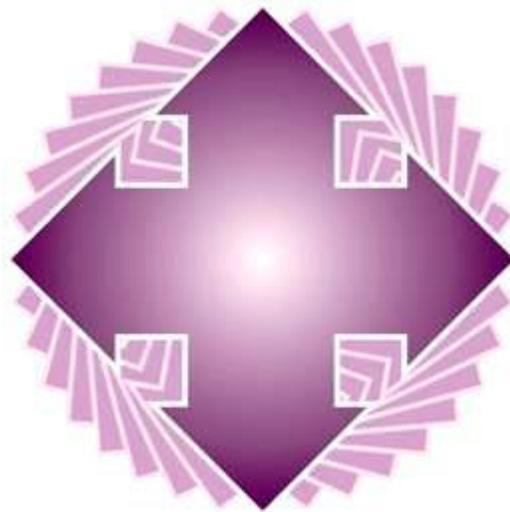


**Preparation and Formation for  
a Call to the Vocational Diaconate**  
*A supplement to the ordination manual*



**The Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh**  
**2014**

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## **1 Vocational Deacons in the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh**

Welcome to the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh's Deacon Formation Program!

This is an exciting time for the diaconate in our diocese. More and more parishes are raising up deacons to help grow God's kingdom in the diocese and beyond. Our deacons are a diverse group, with different talents and different gifts, but all with servant hearts eager to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

The supplement in your hands is your guide to the formation process. **All documents which the diocese provides in the document manual for ordination to the priesthood will be relevant to your process**, as well, and you should obtain a copy of *Discerning and Responding to a Call to the Priesthood: Ordination Documents*<sup>1</sup> from the diocesan website or office. What follows in this manual for deacons serves as a guide, a course catalogue, for the preparation which you will undertake in place of the formal seminary training which is expected of those who are preparing for the transitional diaconate and the priesthood.

Admittedly, many people find these two sets of documents to be overwhelming. I encourage you to consider the diocesan ordination manuals to be the outline of the general process (from Aspirancy, through Postulancy and Candidacy). The deacon materials in this booklet serve as a course catalogue, corresponding to milestones in your process, but it is a supplement, not a substitute for the Ordination Manual.

The first step in any process is to seek spiritual direction and the counsel of your parish rector or priest-in-charge.

The Deacon Formation Board (DFB) has worked hard to create a challenging, flexible, and practical formation program, outlined in this document. It aims to suit academic, spiritual, and practical training needs for our deacons-to-be. We look forward to partnering with you as you seek to serve God more fully. Our prayer is that this is the beginning of an exciting stage in your faith journey. I join with our Deacon Formation Board; the Venerable Mark Stevenson, Fr. John Cruikshank, Deacon Nancy Phillips, and Deacon Kathy Walzer in wishing you God's richest blessings.

Deacon Tara Jernigan  
Director of the Deacon Formation Board  
tjernigan@randomly.com

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<sup>1</sup> Those documents are available here:  
[http://www.pitanglican.org/media/2013\\_Ordination\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.pitanglican.org/media/2013_Ordination_Manual.pdf) and  
[http://www.pitanglican.org/media/2013\\_Ordination\\_Documents.pdf](http://www.pitanglican.org/media/2013_Ordination_Documents.pdf)

## **2 Deacon Formation Program – Curriculum**

While your process toward ordination will mirror the process for those seeking the priesthood, your course of training will be uniquely formed for the needs of future vocational deacons. We understand that it is not necessary or at times even preferable for all deacons to attend traditional seminary courses. Likewise, we have intentionally designed a program which will allow our future deacons to receive local training in a way that (as much as possible) reduces expenses, builds relationships among deacons and priests, and appropriately challenges and forms our future leaders. Therefore, the Deacon Formation Program consists of three parts:

- Academic Curriculum
- Local Applied Ministry Modules
- A custom designed internship

### **2.1 Academic Curriculum**

A challenging, academically grounded, curriculum is essential to the training of every deacon. The Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh expects that all ordained leaders will be well prepared to teach the Scriptures, provide pastoral care and support our priests and other parish leaders in ministry. The Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh is fortunate to have Trinity School for Ministry (TSM) as a partner in training deacons for ministry.

