENDORSEMENT FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE**

**Canon III.8.6 (d)(2)**

To: The Standing Committee of the Diocese of East Carolina.

From: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parish of Faith Community)

We do support \_\_\_\_\_ for ordination to the Diaconate.

The Vestry duly convened at \_\_\_\_\_ on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, and that the names attached are those of at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clerk of Vestry)

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Clergy or Community Leader)

**To be signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and a Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.**

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**STANDING COMMITTEE TESTIMONIAL  
FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE**

**Canon III.8.6 (f)**

(From the Standing Committee to the Bishop)

To the Right Reverend \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop of East Carolina.

We, the Standing Committee of the Diocese of East Carolina, having been duly convened at

\_\_\_\_\_, do testify that

\_\_\_\_\_, desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate and

Priesthood under Canon III.8, has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating

\_\_\_\_\_ preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under

Canon III.8; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon

III.8 have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend

\_\_\_\_\_ for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set

our hands this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signed)

**(Must be signed by a majority of members.)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **CANON 5: Of General Provisions Respecting Ordination**

**Sec. 1. (a)** The canonical authority assigned to the Bishop Diocesan by this Title may be exercised by a Bishop Coadjutor, when so empowered under Canon III.19, by a Bishop Suffragan when requested by the Bishop Diocesan, or by any other Bishop of the Anglican Communion canonically in charge of a Diocese, at the request of the ordinand's Bishop.

**(b)** The Council of Advice of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe, and the board appointed by a Bishop having jurisdiction in an Area Mission in accordance with the provisions of Canon I.11.2(c), shall, for the purpose of this and other Canons of Title III have the same powers as the Standing Committee of a Diocese.

**(c)** In case of a vacancy in the episcopate in a Diocese, the Ecclesiastical Authority may authorize and request the President of the House of Bishops of the Province to take order for an ordination.

**Sec. 2. (a)** No Nominee, Applicant, Postulant, or Candidate for ordination shall sign any of the certificates required by this Title.

**(b)** Testimonials required of the Standing Committee by this Title must be signed by a majority of the whole Committee, at a meeting duly convened, except that testimonials may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original.

**(c)** Whenever the letter of support of a Vestry is required, the letter must be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of all of the members of the Vestry, at a meeting duly convened, and by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Parish, and attested by the Clerk of the Vestry. Should there be no Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the letter shall be signed by a Priest of the Diocese acquainted with the nominee and the Parish, the reason for the substitution being stated in the attesting clause.

**(d)** If the congregation or other discernment community of which the nominee is a member is not a Parish, the letter of support required by Canon III.6 or Canon III.8 shall be signed and dated by the Member of the Clergy and the council of the congregation or other community of faith, and shall be attested by the secretary of the meeting at which the letter was approved. Should there be no Member of the Clergy, the letter shall be signed and dated by a Priest of the Diocese acquainted with the nominee and the congregation or other community of faith, the reason for the substitution being stated in the attesting clause.

**(e)** If the applicant is a member of a Religious Order or Christian Community recognized by Canon III.24, the letters of support referred to in Canon III.5 or Canon III.6 and any other requirements imposed on a congregation or Member of the Clergy may be given by the Superior or person in charge, and Chapter, or other comparable body of the Order or Community.

**Sec. 3.** An application for any dispensation permitted by this Title from any of the requirements for ordination must first be made to the Bishop, and if approved, referred to the Standing Committee for its advice and consent.

## **CANON 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons**

### **Sec. 1. Selection**

The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall establish procedures to identify and select persons with evident gifts and fitness for ordination to the Diaconate.

**(a) Nomination.** A confirmed adult communicant in good standing, may be nominated for ordination to the diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith. The Nomination shall be in writing, and shall include:

- (1) Full name and date of birth.
- (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.
- (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.
  
- (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any diocese.
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the applicant has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned and areas of specialization.
- (7) A letter of support by the applicant's discernment community, including a statement committing the discernment community to involve itself in the applicant's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry or comparable body, and the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.
- (8) An acceptance in writing by the nominated person. The nomination shall be submitted to the Bishop, who may admit the person as a Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate.

**(b) Admission to Postulancy.** Admission is the time between nomination and candidacy and includes a process of exploration of and decision on the Postulant's call to the Diaconate.

- (1) There shall be a thorough investigation of the Postulant which shall include:
  - (i) a background check, and
  - (ii) medical and complete psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.
  - (iii) Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept on file by the Bishop.
- (2) The Bishop, or the Bishop's designee, may interview the Postulant. The Commission or a designated committee shall interview the Postulant, and the Commission or designated committee shall submit a recommendation to the Bishop.
- (3) The Bishop may then admit the Postulant as a Candidate, informing the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader of the Candidate's discernment community in writing.

