

DISCERNMENT AND MINISTERIAL FORMATION HANDBOOK

The Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota

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DISCERNMENT

Discernment is not undertaken only by those who may feel called to specialized ministry in the church. Throughout our lives we are all in discernment. When faced with the need to make a decision, we examine our choices or options in light of past experience, knowledge, known facts, and future goals or dreams. Sometimes this is done in a split second; other times, as when choosing a specific career path or a life partner, it happens over the course of months or years.

We, as Christians, are all ministers by virtue of our baptism. Through baptism, God calls us to share in Christ's eternal Priesthood. Every baptized Christian is called upon to bring the presence of Christ into the home, workplace, and community. The Church both in this Diocese and at large highly values lay ministry. Even though the Church does not always do an adequate job of reaffirming this fact, it can never be repeated enough that ordained clergy are not "professional" Christians, and lay people are absolutely not "amateur" Christians. Such a perception fundamentally betrays the true nature of ministry in the Church in which a Christian's calling to ministry comes first and foremost through baptism and *all* Christians are called to specific forms of ministry in the Church and the world. A clergyperson is called to the particular ministry of equipping and encouraging all the baptized in order that they may fulfill their unique ministerial callings. The call to ordained ministry is different than calls to other ministries, but it is absolutely not a higher or "more Christian" calling than being, for example, a teacher, plumber, or senator.

Not everyone possesses the gifts for ordained ministry, just as most ordained ministers do not share all the same gifts and talents as other members of their congregations. And one must recognize that when we mean gifts, the Church is not *only* talking about abstract talents or potentials; being gifted for ordained ministry is not merely a matter of having a passion for the Kingdom of God, or a talent for interpreting Scripture, or the ability to speak well, or the patience and empathy to care for the lost, lonely, sick, and dying – although these are of course of great benefit in ordained ministry. In the context of discerning a call to ordained ministry, "gifts" takes on a more holistic, communal meaning. This includes a certain ability to navigate the frustrating life of the Church in the world. It means the desire *and* ability to dedicate a considerable amount of time and effort to receiving the tools for ministry. It means the ability to commit to a regular schedule of study, preaching, and pastoral care that congregations deserve. It means, in the end, an awareness that God's call to ordained ministry is not a call to just another job – like baptism, it is a call that, once discerned and accepted, means a lifelong commitment and a fundamental change in a person's life that in some ways can never be reversed. Because ordained ministry is not a private revelation or right, but a calling from God through a community *for* a community, a community must help decide if God truly has called you to ordained ministry or if God has called you, through your gifts, to some other form of equally valid and important lay ministry. A Discernment Process and Discernment Committee help to clarify God's call in your life.

The heart of discernment is a series of ongoing conversations in relationship and community. People should by no means enter the discernment process only after they believe themselves to have a clear call to ordained ministry. There are many ways that God calls people to ordained ministry, and that call may be recognized in one's community before it is recognized in oneself. One may also have a general passion for the Kingdom of God in the world, and it is through the discernment process that one can discover where that passion is put to its best use, be it through ordained or some other ministry. The formal discernment process is certainly meant to help those called to ordained ministry discover their call, but it is just as important in helping make clear God's calling if it is not to ordained ministry. Discerning a call to something other than ordained ministry through this process should never be perceived or presented as a failure. The only failure possible in the discernment process occurs when someone enters into a ministry for which he or she is not called, which means that allowing someone to enter ordained ministry who has not been so called is just as much a failure of discernment as is failing to recognize a real call *to* ordained ministry.

Fundamental Guiding Principles of the Discernment Process

1. Discernment occurs in the context of the established and disciplined life of prayer and Scriptural meditation of each discerner and of each discerning community.
2. The purpose of discernment is a progressive discovery of God's will in all the subtlety and graciousness of that will.
3. The process of discernment calls for patient faithfulness, rather than for a particular result or outcome, and fully acknowledges the human particulars and context of the discerner's life (family, physical limitations, gifts and liabilities, temperament, finances, age, etc.)
4. Discernment encompasses the whole of the life-journey of the discerner.
5. Discernment offers the gift of rigorous insight and mature self-awareness as essential for sifting, sorting, and distinguishing between temptations and invitations.
6. Discernment is dynamic – it attends to the movements, growth, and evolution of the discerners.
7. Discernment takes place and is tested within the faith community and calls for patience, candor, and trust.
8. The indicators of appropriate discernment, for both the individual and the community, are peace, affirmation, consensus, a feeling of “right fit,” and courage.

DISCERNMENT PROCESS OUTLINE

Discernment to ordained ministry begins within the real relationships of a worshipping community and aims toward furthering healthy relationships within worshipping communities. For these relationships to have developed, one must show a commitment to life in Christian community over time. These are the reasons for the canonical requirement that a person be a resident and show a commitment through regular attendance and participation in a faith community in the Diocese of South Dakota for *at least* one complete calendar year prior to entering the formal discernment process.

So, assuming a person has committed him- or herself to the communal life of an Episcopal congregation in South Dakota, how does the discernment process begin? Everything starts with a faith community identifying a person as having the gifts, talents, and qualities they would want in an ordained minister. In some cases, this recognition may begin in the community and be brought to the attention of the individual; in others, the individual may first feel a sense of call and have it affirmed by the community.

The **general procedure** is as follows:

1. Either you or your community discover and make known that you may have gifts for ordained ministry; *then,*
 2. Talk to your priest; *then,*
 3. You and your priest will talk with your community leaders and elders (or Vestry/Bishop’s Committee/Mission Council) who will give you feedback. **You must have the support of your worshipping community.** It is vital that both you and the worshipping community understand that support consists in the community affirming that they would be willing to accept you as an ordained minister in that community. This does not mean you necessarily will return to that community, but a **community’s inability to make this affirmation means that they do not discern a call to ordained ministry for you;** *then,*
 4. You and your priest will talk with your Bishop and the Missioner for Leadership Development (MLD); *then,*
 5. You will be expected to attend the annual Discernment Retreat. The discernment process *cannot* proceed until you have attended one of these retreats, and you must make known your intention to attend at least one month prior to the retreat you will attend. It is here that you will work with lay leaders and clergy (including the Bishop) from throughout the Diocese through a series of reflections and conversations to determine what God’s call in your life is.
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| <p>A. If a call to lay ministry is affirmed, <i>then,</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. You will be given tools for further clarification about your call to lay ministry and then work with your priest to define that ministry and begin training and licensing or further exploring what your ministry in the world looks like. A good resource to work through with your priest is <i>Conversations with Scripture and with Each Other: Spiritual Formation for Lay Leaders</i>, M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE. | <p>B. If your call to the diaconate or priesthood is provisionally discerned, <i>then,</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. You will sign a Discernment and Formation Covenant (DFC) between you and the Diocese in which you affirm your understanding and acceptance of the expectations for formal ministerial formation and the responsibility the Diocese has for helping you fulfill those expectations; <i>then,</i>7. You will be given an evaluation to see what knowledge and skills for ordained ministry you already possess and what areas can be |
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improved in order to ensure that you are equipped for success during your formal ministerial education (whether through Niobrara School for Ministry or another accredited theological school); *then,*

8. You will be assigned a mentor who will work with you in drafting an Individual Ministerial Formation Plan (IMFP), that will guide your work first in completing the requirements of Iglúwiyeyya (described below) prior to postulancy and then formal ministerial education; *then,*

9. A continuing discernment committee/group will be formed in your local community. This group will serve at least two functions. First, it will ensure that you continue to clarify your sense of call; in this process you and/or your community may come to the conclusion that you do not have, at the current time, a call into ordained ministry, and the committee will be responsible for relaying that information to the Bishop and Missioner for Leadership Development. Second, this group will do all that it can to support your journey through formal ministerial formation and hold the Diocese accountable to its commitments; *then,*
10. Upon completing the Iglúwiyeyya curriculum to the satisfaction of your mentor and the MLD, you will apply for postulancy. Part of your work with your mentor, the Bishop, and the MLD will include discerning whether your educational formation will occur best through the Niobrara School for Ministry, an extension seminary program, or a residential seminary; *then,*
11. You will enter into your formal educational component of your formation and discernment. Regardless of what form this takes, you will be expected to maintain regular communication with the Diocese in the form of, for instance, Ember Day letters. During this portion of your formation, regardless of what form your education takes, the MLD will be available to help provide additional resources and consultation to ensure success. This aid is available as much for those in residential seminaries as it is for those in the Niobrara School for Ministry. Upon completing $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of your formal ministerial education, you may apply for candidacy; *then,*
12. Assuming the requirements for ordination as described in Canon VII (for the permanent diaconate) or VIII (for the priesthood) have been fulfilled, you will be ordained to Holy Orders. Those who are pursuing ordination to the priesthood will first be ordained as transitional deacons, and will serve in diaconal ministry for not less than six months, and, assuming they meet the above stated requirements, will then be ordained to the priesthood.

While the above describes the procedure for moving from initial discernment to the ministry to which one is called (lay, ordained diaconal, or ordained priestly), one should *always* keep in mind four things:

First, the process is not mechanical or automatic; you should never have the expectation that simply because you put in the effort you deserve to move to the next step. The discernment process, when done correctly, is guided by the Holy Spirit and as such will not always conform to our expectations for a neat and orderly stepwise progression.

Second, in addition to the process being led by the Spirit, it is also undertaken by and guided by fallible human beings who do not always make correct decisions or hear God's voice. This is as true for individuals discerning their call as it is for those who are helping them through this process, and this is all the more reason why it is vital that discernment take place in community and with as much transparency as possible. The more that communities, rather than isolated individuals, are involved in the process, the more opportunities there are to provide a corrective to human fallibility and point out when the urgings of the Spirit may be overlooked.

Third, discerning that one is not called to ordained ministry and discontinuation from this process, whether this is initiated by the discernor him or herself or by those tasked with facilitating the process of discernment, only means, except in certain exceptional cases, that *at this time* a call to ordained ministry has not been discerned. Excepting those instances where a person has been permanently barred from re-entering the discernment/ordination process, there is the possibility that a call into ministry may be discerned in the future (for the regulations concerning readmission to the ordination process after discontinuation, see Title III.6, III.7, and III.8 of the *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*).

Fourth, it must always be remembered that ordination results from a call from God through the community and is no individual's *right*. As with obviously inappropriate reasons for seeking ordination, such as a desire for power, authority, or recognition, an unyielding belief that one has a right to ordination will be regarded as a clear indication that an individual *does not* have a call into ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Dakota.

INITIAL STEPS IN DISCERNMENT

Assuming that you have been a resident of a faith community in the Diocese of South Dakota for at least one year, what follows is the first stage of discernment generally undertaken prior to attending an annual discernment retreat:

1. Your faith community may have identified you as having the leadership qualities of ordained ministry (faith communities should reference the below "Aids and Expectations for Congregational Discernment" for what qualities may indicate a person is called to ordained ministry, as well as what indicators warning that a person *does not*, demonstrate these qualities) or you may be experiencing a feeling of being called to ordained ministry.
2. If you wish to pursue a process to discern the validity of the identification or feeling, meet with the priest in charge of your congregation for an initial discussion.
3. The priest will advise the Bishop's Committee/Mission Council/Vestry of your intentions to receive preliminary community involvement, context, and feedback. This group may evaluate you on Christian commitment, personal stability, intellectual curiosity, leadership style, ability to communicate, and personal characteristics.
4. Begin thinking about your Christian journey. After the retreat you will be expected to translate this into a Spiritual Autobiography. This will not only describe your growth in faith up to this point in life, but should also include a description of your involvement in your local congregation, how you are living out your baptismal covenant in the world, the individual and communal indications of a call into ministry, and a summary of the work you have done under the advisement of your local congregation after that identification of your call.
5. Request that your priest (or other leader of your local faith community) speak with the MLD and then (or at the same time) the bishop in order to discuss whether it is appropriate to attend the next discernment weekend.

AIDS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR INITIAL DISCERNMENT

Below are listed guidelines for helping individuals and congregations begin the process of identifying those who may have calls into ordained ministry. However, as described above, the work of discerning the nature of one's ministry is the responsibility of every Christian by nature of his or her baptism and so the basic principles of discernment here provided may just as well be used in helping individuals discover the specific natures of their ministries as Christians (be they in or out of the church).

Qualities Sought in Potential Clergy (Deacon or Priest)

A person *may* be called by God into ordained ministry if he or she:

1. Has regularly attended and participated in the life of the local church for a minimum of one year (this is a canonical requirement; what constitutes regular attendance and participation may differ depending upon the local community; if a person has been attending for at least a year, but you are unclear about whether their attendance and participation is “regular,” it would help to contact the Bishop for further guidance);
2. Demonstrates commitment to knowing and following Jesus Christ;
3. Shows strong signs of growth toward maturity as a Christian (it may help to look for the Fruits of the Spirit as described by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 as an indication of growing Christian maturity);
4. Understands and accepts the vows that will be taken at ordination (specifically, that ordained ministry is not a “job” that one can quit if it becomes dissatisfying, but is instead like the commitment made in marriage or baptism. It will help to review pp. 510, 526-51 of the *Book of Common Prayer*);
5. Shows an ability to proclaim and live the gospel in the Church and in the world. This would include the capacity to offer an example of faith and discipleship, to collaborate effectively with others, and to inspire the Church in its mission to the world as community builders and reconcilers;
6. Demonstrates the gifts of being a non-anxious presence in the midst of difficult pastoral situations and the ability to mediate disagreements, especially within the Church;
7. Exhibits a capacity for and willingness to lead public worship (an individual need not be an exceptionally talented public speaker or read portions of the liturgy every week, but this person should have experience reading scripture or leading other parts of the liturgy, and these activities should be performed joyfully and not begrudgingly);
8. Talks clearly about one's vocation to ministry and mission (affirming a love for God, the life of the Church, and the world are necessary for this calling, but not sufficient – all Christians should strive for these things; one must look further for indicators such as a desire to equip other Christians for ministry through preaching and teaching, being drawn to administer the sacraments to the community, etc.);
9. Shows an understanding of the Christian faith and a desire for a deeper understanding, has an openness to mystery and God's new revelation, and a vision of what the community of faith might become (one should look for a desire for deeper engagement and understanding of Scripture and the Book of Common Prayer as well as a firm grasp on the basic tenets of the Christian faith);
10. Shows evidence of a commitment to a spiritual discipline;
11. Is mature and stable enough to sustain the demanding role of an ordained minister and to face change and pressure in a flexible and balanced way. This is largely determined by a person's ability to know when they need help from others and the ability to tend to their own health and well-being;
12. Demonstrates self-awareness and self-acceptance as a basis for developing open and healthy professional, personal, and pastoral relationships as a minister;
13. Has the necessary intellectual capacity, stamina, and quality of mind to undertake a course of formation and preparation (this does not mean that someone must have always performed well in educational endeavors, but he/she must show a capacity for critical reasoning and problem solving, some capacity *and* desire to grow in knowledge, and the ability to communicate what was learned).

