

**The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island
Commission on Ministry**

Process, Timeline, and Benchmarks for the

*Reception of
Previously Ordained Clergy*

The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island Commission on Ministry

Process Timeline and Benchmarks for the Reception of Previously Ordained Clergy according to Title III.10.3 (Clergy Ordained by Bishops in Churches in the Historic Succession but Not in Communion with This Church)

Part I: Initial Discernment and Exploration

Anytime

Previously ordained cleric (“Applicant”) meets the description in Title III.10.3 (i.e. Roman Catholic) leaves his/her judicatory and becomes actively involved in the Episcopal Church. After having spent a significant amount of time as an active parishioner in an Episcopal congregation and having been officially received as an Episcopalian, he or she discusses with the local cleric his or her desire to return to the ordained life. If he or she seriously desires a return to the ordained life and they have the support of their Sponsoring Cleric, they are asked to schedule an initial meeting with the Bishop’s Office (contact: Canon to the Ordinary) for the purpose of providing an overview of the process. The Sponsoring Cleric is encouraged to accompany the Applicant to this particular meeting.

1st Saturday in March (9am-12pm) - Mercer School of Theology

Day of Discernment

This is a morning-long event sponsored by the Commission on Ministry for those exploring a call to serve as a priest, deacon or religious. A separate tract for Applicants under Title III.10.3 will be offered during this day. The registration form for the Day of Discernment (found on diocesan website) is completed by the Sponsoring Cleric. The Sponsoring Cleric is required to accompany the Applicant to the Day of Discernment.

The following is required for attendance:

- a. Must have the clear and compelling support of their Sponsoring Cleric.
- b. Must have been received as an Episcopalian
- c. Must have evidence of being an active, faithful member of a local congregation
- d. Evidence gifts necessary for serving the needs of the changing church

If following the Day of Discernment there are compelling reasons for the Applicant to continue in formal discernment, he or she shall complete a **Notice of Interest (From S-22)** which shall be submitted to the Commission on Ministry at 36 Cathedral Avenue, Garden City, N.Y. along with **A Letter of Endorsement** by the Sponsoring Cleric.

Part II: Formal Discernment

Late March / Early April

The Commission on Ministry will create a discernment process designed specifically for Applicants (n.b. Parish-based discernment committees and processes are neither encouraged nor recognized). Each committee will be composed of a lay companion from the sponsoring congregation. Two members of the Commission on Ministry will also serve on the **Discernment Committee**, with one of these members serving as the Committee chair. ***Attendance by ALL members at ALL meetings is mandatory.***

During this timeframe, the Applicant must complete and submit the following to the Commission on Ministry, 36 Cathedral Avenue, Garden City, NY:

- a. **Confidentiality Release (From A-21)**
- b. Resume/CV
- c. Transcripts of all academic and theological studies.
- d. Evidence of previous ministry and credentials
- e. Certificate of Reception into this Communion
- f. Evidence of Safe Church training (inquire with Parish Administrator)
- g. Evidence of having participated in the Sacred Ground series (recommended)

In addition to the above, when appropriate, a light reading list will be provided through the Mercer School of Theology to help aid the Applicant in better understanding the Anglican ethos.

Discernment Committee Assessments Completed and Next Steps Determined

Late Summer/Early Fall

Discernment Committee work concludes at the end of the summer with reports being presented to the Commission on Ministry Core team and Bishop for review no later than August 1st.

If as a result of the discernment process the Applicant is invited to continue on, either of the following scenarios will occur:

- 1) The Applicant will immediately be invited to pursue/engage the following:
 - a. Behavioral Screening Questionnaire **(Form P-23)**
 - b. Psychological Evaluation (Kenwood Psychological Services) **(Form P-24)**
 - c. Life History Questionnaire **(Form P-25)**
 - d. Release of Information to Diocese **(Form P-26)**
 - e. Required Medical Examination **(Form P-27)**
 - f. Initial Application for Reception of Holy Orders **(Form R-01)**
 - g. Assessment of Applicant by Cleric **(Form R-02)**
 - h. Criminal Background Check

- i. Certificate from 2 Episcopal Priests **(Form R-03)**
“A certificate from at least two Presbyters of this Church stating that, from personal examination or from satisfactory evidence presented to them, they believe that the departure of the person from the Communion with which the person has belonged has not arisen from any circumstances unfavorable to moral or religious character, or on account of which it may not be expedient to admit the person to Holy Orders in this Church.” -- CC Title III.10.3a (5).
- j. The sponsoring clergy will receive notice that the Applicant has been invited to continue forward and in the spirit of Canon III.8.2a (1) will be requested to cover 1/3 of the costs of the psychological examinations and background check. A check for \$1,100.00 made payable to Diocese of Long Island (This figure can change from year to year depending on fluctuating costs of exams). Notice of the parish’s financial support for the nominee should be conveyed to the Commission in writing.

