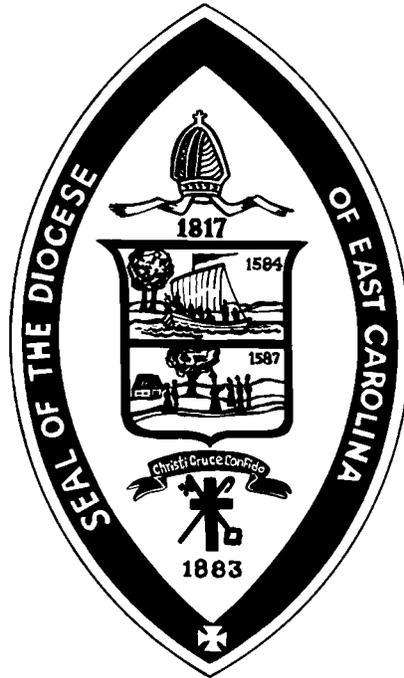


Steps Toward Ordination to the Diaconate



The Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

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(Revised 12/16/14 by the Commission on Ministry)

What is a Deacon

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

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

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

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

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

REQUIREMENTS

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

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

THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

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

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

PROCESS LEADING TO ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

(Note: All provisions of Title III, Canon 6 (2009): Of the Ordination of Deacons, shall apply. A copy of this Canon is attached as Appendix 10 to this document. It is the Aspirant's responsibility to read and understand the Title III Canons and to see that all canonical requirements are met.)

Phase 1: The Nomination Process

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

A Nominee for the diaconate must:

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

Steps of Discernment

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

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

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

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

6. The Nominee receives written endorsement of the Clergy and Vestry of the Nominees faith Community according to Title III, Canon 6.2.a and ensures that they are sent to the Bishop. (Appendix 5)
7. In a personal letter to the Bishop, the Nominee applies in writing under provision of Title III, Canon 6.2(b) providing the information required in the above mentioned Canon. Enclose with the letter the Application for Postulancy. (Appendix 3)
8. ***The Nominee and Rector must see the Bishop prior to July 1st in order to attend the November overnight meeting of the Commission on Ministry (see item 13).***
9. The Bishop may:
 - a. say no;
 - b. counsel or insist on delay;
 - or, c. say to proceed.
10. The Nominee must complete the Life History Questionnaire, and the Behavioral Screening Questionnaire and mail to designated examining Psychiatrist, sign Authorization and Release to Diocese form, and have a physical and psychiatric examination. Either the individual or the parish shall reimburse the diocese for the cost of these services. Forms for the physical and psychiatric examinations are obtained from the Diocesan Office.
11. The Nominee will write and send to the Bishop one or two pages describing his or her activities within the parish or diocese, areas of personal growth, or insights gained since first speaking with his or her Priest about holy orders. This statement may be thought of as an update of the Nominee's Spiritual Autobiography and should include a description of their specific diaconal ministry.
12. **All required paperwork must be in the Bishop's office by August 31st.**
13. The Bishop considers items 5-12. If all are satisfactory and with the Bishop's agreement, the Nominee meets in November at an overnight interview with the Commission on Ministry, who makes a recommendation to the Bishop. Rectors will attend the first day of the November retreat with the Nominees. (Commission on Ministry will pay overnight expenses of the Nominee and their spouse, should the spouse desire to attend.)
14. The Bishop makes a determination regarding Postulancy.
15. After consultation with the Bishop and being admitted as a Postulant, the Postulant applies to Diaconal School. No one may enroll in North Carolina School for the Diaconate without first securing the Bishop's permission.

Phase II: Postulancy and Academic Work

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

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

1. Spiritual Direction: The Postulant shall meet regularly with a Spiritual Director approved by the Bishop. The role of the Spiritual Director will be to assist the Postulant in evaluating the varied experiences both inside and outside of the parish, i.e., how does the person's ministry relate to the whole Church.

