



Deacon Formation Process Manual

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



Acknowledgement

The Diocese of Huron offers grateful thanks to the many people who contributed to the completion of this manual. We also appreciate the use of material found in manuals of others, which have been used with permission.

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The Ministry of the Deacon

From the beginning of the Church until the Middle Ages, and once again in our time, many people recognize a call to lifelong service in the diaconate. Deacons respond to Christ's call to service by offering themselves in direct ministry to those in need in the world. Under the authority of the Bishop, they serve in parishes to assist the priest in ministry of the baptized to the world. Within this community they invite and encourage others to join in community ministry, as they serve the sick, the poor, and hungry. The Deacon is ordained to this ministry for life and becomes a bridge of information between the church and the world's needy. Deacon's ministry is usually non-stipendiary beyond reimbursements for expenses.

The charge to a Deacon at ordination states: "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. 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. You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. You are to assist the bishop and priest in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments, and you are to carry out other duties assigned to you from time to time. At all times, your life and teaching are to show Christ's people that in serving the helpless they are serving Christ himself." (BAS p. 655)

The diaconate is recognized today as a full and equal order, with as much identity and authority as the ministry of the laity, the priesthood and the episcopacy.

Qualities and Skills Expected of Deacons

Faith Development: has a questing prayer life, studies scripture for nourishment, has a spiritual depth and a sense of God's presence in life's journey; one who can articulate their faith and share their vision with others.

Ability to be self-reflective: has a healthy sense of self, manifesting the capacity to be appropriately self-aware, self-affirming, and self-critical with evidence of healthy self care – physical, emotional, and spiritual

Demonstrated commitment to the church: has an established loyalty to the Anglican Church while being reflective, able to exercise leadership and independence while maintaining a healthy sense of accountability to church structures of authority and community.

Ability to be a Risk-taker and Interpreter: has the willingness to try new things creatively; the capacity to persevere in difficulty, and show resilience in adversity; the capacity to work hard; the ability to interpret the needs and concerns of the world to and for the Church. One who has the ability to manifest a sense of humour and joy.

Leadership style: collegial in leadership style and capable of sharing ministry with the lay and ordained ministers of the church.

Ability to develop leaders: has demonstrated accomplishment in leadership roles and the ability to learn and help others to learn.

Ability to Offer Caring Support: a person of supportive compassion for those in need in the church and



in the world; one in touch with their own needs and willing to seek support as needed; a willingness to be a caring presence in the face of overwhelming pain and need.

Ability to Communicate: can develop and deliver a sermon that address the scripture, the needs of God's people and the hope of the Gospel; the ability to write, read and speak clearly and communicate the message of God's love to all people. An ability to demonstrate a sense of humour and joy.

Ability to Serve in Liturgy: an understanding of the various liturgies of the Anglican Church and the Deacon's role in each; the ability to plan and lead worship; a reverent approach to worship that assists other participants in a prayerful and joyful offering to God.

