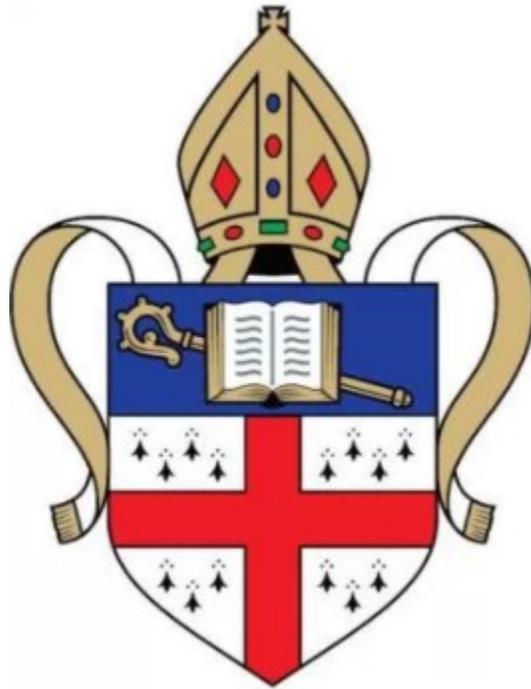


# Diocese of Rupert's Land



Diaconal Ministry Team  
Resources

## Am I Called To Be A Deacon?

## **Am I Called to be a Deacon?**

### **Diaconal Formation Process in the Diocese of Rupert's Land**

This is an outline for those interested in the process for those seeking to be formed to be ordained as deacons in the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Note that somewhat different processes are in place for those whose ordained ministry will be in the context of indigenous ministries and/or in the context of a team-based Local Collaborative Ministry.

The entire process takes place within a blanket of prayer and discernment as we seek always God's will for our Church and for each individual whom God has called and gifted for ministry.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***Initial Discernment***

- You begin to sense a call to ordained ministry, perhaps through the affirmation and encouragement of others.
- Begin to have informal conversations with your parish priest, family, and friends about this sense of calling. Read (at least) Section One of the Competencies chapter of *The Iona Report: The Diaconate in the Anglican Church of Canada*, available here: <https://www.anglican.ca/resources/the-iona-report/>. Keep in mind that in the Diocese of Rupert's Land, diaconal ministry is generally non-stipendiary, that is, unpaid.
- With your home parish priest, call together a Parish Discernment Group who will meet with you for five to twelve months using a process for discussion provided through the Bishop's Office. Continue to have ongoing conversations with your parish priest. This process is intentionally flexible so that it can be shaped to meet your needs. The conversation should be guided by The "Parish Discernment Guidelines" document, available through the Bishop's Office.
- In some cases, a preliminary conversation with the Diocesan Ministry Developer or the Bishop may be desired.

#### ***Becoming a candidate...***

- When you feel you are ready to move ahead, complete and submit the 'information sheet' (aka 'yellow form') to the Bishop's Office.
- Your home parish priest working with the parish discernment group completes a Letter of Commendation which is submitted to the Bishop's Office.
- You will be invited to meet with the Bishop for conversation about your vocation.

#### ***Becoming an 'aspirant,' one who aspires to diaconal ordination...***

- If you are recommended to proceed to the next step of the discernment process, you will be invited to prepare written material which is reviewed by the members of the Diocesan

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the process can be terminated at any stage, either by the individual or by the Bishop. It is also possible for individuals to take a 'leave of absence' from the process for a time where necessary.

Discernment Coordinating Team, and then passed along (as they believe it appropriate to do so) to the members of the Diaconal Ministry Team (DMT).

- Meet with a panel (usually three people) of members of DMT. This interview is generally an hour long. There may be more than one panel interview if DMT feels that would be helpful. The panel report is shared with all DMT members, who make a recommendation to the Bishop about proceeding.
- You will be invited to meet with the Bishop. You will learn at this point about the DMT's recommendation for the next steps in your discernment.
- You may be invited to meet with the Diocesan Ministry Developer at this point to create a learning and formation plan as you continue your discernment and journey towards diaconal ministry.