2. Servant Ministry: The Postulant shall be regularly engaged in service to the community outside of the parish.

3. Parish Placement: The Postulant is to be assigned work in a parish other than his/her sponsoring parish. Recognizing possible geographical difficulties, this experience could occur on a monthly basis. This parish experience shall include a focus on the liturgy and exploration of their ministry in the world.

4. The Postulant will enroll in the Diocese of North Carolina Deacon Formation Program in order to receive academic instruction in those areas required by Title III, Canon 6 Sec. 5(f) (see Appendix 10). Academic work is normally scheduled for Saturdays, twelve times each academic year. Sessions include two two-hour classes and a continuing seminar on servant ministry, in which the Postulant's vision of diaconal ministry is enlarged and clarified. Weekend conferences and retreats are scheduled from time to time. Between class sessions, Postulants are expected to engage in private reading, study, and writing. Postulants may also be required to attend gatherings with Deacons and Candidates in the Diocese of East Carolina.

5. Communicate with the Bishop by letter four times a year in the Ember Weeks. (See BCP p. 18) Also, notify the Bishop regarding life changes, i.e. engagement, death of spouse, or a child, loss of employment, etc.

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

Phase III: Candidacy

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

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

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

The Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop at his discretion may remove a person from the process at any point along the way Canon 6. 4(d).

Phase IV: Ordination

1. By Canon, one must have been a Candidate for at least one year and be at least 24 years old
2. The Candidate must have completed the East Carolina Deacon Formation Program, and successfully completed Canonical examinations as required by Title III, Canon 6.5(i).
3. The Candidate must be recommended by the Commission on Ministry. In order to secure this recommendation, the Candidate must complete all necessary items as listed on the Checklist for Steps to Ordination (page 10) and send to the Diocesan House by December 31.
4. The Standing Committee certifies that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate have been met and presents the proper document to the Bishop. If the Bishop agrees to ordain, the Bishop then proceeds to set the ordination date.

CHECK LIST

Phase I - Steps to Postulancy

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

- _____ Nominee is resident in congregation or faith community a minimum of 1 year before discernment begins
- _____ Spiritual Autobiography
- _____ Minimum of 4 sessions with Rector for spiritual discernment
- _____ Minimum of 6 sessions with discernment committee
- _____ Letter to Bishop from Rector endorsing Nominee, including:
 - _____ current photograph,
 - _____ autobiography,
 - _____ Vestry endorsement,
 - _____ Discernment Committee letter with commitment to assist with formation
- _____ Nominee letter to Bishop, including Application with all necessary documentation
Canon 6.2(b)
- _____ Interview with the Bishop prior to July 1 - *Canon 6.3(a)(2)*
- _____ Education level with accompanying official transcripts when applicable -*Canon 6:2(b)(6)*
- _____ Physical examination forms
(Check with Bishop's Secretary for these forms)
- _____ Psychiatric examination forms, including Life History Questionnaire (sent to examining psychiatrist) and Behavioral Screening Questionnaire (Check with Bishop's Secretary for forms)
- _____ Authorization and Release form signed (Check with Bishop's Secretary for these forms)
- _____ A Background Check will be initiated through the Bishop's Office
- _____ Interview with COM - *Canon 6.3(b)* - Overnight meeting in November
- _____ Notification sent of admittance *Canon 6.3(d)*

CHECK LIST

Phase II & III – Steps to Candidacy

No minimum length of time as postulant required Canon 6 (2009)

- _____ Course of study/formation determined and underway *Canon 6:5(f-g)*
- _____ Ember Day letters sent to Bishop *Canon 6.5(h)*
- _____ Service to community outside of parish
- _____ Parish placement
- _____ Application of request for Candidacy sent to Bishop
- _____ Re-affirmation from local faith community *Canon 4(a)(2)*
- _____ Written evaluation from Spiritual Director
- _____ Written evaluation from North Carolina Deacon Formation Program Supervisor
- _____ One to two page statement (update of Spiritual Autobiography)
- _____ Interview with Standing Committee *Canon 6.4(b)*
- _____ Interview with COM *Canon 6.4(b)*
- _____ Notification from Bishop sent to Nominee *Canon 6.4(b)*

