



ADSW Ordination Process Manual

Guidelines for Rectors and
those seeking Holy Orders

updated 2019 & 2022

Reception & Ordination Committee
of the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest

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Introduction to the Ordination Manual

Discerning and Responding to a Call to ordained ministry is important and holy work for all of us in the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest. The Bishop and the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest's Reception and Ordination Committee (ROC) have worked hard to design a process that asks the Holy Spirit to work in our midst as we seek His best for our leaders and our parishes. In addition, the Bishop and the Reception and Ordination Committee have worked hard to align the ordination process with the vision, mission and guiding principles of our diocese. It is our hope that this manual *The Ordination Process Step-by-Step*, accompanied by the *Ordination Documents*, will be a useful guide. Both the Manual and the Documents are available on the Diocesan website (www.anglicansw.org), and by request to the ROC (roc@anglicansw.org).

The manual begins with a letter from the Bishop describing his vision for those called to ordination in the Diocese of the Southwest. This letter is followed by several other documents which spell out various presuppositions about ordained leadership in our diocese. Beginning on page 11, the manual describes each step of the ordination process. All required forms may be found in the *Ordination Documents* booklet or on our website (www.anglicansw.org).

Ordination Process Summary

The first part of the ordination process takes place in the parish of the person seeking ordination. The local community of faith is best suited for this initial work of discernment and support. The Rector and a Congregational Discernment Committee each meet with an individual to listen, ask, and pray about a particular calling. Those called to ordination are called by the whole Church, not just a unique worshipping community. For this reason, the next steps of the process are carried out by the Bishop and the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest's Reception and Ordination Committee (ROC).

ROC Contact Information

For all questions regarding the ordination process, begin by contacting the Bishop's office, we will answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate person.

When you have completed the required Documents, please send them to the ROC via the Bishop's office. You may send them by mail or email as attachments. It is also advised that you keep a copy for your personal records.

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ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF THE SOUTHWEST

May we be one so that the world may know Jesus Christ. -John 17:23

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The Bishop's Message to Those Seeking Discernment

Dear Friends in Christ,

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise it over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28)

It is the work of the diocese and the Church to raise up transformational leaders so that the Church might expand the Kingdom of God and fulfill the great commission. However, our Lord points out that there are two different models of leadership we can buy into. Leadership among the Gentiles often involves coercion and "lording authority over those we lead." Jesus counters that in the Kingdom of God "those who would be great leaders must do so with a servant's heart." It is not so much about authority we receive as a leader, as about how much we are willing to sacrifice and serve that gives our ministry authority in the Kingdom. The Church doesn't need other lords. It needs to be in submission to the Lord of lords. The Church does need leaders, but leaders with a teachable spirit, and a servant's heart.

I have often heard people in the pews say that "they are *just* lay people." This thinking is often rooted in a high regard for ordained clergy and an inaccurate picture of lay ministry. Let it be known that the majority of Kingdom work is done by the laity. It is the laity that are out in the world meeting people from all walks of life and who have the real opportunity to do discipleship, evangelism and mercy ministry.

Our deacons, priests and bishops are devoted to the service and building up of the laity. And it is the laity who are the real ministers. A deacon works under the direction of a bishop and should be available to work throughout the diocese. One often finds deacons in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, and prisons. A priest, on the other hand, often struggles to find time to get into those institutions. Their ministry largely revolves around the individual parish and the members of that parish. A bishop's ministry is even more restricted in that most of his time is spent working with the clergy in the parishes of the diocese. All of which is to say that to become ordained is to limit and focus one's ministry in specific ways. It is also to say that lay ministry is of the highest importance, and ordained ministry functions at its best when it equips and enables lay ministry. The old saying that, "ministers should minister, and congregations should congregate" is the death of the church.

With that important distinction understood, it's obvious that the people that God is calling into ordained ministry are already ministers. They already doing God's work among the body of Christ and the world. And in a sense, ordination is the church's recognition of that ministry and the gifts that make it fruitful. The people that the Church ordains are also people with a strong sense, a "call," to the ordained ministry. They have a conviction that this is what they were made for, and that they expect to be involved in this ministry for the rest of their lives.

What kinds of people are these people that are already involved in ministry and feel a call? All kinds— all ages, all cultures, all nationalities. The Church needs clergy of all ages. We need young clergy to raise up young lay ministers. We need mature and bi-vocational clergy to reach small, mature congregations. We also need bilingual or Spanish-speaking clergy to raise up congregations in the Spanish- speaking communities throughout New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, and Mexico.

Another big issue for many of us who are considering a call to ordained ministry is the daunting thought of several more years of school. Fortunately, online instruction and new models for mentoring are opening up opportunities for young people, retired people, and people living in diverse ethnic communities to train for ministry at a much more local level.

