

## PART I: OVERVIEW OF THE THREE YEARS

We believe that all baptized persons are called to minister in Christ's name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church, and to serve in Christ's mission at all times and in all places. We affirm that all are called to sustain their ministries through commitment to life-long Christian formation. (Title 111.1.1)

If you believe that God may be calling you to ordained ministry, your first step is to begin and continue conversations with your priest.

Below are the requirements for ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood, as stated in the Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Indianapolis.

Copies of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Indianapolis are available here and here and here, or by contacting Janet Brinkworth, Executive Assistant to the Bishop: [brinkworth@indydio.org](mailto:brinkworth@indydio.org).

This checklist has been prepared for your assistance and guidance in navigating the process. It is the responsibility of each Aspirant, in consultation with their mentoring priest, Commission on Ministry liaison, and with the support of Bishop's Staff, to ensure that they meet canonical requirements. Process and timeline will vary, depending on a person's needs, experience, and circumstance. There are certain requirements of time periods to be aware of, particularly Canon III.

An Aspirant's file will always be available to them by contacting the Bishop's Executive Assistant. The Aspirant is responsible for ensuring that all necessary documents are contained within their file. We highly recommend that Aspirants keep a copy of everything they have sent to the Bishop, the Bishop's Executive Assistant, the Commission on Ministry, and the Standing Committee throughout the discernment of a call to ordained ministry.

Where the process is different for those discerning for the diaconate versus the priesthood, this difference is noted. If there is no division, requirements are the same for both orders of ministry.

Confirmed adult communicants in good standing are eligible to enter discernment for these ministries:

- having received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism,
- having been duly recorded in this Church and sixteen years of age,
- having been resident at their would-be sponsoring parish for a period of at least one year
- having made a mature public affirmation of faith and commitment (i.e. confirmed/received),
- having received Holy Communion at least three times during the preceding year, and
- having been faithful in corporate worship, in working, praying, and giving.

(III.6.2,8.2, Title 1.17)

Aspirancy: First Step in Public Discernment

Having met with their sponsoring Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge over a period of months, at minimum, with the sponsoring Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge's support of the Aspirant's call to an exploration of ordained ministry, the

Aspirant and sponsoring priest meet with the Bishop to share the Aspirant's desire to begin more formal discernment.

The Aspirant attends an Information Day, accompanied by their sponsoring Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge, spouse/partner, and a Vestry member. Information Day may be offered twice per year and most often in June, hosted by the Bishop and the Commission on Ministry. The date will be published on the diocesan website and in the weekly newsletter. Note: once the Bishop grants permission to move forward, regardless of the timing of the next Information Day, the Aspirant may complete an Application for Discernment and continue with the steps that follow, below.

Complete the Application for Discernment form and submit to the Bishop's Executive Assistant, Janet Brinkworth.

A note of importance: throughout the process of discernment toward ordained ministry, it is the Aspirant's responsibility to ensure that materials in their files are complete.

Once the Application for Discernment has been submitted to the Bishop's office, the Aspirant will:

- Schedule an appointment with the Canon to the Ordinary for Congregational Development and Leadership to become familiar with the discernment process checklist and ask any questions he/she/they may have.
- Maintain the status of "confirmed adult communicant in good standing," which means a faithful practice of regular worship, and faithfulness in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.
- Remain in regular contact with their sponsoring Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge and with their Commission on Ministry liaison with questions and updates, and for the purpose of ongoing support.
- Practice personal prayer and reflection.
- Engage a spiritual director for the purpose of regular guidance. A list of spiritual directors is available from the Bishop's executive assistant.
- Contact the Safeguarding administrator of his/her/their parish to complete the necessary Safeguarding God's People and Safeguarding God's Children courses as required, maintaining those certifications to remain current every 3 years. (III.6.5, 8.5)
- In consultation with the Canon to the Ordinary for Congregational Development and Leadership or the Associate for Transitions and Congregational Development, secure certification in a racial reconciliation/anti-racism training that has been approved by the Bishop.
- Contact the Executive Assistant to the Bishop to secure an Oxford background check, recognizing that the expense of this background check will be split between the Aspirant and the Bishop's office. The Aspirant will be invoiced by the Bishop's office for his/her/their portion of the expense of this check. The Aspirant's parish may provide resources to help offset this cost.
- Contact the Executive Assistant to the Bishop to secure a psychological evaluation, recognizing that the expense of this exam will be divided between the Aspirant and the Bishop's office. The Aspirant will be invoiced by the Bishop's office for his/her/their portion of this expense. The Aspirant's parish may provide resources to help offset this cost.
- Contact the Executive Assistant to the Bishop to secure the form for a physical exam, returning the completed form to the Bishop's office.