CHECK LIST

Phase IV – Steps to Ordination to the Diaconate

- _____ A minimum of 18 months from time of written acceptance of nomination *Canon 6.6(a)*
- _____ Candidate at least 24 years of age
- _____ If more that 36 months has elapsed since admission as Postulant
 - _____ Physical* *Canon 6.5(j)*
 - _____ Psychological* *Canon 6.5(j)*
 - _____ Background check* *Canon 6.5(j)* all to be paid by the Postulant and/or parish
- _____ Application for ordination (Appendix 7)
- _____ Certificate of sexual misconduct prevention training *Canon 6.5(g)(1)*
- _____ Certificate of training regarding Title IV training *Canon 6.5(g)(3)*
- _____ Certificate of anti-racism training *Canon 6.5(g)(4)*
- _____ Internship outside of sponsoring parish *Canon 6.5(b)*
- _____ Certification that course of study/formation completed *Canon 6.6*
- _____ Ordination exams *Canon 6.5(j)*
- _____ Re-affirmation from local faith community *Canon 6.6(b)(2)*
- _____ Interview with COM and Bishop *Canon 6.5(i)*
- _____ Standing Committee certification that all is in order *Canon 6.6(c)*

GUIDELINES FOR DEACONS IN THE DIOCESE OF EAST CAROLINA

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

DISCERNING A CALL TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

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

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

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

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

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

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

Parish Discernment Committee Member's Individual Evaluation
CONFIDENTIAL

Applicant's Name: _____

Discernment Committee Member's Name: _____

Parish: _____ Date _____

How long have you known this applicant and in what context?

It is a high calling to serve God and the Church in Holy Orders. The Applicant, Congregation/Faith Community and Diocese share in discerning this call. The following information, giving your thoughts and impressions, will assist in this process. Please answer prayerfully and to the best of your knowledge. O ctm' { qwt "answer'lp'vj g'ej gen'dqz<" 1 = poor, 3 = adequate, 5 = superior

- Does this person exhibit emotional maturity? 1 2 3 4 5
Can he/she be described as, "A person of Christian character, proven fitness, and leadership in his or her community..?" (Canons of the Episcopal Church)

- Does this person have a stable family life? 1 2 3 4 5

- Does this person have stable relationships? 1 2 3 4 5

- Does this person have a stable employment history? 1 2 3 4 5

- Does this person have a regular and mature prayer and worship life? 1 2 3 4 5

- To what degree does this person exhibit leadership ability 1 2 3 4 5

- What experience does this person have in lay ministry and service within the church and outside the church? _____

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

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

_____ Yes _____ No

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

Positive: _____

Negative: _____

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

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Uncertain

If "No" or "Uncertain", please explain: _____

Other comments: _____

Appendix 3

APPLICATION FOR POSTULANCY

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

I _____, a nominee, request admission to Postulancy.

(Signature) (Date)

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (cell) _____ Email _____

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

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

Date of Birth _____ Date of Baptism _____ Place of Baptism _____

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

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

*If yes, please list the Diocese and date _____

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

Education (Use additional space if needed.)

	Name/Address	Dates Attended	Diploma/Degree
High School			
College			
Graduate School			
Other			

This application should be printed, signed and mailed to the Bishop's office along with other required documentation as described in the Manual for Ordination .

APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY

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

I _____, a Postulant from the Diocese of East

Carolina, request admission as a Candidate for Holy Orders.

(Signature)

(Date)

Address _____ City _____ Zipcode _____

Phone (home) _____ (cell) _____ Email _____

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

Date admitted as a Postulant _____

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

Parish Endorsement for Postulancy

Canon III.6.2(a)

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

From: _____ (Parish or faith community's name)

We do support _____ to be admitted as a Posulant.

