



Ministerial Discernment Process Guide for the Diaconate

Abstract

This guide is for use by those discerning a call to ordained ministry, and by clergy leaders and others in the church who are assisting in their discernment. The aim of this guide is to empower clergy leaders, congregations and enquirers for the priesthood and the diaconate with the knowledge and tools needed to do the work of discernment. The guide lays out the principles and procedures to be used consistently throughout the diocese so that we raise up faithful, disciplined, effective and inspirational leaders for our church.

The guide recognizes that the ministry of priests and deacons is quite different, as are many of the gifts, passions, and qualities we seek in priests and deacons. This affects the work of discernment. Therefore, this guide exists in two versions: one to be used by those exploring priesthood, and one to be used by those exploring the diaconate. **Please be sure you are working with the correct documents.**

Both guides rely upon the “Criteria for Holy Orders,” (see Appendix D1 for Deacons) as developed for use within our ecclesiastical province, and with additional input from theological educators and local clergy leaders. Please note that the criteria are similar, but not identical, for deacons and priests. They describe some of the important qualities our diocese is seeking in its clergy. They are rooted in the calling of all the baptized into the ministry of the church.

The guide goes on to describe the process of discernment during which an individual, who begins as an enquirer, may become an applicant, then a postulant, and finally an ordinand.

Please note that completing the steps in this process does not “guarantee” ordination, nor is the process a linear journey. Many enquirers complete the process in an order that best suits the circumstances of their lives, repeat steps in the process, or discern during the process that their call is *not* to ordained ministry. Ultimately, it is the bishop’s prerogative when and whether to invite an enquirer to become an applicant, a postulant, or an ordinand.

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Appendices to this Guide

Updated versions may be found on the diocesan website: <https://www.bc.anglican.ca/congregation-resources/ministry-discernment>

- Appendix D1 – Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate
- Appendix D2 – Enquirer’s History Form - Diaconate
- Appendix D3 – Discernment Worksheet for Ordination to the Diaconate
- Appendix D4 – An Example of a Completed Diaconal Discernment Worksheet
- Appendix D5 – Guide for Parish Discernment Groups
- Appendix D6 – Parish Discernment Group Report to the Bishop & Director of Deacons
- Appendix D7 – Clergy Leader Letter of Recommendation to the Bishop & Director of Deacons
- Appendix D8 – Training and Formation for Diaconal Ministry

A Word from Bishop Anna

Dear friends,

Frederick Buechner defines vocation as the place where “your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” The needs of the world and of the church are many, and as baptised persons, we all have a vocation to live into our baptismal covenant. We are all children of God, created in the image of God with particular gifts, abilities and charisms. We are all called to discern the best way to express these gifts in what poet Mary Oliver calls our one “wild and precious life.”

The Anglican Church calls out some from among us to serve as deacons, priests and bishops. Discerning whom God is calling to such ministry is the collective responsibility of the church. The church must affirm and raise up leaders from its midst and help them discern a call, or not, to ordained ministry.

This guide is intended to assist congregations form discernment committees for those who are exploring a call to ordained ministry. It is meant to create a space for fruitful and faithful conversations about the nature of ministry, an individual’s journey, and service through the church. All those participating in this process are entering into a journey of discernment and growth in their own sense of vocation, faith and communion.

To those discerning a call to ordained ministry, bless you on your journey and thank you for being real, vulnerable and honest with yourself, with God and with the church. To those serving as the discernment team, please enter this sacred responsibility prayerfully and carefully. To have someone share their journey with you in such an intimate way is no small thing, and should be treated with respect and compassion.

With every blessing on our shared work of discernment,



+Anna

The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

Ephesians 4.11-16; New Revised Standard Version

Ministry in broad perspective

Ordained or Lay?

More often than not in the church, talk about ministry is quickly narrowed down to ordained ministry, and even more quickly to presbyteral (priestly) ministry. However, ministry within the church of Christ is much broader than this: it is the work of every baptized Christian, wherever we live and move and have our being. All Christians are called to do the work of the church, within the church and beyond, in prayer, in service, in governance and leadership.

Each of us, in settling upon our God-given vocation and ministry, must engage in the work of discernment. God needs people everywhere. Ministerial discernment, therefore, must be an open-ended inquiry into the gifts and needs of the individual, and a faithful attempt to assist enquirers to hear where God most needs people with their particular gifts and interests. This may or may not entail ordination.

However, within this process we do wish to encourage gifted, capable people to explore whether the diaconate or the priesthood might be their calling. We are seeking those who have both *an inner awareness of a call from God* and are *affirmed in that call as observed by others*. We are seeking people who show both passion and realism in their commitment to the church as a bearer of God's mission in the world, and a current involvement in that mission through the life of a congregation within the diocese. We are seeking those whose spirituality is centered in their baptismal identity, rooted in a relationship with God, lived out in their practices of private and public prayer, and demonstrated through the stewardship of their relationships and their resources.

The "Criteria for Holy Orders" and the process for discernment described in the following pages are tools to help enquirers and parishes discover the ministry, whether ordained or lay, to which an enquirer is best suited.

Purpose of the Criteria

To assist us in identifying those referred to as “enquirers,” who would be suited to explore discernment for Holy Orders, we have a set of criteria with the following objectives:

- to guide those who initiate conversations with potential enquirers;
- to assist enquirers in their own reflections on vocation; and
- to use in conversations between enquirers and Parish Discernment groups, and as a basis for next steps.

As always, the qualities we seek may be present in each person in varying degrees given their age, church background, life experience and time in the discernment process. Thus, we are seeking people who either currently possess the gifts, abilities and characteristics which will serve them and the church well, *or* who demonstrate a clear potential to develop these gifts, abilities and characteristics during their discernment and formation.

The Criteria for Holy Orders are found on the following page, and may be printed for easy reference by both the enquirer and the parish discernment group.

Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate

In assessing suitability for ordination to the diaconate, the church considers the character, skills and knowledge of candidates. These are sometimes described as “character, charisms, and content,” or as proficiencies of the “heart, hands and head.” The church seeks enquirers who show promise of developing these necessary qualities, and an evident affinity for the ministry of a deacon. Deacons inhabit the liminal space between the church and the world. Their role is that of witness to the world, service to those at risk or in need, and of interpreting the needs, concerns and hopes of the world back to the church. The deacon is actively engaged in such ministry, and leads others in the church community to do the same.

1. **Diaconal Identity:** We seek a person whose day-to-day ministry and commitments are already compellingly diaconal in nature. We seek a person who is practised in the ways of both the church and the world, and who is committed to the wellbeing of both. We seek a person with a growing understanding of *diakonia* within the mission of the church, and who can imagine how such *diakonia* could play out in their own church context.
2. **A pattern of spiritual practice rooted in a diaconal, Christ-centred, Anglican approach to spirituality:** We seek a person who is working with a “Rule of Life,” is regular in the Daily Offices, faithful in their participation in the Eucharist, and active in the practice of personal and intercessory prayer. We seek a person who pays attention to their interior life, and has initiated a relationship with a qualified spiritual director. We seek someone who can articulate how their spirituality relates to the vocation of a deacon.
3. **Personal awareness and understanding:** We seek a person whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others. We seek a person who is working on self-awareness and who nurtures authentic and productive relationships with others. This includes: an openness to and respect for differing social and cultural communities in church and society; understanding and having the ability to communicate emotions; and being attuned to the impact of one’s presence, words and actions on others. We seek a person who responds appropriately to conflict, and who has the emotional resilience to persevere and remain in relationship with others when situations get difficult.
4. **Community engagement:** We seek a person who demonstrates knowledge of their local community, and eagerness to learn more about contemporary issues. We seek a person who shows sensitivity to human suffering and injustice, and who is committed to interpreting to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.
5. **Rootedness in the biblical narrative:** We seek a person who has an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content and themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry. We seek a person who is aware of the authority of scripture as understood in the Anglican tradition, and who can articulate some of the challenges put to scripture in our contemporary context.
6. **A gatherer and builder of community:** We seek a person who is gifted in gathering diverse people into a community and then building and developing that community over time. We seek those who can help groups of people collaborate around shared values and a sense of purpose. We seek

those who can assist others to identify and develop their gifts and skills in service to God, the church, and especially the broader community.

7. **A leader who both carries authority and can live productively in relationship to others in authority:** We seek a leader who is comfortable exercising a style of leadership that is both relational and carries authority. We seek someone who, having made ordination vows, acknowledges the authority and responsibility that others (ordained or lay) carry in relationship to them, and can nurture productive relationships with them.
8. **A listener who loves to learn:** We seek a person who is committed to lifelong learning. We seek a person who sees God as moving and active in scripture, tradition and reason, who is open to learning from other disciplines, and from the wisdom of the community. We seek people who learn from their experience of both success and failure.
9. **A good steward:** We seek a person who practises self-care of body, mind and spirit, and who nourishes the important relationships in their life. We seek someone who is committed to stewardship of the created order. We seek a person who gives generously of their time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God.