Applicant Preparation

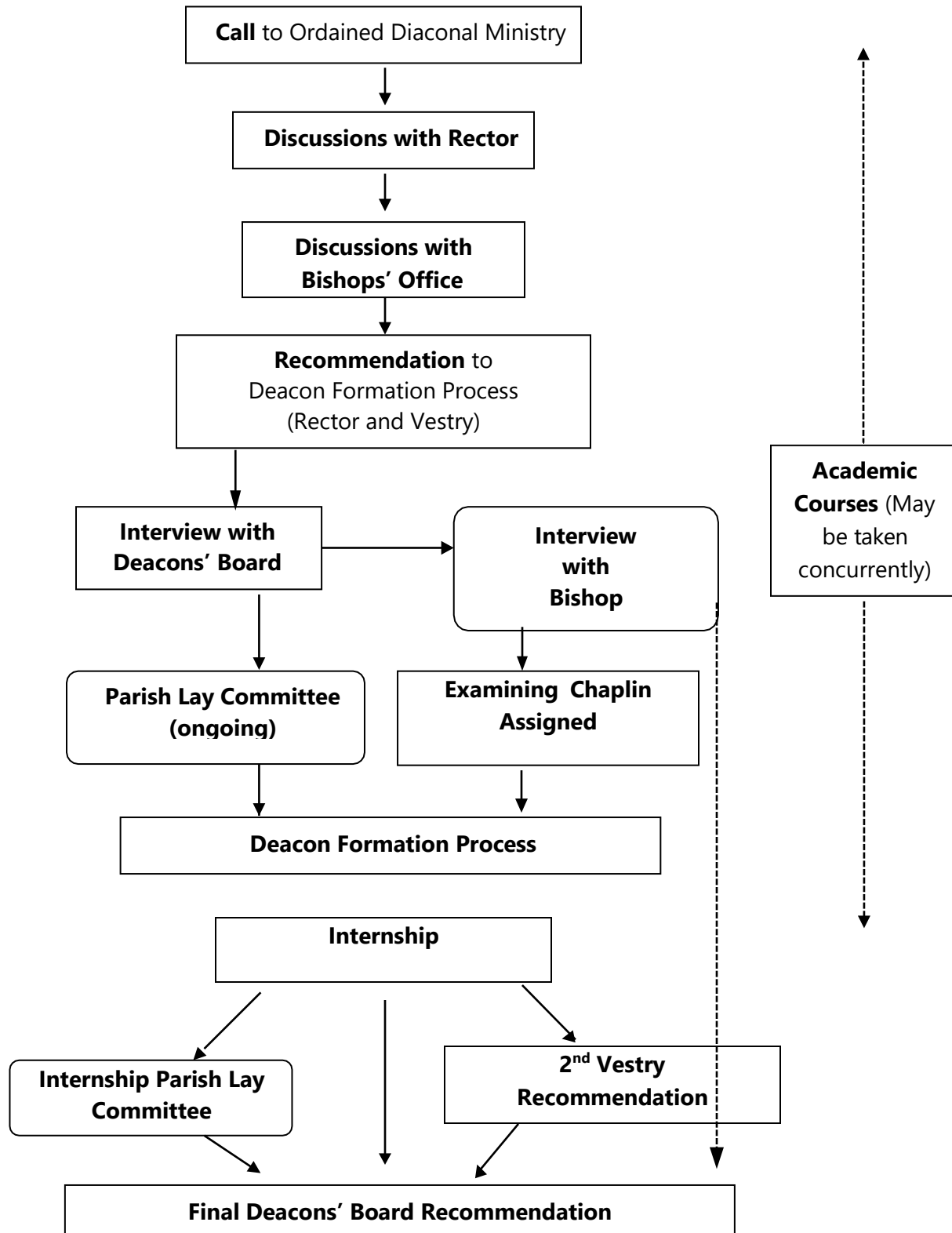
Those who feel called to serve as a deacon in the Diocese of Huron are required to participate in a discernment process. After this preparation, if the person still feels called to ordination as a deacon, he or she should have the support of his or her local priest and Vestry to continue in the Deacon Formation Process in order to continue in discernment. In order to be considered for the discernment process of diaconal ministry one must be an active and communicant member of the Anglican Church for a minimum of two years. *Only after the Bishop accepts the individual for postulancy will they begin the Deacon Formation Process described later in this manual.*

Training for the Diaconate:

The preparation for the diaconate in the Diocese of Huron normally involves a minimum two-year process of study (equivalencies acceptable) and internships that prepare the deacon to fulfill a dual role in ministry to the church and the world. Normally, a time commitment of up to 12 to 15 hours per week, possibly including seminars, internships, and academic courses, as required, is expected. **Ultimately, the decision to ordain any candidate is in the hands of the Bishop of Huron.**



Flow Sheet for Becoming a Deacon





Responsibilities of the Parish Rector

Persons interested in applying for candidacy for Holy Orders are required to seek out their Rector for a conversation and reflection on ministry. Over time, these conversations may lead to the conclusion that this perceived call could be supported by the priest. The priest recommends contacting the Bishops' Office

The Rector is expected to have a good knowledge of the role of Deacons in the Diocese of Huron. Recommended reading would be *The Handbook for the Diaconate*, the books *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, and *Many Servants: an introduction to Deacons* (Ormonde Plater, 2004) and dialogue with other priests and deacons are ways of gaining this information.