If you are reading these pages, the Lord has placed on your heart the desire to begin a long journey of exploration to see if you are indeed called to a more specific ministry of equipping the saints in the Church. It should be a time of prayer and humble discernment. It will necessarily include the support, prayers, and discernment of the parish that you attend. You should spend time in discernment with the Rector of your parish and work closely with a local ministry discernment committee.

All of these steps are outlined in this manual. While it seems like the journey is long, it is important to engage in all these steps of discernment. We are not just raising up leaders for the local church. We are raising up leaders for the wider Church of God. In all of this, no matter the outcome, we are seeking to live in the will of our Savior. It is in His service that we will all find fulfillment in the ministry he calls us to.

Yours in Christ,

+Steven Tighe

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P.S. As you and your community discern together, I commend to you the following prayers, of a great Irish saint, Brendan-Abbott, and adventurer-who followed the Lord wherever he was called, even into the Atlantic on a tiny boat called a coracle.

A Pilgrim's Plea

Shall I abandon, O King of mysteries, the soft comforts of home? Shall I turn my back on my native land, and my face towards the sea? Shall I put myself wholly at your mercy, without silver, without a horse, without fame and honor? Shall I throw myself wholly on you, without sword and shield, without food and drink, without a bed to lie on?

Shall I say farewell to my beautiful land, placing myself under your yoke? Shall I pour out my heart to you, confessing my manifold sins and begging forgiveness, tears stream down my cheeks? Shall I leave the prints of my knees on the sandy beach, a record of my final prayer in my native land? Shall I then suffer every kind of wound that the sea can inflict? Shall I take my tiny coracle across the wide sparkling ocean? O King of the glorious heaven, shall I go of my own choice upon the Sea? O Christ, will you help me on the wild waves?

PRAYER OF ST. BRENDAN

"Help me to journey the beyond familiar and into the unknown. Give me the faith to leave old ways and break fresh ground with you. Christ of the mysteries, I trust you to be stronger than each storm within me. I will trust in the darkness and know that my times, even now, are in Your hand. Tune my spirit to the music of heaven, and somehow, make my obedience count for You. Amen"



Getting to Know the ADSW's Governance: Constitutions and Canons

All persons considering ordination in the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest should read the [Constitutions and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America, ACNA-Constitution-and-Canons-June-2019.pdf \(anglican church.net\)](#) particularly, Title III which pertains to ordination; and the Constitution and Canons for the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest, www.anglicansw.org/southwest. These are the governing principles to which we are all subject as members of the ACNA and ADSW.

We also advise reading The Ordinal of the ACNA, [Anglican Church in North America – 2019 Book of Common Prayer](#) which includes the liturgies and vows taken by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, the words you will speak if discerned into ordained ministry in the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest.

Getting to Know the ADSW's Vision, Mission, & Guiding Principles

Vision: To be a Maundy Thursday Diocese: obedient to the new command, “To love one another as he loved us”; To serve each other even as our Lord washed the disciples’ feet; to transform lives through worship even as our Lord transformed wine and bread at the Last Supper.

Mission: To become dandelions: humble in nature, deeply rooted in the Scriptures, and spread everywhere by the wind of God’s Spirit!

Guiding Principles:

1. Clergy and lay leaders seek to know and live the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to share it with others outside their local congregations.
2. Clergy and lay leaders live in relationship with Jesus and nurture that relationship by spending time with him in study, prayer, and through the sacramental life of the Church.
3. Clergy and lay leaders understand that the tithe is the beginning of their giving.
4. Clergy and lay leaders model faithful family relationships, including sexual purity.
5. Clergy and lay leaders are in functional accountability and intercessory relationships to safeguard themselves and their people.
6. The Bishop and the clergy are bound to each other on the basis of a shared orthodox faith, mutual trust and respect, and together seek to build up the Kingdom of God and bring glory to his Name.
7. Members of the Synod, Standing Committee, ROC, and our vestries are committed to faithful attendance, mutual submission, and to work for the common good.
8. It is the work of the diocesan leadership to strengthen congregations and encourage planting new congregations.
9. We are committed to establishing a diocese in Mexico and helping existing Anglican congregations there. We also seek to establish Spanish-speaking congregations in the U.S.

Getting to Know the ADSW's Covenant for Our Life Together

We covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ and one another to follow in His Way as we serve together.

Prayer

We covenant to pray daily for each other, for our congregations, and for the Diocese. We pray for spiritual and numerical growth in all our congregations. We pray that we will always have a spirit of forgiveness and grace as we relate to each other.

Biblical Relationships

We affirm that we will communicate in a respectful and healthy manner, speaking well of one another publicly and privately. When we fail this standard, we will repent and seek forgiveness from God and one another (Ephesians 4:29-32). When we believe that another member has sinned against us, we will seek to use the process laid out in Matthew 18:15-20, first and foremost going discreetly and directly to the person with whom we have a grievance. In all humility, we commit to transparent conversations regarding our corporate life together. We will seek mutual cooperation and collaboration in our life together.