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

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

(Signed) _____
(Clerk of Vestry)

(Signed) _____
(Clergy or Community Leader)

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

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

PARISH ENDORSEMENT FOR CANDIDACY

Canon III.6.4(a)(2)

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

From: _____ (Parish or faith community's name)

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

(Signed) _____
(Clerk of Vestry)

(Signed) _____
(Clergy or Community Leader)

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

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

APPLICATION FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

[Canon III.6.6(b)(1)

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

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

Date of Birth _____

Date Admitted as a Postulant _____

Date Admitted as a Candidate _____

(Signature)

(Date)

PARISH ENDORSEMENT FOR ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

Canon III.6.6 (b)(2)

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

From: _____ (Parish of Faith Community)

We do support _____ for ordination to the Diaconate.

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

(Signed) _____
(Clerk of Vestry)

(Signed) _____
(Clergy or Community Leader)

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

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

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

Canon III.6.6 (c)

(From the Standing Committee to the Bishop)

To the Right Reverend _____ Bishop of East Carolina.

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

_____, do testify that

_____, desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate and

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

_____ preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under

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

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

_____ for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set

our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord _____.

(Signed)

(Must be signed by a majority of members.)

TITLE III, CANON 5: Of General Provisions Respecting Ordination

Sec. 1

- (a) The canonical authority assigned to the Bishop Diocesan by this Title may be exercised by a Bishop Coadjutor, when so empowered under Canon III.19, and at the request of the Bishop Diocesan, by a Bishop Suffragan, or by any other Bishop of a Church in full communion with this Church who was ordained in the historic succession, at the request of the ordinand's Bishop.
- (b) The Council of Advice of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe, and the board appointed by a Bishop having jurisdiction in an Area Mission in accordance with the provisions of Canon I.11.2(c), shall, for the purpose of this and other Canons of Title III have the same powers as the Standing Committee of a Diocese.
- (c) In case of a vacancy in the episcopate in a Diocese, the Ecclesiastical Authority may authorize and request the President of the House of Bishops of the Province to take order for an ordination.

Sec. 2

- (a) No Nominee, Postulant, or Candidate for ordination shall sign any of the certificates required by this Title.
- (b) Testimonials required of the Standing Committee by this Title must be signed by a majority of the whole Committee, at a meeting duly convened, except that testimonials may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original.
- (c) Whenever the letter of support of a Vestry is required, the letter must be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of all of the members of the Vestry, at a meeting duly convened, and by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Parish, and attested by the Clerk of the Vestry. Should there be no Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the letter shall be signed by a Priest of the Diocese acquainted with the nominee and the Parish, the reason for the substitution being stated in the attesting clause.
- (d) If the congregation or other discernment community of which the nominee is a member is not a Parish, the letter of support required by Canon III.6 or Canon III.8 shall be signed and dated by the Member of the Clergy and the council of the congregation or other community of faith, and shall be attested by the secretary of the meeting at which the letter was approved. Should there be no Member of the Clergy, the letter shall be signed and dated by a Priest of the Diocese acquainted with the nominee and the congregation or other community of faith, the reason for the substitution being stated in the attesting clause.
- (e) If the applicant is a member of a Religious Order or Christian Community recognized by Canon III.24, the letters of support referred to in Canon III.5 or Canon III.6 and any other requirements imposed on a congregation or Member of the Clergy may be given by the Superior or person in charge, and Chapter, or other comparable body of the Order or Community.

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

CANON 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons

Sec. 1. Selection

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

Sec. 2. Nomination

A confirmed adult communicant in good standing, may be nominated for ordination to the diaconate by the person's congregation or other community of faith.

- (a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and

- (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight .
- (b) The Nominee, if in agreement with the nomination, shall accept the nomination in writing and shall provide the following to the Bishop:
 - (1) Full name and date of birth.
 - (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.
 - (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.
- (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned, and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

Sec. 3. Postulancy

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy and may initiate the formal preparation for ordination. Postulancy involves continued exploration of and decision about the Postulant's call to the Diaconate.

