



ANiC Ordination Process

The Anglican Network in Canada is passionate about people coming to know the Lord Jesus. The church (and the harvest) is his, not ours. Jesus says, "...the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2). ANiC prays earnestly for the proclamation of the gospel across Canada and New England, in diverse cultures, geographies, and age groups. As Anglican Christians, being nourished by God's Word and Spirit, we are eager to identify, equip, and deploy ministers of the gospel to faithfully teach and preach God's word, and shepherd the flock of God in parishes and church plants from sea to sea. If you sense you are being called by God (and encouraged in your congregation) to explore ordained ministry, this document outlines the process we follow within the Diocese. We seek to support and encourage you, because the task of gospel ministry, while wonderful, is weighty. The BCP (Book of Common Prayer) Ordination Collect guides us to pray: "Mercifully behold these thy servants now called to the like office and administration; replenish them so with the truth of thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve thee in this office, to the glory of thy Name, and the edification of thy Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ...."

Discerning a call to holy orders takes place within the context of the Church, both in the local parish and on the diocesan level. The process of discernment within ANiC generally takes three years. It involves a period of parish discernment, appropriate education, practical ministry training and experience, and meetings with the bishop and the Diocesan Ordination Chaplain (DOC). It is designed to help potential Candidates¹ discern their suitability for and calling to ministry and to provide support for those pursuing ordination. It is also designed to aid ANiC in discerning their ministry gifts, spiritual maturity, and godly character.

The Anglican Church has three orders: bishops, priests (or presbyters), and deacons. These orders are sequential: All bishops were first ordained to the priesthood and all priests were first ordained to the diaconate. There are **permanent** deacons, who have a vocational call to the diaconate, and **transitional** deacons, who have a vocational call to the priesthood. Transitional deacons are usually ordained to the priesthood at least 12 months after their ordination to the diaconate. Part of the discernment process is determining whether someone is suitable to serve the Lord Jesus as either a transitional deacon (and ultimately as a presbyter or priest), or a permanent (vocational) deacon (see "**The Permanent Diaconate in ANiC**" document for background and specifics on the ministry of all deacons, transitional and permanent).

Beginning the Discernment Process

1. Those considering ordained ministry (the Candidate) should first meet with the Rector (or priest-in-Charge) in their parish. In this meeting, the Candidate and Rector will review both the individual's desire to be ordained and the evidence from parish involvement of progress in Christian faith and giftedness for ministry. The Candidate should be firmly established within a parish, supervised by the rector and well-known to lay leaders. This is where practical ministry experience will normally take place and suitability for ordained ministry is assessed.

¹ Traditionally in some Dioceses, those seeking to be ordained into Holy Orders are identified at different points in the process as an "Aspirant," "Postulant," and/or "Ordinand." For simplicity we use "Candidate," which is the basic sense of these terms, throughout this document.

2. The next step in the process is for the Rector to connect the Candidate with the DOC on behalf of the bishop. The DOC will, under the bishop, have discretion in applying the following guidelines.
3. The DOC requests the Candidate to supply personal and spousal references (see Appendix 1), and a CV with academic certificates and transcripts. ANiC typically requires Candidates to possess a bachelor's and a master's degree (or to be in the process of pursuing graduate theological education). All other relevant paperwork is listed in Appendix 5.
4. The DOC requests the Rector to begin the Parish Discernment Process for the Candidate.