Building Gospel Partnership

During each yearly parish visitation, the Bishop and clergy will meet for mutual encouragement and prayer. We commit to ongoing reflection and dialogue around annual goals to assess the health of the congregation and thus the health of the diocese. During the visitation the Bishop will follow up on efforts towards mission and evangelism.

Common Mission

We covenant to live together in community, not just in worship, but in mission as well. We commit to participate in Synod, clergy and deanery gatherings, and diocesan-wide events as much as we are able. We seek to live in obedience to the Great Commission, striving to make disciples, and leading lives in obedience to the Word of God. We will look for opportunities to reach people outside our church and impact our communities.

Gospel Partnership as Leaders

We agree to engage in our common life together to the best of our ability, encouraging our congregations to join us as we work together to establish the Kingdom.

This covenant comes out of a time of testing in our fundamental relationships. The following Scripture passages shape the nature of our covenant and spell out the meaning of our faithfulness to God and to one another: *1 Cor. 12:12-27, Ephesians 4:11-32, Romans 12:3-21.*

We conclude with this from St. Paul: I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. *Philippians 1:3-5*

Getting to Know the ADSW: Definitions of Deacon and Priest

Definition of a Deacon

A deacon is called by God to a special ministry of servanthood directed by the Bishop. In the name of Jesus Christ, a deacon is to serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely and interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world. A deacon is to assist the bishop and priests in public worship and in the ministration of God's Word and Sacraments. In this diocese the work of the deacon is to administer and apply the resources of the Church for ministry to the needy both inside and outside the Church and in so doing serve as a bridge between the Church and the world. A deacon is called to model, encourage, and equip servanthood among lay people.

Definition of a Priest

A priest is called by God to lead a community of faith and is charged to encourage, call out and orchestrate the gifts of the people of God, so that the church can live up to its responsibility of reaching those outside it with the transforming love of Jesus Christ. As such, he or she is authorized or ordained to perform sacerdotal functions, speaking and acting as Christ's representative, with the authority of the Church. The priesthood is rooted in the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. A priest is commissioned to make Christ's presence a tangible reality through the preached Word, through the sacraments and as an example of Christian living. A priest is called to work as a pastor, priest and teacher and to share in the Councils of the Church. According to the Book of Common Prayer, the priest is to minister to the people committed to his or her care; to preach the Word of God; to baptize; to celebrate the Eucharist; and to pronounce Absolution and Blessing in God's name.

Divorce, Remarriage and the Call to Ministry

The Canons of the Anglican Church in North America (Title III, Canon 3, Section 5 & 6) state:

Section 5 – *Concerning Upholding the Sanctity of Marriage Especially for Those to Be Ordained*

Marriage as a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, where the two become one flesh, is both an ordinance of Creation, affirming as such by our Lord, and commended by Saint Paul as a sign of the mystical union between Christ and his Church (Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:22-32). As wholesome examples and patterns to the entire flock of Christ, all married persons to be admitted to Holy Orders shall remain married to their spouse for life, and in accordance with the vows they exchanged in Holy Matrimony. Subject to Section 6 of this Canon, no person shall be admitted into Holy Orders who has divorced and remarried.

Section 6 - *Concerning Pastoral Exceptions to Section 5*

The Archbishop of this Church, on an application made to him by the Bishop sponsoring a person who by reason of Section 5 of this Canon could not otherwise be admitted into Holy Orders may, upon showing of good cause and particularly in light of the exceptions in Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7, remove the impediment imposed by that section to the admission of the person into Holy Orders. Pastoral exceptions may be made in accordance with the directions given from time to time by the Archbishop acting in consultation with the College of Bishops.

The Anglican Diocese of the Southwest understands that:

Considering the place of the deacon or priest as a model for the community, and as a picture of Christ's love for the Church, the acceptance of a divorced person for Holy Orders shall be a *very* rare situation. The man or woman who has not been able to find reconciliation with the central person in his or her life may be hard pressed to proclaim this to those under his or her care. However, Christians also have been taught that, in the new life of Christ, the old things have passed – if a divorce took place prior to a person becoming a Christian, this may be a mitigating circumstance, especially if the Christian leader uses their past life as a contrast to God's will for the people.

In light of this and the ACNA's canons, the ROC will not receive into the ordination process any individual who has multiple divorces. The ROC will consider cases in which divorce was not desired nor pursued by the individual, but forced upon them by the spouse, particularly if the individual has remained single, but a remarriage subsequent to the undesired divorce will not necessarily be an impediment. The ROC will also consider a person who has divorced their spouse for continued, unrepentant unfaithfulness, for self-protection or the protection of children. If that person has remained single, and continues to hope for reconciliation, there is no immediate impediment to ordination. In the case of remarriage after such a situation, the case must be decided on its own merits, and by means of inquiry into the frame of mind and the understanding of the individual.