Qualities That May Indicate Someone Does Not Currently Have a Call to Ordained Ministry

It may be possible that there are people in your community that exhibit some of the signs described above, or feel themselves called to ministry, but if they exhibit any of the characteristics listed below, the community at the very least should proceed more cautiously and critically in the process of discernment as these characteristics may well indicate that a person *does not* have a call into ministry at this time:

1. Has the individual been a resident in the Diocese of South Dakota for less than a year, or has he or she attended worship and other gatherings extremely infrequently? (the first of these automatically means that the individual canonically cannot enter the formal discernment process)
2. Does the person have a history of causing division, harm, or conflict within the Church, his/her family, or the larger community, of which he/she continues to be unrepentant, either by continuing the behavior or by showing no remorse or regard for past harms? (It is important to note that a past history of causing harm in most cases does not automatically prevent a person from receiving a call into ordained ministry – we believe that we are all sinners who can be transformed by God’s grace; the warning sign is that the person shows no indications that he/she has not accepted this offer of transformative grace; furthermore, this is a warning sign that most often will not be observed by the individual in question and *must* be brought forward by the community)
3. Does the individual show little or no desire to grow in the Christian life?
4. Does the individual regularly refuse to actively participate in worship, or does so only begrudgingly?
5. Is the individual unable to clarify why he or she feels called into ministry beyond a general love of God, the Church, or the welfare of the world?
6. Is this a person whom your congregation would not accept as an ordained minister?
7. Does the individual lack characteristics that are necessary for successful pastoral ministry, such as humility, integrity, patience, self-control, empathy, etc.? If these qualities are lacking, does the individual show no desire or attempt to develop them?
8. Does the individual appear to have motives for becoming an ordained minister other than a call from God and a desire to serve God’s people? For instance, does it appear the person wants to be ordained in order to receive authority, power, or prestige? (If there is the suspicion that such ulterior motives may be present, then the congregation should be cautious in moving forward; however, if a person has openly admitted to these ulterior motives as the primary reasons he/she is seeking ordination, then that is clear indication that he/she is not currently called to ordained ministry and should not be allowed to go further in the process)
9. Does the individual believe that he or she has a right to be ordained, or does this person consistently become indignant at the suggestion that ordination is not a right?
10. Does the person show little regard for their own physical, emotional, psychological, or spiritual well-being? Does he or she show a significant lack of self-awareness? (for instance, a person may consistently engage in insulting, demeaning, or insensitive behavior that he/she is unaware of or consider humorous)
11. Does the person disparage the need for further education, or believe that any additional ministerial formation stands as an unnecessary obstacle to ordination?

Again, many of the above characteristics in an individual point toward the possibility that he or she is not currently called to ordained ministry or prepared to accept such a call. However, it is still the responsibility of the local congregation to make a person aware that he/she is exhibiting these characteristics and provide them the support needed to rectify them. In some instances, once these situations are resolved, a person may continue with the discernment process. In other instances, the resolution of these issues will itself constitute the recognition that one is not called to ordained ministry (as in the case of someone who only desires to be ordained for the power or authority it confers).

Expectations during Initial Stages of Discernment

The following are expected of both an individual and his/her congregation in the initial stages of discernment. It is through these activities and conversations that a community comes to best begin to identify whether an individual has the characteristics that point towards or away from a call to ordained ministry. Furthermore, those who will continue in the discernment process by attending a discernment retreat will need to incorporate evidence of engaging in the following activities and practices in their Spiritual Autobiographies. It is the responsibility of the priest or other leaders in the congregation to ensure that those who are discerning a call to ordained ministry are given opportunities to engage in these activities and practices.

1. Spiritual Formation

It is expected that those put forward by congregations to continue the discernment process will already engage in certain spiritual disciplines well before beginning the discernment process. Nevertheless, once the process has commenced, it is absolutely necessary that those discerning become even more conscious of forming themselves after the mind of Christ. Early efforts are to be made to further develop life habits of daily prayer, meditation, the reading of Scripture, and other spiritual practices. Living a life that has a proper balance between a commitment to God, to family and career, and to recreation and relaxation is the general goal. An exceptional resource for exploring different spiritual disciplines and how they can be integrated into one's life is Richard Foster's *A Celebration of Discipline*.

2. Study and Reflection

Study and reflection, followed by discussion of the content with a mentor, highlights and helps make connections between the reading and the experience of the person(s) discerning a call to ministry. This also provides good preparation for the theological education component of the ordination process.

A small example of books that might be beneficial in this area are:

- a. The new Church's Teaching Series
- b. Books on lay, diaconal, or priestly ministries, so that the person may gain greater clarity into which form of ministry they may be called (see below for summaries of diaconal and priestly ministry)
- c. The Vision and Mission Statements of the Diocese. Specifically, they shall reflect on what it means to be a sacred circle gathered around Jesus in prayer, loving and serving God and our neighbor in Jesus' name, and how we can restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.
- d. *Experiencing Faith*, Lichfield Curriculum, Pt. 1 (available from the MLD), and other books on discernment, such as *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community*, Suzanne G. Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward, or *Exploring Life and Calling*, Gary Black, Jr.
- e. The Catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer* (p. 845)
- f. Resources that pertain to other licensed ministries, e.g., catechist, preacher, etc.

The Ministry of Deacons

Coming from the Greek *διάκονος* (*diákonos*) the word deacon means "servant" or "envoy." The unique role of the deacon among the ordained is to represent Christ and his redemptive love in the world, and to interpret the needs, concerns and hopes of the world to the Church. Deacons help the baptized to find places of connection with God in their lives beyond Sunday morning. Deacons are not those who alone do the work of the Church in the world; rather, they gather, lead, equip, and

inform the baptized in that work. In all their work, deacons enhance the ministry of the laity; they do not supplant it.

In accordance with Canon III of The Episcopal Church, deacons must be academically trained in the Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the church. They must also be familiar with *diakonia* and the diaconate, demonstrate human awareness and understanding, exemplify spiritual development and discipline, and undergo extensive practical training and experience.

Because the diaconate is non-stipendiary, those called to this ministry must exhibit the energy necessary for work both in and outside the church. Deacons serve under the authority of the Bishop, and are assigned by the Bishop in the diocese. Deacons will, in most cases, work under the direct supervision of a priest, and the capacity to work comfortably in that relationship is fundamental. Deacons will be expected to have a spiritual discipline and seek regular continuing education opportunities in order to grow in their vocation.

The Ministry of Priests

The word priest comes from the Greek *πρεσβύτερος* (*presbyteros*), meaning “elder.” A priest is ordained to “represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God.” (BCP p. 856) A priest is also trained in pastoral care and the conduct of public worship.

All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord and to share in the renewing of the world. The priest participates in this general ministry by enabling the rest of the people of God to live into that baptismal covenant. To that end, the priest convenes the Eucharistic assembly and in the larger exercise of the office enables the individual members of Christ’s body to discover and live out their particular vocations.

Parochial priests have the responsibility of conducting worship, caring for the church building(s) and maintaining church records. Priests have the duty to ensure all persons in their charge receive instruction in Scripture, in the Outline of Faith (as presented in the Catechism in the BCP), in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church, and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons. Priests provide instruction in Christian stewardship, and must responsibly dispense discretionary charitable funds. They prepare people for baptism and confirmation or reception.

A locally trained priest is called out of his or her own congregation to serve that congregation in a non-stipendiary manner and under the direction of the superintending presbyter and the authority of the Bishop. The Bishop will assign the new priest a mentor. Priestly ministry in any other location in the diocese may be done with the prior approval of the Bishop. Priests are expected to seek regular continuing education opportunities in order to grow in their vocation, which includes Niobrara School for Ministry’s ministry weekends and summer seminary, or other equivalent education.

It is important to note that locally ordained priests are not “less” priests than stipendiary priests, but they do serve somewhat different needs. Locally ordained priests, while they are still expected to be available to their faith communities, do not have the same expectations placed upon them for full-time ministerial work. One may think of the distinction between locally ordained priests and stipendiary priests as akin to the relationship between volunteer firefighters and full-time, paid firefighters. Both receive training to be able to safely and effectively do their work, but there is often a much higher expectation place on the paid firefighter’s time because he or she is paid.

3. Participation in Ministry Gatherings

An essential part of the formation for ministry is participation in the various ministry gatherings throughout the year. These include:

- a. Participation at a Dakota Experience (required of all lay and ordained leaders in the Diocese).
- b. Niobrara Convocation, Diocesan Convention, and other organized Diocesan events.
- c. Other educational opportunities, such as Niobrara School for Ministry's Summer Seminary and Ministry Weekends. Any outside theological education undertaken during the discernment period will potentially be applied to the educational requirements necessary for the ministry to which the discerner is called.

4. Ministry Participation

While reading and reflection are taking place, the person seeking ordination, in collaboration with a guide from within the congregation (this person may be an ordained minister or a respected lay member), will identify a ministry area(s) in which to work during the ordination process. Suggested areas of ministry are:

- a. Outreach ministries, such as domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, advocacy programs with the poor;
- b. Youth work both in the church and the community;
- c. Participation in the liturgy, and;
- d. Pastoral care, including visits to hospitals, nursing homes, jails and prisons.

Spiritual Autobiography

During Iglúwinyeya (described below), one component of discerning a call into ministry will be the composition of a "Spiritual Autobiography" in which he/she explains his/her growth in faith, understanding of call, how he/she came to that understanding, and a summary of his/her activity and learning during the initial stage of their discernment. These should not be more than 12 pages long, double spaced, in 11- or 12-point font (in a standard academic, serif font such as Times New Roman, Times, Garamond, or Georgia). While there is no lower page limit, a guideline to aim for is 6 to 10 pages. Those composing their spiritual autobiographies will be significantly aided by reading William Placher's *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Wisdom on Vocation*.

DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Participation in an annual discernment retreat will be the first step in officially discerning a (provisional) call to the diaconate, priesthood, or some form of specialized lay ministry. If through this weekend it is discerned that an individual is called to ordained ministry, he or she will then formally enter the ordination process. If the call discerned is to lay ministry, that individual will be given resources to further explore the nature of that ministry and develop that call in his or her community.

Discernment retreats will usually be held one weekend a year and will include those in the initial stages of discernment, those who may be entering the ordination process that year, and select clergy and laity from around the diocese. This weekend will include times for reflection and conversation done in the context of fellowship, prayer, and worship. Furthermore, the ordination process and formation expectations will be clearly presented. These activities will culminate with a conversation with each individual in which it is determined whether he or she should at that time continue formation for lay, diaconal, or priestly ministry. It is also possible that the result of the discernment retreat is that a person should return to his/her home parish and continue general discernment.

The discernment retreat is the opportunity for certain other necessary preliminaries for those who do enter the formal ordination process. First, they will enter into a covenant with the Diocese in which they explicitly affirm that they understand the requirements and responsibilities both of the ordination process and the expectations of ordained ministers, and that consistent failure to fulfill these responsibilities will result in the suspension or discontinuation of one's ordination process. Similarly, the Diocese, particularly those responsible for ministerial formation and the ordination process, will commit to do all that is possible to equip people for success through the ordination and ministerial education processes.

There will also be an evaluation meant to determine what preparation those entering the ordination process bring with them. This will *not* be a test to determine whether people can enter the ordination process or not. Instead, this evaluation is meant to give the diocese a benchmark of what support can be given to those in the ordination process as they move from the discernment weekend to Iglúwiŋyeya (described below).

Attending a discernment retreat does not guarantee entrance into the ordination process, but it will be impossible to enter the ordination process without attending a discernment retreat. It is true that because they are offered only once every year, it takes considerable planning and personal initiative to ensure that one has fulfilled the preliminary discernment expectations at least one month prior to the discernment retreat in the year that one desires to enter the discernment process. However, such planning should be considered part of the discernment process itself. Once in the ordination process, whether one attends a residential seminary or the Niobrara School for Ministry, considerably more will be expected in terms of pre-established commitments and time management. The life of ordained ministry will then expect even more. College students who desire to enter seminary after graduation should make every effort to attend a discernment weekend no later than their junior year.

NOTE: Discernment retreats are the primary location where a provisional call into ordained ministry will be recognized, but anyone with a desire to know more about general discernment, formal discernment, and the ordination process is welcome and encouraged to attend. Those in the very earliest stages of discernment will generally return to their local communities and do more in-depth discernment with their priests, but having greater familiarity with the process and expectations for ordination will only help with that work. Discernment retreats will also be helpful for people who plan to be involved in local discernment committees. It is still expected that if you plan to attend a discernment weekend, you let the MLD know at least a month prior to the event.

IGLÚWIŊYEYA: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

After the Retreat

If someone has provisionally been accepted into the ordination process, he/she should expect to receive his/her mentor within two weeks and will have input as to who this mentor is. In some instances, a mentor may be assigned at the retreat itself. Those who come to retreats will likely already have a sense of whether they should go to a residential seminary, pursue study through an extension program, or undertake the Niobrara School for Ministry's course of study. Still, one of the first roles a mentor plays is in helping an aspirant clarify which path to ministerial education works best for his/her personal circumstances, and, for those desiring to attend a residential seminary, to equip the student for a productive conversation with the Bishop about which seminaries to explore.

For those who undertake their course of study through the Niobrara School, their mentors will guide and direct them through the curriculum. In either case, the initial work a mentor does remains the same, and that work is to prepare each individual to succeed in his/her coming theological education.

The Inherent Difficulty of Theological Education

In whatever form it takes, education for ministry is challenging – and so it should be. When you step in front of a congregation vested with the authority to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments, and when you put on a collar and go out into your community, your congregation and larger community rightfully have certain expectations of you. Your responsibilities as an ordained clergyperson demand that you can lead the people of your congregation into deeper relationships with God and equip them for the ministries to which they have been called by nature of their baptism. While ordained ministry is a calling and therefore *more* than just another job, it is certainly not *less* than any other job. Regardless of whether one sees ordained ministry as a profession or as a skilled trade, there is minimum body of knowledge that must be acquired and set of skills in which one must demonstrate competence in order to responsibly engage in that work. Doctors must have a strong grasp of human anatomy and be able to correctly diagnose and treat illnesses before they can practice, and electricians must have an understanding of circuits as well show that they can safely wire a building before they can begin their trade.

In both of the above examples, it is obvious why these expectations exist: a physician's or electrician's botched job truly can imperil the physical safety or well-being of those around them. Incompetence in engineering leads to bridge collapses, bad wiring jobs cause buildings to burn down, under-qualified lawyers let innocent people go to prison, and unskilled surgeons kill patients. While it may be a commonly held belief that the stakes are not so high for ordained ministry, this assumption is completely untrue. Not only does the undertrained clergyperson have the real potential to put the physical safety of his or her congregants at risk, the stakes are even higher since *all* clergy are responsible for the spiritual welfare of those in their care. These higher stakes make it all that much more important that there be a minimum core of knowledge and practical skills that all ordained ministers are expected to possess.

In addition to the higher stakes inherent in the practice of ministry, the exercise of responsible ministerial duty requires a range of skills and knowledge that goes beyond most other professions or technical trades. To interpret the Bible and understand our history as a Church, one must have some awareness of cultures foreign both in time and place, as well as the ability to practice some degree of literary criticism. To engage the world theologically, one must develop a capacity for philosophical and abstract-conceptual thinking. To lead worship and preach effectively, one must be able to translate these other areas of knowledge and be practiced in public speaking and even a kind of theatricality. To make matters more complex, theological

education not only expects that a person can read critically and constructively and write effectively, but it has developed its own distinctive vocabulary that can sometimes make it seem like a foreign language.

No amount of preparation can or should be expected to make one's theological studies "easy" in any meaningful way. Wrestling with the profound mysteries of God and God's life in the world should demand some degree of struggle. However, it is possible to make what seems to many people to be an overwhelming and impenetrable difficulty less stressful and more manageable, and therefore better equip our people for success in their theological education.

Iglúwinyeya **[ig-LOO-ee-yah]**

Iglúwinyeya, which can also be spelled *ighúwinyeya* or *ighúwinyea*, is a Lakota word that means "to prepare oneself," "to get oneself ready," or "preparing oneself." In careful and slow speech it is pronounced **ig-LOO-ee-yay-yah**, but in everyday, conversational speech it can be pronounced **ig-LOO-ee-yay-ah** or even **ig-LOO-ee-yah**. This word can be used in Lakota to talk about the daily routine a person undergoes to get ready for the day, but it can also apply to more formal or special occasions. This word can even be used in cases of intellectual or spiritual preparation. A Lakota word has been chosen to describe this time of getting ready for ministerial formation as a way of remembering that L/Dakota thought and culture has played a significant role in forming the distinctive spiritual tradition of the Episcopal Church in South Dakota.