Once the Discernment Process has been completed the priest and Vestry will be asked to provide a letter of support to the Bishop. Based on that letter of support, the Bishop will determine whether an interview is appropriate.

A letter to the Bishop should include the following:

- the length of discernment of the applicant, including the beginning date and process to date;
- an assessment of the perceived call;
- an impression of the applicant's spiritual life, character and leadership in the parish;
- the applicant's gifts and skills for ministry and understanding of the Baptismal covenant;
- a statement of support for applicant in this process;
- a statement of how the applicant's family is supporting this process;
- proof of baptism and confirmation;
- a police records check.

The congregation's Vestry must also provide a letter of support for the applicant's participation in this process. Any questions with regard to this process should be directed to the Executive Archdeacon, Bishops' Office.

Responsibilities of the Home Parish

Introduction

The Deacon Formation Process of the Diocese of Huron enables its participants to explore the discipline of Christian servanthood from the perspective of the diaconate. At the same time, the process enables diocesan leadership to gather information regarding participants from a variety of reliable sources.

The vocation of a Christian to holy orders in the Anglican Church is a most serious matter. A true vocation to the ordained ministry is a calling from God, but that calling must be recognized and acknowledged by the individual and be authenticated and supported by the Church, the Body of Christ. The basic group within the Church which deals with vocation to ministry is the individual's home parish. Thus the primary responsibility for recognizing and supporting the vocation to diaconal ministry lies with the parish. This includes the whole congregation, not just the Rector and Parish Council. If someone has a vocation to diaconal ministry, evidence of such a ministry should be clearly visible, both within and beyond the parish.



Assessing another's call to ordained ministry is not simply a private affair but the proper concern of the Body.

The individual's participation in the life of the parish and direct involvement in servant ministry beyond the parish forms the necessary context for the Rector's and Vestry's evaluation and for the endorsement of a possible vocation. The endorsement by the Vestry is a significant step and should never be undertaken solely to approve the Rector's recommendation. It should reflect the Vestry's wholehearted support of the individual throughout the entire process, including financial assistance for study and ministry expenses.

Applicants must have the full support of their Rector and Vestry throughout the entire process. A Parish Lay Committee is created to assist in this support.

The Parish Lay Committee

Introduction:

The body of Christ is most clearly equated to the community of those who believe in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. Each member of the body remains an individual and yet is an integral part of the community. It is the gifts of each person working together with others that helps that community function at its best and accomplish great things. Individuals may not be aware that they have certain gifts and with the help of other Christians as guides can discover hidden gifts and find new satisfaction in the ministry they offer.

One essential element of this discernment process is the ongoing support of a Parish Lay Committee (PLC). This is a small group of members who agree to meet with the person discerning their gifts and to offer support.

It is an exceptional gift and an important ministry to offer time and attention as a resource for one who is exploring a call to ministry. The person will be able to move forward in the task with greater clarity when others have been part of the exploration and decision.

Process:

The Parish Lay Committee (PLC) in their home parish is appointed when someone is raised up by the Vestry and Rector to the Bishop to enter the discernment process of Diaconal Preparation. The Rector, in consultation with the candidate, will appoint 3 to 6 parishioners who are active in the congregation and who are willing and able to accompany a fellow parishioner discerning more about a call to diaconal ministry.

The meeting of the PLC will need to be grounded in prayer, an openness to the Holy Spirit, and based on a signed agreement of confidentiality. The commitment of all members to faithful attendance is essential. (Some excellent resources for discernment study are the books *Listening Hearts*, and *Grounded in God*, both by Suzanne Farnham et al.)

The PLC enters into a special relationship with the person on behalf of the parish and larger church. This requires a commitment of time, energy, sharing of self and a willingness to take the risk of asking difficult



and challenging questions. In the course of their life as a group, all participants may encounter insights and questions which will be both rewarding and unsettling. They will be accompanying one another on a journey of discovery, with no certain destination other than a deepened awareness of the love of God and God's claim on all our lives.