In the case of a divorce or divorce and remarriage where there is an unrepentant or blasé attitude towards the matter, ordination should not be presented as an open door. Though all married Christians are called to fidelity in life-long marriage, those in leadership positions are those to whom much has been given; from them, more may be expected.

The ADSW's Ordination Process by Stages

The ordination process has three main stages:

Discernment Stage – praying and discerning with your local parish and rector. This includes what is often referred to as the “Aspirancy” and you, the “aspirant.” This refers to your exploring and discerning your call with others. This time is also usually, though by no means always, when you will do your theological education/seminary.

Postulancy Stage – You will continue exploring your call with the Bishop and the ROC and will be interviewed by them and approved as a “postulant”. A postulant (from the Latin *postulare*, to ask) was originally one who made a request or demand. In our diocese, it is also used to describe the ecclesiastical status of a person who has discerned a call to the priesthood or diaconate and has received parish and diocesan endorsement. You will continue in relationship with the ROC and the Bishop, completing further steps as well as continuing in ministry within your home parish, and with your education, if applicable. This culminates in Applying for Candidacy in communication with the Bishop.

Candidacy Stage – After completing the steps outlined and through the recommendation of the Bishop, the ROC and Standing Committee, you will be approved as a “candidate”. At this point, the Bishop will appoint a date for ordination and add other recommendations as he desires in preparation for the ordination.

Furthermore, after ordination to the transitional diaconate for those called to the priesthood, one will also apply for ordination to the priesthood and remain in contact with the Bishop and the ROC and have another interview before ordination to the priesthood (a date and time to be determined by the Bishop).

Theological Education – Traditionally, a person would go to seminary or seek theological education after contacting the Bishop and having completed the discernment stage. We recognize this is not always the case so will outline course expectations here. It is expected that by the time of candidacy, you will have completed education and received your degree or certificate.

Suggested Courses and Subject Areas

1. *Holy Scripture* –the whole survey of both Old and New Testaments;
2. *Church History* - the span of Christian history from patristics through the modern era;
3. *Anglican Church History* – focus on the role of the Anglican Communion in Christian history;
4. *Doctrine* – theology of the teachings of the Church, especially regarding the Creeds;
5. *Liturgics* – the sacraments; theology and use of the Book of Common Prayer;
6. *Moral Theology and Ethics*—applying Scripture and doctrine to moral decisions and formation
7. *Ascetical Theology* –Spiritual Formation, use of the daily office, prayer, and historic disciplines
8. *Practical Theology* –pastoral care, leadership, homiletics, Christian education;
9. *The Missionary Work of the Church* –apologetics, evangelism, church planting and cross-cultural missions with particular understanding of the role of the Anglican Communion

The requirements for each stage will be explained in the following pages. These requirements may be modified by the Bishop, in consultation with the ROC.

There is no specific timeframe applicable to everyone. Some people will proceed through each step and requirement very, very quickly while others may take many years. ***Please do not assume that one person's timeframe will match your own, nor that the speed of the process is a measurement of an individual's gifts or calling.*** This is not a race but a journey. The submission of all documents to the ROC is ultimately the responsibility of the individual in the ordination process. Any documents not submitted by announced deadlines, with the proper signatures and dates may delay the ordination process.

All forms can be found in *The Ordination Documents*.

Discernment Stage Step-by-Step Your Rector’s “Careful Inquiry”

The formal process of discerning a call to ordination begins with your Rector’s Careful Inquiry – a series of 2 or 3 (or more) conversations between your rector and you, the person seeking ordination (“aspirant”). If applicable, your spouse or fiancé(ee) will be asked to attend at least one of these conversations. At the end of these conversations, your Rector should be comfortable encouraging you to pursue ordination, will write a brief report and send it to your Congregational Discernment Committee, who will continue discerning with you. If the Rector is not comfortable proceeding, they will let you know in the course of their conversations with you.

The Ordination Documents includes guidelines for your Rector and what should be included in their written “Careful Inquiry” Report.

You have probably already discussed these with your Rector over the course of your relationship, but be prepared for them to ask you about your:

- Deep, growing personal faith
- Clear sense of call and your gifts
- Experience of the church and the place of ordained ministry within it
- Demonstrated leadership ability
- Emotional and Physical Health – including healthy family relationships
- Intellectual and Academic life

The Congregational Discernment Committee Interviews

The Congregational Discernment Committee (CDC) assists the Rector and Vestry in discerning particular calls to ordained ministry. The Rector usually appoints people to the CDC. In some churches, the Vestry serves in this capacity. The CDC normally includes four to eight people, one of whom is on the Vestry, and one of whom is clergy.