When students begin theological education, their teachers and even the texts they read will make certain expectations about what skills and knowledge these students bring to their studies, and often these sources can or will do little to let those who do not possess such skills and knowledge catch up. Some students are able to acquire this background at the same time that they are trying to learn the material before them, but it often comes at the cost of a diminished capacity to learn or quality of life. For others, this prospect proves overwhelming, leading them to believe they are unable to undertake the education necessary for their calling, when in fact it is not capacity to learn, but only a set of background skills and knowledge, that are lacking.

The Diocese is responsible for ensuring that all those engaging in theological education and ministerial formation are given the greatest possible chance for success. Knowing what was above described about the nature of theological education and how different students have responded to that environment, the Diocese has the responsibility to ensure that students have the background and skills that are assumed in the course of theological education. This course of study will further provide a sense of community and continuity between those who go to residential seminaries and those who remain in South Dakota to pursue their formal theological education.

This background can be broken into three areas: competence in written communication, study skills and academic integrity, and the vocabulary of theological and religious studies. With these areas in mind, those in the ordination process will be expected to meet these learning outcomes prior to being able to enter into formal theological education:

- I. Students will demonstrate competency in written communication for theological and ministerial studies when their writing is free of those explicit grammatical and stylistic mistakes that impede the communication of their ideas. Furthermore, they will need to demonstrate some familiarity with how to logically expound an idea or argument and are able to distinguish between levels of formality in written communication.
- II. Students will demonstrate competency in study skills when they can understand and apply methods for critical and engaged reading, have been exposed to a variety of effective note taking techniques and begun to discover which are most effective for their learning styles, and can make use of select techniques for improving retention and recall of information. Students will

- demonstrate competence in the expectations for academic integrity when they can accurately describe various forms of plagiarism, are aware of its severity, and can demonstrate the ability to properly credit other thinkers when making use of their work or ideas.
- III. Students will demonstrate competency in theology and religious studies terminology when they can show awareness of the definitions and proper usage of the 100 or so of the most frequent vocabulary items, a list of which will be provided, can make use of a theological dictionary to look up unfamiliar terms, and have knowledge of the building blocks of much for much of this technical terminology so that they can make educated guesses about the meanings of unfamiliar words as they appear.

The purpose of the evaluation taken during the discernment retreat is to identify what skills and knowledge students already have in relationship to these learning outcomes and what areas need strengthening. If there are areas that are identified as needing improvement, you will work with your mentor in consultation with the MLD to develop a course of study that meets those specific needs.

Once your mentor believes that a student has successfully completed his or her individual course of study and can meet the learning outcomes described above, the mentor and student will consult with the MLD to determine an appropriate means of evaluation. There is no one form of evaluation that every student must undergo in order to demonstrate competency. Some will benefit from a written evaluation, others may submit work done under the guidance of their mentor, others may have a conversation with the MLD, and others may meet these requirements with a passing grade in a pre-approved university or community college course.

One must always keep in mind that the degree to which one needs to strengthen these skills to reach the learning outcomes does not indicate one's intelligence or capacity to succeed in theological education, but has more to do with one's chosen field of study/career and proximity in time to that study. A student who is currently in college or a recent college graduate and studied religion or philosophy will probably need to do less of this preparatory work than someone who graduated 15 years ago with a degree in accounting, or someone who has spent most of his or her career in a more technical field.

It cannot be reiterated enough that the ability to pass this requirement before starting formal theological education is not meant to be an unnecessary bureaucratic hoop to jump through, but is oriented toward ensuring that those who engage in formal theological education are as equipped to succeed at possible. Even if it takes longer to accomplish these outcomes than one would have expected, this time spent in preparation will more than likely save you time in your overall course of study and make the experience more enjoyable.

***Iglúwinyeya* Suggested Materials**

1. Collegiate English Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's or Oxford American Dictionary)
 2. *Essential Theological Terms*, Gustavo Gutierrez
 3. *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*, A.E. Livingstone
 4. Handouts on Study Skills
 5. Handouts on Critical Reading
 6. Handouts on Effective Communication
 7. Handouts on Academic Integrity
 8. *The Seminary Student Writes*, Core, or *The Little, Brown Handbook*, Fowler (buying the most current edition is prohibitively expensive, however the 10th-12th are available used on Amazon for extremely low prices)
 9. *Garner's Modern English Usage*, Garner (older, but still acceptable, editions called *Garner's Modern American Usage*), or *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White
- + *What to Expect in Seminary*, Cetuk
+ *Doing Theological Research*, Pazmiño

THE LOCAL DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE

We are all Christian ministers by virtue of our baptism. We are all called to share in Christ's eternal Priesthood. Every baptized Christian is called upon to bring the presence of Christ into the home, workplace, and community. It cannot be reiterated enough that this Diocese highly values lay ministry and sees lay ministry as the *primary* and *principle* ministry in the Church.

This Diocese does not hold to the view that ordination is a means of recognizing a mature Christian life or a successful lay ministry. In fact, the Diocese believes that "rewarding" successful lay ministers with ordination can actually be harmful because it can give the impression that lay ministry is invalid and must be validated through ordination. Success in lay ministry may be one component in identifying a potential call to ordination, but it cannot be the only factor. Likewise, academic accomplishment, a life of caring and compassion, a history of personal struggle and courage, and a strong personal sense of being called, are all valuable assets, but they do not of themselves mean a call to ordination. Part of the discernment process is determining when these parts of a person's life provide evidence of a call into ordained ministry and when they indicate a call to a specific lay ministry. Another vital part of the discernment process is finding ways to celebrate and validate those called to lay ministry *other than* putting these people forward for ordination.

We as a Church community believe that God calls out certain women and men for ordained leadership roles. This leadership must be composed of individuals well-chosen, highly trained and committed to serving God and the Church. The call to Holy Orders comes to the individual from God both internally through a personal recognition and externally through the Church, both at the level of the local congregation and the Diocese. Therefore, discerning a call is a matter neither of an individual with no regard for the judgement of the community nor of the community imposing its will with no regard for the wishes of the individual. Rather, discerning a call should always be a matter of an individual in and with a community.

After someone has attended a discernment retreat, he or she will return to his or her Church community with an affirmation of a call to explore more fully lay ministry, with an initial acceptance into the ordination process, or with a need to gain greater clarity as to whether it is lay or ordained ministry into which he or she is called. In all these situations, it is necessary to form a local Discernment Committee.

Local Discernment Committee Responsibilities:

- I. To provide a support network for the person seeking ordination during the entire ordination process;
- II. To continue to reflect on the person's spiritual and ministry formation, their relationship with Jesus Christ, and their involvement in the local congregation;
- III. To submit an evaluative report to the Vestry, Bishop's Committee or Mission Council which, if affirming of the person and his or her call to ordained ministry, becomes part of the application for postulancy. Once this report and the letter of support from the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Mission Council have been received and the student has satisfactorily achieved the learning standards for the *Iglúwinyeya* curriculum, the application for postulancy can be sent to the person.
- IV. To submit an evaluative report to the Commission on Ministry, Priest in Charge, and Bishop if the person is affirmed for Lay Ministry.

Serving on a discernment committee provides everyone involved with the opportunity to continue listening for what call God has placed in their lives. While assisting a person in discerning a call to ministry, members of the local discernment committee are also called to reflect on their own baptismal ministry (this would be a good time to study and meditate on the liturgies for baptism and the reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant in the Book of Common Prayer). Ministry is not just about ordination, but also about exercising the gifts and talents given to us by God in specific ways for the good of the Church and for the communities in which we live.

Those coming before the local discernment committee will have spent several months coming to an understanding of what discernment means in their lives and will probably have read one or more of the following books. It will therefore prove helpful for members of the discernment committee to familiarize themselves with some or all of this material so that they may more fruitfully be in conversation with those who are discerning a call:

1. *Experiencing Faith*, Lichfield Curriculum, Part 1
2. *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (Suzanne G. Farnham, Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward)
3. *Exploring Life and Calling*, Gary Black, Jr.

If a local discernment committee has been formed for a person who has entered into the ordination process, it is still vitally important the committee remember that this is a provisional status. If the local discernment committee does not feel that the person should continue the ordination process, the committee has an obligation to make this known to the diocese. At that point, it is likely that the ordination process will be suspended or discontinued. To discern that a person should no longer be in the ordination process, but continue as if they should, will be detrimental to the person seeking ordination, the congregation, and ultimately the Church at large. On the other hand, if the local discernment committee believes that the person should proceed into the ordination process, the committee is obliged to offer support and prayer for the person as he or she continues to discern their ministry.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. Has this person remained a communicant in good standing? What does this person do in the congregation?
2. Has this person been active in this community for at least one year?
3. Does the person attend church regularly and have a disciplined prayer life?
4. What leadership role does this person play in the life of the church?
5. Is there anything about the person that would prohibit or hinder an effective ministry?
6. Does the person have the full support of their family?
7. Does the person have an understanding of their sense of vocation and of their gifts, abilities, and traits?
8. Can this person establish good relationships with many different types of people?

In addition to these questions, the questions and guidelines from pp. 7-8 of this section of the Handbook (Aids and Expectations for Initial Discernment) should continue to guide the local Discernment Committee.

EXPECTATIONS FOR A PERSON IN THE ORDINATION PROCESS

Below is an outline of the *minimum* expectations for a person who is involved in the ordination process. By signing the covenant at the discernment retreat, each person acknowledges that he/she understands the following expectations and are prepared to accept the responsibilities that these expectations entail. Likewise, the Diocese agrees to do everything possible to equip students to successfully fulfill these expectations. This covenant relationship is truly meant to foster bi-directional accountability: The Diocese will hold those in the ordination process accountable to the responsibilities to which they have agreed, and those individuals and their local congregations should make the Diocese aware if they feel that they are not receiving adequate support.

1. Be familiar with this *Handbook*.
2. Understand and commit the time and funds necessary for ordination.
 - a. Each person's ministry journey is unique, and many factors bear on each step. There is no concrete timeline, however a residential seminary is meant to take three years and the Niobrara School for Ministry (NSM) Course of Study has been set-up on a four-year schedule. Less time in NSM would only be possible if some training had already been previously completed and competency in those areas can be demonstrated.
 - b. Time Line: Generally, 3-5 years with no significant delays, and no longer than 7 years without having to reestablish competency in material studied prior to that period.
 - c. Time involves reading, study, reflection, writing, attendance at ministry classes and Summer Seminary (NSM), spiritual direction and discipline, home church ministry, and meetings with your mentor. The specific amount of time required to complete these assignments will differ from person to person. A full time student in seminary should anticipate between 24 and 48 hours of study per week outside of the classroom. Those working with a mentor in Niobrara School for Ministry or attending another school part-time should still anticipate between six and twelve hours of study each week if they want to remain on schedule.
 - d. Seminary expenses include tuition, books, cost of relocation, and regular living expenses. One can anticipate that without any financial assistance, attending residential seminary means an investment of between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year. Most students do receive scholarships and grants to offset these costs, but it may still be necessary to invest between \$10,000 and \$15,000 per year out-of-pocket or in the form of student loans. Niobrara School expenses will include travel, registration fees, lodging, meals, and cost of books. Some scholarship aid is available for NSM students, and you should seek other sources for financial aid. The congregation or mission that calls you forth should also make every attempt to provide some financial support.
 - e. You are responsible for paying for the physical exam required - through your insurance if possible. The exam may be completed as part of your yearly physical.
 - f. In most cases, deacons and locally trained priests are non-stipendiary. There should be no expectation of income from this ministry beyond expense reimbursement.
 - g. With rare exceptions, deacons and locally trained priests will serve in the community that called them forth. Completing a seminary degree guarantees neither ordination nor job placement. There is likewise no guarantee of placement in the Diocese of South Dakota for seminary-trained ordinands.
3. You are expected to be an active part of a worshipping Episcopal community which can help you discern your call, support you, and honestly recommend (or not recommend) you for ordination. Those who attend a residential seminary are expected to keep their home congregation in South

Dakota aware of their progress. Those in the Niobrara School for Ministry are expected to remain, whenever possible, involved in the congregation in which they started the discernment process.

4. Discernment should be ongoing and designed to help you reach the decision to continue in the ordination process, delay at any step or stage, or remain in lay ministry.
5. There is such a thing as a failure of discernment, but that is *absolutely* not the same thing as not being ordained. Because discovering and living into one's Christian vocation is the primary purpose of discernment, the only time that a discernment can be said to have "failed" is if you end up ministering in a capacity that you have not been called to.
6. At all stages, you can stop or postpone the process. Also at all stages, you can be removed from the process at the Bishop's discretion, although there are very few scenarios in which a person will be removed without any prior warning or indications.
7. There is an expectation that, *as a leader*, you will be proactive in your process, communicating and cooperating with others involved, seeking forms of financial aid, anticipating and planning for necessary steps, *initiating certain steps and contacts*, asking questions or for clarification when needed, and otherwise participating fully in the process.
8. Application Forms for each stage of the process, plus the forms required for your psychological and physical exams, are made available by the Diocesan Office when appropriately requested by the applicant. **The Diocesan Office will give you the names of the approved examiners for the required psychological exams.** The diocese pays for this exam.
9. You will be assigned a mentor to help you plan your theological education and spiritual formation, and who will support, direct, and advise along the way. You may have input in the choice of your mentor, and if you are in the Niobrara School for Ministry you may set your pace of study, although this information should be included in your IMFP.
10. For those doing their primary theological formation through the Niobrara School for Ministry, it is required that you develop an IMFP in conversation with your mentor and that this IMFP be submitted to the MLD, as well as any modifications of this agreement that occur during your course of study.
11. You are expected to develop a Rule of Life with your mentor during *Iglúwinyeya*, regardless of the type of ministerial education you embark upon, and it is recommended that you get a Spiritual Director to work with you if you are attending a residential seminary (even if this is not required by your seminary). Early efforts are to be made toward forming your mind after the mind of Christ, developing life habits of daily prayer, meditation, and the reading of Scripture, and other spiritual practices. Living a life that has a proper balance between a commitment to God, to family and career, and to recreation and relaxation is the general goal.
12. Everyone at the *Iglúwinyeya* stage of the formation process and then all those who do their formation through the Niobrara School for Ministry are expected to have contact with their mentor at least once a month.
13. Whenever possible, formation shall take place in community, including other people preparing for ministry or ordination. For those undertaking most of their education in the state of South Dakota, this includes diocesan training and educational events.
14. You are expected to complete approximately 2/3 or 3/4 of your theological education before applying for Candidacy.
15. Everyone in the ordination process is required to keep the Diocese informed about their academic and financial circumstances.
 - a. Those who attend residential seminaries are required to have their seminaries send the Missioner for Leadership Development an official transcript at the end of every semester.

They are likewise expected to send certificates of completion *and* complete copies of evaluations for CPE and Field Education.