### ***Becoming a postulant...***

- At the Bishop's invitation, attend a weekend-long discernment process called the Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination for Deacons, or ACPO-D. ACPO-D is held regularly with candidates and assessors from across the Diocese of Rupert's Land. Over the course of the weekend (usually at a retreat centre), you will have a number of meetings with ACPO-D assessors who are seeking to discern whether they believe God is calling you to ministry as a deacon. The costs of your participation will be covered. You will receive a recommendation and feedback to assist you in the next stages of your journey. You will know the results of the ACPO-D weekend before you leave to return home, and the recommendation report is shared with the Bishop.
- Following your ACPO-D weekend, you will be invited to meet with the Bishop. At this time you will be informed whether you are being formally accepted as a postulant.

### ***As a postulant...***

This is the stage of more intentional formation for ordained ministry. Formation consists of moving towards acquiring the competencies for diaconal ministry identified in *The Iona Report*. These are laid out in broad terms below; see the report for more details.

While there is limited bursary assistance available from the Diocese and the national Anglican Foundation, and your parish may also offer assistance, the costs of these formation programs ultimately rests with the postulant.

At this stage you will be asked to provide documentation of your (in Manitoba) Child Abuse and Adult Abuse Registry Checks, and Police Records Check (in Manitoba and Ontario).

You will meet with the Diocesan Ministry Developer following your acceptance as a postulant and then at least twice a year thereafter to review your academic, practical, and spiritual formation. At this time you will discuss your learning goals and how to meet them.

The length of your postulancy will depend on the training and experience you bring. For those who begin this process without any formal theological education, you can expect to spend two years or more in formation; this will largely depend on whether you are completing studies full-time or part-time (see below).

Note that from time to time there may arise issues in the church, or in your own life, that may require some flexibility with the requirements noted below. Should substantive issues arise during the course of your postulancy (family or personal issues, financial, spiritual), please don't hesitate to be in touch with the Ministry Developer or the Bishop. We are here to support you in this journey.

### *Knowledge*

Acquire a grounding in theological education, as advised by the Diocesan Ministry Developer. Studies will need to include demonstrable competence in the following areas:

- Biblical studies, both Hebrew Bible and New Testament
- Theology: core Christian doctrines and how they have been received and developed within Anglicanism
- Christian History: including Anglican history, globally and within Canada
- Anglican Liturgy: including Anglican spirituality and preaching
- Indigenous studies: including the churches' roles in Indian Residential Schools and response to the Truth and Reconciliation report and Indigenous spiritualities
- Contextual theology: missiology, social justice and advocacy, interfaith and ecumenical teachings and practices
- Studies in the diaconate, including the biblical and historical roots of the order, theological understandings

### *Practical training*

- Completed in the postulant's home parish and/or another parish setting and/or another ministry setting (as determined by the postulant, diocesan ministry developer, Diaconal Ministry Team and bishop in consultation), intentional field education will be undertaken, usually (in parish placements) under the supervision of the Incumbent. Specific learning goals will be agreed upon in a learning covenant prior to the placement's commencement.
- Complete one basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (see [www.uwinnipeg.ca/theology/docs/cpe-brochure.pdf](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/theology/docs/cpe-brochure.pdf)) or the Learning on Purpose learning circle at the Centre for Christian Studies (see <http://ccsonline.ca/program/courses-and-circles/#leadership>). Other pastoral care training may be acceptable, to be negotiated with the Diocesan Ministry Developer and approved by the Bishop in consultation with DMT.