Educational Requirements and Funding

Educational Requirements

The Diocese of Islands and Inlets aligns itself with the “Iona Report on the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada” (2016), which adopts a competency model for diaconal “formation.” (See Appendix D8.)

It is expected that candidates for the diaconate will engage in formal preparation for their ministry, with a view to strengthening or developing the competencies set out in the Iona Report. To this end, each candidate will work with the diocesan director of deacons to devise a program of learning appropriate to their own circumstances and relevant education. Please note that programs of study must be approved by the director of deacons in order to be credited towards readiness for ordination, and to be eligible for funding assistance (see below).

Normally, candidates for the diaconate will complete their learning programs on a part-time basis, and via distance learning. It is not required that deacons complete a degree in theology, and a diaconal candidate holding an MDiv, or other theological certificate or diploma, may be asked to complete further modules of study. In exceptional circumstances, candidates may be ordained prior to completing their agreed program of learning.

Candidates will be expected to complete a supervised field placement as part of their formation. They are strongly encouraged to participate in meetings of the diocesan “Chapter of Deacons,” and are expected to be working with a qualified spiritual director of their choice.

For further information, see Appendix D8.

Funding

There are many opportunities for funding available. Many institutions offer entrance scholarships, bursaries, and grants. At some institutions, those who have been confirmed as postulants by their diocese are eligible for tuition assistance. There are also specific funding opportunities available for past members or family members of those who served in the Canadian Forces. In addition, a candidate’s home parish is sometimes able to provide assistance. In this diocese, funding is available through the Educational Trusts Board, as follows:

Educational Trusts Board

The Diocese of British Columbia administers a legacy trust portfolio through the Educational Trusts Board that offers educational grants to laity and clergy. The “C.H.G. Mann Scholarship” was established “to support ordination candidates in their theological studies,” and is for individuals who have been identified by the bishop as being “on the path to ordination.” To be eligible, an individual must have entered the “applicant phase” of the discernment process (see below), and be pursuing a course of learning as agreed upon with the director of deacons. The maximum cumulative amount available from

the Mann Scholarship is \$23,400, and may not exceed \$7,800 in a given year. These funds may be used to cover tuition, travel, accommodations, meals, learning materials, and other specified expenses.

The Mann Scholarship is normally earmarked for individuals who have not yet been ordained. In those exceptional circumstances where a deacon is ordained prior to the completion of their agreed course of learning, funding may be extended to cover the outstanding studies.

In addition, the “Stanley Flitcroft Bursary Fund, Ellenor Swallow Trust, and the Diocesan Ministry Fund” were established for laity to attend a short-term course, seminar, workshop or conference. The maximum amount granted from either the Flitcroft Fund or Swallow Trust is \$1,300, but amounts greater than \$1,300 may be available from the Diocesan Ministry Fund. Individuals in any phase the discernment process may apply for funding for courses, workshops, etc. related to their discernment.

Process for Identifying Potential Deacons in the Parish Community

The process of discernment begins with either (A) the parish defining its need for a deacon (and then proposing a suitable candidate), or (B) an individual within the parish identifying a sense of call to diaconal ordination.

Regardless, the discernment process will take place along two lines: one focused on the parish, to educate, and assess its readiness for a deacon; the second, focused on the suitability of the candidate in question.

Starting Point A – A Parish seeks a Deacon

A.1 Preliminary Conversations

1. The parish is invited by the bishop or director of deacons to consider engaging a deacon; or the parish itself indicates to the bishop or the director of deacons its desire to engage deacon.

At this point, the parish is invited to undertake a process of ministry reflection, to determine its need and readiness for a deacon.

A.2 The Parish Discernment Process: Ministry Reflection on Diaconal Ministry and Needs

1. The director of deacons meets with the clergy leader to design a process to assist the parish to reflect upon its own diaconal ministry and aspirations, as well as to educate the parish about the theology and practice of ordained diaconal ministry.
2. This process could include:
 - a presentation or homily by the director of deacons (or designate) on the distinctive work of the deacon, the whole church's diaconal vocation, and the trend towards missional churches; with an opportunity for discussion.
 - familiarization of the parish leadership team (e.g. parish council, church wardens, parish staff, outreach leaders) with the ordinal, General Synod's statement on the theology of the diaconate and its recommendations concerning best practices, and the Iona competencies.
 - consideration of the current and potential ministry of the parish to the world.
3. The parish leadership team produces a brief written statement describing its commitment to ministry beyond the doors of the church, and why it needs or wants a deacon. This statement must be approved by a meeting of the parish vestry. It is then shared with the director of deacons and the bishop.

Once a parish has indicated its interest and readiness to engage a deacon, the process moves to the next stage, which is to identify promising potential deacons in the parish's midst.

A.3 Identifying promising candidates for diaconal ordination

1. The parish leadership team advises the parish of the desire to identify someone to serve as a deacon in their midst. The team invites those who have participated in any part of A.2 (the ministry reflection on diaconal ministry and needs), to suggest names of individuals who might be invited to consider becoming the parish deacon. These names are received by the clergy leader.
2. The clergy leader meets with the director of deacons to determine who might be obvious candidate(s) for consideration. The clergy leader may choose to involve a few others in this conversation.
3. This group will bear in mind that before entering a formal discernment process, an enquirer must be a confirmed member of the Anglican Church, with a stable connection to their parish for at least one year, and a history of active and regular participation in its life and worship. An enquirer should exhibit a pattern of life that expresses a connection to God, and model healthy interpersonal relationships.
4. Those identified are approached by the clergy leader (or designate).

Prospective candidates who agree to explore their sense of vocation first do so through a series of preliminary conversations.

A.4 Preliminary Conversation

1. The enquirer meets with the director of deacons. The purpose of this meeting is to:
 - invite the enquirer to respond to the parish's affirmation of their diaconal identity, explore the nature of "call," and to discuss the developing role of deacons in the mission of the church;
 - share resources to assist the enquirer to enhance their understanding of diaconal ministry and to test their own sense of call;
 - explain the normal process of discernment and formation;
 - ascertain whether the enquirer is a confirmed member of the Anglican Church.
2. The director of deacons may invite the enquirer to attend meetings of the Chapter of Deacons.
3. The director of deacons meets again with the enquirer to review their developing sense of vocation, and consults with the clergy leader concerning the readiness of both the parish and the enquirer to enter a period of formal discernment.

*If all three parties agree, the enquirer is invited to submit a completed application to enter the process of discernment to the director of deacons (using Appendix D2). At this point, the enquirer becomes an **applicant**.*

A.5 The Applicant Discernment Process (See Appendix D5 for details)

Upon receipt of the enquirer's application (Appendix D2), the following steps ensue:

1. The applicant completes Safe Church training and gives evidence of a satisfactory Police Information Check, including a vulnerable sector check. This information is lodged with the diocesan office.
2. Meanwhile, the clergy leader assembles a parish discernment group in consultation with the director of deacons and the applicant. At least one member should be a member of the Parish Council. The director of deacons will assist in the appointment of at least one member who is thoroughly acquainted with the current practice and theology of the diaconate.
3. The director of deacons meets with the discernment group (and applicant) to describe the process, clarify the role of group, and review the distinction between diaconal and presbyteral ministry.
4. The group meets with the applicant a minimum of 9 times over a period of up to 9 months (and no fewer than 6). The work of the discernment group has a triple focus:
 - The diaconal identity and commitment of the applicant
 - The character of the applicant
 - The skills of the applicant
 Detailed information about these meetings is provided at Appendix D5.
5. During this period of discernment, the director of deacons may invite the applicant to begin the work of formation, normally starting with an approved course on the nature of diaconal ministry and the diaconate.
6. The discernment group's work culminates in a recommendation to the bishop and director of deacons (see the form at Appendix D6), stating whether or not the group believes the applicant should move forward in the process.
7. The director of deacons, the convener of the discernment group, and the parish clergy leader meet to determine next steps, including communication with the applicant.

*Applicants who are recommended to continue in the process become **postulants**. The postulant now engages in a blended period of formation and continuing discernment.*

A.6 The Postulant Discernment (and Formation) Process

At this point, and during the postulant's period of formation, there are many opportunities for continuing assessment and growth. This is a period when the postulant and church seek the discerning wisdom of teachers, supervisors, professionals, and the wider church. During this period:

1. The postulant meets with the director of deacons to devise a learning plan in accordance with the Iona competencies, and their own identified skills and challenges. They begin (or continue) formal preparation for diaconal ministry.
2. The postulant establishes (or continues) regular meetings with an approved spiritual director. The director of deacons can assist in the choice of a spiritual director.

3. The postulant meets with the bishop and the archdeacon for discernment.
4. The postulant writes an annual “ember letter” to the bishop describing their progress, challenges, and plans for continued growth.
5. The postulant participates fully in meetings of the Chapter of Deacons, and of the clergy of the diocese, as appropriate.
6. The postulant undertakes a 6-9 month internship in a setting other than their parish church to hone their diaconal skills. This assignment is worked out in collaboration with either the director of deacons, or the field work supervisor at the educational institution they attend.
7. The postulant attends a diocesan discernment event, along with others testing a sense of call to ordained ministry. If possible, this takes place during the postulant’s internship.
8. The diocese arranges (and pays for) a psychological assessment.