Additionally, the emergence of distance learning via the Internet offers students an alternative means of satisfying academic course requirements. Online courses must be taken through accredited institutions. Currently Trinity School for Ministry offers an online program which is custom tailored to our needs in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and we strongly commend the Certificate in Diaconal Studies for most of our students' academic training.

The Deacon Formation Program will require that each deacon-in-formation complete an academic curriculum consisting of introductory level courses. The Deacon Formation Program is intended to allow a student to complete the academic component of the program in a minimum of two years. Note that while these courses need not be completed at a single institution, continuity in your formation is strongly encouraged.

#### **Academic Course Areas**

- Old Testament (It is strongly recommended that Scripture
- New Testament courses be taken early in the formation process.)
- Church History
- Systematic Theology
- Spiritual Formation
- Anglican Ethos/Tradition
- Missions

### ***2.1.1 Distance Learning at Accredited Institutions***

Distance Learning via the Internet is one of the fastest growing areas in continuing education. Many accredited institutions either have or are developing Web-based program offerings. Students may, after consultation with the Deacon Formation Board, complete their academic courses at approved institutions other than Trinity, according to the student's particular needs and goals.

#### **Suggested Distance Education Programs**

Asbury Theological Seminary ([www.ats.wilmore.ky.us](http://www.ats.wilmore.ky.us))

Fuller Theological Seminary ([www.fuller.edu](http://www.fuller.edu))

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary ([www.gcts.edu](http://www.gcts.edu))

Regent University ([www.regent.edu](http://www.regent.edu))

Trinity School for Ministry ([www.tsm.edu](http://www.tsm.edu))

Wheaton College ([www.wheaton.edu](http://www.wheaton.edu))

Nashotah House Theological Seminary offers a distance education program using one week residential intensive sessions. ([www.nashotah.edu](http://www.nashotah.edu))

### ***2.1.2 Academic Course Equivalency with Documentation***

Deacons-in-formation may apply for equivalency credits for courses completed successfully, within the past 8 years at comparable, accredited, institutions.

The student must submit all of the following information for evaluation of equivalency:

1. Course Syllabus
2. One evaluated major paper or work
3. Transcript of grade received for the class

The DFP Board will evaluate the material and determine whether or not the prior course can serve as credit for one of the required courses. The DFP Board may decide to accept the material as credit, require the student to take the equivalency exam, or require the student to take the academic course.

### ***2.1.3 Academic Course Equivalency Exams***

If a student has taken prior coursework in a required area, but does not have sufficient documentation for any reason (more than 8 years since course was taken, or if the course did not require significant works to be evaluated), a student may request the opportunity to take an equivalency exam in the area. All of the following requirements apply to equivalency exams:

1. A student must have taken some type of course or formal training program. The student must provide:
  - a. The name of the course/program
  - b. The year and place the course/program was taken.
2. There is a \$50 fee to take an equivalency exam.
3. Equivalency exams are "on site" exams.
4. The exam will be graded on a pass/fail basis.

5. Students can take an equivalency exam in an area only once. If unsuccessful, they must take the required course.
6. Requests for equivalency exams must be approved by the Deacon Formation Board.

## ***2.2 Local Applied Ministry Modules***

These courses serve as a well-rounded academic and spiritual praxis course in which the student will learn to apply seminary courses in a ministry context. Significant focus on personal spiritual formation, practical ministry, pastoral ethics, and building relationship among students and mentors will be the core of this portion of the coursework.

Local Applied Ministry Modules will normally meet one Saturday per month for the course of eight months. Students may enroll in these courses by contacting the director of deacon formation or the diocesan secretary.

### ***2.2.1 Introduction to the Diaconate***

This course is exploration of the ministry of the vocational diaconate and how it relates to the diocese and the church as a whole. This course will examine the biblical perspective on servanthood; trace the development of the diaconate throughout the history of the church; examine the new role of the deacon in the contemporary church and the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh; explore the full range of diaconal ministries through conversations with the Bishop, priests and deacons; and introduce the prospective deacon to the formation program and the ordination process in the diocese.

