THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

Complete Overview of Discernment Process
for Ordination to the Priesthood
In the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

Submit all forms and documents electronically to the Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development and the Bishop's Executive Assistant upon completion.

Initial Discernment: Local and Diocesan

❏ Aspirant must be Baptized (in any Christian denomination), Confirmed or Received in the Episcopal Church, and a communicant in good standing in a congregation/faith community of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri. (The Aspirant, *before ordination* to the Transitional Diaconate, must be 24 years of age or older.)

❏ Aspirant will have been active in lay ministry in the congregation/faith community for at least a year, and ideally the Aspirant and the senior cleric of the congregation/faith community (hereinafter Rector/Priest-in-Charge) will have been in relationship for at least a year.

❏ Aspirant meets with Rector/Priest-in-Charge to explore their sense of call to ministry (lay or ordained).

  ❏ If the Aspirant desires to further explore lay or other vocational ministry (such as service through a vowed religious or monastic community), proceed according to the appropriate checklist for that track.

  ❏ If the Aspirant desires to further explore ordained ministry, proceed to the next step on this list. *Note: it is not necessary at this point in the process to have complete clarity on to which order of ordained ministry (deacon or priest) the Aspirant is being called.*

❏ Aspirant meets with the Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development for an overview of the diocesan discernment process.

❏ Aspirant meets with the Bishop and the Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development to request permission from the Bishop to form a Congregational Discernment Committee (CDC) OR complete additional steps as directed by the Bishop.

❏ If the Bishop grants permission to form a CDC, Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development informs the Chair of the Commission on Ministry (COM).

❏ COM chair contacts the Rector/Priest-in-Charge regarding formation of CDC.

- ❏ Aspirant and Rector/Priest-in-Charge collaborate to form CDC (approximately 6 people in addition to Aspirant). Recruit at least two persons from outside the congregation/faith community to join CDC (they may be Episcopalian or non-Episcopalian), one chosen by Aspirant and one chosen by Rector/Priest-in-Charge.
- ❏ Aspirant submits contact information, short biography, and photo via form from Bishop's Executive Assistant.
- ❏ Aspirant submits *(DSC 1) Spiritual Autobiography*.
- ❏ Aspirant submits *(DSC2) Plan for Pastoral Care after Discernment*, created by Aspirant and Rector/Priest-in-Charge.
- ❏ The Chair of the Commission on Ministry (COM) (or someone designated by the Chair) trains CDC at their first meeting. The Rector/Priest-in-Charge attends the first meeting, but normally does not attend or participate in the remaining CDC meetings.
- ❏ CDC gathers for 8 sessions according to the meeting structure provided by COM. Aspirant continues meeting with Rector/Priest-in-Charge for discernment.
- ❏ The CDC completes (DSC3) Discernment Report Concerning Holy Orders.

Nomination for Ordination

- ❏ CDC submits *(DSC3) Discernment Report Concerning Holy Orders*.
- ❏ Rector/Priest-in-Charge submits *(DSC4) Priest-in-Charge Report*.
- ❏ Vestry/Bishop's Committee submits *(DSC5) Letter of Support for Postulancy for the Diaconate or Priesthood from the Priest-in-Charge and Vestry/Bishop's Committee*.
- ❏ Aspirant submits (*DSC5b) Acceptance of Nomination for Ordination* and becomes a Nominee OR continues forward in discernment for lay ministry or vocation in a vowed religious community. Note: Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate may occur no earlier than 18 months after this form is signed and dated.
- ❏ Nominee requests and Rector/Priest-in-Charge submits *(DSC6) Application Fee from the Congregation* ($200).
- ❏ Nominee submits *(DSC7) Self-Disclosure Form*.
- ❏ Nominee submits *(DSC8) Application Fee from Applicant*. (Personal check for $500.00 for Background Check and Psychological Exam fees. Nominee may request congregational/diocesan aid if financial hardship exists).
- ❏ Nominee submits *(DSC9) Background Check* (application available from the Diocesan Financial Assistant).
- ❏ Nominee submits *(DSC10) Application for Postulancy*.
- ❏ Nominee schedules a physical exam with personal medical provider and submits *(DSC11) Required Medical Examination*.
- ❏ Nominee submits (*DSC12) Vision for Ministry*.
- ❏ Nominee submits *(DSC13a and b) -- Church Pension Group Behavior Screening Questionnaire & Life History Questionnaire)*.

❏ Nominee emails one of the following options to schedule a Psychological Examination. A confidential report is submitted to the Bishop:
    ❏ Clergy Candidate Evaluation Services, LLC (clergycevalsvcs@gmail.com)
    ❏ St. Louis Behavioral Medicine Institute (Christopher.Grimes@uhsinc.com & Sue.Mertens@uhsinc.com)
❏ Nominee contacts Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development to request a meeting with COM once all forms are submitted.
❏ Nominee meets with COM.
❏ COM makes a recommendation and submits *(PP-Part 4, PP17) COM Interview Report to the Bishop, Postulancy for Diaconate or Priesthood.*
❏ Bishop reviews the COM Interview Report and contacts the Nominee with the Bishop's determination for next steps.
❏ The Nominee moves forward in the process according to the steps for the appropriate order of ministry: Lay, Religious, Deacon, Priest (see Postulancy/Lay/Religious checklists) and the Bishop assigns a mentor in that order (if not already assigned).
❏ If the Bishop grants Postulancy for Holy Orders, the Bishop's Office issues a Letter of Postulancy to the Nominee.