Committee members are active members of your congregation who have a lively faith in Jesus Christ which they can articulate, have a heart for the mission of the Church, and listen carefully to God and to others. Committee members commit themselves to pray for you and listen to the Holy Spirit regarding your call, to listen to you and ask relevant, challenging questions, and think well with the other members.

The congregational discernment process is a series of conversations (normally 2-4) between you and your church’s Congregational Discernment Committee (CDC). Normally, your Rector or other parish clergy, participates in the conversations with the CDC. Your spouse (if applicable) will probably be asked to attend at least some of the sessions. When the CDC has finished the conversations, it writes a report to your church’s Vestry. Usually a member of the CDC attends the Vestry meeting with you to give support and field questions. Sample questions can be found in the *Ordination Documents*.

Discernment Stage Step-by-Step The Vestry Interview(s)

It is the Vestry of the parish, under the guidance of the Rector and with the recommendation of the Congregational Discernment Committee, which recommends an aspirant to the Bishop for Postulancy. The Vestry must formally attest to the individual's suitability for ordained ministry on the "Recommendation for Postulancy" form. While the exact nature of Vestry participation varies from parish to parish, most Vestries will meet with the aspirant at least once prior to making a recommendation. During the interview, the Vestry is responsible for making sure they fully support this person for a life of ministry as well as making sure the individual will meet the cost of their theological education. It is also recommended that a member of the CDC accompany the aspirant to the Vestry meeting.

Writing your Spiritual Autobiography

Write a brief history (no more than 2,000 words) of your faith journey, including significant events, persons and things that have influenced how you see yourself as a person of faith. Please entitle the document "Spiritual Autobiography." Put your name and the date clearly at the top of the first page of the document.

This paper should include some kind of response to the following questions:

When and how did you first become aware of and/or committed to following Jesus Christ?

In what ways have you grown in Christ-likeness over the past years?

What obstacles, trials or failures have you faced which have challenged your faith? How did you respond in these situations?

What are your strengths and barriers, particularly those recognized by others? Are there types of communities where your leadership skills would be especially appreciated? Are there groups of people that it is hard for you to minister to? Does your present context draw on your God-given personality and strengths?

What things have you done (or are doing) in order to develop your strengths and to minimize the ill effects of your barriers, in order to maximize your effectiveness in serving God?

Answering the Self-Reflection Questions

1. **Relationship to God:** What is the gospel? What's the heart of the Good News you want to share with others? How do others help in your relationship to God?
2. **Discipleship:** What is discipleship? How have you been taught the faith? Who has discipled you along the way, and how? Please describe. Have you experienced catechesis? If so, please describe?

3. **Worship:** Briefly describe your current participation in public worship. How significant is worship as a part of your spirit formation? What elements of worship are most meaningful to you? Is there anything connected to worship with which you struggle? What are some favorite hymns/songs and why?
4. **Spiritual Disciplines:** Describe your patterns and practices of personal and corporate devotions. How often do you read the Scriptures? When and how do you usually pray? Do you regularly use the Book of Common Prayer (e.g. the Daily Office)? In what other ways do you seek to grow in grace? What other practices are meaningful for your spiritual life? Do you practice daily repentance? Have you experienced spiritual direction? If so, what has God chosen to do in that time?
5. **Friendship:** Do you have close friends? Who are they? How important are friendships to you? Is it hard for you to sustain friendships, why or why not?
6. **Calling:** Briefly describe your sense of calling to ordained ministry. To what office and type of future ministry do you believe God is calling you? How have others affirmed you in this sense of calling?
7. **Anglican Calling:** Why do you wish to be ordained in the Anglican Communion, and specifically, the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest? If you are or have recently been in another denomination, what differences do you see and what appeals to you about Anglicanism? Are you willing to serve under spiritual authority, why or why not?
8. **Leadership:** Describe your experiences in leading. Make sure to include any ministry in the church, including small group leadership or teaching. Were these ministry endeavors fruitful? What leaders in your life have helped you form your leadership style, and how? How do you react to stress when leading?
9. **Conflict:** Describe a conflict in which you were involved, how you reacted, what you might have done differently, and what you learned about how you react to conflict.
10. **Discipline:** What is your view on church discipline? Have you ever been disciplined or dismissed from a Christian congregation or denomination? Have you ever been removed from an ordination or credentialing process with another Christian congregation or denomination? If so, explain.
11. **Other Interests:** What hobbies do you have? What books have you read recently? What do you do with your friends and family outside of work and church?
12. **Is there anything else you would like to communicate?**

Three Letters of Recommendation

1. From your spouse (if married) OR (if unmarried) a friend/family member of the opposite sex
2. From a teacher/mentor/supervisor (someone who has disciplined you in some way)
3. From someone you are discipling or mentoring currently

Recommending to the Bishop and Applying for Postulancy

If the Rector and Vestry recommend that the individual apply for postulancy, all documents previously gathered will be forwarded to the Bishop for review.