This course will be offered in the late spring of every year, as it is also intended to serve as a means to help the student discern his or her call to the diaconate. It will serve as a prerequisite for the entire curriculum. There are no prerequisites; this course is open to anyone in the discernment process or those who are inquiring about the role of the deacon.

### ***2.2.2 Method for Biblical Interpretation and Proclamation (Applied Scripture)***

This course is intended to prepare students for the role of the deacon in telling the story of our Christian faith. The course will focus on biblical literacy and methods for interpreting, applying, and articulating the Scriptures for the modern listener. In addition to an aggressive focus for a broad and deep understanding of Scripture, this course will serve as an introduction to homiletics and catechesis skills. The course will run for approximately eight sessions meeting either monthly or twice a month and will be scheduled as needed. (*Prerequisites: Concurrent enrollment in or completion of Introduction to Old Testament, Introduction to New Testament. Postulant or Candidate status, or permission of Deacon Formation Board.*)

### ***2.2.3 Liturgics and the Development of Spirituality (Applied Tradition)***

This course will examine the history and nature of the Anglican Communion and the Anglican Church in terms of worship, spirituality and theology as outlined in the Book of Common Prayer. It will explore the specific role of the deacon in the worship life of the church, including both the theoretical, through examination of key academic works, and the practical, through hands-on demonstration and discussion with priests and deacons. The course will run for approximately eight sessions meeting either monthly or twice a month and will be scheduled as needed. (*Prerequisites: Concurrent enrollment in or completion of Introduction to Systematic Theology, Introduction to Church History. Postulant or Candidate status, or permission of Deacon Formation Board.*)

### ***2.2.4 Pastoral Care, Ethics and Practice of Ministry (Applied Reason)***

This course is intended to serve as an introduction to the broad issues of pastoral care, including visitations to the sick and shut-in; how to raise up and marshal the resources of the parish to care for each other; and how to access the resources of the community to serve those with special concerns, such as the growing senior population in the area. . The course will run for approximately eight sessions meeting either monthly or twice a month and will be scheduled as needed. (*Prerequisites: Concurrent enrollment in or completion of Introduction to Anglican Tradition, Introduction to Missions. Postulant or Candidate status, or permission of Deacon Formation Board.*)

## ***2.3 Course Exemptions***

In exceptional and rare cases, the Deacon Formation Board may choose to exempt students from coursework in which the student already has significant academic and ministry experience. Exemptions may be made to allow for students to fulfill a requirement with more advanced work. Exemptions from Local Applied Ministry Modules will not exceed one exemption, regardless of the student's ministry background, as the courses are intended both for continuing formation and for development of a collegial environment among the deacons-in-formation. Requests for exemption must include the following:

1. Student's experience and previous studies justifying the request for an exemption.
2. Student's proposed course of study, if an exemption is being granted for more advanced, related, coursework
3. Recommendation for exemption by the Director of Deacon Formation.

No exemptions will be considered without the Director of Deacon Formation's recommendation. Exemptions are granted or denied at the discretion of the Deacon Formation Board. In the event that the student proposes advanced coursework, follow-up documentation may be requested once the coursework is completed.

## ***2.4 Internship***

The deacon-in-formation will be required to complete an internship at some point in his or her formation program. In the case where a parish internship is desired, he or she may be assigned by the Bishop to serve at a parish in the diocese other than his or her home parish. Alternatively, an internship may be arranged in conjunction with an institution or program offering a ministry experience in a particular area of interest.

The internship will last approximately three months (about 30 total hours) e.g. a summer or the equivalent of a semester. The purpose of the internship is to provide the deacon-in-formation with the opportunity for practical experience, while introducing him or her to a new perspective on parish life or ministry in the diocese.

An internship taken at the end of the coursework will serve as a capstone experience, providing opportunities to apply what has been learned through the academic curriculum and Local Applied Ministry Modules. Internships taken earlier in the formation experience may facilitate clarification of a student's diaconal call and understanding of servant ministry. An internship might provide specific opportunities to preach; lay the groundwork for a new or coordinate an existing parish ministry; or gain some practical pastoral care experience. An internship may build on an existing strength or serve to provide experience in a new area of ministry.