- b. Those in the Niobrara School for Ministry are expected to maintain a record of their theological education and formation and to undergo periodic evaluations.
 - c. Everyone, both in NSM and seminary, is expected to submit an annual report on their financial circumstances according to a form available through the Diocese.
16. Throughout your process prior to ordination, the Missioner for Leadership Development will administer tests to those in the Niobrara School for Ministry to test preparation and understanding per the Standards of Learning, just as those who attend residential seminaries will be given examinations in order to demonstrate competency in material learned. You must have your mentor's recommendation before requesting to take an exam. All examinations must be taken and satisfactory understanding must be demonstrated prior to setting an ordination date.
 17. Once you are ordained, you are expected to make use of continuing education opportunities.
 18. You are expected to communicate with the Bishop (written note, email, or scheduled phone call or face-to-face) four times a year, in Ember weeks, throughout the ordination process. One working towards the diaconate should reflect, in these reports, on one's academic, diaconal, personal, spiritual, and practical development. One working toward the priesthood should reflect on one's academic experience and personal and spiritual development. As you describe your experiences, tell how they affected you and what growth you experienced. You may also include other material or significant family experiences that will provide the Bishop with a picture of your life and work. These "conversations" with the Bishop are kept confidential. No one sees or hears them except you and the Bishop.
 19. Background checks and the results of your psychological and physical exams are also kept confidential by the Bishop.
 20. For those in NSM, the person seeking ordination - in collaboration with the mentor - will identify an area(s) of ministry in which to work during the ordination process.
 21. You are expected to have some familiarity with the National Constitution & Canons, Diocesan Constitution & Canons, and Diocesan Policy Manual. These are all available on the diocesan or national church websites.
 22. Attend Niobrara Convocations and Diocesan Conventions (during the course of study and after ordination for those in NSM and when in residence for those in seminary).

SECTION II

Theological Education and Resources for the Niobrara School Course of Study

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND FORMATION NIOBRARA SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY

Postulancy is a period of continuing discernment during which you will pursue academic studies to attain proficiency in subjects appropriate to your call, be it to the diaconate or the priesthood. A detailed explanation of what constitutes proficiency is provided in the *Standards of Learning* in this handbook (pt. IV).

This academic course of study is required canonically and traditionally obtained through graduate studies at an approved theological seminary. The renewed focus on diaconal ministry along with demographic trends that make full-time stipendiary priest positions impossible in some areas have dictated that the Diocese address the training of both deacons and priests for local, non-stipendiary ministry.

The Diocese of South Dakota has developed an ordination preparation program in accordance with Canon III. The program is designed to be completed in 4 years, but can be completed in as little as 3 years, depending upon the time you can devote to it. Your personal situation may require more than 4 years, but all units must be completed before ordination to the Diaconate or the Priesthood.

A locally trained priest is not a sub-order of clergy, or an easy fix for a church without a priest. It is a vocation not to be taken lightly, and thorough discernment and rigorous training are needed so that *all* ordained ministers in the Diocese can be effective witnesses to our faith in Christ Jesus and his transformative power. Rigorous training is needed so that ordained ministers can pass along core Christian knowledge and churchcraft, as well as adequately address questions about the Church to those with little knowledge, or distorted understandings, of the Episcopal Church and Anglican tradition.

As a student, you will be assigned a mentor who will work with you on your studies and with whom you are expected to contact at least once per month (this could take the form of a phone call or face-to-face meeting). You will also have periodic evaluations and/or projects to assess your progress. When a unit is completed, the Missioner for Leadership Development (MLD) will provide an examination (“mini-exam”). An exam at the end of your study will be given by the Board of Examining Chaplains to measure your ability to apply your learning to ministry in the Church and world. Group study (with others in the process and/or in your congregation) is highly encouraged.

You are expected to keep notes as you study. You should use the study tools provided in the section on *Iglúwinyeya* as well as the Standards of Learning to help direct and monitor your progress. You should incorporate into your IMFPs (Individual Ministerial Education Plans) what you believe to be the most helpful ways for you to understand, retain, and interpret the material that you study. This may include reflecting on how the information can be used in sermons, pastoral care situations, devotions, etc. You also should keep a written record of these notes and reflections. Even in instances where a student’s primary means of reflection/interpretation comes through conversation with a mentor or other students, summaries of these conversations should be written. All of this written material is to be submitted at regular intervals (at least once a month) to your mentor so that the mentor can track your progress and make any necessary suggestions or corrections.

Courses will use online lectures as well as printed curriculum and textbooks. You will need to have access to the internet with an email address both to access the online materials and to maintain contact with your mentor and the Diocese.

Course of Study Outline

PRIOR TO POSTULANCY: Competency in Ighwinyeya standards of learning

Suggested Schedule: This timeframe can be modified according to the specific circumstances developed in one's IMFP, but the entire process must last at least three and not more than seven years. If your process lasts longer than seven years, you will have to reestablish competency (in a way determined most appropriate for you) in the material completed outside of this seven-year window before the course of study can be considered completed.

NOTE: See below for the possibility of “testing out” of certain of these areas.

2/3 or 3/4 of this course of study, including evaluations, must be completed before applying for Candidacy. The course of study is divided into four Units that each take approximately one year. Each Unit has between two and four “areas” (Old Testament, theology, etc.). The course of study is as follows:

UNIT ONE

Interpretation/ Exegesis	2-6 weeks	Text(s), Assigned exercises
Old Testament	18 weeks	Biblical readings, lectures, and text(s)
New Testament	14 weeks	Biblical readings, lectures, and text(s)

UNIT TWO

<i>HISTORY AREA:</i>	24 weeks total	
Early Church to Reformation (c. 33-1662 AD)	14 weeks	Textbook(s)
Anglican History	3 weeks	Handouts
Episcopal Church in the USA	3 weeks	Textbook(s)
Episcopal Church in SD	Ministry Weekend	Group Exercise
Other American Religious Traditions	4 weeks	Textbook(s)
<i>THEOLOGY AREA:</i>		
Historical and Systematic Theology	18 weeks	Textbook(s)
Lakota Theology	Ministry Weekend	Texts, Handouts

UNIT THREE

Christian Ethics	8 weeks	Textbook(s)
Theory and Practice of Ministry	12 weeks	Textbooks, handouts
Liturgy & Worship	12 weeks + practicum <i>or</i> 2-6 weeks and summer seminary (when offered)	Workbook and/or textbook(s)
Preaching	10 weeks + sermons <i>or</i> 2-6 weeks and summer seminary (when offered)	Textbooks, sermon collections, handouts

UNIT FOUR

Spirituality	8 weeks	Textbooks
Individual and Community Pastoral Care	24 weeks	Textbooks, handouts
Priest/Deacon Studies	4-8 weeks	Textbook(s)
Church Polity & Administration	2-4 weeks	Texts, handouts

MINISTRY WEEKENDS

The Following Ministry Days/Weekends will be held on a rotating basis, but will be offered at least once during your course of study. You *must* attend each of them at least once, but you may repeat weekends. Weekends with an asterisk (*) completely fulfill a requirement, while the others are required *in addition to* self-study or “testing out.”

Safeguarding God’s Children*	Episcopal Church in SD*
Safe Church Training*	Lakota Theology*
Anti-Racism Training*	Dakota Experience*
Suicide Awareness Training (QPR)*	Book of Common Prayer*
Self-Care/Community Care	Polity
Exegesis	Liturgy Practicum
	Congregational Speech and Song

In addition to the above described ministry weekends, there may also be special ministry weekends that are offered by guest speakers, on special topics, or are not part of the regular rotation. Except in the rare cases where such an event is offered with less than two months’ notice, attendance by all current Niobrara School students is expected at all of the special ministry weekends.

SUMMER SEMINARY

Each year there will be a week-long session called “Summer Seminary.” The topics covered at Summer Seminary will rotate depending upon who is teaching. Thus, it is possible that not every person going through Niobrara School will attend every topic covered by Summer Seminary and it is possible that others will attend multiple Summer Seminaries with the same topic. While Summer Seminary cannot completely replace guided study with one’s mentor, full participation (including all pre-assigned work) in Summer Seminary *should* shorten the time needed for such guided study. Because Summer Seminary is meant to enrich and not replace guided self-study, the courses offered will do one of these four things: address core competencies that have a practical component (such as preaching or liturgy), provide supplemental teaching, deal with special topics, or cover the content of multiple ministry weekends. You are expected to attend Summer Seminary each year that you are in the course of study, regardless of whether the topic is one that you have studied before. This expectation results from Summer Seminary’s not only being a time for topical learning, but also because it is pivotal for forming and maintaining relationships in community with other students in the course of study. Should a topic arise that you have already completed, every effort will be made to ensure that you receive appropriate resources to deepen your understanding of that topic.

ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF FULFILLING REQUIREMENTS

This course of study is meant to equip people with the tools and knowledge for the work of ordained ministry and it is possible that you will come into the process with considerable knowledge in one or more of these areas because of other courses or self-study. With this in mind, evaluations have been created – where possible – through which you may “test-out” of particular areas. There will be two pre-established dates each year on which these examinations will be administered, although the location of these evaluations will be determined by those taking them.

The procedure for taking these examinations is as follows: Should you feel adequately prepared to “test out” of one of the units, contact the MLD *no later than one month prior to the testing* in order to see if your intended area(s) can be tested out of. If the unit has an examination, you will be told the specific time of day and location of the testing no later than 3 weeks before the established date. These evaluations will be timed, closed book (no outside resources will be allowed during the evaluation), and you cannot take more than two examinations on one date (thus, a single person cannot “test out” of more than four areas in one year).

While we want to do everything to acknowledge self-study, it is also vitally important to ensure consistency of preparation for all those in the course of study, meaning that these evaluations are seek to ensure that *at least* as much time and effort has gone into outside preparation as goes into the completion of an area through the course of study. You should expect these evaluations to be as rigorous – if not more so – than those undertaken in the regular course of study. It is therefore expected that everyone desiring to test out of a certain unit should only do so after consultation with their mentors or the Missioner for Leadership Development. During such consultation, it may be determined that your outside preparation is not sufficient to warrant “testing out” of a particular unit, but such preparation may allow for a shorted time of study on that area.

“Testing out” of certain units may shorten the timeframe for the completion of the course of study, but it does not guarantee it. Furthermore, no matter how many areas you test out of, you will still be expected to spend a minimum of *two years* in the course of study and will attend all required ministry weekends and summer seminars during that time. This expectation exists because certain parts of ministerial formation can only be accomplished through hands-on practice under the guidance of a mentor. Furthermore, the Diocese of South Dakota understands ministerial formation to encompass much more than developing your knowledge. Formation also requires that you learn to work with others and to develop skills for coping with interpersonal conflict in healthy ways. These are elements of ministry formation that can only be accomplished through relationships cultivated in community over time.

However, should you demonstrate competency in multiple units from the course of study, it is not expected that you repeat units simply to fill out the required two-year minimum. Instead, such a scenario offers you the opportunity, as part of your IMFP, to either give greater attention to those areas of ministerial formation that require hands-on work or to develop a course of study that goes deeper into one of the areas of study (theology, biblical studies, history, administration, community development, etc.). The MLD is available to suggest further resources for these courses of study.

RESOURCES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Niobrara School for Ministry understands that different mentors will be more comfortable with certain resources and that not every curriculum/text will be equally effective for every student. The focus of IMFPs and mentoring is to help students achieve certain learning outcomes rather than to have worked through specific texts. As a result, the curricula listed here are flexible enough to match the needs of the mentor with the needs of the student and to allow for substitutions if certain methods do not prove helpful.

A few points to understand about the structure of this list:

1. For certain topics, there will be a preferred resource for achieving that topic's goals. These resources will generally be the most helpful to the most students.
2. In some topics there will be several equally valuable resources. In these instances, the mentor and student may choose whatever option suits their circumstances best.
3. Required resources, in addition to asterisks being affixed to them, will receive numbered bullet points. Recommended supplemental material will not.
4. Within a numbered bullet point, texts/resources that constitute a unit will be joined by **and**, while **or** marks off different options for fulfilling an area goal.
5. This list is by no means complete, and the MLD can help guide you to or help with the development of other resources for meeting learning goals. However, please consult with the MLD before deviating from the list, and please give the below listed resources a fair hearing before deciding they are ineffective.

Because each mentor and student will possess different needs and strengths, specific outlines for how each of these resources should be studied will not be provided below. Rather, the suggested time frame to cover the required material and annotations to help mentors and students know which resources will best help them meet the learning outcomes are given. This approach should be flexible enough for you as a student to accommodate the material to your personal IMFPs and thus work quickly through material you find less challenging and slow down for material that is more challenging. As an example, someone may find that he/she takes 8 weeks to work through early and medieval Church history, but only 1 or 2 weeks to do American Christianity. Likewise, someone may need 16 to 18 weeks to work through theology, but only 8-10 for history.

NOTE WELL: While putting in the time and effort to read the assigned materials is necessary for ministerial preparation – and students deserve commendation for this effort – time and effort are not in and of themselves sufficient to establish competency, nor do they guarantee satisfactory outcomes on the mini-exams. Rather, students must also demonstrate that they have a sufficient understanding of the material based on the expectations that come with being an ordained minister. It is therefore vitally important that any difficulties you may be encountering be recognized early on in the process so that alternative strategies or resources may be used. In such cases, the Missioner for Leadership Development should be made aware of the situation as early as possible so that the burden of remedying the situation does not fall wholly on you or your mentor. Furthermore, you are not to be recommended for testing, whether at the end of each area or at the end of the course of study, unless your mentor is confident that you have sufficiently grasped the material. Taking this approach may mean that students who have worked together do not test at the same times or progress at the same rate, but it will substantially reduce the likelihood of the indignity, both for a congregation and for a minister, of placing someone into a ministerial setting for which he or she is ill- or unequipped.

KEY:

- ** Preferred Resource for Fulfilling Learning Outcomes
- * Alternative Resource for Fulfilling Learning Outcomes
- + Additional, Recommended Reading or Resource
- CTS (New Church's Teaching Series)
- Lichfield (Lichfield Curriculum Workbook)
- TEEM (Trinity Episcopal Extension Ministries)

***Iglúwinyeya* Resources**

1. Collegiate English Dictionary (**Merriam-Webster's or **Oxford American)
 2. *Essential Theological Terms*, Gutierrez
 3. Handouts on Study Skills
 4. Handouts on Critical Reading
 5. Handouts on Effective Communication
- + *Oxford Concise Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Livingstone
 - + *What to Expect in Seminary*, Cetuk
 - + *The Seminary Student Writes*, Core
 - + *Doing Theological Research*, Pazmiño
 - + *Elements of Style*, Strunk and White

UNIT I: BIBLICAL STUDIES

Bibles and Biblical Reference

A student must own at least one NRSV translation of the Bible with appropriate study notes in order to engage in biblical studies. Students are further expected to own a scholarly bible dictionary (the *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary* is highly recommended) as their training in exegesis will be oriented toward exegeting passages primarily for the purpose of preparing sermons. While not required, having at least one other reputable translation of the Bible will facilitate more in-depth understanding of the language of Scripture since it allows one to see ranges of meaning in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek that are not captured by any single English translation (no resources are provided here for the study of biblical languages such as Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, but a student with a strong desire to acquire some capacity in biblical languages can work directly with the MLD; foreign language study will, however, in most cases lengthen one's study time).

1. Annotated Study Bible with Apocrypha (NRSV):
 - **The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha* (NRSV), Oxford University Press
 - or **The Harper Collins Study Bible* (NRSV), Harper Collins Publishers
 2. *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*
 3. *Exegesis handouts or
 - **Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, by Hayes and Holladay
- + Bible Atlas
 - + Bible Concordance
 - + Other scholarly biblical translations for comparison, including:
 - The New Jerusalem Bible
 - The Revised Standard Version
 - The Contemporary English Bible

Biblical Interpretation

This section should be completed before beginning Old or New Testament studies to ensure an understanding of the various frameworks for Christian (particularly Episcopalian) readings of the Bible. You can reasonably expect to spend between two and six weeks working through the principles of biblical interpretation. One or more of the following texts should be used to help you understand that the texts of the Bible are always interpreted and so that you are familiar with the range of ways that the Bible can be interpreted by Episcopalians. The student should work toward forming his or her own interpretive lens for scripture that fits within this appropriately Episcopalian range. Furthermore, the student should be able to have a sense of those modes of interpretation that go beyond what our tradition has deemed appropriate (possibilities could include, from opposite ends of the theological spectrum, that the Bible may be inspirational or historically important but is neither authoritative nor normative for today's Church *or* that one's salvation is dependent upon believing that the Bible is completely free from errors of any sort). The student should also understand how his or her interpretive framework allows him or her to understand and apply the texts of scripture to contemporary ethical, homiletical, pastoral, and social situations.