- Provide a letter of support in this process from his/her/their spouse/partner, if applicable.
- Provide two reference letters of support from lay or ordained leaders.
- Be prepared to share his/her/their familiarity with:
  - The Baptismal Covenant, the Catechism, the Rite for Ordination according to the order they discern, and the Canons.
  - Their particular gifts and skills for ministry, and how they discern that their gifts may serve to build up the church.
  - Appropriate boundaries in areas of leadership, finance, emotion, sexuality, accountability, and responsibilities.
  - Where the Aspirant may need to improve and learn new skills.
  - How the Aspirant's family may be affected by the process of discernment, formation, and service in ministry.

The Aspirant may consult with Bishop, either Canon to the Ordinary, or the Associate for Transitions regarding the financial resources available to support their preparation.

The Aspirant's sponsoring Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge will assign 4-6 people to a Congregational Discernment Group (CDG). The Commission on Ministry will provide a Congregational Discernment Handbook and an orientation session for the CDG and the Aspirant.

- The Aspirant will meet with this group for 8 sessions over a 3-6 month period.
- Before the fourth session, the Aspirant will submit to the CDG a spiritual autobiography sharing his/her/their major life events, family and personal circumstances, spiritual events, and other factors that led to this present vocational aspiration.

The Congregational Discernment Group will:

- Assist the Aspirant in listening for and reflecting on God's presence, discerning his/her/their gifts, and seeking to discover God's will;
- Submit a report to the Vestry and the Commission on Ministry (copy the Bishop's Executive Assistant), which:
  - Describes the discernment process that the group has undertaken, articulating their sense of the Aspirant's call
  - Includes a recommendation related to the parish's nomination of this person for continuing public discernment of a call to ordained ministry
- Commit to providing ongoing support throughout the Aspirant's discernment process, whether it is ultimately to ordained ministry or to baptismal ministry

The Bishop or a member of the Bishop's staff may recommend that the Aspirant shadow an experienced priest or deacon for a period of time, based on the Aspirant's experience and for the enrichment of his/her/their discernment. This may take place at the same time as congregational discernment.

Aspirants will submit to the Commission a typed 2-3 page spiritual autobiography on ordained ministry which includes:

- Their earliest memories of God's presence and sense of God's call
- People who have been influential in their faith development
- Reflection on their major points of decision
- Major commitments they have made
- Influences in their faith journey
- Decisions they have made in discerning a call to ministry

The Aspirant's Vestry will write a letter of support to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry on behalf of the congregation, nominating the Aspirant for Postulancy, which:

- pledges to contribute financially to that preparation
- promises that parish leaders and the congregation as a whole will be involved and supportive of the Aspirant's preparation for ordained ministry.

This letter will be signed by the sponsoring Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge and 2/3 of the Vestry (III.6.2,8.2)

If the Aspirant accepts this nomination, he/she/they will write a letter to the Bishop accepting this nomination, which also includes:

- full name and date of birth
- legal time of residence in the Diocese of Indianapolis
- evidence of Baptism and Confirmation
- Notice of any previous application or nomination for Postulancy in this or any other diocese
- Education attained: degrees, official college transcripts for both undergraduate and graduate coursework
- A description of their discernment process

When the Bishop has received all of the materials above, culminating with the Aspirant's letter accepting the nomination of his/her/their parish, the Bishop may extend a letter to the Aspirant, inviting him/her/them to take part in a Commission on Ministry (COM) weekend interview for Postulancy.

Members of the Commission on Ministry will engage Aspirants throughout the weekend, in conversation and prayer and during worship, seeking to discern each Aspirant's gifts for ministry. By the end of the COM weekend, members will make a recommendation to the Bishop about whether they believe each Aspirant should move forward to a point of further public discernment. The decision of Postulancy belongs to the Bishop, who invites these recommendations from the COM. Documentation of the COM recommendation to the Bishop for each Aspirant will be provided for the respective Aspirants' files.

The Bishop will notify Aspirants of her decision about Postulancy before they depart the COM weekend.