A Letter of Agreement outlining the planned objectives and responsibilities for the internship must be submitted to the Deacon Formation Board for approval prior to the start of the internship. Evaluations of the experience must be submitted both by the deacon-in-formation and the supervisor at the conclusion of the internship. A sample Letter of Agreement and sample evaluation form are included in the Appendix.

## ***2.5 Diaconal Postulants and Candidates Outside the Pittsburgh Geographic Region***

Students outside geographic Pittsburgh are encouraged to join both the academic and the praxis courses via the internet. Ongoing contact with the mentoring rector (in the student's local parish) is part of the program for all students (local and distance education) and will be a vital part of the student's mentoring and feedback experience. Students will not be able to successfully complete the program without the intentional mentoring relationship with their local clergy.

## **3 Overview of the Ordination Process**

*The detailed guide for the ordination process must be obtained from the Diocese. This section is intended to be brief summary only. This handbook is a supplement to the Ordination Manual created by the Commission on Ministry. The Ordination Manual contains all the forms and detailed information necessary to apply for each step in the*

process. That document may be obtained from the secretary to the Commission on Ministry.

There are three phases prior to ordination:

- Aspirancy – a time in which ordination is explored through community and individual reflection. Students may take seminary courses for enrichment purposes, but the primary focus of the discernment process is conducted within the parish.
- Postulancy— (usually a minimum of 6 months) – an intentional period of time which the Church has set aside for the development of ministry of the person seeking Holy Orders. Postulancy status is required before taking Local Applied Ministry Modules.
- Candidacy – Candidates are usually closing in on completion of the academic process. During this time, students will apply what they have learned in both an internship and in canonical examinations.

### ***3.1 Canonical Exams and Ordination***

All coursework including Academic Courses, Local Applied Ministry Modules and the Internship must be close to completion prior to making application to take Canonical Exams. Canonical exams are not offered without the recommendation of the Director of Deacon Formation. All canonical exams are administered by the Board of Examining Chaplains-Diaconate and normally take place during the late fall and winter months.

## ***4 Spiritual Direction***

All aspirants, postulants, and candidates for holy orders are required to meet (at minimum monthly) with a Spiritual Director. If you need assistance forming a relationship with an appropriate and trusted spiritual director you may contact the diocesan office (412-281-6131) for a current list of active spiritual directors.

## ***5 Mentors***

Each postulant will be matched with a Deacon as a mentor. The mentor is not a Spiritual Director, rather the purpose of the mentor is to provide a companion who has been through the deacon-in-formation process.

## 6 Appendices

### 6.1 Deacon Formation Curriculum and Program Checklist

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

- Coursework** (Each course must be the equivalent of a one-semester course. Scripture courses must be taken first.)

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Institution/Course</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Old Testament	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> New Testament	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Church History	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Theology	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Anglican Ethos/Tradition	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Formation	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to the Diaconate	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral Care	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Liturgics	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Missions	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Homiletics and Catechesis	_____	_____

- Internship** (At least one year of coursework must be completed prior to beginning the Internship.)
- Submitted Letter of Agreement to Deacon Formation Board
  - Evaluations submitted to Deacon Formation Board from both student and supervisor.

Location of Internship: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *6.2 Application for Academic Course Equivalency*

The following information should be submitted to the Deacon Formation Board. The DFP Board will evaluate the material and determine whether or not the prior course can serve as credit for one of the required academic courses.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Email (if available):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equivalency requested for:** (mark one only)

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Church History
- Systematic Theology
- Missions
- Anglican Tradition

**Course Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Note - must be accredited.)

**Date Taken:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Note – course must have been taken within the  
Past 8 years)

Please send this form, along with the following information, to the Director of the Deacon Formation Board.

- Course Syllabus
- One evaluated major paper or work
- Transcript of grade received for the class

I understand that the DFP Board may decide to accept the submitted material as credit, or may require me take the equivalency exam, or may require me to take the course at an accredited institution.

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

### ***6.3 Application for Academic Course Equivalency Exam***

The following information should be submitted to the Deacon Formation Board in order to request an equivalency exam.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Email (if available):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equivalency Exam requested for:** (mark one only)

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Church History
- Systematic Theology
- Missions
- Anglican Tradition

Please send this form, along with the following information, to the Director of the Deacon Formation Board.