The Parish Lay Committee will appoint a chairperson who will be the person's parish contact person and liaison throughout the journey of discernment and formation and will meet at least **quarterly** with the individual for suggestions as to direction of questions and exploration.

Deacon Formation Process Period

If by the end of the Discernment Process period the individual and the PLC have discerned a call to Diaconal ministry, then the Parish Vestry will be asked to support and forward such recommendation to the bishop. The recommendation will be accompanied by the individual's Diaconal Ministry Statement clearly stating the nature of the ministry in the community beyond the church. It is understood that by recommending the individual for diaconal ministry, the congregation is embracing that ministry as its own and the individual as its representative in offering that ministry on its behalf. The deacon is called to bring the mission of the Church to the world and the needs of the world to the Church so that all members of the parish, in response to their call at Baptism, may be enabled to exercise ministry in response to those needs. Upon recommendation by the bishop the Deacons' Board will appoint an examining chaplain to the candidate.

After an interview with the head of Human Resources, representing the Deacons' Board, the individual may begin the Deacon Formation Process. At this point the Parish Lay Committee continues and, in consultation with the Rector, the examining chaplain and the candidate, may be involved with the support and evaluation of internship(s).

Internship Supervisors will make a report at the end of an internship. The Parish Lay Committee will continue to meet with the candidate to discuss the relationship of the internship ministry to the Church. Reports will be prepared by: Internship Supervisors, the Parish Lay Committee, the Rector, the examining chaplain and the candidate. Reports will be submitted to the Deacons' Board through the examining chaplain.

Ministry Re-evaluation

Through the training and assessment process, individuals who come to realize that their ministry is not suited for ordained ministry may explore other ministry options suited to their particular gifts. Individuals who truly feel that they are called to ordained ministry should seek guidance from their parish rector or the Executive Archdeacon. Information about the process of ordination to the Diaconate or to the Priesthood can be found in the Policy Practice and Procedures Manual.



Deacon Formation Process

Relationship with the Deacons' Board

The candidate has an interview with the Deacons' Board. The Examining Chaplain serves the Board by supporting and directing the candidate throughout the process.

The Board will evaluate the educational and experiential background of the candidate to determine which academic requirements are yet to be completed. The Board will recommend and approve the location and context of the internship placements.

Internships

The applicant will participate in an internship with two aspects.

One aspect will be a 12-week internship in a supervised parish setting in home or other parish. Interns will be assisted by a clergy supervisor and a Parish Lay Committee in that congregation, both of whom will provide an assessment of call and suitability for ministry.

The other aspect will be in an area of ministry to which they feel called. This will be reviewed with the Board and the examining Chaplain. Supervisory oversight shall be established for this twelve-week segment. The intern's supervisor must report on the intern's work, and this report will become part of the candidate's file.

Academic Requirements

There are eight courses in compulsory areas:

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Church History
- Moral / Systematic Theology
- Introduction to Counselling
- Homiletics
- Liturgical Theology and Practice
- Spiritual Formation

There is an additional requirement of a CPE unit or four courses which should be selected in consultation with the Chaplain. Some topics may include:

- Advanced counselling courses
- Additional biblical courses
- Pastoral Theology
- Social Justice
- Leadership skills
- Communication skills



The Chaplain and the candidate will evaluate courses already taken and life experience in order to make a recommendation to the Board about fulfillment of the academic requirements.

Conclusion

After completion of this part of formation the examining Chaplain will make a recommendation to the Deacons' Board which will be included in their file. The Deacons' Board reports to the Diocesan Bishop and ordination is at the discretion of the Bishop.

Internship Parish Lay Committee in Other Parish

Introduction:

As the intern works with the parish, members of the congregation are invited to help assess his or her skills and abilities to serve in ordained ministry. The Rector of the congregation is asked to form a committee of 3 to 6 members called an Internship Parish Lay Committee (IPLC) to assist in doing this work.