*Upon successful completion of these items, and barring unforeseen impediments or arresting concerns, the bishop may declare the postulant an **ordinand**. This designation may be conferred before or after the postulant has completed their agreed learning plan.*

It should be noted that the decision to ordain is the bishop’s alone, and can be dependent upon external factors unrelated to the postulant’s personal suitability for ordination. Candidates should be aware that there is no guarantee either of ordination or a position in this diocese.

Starting Point B – an Individual Perceives a Sense of Calling

An individual in the parish perceives a sense of calling to diaconal ministry, and shares this with the clergy leader.

At a minimum, before entering a formal discernment process, an enquirer must be a confirmed member of the Anglican Church, with a stable connection to their parish for at least one year, and a history of active and regular participation in its life and worship. An enquirer should exhibit a pattern of life that expresses a connection to God, and model healthy interpersonal relationships.

If the clergy leader is satisfied that the individual is ready to begin a formal process of discernment, the following ensues:

B.1 Preliminary Conversations

1. The clergy leader advises the director of deacons of a potential vocation.
2. The enquirer meets with the director of deacons. The purpose of this meeting is to:
 - explore the enquirer’s sense of call and understanding of diaconal ministry, and to determine the appropriateness continuing the process of diaconal discernment;

- share resources to assist the enquirer to enhance their understanding of diaconal ministry and to test their own sense of call;
 - explain the normal process of discernment and formation.
3. The director of deacons may invite the enquirer to attend meetings of the Chapter of Deacons.
 4. The director of deacons meets again with the enquirer to review their developing sense of vocation, and consults with the clergy leader concerning the readiness of both the parish and the enquirer to enter a period of formal discernment.

If all three parties agree, the enquirer is invited to submit a completed application to enter the process of discernment to the director of deacons (using Appendix D2). At this point, the enquirer becomes an applicant.

The process of discernment now unfolds in two parallel tracks, one focused on the applicant, the other focused on the parish.

B.2 The Parish Discernment Process: Ministry Reflection on Diaconal Ministry and Needs

The parish is invited into a process of ministry reflection to determine its readiness for the ministry of a deacon.

1. The director of deacons meets with the clergy leader to design a process to assist the parish to reflect upon its own diaconal ministry and aspirations, as well as to educate the parish about the theology and practice of ordained diaconal ministry.
2. This process could include:
 - A presentation or homily by the director of deacons (or designate) on the distinctive work of the deacon, the whole church's diaconal vocation, and the trend towards missional churches; with an opportunity for discussion.
 - familiarization of the parish leadership team (e.g. parish council, church wardens, parish staff, outreach leaders) with the ordinal, General Synod's statement on the theology of the diaconate and its recommendations concerning best practices, and the Iona competencies.
 - consideration of the current and potential ministry of the parish to the world.
3. The parish leadership team produces a brief written statement describing its commitment to ministry beyond the doors of the church, and why it needs or wants a deacon. This statement must be approved by a meeting of the parish vestry. It is then shared with the director of deacons and the bishop.

While this process is underway, the parish also undertakes the "applicant discernment process." Applicant discernment is completed on behalf of the whole diocese, even if the parish discerns that it is not yet ready for a deacon.

B.3 The Applicant Discernment Process within the parish (See Appendix D5 for details)

Upon receipt of the enquirer's application (Appendix D2), the following steps ensue:

1. The applicant completes Safe Church training and gives evidence of a satisfactory Police Information Check, including a vulnerable sector check. This information is lodged with the diocesan office.
2. Meanwhile, the clergy leader assembles a parish discernment group in consultation with the director of deacons and the applicant. The director of deacons will assist in the appointment of at least one member who is thoroughly acquainted with the current practice and theology of the diaconate.
3. The director of deacons meets with the discernment group (and applicant) to describe the process, clarify the role of group, and review the distinction between diaconal and presbyteral ministry.
4. The group meets with the applicant a minimum of 9 times over a period of up to 9 months (and no fewer than 6). The work of the discernment group has a triple focus:
 - The diaconal identity and commitment of the applicant
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 Detailed information about these meetings is provided at Appendix D5.
5. During this period of discernment, the director of deacons may invite the applicant to begin the work of formation, starting with an approved course on the nature of diaconal ministry and the diaconate.
6. The discernment group's work culminates in a recommendation to the bishop and director of deacons (see the form at Appendix D6), stating whether or not the group believes the applicant should move forward in the process.
7. The director of deacons, the convener of the discernment group, and the parish clergy leader meet to determine next steps, including communication with the applicant.

*Applicants who are recommended to continue in the process become **postulants**. The postulant now engages in a blended period of formation and continuing discernment.*

B.4 The Postulant Discernment (and Formation) Process

At this point, and during the postulant's period of formation, there are many opportunities for continuing assessment and growth. This is the period in which the postulant and church seek the discerning wisdom of teachers, supervisors, professionals and the wider church. During this period:

1. The postulant meets with the director of deacons to devise a learning plan in accordance with the Iona competencies, and their own identified skills and challenges. They begin (or continue) formal preparation for diaconal ministry. (For further information, see Appendix 5.)
2. The postulant establishes (or continues) regular meetings with an approved spiritual director. The director of deacons can assist in the choice of a spiritual director.

3. The postulant meets with the bishop and the archdeacon for discernment.
4. The postulant writes an annual “ember letter” to the bishop describing their progress, challenges, and plans for continued growth.
5. The postulant participates fully in meetings of the Chapter of Deacons, and of the clergy of the diocese, as appropriate.
6. The postulant undertakes a 6-9 month internship in a setting other than their parish church to hone their diaconal skills. This assignment is worked out in collaboration with either the director of deacons, or the field work supervisor at the educational institution they attend.
7. The postulant attends a diocesan discernment event, along with others testing a sense of call to ordained ministry. If possible, this takes place during the postulant’s internship.
8. The diocese arranges (and pays for) a psychological assessment.

*Upon successful completion of these items, and barring unforeseen impediments or arresting concerns, the bishop may declare the postulant an **ordinand**. This designation may be conferred before or after the postulant has completed their agreed learning plan.*

It should be noted that the decision to ordain is the bishop’s alone, and can be dependent upon external factors unrelated to the postulant’s personal suitability for ordination. Candidates should be aware that there is no guarantee either of ordination or a position in this diocese.

Appendix D1

Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate

This appendix is for use by all who are involved in the discernment process. The criteria outlined here should be kept in mind throughout the entire process, and will be in evidence in several of the other appendices.

In assessing suitability for ordination to the diaconate, the church considers the character, skills and knowledge of candidates. These are sometimes described as “character, charisms, and content,” or as proficiencies of the “heart, hands and head.” The church seeks enquirers who show promise of developing these necessary qualities, and an evident affinity for the ministry of a deacon. Deacons inhabit the liminal space between the church and the world. Their role is that of witness to the world, service to those at risk or in need, and of interpreting the needs, concerns and hopes of the world to the church. The deacon is actively engaged in such ministry, and leads others in the church community to do the same.

- 1. Diaconal Identity:** We seek a person whose day-to-day ministry and commitments are already compellingly diaconal in nature. We seek a person who is practised in the ways of both the church and the world, and who is committed to the wellbeing of both. We seek a person with a growing understanding of *diakonia* within the mission of the church, and who can imagine how such *diakonia* could play out in their own church context.
- 2. A pattern of spiritual practice rooted in a diaconal, Christ-centred, Anglican approach to spirituality:** We seek a person who is working with a “Rule of Life,” is regular in the Daily Offices, faithful in their participation in the Eucharist, and active in the practice of personal and intercessory prayer. We seek a person who pays attention to their interior life, and has initiated a relationship with a qualified spiritual director. We seek someone who can articulate how their spirituality relates to the vocation of a deacon.
- 3. Personal awareness and understanding:** We seek a person whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others. We seek a person who is working on self-awareness and who nurtures authentic and productive relationships with others. This includes: an openness to and respect for differing social and cultural communities in church and society; understanding and having the ability to communicate emotions; and being attuned to the impact of one’s presence, words and actions on others. We seek a person who responds appropriately to conflict, and who has the emotional resilience to persevere and remain in relationship with others when situations get difficult.
- 4. Community engagement:** We seek a person who demonstrates knowledge of their local community, and eagerness to learn more about contemporary issues. We seek a person who shows sensitivity to human suffering and injustice, and who is committed to interpreting to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.
- 5. Rootedness in the biblical narrative:** We seek a person who has an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content and themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry. We seek a person who is aware of the authority of scripture as understood in the Anglican tradition, and who can articulate some of the challenges put to scripture in our contemporary context.
- 6. A gatherer and builder of community:** We seek a person who is gifted in gathering diverse people into a community and then building and developing that community over time. We seek those who

can help groups of people collaborate around shared values and a sense of purpose. We seek those who can assist others to identify and develop their gifts and skills in service to God, the church, and especially the broader community.