1. ***Scripture and the Authority of God: How to Read the Bible for Today*, Wright
or **Getting Involved with God*, Davis
or **The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*

The first two texts are preferred because they come from within the Anglican tradition and they are generally more accessible. The *Cambridge Companion* benefits from dealing with a wide range of traditions, and may aid students who prefer a more academic approach. One can also draw on certain article from the *Cambridge Companion* to supplement either of the other texts.

- + *Imagination Shaped: Old Testament Preaching in the Anglican Tradition*, Davis

Much of how exegesis and interpretation is taught in this course of study is to equip ministers to prepare informed and contextually relevant sermons. With that goal in mind, this work provides models of how Anglicans throughout history have engaged with the Bible for preaching.

- + *Captive to the Word*, Volf

A nice collection of essays on theological interpretation of the Bible from one of the 21st century's most influential theologians.

Guiding Principles for both Old and New Testament

Once students have a satisfactory grasp of the principles of biblical interpretation, they can turn to specific study of the Old and New Testaments. One can expect to spend 14-16 weeks on the Old Testament and 12-14 weeks on the New Testament, although it may be necessary to allocate more time for one or both sections. For both Testaments, it is expected that the course of study will entail reading the Bible in conjunction with a textbook and audio/video lectures (the MLD has the Great Courses lectures for distribution). In the case of the lecture components, it is essential that the student not listen passively, but actively take notes for later review. The texts and lectures begin with general introductions to the social and historical contexts of the Old and New Testaments, and it is preferable to have completed these sections prior to reading the books of the Bible. The books of the Bible should be read in conjunction with their corresponding textbook chapters and lectures. It is expected that students read the entire New Testament and it is preferable for them to read the entire Old Testament. If that is not possible they will need to have read in their entirety: *Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, the Psalms* (preferably both in the BCP and the NRSV), *Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel*, as well as selections from all remaining books.

Students will have successfully completed the Scriptural component of the course of study when they can demonstrate competency in the standards of learning associated with A. Holy Scripture (Section IV of the Handbook), with particular emphasis on the ability to interpret scripture for ministry, as

demonstrated by the capacity to retell major stories, events, and theological themes of the Bible in their own words and explain how these impact contemporary Christian life in a local context. If a mentor is unsure whether a student has adequately met these requirements, he or she should consult with the Missioner for Leadership Development (while it will not be explicitly stated in all subsequent sections, this holds true for every area of study).

Old Testament

1. Textbooks:

***The Old Testament: A Very Short Introduction*, Coogan

The “Very Short Introductions” series by Oxford provides accessible, accurate, and concise introductory materials, making them the preferred choice for most students. They also provide extremely helpful “further reading sections” that allow students to go deeper on particular topics. Because Coogan’s work focuses less on the importance of the Old Testament for the Church and more on its Historical-Critical study, using this book requires that one take more initiative in thinking critically about the theological and pastoral importance and authority of the Old Testament.

or **Old Testament Theology: An Introduction*, Brueggemann

While longer than Coogan introduction, the strength of Brueggemann’s work is that it is consciously an introduction to the Old Testament as it relates to the Church. It is recommended that if Brueggemann’s book is used for the Old Testament, Dunn’s introduction should be attempted for the New Testament since they are intended to function as a complete unit.

2. Lectures:

*Yale Open Courses: The Old Testament (<http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies>)

or *The Old Testament, Amy Jill-Levine, The Great Courses

+ *A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*, Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim, and Petersen.

+ *Reading the Old Testament*, Barton

+ *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, Miller and Hayes

New Testament

1. Textbooks:

***The New Testament: A Very Short Introduction*, Luke Timothy Johnson

In addition to the benefits of the “Very Short Introduction” series, Luke Timothy Johnson is both one of the foremost contemporary New Testament scholars and is consciously committed to the literary integrity of the New Testament (in contrast to primarily Historical-Critical scholars who approach the New Testament as a repository of ancient data to be dissected).

or **New Testament Theology: An Introduction*, Dunn

In addition to functioning as a complete unit with the Brueggemann’s OT introduction, Dunn’s religious background is Anglican.

or **The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*, Luke Timothy Johnson

This work covers much of what Johnson’s “Very Short Introduction” does, but it does so in considerably more detail.

or **An Introduction to the New Testament*, Brown

Brown’s represents the most scholarly of the introductions, as well as the longest, but this greater detail may prove appealing to certain students.

2. Lectures:

***Jesus and the Gospels* (Lectures 1-25, 35-36) and *The Apostle Paul* (All 12 lectures), both Luke Timothy Johnson, The Great Courses

If the student has the time and desire to listen to all of Johnson’s lectures on the non-canonical Gospels (lectures 26-34), this undertaking will certainly be informative and presents no problem, but it is not necessary for the completion of the course of study.

or **Yale Open Courses: The New Testament* (<http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies>)

If you use Johnson's lectures, it is less necessary to use one of his books as the primary textbook, although his "Very Short Introduction" will probably still prove most accessible. However, should one use the Yale lectures, it is necessary to use one of Johnson's books to ensure that the student receives an introduction to the New Testament that goes beyond Historical-Critical study to include its literary and theological dimensions as well.

+ *The New Testament World*, Malina

While this is only in the recommended section, it should be noted that this or some other social/cultural history of the ancient Mediterranean world should be used to help students contextualize the writings of the New Testament.

+ *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*, eds. Potter and Mattingly

+ *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, Kenneth Bailey

+ *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*

UNIT TWO: HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

A student can reasonably expect to take between 20 and 28 weeks to complete the total study of Church and denominational history. The breakdown for suggested amounts of time for each sub-area (Early Church, Anglican, Episcopal Church history, etc.) should provide a guideline for how much relative time should be taken in one's overall study of Church history. They are not, however, rigid expectations that must be adhered to; should a student work more quickly through one section or need more time on another, this should pose no problem so long as they meet the Standards of Learning (III.B) in this handbook.

While history includes dates, names, and events, having a good grasp of history means much more than this. Truly engaging in history, particularly for the good of the Church, is about understanding the cultural and temporal contexts in which certain events happened; it is about getting a sense of what caused people to behave the way they did and why certain events happened and others did not; it is about seeing our contemporary world as part of the stream of history and understanding that what has come before us continues to shape who we are today. Most importantly, from a Christian standpoint, the study of history is about engaging with a living reality, not merely events that are "in the past." It is about building relationships with the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us but continue to be parts of our lives by getting to know the contexts that shaped them – just as real relationship with our contemporaries requires that we know their stories and cultural contexts. Ultimately, history is important because we worship a God who, while beyond time, has chosen to be known in and through the particular lives and events of people in history.

Successfully meeting the standards of learning for history will mean being able to explain and interpret the events and figures described in III.B. It will also require an awareness of how the study of history is important in our contemporary Christian lives and can explain how the study of history impacts the current practice of ministry.

Church History

1. *Why Study the Past?* Williams

This is an exceptional (and required) text by theologian and former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams that will provide a foundation for how one should approach the study of history as a part of theological education and of the importance of history for the contemporary Church.

2. **Telling Our Story* (Lichfield – chapters 2-5)

- or **A Brief History of Christianity*, Lindberg
 Both of these resources are accessible and provide good introductions to the history of the church from its inception through to the Reformation (and beyond in the case of Lindberg). The Lichfield curriculum may be slightly more accessible while the Lindberg text provides a somewhat more scholarly introduction. The great advantage of the Lindberg text is that if one works through it, less time needs to be dedicated to the texts for Reformation or American religious history.
3. ***The European Reformations*, Lindberg
 or **Crisis and Renewal: The Era of the Reformations*, Holder
 While the Episcopal Church, as a part of the worldwide Anglican tradition, is both catholic and reformed, it is still a Protestant church. It is therefore vitally important that a good amount of time be taken understanding the ways that the Anglican tradition is a product of the era of Reformation and how its way of being Protestant differs from other Protestant traditions. Either of these books provide good introductions to the social, political, economic, and spiritual forces that led to and drove the reformations in Europe. It may be helpful to continue using Lindberg if his was the text used as a general introduction to Church history. Both of these texts are fairly long, and only need to be read in their entirety if a student shows great interest in this history. Otherwise, the student should read closely the introductory and concluding material, as well as anything on the English and Scottish reformations, and can give a more cursory overview of the remaining material.
4. *Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction*, Chapman
 Provides a good overview of the history of Anglicanism in England.
5. *A History of the Episcopal Church, 3rd Edition*, Prichard
6. *That They May Have Life*, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve
7. ***Religion and American Culture*, Marsden
 or **A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Noll
 or **Introducing American Religion*, Lippy
 Being in ministry in the United States means understanding not only one's own religious tradition, but also the other traditions encountered in the life of ministry. In a culture in which religious identity is increasingly fluid, it is vitally important to know the religious ideas that members of our churches are knowingly and unknowingly bringing with them. The first two texts deal primarily with Christianity, but their strength lies in being written more specifically with ministerial practice in mind. Noll's area of expertise is the history of evangelicalism, so students who may be more interested in a history that highlights the various evangelical and charismatic movements will benefit from his work. Lippy goes beyond Christianity to look at the other religious traditions that have shaped American life, but he does so with less interest in being of service to the Church. It may be advisable to use one of the two first texts and supplement it with elements from Lippy, or to look for supplemental work on other world religious traditions (as always, the Oxford Very Short Introductions should be a place to start; look for their introductions to Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, etc.)
- + *Early Christian Tradition*, Lyman (CTS)
 + *Living with History*, Thompsett (CTS)
 + Exploring the Church's Past (TEEM)
 + *Church History in Plain Language*, Shelley
 + *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, Wilken
 + *The Christian Tradition*, vols. 1-5, Pelikan
 Good for going deeper into Church history. These may be used as reference material or as supplements if students need/want greater exposure to certain ideas and movements.

- + *Greek East and Latin West*, Louth
Our curriculum necessarily has to limit itself and unfortunately this means spending less time on the development of Eastern Orthodoxy. For students who wish to look more deeply at the forces that led to the early division between the Western and the Eastern churches, this is one of the best available.
- + *Recultivating the Vineyard*, Hendrix
A more in-depth exploration of how the ideas of the reformers were received and implemented on the ground in early modern Europe.
- + *The English Reformation*, Dickens
- + *Theology in America*, Holifield

Theology

Theology is an area that may take significantly longer to get through because, as an academic discipline, it can be much more foreign to people and deals with some of the more intricate and, at times, difficult concepts of all of the material under consideration. At the same time, some people may find thinking theologically very intuitive and will go very quickly through this material. One should not be surprised if the time to read and comprehend this material ranges widely, from 8 or 10 to 25 or more weeks. However, it is necessary to truly take the time for students to become competent in the formal study of theology because theology is the area that unites and informs all other areas of ministerial study, even as it is informed and shaped by them. Even though this may seem the most “abstract” of the fields that will be studied, it is one of the most basic since all people, whether they know it or not, already do theology, because theology, at its core, is talking and thinking about God and God’s relationship to the world.

This study of theology focuses both on contemporary systematic/comprehensive theology (that is, thinking about how one’s theological concepts inform and affect each other) and the historical development of Christian thought. Depending on the student’s needs, it may be better to begin with historical theology and then do contemporary work, or it may make sense to first establish a sense of the nature and task of theology and then go back and see how it has developed. A student will be considered competent in theology when he or she can fulfill the standards of learning III.C, with particular attention being paid to the capacity to explain the relevance of thinking critically about one’s theological beliefs and the ability to demonstrate how one’s theological beliefs impact how one engages in more “practical” disciplines such as pastoral care, preaching, and ethics.

1. ***Tokens of Trust and Being Christian*, Williams
or **Theology: The Basics*, McGrath
or **Introduction to Christian Thought*, Gonzalez
The two Williams texts are preferred because Williams writes with the explicit purpose of providing an introduction to theology from an Anglican perspective. The advantages of the other two texts are that they may prove more descriptive and expose students to a wider range of theological positions. However, this wider range means it will be necessary to clarify a more distinctively Anglican/Episcopalian approach to theology.
 2. *A History of Christian Theology and Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, vols. 1 and 2, both Placher
Placher provides a good introduction, with excerpts from a variety of primary source theology, to the development of Christian thinking. It is not necessary to read every primary source, but every effort should be made to read from a wide variety of theological viewpoints and time periods.
- + *Confessing Our Faith* (Lichfield)
 - + *Mysteries of Faith*, McIntosh (CTS)
 - + *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, McGrath

+ *Practicing Theology*, Volf and Bass

This collection of essays may be helpful in demonstrating how theology as a discipline does and should inform other areas of ministry and life.

+ *On Christian Theology*, Rowan Williams

For those students who are interested in deepening their understanding of Rowan Williams' theological vision, this will be the text to use. Be advised that this is a much more technical and dense piece of theological writing.

For those who want to go *considerably* deeper into the study of theology, or to read more from a single theologian, there is an abundance of possibilities. Rather than listing them here, a better place to start would be to identify certain theological figures or themes from the Placher readings that were of particular interest and then consult with the MLD for the best works to engage.

NOTE: As with any discipline, it is only advisable to enter into much deeper study of a topic if this further study will not slow down one's overall course of study. It is better to note an interest in a particular subject and then seek further resources to continue one's education after the course of study than to spend too much time in one area during the course of study once one has met the competency requirements for that area.

UNIT THREE: ETHICS AND MINISTERIAL PRACTICE

Christian Ethics

So long as a student has demonstrated a command of theology and has completed this study shortly before beginning ethics, this area should not take as long as other areas. This is because Christian Ethics, while not exactly "applied theology," in many ways fills out the more theoretical theological framework developed in the previous area. So, it should not be unusual for a student to take four to eight weeks studying Christian ethics. If, on the other hand, the study of Christian ethics proves to be a considerable challenge, this may indicate that more work needs to be done in theology.

A student will demonstrate competence in Christian Ethics and Moral Theology when he or she can fulfill the standards of learning in III.H. While students need to demonstrate that they understand how one's system of ethics impacts one's behavior, it is vital that they understand that ethics and moral theology are not merely a set of rules dictating good and bad behavior.

***A Textbook of Christian Ethics*, Gill

or **Ethics After Easter*, Holmgren

Both of these texts are written by thinkers in the Anglican tradition, although Gill's work provides a more comprehensive introduction both to the major currents and problems in Christian Ethics than does Holmgren. The advantage Holmgren's work has is that it presents a single unified vision of Christian moral theology, although if the goal is to help lead a student to developing their own Christian ethical framework, assuming it is appropriately within the Episcopal tradition, Gill's work may still be preferable.

Theory & Practice of Ministry

While everything that is undertaken in in the course of study is "practical" in the sense that everything should be done with an eye to how it impacts the practice of ministry, the last two units turn to explicitly imparting the practices necessary for effective ministry, and the theory that underlies those specific practices. One may also consider these areas to be those that are most explicitly related to the practices specific to work as an ordained minister (while ordained ministers should have a sufficient understanding of theology, the bible, history, and ethics to help lead their congregations to deeper appreciations of these things, these are areas of knowledge that all Christians really have a

responsibility to cultivate). At the same time, there are certain areas here that are specifically related to practice, but which still remain the responsibility of all Christians (spirituality, prayer, and participation in the liturgy for instance), even if the ordained minister may play specific roles in these areas.

One may think of this specific area, Theory & Practice of Ministry, as the place in which the theory and practice of specifically Christian leadership and administration of the church as an institution is undertaken. One should expect between 12 and 16 weeks to go through all four sub-areas, although this may be shorter or longer depending on the student and does not necessarily have to be split up evenly.