In summary, the following documents should have been sent already or be sent at this time:

Rector's Careful Inquiry Letter

Congregational Discernment Committee Evaluation

Vestry Recommendation for Postulancy form

Spiritual Autobiography & Self-Reflection Questionnaire

3 Letters of Recommendation

Academic Transcripts (unless still in process)

Application for Postulancy

Signed Waiver of Rights, Release of Claims and Indemnity, and Hold Harmless Agreement

Once the Bishop receives and examines the documents, he will order a Background Check if he would like to proceed with your application. You can expect to hear that he has received your documents and you will receive information regarding the background check shortly thereafter.

Discernment Stage Step-by-Step Background Check

The Diocese of the Southwest is strongly committed to protecting persons from sexual and professional misconduct by clergy. Before the individual comes to the ROC for Postulancy, they must complete a series of background checks to determine if there is any history of criminal behavior, child abuse, financial difficulty or serious motor vehicle offences. Background checks are conducted or renewed on *all* persons prior to ordination, employment or acceptance into the Diocese of the Southwest.

The Oxford Document Management Company, Inc. is contracted and paid by the Diocese to conduct and to administrate these background investigations on its behalf. Oxford Document Management is an entity created by a Certified Public Accountancy firm in Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the purpose of assisting the Anglican Church in North America in its inquiries. Individuals should be assured that confidentiality is of utmost importance to the Diocese and is written into its contract with Oxford Document Management.

Upon acceptance into the ordination process, the Bishop will request the Oxford Background Check be started. The individual will be asked to complete and return forms on which he or she identifies teachers, employers, congregational leaders and bishops who have had authority over him or her in the last ten years. In the communication with the individual's past leaders, Oxford will make it clear thatn the ADSW's inquiry is being made to comply with our diocesan policy and *not because we suspect*

that the individual is, or has been, implicated in cases of sexual or professional misconduct. The individual will be asked to authorize, on a form provided, the release of any relevant information held by these authorities. In addition, the individual will be asked to sign a separate form authorizing the release of Credit and Motor Vehicle Records.

If any information concerning sexual misconduct or criminal conviction is reported, the information will be given directly and confidentially to the bishop to determine what action should be taken in response to the report. If any such report is made, the individual will be given the opportunity to respond.

The total cost of clearances by the Oxford Document Background Check is \$180.00; this is distributed in thirds by the Diocese (\$60.00) the Parish (\$60.00) and you (\$60.00). Once the Diocese receives an invoice, we will, in turn, invoice you and your church.

While the Background Check is completing (within 90 days of your original submission of the Postulancy documents), the Bishop will notify you about proceeding with the ordination process. He will have already notified the ROC and if recommended, he will forward on the documents and request that you schedule an interview with the ROC.

Reception and Ordination Committee Postulancy Interview

The Reception and Ordination Committee (ROC) is the ADSW's equivalent of the Congregational Discernment Committee. Each member of the Committee shares a deep commitment to Christ, to the church, and to the future leadership of our Diocese. They conduct interviews with prayerful hearts and a deep desire to discern God's purposes for individuals and for the Church as a whole. At the interview, the ROC meets with you, ideally is accompanied by your spouse (or fiancé/e), Rector, and a representative from the Congregational Discernment Committee. You can expect to meet between 60-90 minutes.

During the interview, ROC members will ask a number of questions about the aspirant's life, personal faith, gifts and ministry. They may also ask specific questions related to the background information provided. The aspirant's spouse/fiancé(e) (if applicable), Rector, and CDC representative will also be asked to offer their reflections.

Members of the ROC will be looking for evidence of:

- a personal commitment to the risen Jesus of Nazareth as uniquely revealing the very nature of God
- a mature faith, informed by and conforming to the creeds of the historic Church, which energizes him or her to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ with passion and conviction
- a disciplined life of prayer, both personal and corporate
- an integrated approach to life and a wholeness of personality and emotional health;
- a regard for physical and mental health and well-being

- a recognized and demonstrated ability to lead others toward faith in Jesus Christ through teaching, preaching and personal example
- a recognized and demonstrated ability to disciple others in Christian leadership
- a clear call to ordained ministry
- a growing understanding of Holy Scripture fed by ongoing study and meditation
- a curious and incisive intellect fed by a commitment to personal continuing education and spiritual development
- a sense and knowledge of the contemporary culture in which, to which, and, at times, *against* which the Gospel must be addressed
- an acceptance and a celebration of the richness of the Anglican tradition.