7. **A leader who both carries authority and can live productively in relationship to others in authority:** We seek a leader who is comfortable exercising a style of leadership that is both relational and carries authority. We seek someone who, having made ordination vows, acknowledges the authority and responsibility that others (ordained or lay) carry in relationship to them, and can nurture productive relationships with them.
8. **A listener who loves to learn:** We seek a person who is committed to lifelong learning. We seek a person who sees God as moving and active in scripture, tradition and reason, who is open to learning from other disciplines, and from the wisdom of the community. We seek people who learn from their experience of both success and failure.
9. **A good steward:** We seek a person who practises self-care of body, mind and spirit, and who nourishes the important relationships in their life. We seek someone who is committed to stewardship of the created order. We seek a person who gives generously of their time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God.

Appendix D2

Enquirer's History Form - Diaconate

This form is for use by the enquirer, and will be shared with others involved in the discernment process, including a parish discernment group (should one be convened), and a psychologist. Upon submission of the Enquirer's History form, the enquirer becomes an "applicant."

Please note that the Enquirer's History form is to be completed only *after* the enquirer, the clergy leader of their home parish, and the director of deacons are together agreed that the enquirer is ready to begin a formal discernment process.

When invited to do so, please complete and forward a Word .docx or .pdf to:

- the director of deacons
- the supporting clergy leader

Note: Type in the shaded areas below; they will expand as you type.

Part I - Identification

Name:

Address:

Postal Code:

Home phone:

Cell:

Email address:

Part 2 – Church history

Present Parish:

Incumbent:

Length of affiliation with this parish:

Date and Place of Baptism:

Date, Place and by Whom Confirmed or Received into the Anglican Church:

Former Denominations (if any):

How long have you been worshipping in the Anglican Church?

Describe the consultation process (if any) you have had with your clergy leader.

Have you previously applied for admission to the ordination process in this or any other diocese?

If yes, give date, diocese and name of bishop:

Have you ever applied for ordination in another denomination?

If yes, give date, place and denomination:

Have you ever been ordained in another denomination?

If yes, give date, place and by whom:

What position(s) did you occupy in that denomination?

Part 3 – Background

Are you legally entitled to work in Canada?

Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?

Would you be able and willing to travel as needed by the job?

Ordained ministry can be very demanding, and requires the careful balancing of both personal and work commitments and priorities. What challenges do you anticipate in this regard should you be ordained, and how might you address them?

Do you have plans in place to finance the costs of your theological education? Please outline:

Part 4 – Educational Background

School	Year of Graduation	Degree/Diploma
High School		
University (Undergraduate)		

Graduate School		
Theological Education		
Other certificates and licenses:		

Languages: Spoken:
 Read and write:

Part 5 – Work Experience

Present Employment/ responsibilities:

Current Employer/length of service:

Previous Employment/ responsibilities:

Previous Employer/length of service:

To what professional or other organizations relevant to your ability to perform ordained ministry (if any) do you belong?

Part 6 – Secular and Leisure Activities

With what community organizations are you involved and what is your role?

With what community organizations have you previously been involved and what was your role?

What are your main leisure activities?

Part 7 – Church-Related Activities

Present parish involvement:

Previous parish involvement:

Present and past deanery/diocesan/provincial/national involvement:

Part 8 – Spiritual Background and Diaconal Vocation

On separate pages provide answers to the following:

1. Briefly describe your spiritual journey (600 words max.)
2. A deacon is to “interpret the needs, concerns and hopes of the world to the church.” What needs do you perceive in your own community that ought to be of concern to the church? (250 words max.)
3. What difference do you believe that the church could or should make in addressing these concerns? (250 words max.)
4. How do you think that your being ordained would assist the church in this ministry? (250 words max.)
5. What do you see as the evidence of your call to ordained ministry?
6. What have you have done to explore the theology and nature of the diaconate and diaconal ministry?

Do you currently have a spiritual director?

Yes

No

Please provide the names and email addresses of at least two people who would be willing to witness to your spiritual development:

1)

2)

Signature: _____ Date:

Sponsoring Incumbent:

Appendix D3

Discernment Worksheet for Ordination to the Diaconate

This worksheet is a record-keeping tool for use by the parish discernment group as they complete their meetings with the enquirer, using the detailed process outlined at Appendix D5. It is based directly on the “Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate” (Appendix D1).

As the discernment process unfolds, individual members of the group are encouraged to use this worksheet to help organise their observations and thoughts, with a view to preparing a joint recommendation concerning the applicant’s suitability for ordained ministry. This recommendation (see Appendix D6) is made to the bishop and director of deacons. The notes made using this worksheet will inform that recommendation, but are not to be submitted as part of it.

In assessing suitability for ordination to the diaconate, the church considers the character, skills and knowledge of candidates. These are sometimes described as “character, charisms, and content,” or as proficiencies of the “heart, hands and head.” We are looking for the qualities described in the “Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate.” Please note that no one is expected to possess these qualities in full. However, we do seek enquirers who show promise of growth, in addition to an evident affinity for the ministry of a deacon.

For an example of a completed worksheet, please see Appendix D4.

Diaconal Discernment Worksheet

<p>Diaconal Identity. We seek someone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• whose day-to-day ministry and commitments are already compellingly diaconal in nature;• who is practised in the ways of both the church and the world, and who is committed to the wellbeing of both;• with a growing understanding of diakonia within the mission of the church; and• who can imagine how such diakonia could play out in their own church context.
<p>Experienced or Observed Strengths: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>
<p>Areas Needing Development: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>
<p>Comments / Questions / Notes Click or tap here to enter text.</p>

A pattern of spiritual practice rooted in a diaconal, Christ-centred, Anglican approach to spirituality. We seek someone who:

- is working with a “rule of life;”
- is regular in the daily offices, faithful in their participation in the eucharist, and active in the practice of personal and intercessory prayer;
- pays attention to their interior life;
- has or is initiating a relationship with a qualified spiritual director;
- can articulate how their spirituality relates to the vocation of a deacon.

Experienced or Observed Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Personal awareness and understanding. We seek someone:

- whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others.
- who is working on self-awareness and who nurtures authentic and productive relationships with others. This includes:
 - an openness to, and respect for, differing social and cultural communities in church and society;
 - understanding and having the ability to communicate emotions; and
 - being attuned to the impact of one’s presence, words and actions on others.
- who responds appropriately to conflict, and who has the emotional resilience to persevere and remain in relationship with others when situations get difficult

Experienced or Observed Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Community engagement. We seek someone who:

- demonstrates knowledge of their local community, and eagerness to learn more about contemporary issues;
- shows sensitivity to human suffering and injustice;
- is committed to interpreting to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.

Observed or Experienced Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Rootedness in the biblical narrative. We seek someone who:

- has an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content and themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry;
- is aware of the authority of scripture as understood in the Anglican tradition;
- can articulate some of the challenges put to scripture in our contemporary context.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Gatherer and builder of community. We seek someone who:

- is gifted in gathering diverse people into a community and then building and developing that community over time;
- can help groups of people come together around shared values and a sense of purpose;
- can assist others in identifying and developing their gifts and skills in service to God, the church and the broader community.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

A leader who both carries authority and can live productively in relationship to others in authority. We seek a leader who:

- is comfortable exercising a style of leadership that is both relational and carries authority;
- having made ordination vows, acknowledges the authority and responsibility that others (ordained or lay) carry in relationship to them; and
- can nurture productive relationships with those in authority.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Questions / Comments / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

A listener who loves to learn. We seek someone who:

- is committed to lifelong learning;
- sees God as moving and active in scripture, tradition and reason;
- is open to learning from other disciplines, and from the wisdom of the community.
- learns from their experience of both success and failure.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Questions / Comments / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

A good steward. We seek someone who

- practises self-care of body, mind and spirit;
- nourishes the important relationships in their life;
- is committed to stewardship of the created order;
- gives generously of their time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Click or tap here to enter text.

Areas Needing Development

Click or tap here to enter text.

Questions / Comments / Notes

Click or tap here to enter text.

Appendix D4 – An example of a completed Diaconal Discernment Worksheet

This appendix is for review by the parish discernment group, in order to provide an example of how the Diaconal Discernment Worksheet (Appendix D3) might be completed in the case of a fictional applicant named Anna.

Diaconal Discernment Assessment Worksheet

This worksheet is a record-keeping tool for use by the parish discernment group as they complete their meetings with the enquirer, using the detailed process outlined at Appendix D5. It is based directly on the “Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate” (Appendix D1).

As the discernment process unfolds, individual members of the group are encouraged to use this worksheet to help organise their observations and thoughts, with a view to preparing a joint recommendation concerning the applicant’s suitability for ordained ministry. This recommendation (see Appendix D6) is made to the bishop and director of deacons. The notes made using this worksheet will inform that recommendation, but are not to be submitted as part of it.