**Year Two: The Deacon in the Church**

The Foundation Year

Canonical Requirements:

Canon III 6.5 (f) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas: (1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church. (2) Diakonia and the diaconate. (3) Human awareness and understanding. (4) Spiritual development and discipline. (5) Practical training and experience.

Special Note:

Academic Requirements may be met through the following academic institutions with final permission from the Bishop: Church Divinity School of the Pacific's CALL Courses, Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation, Earlham School of Religion (Social Justice Workshops and Holy Scripture Courses), Christian Theological Seminary.

Courses may be audited at less cost, however, final projects and course work must be made available for the individual's academic portfolio. Academic portfolios will be used by the Bishop, COM and Examining Chaplains to ascertain the individual's academic competency and proficiency at the end of their formation process.

- Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) and their CALL Courses: <https://cdsp.edu/center-for-anglican-learning-and-leadership/call-2018-19-online-courses/>
- Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation (BSSF): <https://www.bexleyseabury.edu/category/courses/course-catalog/>
- Earlham School of Religion (ESR): Website: <https://esr.earlham.edu/>
  - ESR Course Catalog: [https://esr.earlham.edu/esr/sites/default/files/ESR%20Catalog15\\_sm.pdf](https://esr.earlham.edu/esr/sites/default/files/ESR%20Catalog15_sm.pdf)
- Christian Theological Seminary: <https://www.cts.edu/>

*Academic Expectations:*

**Holy Scriptures:**

1. Intro to OT Scripture Studies (1 course)
2. Intro to NT Scripture Studies (1 course)

**Anglican Theology:**

1. Intro to Anglican Theology (1 course)
2. Practical Theology (Anglican Theology applied to modern social issues) (1 course)

**Diakonia & The Diaconate:**

1. The Diaconal Hermeneutic (1 course)

**Note:** *The Postulant is expected to complete both classes in Holy Scripture and the Intro to Anglican Theology course in Year Two, all other academic courses may be completed over the course of Year Two and Year Three as determined by the individual's schedule.*

*End of Year Two*

- *Upon successful completion of Year 2 courses: If Intro to OT, Intro to NT and Intro Anglican Theology and all Cohort expectations have met thus far, a postulant may apply for Candidacy.*

**Year Three: Deacon in the World**

The Practical Year and Internship Year

Canonical Requirements:

Canon III 6.5 (g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding (1) prevention of sexual misconduct. (2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse. (3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof. (4) the Church's teaching on racism.

**1. Assigned Internship Begins**

*The following Canonical Requirements will be provided in-house by Cohort Gatherings or diocesan-approved outside organizations*

2. Prevention of Sexual Misconduct Training
  - a. Will be covered by Cohort Gatherings and all formation students must complete diocesan requirements for Safeguarding God's People during the Aspirant year.
3. Duty to Report
  - a. Will be covered by Cohort Gatherings and Safeguarding God's People.
4. Constitutions and Canons
  - a. Will be covered by Cohort Gatherings, can also be covered by other diocesan approved organizations.
5. Anti-Racism Training
  - a. Will be covered by diocesan approved organizations. Training may be completed in Year One or Year Two. Organizations providing the training must be approved by the Canon to the Ordinary for Congregational Development and Leadership.
6. Human Awareness and Understanding
  - a. Will be covered by Cohort Gatherings, can also be covered by other diocesan approved organizations.
7. Pastoral Care
  - a. Will be covered by Cohort Gathering, can also be covered by other diocesan approved organizations.
  - b. Internship should allow for Deacon to provide Eucharistic Visits (LEV) and shadow priest for some Pastoral Care learning (i.e. Hospital visits, prayer, etc).
8. Homiletics
  - a. Will be covered by Cohort Gatherings, can also be covered by other diocesan approved organizations.
9. Experiential Training in Community Organizing
  - a. Will be covered by diocesan approved organizations. Training may be completed in Year One or Year Two. Organizations providing the training must be approved by the Canon to the Ordinary for Congregational Development and Leadership.

