

## Requirements for Clergy Ordained in Other Denominations Updated January 23, 2024

Clergy ordained in other Christian denominations (except those in full communion with The Episcopal Church – see below) now seeking to serve as ordained persons in the Episcopal Church enter a similar parish discernment process as other inquirers exploring a call to ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church, in addition to providing information and references from their previous history of ordained ministry.

Specifically, the inquirer must:

- be a United States citizen or on the path to United States citizenship
- be able to support himself/herself without functioning as an ordained person in the denomination which he/she is leaving
- be a confirmed adult communicant in good standing in a Congregation of this Church *before* accepting nomination for reception from this Congregation
- attend the Ministry Discernment Conference, along with a sponsoring priest and a member of the parish discernment committee (typically on the first Saturday in February)
- meet with the parish discernment committee between March and June
- receive endorsement of the vestry of the sponsoring Congregation
- apply for reception to holy orders (application due on August 1)
- if invited, attend interviews in November or December
- if invited into formation, fulfill all requirements including
  - psychiatric, psychological and medical examinations and background checks
  - additional studies in the history, liturgy and polity of the Episcopal Church
  - Safe Church training, training regarding the Church’s teaching on racism, and disciplinary trainings
  - demonstrated proficiency in six canonical areas of study
  - Ember Day letters to the Bishop
  - attendance at required diocesan events
- be interviewed by the Standing Committee
- promise in writing to submit in all things to the discipline of the Episcopal Church “without recourse to any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction or foreign civil jurisdiction.” (Canon III.10.3.f)

*Note: This process typically takes three to five years. Specific formation requirements appropriate to individual circumstance will be determined in consultation with the Bishop and Canon for Ordained Vocations after admission to postulancy.*

At the conclusion of the above process, clergy from denominations who were *not* ordained by a bishop in the historic succession (e.g. UCC, Methodist, Presbyterian) apply for *ordination* to the diaconate, and six months later for *ordination* to the priesthood.

At the conclusion of the above process, a deacon or priest ordained by a bishop in the historic succession (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and certain Anglican bodies not in communion with the See of Canterbury) that is *not* in full communion with the Episcopal Church may be *received* as a deacon or priest in the Episcopal Church.

Clergy from the following denominations **in full communion with Episcopal Church** do not need to enter formal discernment and should contact Laura Simons ([lsimons@diomass.org](mailto:lsimons@diomass.org)) in the Bishop’s Office to receive permission to officiate in the Diocese of Massachusetts.

- Anglican Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury and the Episcopal Church
- The Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht
- The Philippine Independent Church

- The Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## **Reception Application Checklist**

### **Canonical Requirements**

- Discernment in and Endorsement from a Congregation in this Diocese
- Background Check
- Medical Examination
- Psychological Evaluation
- Safe Church Training
- Title IV Training
- Training regarding the Church's teaching on racism
- Examination in the history, worship and government of the Episcopal Church, including an essay discussing the points of Doctrine, Discipline, Polity, and Worship in which the Church from which the applicant has come differs from this Church

### **Application Checklist**

- Updated Autobiographical and Ministry Statements
- Resume, including two references from previous ordained ministry
- Essay discussing the points of Doctrine, Discipline, Polity, and Worship in which the Church from which the applicant has come differs from this Church
- Letters from **two** Presbyters in good standing of this Church "stating that, from personal examination or from satisfactory evidence presented to them, they believe that the departure of the person from the Communion to which the person has belonged has not arisen from any circumstance unfavorable to moral or religious character, or on account of which it may not be expedient to admit the person to Holy Orders in this Church"

### **Reception Requirements**

- Consent of the Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee
- Letters Dimissory, or their equivalent, under the seal of the Bishop with whose diocese the person has been last connected, assuring that the person's "letters of Holy Orders and other credentials are valid and authentic" and that the person "is free from any vows or other engagements inconsistent with the exercise of Holy Orders in this Church"
- Certificate regarding moral and godly character and theological qualifications
- Letter to the Bishop promising "to submit in all things to the Discipline of this Church, without recourse to any foreign jurisdiction, civil or ecclesiastical"
- Bishop approves first pastoral cure
- Priest signs of the oath of ordination (Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church) in the presence of the Bishop and two Presbyters
- Bishop assigns a member of the clergy to serve as a mentor