A student will be considered competent in Theory & Practice of Ministry when he/she can fulfill the expectations of the standards of learning for III.E. Specific attention should be given to how a distinctively theological understanding of leadership, and pastoral leadership in particular, differs from how leadership may be conceived of in the secular world while also demonstrating how tools from other conceptions of leadership can be brought to bear on pastoral ministry.

I. Pastoral Theology and Theory

1. *Serving Christ Today*, Lichfield
 2. *In the Name of Jesus*, Nouwen
- + *Wounded Healer*, Nouwen

One of Nouwen's most recognized and important works, it is slightly longer than *In the Name of Jesus*, and covers similar ground. However, use of this book will also constitute considerable headway in the section on spirituality.

- + *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry*, Willimon

Willimon has written a comprehensive approach to understanding the appropriate and inappropriate ways in which one functions as an ordained minister, but it is important to note that his work is both written from a United Methodist understanding of ordained ministry (albeit from a rather Anglican approach to Methodism) and from a *very* specific theological standpoint, that of Postliberalism. This still proves to be an important resource, but one must be careful to recognize that Willimon often speaks more authoritatively and definitively on subjects that, especially for Episcopalians, may be open for debate.

- + *The Pastor*, Lathrop

This is a similar type of book to that written by Willimon, although it is considerably shorter. Like Willimon, Lathrop is not Anglican (he is Lutheran), but also like Willimon his approach is congruent with Anglicanism (his primary field of study is liturgical theology). It may be most helpful to take portions of these two works to supplement the primary texts as needed.

II. Pastoral Leadership and Systems Theory

1. *Leading God's People*, Beeley

Beeley's work bridges the gap between a theory of pastoral leadership and the practice of this leadership. Beeley is particularly helpful because his work shows how the study of history and theology continue to inform our conceptions of "practical ministry" and because he writes as an ordained and practicing Episcopal priest. Furthermore, this work is valuable because it can be used to work with lay leaders in helping them come to a deeper appreciation of a theologically informed conception of leadership in congregations.

2. *How Your Church Family Works*, Steinke

Understanding the ways in which a church community takes on characteristics and dynamics that go beyond the sum of its members is necessary for navigating conflict and encouraging congregational health. Systems theory lets clergy recognize how to navigate the specific group dynamics and dysfunctions of congregations and the groups that

make up those congregations. Systems theory is something that has consistently been flagged by practicing ministers as highly valuable in their ministerial formation or which they wished they had received more training in. It should receive considerable attention in the course of ministerial preparation.

3. **Heart, Mind & Strength: Theology and Practice for Congregational Leadership*, Jones
or **Leadership in Congregations*, Bass, ed.

Both of these works provide tools for leading and managing people in a congregation as well as suggestions for how the congregation can relate to one's larger community. The second work is an anthology of articles, so therefore provides a wider lens for looking at this work, but may be less helpful in presenting a coherent system.

+ *Never Call Them Jerks*, Boers

An excellent work for dealing specifically with conflict and difficult personalities.

+ *Holy Conversations*, Rendle and Mann

+ *The Reformed Pastor*, Baxter

Even though this is from a 17th century English theologian, it is never harmful to look to the history of congregational leadership, and it very well may provide insights that remain applicable to contemporary congregations.

III. Church Administration

1. *Church Administration*, Bacher and Cooper-White

Think of this as more of a reference guide for how to approach the management of the organizational aspects of a congregation. Not everything will be applicable to every ministry context, but it will be important to identify what from this work *will* be needed once one enters local ministry and to gain some expertise in this area. Administration is another of the areas that has consistently been flagged as important but overlooked in ministerial formation, so this component should not be given short shrift.

+ *The Vestry Handbook*

IV. Multi-Cultural Ministry

1. **Being the Church in a Multi-Ethnic Community*, McIntosh & McMahan
or **Ministering Cross-Culturally*, Lingenfelter

Even if one's primary ministerial location will be in an ethnically homogenous location, the larger church, not only in the world, but here in South Dakota, is ethnically diverse. Ethnic and cultural diversity bring many opportunities for growth and joy, but they also make ministering more complex by introducing a number of additional variables to which the minister must be sensitive. Even if one *is* primarily in an ethnically homogenous local setting, we exist as a relational and connectional church, and local congregations will be in contact with other groups that are different ethnically and culturally. While expectations like Dakota Experience and anti-racism can help with multi-cultural ministry and cultural sensitivity, being able to adapt as necessary to changing cultures and congregations requires some knowledge of the theory behind multi-cultural ministry. Both of these works are written from more evangelical perspectives, so that must be taken into account when working through this material.

2. *Cultural Intelligence*, Livermore

+ *Leading Cross-Culturally*, Lingenfelter

Liturgy & Worship

It is expected that prior to even entering the ordination process one will already have practice serving in various liturgical capacities in one's congregation and will be familiar with the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. Therefore, working through this material should not, in most cases, mean beginning from scratch. However, there is also the possibility that precisely because of one's familiarity with one's local worshiping styles and practices, coming to understand when these practices may need some

correction or to appreciate the diversity of worship styles and liturgical theologies may add more time to this unit. A reasonable expectation is 10-14 weeks of work in this area, and during this time there should be, in addition to the required practicum weekend, greater engagement in one's worshipping community as well as greater critical engagement with one's worship style. This time will require greater physical contact time between mentor and student.

Students will be considered competent in worship and liturgy when they can fulfill the standards of learning in III.D and parts of E. Specific attention should be given to recognizing the range of liturgical and sacramental theologies that are present among Christians and how these compare to the range that is generally considered appropriate within the Episcopal Church. Furthermore, emphasis should be given to learning a variety of worship styles in order to fit one's worship leadership to the piety of one's congregation.

1. *The 1979 Book of Common Prayer*
 2. *The Book of Common Prayer: A Biography*, Jacobs
An extremely accessible, well researched, and fair analysis of the development and use of the Book of Common Prayer in the Anglican world.
 3. *Worship for Today's Church* (TEEM)
 4. **Introduction to Christian Worship*, White
or **Liturgy*, Burns
Either of these will give a good overview of both ritual theory as it applies to the liturgy and to the theology of worship. The White book is a classic and full of detail, although not written in an overly academic style. Burns' book is shorter and may be easier to study and make notes in.
 5. **The Worship Architect*, Cherry
or **Grand Entrance*, Humphrey
While the focus of this area is to enable proper understanding and use of the Book of Common Prayer in worship, these works provide additional resources for how one may introduce other elements into the worship service, as well as providing an appreciation for how other faith traditions structure their worship.
 6. *The Singing Thing Too: Enabling Congregations to Sing*, Bell
Whether a student will be returning to a congregation in which they are solely responsible for leading the music or to a congregation with a multi-person music team, the ordained minister needs to be familiar with how to select, teach, and lead singing. This book also provides insight into why people may not sing in congregations and aids in promoting congregational singing.
- + *Speaking of the Church: Handbook of Ecclesiastical Words & Phrases* (.pdf)
 - + *Opening the Prayer Book*, by Jeffrey Lee (CTS)
 - + *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, Hatchett
 - + *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*
A very good collection of essays on the history, development, and worldwide variety of Books of Common Prayer.
 - + *Praying Shapes Believing*, Mitchell
A liturgical theology of prayer book worship
 - + *A Priests Handbook*, Michno
A detailed look at additional practices, such as manual acts and how to lead processions or use incense in a congregation. However, one must be careful with the use and authority of this work. While it gives options for how to lead prayer book worship, it often portrays practices that are truly optional as though they are rubrical. It may be important to own this work if for no other reason than because some priests will present information from this book as though it were necessitated from the BCP and it will be helpful to reference this to see if that is the case in any given situation (liturgical colors are a good example of this phenomenon).

- + *Elements of Rite*, Kavanagh
- + *Book of Occasional Services*, Church Publishing
- + *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*, Long

An extremely valuable theological exploration of the nature of the Christian funeral from one probably the preeminent homiletician of the last 20 years. It is highly recommended that this be used as at least as a reference.

- + Holy Women, Holy Men (<http://generalconvention.org/ccab/files/2>) (<http://ebookbrowse.com/holy-women-holy-men-pdf-d125368989>)
- + *A Theology of Worship*, Weil (CTS)
- + *Christian Worship in North America*, White

Preaching

While it can often be neglected in Episcopal churches in favor of an emphasis on the service of the Table, the proclamation of the Word, of which preaching is a key component, is just as important in our services. It is therefore expected that students will become competent both in preparing the content of a sermon and in delivering that sermon.

Competency in preaching will be established when the mentor, in consultation with the MLD, believes that a student can appropriately exegete a passage of Scripture for preaching, craft a sermon with a clear central message that can be understood and followed, and deliver it clearly and confidently. It is likely that the student will not only need to prepare a manuscript (along with an explanation of sermon preparation process), but will need to provide either a recording of a sermon or arrange for an opportunity for the Missioner for Leadership Development or the Bishop to observe the student's preaching.

1. **The Witness of Preaching*, Long
or **Preaching*, Craddock

Both of these are standard texts for teaching the craft of homiletics and take a student through the whole process of preparing, crafting, and delivering a sermon. Assuming a student has successfully completed their exegesis component and the [TEP] communication competency, the main focus in using these texts should be on the specific nature of a sermon as a means of communication. Craddock's book is older than Long's but it also may be more accessible. Both Craddock and Long are some of the most important and influential homileticians of the last 50 years.

2. *Patterns of Preaching*, Allen
This collection of sermons provides detailed explanations of the various structures that a sermon can take and explains how they can most appropriately be employed.
 3. **The Collected Sermons of Fred Craddock*
or **The Collected Sermons of William H. Willimon* (or both)
 4. *The Preaching Life*, Brown Taylor
 5. Installation Sermon of Presiding Bishop Curry
 6. Sermons That Work: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/?menu=menu7285>
- + *The Homiletical Plot*, Lowry
 - + *Preaching from Memory to Hope*, Long
 - + *The Preaching of Jesus*, Brosend

UNIT FOUR: SPIRITUALITY, PASTORAL CARE, and POLITY

Spirituality & Prayer

It is expected that those in the ordination process, especially by the time they have gotten to the fourth unit of the course of study, will already have developed a regular practice of devotional biblical reading (in contrast to critical study or reading for sermon preparation) as well as a habit of regular prayer and meditation. The purpose of this unit is *not* to introduce students to practices of piety for the first time. Instead, the focus should be on deepening their understanding of the nature of Christian spirituality and being introduced to a range of devotional practices and spiritual disciplines so that they may best help the members of their congregations find appropriate spiritual disciplines and spirituality practices. This area should also help equip students to do some degree of spiritual direction with their congregants.

The length of time that students spend in this area will be determined in large part by how many different spiritual disciplines and devotional practices they have tried in the past. One can therefore expect a fairly large range of times, from 3-12 weeks, depending upon the particularities of the student. **NOTE:** this area should not take longer because the student has yet to have developed any personal spiritual practices. If it becomes apparent at this point that a student has no familiarity with spiritual disciplines or devotional practices, this should be flagged as highly problematic and will warrant a reevaluation of whether the student should remain in the ordination process. However, there should be no instances in which this is the case because students should be making their mentors aware of their devotional practices throughout the entire educational process.

Competency in this area will be demonstrated when a student can show familiarity with a variety of spiritual disciplines, be able to give an account in their own words of how they understand Christian spirituality its role in the life of faith, and can propose a course of spiritual practices in response to different hypothetical congregants' needs.

1. *The Practice of Prayer*, Margaret Guenther (CTS)
2. *The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality*, Rolheiser
3. *Spiritual Direction*, Nouwen

+ *Prayer*, Foster

+ *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*, Casey

This book should be considered highly recommended, and will be required if the student does not have any familiarity with devotional bible reading.

+ *Approaches to Prayer*, ed. Morgan

+ *The Ignatian Workout*, Muldoon

An excellent contemporary introduction to the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola.

+ *Praying Our Days*, Griswold

A selection of prayers, mostly from the Prayer Book, with some commentary, for use in individual prayer.

+ *Five Models of Spiritual Direction in the Early Church*, Decapopoulos

+ *Spiritual Friend*, Edwards

Pastoral Care

In addition to teaching and administering the sacraments, a central responsibility of the ordained minister is the ability to help provide guidance to individuals and their communities on matters related to their well-being. Because we believe that humans are not disconnected from material reality, and we believe that the psychological, physical, and communal dimensions of a person are interconnected with the spiritual, it is necessary to take an approach to pastoral care that guides individuals into greater wholeness in all of these areas.

While it is vitally important to recognize that ordained ministers are not the same as licensed counselors, community developers, or public health consultants, it is also necessary to acknowledge the realities of the communities in which we are called to serve. Unfortunately, many of these services are unavailable or under-available. Furthermore, the difficulties faced by many members of our congregations, which may include racism, economic poverty, addiction, violence, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and chronically under-treated depression and other mental illnesses make the lack of these resources that much more harmful and put greater stress on the physical, emotional, and spiritual health of our congregants. Thus, while our ordained ministers cannot be expected to completely fill the vacuum left by the lack of these other services, it does mean that pastoral care in certain communities will entail finding creative ways to help people secure these physical, emotional, and mental health resources more often than will be expected of ordained ministers in other contexts.

One can think of pastoral care in the Niobrara School course of study as consisting of three components. The first is traditional practices of pastoral care, such as marriage counseling, conflict management, the ability to impose church discipline, and grief counseling. The second component is self-care. While this is often not thought of as a component of pastoral care and counseling, it plays a key role. Aside from the fact that clergy who have appropriate self-care practices and keep themselves mentally, physically, and spiritually healthy are better able to do all the required tasks in their ministries, living a healthy lifestyle allows the ordained minister to model such a lifestyle for members of his or her congregation. The third component is the capacity to accurately recognize the elements that are causing physical and mental harm to people in our communities and have some capacity to point people toward solutions. This third element does not mean that clergy are expected to be experts in community development, nutrition, or mental health, but they need to know how to seek out the people or resources that can provide such expertise.

A student can expect to spend between 16 and 20 weeks working through various components of pastoral care and developing the capacity to find resources for individual and community health.

A student will have demonstrated competency in Pastoral Care when he or she meets the standards of learning associated with pastoral care. These standards will depend upon whether one is seeking ordination to the diaconate (III.F) or the priesthood (III.G). Students will also need to demonstrate an awareness of their own health and well-being needs in order to practice proper self-care (if one's health consistently prevents one from attending required events, keeping up with one's studies, or meeting with one's mentor, this may be an indication that one is not equipped for ordained ministry). Finally, students need to demonstrate an awareness of the forces that diminish the individual and communal health of their communities and the capacity to at least point people toward resources that may diminish the power of some of those forces.

I. General Pastoral Care

1. * *An Introduction to Pastoral Care*, Gerkin
**Giving Counsel*, Capps
or **Caring for God's People*, Culbertson
Any of the above texts are excellent introductions to standard practices of pastoral care and counseling.
2. *Counseling Troubled Youth*, Dykstra
While this resource focuses on youth, it has insights that can be applied to more difficult counseling scenarios for people of all ages.
3. *Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Eating Healthy*, Willett & Skarrett
4. Handouts on Teaching and Modeling Healthy Lifestyles
+ *Counseling Women*, Neuger
+ *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling, vols. 1-3*, Wicks, Parsons, and Capps

- An excellent reference work that is specifically oriented toward the intersection of pastoral care and clinical counseling.
 + *A History of Pastoral Care in America*, Holifield

II. Pastoral Care: Community Health and Development

1. *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health and Welfare*, Minkler
 This reference work can help provide a starting point for entering into or beginning the conversation within one's local community about how the human and material resources already within one's community can be marshalled to help meet the needs of that community.
 2. *Toxic Charity*, Lupton
 An exploration of the ways that Church communities' good intentions can often harm the people they intend to help, as well as suggestions for how to avoid such harmful patterns.
- + *Community and Growth*, Vanier
 + *Worlds Apart: Politics and Poverty in Rural America*, Duncan
 + *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America*, Carr and Kefalas
 The two above resources focus mainly on rural Appalachia, the South, and New England, and so do not perfectly fit the situation in South Dakota, but they may nevertheless provide helpful insights and possible solutions.
 + *Start a Community Food Garden: The Essential Handbook*, Joy
 + *Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and Practice*, Leigh, et al.