In assessing suitability for ordination to the diaconate, the church considers the character, skills and knowledge of candidates. These are sometimes described as “character, charisms, and content,” or as proficiencies of the “heart, hands and head.” We are looking for the qualities described in the “Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate.” Please note that no one is expected to possess these qualities in full. However, we do seek enquirers who show promise of growth, in addition to an evident affinity for the ministry of a deacon.

<p>Diaconal Identity. We seek someone:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• whose day-to-day ministry and commitments are already compellingly diaconal in nature;• who is practised in the ways of both the church and the world, and who is committed to the wellbeing of both;• with a growing understanding of diakonia within the mission of the church; and• who can imagine how such diakonia could play out in their own church context.
<p>Experienced or Observed Strengths</p> <p><i>In the two years Anna has been in the parish, she has organized and led a homeless advocacy group that has both volunteered at a local shelter and participated in the ongoing dialogue about the issue of homelessness in our region. She sees this as a fundamental aspect of the role of the church. She is becoming known in the parish as someone who has knowledge and experience working with poverty, and especially those dealing with mental health issues.</i></p>
<p>Areas Needing Development</p> <p><i>Anna can be impatient with church members who consider her work with the homeless to be “activist” or “too political.” She will need to keep working on how to encourage the church to adopt and engage in outreach to the community.</i></p>

Comments / Questions / Notes

--

A pattern of spiritual practice rooted in a diaconal, Christ-centred, Anglican approach to spirituality. We seek someone who

- is working with a “rule of life;”
- is regular in the daily offices, faithful in their participation in the eucharist, and active in the practice of personal and intercessory prayer;
- pays attention to their interior life;
- has or is initiating a relationship with a qualified spiritual director;
- can articulate how their spirituality relates to the vocation of a deacon.

Experienced or Observed Strengths

As a recent “convert” to Anglicanism, Anna has much enthusiasm for weekly Eucharist and for the combination of order and open-mindedness that Anglicanism has at its core. Anna is very interested in learning new ways to practice spiritual life. She has a strong sense of the importance and breadth of intercessory prayer, especially for those who are vulnerable or at risk.

Areas Needing Development

Anna should learn more about and practice the Anglican pattern of Eucharist, Office and personal prayer. She should enter into the rhythm of praying the Office as well as find a spiritual director who could also serve as her confessor. Anna should begin serving in different capacities in the Sunday liturgy. We encourage her to continue to ground her diaconal self-understanding in the great themes of the bible.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Some wonder how Anna will feel about life in an Anglican Church once the initial euphoria wears off?

Personal awareness and understanding. We seek someone:

- whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others.
- who is working on self-awareness and who nurtures authentic and productive relationships with others. This includes:
 - an openness to, and respect for, differing social and cultural communities in church and society;
 - understanding and having the ability to communicate emotions; and
 - being attuned to the impact of one’s presence, words and actions on others.
- who responds appropriately to conflict, and who has the emotional resilience to persevere and remain in relationship with others when situations get difficult.

Experienced or Observed Strengths

Given her background in counseling, Anna is adept at understanding and articulating her emotions. She is also strong in her ability to cultivate authentic, healthy relationships with others.

Areas Needing Development

Some wonder if Anna will be able to exhibit the kind of resilience needed to remain in relationship over time when things get difficult.

Comments / Questions / Notes

We wonder if Anna would benefit by some formal training in conflict management and resolution.

Community engagement. We seek someone who:

- demonstrates knowledge of their local community, and eagerness to learn more about contemporary issues;
- shows sensitivity to human suffering and injustice;
- is committed to interpreting to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.

Observed or Experienced Strengths

Anna has gone to considerable lengths to understand the history of our parish's interaction with our indigenous neighbours, and recently read and led a book study on Bob Joseph's book, "21 Things You Didn't Know about the Indian Act." She recently attended a seminar on MAID, as part of her ongoing education as a counselor, and has kept up to date on statements made by the Anglican Church in this regard.

Areas Needing Development

Anna does need some help discerning how best to bring what she has heard in her learning and practice to the attention of the church – should she preach? Teach? Write articles? Convene groups? And so on.

Comments / Questions / Notes

--

Rootedness in the biblical narrative. We seek someone who:

- has an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content and themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry;
- is aware of the authority of scripture as understood in the Anglican tradition;
- can articulate some of the challenges put to scripture in our contemporary context.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Anna is gaining familiarity with the bible, and expresses appreciation for the more nuanced approach which Anglicans take in its interpretation. This was not her experience previously, when she felt that Christians were unable to reconcile the bible with contemporary social issues and scientific insights.

Areas Needing Development

As Anna becomes more familiar with scripture, we hope that she will be able to identify compelling examples of servant ministry (and ministers), as well as themes such as justice, mercy, law, grace, poverty, wealthy, exile, wilderness, and so on.

Comments / Questions / Notes

Does the church expect its clergy to have read the whole bible?

Gatherer and builder of community. We seek someone who:

- is gifted in gathering diverse people into a community and then building and developing that community over time;
- can help groups of people come together around shared values and a sense of purpose;
- can assist others in identifying and developing their gifts and skills in service to God, the church and the broader community.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Anna is showing great promise in this area in the parish. In the two years she has been in the parish, she has organized and led the above-mentioned a homeless advocacy group. In addition, she has organized a successful young singles' social justice group. Anna is a natural gatherer of people and creator of community around a specific purpose. Within her work in the parish and in her work, she has great opportunity to interact with people of diverse backgrounds, ages and ethnicities.

Areas Needing Development

--

Comments / Questions / Notes

She just needs to keep this up and needs to find a way to build in feedback on her leadership style.

A leader who both carries authority and can live productively in relationship to others in authority. We seek a leader who:

- is comfortable exercising a style of leadership that is both relational and carries authority;
- having made ordination vows, acknowledges the authority and responsibility that others (ordained or lay) carry in relationship to them; and
- can nurture productive relationships with those in authority.

Experienced or Observed Strengths

Anna seems to have no problem with exhibiting leadership in an "upfront" way that stays connected to others. She has shown this both in the parish and in her work as an Executive Director of a fledgling NGO.

Areas Needing Development

In that the Anglican Church is new to Anna, she will need to learn about and experience being in productive relationship with others who have authority in relationship to her, especially in the role of deacon.

Questions / Comments / Notes

--

A listener who loves to learn. We seek someone who:

- is committed to lifelong learning;
- sees God as moving and active in scripture, tradition and reason;
- is open to learning from other disciplines, and from the wisdom of the community.
- learns from their experience of both success and failure.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Anna is a learner and sees life as one learning opportunity after another. She is particularly interested in learning more about how Anglicans see things.

Areas Needing Development

In that Anna is new to the Anglican Church, she needs a full immersion in how Anglicans understand Scripture, tradition, reason, community life, liturgy, learning from other disciplines, Christian action and on and on!

Questions / Comments / Notes

--

A good steward. We seek someone who

- practises self-care of body, mind and spirit;
- nourishes the important relationships in their life;
- is committed to stewardship of the created order;
- gives generously of their time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God.

Observed Experiences or Strengths

Anna has a strong ethic of giving of herself to her work, to her Christian faith and to the circle of friends she has cultivated.

Areas Needing Development

Anna openly admits that she needs help in cultivating greater balance in her life. More specifically, she needs encouragement in getting the rest and exercise she needs as well as a pattern of financial giving that reflects her commitment to the church.

Questions / Comments / Notes

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Appendix D5

Guide for Parish Discernment Groups

This appendix is for the use of the applicant and parish discernment group, in order to guide their deliberations. It provides detailed instructions for completing Step A5 or B3 as outlined in the introductory website materials entitled “Process for Identifying Potential Deacons in the Parish Community.”

Overview and Purpose

Once the applicant has submitted the Enquirer’s History form (Appendix D2), the clergy leader assembles a parish discernment group, in consultation with the director of deacons and the applicant.

This group typically includes five to six lay people. At least one member of the group must be a member of the parish council. In addition, at least one member of the group must be thoroughly acquainted with the current practice and theology of the diaconate. The director of deacons will assist in the selection of this individual, who will often be from another parish.

The clergy leader remains available to support the group leaders but, with the exception of the first meeting, does *not* participate in the group’s meetings.

The group will begin its work together *after* an orientation meeting with the director of deacons to describe the process, clarify the role of the group, and review the distinction between diaconal and presbyteral ministry. Both the applicant and the clergy leader are to attend this orientation meeting.

The group then meets with the applicant (but not the clergy leader) a minimum of 8 times over a period of up to 9 months (and no fewer than 6). The work of the discernment group has a triple focus:

- The diaconal identity and commitment of the applicant
- The character of the applicant
- the skills of the applicant

The group should follow the general flow of meetings and conversations outlined below. After the final meeting with the applicant, the group writes a letter to the bishop and director of deacons (using the form at Appendix D6), outlining what they observe to be the applicant’s gifts and vulnerabilities, with recommendations concerning whether the applicant should move forward in the process. This report is to state explicitly the overall recommendation of the group: “Yes,” “No,” or “Not at this time.”