Postulancy for Priesthood

❏ Postulant submits Ember Day Letters to the Bishop (four times per year until priestly ordination).
❏ Postulant attends Ordination Town Halls with the Bishop (quarterly).
❏ With consultation from the Bishop, the Postulant applies to diocesan-approved local formation such as Bishop Kemper School for Ministry or an Episcopal seminary.
❏ Postulant meets with the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains (DBEC) to draft *(PST 1) Initial Recommendations and Expectations (Formation Plan).*
❏ Postulant meets with DBEC to confirm initial Formation Plan.
❏ Postulant discerns and enrolls in an accredited Clinical Pastoral Education program and/or equivalent significant additional training program as approved by the Bishop (faith-based community organizing/language training/other).
❏ Determining Field Placement:
    ❏ Episcopal seminary postulants coordinate with seminary and notify Canon to the Ordinary and Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development.
    ❏ Local formation postulants coordinate with Canon to the Ordinary and Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development.
    ❏ Non-Episcopal seminary postulants coordinate with seminary and Canon to the Ordinary and Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development.

- ❏ Postulant requests and sends to DBEC field placement evaluation, progress reports, or letter from Field Placement Supervisor attesting to progress on Learning Agreement (or equivalent).
- ❏ Postulant submits *(PST2) DBEC Certification for Candidacy*.
- ❏ Postulant meets with DBEC, who certifies Postulant is approximately halfway through Formation Plan and ready for candidacy interviews.
- ❏ Postulant completes Praesidium Academy Safe Church Training, Dismantling Racism, and Title IV training. (Note: certification of completion for each training must be no more than 36 months prior to ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.)
- ❏ After consulting with the Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development, Postulant submits *(PST3) Formal Application for Candidacy*.
- ❏ Rector/Priest-in-Charge submits *(PST4) Letter of Support for Candidacy for Priesthood from the Priest-in-Charge and Vestry or Bishop's Committee*.
- ❏ Postulant meets with COM for Candidacy, COM submits *(PST5) Candidacy for the Priesthood Check-In Interview Report*.
- ❏ Postulant meets with Standing Committee for Candidacy, Standing Committee submits *(PST6) Standing Committee Certification for Candidacy for the Priesthood*.
- ❏ Bishop contacts the Postulant with the Bishop's determination for next steps. If the Bishop grants Candidacy for Holy Orders, the Bishop's Office issues a Letter of Candidacy to the Postulant.

Candidacy for Holy Orders
- ❏ Candidate submits to DBEC transcripts or equivalent documentation from academic formation (seminary, Bishop Kemper School for Ministry, or other).
- ❏ Candidate submits *(CAN1-P) DBEC Certification for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate*.
- ❏ Candidate meets with DBEC.
- ❏ Candidate submits *(CAN2) Application for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate*.
- ❏ Rector/Priest-in-Charge submits *(CAN3) Rector/Vestry Letter of Support*.
- ❏ COM Chair submits *(CAN4) COM Recommendation for Ordination to the Diaconate*.
- ❏ Standing Committee submits *(CAN5) Standing Ctte. Certification*.
- ❏ Candidate verifies with Diocesan Office that background checks, physicals, psychological evaluations, Dismantling Racism, Safe Church Training, and Title IV Training are less than 36 months old.
- ❏ Candidate meets with Canon to the Ordinary if placement in Diocese of Missouri is intended, or meets with Bishop to request release from Diocese of Missouri.
- ❏ Candidate completes ordination retreat, coordinated with Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development.
- ❏ Candidate meets with Bishop, Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development, and Cathedral Dean to plan Transitional Diaconate ordination liturgy.

- ❏ Candidate must be at least 24 years of age at the time of ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.
- ❏ Candidate ordained to the Transitional Diaconate.
- ❏ Transitional Deacon begins attending Fresh Start program for those in new ministry positions.

Ordination to the Priesthood

- ❏ Ordination to the Priesthood may occur no earlier than six months after Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.
- ❏ Candidate/Transitional Deacon takes General Ordination Exams and demonstrates proficiency in the canonically required areas of study.
- ❏ Transitional Deacon submits *(TDC1) Certification for Ordination to the Priesthood* to DBEC.
- ❏ Once GOE results are received, Transitional Deacon meets with DBEC to discuss formation completion and/or remediation if needed.
- ❏ DBEC certifies formation as complete and Transitional Deacon has achieved proficiency in the canonically required areas of study and sends *(TDC 1)* to COM.
- ❏ Transitional Deacon submits *(TDC2) Application for Ordination to the Priesthood.*
- ❏ Rector/Priest-In-Charge submits *(TDC3) Letter of Support for Ordination to the Priesthood.*
- ❏ COM Chair submits *(TDC4) COM Recommendation for Ordination to the Priesthood.*
- ❏ Standing Committee submits *(TDC5) Standing Committee Certification for Priesthood.*
- ❏ Candidate/Transitional Deacon submits final certified seminary/formation transcript to Office of the Bishop.
- ❏ Candidate meets with the Bishop, Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development, and clergy of the parish hosting the ordination liturgy to plan ordination liturgy.
- ❏ Candidate completes ordination retreat, coordinated with Canon for Evangelism & Discipleship Development.
- ❏ Candidate is ordained to the Priesthood.

These steps are in compliance with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, 2018.