Deacon and Priest Studies

The ministries of those called to be permanent deacons and those called to be priests share certain similarities, but they remain distinct vocations with distinct roles within their respective communities. One can expect 6 to 10 weeks on exploring the specific natures of these callings (those who are discerning a call to the priesthood will still need to have an understanding of diaconal ministry in order to fulfill their standards of learning). One can expect 4-8 weeks of study for those entering the diaconate and 6-8 weeks for those entering the priesthood.

Students will demonstrate competency in this area when they can fulfill the learning remaining standards of learning appropriate to their calling (III.F for deacons and III.H for priests)

1. *Deacons in The Liturgy*, Plater
 2. *Many Servants: An Introduction to Deacons*, Plater
 3. *The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order*, Barnett
 4. *On Being a Priest Today*, Brown & Cocksworth
- + *The Servant Church: Diaconal Ministry and the Episcopal Church*, Booty
 + *Deacons and the Church*, Collins
 + *Unexpected Consequences: The Diaconate Renewed*, Epting

Church Polity

Students will demonstrate competency in the structure and governance of the Episcopal church when they can fulfill the standards for learning III.I point 1. NOTE: This does not mean that they need to have memorized the Constitution and Canons either of the Episcopal Church or of the Diocese, but it does mean that they should be able to give a summary, in their own words, of the structure of the church, and should know where to look to resolve particular questions of order and governance in the Church.

1. *Shared Governance*, House of Deputies Special Study Committee
2. *Many Parts, One Body: How the Episcopal Church Works*, Dator
3. Current Constitution & Canons
4. Current Diocesan Constitution & Canons

SECTION III

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

Fees & Expenses for Niobrara School	III.2
Discernment/Ordination Outline.....	III.3
Discernment and Ordination Checklist.....	III.5
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FEES & EXPENSES FOR NIOBRARA SCHOOL

The following costs are estimates of how much you can expect to pay per year for each item. You may find that the amount you are required to spend on textbooks is more or less than the figure below depending on which resources you use.

Textbooks	\$150
Summer Seminary	\$250
Ministry Weekends	\$100 (\$15/weekend)

Assuming a course of study that lasts between three and five years, it would be fair to assume a cost of between \$1,500 and \$2,500 for the entire course of study.

Additional Financial Considerations:

Cost of travel to ministry weekends and Summer Seminary
Cost of hotels or other lodging for ministry weekends

Sources of Financial Aid

St. Mary's School Scholarship
ECW Scholarship
Bishop Jones Scholarship
Your Local Congregation
Family

DISCERNMENT/ORDINATION OUTLINE

Time Line: Generally 3-5 years

Initial Discernment (Asperancy):

1. Identify a call to diaconate or priesthood – by a group of people in your congregation or community of faith or in yourself.
2. Prepare a Spiritual Autobiography
3. Attend a Discernment Retreat
4. Receive a mentor and complete *Ighiminyeya* requirements
5. Meet with bishop and priest-in-charge
6. Formation of and meeting with a Discernment Committee
7. If Discernment indicates a call to ordination, Discernment Committee sends letter to Bishop nominating the person for ordination.
8. If Nominee accepts the nomination,
 - a. Request application for Postulancy
 - b. Submit application for Postulancy, which includes:
 - i. Application Form
 - ii. Letter from Discernment Committee
 - iii. Letter of Support from Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Mission Council
 - iv. Spiritual Autobiography
 - v. Covenant Not to Sue
9. Interview/meeting with COM, with recommendation to Bishop
10. Bishop approves or disapproves application
11. If approved, made a Postulant
 - a. Ember Day Letters
 - b. May be removed from process at Bishop's discretion

As a Postulant:

12. Continue exploration/discernment
13. Be assigned a Mentor who may also be a Spiritual Director.
14. Begin prescribed program of theological education & evaluation. Be able to document completion of a significant portion (2/3 or 3/4) before applying for Candidacy.
15. Background Check, Medical and Psychological Evaluations
16. This is the point where the community accepts that the call is valid and the movement shifts toward ordination.
17. Submit application for Candidacy which includes:
 - a. letter of support from the congregation or community of faith and
 - b. statement from COM attesting to continuing formation
18. Interview/meeting with Standing Committee, with letter of approval
19. Bishop approves or disapproves application
20. If approves, made a Candidate
 - a. Must remain in canonical relationship with Diocese until ordination to the diaconate.
 - b. Ember Day Letters continue
 - c. May be removed from process at Bishop's discretion

As a Candidate:

21. Complete education and continue formation
 - a. Successful completion of preparation, including paperwork, required before application for ordination will be considered.
 - b. Periodical evaluations

- c. Final assessment of preparation, formation, and readiness.
- 22. Application to be ordained (to the Diaconate).
 - a. After at least 18 months has passed from the time of written acceptance of nomination.
 - b. Background, medical, & psych evaluations up-to-date
 - c. Must be at least 24 years old at the time of ordination
- 23. A Candidate must first be ordained Deacon before being ordained Priest.
 - a. Separate, additional application to be ordained to priesthood.

Ember Day Letters

Each Postulant and Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood shall communicate with Bishop (in person or by letter or by email) four times a year, in the Ember Weeks.

Diaconate – reflect on your academic, diaconal, human, spiritual and practical development.

Priesthood – reflect on your academic experience and personal and spiritual development.

Background Check

When notified, the Diocesan Office initiates this check of credit, criminal, civil, and sexual records

Medical Evaluation

By your family physician, using forms prepared for the purpose by the Church Pension Fund. Self/insurance pay. Can be part of a routine, annual physical.

Psychological Evaluation

By a professional evaluator pre-approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by the Church Pension Fund. Diocese pays.

Mentor

A member of the clergy, or properly educated and qualified lay-person, who will help you set a schedule of theological education and spiritual formation based on Diocesan and canonical standards, and who will support, direct, and advise you along the way.

DISCERNMENT AND ORDINATION CHECKLIST

Selection/Nomination/Discernment

- Resident in faith community in Diocese of South Dakota for at least one year
- Attended a Discernment Retreat
- Met with Bishop and Missioner for Leadership Development
- Completed *Iglwinyeya* program, including Spiritual Autobiography
- Ongoing meeting with discernment committee
- Letter of support from the discernment committee
- Letter of support from the Vestry/Bishop's Committee/Mission Council
- Request Application for Postulancy
- Complete and submit Nomination application for Postulancy
 - Application
 - Verification of Baptism
 - Verification of Confirmation
 - Acceptance of Nomination
 - Spiritual Autobiography
 - Reading list
 - Prior theological study
 - Current ministry
 - Covenant Not To Sue
- Interview with the Commission on Ministry (COM)
- Recommended by the COM
- Approved for postulancy by the Bishop (letter received) as of _____

During Postulancy

- Begin and complete 3/4 theological education and formation

___Name of Mentor(s) _____

___Faithful at worship, in prayer, in ministry

___Background Check

___Signed Authorization and Release

___Psychological evaluation

___Behavioral Screening Questionnaire (BSQ)

___Life History Questionnaire (LHQ)

___Physical evaluation

___Request application for candidacy

___Completed & Submitted application for Candidacy

___Application form

___Report of one's progress through process

___Letter of support from Vestry, Bishop's Committee, Mission Council

___Certificate from Niobrara School for Ministry (NSM)

___Transcripts of academic work completed since nomination

___Recommended for candidacy by the COM

___Recommended for candidacy by the Standing Committee

___Approved for candidacy by the Bishop (letter received) as of _____

___Sent End of Semester Transcripts (seminarians)

Dates: _____

___Sent Complete CPE and Field Education Evaluations (seminarians)

___Sent Ember Day Letters

Dates: _____

During Candidacy

- ___ Complete theological education and formation
- ___ Notify MLD that education is complete and ready for evaluation
- ___ Complete Board of Examining Chaplains (BEC) evaluation
- ___ Contact Bishop for ordination date
- ___ Sexual misconduct prevention training
- ___ Training regarding the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church particularly

Title IV (Disciplinary canons)

- ___ Anti-racism training
- ___ Suicide Awareness training
- ___ Sent Ember Day Letters

Dates: _____

Before Ordination to the Diaconate or Transitional Diaconate

- ___ At least 18 months have passed since the acceptance of nomination.
- ___ Have reached the age of 24.
- ___ Conversation with Bishop concerning placement
- ___ Request application for ordination
- ___ Completed and submitted application for ordination
 - ___ Application form
- ___ Provided Letter of Support from Vestry, Bishop’s Committee, or Mission Council
- ___ Certificate from program of preparation, e.g. Niobrara School for Ministry, seminary

- ___ Certificate from NSM and Board of Examining Chaplains (BEC)
- ___ Final Transcripts
- ___ Recommended by BEC to Commission On Ministry (COM)
- ___ Recommended to Standing Committee by COM
- ___ Approved by the Standing Committee
- ___ Approved by the Bishop and order of ordination (letter received)

Before Ordination to the Priesthood

- ___ Requested application for ordination
- ___ Discussed placement with the Bishop
- ___ Completed and submitted application for ordination
- ___ Provided Letter of Support from Vestry, Bishop's Committee or Mission Council
- ___ Certificate from Seminary or other program of preparation
- ___ Recommendation by the COM
- ___ Certification and recommendation by Standing Committee
- ___ Approval of Bishop and order of ordination (letter received)

According to the canons, the minimum time for ordination to the priesthood is 24 months

CANON 6: Of the Ordination of Deacons

Sec. 1. Selection

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

Sec. 2. Nomination

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

(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to

(1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and

(2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.

(b) The Nominee, if in agreement with the nomination, shall accept the nomination in writing and shall provide the following to the Bishop:

(1) Full name and date of birth.

(2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.

(3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.

(4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.

(5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Diaconate.

(6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned, and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

Sec. 3. Postulancy

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

(a) Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop shall

(1) determine that the Nominee is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing, and

(2) confer in person with the Nominee,

(b) If the Bishop approves the Nominee proceeding into Postulancy, the Commission, or a committee of the Commission, shall meet with the Nominee to review the application and prepare an evaluation of the Nominee's qualifications to pursue a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate. The Commission shall present its evaluation and recommendations to the Bishop.

(c) No Bishop shall consider accepting as a Postulant any person who has been refused admission as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate in any other Diocese, or who, having been admitted, has afterwards ceased to be a Candidate, until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission, or in which the person has been a Candidate, declaring the cause of refusal or of cessation.

(d) The Bishop may admit the Nominee as a Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Postulant's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Postulant, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the

Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the Postulant's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(e) Each Postulant for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

(f) Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Postulant and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

Sec. 4. Candidacy

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

(a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:

- (1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and
- (2) a letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a written statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having received approval in writing of the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate. The Bishop shall record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Candidate, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(c) A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon, except, for reasons acceptable to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate.

(d) Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate, at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

(e) If a Bishop has removed the Candidate's name from the list of Candidates, except by transfer, or the Candidate's application for ordination has been rejected, no other Bishop may ordain the person without readmission to Candidacy for a period of at least twelve months.

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

(a) The Bishop and the Commission shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Diaconate in accordance with this Canon to ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.

(b) The Bishop may assign the Postulant or Candidate to any congregation of the Diocese or other community of faith after consultation with the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(c) Formation shall take into account the local culture and each Postulant or Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry.

(d) Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for ordination.

(e) Wherever possible, formation for the Diaconate shall take place in community, including other persons in preparation for the Diaconate, or others preparing for ministry.

(f) Before ordination each Candidate shall be prepared in and demonstrate basic competence in five general areas:

(1) Academic studies including, The Holy Scriptures, theology, and the tradition of the Church.

(2) Diakonia and the diaconate.

(3) Human awareness and understanding.

(4) Spiritual development and discipline.

(5) Practical training and experience.

(g) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding

(1) prevention of sexual misconduct.

(2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.

(3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.

(4) the Church's teaching on racism.

(h) Each Candidate for ordination to the Diaconate shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, for times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic, diaconal, human, spiritual, and practical development.

(i) During Candidacy each Candidate's progress shall be evaluated from time to time, and there shall be a written report of the evaluation by those authorized by the Commission to be in charge of the evaluation program. Upon certification by those in charge of the Candidate's program of preparation that the Candidate has successfully completed preparation and is ready for ordination, a final written assessment of readiness for ordination to the Diaconate shall be prepared as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission. This report shall include a recommendation from the Commission regarding the readiness of the Candidate for ordination. Records shall be kept of all evaluations, assessments, and the recommendation, and shall be made available to the Standing Committee.

(j) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon, the following must be accomplished

(1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.

(2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.

(k) Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain a part of the permanent diocesan record.

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate

(a) A person may be ordained Deacon:

(1) after at least eighteen months from the time of written acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in III.6.2(b), and

(2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age.

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

(1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.

(2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the dates of admission.

(4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

(5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

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

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

(Signed) _____

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

CANON 8: Of the Ordination of Priests

Sec. 1. Selection

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

Sec. 2. Nomination

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

(a) The Nomination shall be in writing and shall include a letter of support by the Nominee's congregation or other community of faith committing the community to:

- (1) pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and
- (2) involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Priesthood. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed by two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body, and by the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight.

(b) The Nominee, if agreeing, shall accept the nomination in writing, and shall provide the following to the Bishop:

- (1) Full name and date of birth.
- (2) The length of time resident in the Diocese.
- (3) Evidence of Baptism and Confirmation.
- (4) Whether an application has been made previously for Postulancy or the person has been nominated in any Diocese.
- (5) A description of the process of discernment by which the Nominee has been identified for ordination to the Priesthood.
- (6) The level of education attained and, if any, the degrees earned and areas of specialization, together with copies of official transcripts.

Sec. 3. Postulancy

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

(a) Before granting admission as a Postulant, the Bishop shall

- (1) determine that the person is a confirmed adult communicant in good standing.
- (2) confer in person with the Nominee.
- (3) shall consult with the Nominee regarding financial resources which will be available for the support of the Postulant throughout preparation for ordination. During Postulancy and later Candidacy, the Bishop or someone appointed by the Bishop shall review periodically the financial condition and plans of the Postulant.

(b) If the Bishop approves proceeding, the Commission, or a committee of the Commission, shall meet with the Nominee to review the application and prepare an evaluation of the Nominee's qualifications to pursue a program of preparation for ordination to the Priesthood. The Commission shall present its evaluation and recommendations to the Bishop.

(c) No Bishop shall consider accepting as a Postulant any person who has been refused admission as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood in any other Diocese, or who, having been admitted, has afterwards ceased to be a Candidate, until receipt of a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese refusing admission, or in which the person has been a Candidate, declaring the cause of refusal or of cessation.

(d) The Bishop may admit the Nominee as a Postulant for ordination to the Priesthood. The Bishop shall record the Postulant's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Postulant, the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Postulant may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of Postulant's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(e) Each Postulant for ordination to the Priesthood shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Postulant's academic experience and personal and spiritual development.

(f) Any Postulant may be removed as a Postulant at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Postulant and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the director of the program of preparation.