- OR -

- 2) The Applicant will be assigned to an Internship Parish under the supervision of a Mentor Priest for a period of time to encourage deepening discernment and exploration. The following shall occur during this time:
 - a. Internship Parish shall offer a survey of pastoral experiences including service on the altar, occasional preaching, pastoral care, and formation as well as an exposure to church governance and administration (t/b worked out between with Mentor Priest)
 - b. A designated member of the Mercer Faculty or Diocesan clergy will meet with Applicant for some continued light book study and to assess previous theological formation (Seminary attended; training; assessing what further theological training would be required) and to review the theological areas required by the canons (cf. p. 5 below).
 - c. Ember Letters -- must be submitted to the bishop at the 4 Ember Days of the liturgical calendar. The purpose of the Ember Day letter is to apprise the bishop of the state of your life, discernment, formation etc. The letter should demonstrate a measure of depth, reflection and include some personal story. Ember letters are received directly by the Bishop.
 - d. A date shall be set as to when the Applicant shall meet again with the Commission to see if he or she is ready to take next steps.
 - e. If the Commission is satisfied with the Applicant’s progress, he or she shall be invited to engage the required psychological and physical evaluations and criminal background check etc. (cf. above)

Part III: Formation and Reception

The Commission on Ministry shall review all of the materials that have been submitted thus far and set a time to meet again with the Applicant. If all is in order and it is the will of the Church, the previously ordained cleric shall begin Anglican Studies (approximately two academic semesters).

These next steps will include the following:

- a. Applicant will be assigned to an Internship Parish with a Mentor Priest. Internship Parish shall offer a survey of pastoral experience including service on the altar, occasional preaching, pastoral care, and formation as well as an exposure to church governance and administration (t/b worked out between with Mentor Priest)
- b. Anglican Studies will commence through the Mercer School of Theology or applicable Episcopal Seminary if so determined.
- c. Ember Letters -- must be submitted to the bishop at the 4 Ember Days of the liturgical calendar. The purpose of the Ember Day letter is to apprise the bishop of the state of your life, discernment, formation etc. The letter should demonstrate a measure of depth, reflection and include some of the Applicant's personal story. Ember letters are received directly by the Bishop.
- d. Applicant will meet from time to time with his or her "shepherd" (liaison) from the Commission on Ministry.

The following forms must be completed and returned to the Bishop's Office:

- a. Application for Reception of Holy Orders ([Form R-21](#))
- b. Vestry Endorsement For Reception of Holy Orders ([Form R-22](#))

Financing Studies

Through a generous bequest from the George Mercer, Jr. Scholarship Fund, we are able to cover the costs of the tuition and in some instances room and healthcare for Applicants studying at seminary. Further information and proper paperwork should be obtained from the Mercer School of Theology.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Evidence of CPE Certification shall be submitted to the Bishop's Office. Applicants who have not completed CPE or equivalent may be required to do so.

Academic Transcripts/Certifications

Academic transcripts of Anglican Studies and any certificates of study should be provided to the bishop's office for the personal record file of each Applicant. It is the responsibility of the

Applicant to ensure that his or her transcripts are forwarded to the Bishop’s Office for his or her permanent record file.

Consent of Bishop and Standing Committee

At the conclusion of the Anglican Year, prior to being examined pursuant to Title III 10.3(c), the Applicant shall have received certificates from the Bishop and from the Standing Committee that the applicant is acceptable as a Member of the Clergy of this Church, subject to the successful completion of the examination.

Appointment with the Standing Committee will be coordinated through the Bishop’s Office

Testing Theological Proficiency

Pursuant to Title III.10(c), the Applicant having furnished evidence of satisfactory theological training in the previous Church, is examined by the Commission and show proficiency in the following subjects:

1. Church History: the history of the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church.
2. Doctrine: the Church's teaching as set forth in the Creeds and in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism.
3. Liturgics: the principles and history of Anglican worship; the contents of the Book of Common Prayer.
4. Practical Theology:
 - a. The office and work of a Deacon and Priest in this Church.
 - b. The conduct of public worship.
 - c. The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese in which the applicant is resident.
 - d. The use of voice in reading and speaking.
5. The points of Doctrine, Discipline, Polity, and Worship in which the Church from which the applicant has come differ from this Church. This portion of the examinations shall be conducted, in part at least, by written questions and answers, and the replies kept on file for at least three years.

Office For Transition Ministry Portfolio

At this time, the Applicants shall be granted access to their Office for Transition Ministry (OTM) portfolio through the office of the Transition Ministry Team. It shall be the responsibility of the Applicant to make such contact with the Bishop’s Office.

Oath of Conformity

Prior to being received, the Applicant must promise in writing to submit in all things, to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

Reception of Orders

The orders of the Applicant shall be received per the directives of the Book of Common Prayer at a time and venue that is acceptable to the Bishop. Pursuant to Title III.10. 3(I), no one shall be received less than 12 months from the date of having become been received as an Episcopalian.

First Assignment

The Office for Transition Ministry of the Diocese of Long Island shall assist Applicants in identifying and discerning a first cure.

Ongoing Mentoring: Program for Transitioning Clergy

During the first full year of a first cure, newly received clergy shall participate in the Program for Transitioning Clergy sponsored by the Bishop's Office and the Mercer School of Theology.

Definitions:

Sponsoring Parish – your home parish (supporting parish)

Sponsoring Cleric – rector/vicar of sponsoring parish

Internship Parish – Church community in which the Applicant receives field education.

Mentor Priest – provides support, encouragement and supervision to the Applicant; generally the cleric in charge of the Internship Parish.

Applicant – previously ordained cleric from a church of the historic succession but not in communion with the Episcopal Church who is in the formal process to have his or her orders received.