Session Guide Introduction

This guide is provided as a means for the parish discernment group to help the applicant explore their sense of call, and to help the group explore its own experience of the applicant both in the parish, and in the meetings of the group.

The sessions in the guide are largely based on the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate (Appendix D1). There are nine session outlines, including the introductory orientation with the director of deacons,

and a concluding meeting in which the group deliberates on its recommendations. The concluding meeting is not attended by the applicant.

Most sessions cover a given topic or theme, and include work to be done before the session, question prompts, and activities. The sessions are designed to ensure that groups are equipped to comment knowledgeably on the questions they will be asked to answer in their report to the bishop and director of deacons (Appendix D6). Therefore, groups should cover all the topics laid out in the guide. They may also augment it with their own appropriate questions.

To help facilitate meetings, each group should select a convener and a secretary. (Neither of these roles is appropriate for the applicant).

- The convener is responsible for setting meeting dates, contacting the group and distributing any materials. The convener should be willing to be a point-person for communications with the director of deacons and the bishop's office regarding the applicant's process. During meetings, the convener facilitates the conversation, steering it back to its focus should it begin to drift. It is helpful if the convener has had prior experience in small group leadership.
- The role of secretary can be rotated among members (again, with the exception of the applicant). Notes gathered by the secretary will provide form the basis of the group's formal submission to the bishop and director of deacons (Appendix D6).

General Outline for Meetings

Groups will normally meet for six to nine months and should plan to meet for at least 90 minutes per session, no less than once a month. Groups begin when the clergy leader and applicant agree that the applicant is ready. They conclude when the group has examined all the questions in the guide and has arrived at a consensus about the applicant's call to holy orders.

Each group will find its own rhythm and style. Groups should open and close each session with prayer, silence or both. Each session should also include some time for personal sharing, prayer and mutual support.

Session Nine provides for a time for members to meet without the applicant for their own discernment conversation. Groups may find the need to do this more frequently, for instance, at mid-point in the meeting cycle. This check-in time can be used to identify areas of the applicant's call, experience or learning that members wish to revisit or to explore more fully. If differences in discernment are identified during the process, the group can then take steps to attempt resolution.

Groups are welcome to supplement, but not to replace the guide with their own work.

Session by Session Discussion Guides

Session One: Orientation Meeting with the Director of Deacons

The clergy leader attends this meeting, and shares chairing responsibilities with the director deacons.

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Read the following short documents (which will be provided ahead of the meeting):

- *The Diaconate FAQ (posted on the diocesan website under Ministries & Programs/Chapter of Deacons)*
- *The Examination of the Deacon (BAS Ordination rite, pp 655-656)*
- *“Section I: Preface” of The Iona Report: The Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada, pp 15-20*

Read the following materials included in the “Ministerial Discernment Process Guide for the Diaconate” (found on the diocesan website, nested in Parish Resources/Ministry Discernment):

- *Abstract*
- *A Message from Bishop Anna*
- *Ministry in Broad Perspective*
- *Purpose of the Criteria*

In addition, please read and keep handy the following appendices, which you will need throughout the process:

- *Appendix D1 - Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate*
- *Appendix D3 – Ministry Discernment Worksheet (for an example of a completed worksheet, you may wish to review Appendix D4)*
- *Appendix D5 – Guide for Parish Discernment Groups*

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting exercise: Pray together the following collect for mission:

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy church, that in our vocation and ministry we may truly and devoutly serve you; through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

2. Briefly introduce yourself to the group: your name, how long you have been associated with the parish, and any role(s) you may have
3. The director of deacons outlines the purpose of the meeting
 - describe the discernment process;
 - clarify the role of the group;
 - provide a brief history of the diaconate;
 - review the distinction between diaconal and presbyteral ministry; and
 - address concerns and next steps.

4. Activity: In go-round fashion, each member shares any previous experience of deacons (who, how many, where, etc.)
5. Questions to Explore:
 - What did you perceive to be their chief role?
 - What differences did you note between the role of the deacon and the role of the priest in these situations?
6. Background on the Diaconate – the director of deacons provides some background on the history of the diaconate, and the place and role of deacons.
7. Housekeeping matters: questions for clarification, selection of chair and secretary, next meeting date.
8. Distribute completed copies of the Enquirer’s History form. End with any preparatory comments about the next session, and a prayer of your choice.

Session Two: Introductions and Spiritual Autobiographies

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Prepare the story of your spiritual life. Make sure you include many aspects of your life in what you share: personal life, family life, vocational life and life in the church are all relevant. Forms that your autobiography can take may include (but are not limited to): a timeline with milestones and turning points; a collage with images that communicate important themes; a picture or pictures that communicate your spiritual history and life via images; or the use of some other medium that best suits you. After you complete this in a comprehensive form, decide what you would be willing to share with the group in a 10-minute presentation.

When the group gathers:

2. Prayer and connecting exercise: Pray together the following collect for mission:

O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

If necessary, briefly re-introduce yourself to the group: your name and any role(s) you may have in the parish. In addition, what is your day-to-day ministry in the world, and what is one expectation that you are bringing to this process?

3. Go over any norms for the group, e.g.: arrive and end on time, what is said in the group stays in the group, use “I statements,” etc.
4. Activity: Each member of the group should spend 10 (maximum 15) minutes sharing their spiritual autobiography. Group members simply receive someone’s story after it is offered (no need to probe further or comment on it). If the sharing needs to be carried over to a second session, do so.
5. Reflection: After everyone has had a turn telling their story, the group explores:
 - in what ways do our spiritual journeys connect thematically to one another?
 - what similarities do our stories share?

- what differences?
6. End with any preparatory comments about the next session, and a prayer of your choice.

Session Three: Diaconal Identity and Community Engagement

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Using the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate (Appendix D1), first read through the description of Criteria #1 and #4). Read the applicant's Enquirer's History form, paying special attention to Parts 4-8 inclusive. Make notes for yourself about how you perceive the applicant to be functioning in accordance with these two criteria. The applicant does the same in self-reflection.

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting exercise: a member offers prayer. Read together Luke 4.18-19. Reflect briefly on how you see the mission Jesus describes in this passage being carried out today.
2. Activity: The applicant describes a local or regional need/issue about which they are passionate, and ways in which the faith community could be called to engage. Group members are invited to list other such issues.
3. Questions for the group to explore with the applicant:
 - What would people need to learn in order to address one or more of the issues raised meaningfully? What would you need to learn? With whom could you or the church collaborate?
 - What challenges do you see in the church becoming involved in these issues? How could these challenges be addressed?
4. End discussion by going around the group and each person sharing one insight (for themselves or about the applicant) they will take away from exploring these criteria.
5. End with any preparatory comments about the next session and with prayer.

Session Four: Personal Awareness and Understanding

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Using the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate (Appendix D1), read through Criterion #3 on personal awareness and understanding. Make notes about where you have seen this lived out in the applicant's time in the parish or in the group.

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting time: A member offers prayer. Read together Ruth 1.16-18. Briefly share one relationship that has been important to you in the last month.
2. Activity: Each group member shares one situation in their life that has called on them to be emotionally or relationally mature. What is the situation and how has it asked you to function? Share in a go-round fashion.
3. A group member will read aloud the criteria on personal and awareness and understanding. Explore some or all the following discussion questions with the applicant:

- Where in your daily work or in your personal life do you most struggle with this criterion? What are the specific situations or personal characteristics/behaviours in others that are the most challenging for you?
 - Who for you exemplifies the kind of qualities described in the criteria?
 - What are you doing to nurture your best self in terms of personal awareness and emotional resilience?
4. In a go-round fashion, each person shares their description of where they have seen elements of the criteria in the applicant. Applicant shares as well.
 5. Applicant shares what they have heard in the group and what they believe they continue to need to work on.
 6. End with any preparatory comments about the next meeting, and with a prayer of your choice.

Session Five: Christ-Centered Anglican Spiritual Practice

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Using the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate (Appendix D1), read through Criteria #2 and #9. Read “The Examination” in the ordination liturgy for deacons (BAS pp 655-656, provided at Session 1). Make notes about what kind of spiritual practice you imagine would best support the kind of presence and activity described.

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting time: A member offers prayer. Read together the “Hear O Israel” (BAS p. 53).

Hear, O Israel,
the Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God
with all your heart,
with all your soul,
with all your mind,
and with all your strength.

This is the first and the great commandment.
The second is like it:
Love your neighbour as yourself.

There is no commandment greater than these.

2. Share one challenge you experience in keeping the “Great Commandments,” i.e. in loving God through nurturing your emotional life (“heart”), spirit (“soul”), intellect (“mind”), and physical wellbeing (“strength”); as well as “loving your neighbour as yourself.” The applicant also shares.
3. Activity: Read through the criteria related to Anglican spiritual practice and stewardship (Criteria #2 & #9). The applicant shares their current Rule of Life or spiritual practice, and connects it to the criteria.
4. Other questions the for the group to explore with the applicant:
 - What do you think is the importance of having a spiritual practice as an ordained deacon?