Sec. 4. Candidacy

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

(a) A person desiring to be considered as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood shall apply to the Bishop. Such application shall include the following:

- (1) the Postulant's date of admission to Postulancy, and
- (2) a letter of support by the Postulant's congregation or other community of faith. If it be a congregation, the letter shall be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry or comparable body and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(b) Upon compliance with these requirements, and receipt of a statement from the Commission attesting to the continuing formation of the Postulant, and having received approval in writing of the Standing Committee who shall have interviewed the Postulant and who shall have had an opportunity to review the documentation relating to the application of the Postulant, the Bishop may admit the Postulant as a Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood. The Bishop shall record the Candidate's name and date of admission in a Register kept for that purpose. The Bishop shall inform the Candidate, the Member of the Clergy or leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or proposes to attend, or the director of the Candidate's program of preparation, of the fact and date of such admission.

(c) A Candidate must remain in canonical relationship with the Diocese in which admission has been granted until ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon, except, for reasons acceptable to the Bishop, the Candidate may be transferred to another Diocese upon request, provided that the Bishop of the receiving Diocese is willing to accept the Candidate.

(d) Any Candidate may be removed as a Candidate at the sole discretion of the Bishop. The Bishop shall give written notice of the removal to the Candidate and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the Dean of the seminary the Candidate may be attending or the director of the program of preparation.

(e) If a Bishop has removed the Candidate's name from the list of Candidates, except by transfer, or the Candidate's application for ordination has been rejected, no other Bishop may ordain the person without readmission to Candidacy for a period of at least twelve months.

Sec. 5. Preparation for Ordination

(a) The Bishop and the Commission shall work with the Postulant or Candidate to develop and monitor a program of preparation for ordination to the Priesthood and to ensure that pastoral guidance is provided throughout the period of preparation.

(b) If the Postulant or Candidate has not previously obtained a baccalaureate degree, the Commission, Bishop, and Postulant or Candidate shall design a program of such additional academic work as may be necessary to prepare the Postulant or Candidate to undertake a program of theological education.

(c) Formation shall take into account the local culture and each Postulant or Candidate's background, age, occupation, and ministry.

(d) Prior education and learning from life experience may be considered as part of the formation required for the Priesthood.

(e) Whenever possible, formation for the Priesthood shall take place in community, including other persons in preparation for the Priesthood, or others preparing for ministry.

(f) Formation shall include theological training, practical experience, emotional development, and spiritual formation.

(g) Subject areas for study during this program of preparation shall include:

(1) The Holy Scriptures.

(2) Church History, including the Ecumenical Movement.

(3) Christian Theology, including Missionary Theology and Missiology.

(4) Christian Ethics and Moral Theology.

(5) Studies in contemporary society, including the historical and contemporary experience of racial and minority groups, and cross-cultural ministry skills. Cross-cultural ministry skills may include the ability to communicate in a contemporary language other than one's first language.

(6) Liturgics and Church Music; Christian Worship and Music according to the contents and use of the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts.

(7) Theory and practice of ministry, including leadership, and the ministries of evangelism and stewardship.

(h) Preparation for ordination shall include training regarding

(1) prevention of sexual misconduct.

(2) civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.

(3) the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof.

(4) the Church's teaching on racism.

(i) Each Postulant or Candidate for ordination to the Priesthood shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting on the Candidate's academic experience and personal and spiritual development.

(j) The seminary or other formation program shall provide for, monitor, and report on the academic performance and personal qualifications of the Postulant or Candidate for ordination. These reports will be made upon request of the Bishop and Commission, but at least once per year.

(k) Within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Deacon under this Canon, the following must be accomplished

(1) a background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.

(2) medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by The Church Pension Fund, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.

(l) Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by the Bishop and remain a part of the permanent diocesan record.

Sec. 6. Ordination to the Diaconate for those called to the Priesthood

(a) A Candidate must first be ordained Deacon before being ordained Priest.

(b) To be ordained Deacon under this Canon, a person must be at least twenty-four years of age.

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

(1) an application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.

(2) a letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.

(3) written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the date of admission.

(4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

(5) a certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

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

To the Right Reverend _____, Bishop of _____ We, the Standing Committee of _____, having been duly convened at _____ at _____, do testify that A.B., desiring to be ordained to the Diaconate and Priesthood under Canon III.8 has presented to us the certificates as required by the Canons indicating A.B.'s preparedness for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8; and we certify that all canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under Canon III.8 have been met; and we find no sufficient objection to ordination. Therefore, we recommend A.B. for ordination. In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands this _____ day of _____, in the year of our Lord _____.

(Signed) _____

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

Sec. 7. Ordination to the Priesthood

(a) A person may be ordained Priest:

(1) after at least six months since ordination as a Deacon under this Canon and eighteen months from the time of III.8.2(b), and

- (2) upon attainment of at least twenty-four years of age, and
- (3) if the medical evaluation, psychological evaluation, and background check have taken place or been updated within thirty-six months prior to ordination as a Priest.

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

(1) an application from the Deacon requesting ordination as a Priest, including the Deacon's dates of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy and ordination as a Deacon under this Canon,

(2) a letter of support from the Deacon's congregation or other community of faith, signed by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight,

(3) evidence of admission to Postulancy and Candidacy, including dates of admission, and ordination to the Diaconate,

(4) a certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation, written at the completion of the program of preparation, showing the Deacon's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Deacon's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Priesthood, and

(5) a statement from the Commission attesting to the successful completion of the program of formation designed during Postulancy under Canon III.8.5, and proficiency in the required areas of study, and recommending the Deacon for ordination to the Priesthood.

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

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

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

(e) No Deacon shall be ordained to the Priesthood until having been appointed to serve in a Parochial Cure within the jurisdiction of this Church, or as a Missionary under the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese, or as an officer of a Missionary Society recognized by the General Convention, or as a Chaplain of the Armed Services of the United States, or as a Chaplain in a recognized hospital or other welfare institution, or as a Chaplain or instructor in a school, college, or other seminary, or with other opportunity for the exercise of the office of Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop.

(f) A person ordained to the Diaconate under Canon III.6 who is subsequently called to the Priesthood shall fulfill the Postulancy and Candidacy requirements set forth in this Canon. Upon completion of these requirements, the Deacon may be ordained to the Priesthood.

SECTION IV

Standards of Learning

STANDARDS OF LEARNING: A COVENANT FOR MINISTRY FORMATION

The Development of Diocesan Trained Ministry in the Diocese of South Dakota

The following sets forth minimum criteria and standards for the preparation of persons for ordination to locally trained ordained ministries under the provisions of Title III Ministry canons.

I. Spiritual Formation and Self-Care

A person called to a ministry under this covenant shall:

- Develop a spiritual discipline which could include life habits of daily prayer, and the reading of and reflection upon Scripture, under the guidelines of the Book of Common Prayer.
- Seek out spiritual direction.
- Strive to live a life that evidences a proper balance between commitments to family, work, and recreation, and emotional, physical and mental health.

II. Required Practical Ministry Training. A person contemplating ministry under this Covenant shall

- Attend a Dakota Experience.
- Be familiar with the variety of cultural customs and traditions within the local community and diocese.
- Be familiar with the theology and practical application of Mutual Ministry.
- Be familiar with general causes, symptoms and treatment of drug, alcohol and other addictions.
- Attend a Sexual Misconduct Awareness Training Program
- Attend Anti-racism training.
- Understand the authority of the Bishop and the polity of the Episcopal Church.

III. Specific Education: Persons called to ordained ministries should demonstrate adequate knowledge (deacon) or proficiency (priest) in the following areas, which will all be covered in your course work.

A. Holy Scripture

1. General introduction to Holy Scripture:

- Be able to use an exegetical (analytical or interpretive) method in your use of Scripture
- Be able to discuss the authority of Scripture as understood by the Episcopal Church
- To reflect a knowledge and understanding of the content of the Bible.
- To apply and evaluate the Bible's message in relationship to life situations, contemporary issues and challenges.

2. Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures)

- Understand the major structure and themes of the OT.
- Describe the significance of Torah.
- Describe the importance of the Exodus.
- Describe the history of the Exile, and what it tells us about God.
- Tell several of the stories found in the Old Testament in your own words and explain what those stories have to say about God, human beings, sin, judgment and redemption.
- Explain how God is described in the Old Testament and what images are used for God.

- Have a general idea of the chronology of events in the lives of the Hebrew people, how they came to be a people.

3. New Testament (Christian Scriptures):

- Outline the major divisions of the New Testament.
- Have a general idea of the order in which the various books of the New Testament were written.
- List the Synoptic Gospels and describe how they differ from the Gospel According to John.
- Explain why we have four versions of the gospels.
- Describe the difference between Gospel and the gospels.
- Describe major theological themes in each of the gospels.
- Explain the significance of Paul in terms of the development of his major theological concepts.
- Discuss some of the major themes in the Epistles.
- Be able to identify some of the major figures in the New Testament.
- Describe how God is perceived in the New Testament?
- Describe what the New Testament has to do with Jesus.

B. Church History.

- An understanding and working knowledge of the history of the local congregation and/or region.
- An understanding and working knowledge of the history of the Episcopal Church in South Dakota, including D/Lakota culture and tradition.
- Identify and describe major events and movements within the history of Christianity and explain their importance for the development of Christianity in general and the Episcopal Church in particular.
- An understanding and working knowledge of Anglican Church History with particular attention to:
 - The Early Church
 - Spread of Christianity
 - Medieval Church History
 - A basic understanding of the Protestant Reformation
 - Henry VIII, Thomas Cranmer, the development of the Book of Common Prayer
 - The “three-legged stool”, or Scripture, Tradition and Reason
 - The Elizabethan settlement and “via media.”
 - The Anglican Communion
- An understanding and working knowledge of the history of the Episcopal Church in this country with particular attention to:
 - Events surrounding the establishment of the Episcopal Church and House of Bishops and the adoption of the American Book of Common Prayer.
 - A basic grasp of the spread of the Episcopal Church from the colonies westward.
 - A basic grasp of recent church history.

C. Theology: Church’s Teaching as set forth in the Creeds and in *An Outline of the Faith*, commonly called the Catechism.

- Display an accurate knowledge of the basic theological concepts and doctrines of the Christian faith.

- Know how and why the Apostles' and Nicene creeds were formed.
- Be able to explain the major ideas contained in the creeds. For example: "One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church", "Resurrection of the Body," Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord", the doctrine of the Trinity, etc.
- Know the content of the Catechism.
- Understand the concept *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* which means "what we pray is what we believe." Give examples from the Book of Common Prayer about what the Episcopal Church believes.
- Explain how Baptism undergirds the church's liturgy and mission
- Explain the theology of Incarnation, Fall and Redemption, Salvation

D. Knowledge of the Book of Common Prayer.

- Know what "common prayer" is and why it is important to the Episcopal Church.
- Understand fully the content of the Book of Common Prayer, its structure, order, specific liturgies, the lectionary, daily office, historical documents, etc.
- Explain what a rubric is and why it is important to understand them. Give several examples of rubrics in the Book of Common Prayer.
- Explain the use of the Psalms in liturgical worship.
- Be familiar with liturgical resources, i.e. Holy Women, Holy Men; Book of Occasional Services; Burial Service Book; Enriching our Worship I and II, etc.

E. Theory and Practice of Ministry

- Understand and describe how contemporary cultures affect the practice of ministry in particular situations.
- Identify the theological, pastoral, and practical issues and methods pertinent to the contemporary practice of ministry in specified situations.
- Illustrate and analyze the issues and challenges for ministry, applying them in a response to a contemporary situation.
- An Understanding of the Office and Work of a Deacon and of a Priest
- Define "sacrament" and explain why we think of ourselves as a sacramental church.
- List and explain the meaning of the seven sacraments of the church.
- Discuss the Baptismal Covenant and its implications
- Explain the ministry of various orders of the church, e.g. laity, bishop, priest, and deacon.

F. The Work and Ministry of a Deacon

- Help identify, train and encourage the ministry of all the baptized in the community.
- Be able to explain the ministry of the Deacon in the world.
- Know and understand a Deacon's role in worship to include Holy Eucharist, baptisms, wakes, funerals, marriages, and the major functions of Diaconal ministry, both in and out of the church.
- Drawing on Scripture and tradition, be able to explain why the church needs deacons today.
- Be able to describe your own servant ministries in the community.
- Be able to connect the ministries of other church members with the needs of the community.
- Be able to prepare the altar for Eucharist, do ablutions, etc.
- Be able to properly introduce the gospel.

- Know the proper use of voice in public speaking.
- Be able to plan a baptism and funeral in accord with the BCP.
- Know the theology of and the proper administration of unction.
- Know the proper use of “Communion Under Special Circumstances.
- Be able to help train worship leaders and Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors.
- Be equipped with basic pastoral care skills, e.g. hospital, shut-in visitation, death and dying.
- Be able to prepare and preach a sermon.
- Know how to do a deacon’s distribution and when it is permissible to do it.
- Know the Guidelines for Deacons in the Diocese.

G. The Work and Ministry of a Priest

- Identify, train and encourage the ministry of all the baptized in the community.
- Supervise and utilize all licensed lay ministers.
- Know and understand the role of the Priest in the church’s liturgy and in the congregation.
- Know how to properly celebrate the Eucharist including
 - Instruction and rubrics
 - Parts and order of the service
 - Gestures and reading style
 - How to administer the sacrament.
- Know the appropriate use of deacons and other ministers in a service.
- Know how to prepare candidates and sponsors for Baptism and Confirmation.
- Know how to properly celebrate a Baptism
 - Instruction and rubrics
 - Parts and order of the service
 - Gestures and reading style
 - How to administer the sacrament
- Know how to properly prepare couples for marriage particularly as to the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony.
- Know the canonical requirements for the solemnization of Holy Matrimony.
- Know the legal requirements for Holy Matrimony.
- Know how to properly conduct a wedding
 - Same as in Eucharist and Baptism but including:
 - How to conduct a wedding rehearsal
 - Appropriate music, readings, participants
 - Cultural issues
- Know how to properly conduct a funeral
 - Instruction and rubrics.
 - Order of the service.
 - Wakes.
 - Working with families, funeral directors, musicians.
 - Being aware of cultural issues.
 - Being able to talk about issues surrounding death and dying.
- Know how to do healing prayers and the proper use of unction.
- Know how to conduct a service of the Reconciliation of a Penitent.
- Know how to prepare and preach a sermon.
- Know responsibilities concerning record keeping, parochial reports, and other pertinent administrative matters.
- Be equipped with basic pastoral care skills, including crisis ministry.

- Be familiar with the authorized hymnals, including the Dakota Hymnal, and how to choose appropriate music for liturgies.
- Be equipped to teach matters of faith and doctrine from the Catechism, Creeds and other resources including the New Church's Teaching Series.
- Have a general understanding of the ministry of Christian Education.
- Have a general understand of how to lead a Vestry or Mission Council, including ability to resolve conflict.

H. Ethics and Moral Theology in Contemporary Society

- Demonstrate an informed awareness about how Christian ethics and moral theology apply the structure and content of faith to intentional preparation for, and reflection upon, individual and community living.
- Be able to apply Scripture, Tradition and Reason to the making of moral judgments.
- Choose a specific ethical situation and apply a basic moral teaching.
- Know what positions the Episcopal Church has taken, including abortion, capitol punishment, homosexuality, economics, racism, war, the environment.
- Be aware of basic ethics of Christian living, e.g. respect, honor, etc.
- Analyze contemporary issues of society, conflicts, or mission priorities facing local congregations, communities, and the diocese.
- Demonstrate how our faith can be lived out across cultural similarities and differences.

I. Other Matters

- Be familiar with the Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of South Dakota, specifically reviewing the Table of Contents, and discuss why the Constitution and Canons are important.
- Be able to discuss a theology of stewardship and its application
- Know the Diocesan Mission and Vision statements.