The Church raises up and the Bishop ordains deacons to serve to the needy and assist in parish outreach ministry; and priests to become spiritual and pastoral leaders of the parish. The exercise of ordained ministry – in the diaconate and the priesthood – is by its nature a formal and public vocation, undertaken to meet specific pastoral and leadership needs within the community of the church. Therefore, discerning and defining a call to such ministry is always a community task. The IPLC serves as the voice of that discerning community. This group helps the individual identify and affirm his or her personal gifts for ministry and discern whether he or she is called to serve in ordained ministry. The IPLC serves as a testing group for the individual doing discernment, and as an advisory group to the Deacon's Board, and the bishop.

Discerning one's Christian vocation is a difficult and daunting process, one that the Church takes very seriously.

Process:

Those who enter the Deacon Formation Process will engage in a discernment process with an Intern Parish Lay Committee in their assigned intern congregation. The Rector appoints parishioners who are active in the congregation and who are willing and able to meet with the intern in discerning a call to ordained ministry. The IPLC will have between three and six people, one of whom will be the participant's Internship Parish Contact Person and will arrange the committee's meetings.

The IPLC will meet at least 4 times in the 12-week period. The work of the IPLC and the student should be surrounded with prayer. The first meeting will be an opportunity to get acquainted and share information about the intern's life and goals as well as the parish life. Goals for their internship shall be established by the candidate in consultation with the parish and their chaplain. Thereafter, monthly meetings should be held to provide feedback to the intern of the observed ministry and to reflect upon opportunities that might be explored in the future. The intern may also tell the IPLC how they can support their goals and learning. When the intern has an opportunity to preach, the IPLC will offer feedback on the homily. The final meeting will be to share the IPLC's closing report with the intern.



Additional help can be found in the section titled "Qualities we seek in Ordained Persons"

As the committee works we invite you to remember that every one of us has a unique perspective and experience of God to share. Together we constitute the community of faith through which individual vocations are recognized. Shared and affirmed. The task of the IPLC calls not for great expertise or "holiness" but for:

- Faith and humility;
- A willingness to listen openly and speak candidly in the context of a caring community;
- The ability to affirm the strengths and address weakness of the candidate within the context of the world's needs and the Church's life

Suggestions for Meetings of Lay Committee:

There should be at least 4 planned meetings during the course of the 12-week internship. The agenda for these meetings should be at the discretion of the chair and the suggested topics below serve only as a guideline.

First meeting-

1. General personal introductions all around with some personal history of parish life.
2. Student's personal introduction and some identification of personal hopes and expectations for internship year, including any personal programs already discussed with the Clergy Supervisor.
3. Committee response to the student program plans, including any support, recommendations, or cautions.
4. General discussion of the committee's suggestions for the student's time with the congregation and a plan for assistance in introducing the student to the congregation.
5. Develop a roster of committee names, addresses and phone numbers as well as a schedule for the next few meetings. These should be delivered to all when typed.

Guidelines for meetings 2 and 3 –

These meetings will focus on specific ministry experiences and personal awareness of the student in parish life. A constructive critique of sermon presentations should be included. Particular attention should be paid to the student's participation in outreach ministry and their leadership skills in that area. One meeting should be devoted to reviewing an incident of ministry presented by the student; the committee can then discuss the skills demonstrated in the experience. Confidentiality of meeting content is expected.

Guideline for the final meeting –

This meeting is both an opportunity to discuss the final reports being submitted to the Board and the candidate's chaplain. It is also a time for closure for committee members involved in the internship experience.