## **Sec. 2. Candidacy**

**(a) Candidacy** is a time, no less than one year in length, of formation in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, and the congregation or other community of faith.

**(b)** The Bishop may assign the Candidate to any congregation of the diocese or other community of faith after consultation with the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

**(c)** At the Bishop's sole discretion, any Candidate may be removed from the list of Candidates, with written notice of the removal being given to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the nominating congregation or other community of faith and the Commission.

### **Sec. 3. Preparation for Ordination**

(a) The Bishop, in consultation with the Commission, shall determine the length of time and extent of formation needed to prepare each Candidate for ordination.

(b) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas:

- (1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.
- (2) Diakonia and the diaconate.
- (3) Human awareness and understanding.
- (4) Spiritual development and discipline.
- (5) Practical training and experience.

(c) The formation process shall include sexual misconduct prevention training, training regarding Title IV of these Canons, and anti-racism training.

(d) Formation shall reflect the local culture and each Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry. Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination.

(e) Wherever possible, formation shall take place in community, including persons in preparation for the diaconate, or others preparing for ministry.

(f) Each Candidate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

(g) During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination. Records shall be kept of all evaluations, assessments, and the recommendation, and shall be made available to the Standing Committee.

(h) If the medical examination, psychological examination, or background check have taken place more than 36 months prior to ordination, they must be updated.

(i) Before ordination each Candidate must have reached the age of twenty-four, and made application for ordination.

(j) Upon certification in writing by the Standing Committee that all canonical requirements have been met and that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, doctrinal, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate a Deacon.

## **CANON 7: Of the Life and Work of Deacons**

**Sec. 1.** Deacons serve directly under the authority of and are accountable to the Bishop.

**Sec. 2.** Deacons canonically resident in each Diocese constitute a Community of Deacons, which shall meet from time to time. The Bishop may appoint one or more of such Deacons as Archdeacon(s) to assist the Bishop in the formation, deployment, supervision, and support of the Deacons or those in preparation to be Deacons, and in the implementation of this canon.

**Sec. 3.** The Bishop may establish a Council on Deacons ("Council") to oversee, study, and promote the Diaconate.

**Sec. 4.** The Bishop, after consultation with the Deacon and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, may assign a Deacon to one or more congregations, other communities of faith or non-parochial ministries. Deacons assigned to a congregation or other community of faith act under the authority of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight in all matters concerning the congregation.

- (a) Deacons may have a letter of agreement, subject to the Bishop's approval, setting forth mutual responsibilities in the assignment.
- (b) Deacons shall report annually to the Bishop or the Bishop's designee on their life and work.
- (c) Deacons may serve as administrators of congregations or other communities of faith, but no Deacon shall be in charge of a congregation or other community of faith.
- (d) Deacons may accept chaplaincies in any hospital, prison, or other institution.

**Sec. 5 .** The Bishop and Commission shall require and provide for the continuing education of Deacons and keep a record of such education.

**Sec. 6. (a)** A Deacon may not serve as Deacon for more than two months in any Diocese other than the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident unless the Bishop of the other Diocese shall have granted a license to the Deacon to serve in that Diocese.

**(b)**

- (1) A Deacon desiring to become canonically resident within a Diocese shall request a testimonial from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident to present to the receiving Diocese, which testimonial, if granted, shall be given by the Ecclesiastical Authority to the applicant, and a duplicate thereof may be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese to which transfer is proposed. The testimonial shall be in the following words:

**I hereby certify that A.B., who has signified to me the desire to be transferred to the Ecclesiastical Authority of \_\_\_\_\_, is a Deacon of \_\_\_\_\_ in good standing, and has not, so far as I know or believe, been justly liable to evil report for error in religion or for viciousness of life, for the last three years.**

**(Date) \_\_\_\_\_ (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_**

- (2) Such testimonial shall be called Letters Dimissory. If the Ecclesiastical Authority accepts the Letters Dimissory, the canonical residence of the Deacon so transferred shall date from the acceptance of the Letters Dimissory, of which prompt notice shall be given both to the applicant and to the Ecclesiastical Authority from which it came.
- (3) Letters Dimissory not presented within six months from the date of transmission to the applicant shall become void.
- (4) A statement of the record of payments to The Church Pension Fund by or on behalf of the Deacon concerned shall accompany Letters Dimissory.

**Sec. 7.** A Deacon may retire from active service for reasons of age or infirmity with the consent of the Bishop at any time and shall retire for reasons of age or infirmity at the request of the Bishop. The Bishop may, with the consent of the Deacon, assign a retired Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or non-parochial ministry, for a period not to exceed twelve months, and this period may be renewed.