- What about the Anglican spiritual tradition feeds you spiritually? Challenges you?
 - What parts of your current rule or spiritual practice are easiest for you keep? What parts do you need to continue to work on or refine?
 - How do you understand Christian stewardship? What does it include, and what are the important things that are a call on your own time, treasure, and talent?
 - How do you understand your stewardship of the earth and its resources? How specifically do you practise care for creation?
5. End by going around the group with each member identifying one insight about the applicant or about spiritual practice that they will remember from the discussion.
 6. End with any comments on the next meeting and with prayer.

Session Six: Rootedness in the Biblical Narrative

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Using the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate (Appendix D1), read through Criterion #5. Think of biblical characters, stories and themes that touch on your growing understanding of diaconal ministry. Make a list of societal, ethical or doctrinal issues which pose a challenge to scripture, or to which scripture poses a challenge.

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting time: Pray together the collect for Proper 32:

Eternal God,
 who caused all holy scriptures
 to be written for our learning,
 grant us so to hear them,
 read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,
 that we may embrace and ever hold fast
 the blessed hope of everlasting life,
 which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, for ever and ever. Amen.
2. Activity: Have someone read aloud Criterion #5 concerning rootedness in the biblical narrative. In a go-round fashion, each member names one biblical story or character important to them, and briefly explains why.
3. Other questions for the group to explore with the applicant:
 - After the group shares its prepared list of social or ethical issues, the applicant describes how Scripture could (or could not) be helpfully brought to bear on two or more of them.
 - What does it mean to say the bible has “authority”? How do you perceive the Anglican Church to differ from other traditions in its use and understanding of the bible?
 - Pick one story or passage of scripture that you believe goes to the heart of a deacon’s role in the world. If you had the opportunity to preach to the church about this text, what would your main point be to your listeners?
4. End by going around the group with each member identifying one insight about the importance of rootedness in the biblical narrative. Applicant shares one thing they want or need to work on in order to deepen their own biblical groundedness.

5. End with any comments on the next meeting and with prayer.

Session Seven: Gatherer & Builder of Community who Functions Productively both With and Under Authority.

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Using the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate, read through Criteria #6 and #7. Make notes about one or more times when you have experienced the applicant functioning in these ways. Review the Examination from the ordination rite (BAS pp 655-656, previously provided, as well as the question regarding obedience on p 654). Think about a time when you have exercised authority in the past month. The applicant does the same.

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting time: A member offers prayer. Read together Criteria #6 and #7.
2. Activity: the applicant shares a time when they have functioned as a gatherer and builder of community (either within or outside the church). Other group members share what they have experienced of the applicant as a gatherer and builder of community in the parish.
3. Questions for the group to explore with the applicant:
 - In what way is the work of gathering and building community important to the work of a deacon – in the world? In the parish?
 - In your own parish context, what issues or needs can you imagine gathering and equipping people to address?
 - Where are you comfortable and uncomfortable in exercising authority, and how do you perceive your own leadership style?
 - How do you interact with those who have been given authority in relationship to you, particularly on matters where you disagree?
4. In a go-round fashion, members of the group share their thoughts on this question: what is one insight about the applicant that you will take away from the discussion and what is one question you would invite the applicant to explore? Lastly, the applicant shares one learning they have had about themselves in relationship to these criteria, and one area they believe they still need to explore.
5. End with any comments about the next meeting and prayer.

Session Eight: The Love of Learning

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member (including the applicant) should prepare as follows:

Make notes: Why might it be important for a deacon to be not only open to learning, but relish it?

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting time: A member offers prayer. Read together Proverbs 8.22-31. Share the name of a favourite teacher at school, and how they inspired you.
2. Activity: Explore some or all with the applicant:
 - Who (besides the person you have mentioned) have been your most important teachers in life? Who were they and what did you learn from each?

- What life events have taught you the most important lessons or have opened you to the most important learning in your life?
 - What bible story has taught something very important in your life? What did you learn?
 - What book, movie, saint, theologian or artist (etc.) has been your teacher? What did you learn?
 - What situations or people make it difficult for you to learn?
 - What do you want to learn about in the future?
3. Group members go around the circle and share with applicant what they have learned in this session about the applicant and this criterion. Applicant then repeats back what they have heard from the group.
 4. End with any comments about the next meeting, and with prayer.

Session Nine: Discussion (held without the applicant)

Preparation

Before the group gathers, each member should prepare as follows:

Read through the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate again, as well as your notes. Review the questions that will be asked of the discernment group in its final report (See Appendix D6). Make notes about the following:

- *What are the criteria or other areas in which I experience the applicant's gifts and strengths?*
- *What vulnerabilities and areas do I believe the applicant needs to continue to work on?*
- *Given my experience of the applicant in the parish and my/our experience of the applicant in the group, can I envisage this person as a deacon?*

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting exercise: Pray the following collect together:

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light,
 look favourably on your whole Church,
 that wonderful and sacred mystery.
 By the effectual working of your providence,
 carry out in tranquillity the plan of salvation.
 Let the whole world see and know
 that thing which were cast down are being raised up,
 and things which had grown old are being made new,
 and that all things are being brought to their perfection
 by him through whom all things were made,
 your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In light of your work together as a diaconal discernment group, choose one phrase of this prayer that particularly strikes you, and share your reasons why with the group.

2. Activity: Go around the circle and share:
 - perceived strengths and gifts of the applicant
 - perceived vulnerabilities and areas that the applicant needs to continue to work on
 - group members' sense of whether the applicant could be a priest or deacon
3. It may be desirable to take a short break at this time.

4. The group (reconvenes and) discusses what they have shared, and decides whether or not they are affirming the call of the applicant, and recommending that the applicant continue to the next phase of the process (normally, attendance at a diocesan discernment conference and designation as a postulant.) The group must state their decision clearly, choosing one of the following three options, and stating their reasons.
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not at this time
5. Group decides who will draft the report (using Appendix D6) and how it will be distributed for comment and finalized.
6. End with any comments concerning next steps. Regardless of the outcome of the group's deliberations, it may be desirable to convene one last time to debrief and express gratitude.

Next Steps: Sharing the Report with the Applicant

The convener of the group shares the report with the clergy leader *before* it is shared with the applicant, in order to clarify next steps.

If the recommendation is “Yes”:

- a. The convener and the clergy leader share the report with the applicant.
- b. The report is signed and sent to the bishop and director of deacons.
- c. The group and the applicant meet to debrief as outlined below.

If the recommendation is “Not at this time”:

- a. The convener meets with the clergy leader and director of deacons to clarify the steps recommended before the applicant would be eligible to re-apply.
- b. The convener and clergy leader share the report with the applicant. (The director of deacons may attend at the discretion of the convener and clergy leader.)
- c. The report is signed and sent to the bishop and director of deacons.
- d. The group and the applicant meet to debrief as outlined below. The applicant or the group may choose to have the clergy leader present.

If the recommendation is “No”:

- a. The convener meets with the clergy leader and the director of deacons to clarify what pastoral care and supports may be needed by the applicant.
- b. The convener, clergy leader and the director of deacons share the report with the applicant.
- c. The report is signed and sent to the bishop and director of deacons.
- d. The applicant is offered an opportunity to meet with the group as outlined below in order to debrief. The applicant or the group may choose to have the clergy leader present.

When the group gathers:

1. Prayer and connecting exercise: Read together Psalm 98. Share one moment of joy you have experienced in the group's work together.
2. Distribute copies of the report. Group members take turns reading each section aloud.

3. Applicant asks any questions they might have about the report.
4. Discussion of any specific sections of the report and discussion of next steps.
 - If “yes,” what is the next step?
 - If “not at this time,” what is the recommended next step?
 - If “no,” what is the next step?
5. Group members reflect together on their experience of the group:
 - What was energizing or uplifting?
 - What was more of a struggle?
 - What new insights were gained?
6. Close with prayer for the applicant and for all the members of the group.

Appendix D6

Parish Discernment Group report to the Bishop and Director of Deacons

This appendix is for the use of the parish discernment group at the end of their ministry discernment process. It forms the basis of the group's joint recommendation to the bishop and director of deacons concerning the applicant's candidacy. The contents of this report will be shared with the applicant by the bishop or director of deacons, the clergy leader, and one member of the discernment group (usually, the convener.)

Please email, or deliver in hard copy, to the bishop and the director of deacons one typed evaluation completed on behalf of the entire Parish Discernment Group.

Note: Type in the shaded areas below – they will expand as you type.

Applicant's Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Parish: Click or tap here to enter text.

Incumbent: Click or tap here to enter text.

Parish Discernment Group Convener: Click or tap here to enter text.

Names of Parish Discernment Group Members:

1. Click or tap here to enter text.
text.

Parish Position: Click or tap here to enter

2. Click or tap here to enter text.
text.

Parish Position: Click or tap here to enter

3. Click or tap here to enter text.
text.

Parish Position: Click or tap here to enter

4. Click or tap here to enter text.
text.

Parish Position: Click or tap here to enter

5. Click or tap here to enter text.
text.

Parish Position: Click or tap here to enter

6. Click or tap here to enter text.
text.

Parish Position: Click or tap here to enter

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability, giving specific examples. These questions are to be answered by the parish discernment team as a group.