After the interview, you will be contacted by the Bishop regarding whether you have been made a postulant and he may discuss next steps. It is often the case that you, the postulant, would still be proceeding through your theological education and spiritual formation. The manual will also help guide you through steps needed before you apply for Candidacy or interview with the ROC again.

Postulancy Stage Step-by-Step

Physical Examination

Postulants must have a complete and thorough physical examination by a licensed, practicing physician. The form to be completed by the attending physician is found in *the Ordination Documents* and should then be mailed to the Bishop's office.

Psychological Evaluations

The ROC recognizes that ordained ministry is a rigorous endeavor that exerts significant pressures on those involved. Furthermore, because ministers are in positions of visible leadership, they strongly influence the lives of the people they serve. Given these realities, the purpose of the psychological assessment is, to the extent possible, to identify any issues of coping or mental/emotional/psychological health that could bring harm to either the minister or to those s/he serves if left unaddressed.

If you need a recommendation for a psychologist or counseling center who can conduct the interview, please contact the Bishop's office or the ROC chair. The following documents should be sent to the person conducting the evaluation prior to the appointment:

Rector's Careful Inquiry Report
Parish Discernment Committee Report
Application for Postulancy
Spiritual Autobiography
Self-Reflection Questionnaire
Release of Information

The psychologist will compile a written report and give you an opportunity to consult about any questions or concerns. If there are serious concerns, you may be asked to undergo further psychiatric evaluation or care. You will be asked to sign a waiver to permit information contained in the report to be shared with the Bishop and members of the ROC.

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Give me modesty in my countenance, gravity in my behavior, deliberation in my speech, holiness in my thoughts, and righteousness in all my actions. Let thy mercy cleanse me from my sins, and let thy grace bring forth in me the fruits of everlasting life. Amen.

John Cosin, 1594-1672

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Postulancy Stage Step-by-Step

Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse Prevention Training

The ADSW requires all clergy to train on Sexual Misconduct and Child Abuse Prevention. Please familiarize yourself with our guidelines and procedures found on our “Who We Are” page: <https://anglicansw.org/about/> (scroll down the page) The Anglican Diocese of the Southwest uses the services of [MinistrySafe](#) an online training that is about two hours long and has a short quiz at the end. You will be enrolled and the training link sent to your email. Once the training is complete, you will receive an emailed certificate of completion. ADSW requires MinistrySafe training to be taken every two years. If you have taken a training within two years, please send your certificate.

Ember Day Letters

Ember Days are four groups of days, set apart for special prayer and fasting, particularly focused on the ordination of clergy. The Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday following:

- Holy Cross Day – September 14
- The Feast of St. Lucy – December 13
- The first Sunday in Lent
- Pentecost – Whitsunday

Because these days are meant to focus on ordination, Ember weeks have become a time when those in the ordination process write to their bishop, detailing their progress in spiritual growth, theological understanding, and other aspects of their preparation for a life in Holy Orders.

While Ember Day letters may *seem* to be just one more hoop to get through on the way to ordination, be assured that they are not. These letters are a key way for the Bishop to get to know you, to pray for you, to respond to your specific concerns, and to recognize common issues that need systematic attention. Include a report of your personal condition and growth: spiritual, intellectual, emotional/relational, vocational. Answer any of the following: what are you learning? What is God teaching you or re-teaching you? How have your studies affected your understanding and practice of ministry? How is your work in a parish or other ministry context? What are you excited and/or worried about? What is going on with your family and/or other primary relationships? The idea is to give a *sense* of how you are being shaped by God in this season, so that we may pray for you and offer such assistance as is appropriate.

Applying for Candidacy & Candidacy Interview

Please submit a letter of ongoing recommendation from your sponsoring congregation. A meeting with your vestry and rector is the easiest way to accomplish this. Please have them sign the “Vestry Recommendation for the Diaconate” form.

Please turn in the “Application for Candidacy” to the ADSW office. A postulant is made a candidate sometime before ordination to the diaconate (whether transitional or vocational) as a way of indicating continued discernment about the fitness of the call to ordination. The Bishop will contact you once these are received and walk with you through the next steps.

Candidacy Stage Step-by-Step

Canonical Exams for Candidates to the Priesthood

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Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without whose help labor is useless, without whose light search is in vain, invigorate my studies and direct my inquiries, that I may, by due intelligence and right discernment, establish myself and others in thy holy faith. Take not, O Lord, thy Holy Spirit from me, let not evil thoughts have dominion in my mind. Let me not linger in ignorance, but enlighten and support me.

Samuel Johnson, 1709-1784

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Apply your mind to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge.

Proverbs 23:12 (RSV)

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The primary intent of this exam (besides adhering to the ACNA Canons) is to test your ability to integrate academic learning with the challenges of pastoral ministry. We are hoping that the questions will challenge you to show a grasp of theological material and an ability to apply it to real-life situations that you may face in ordained ministry.