Suggestions for Exploration Process:

Areas to be explored in the course of the PLC conversations include:

- *Baptismal Covenant:* How does the person envision living out the Baptismal Covenant: Worship, Forgiveness, Proclamation, Service, Justice Making and Healing, differently as an ordained person/lay person?
- *Image of ordained ministry:* Does the person's understanding of ordained ministry seem realistic? Does the person regard it as a profession among others: a way to earn a living: a privilege to be earned: a duty to be fulfilled: a grace to be accepted: a way to love God: a Channel for serving others: a route to self-fulfillment:
- *Motivation:* What seems to be drawing the person toward ordained ministry: does it seem to result from a particular conversion experience: how does the person exercise servant ministry now: how would it be different if ordained:
- *Life Situation:* Does this person have the resources in time and funds to pursue the Diaconate? Has this person had previous experiences that reflect to the group a calling to ordained ministry? Can the member of the PLC see this person as a deacon? What is the person's family situation and how would the desire to pursue ordained ministry impact the family?
- *Background:* What is the person's history of family, education, work, church experience, and what do they suggest about possible ministries:
- *Spiritual Development:* How long has the person been an active member of the congregation? Of the Anglican Church? When baptized and confirmed or received: does the person participate regularly in corporate worship? Is the person developing a daily discipline of private prayer and Scripture reading?
- *Emotional Health:* What is the PLC's experience of the inquirer's overall emotional health? Is the inquirer able to recognize and live with appropriate boundaries in area such as leadership, finances, sexuality and sense of responsibility?
- *Present Ministry:* What is the past and present ministries this person has pursued in the congregation? In the larger community? Does the person tend to work best alone or in groups? What roles has the person filled in the parish or diocese? How have those ministries been received by others?

Ministry Opportunities in the World

- What about engaging in missionary services?
- What about entering the religious life?
- What about teaching in a church school or college?
- What about running a shelter?
- What about doing *pro bono* legal, tax, art.... Financial advisor, etc., work?



- What about raising a foster child?
- What about urban ministry?
- What amount of time do you have for the new ministry?

Format for the Report:

The IPLC will prepare a written report and recommend how the applicant should continue the formation process to the intern's home parish Rector and the Chaplain. The report will include a brief review of the ministry the intern has participated in during the 12 weeks. The committee members will then offer their recommendations and impression that brought them to that conclusion. The report should be one or two pages long.

Qualities we seek in Ordained Persons:

To help the IPLC in conversation and discernment with the individual, the following list describes qualities of all who seek to do ministry in the Church. We specifically look to see if these qualities are publicly and personally exemplified in those seeking ordained ministry. This list is found below.

Relationship with God:

- A faith grounded in God and in harmony with Scripture, tradition and reason.
- A love of Jesus Christ that can inspire and empower others.
- An openness to mystery and the work of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of which enable one to act with faith in ambiguous situations.
- A practice of prayerfulness, servant hood and participation in Christian community that demonstrates durable Christian faith and witness.

Personal attributes:

- Personal maturity and emotional stability enabling one to minister with and to others.
- Identified by members of the congregation as effective leaders and spiritual persons.
- Demonstrated ability as a leader in the midst of a community of faith, modeling the leadership values described in the ordination service of the BAS.
- Experienced in dealing with the pains and tragedies of life, and willingness to accept help when needed.
- Challenged by the prospect of ordained ministry that reaches beyond the congregation to build bridges between the Church and the wider Community.
- Cognitive abilities including the ability to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize complex and diverse information and the ability to communicate verbally and in writing the significance of Christian faith.
- A sense of perspective modified through a sense of humor or ability not to take oneself too seriously.
- A growing knowledge of one's own gifts and limitations, and the ability to set personal boundaries.
- An awareness of the struggle to live a healthy, balanced life, recognizing that the capacity to care for ourselves in various aspects of our lives (emotional, spiritual, and physical health) effects our ability to care for others and to maintain perspective in the ministry we are called to do.
- An understanding of oneself as a person and the knowledge that the call to ordained ministry comes from and is sustained by the grace of God. (Validation for ministry comes from both external and



internal sources. It is helpful to have the ability to be satisfied and fulfilled in an environment where praise may not be regularly accorded.)

- Integrity and commitment to the development of moral character patterned after the life of Jesus Christ
- The ability to relate to people with varying religious and cultural backgrounds.
- The ability to care for and serve; the capacity to support others in times of crisis.
- The ability to listen and to accept constructive criticism.