1. List the dates on which you met with the applicant, and what was discussed or explained in each meeting.

Click or tap here to enter text.

2. What do you perceive to be the applicant's understanding of Christian ministry?

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. In the group’s conversations with the applicant on the Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate, what have you identified as the applicant’s strengths? What areas have you identified that need continued development?

Click or tap here to enter text.

4. What do you perceive to be the applicant’s understanding of their vocation to ordained diaconal ministry and how was it clearly articulated?

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. How does the applicant’s past and current ministry (in the world, at home, or in the church) exemplify the particular qualities of a deacon? Please be specific.

Click or tap here to enter text.

6. What is your impression of the applicant’s intellectual, emotional and spiritual capacities?

Intellectual: Click or tap here to enter text.

Emotional: Click or tap here to enter text.

Spiritual: Click or tap here to enter text.

7. Are there any physical or emotional conditions that would limit the applicant’s ability to engage in ordained ministry that you know of? If yes, please describe.

Click or tap here to enter text.

8. What is your general sense of the applicant’s suitability for ordination?

Click or tap here to enter text.

9. Are there any other factors that you consider significant?

Click or tap here to enter text.

10. Do you recommend that the applicant continue to the next phase of the diocesan discernment process? *(This is an important step, and would entail any or all of: attendance at a diocesan discernment conference, being named a “postulant” by the bishop, and working with the director of deacons on a learning plan.)*

Yes:

No:

Not at this time:

Please elaborate:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Add name above each title and sign in the opposite box.

Click or tap here to enter text. Convener	
Click or tap here to enter text. Incumbent or Clergy Leader	

Click or tap here to enter text. Applicant	
---	--

Date

Appendix D7

Clergy leader letter of recommendation to the bishop and director of deacons

This appendix is for use by the clergy leader, at the end of the parish discernment process.

The clergy leader who has been most involved with the applicant during the discernment process writes a letter to the bishop and director of deacons indicating:

- their personal discernment of the applicant's vocation
- to what extent the applicant is meeting the various "Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate"
- any recommendations for formation in areas where the applicant needs to grow and develop to become a fully effective minister in the church
- any concerns about eventually incorporating the applicant into the parish's clergy/staff team as a deacon

Appendix D8

Training and Formation for Diaconal Ministry

This appendix comes into play for applicants who have completed the parish discernment process and been recommended to continue to the next phase of the diocesan discernment process (normally, designation as a postulant and attendance at a diocesan discernment conference.) It is primarily for the use of the applicant or postulant, their academic advisors, as well as supervising clergy, in preparing for ordained ministry as a deacon. The work of the parish discernment group will provide information to the director of deacons that will shape a postulant’s learning plan. In this regard, the group may find it interesting or helpful to familiarize themselves with the contents of Appendix D8.

This diocese aligns itself with the “Iona Report on the Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada” (2016), which embodies the following governing principles:

A Distinction between Training and Formation

Training refers primarily to the honing of practical skills. Formation, by contrast, refers to the shaping of a diaconal identity within the inquirer. We are interested not only in what a deacon does, but in who a deacon is, and in that person’s motivation.

Competencies

Historically, the Church has measured preparedness for ministry by assessing a candidate’s intellectual grasp of a topic under review, for instance through the writing of essays or exams. There is, however, a difference between achieving a B+ in a course on the parables of Jesus, and demonstrating that one can assist a study group to imagine how a particular parable applies to their local situation. In a competency model, we are looking for evidence that learners can incorporate “book learning” into their preaching, spiritual life, teaching, and leadership.

Lifelong Learning

Learning and the development of competence is a lifelong affair, and we expect all deacons to engage in ongoing continuing education, especially in areas of particular relevance to their ministry, or which will strengthen gifts and address weaknesses. The Iona Report therefore distinguishes between degrees of competence that might be expected of a deacon early in their process of vocational discernment, from what might be expected at the time of ordination, or again, after several years’ experience.

The Iona Competencies

The Iona Report sets out seven general areas of competence, each subdivided into several specific competencies. Further examples (not included here)¹ are given for each of these more specific competencies, as they might be demonstrated (1) by a new inquirer; (2) by an ordinand; and (3) by a seasoned lifelong learner. It is important to read these examples as illuminative rather than prescriptive. The context of each deacon will determine what each competency requires. The general areas of competence and their specific competencies are as follows:

General Area of Competence	Specific Competencies
Area A	1. Shows understanding of the biblical concept of diakonia and its

¹ For more granular detail, or to download a pdf of the Iona competencies, go to www.anglican.ca/diaconate.

Diakonia and the Diaconate	relationship to the diaconate. Is able to... 2. Identifies and articulates a personal role and identity in diaconal ministry. Is able to...
Area B Human Awareness & Understanding	1. Is growing in self-awareness, with a view to becoming fully present to others in one's ministry, relationships, and interactions. Is able to... 2. Is building and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships. Is able to... 3. Is building and fostering healthy community life in a variety of contexts. Is able to... 4. Is becoming accepting of people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Is able to... 5. Is learning to respond appropriately to conflict. Is able to... 6. Is learning to exercise ministry and leadership in collaboration with others. Is able to...
Area C Spirituality and Spiritual Practice	1. Gives evidence of practicing a prayer life, both in community and in solitude. Is able to... 2. Knows that the spiritual life is in continual development, and that healthy development requires attentiveness. Is able to... 3. Shows a vocational tendency toward the spirituality of a deacon. Is able to...
Area D Practical Training and Experience	1. Demonstrates a diaconal "servant" heart, and gifts for ministry. Is able to... 2. Demonstrates a knowledge of the local community. Is able to... 3. Interprets the "needs, concerns and hopes of the world" to the gathered church. Is able to... 4. Demonstrates a knowledge of, and eagerness to learn more about, contemporary issues. Is able to... 5. Capably performs all diaconal liturgical functions. Is able to...
Area E Church Polity and Diaconal Ministry in the Public Square	1. Demonstrates knowledge of the scope and structures of the church. Is able to... 2. Demonstrates ability to work within the structures of the church. Is able to... 3. Works within agreed procedures, vision, and priorities of the church. Is able to... 4. Demonstrates interpretive skills relating to "church world" interactions. Is able to...
Area F Scripture	1. Demonstrates an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content and themes. Is able to... 2. Is learning about the context in which scripture was written. Is able to... 3. Is growing in ability to exegete and interpret scripture. Is able to... 4. Demonstrates an awareness of the authority of scripture in the Anglican tradition. Is able to... 5. Is learning to identify major biblical themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry. Is able to...

In addition, this diocese seeks growing competence in the basics of Christian theology, and in the work of advocacy, community development and change management.

Designing and Completing a Learning Plan

The completion of a learning plan takes place once an applicant has completed the parish discernment process, and been recommended to the bishop for postulancy. In some circumstances, applicants may be encouraged by the director of deacons to enrol in an introductory course on the ministry of deacons.

Upon designation as a postulant, and with a view to developing the necessary competencies, each postulant will work with the diocesan director of deacons to devise a program of learning appropriate to their own circumstances and relevant education and experience. This work includes (1) study; (2) practice; (3) engagement with ordained deacons; and (4) attention to prayer and spiritual growth.

1. Programs of Study and Learning

- Normally, candidates for the diaconate will complete their learning programs on a part-time basis, and via distance-learning. It is not required that deacons complete a degree in theology, and diaconal candidates holding an MDiv, or other theological certificate or diploma, may be asked to complete further modules of study.
- Normally candidates will hold a baccalaureate degree at a minimum, and prior to entering the discernment process, have appropriate qualifications to perform the diaconal ministry in which they are currently engaged.
- Candidates may pursue an institutional offering in its entirety, or may pick and choose relevant courses across a variety of programs. The director of deacons has a list of recommended programs and courses, although candidates may propose other means of fulfilling competency requirements.
- Please note that programs of study must be approved by the director of deacons in order to be credited towards readiness for ordination, and to be eligible for funding assistance.

2. Supervised Internship

Candidates will be expected to complete a supervised field placement of at least 3 months' duration as part of their formation. Such placements are already incorporated into many educational programs. If necessary, the director of deacons will assist in arranging a placement.

3. Diocesan Chapter of Deacons

The diocesan "Chapter of Deacons" is formally associated with Christ Church Cathedral, as the seat of the bishop. Applicants may be encouraged to participate in Chapter meetings as part of their ongoing diaconal formation. Postulants are expected to participate.

4. Spiritual Direction

Those in formation are expected to be working with a spiritual director of their choice. The bishop's office has a list of trustworthy individuals currently engaged in this ministry, and the director of deacons can assist in selecting someone who will be a good fit. Spiritual directors are meant to be a safe confidant (and sometimes, confessor) for the candidate. They are thus precluded from a reporting, or intervening, role in the discernment process.

Those in formation will meet at least annually with the director of deacons to review their progress and revise their training and formation plan as necessary.