Most seminary education includes courses in the 9 areas of canonical exam testing. The ADSW has joined with the other western Anglican dioceses to form a Board of Examining Chaplains who distribute the exam and communicate directly with the ROC. Please note that they have helpful study notes and suggestions at the wiki site. All postulants should make use of this resource, especially those who have not recently attended seminary. Below is a letter of explanation from Deacon Erin Giles, who is the Coordinator of the Exams:

Welcome to the canonical exam process! First, please know that you are being prayed for as you go through this process. Second, congratulations and blessings on your discernment and ordination preparation efforts thus far. Third, this process is very new and many specific details remain to be clarified. At any point, please contact Deacon Erin Giles, our Exam Coordinator for clarification and help. Your comments and feedback will be appreciated and can help make the exam process smoother for future examinees.

The Board of Chaplains is honored and glad to be working in coordination with your Diocese to assess your knowledge and understanding of the nine areas of study required by the Canons of the ACNA. Our job is to assess areas of strength and weakness in academic training and understanding. We then report back to your Diocese in order for them to be able to tailor any further ministry training needs for you individually. The exam is intended to be diagnostic and to focus on practical ministry implications of the various Canonical Areas. The hope is for it be a helpful process, not a stressful one.

The Board is composed of members from the five ACNA West Dioceses. Most are priests with many years of experience and wide pastoral as well as academic knowledge. Deacons and lay persons also serve in areas of particular expertise.

Canonical Areas Covered in the Exam:

- Holy Scripture
- Doctrine
- Church History
- Anglican Church History
- Liturgics
- Moral Theology & Ethics
- Ascetical Theology
- Practical Theology
- Missionary Work of the Church

The Chaplains want this exam to be as gentle an experience as possible. To that end, a wiki (www.acnawestwiki.org) is being developed to serve as a study guide. The wiki has pages describing each Canonical Area and listing the key sub-categories for each area. Many of those sub-categories are also described in detail with resources that the Chaplains consider essential listed. The emphasis is on primary sources.

- Candidates are expected to be very familiar with Holy Scripture, including all books of the Old Testament, New Testament and to have some knowledge of the Deutero-Canon. They are also expected to have access to, knowledge of and copies of the ACNA Texts for Common Worship, statements of faith, Constitution and Canons, and other liturgical resources such as the calendar including feasts and fasts of the Church, the saints days, and the lectionary. All of these resources are available on the ACNA website:

http://anglican church.net/?/main/texts_for_common_prayer

Canonical Exam Procedure

Integrative Essay Portion

- Integrative essays covering the nine Canonical Areas which have been grouped together for the purpose of the essay portion make up the bulk of exam. There are 5 essay sets. Each essay set will require the candidate to write 2 essays within 3 hours. Each essay set stands alone and can be taken at the convenience of the candidate and in coordination with the proctor.
- Once a candidate has been formally submitted to the Exam Coordinator, Deacon Erin Giles, the candidate is eligible to begin writing the essay sets. Any time limit on the completion of all five essay sets will be set by the sponsoring Diocese.
- **Essay Sets**
 - Holy Scripture
 - Doctrine & Church History/Anglican Church History
 - Liturgics
 - Moral Theology & Ethics/Ascetical Theology
 - Practical Theology/Missionary Work of the Church
- **Proctoring**
 - The ROC would like to gather all postulants together for the exams and in that case, the Chair will likely proctor the exam. If this is not possible, a member of the ROC or other person will be appointed to sit with you during your exams, receive them upon completion and e-mail to Deacon Erin.
- **Essay Set Structure**
 - During each essay set, the candidate must complete 2 essays. There will be 2 sets of 2 questions and the candidate will select one from each set on which to write. The questions are designed to be completed within an hour each, but a maximum of three hours is allowed per essay set.
- **Writing the Essay Sets**
 - Candidates will receive the essay set via email from the Exam Coordinator and then return the set within an agreed upon window. The Exam Coordinator will then send the completed responses to two Chaplains who will review the essays, make comments and return them to the Exam Coordinator, usually within 2 weeks. Results will be sent to the candidate and the sponsoring Diocese.

Candidacy Stage Step-by-Step

Ordination to the Diaconate

Ordinations to the Diaconate in the Diocese of the Southwest normally take place at a central location as determined by the Bishop. Please complete the “Application for Ordination to the Diaconate”, submit a new Vestry recommendation. All deacons are directly responsible to the Bishop and he will oversee you. The Bishop will walk beside transitional deacons during the time of transition and work together to determine the date for ordination to the priesthood.

Ordination to the Priesthood

Transitional Deacons are normally ordained to the priesthood after six or more months as a deacon. This ordination usually takes place in the parish where the deacon is serving. You should complete the “Application to the Ordination to Priesthood” and send to the ROC. The ROC will meet with you and pray for you before your ordination.