- (a) Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop shall
 - (1) determine that the Nominee is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, and
 - (2) confer in person with the Nominee,
- (b) If the Bishop approves the Nominee proceeding into Postulancy, the Commission, or a committee of the Commission, shall meet with the Nominee to review the application and prepare an evaluation of the Nominee's qualifications to pursue a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. The Commission shall present its evaluation and recommendations to the Bishop.
- (c) No Bishop shall consider accepting as a Postulant any person who has been refused admission as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate in any other Diocese, or who, having been admitted, has afterwards ceased to be a Candidate, until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission, or in which the person has been a Candidate, declaring the cause of refusal or of cessation.
- (d) The Bishop may admit the Nominee as a Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Postulant's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Postulant, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the Postulant's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.
- (e) Each Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.
- (f) Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Postulant and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

Sec. 4. Candidacy

Candidacy is a time of education and formation, in preparation for ordination to the Diaconate, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, the Standing Committee and the congregation or other community of faith.

- (a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:
 - (1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and

- (2) a letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- (b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a written statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having received approval in writing of the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Candidate, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.
- (c) A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon, except, for reasons acceptable to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate
- (d) Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate, at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation. (e) If a Bishop has removed the Candidate's name from the list of Candidates, except by transfer, or the Candidate's application for ordination has been rejected, no other Bishop may ordain the person without readmission to Candidacy for a period of at least twelve months.

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

- (a) The Bishop and the Commission shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate in accordance with this Canon to ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.
- (b) The Bishop may assign the Postulant or Candidate to any congregation of the Diocese or other community of faith after consultation with the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- (c) Formation shall take into account the local culture and each Postulant or Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry.
- (d) Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination.
- (e) Wherever possible, formation for the Diaconate shall take place in community, including other persons in preparation for the Diaconate, or others preparing for ministry.
- (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.
- (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.
- (h) Each Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, for times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

- (i) During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination. Records shall be kept of all evaluations, assessments, and the recommendation, and shall be made available to the Standing Committee.
- (j) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished
 - (1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.
 - (2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.
- (k) Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain a part of the permanent diocesan record.

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate

(a) A person may be ordained Deacon:

- (1) after at least eighteen months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2(b)., and
- (2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

(b) The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- (1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.
- (2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- (3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the dates of admission.
- (4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.
- (5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

(c) On the receipt of such certificates, the Standing Committee, if a majority of all members consent, shall certify that the Canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon have been met, that there is no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination. The Standing Committee shall evidence such certification, by a testimonial, addressed to the Bishop in the form specified below and signed by the consenting members of the Standing Committee.

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of _____ We, the Standing Committee of _____, having been duly convened at _____ at _____, do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.6; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend A.B. for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this ____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord _____. (Signed) _____

(d) The testimonial having been presented to the Bishop, and there being no sufficient objection on medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds, the Bishop may ordain the Candidate to the Diaconate under this Canon; and at the time of ordination the Candidate shall subscribe publicly and make, in the presence of the Bishop, the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution.

CANON 7: Of the Life and Work of Deacons

Sec. 1. Deacons serve directly under the authority of and are accountable to the Bishop, or in the absence of the Bishop, the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

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

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

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

- (a) Subject to the Bishop's approval, Deacons may have a letter of agreement setting forth mutual responsibilities in the assignment, and, if such a letter exists, it is subject to renegotiation with the Vestry/ Bishop's Committee after the resignation of the Rector or the Priest-in- Charge.
- (b) Deacons shall report annually to the Bishop or the Bishop's designee on their life and work.
- (c) Deacons may serve as administrators of congregations or other communities of faith, but no Deacon shall be in charge of a congregation or other community of faith.
- (d) Deacons may accept chaplaincies in any hospital, prison, or other institution.
- (e) Deacons may participate in the governance of the Church.
- (f) For two years following ordination, new Deacons shall continue a process of formation authorized by the Bishop.
- (g) The Bishop or the Bishop's designee, in consultation with the Commission, shall assign each newly ordained Deacon a mentor Deacon where a suitable mentor Deacon is available. The mentor and Deacon shall meet regularly for at least one year to provide guidance, information, and a sustained dialogue about diaconal ministry.