- Evidence of prior formal training program  
Name of course/program: \_\_\_\_\_  
  
Date/Place taken: \_\_\_\_\_

- The \$50 exam fee, made out to ‘Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh’ is included.

I understand that equivalency exams are “on site” exams and will be graded on a pass/fail basis. I also understand that I may take the equivalency exam in an area only once and if I am unsuccessful, I must take the required course at an accredited institution.

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

### ***6.4 Application for Internship including Sample Letter of Agreement***

This letter of agreement is a sample only. The deacon-in-formation must create a letter of agreement, in conjunction with the proposed supervisor, and submit it to the Deacon Formation Board for approval prior to beginning the internship. The Deacon Formation Board will review the evaluations at the conclusion of the Internship in order to verify that the experience has satisfied the Internship requirement.

	<b>Deacon-in-Formation</b>	<b>Proposed Supervisor</b>
<b>Name:</b>	_____	_____
<b>Address:</b>	_____ _____	_____ _____
<b>Telephone:</b>	_____	_____
<b>Email (if available):</b>	_____	_____

#### **Letter of Agreement (Sample)**

Deacon-in-Formation John Doe will serve at this Nursing Home as a visitor and liturgical assistant from June 1, 2003 through August 31, 2003 spending an average of 3 hours per week in this ministry under the supervision of Reverend Jane Smith. Activities may include visiting with residents, assisting with worship services, leading Bible study and developing worship service material. At least one opportunity will be provided for preaching and arrangements will be made to allow John to shadow either the staff physician or the activities director. John will participate in at least 2 worship services per month with residents.

John will keep a record of how his time is spent and will submit written, weekly reflection reports to Jane addressing the following questions:

- a) What self-awareness can you reflect on this week?
- b) What stood out to you this week in your interaction with the Residents?
- c) What was significant in your interactions with staff?
- d) Reflect on any formal services or groups led.
- e) What theological issues were relevant for you this week?
- f) What is a specific objective you have for this week?
- g) Progress on last week's objective?

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Jane will meet with John on a bi-weekly basis and will be available, by phone, during normal workday hours to answer any other questions. Jane will arrange for John's access to the facility and will provide a list of residents to visit.

John will also research and complete a report on the topic of "Worship with Dementia Patients".

Both John and Jane will complete a written evaluation of the internship reflecting on the content of the experience, growth experienced and continuing opportunities for growth and exploration as per the attached Sample Internship Evaluation provided in this handbook.

**Signed by:**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## ***6.5 Sample Internship Evaluation***

### **Student Evaluation:**

The student will address the following items in a 2-3 page written evaluation:

#### 1) Describe the content of the internship experience

This section should include specifics about how the internship time was spent such as: I participated in most Sunday worship services during this time and preached at two services. I had an opportunity to participate in 3 worship experiences on the dementia floor. I prepared and led two Bible study classes and rounded with the staff physician. I visited an average of 2 residents on a weekly basis. I read the following books and articles and completed a paper on “Worship with Dementia Patients”. I created a booklet of prayers for the families of Dementia patients.

#### 2) Reflections on Practical Ministry

What have I learned from my experiences during this internship? This section may include observations such as “It is distracting for me to continue talking while walking alongside someone using a walker” or “I have learned how to make a graceful exit at the end of the time I had allotted for a visit”.

What are the opportunities for servant ministry in the place? Who might be better equipped to serve? How might residents live out their Baptismal covenant in this place? What needs of the world should be brought to the attention of the Church and how might those needs be better addressed?

#### 3) Reflections on Academic Work

The student can comment on academic learning during this time. For example “I found it useful to learn the difference between delirium and dementia. I became aware of the problem of depression among the elderly and that the symptoms include x, y and z.”

#### 4) Theological Reflection

How did you encounter God through this experience? What Scripture has special significance for you as you reflect on your internship? Have any new directions emerged for you as a result of this experience?

### **Supervisor Evaluation:**

This one page report will describe the student’s growth and gifts as a servant minister during the internship experience. This evaluation may also include observations about potential areas for future growth.