Commitment to the Church and its ministry:

- A willingness to explore one's call to an ordained vocation in the Church's ministry implies willingness to accept responsibility, practice obedience, seek God's will and give of yourself to others (whether ordained or not). Church leadership involves a mixture of privilege, authority, public visibility, and accountability, all of which must be acceptable to anyone who enters this process.
- Recognition and acceptance that ordained ministry is a vocation and not a "career;" a service for the benefit and building up of others, entered into for the glory of God, not for self alone.
- Acceptance that ordination is for the benefit of others. Commitments made to the ordained person will probably be less than the commitments asked of him or her.
- An understanding of the variety of ministries, particularly the ministry of the laity and those ordained, and how they are related to a common and shared ministry.
- A willingness to wrestle with the Church's prophetic role in society and to recognize the imperative to speak out against injustice or oppression or whatever nature, that keeps people from participating and enjoying basic human rights and basic human needs.

Resources

Discernment

- *Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts* Lloyd Edwards, Crowley, 1988
- *Diakonia: re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* John Collins, Oxford, 1990 *The Discerning Heart: Discovering a Personal God* Maureen Conroy *Are All Christians Ministers?* J. M. Collins, Dwyer and Lovell, 1992
- *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* Susanne Farnham et al, Morehouse, 1991
- *Weeds Among the Wheat* Thomas Green, Ave Maria Press, 1990
- *The Deacon's Ministry* Christine Hall, editor, Leominster, Gracewing, 1991
- *Grounded in God: Listening Hearts for Group Deliberation* Suzanne Farnham et al, Morehouse, 1996
- *Listening to the Music of the Spirit: The Art of Discernment* David Lonsdale
- *Shared Wisdom Approach* Mary Benet McKinney
- *The Clearness Committee: A Communal Approach to Discernment* Quaker Style Parker Palmer
- *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons* Ormonde Plater, Cowley 2004
- *Service Ministry of the Deacon* Timothy J. Shugrue
- *Servanthood* Bennett Simms
- *The Scandal of Service* Jean Vanier



Spiritual Formation

- *Heaven and the Ordinary* Angela Ashwin
- *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict* Ester de Waal *One Day for God* Anthea Dove, Abingdon, 1996
- *Holy Listening* Margaret Gunther, Cowley 1992
- *Holy Ground* Margaret Gunther, Cowley
- *Feathers on the Wind* Edward Hays, Forest of Peace, 1995
- *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim* Edward Hays, 1994
- *St. George and the Dragon* Edward Hays, 1994
- *Holy Fools & Mad Hatters: An Handbook for Hobby horse Holiness* Edward Hays, 1993
- *Pray A 11 Ways* Edward Hays, 1992
- *Mary at the Foot of the Cross* James Hickey
- *To be a Pilgrim* Basil Hume
- *Exploring Spiritual Direction* Alan Jones *Dark Night Spirituality* Peter King *Subversive Orthodoxy* Kenneth Leech
- *Spirituality and Pastoral Care* Kenneth Leech, Cowley, 1989
- *The Ragamuffin Gospel* Brennan Manning, Multnomah Books, 1990
- *Loving the Questions* Marianne Micks, Cowley, 1993
- *Soul Mates* Thomas Moore, HarperCollins, 1994
- *The Wounded Healer* Henri Nouwen, Doubleday, 1979
- *Creative Ministry* Henri Nouwen, Doubleday, 1971
- *The Return of the Prodigal Son* Henri Nouwen, Doubleday, 1994
- *Life of the beloved* Henri Nouwen, Crossroad, 1993
- *In the Name of Jesus* Henri Nouwen, Crossroad, 1989
- *Faith in Dark Places* David Rhodes, SPCK. 1996
- *Friend of the Soul* Norvene Vest
- *Preferring Christ* Norvene Vest
- *Calling, A Son for the Baptized* Caroline A. Westerhoff, Cowley, 1994
- *Availability, the Problem and the Gift* Robert Wicks, Paulist, 1991
- *The Song and the Seed* Macrina Wiederkehr, HarperCollins, 1995
- *Seasons of Your Heart* Macrina Wiederkehr, HarperCollins, 1991