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

Sec. 6

- (a) A Deacon may not serve as Deacon for more than two months in any Diocese other than the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident unless the Bishop of the other Diocese shall have granted a license to the Deacon to serve in that Diocese.
- (b)
 - (1) A Deacon desiring to become canonically resident within a Diocese shall request a testimonial from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the Deacon is canonically resident to present to the receiving Diocese, which testimonial, if granted, shall be given by the Ecclesiastical Authority to the applicant, and a duplicate thereof may be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese to which transfer is proposed. The testimonial shall be in the following words:
I hereby certify that A.B., who has signified to me the desire to be transferred to the Ecclesiastical Authority of _____, is a Deacon of _____ in good standing, and has not, so far as I know or believe, been justly liable to evil report for error in religion or for viciousness of life, for the last three years. (Date) _____ (Signed) _____
 - (2) Such testimonial shall be called Letters Dimissory. If the Ecclesiastical Authority accepts the Letters Dimissory, the canonical residence of the Deacon so transferred shall date from the acceptance of the Letters Dimissory, of which prompt notice shall be given both to the applicant and to the Ecclesiastical Authority from which it came.

(3) Letters Dimissory not presented within six months from the date of transmission to the applicant shall become void.

(4) A statement of the record of payments to The Church Pension Fund by or on behalf of the Deacon concerned shall accompany Letters Dimissory.

Sec. 7. On reaching the age of seventy-two years, a Deacon shall resign from all positions of active service in this Church, and the resignation shall be accepted. The Bishop may, with the consent of the Deacon, assign a Resigned Deacon to any congregation, other community of faith or ministry in another setting, for a term not to exceed twelve months, and this term may be renewed.

Sec. 8. If any Deacon of this Church not subject to the provisions of Canon IV.8 shall declare, in writing, to the Bishop of the Diocese in which such Deacon is canonically resident, a renunciation of the ordained Ministry of this Church, and a desire to be removed therefrom, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to record the declaration and request so made. The Bishop, being satisfied that the person so declaring is not subject to the provision of Canon IV.8 but is acting voluntarily and for causes, assigned or known, which do not affect the Deacon's moral character, shall lay the matter before the clerical members of the Standing Committee, and with the advice and consent of a majority of such members the Bishop may pronounce that such renunciation is accepted, and that the Deacon is released from the obligations of the Ministerial office, and is deprived of the right to exercise the gifts and spiritual authority as a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments conferred in Ordination. The Bishop shall also declare in pronouncing and recording such action that it was for causes which do not affect the person's moral character, and shall, if desired, give a certificate to this effect to the person so removed from the ordained Ministry.

Sec. 9. If a Deacon making the aforesaid declaration of renunciation of the ordained Ministry be under Presentment for any Offense, or shall have been placed on Trial for the same, the Ecclesiastical Authority to whom such declaration is made shall not consider or act upon such declaration until after the said Presentment shall have been dismissed or the said Trial shall have been concluded and the Deacon judged not to have committed an Offense.

Sec. 10. In the case of the renunciation of the ordained Ministry by a Deacon as provided in this Canon, a declaration of removal shall be pronounced by the Bishop in the presence of two or more Members of the Clergy, and shall be entered in the official records of the Diocese in which the Deacon being removed is canonically resident. The Bishop who pronounces the declaration of removal as provided in this Canon shall give notice thereof in writing to every Member of the Clergy, each Vestry, the Secretary of the Convention and the Standing Committee of the Diocese in which the Deacon was canonically resident; and to all Bishops of this Church, the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese of this Church, the Presiding Bishop, the Recorder of Ordinations, the Secretary of the House of Bishops, the Secretary of the House of Deputies, The Church Pension Fund, and the Board for Church Deployment.