10. Year Two academic requirements should also be met by end of year three.

*Upon successful completion of Year Two and Year Three academic requirements and Cohort Gatherings, the Candidate may apply for Ordination*

## PART II: OVERVIEW OF THE CANONICAL REQUIREMENTS, COMPETENCIES & THE COHORT GATHERINGS

### Year Two: The Deacon in the Church The Foundation Year

**Canon III 6.5 (f) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas: (1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church. (2) Diakonia and the diaconate. (3) Human awareness and understanding. (4) Spiritual development and discipline. (5) Practical training and experience.**

*As a deacon in the Church, you are to study the Holy Scriptures, to seek nourishment from them, and to model your life upon them. The Book of Common Prayer, The Ordination of a Deacon, The Examination, p. 543*

**Scriptural Competencies:** Students will demonstrate skills in exegesis. Students will highlight Biblical themes foundation to diaconal ministry. Students will explain what the Episcopal Church defines as the Authority of Scripture. Students will explore Biblical stories of hospitality and service to the poor and marginalized. Students will explore the terms “justice” and “mercy” in the scriptures and use those concepts to address contemporary social justice issues.

*Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers? The Book of Common Prayer, The Baptismal Covenant, p. 304*

**Theology Competencies:** Students will exhibit an understanding of the creeds, the sacramental nature of the Episcopal Church, the Baptismal Covenant. The student will demonstrate an ability to do theological reflection on the role of the deacon in the church and in the world.

*Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them? The Book of Common Prayer, Ordination of a Deacon, The Presentation, p. 538*

**History and Tradition Competencies:** The student will understand the origins and organization of the Episcopal Church. The student will describe the role of the Book of Common Prayer and demonstrate an ability to lead Morning and Evening Prayer. The student will be able to trace the involvement, successes and failings of the Episcopal Church within the realm of social justice.

*God now calls you to a special ministry of servanthood directly under your Bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely.* The Book of Common Prayer, The Ordination of a Deacon, The Examination, p. 543

*The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist Bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of sacraments.* The Book of Common Prayer, The Catechism, p. 855

**Diakonia and the Diaconate Competencies:** The student will understand and relate to others the history and role of the deacon, from the early Church to contemporary times. The student will understand what it means to bring the cares and concerns of the world into the church and to send out the congregation as disciples of the Lord.

**COHORT GATHERINGS NOTE:** Cohort gatherings are generally interchangeable and Year One and Year Two topics *may* be presented on the same day, depending on the make-up of the cohort. Flexibility and creativity, vision and good humor, all excellent diaconal qualities, are required from *all* participants in formation. Time frames for the day are suggestions, not mandates.

**Note:**

**1) Anti-racism training provided by diocesan-approved organizations may occur during Year One and definitely must be completed before the completion of diaconal formation. Please obtain the approval of the Canon before initiating the training. Training usually occurs over 2 and 1/2 days, approximately 20 hours in length.**

**2) Community-organizing training, likewise, may occur during Year One and definitely must be completed before the completion of diaconal formation. Deacon formation leaders will provide agency contact information and resources for community – organizing training. Please obtain the approval of the Canon before initiating the training.**

Cohort Gathering #1

- 1) Orientation to the Year – 15 minutes
- 2) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) In-house presentation – The Book of Common Prayer – one hour
- 5) Practice – Morning Prayer led by presenter - 15 minutes
- 6) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 7) In-house presentation – Episcopal History and Polity – one hour
- 8) Spiritual practices – one hour
- 9) Vespers – led by student – 15 minutes

Cohort Gathering #2



- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) In-house presentation – The History of the Diaconate and the Deacon in the Liturgy – one hour
- 5) Practice – the Deacon in the Liturgy (proclamation of the Gospel and Prayers of the People) – 30 minutes
- 6) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 7) In-house presentation – Scripture through a diaconal lens (First Testament – the Prophetic Voice and Gospel and Acts/Epistles) – two hours
- 8) Vespers – led by student – 15 minutes

## Cohort Gathering #3

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) In-house presentation – Liturgical and Anglican theology - one hour
- 5) Practice – the Deacon in the Liturgy (Setting the Table and Prayers of the People) – 30 minutes
- 6) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 7) In-house presentation – Clergy Self-Care, including Addiction and Recovery – one hour
- 8) In-house presentation – Deacon vestments, customary for Bishop's visits – one hour
- 9) Vespers – led by student – 15 minutes

## Cohort Gathering #4

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) In-House presentation - The Deacon's Role in the Parish and the Diocese and with the priest, including entering the parish system – two hours
- 5) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 6) Spiritual practices – individual prayer time – 30 minutes
- 7) In-House presentation – Diaconal spirituality – one hour
- 8) Balancing a Bi-Vocational Life – 30 minutes
- 9) Check-in – diocesan paperwork and expectations; outside trainings expectations – 30 minutes
- 10) Vespers – led by student – 15 minutes