### *Spiritual formation*

- It is critically important that this time of postulancy be a time of deepening your relationship with Christ. Pay particular attention to your prayer life, beginning to (if you do not already) live by a rhythm of morning and nighttime prayer, meditation, and reading of Scripture. An annual overnight retreat is an excellent practice.
- You will be assigned a Deacon Mentor, who will work with you in assisting you to live into your vocation as a deacon. These relationships are entered into for a one-year term, and are renewable. You will also, as a diaconal postulant, be invited to participate in the life of the Diocesan Network of Deacons, who gather for continuing education, prayer, fellowship, and support.

- If you don't yet have a spiritual director, you are asked to find one. This person will meet with you at times set by the two of you to assist you in your spiritual journey. (See <http://www.rupertsland.ca/ministry/spiritual-directors-in-the-diocese-of-ruperts-land/>).
- Sometimes formation for ministry (and the practice of ministry) surfaces for us personal issues that need some attention. It is not uncommon for postulants, and deacons, to work with a counsellor or therapist from time to time. Doing so can greatly help in our level of self-awareness, which is a great asset in ministry.

***Becoming an ordinand for diaconal ordination...***

- As your formal training draws near to a close, you will be invited to prepare and submit written materials to DMT; questions will be provided by the chair of DMT. This invitation will be issued after a check-in meeting with the Diocesan Ministry Developer, who will inform the bishop and DMT when she feels you are approaching readiness for ordination based on your formation plan.
- You will meet with a panel of (usually three) members of DMT for a pre-ordination interview, with the aim of assessing your readiness for ordination as a deacon. All members of DMT will review your written materials and the panel's report of your meeting, and will make a recommendation to the Bishop.
- Meet with the Bishop to hear whether you are moving to ordinand status, and discuss a date for your ordination as a deacon.
- Complete a pre-ordination retreat. (Details will be discussed at that time.)
- Note that ordination in Rupert's Land usually takes place at St. John's Cathedral in Winnipeg or, alternatively, could take place at St. Alban's Cathedral in Kenora.

This journey is a process which involves input from a variety of persons who will guide, form, assess and help you along this path. Sometimes, ordination is not the final outcome, but the discernment process is in place to help you and the Church grow and form disciples in Christ in whatever form their ministry may take, priestly, diaconal or lay.

For more information please contact the Diocese of Rupert's Land to arrange to speak with the **Diocesan Ministry Developer** or the **Chair of the Diaconal Ministry Team**

Tel. (204) 992-4200

or

Email: [general@rupertsland.ca](mailto:general@rupertsland.ca)

## Vocabulary

Some words and phrases you may hear during your formation process...

*Covenant:* the field placement learning contract agreed to by the postulant, priest supervisor and the diocesan ministry developer. The covenant should shape all ministry in which the postulant engages during the field placement.

*Aspirant:* a person who has applied to become a postulant but has not yet been approved.

*Postulant:* a person who has been approved for ordination in the future. Note that being a postulant is not a guarantee of eventual ordination.

*Ordinand:* a person who has received approval for imminent ordination.

*DMT:* Diaconal Ministry Team (formerly part of *DDGOM*, the Diocesan Discernment Group on Ordained Ministry), comprised of priests, deacons, and lay people from around the Diocese of Rupert's Land. DMT meets regularly to track progress of individuals seeking diaconal ordination and to oversee the formation process.

*Deacon (vocational):* a person ordained to a particular ministry of servanthood, seeking to serve Christ in the poor, weak and vulnerable on behalf of the church, and bringing the needs of the world to the attention of the church. Vocational deacons are generally not paid for their work and come under the direct jurisdiction of the bishop.

*Deacon (transitional):* a person who has been ordained a deacon, as above, who will eventually be ordained a priest. (This progression from ordination as a deacon to ordination as a priest is part of our Anglican heritage, shared with other "catholic" churches, and ensures that priestly ministry is grounded in service to others.)

*CPE:* Clinical Pastoral Education, a program run through institutions (usually hospitals but sometimes jails) in which participants learn pastoral care skills as well as self-awareness. Sometimes these programs are known as SPE, Supervised Pastoral Education.