## Cohort Gathering #5

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 1) Discussion of academic class work/learnings/questions/understandings – 30 minutes
- 3) In -house presentation – Homiletics: Preaching Social Justice – two hours
  - a. The sermons of social justice giants (ex. - Thurman, Romero, King)

- b. Practice with pre-selected texts
- 4) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 5) In-house presentation – Teaching Social Justice through Film – two hours
  - a. The Lunch Date
  - b. The Butterfly Circus
- 6) Forming a deacon identity – 30 minutes
- 7) Closing Prayer – student led

Cohort Gathering #6

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) In-house presentation - The Episcopal Church and Social Justice – one hour
- 5) In-house presentation – Domestic Poverty - 30 minutes
- 6) Noon prayers and lunch – one hour
- 7) In-house presentation – The Baptismal Covenant, the Jesus Movement and the Deacon – two hours
- 8) Preaching Social Justice – practice – one hour
- 9) Vespers – student led – 15 minutes

**Year Three: The Deacon in the World**  
**The Practical Year and Internship Year**

(g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding (1) prevention of sexual misconduct. (2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse. (3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof. (4) the Church's teaching on racism.

*You are to make Christ and his redemptive love known, by your word and example, to those among whom you live, and work, and worship.* The Book of Common Prayer, The Ordination of a Deacon, p. 543

*Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?* The Book of Common Prayer, The Baptismal Covenant, p. 305

**Human Awareness and Understanding Competencies:** The student will demonstrate an awareness of interpersonal dynamics within a parish; ex. setting boundaries, triangulation, personal bias, conflict resolution, etc. The student will understand the institutional safeguards put in place by the Episcopal Church to respect and protect all persons. The student will understand implicit and explicit bias within themselves, the Church and society with regard to race, gender, class, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

## COHORT GATHERINGS

### Cohort Gathering #1

- 2) Orientation to the Year – 15 minutes
- 3) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 4) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 5) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 6) In-house presentation – Safeguarding God's Children (student should have already completed online) and Title IV – 30 minutes
- 7) In-House presentation - Asset- Mapping part one – one hour
- 8) Noon prayers and lunch – one hour
- 9) Asset-Mapping part two – one hour
- 10) In-house presentation – Asset-Based Community Development – two hours
- 11) Closing Prayer – student led

### Cohort Gathering #2

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) Guest speaker – Racial Justice – SuRJ (Stand Up for Racial Justice) Indy speaker – two hours
- 5) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 6) In-house presentation – Community Resources and Networking for the Deacon – one hour
- 7) Guest speaker - Trans 101 – one hour
- 8) In-house presentation – Bringing the concerns of the community to the church – 30 minutes
- 9) Closing prayer – student led

### Cohort Gathering #3

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) Guest speaker – Faith in Indiana – two hours
- 5) Noon prayers and lunch – one hour
- 6) In-house presentation – Conflict Resolution – two hours
- 7) Closing prayer – student led

### Cohort Gathering #4 **Retreat Day**

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Retreat Morning

- 4) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 5) In-house presentation – Engaged Spirituality
- 6) Small group discussion – The Diaconal Journey So Far
- 7) Closing prayer - student led

### Cohort Gathering #5

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) In-house presentation – Pastoral Identity and Ethics – one hour
- 4) In-house presentation – Letters of Agreement – 30 minutes
- 5) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 6) Guest Speaker - The Immigration Issue – two hours
- 7) In-house presentation – Bringing the concerns of the community to the church – 30 minutes
- 8) Closing prayer – student led

### Cohort Gathering #6

- 1) Check-in – how are things going in your parish, your life? – 15 minutes
- 2) Morning Prayer – student led – 15 minutes
- 3) Discussion of academic class work and/or field placement – 30 minutes
- 4) In-house discussion – Pastoral Care and the Deacon; including Addiction and Recovery in the parish, Family Systems in the Parish, and Stewardship – two hours
- 5) Noon prayers and Lunch – one hour
- 6) Guest speaker – Human Trafficking – 2 hours
- 7) In-house presentation – Bringing the concerns of the community to the church – 30 minutes
- 8) Sending Forth Prayer Service – Facilitator led