Parish Discernment Process

1. A Candidate should be resident within an ANiC parish for a minimum of 12 months, and ideally should have worshipped and served for 3 years within the context of the global Anglican Communion (for example, within a GAFCON-related Province).
2. The Rector will establish a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC), consisting of three to six people chosen from within the parish who will journey with the Candidate – generally for a period of three years. The PDC, along with the Rector, will review the evidence from parish involvement of progress by the Candidate in: love of God and personal relationship with the Lord Jesus; ability to teach; godly character; ability to lead; gospel clarity; biblical understanding; theological conviction; love of people; and a servant heart (commensurate with Biblical and Canonical standards). The PDC should include at least one church warden and others who are qualified and willing to help the Candidate discern his/her calling, potentially including a youth representative. The relevant sections on ordination are excerpted from the Canons and Constitution in Appendix 2.
3. The Rector and the Candidate will determine a Training Plan for the Candidate during the parish discernment period that will outline how the Candidate will serve in the parish (and possibly beyond), taking into consideration their existing ministry within the parish. This training plan will be used by the discernment committee to evaluate and give feedback to the Candidate. A Training Framework can be found in Appendix 3.
4. The DOC will provide a detailed process for the Parish Discernment Committee to follow that will guide their work for three years and that will include a form provided by the DOC to be used by the committee in meetings with the Candidate.
5. The Parish Discernment Committee will meet with the Candidate regularly, for a minimum of six times over three years. The DOC will be in contact with the Rector at least once a year to support the Parish discernment and training process.
6. At the end of the Parish Discernment process, the PDC will provide testimony to the qualifications set out in #2 above and relate them in a written Summary Report to the Rector, who will pass on the report with a cover page including his or her own comments to the DOC, who will review and submit it to the bishop. The Candidate will be informed as to the recipients of this report. A framework for the Summary PDC report is offered in Appendix 4.

7. The Parish Discernment Committee must meet with the spouse of the Candidate (if applicable) at least once during the process, for communication and support.

Diocesan Discernment

1. Candidates will engage in an ANiC-approved psychological screening process, involving the Birkman Method, a Prepare/Enrich Inventory, and a one hour follow up with a trained ANiC coach. This meeting will be coordinated by the DOC. The cost should be shared equally by the Candidate, their parish, and ANiC.
2. As part of Diocesan discernment, Candidates are encouraged to attend the Increase Conference, ANiC Diocesan Synod, and, if applicable, an approved church planting assessment event.
3. At the conclusion of the parish discernment process, the PDC and Rector may, in the Summary Report, recommend to the DOC and House of Bishops that the Candidate attend DOVE (Discernment of Vocation Event). The final decision rests with the House of Bishops.

Episcopal Interview

During the Parish Discernment Process, the Candidate will meet at least once in person with the Regional Bishop to discuss the process and receive direction on next steps. Beyond this, the Candidate will connect with the Regional Bishop annually (or more often as needed) as a way of candidly reporting on how the discernment process is proceeding.

Written Examination

Prior to attending DOVE, the Candidate will be expected to complete a written ordination examination. (This will be provided to the Candidate by the DOC in collaboration with the ANiC Discernment Committee (ADC), which hosts DOVE gatherings.)

Regional Discernment of Vocation Event (DOVE)

1. Each year, the ADC will host a day-long regional Discernment of Vocation Event (DOVE).
2. Prior to DOVE, the Candidate will be sent a Candidate Application Form. This form must be submitted to the ADC at least six weeks prior to DOVE.
3. During DOVE, Candidates will be examined through multiple interviews in three key areas:
 - a. theological understanding, biblical competence, and Anglican formation
 - b. leadership potential and spiritual formation
 - c. emotional and psychological capacities for ordained ministry

Post DOVE

1. Following DOVE, the ADC and Ordination Chaplain will provide a report through the Regional Bishop to the House of Bishops along with detailed notes from interviews with the Candidate and details about the Candidate's background, strengths, weaknesses, education, and ministry experience. This report should be signed by the Candidate and the assessors.
2. The ADC may recommend to the House of Bishops (through the Regional Bishop) the Candidate for:
 - a. Ordination to the transitional diaconate.
 - b. Ordination to the permanent (vocational) diaconate
 - c. An invitation to return to a future DOVE if it is determined that further local discernment needs to take place to address concerns about the Candidate's suitability for ordained ministry.
 - d. A form of Lay Ministry.
 - e. Other recommendations based upon the specific needs of the Candidate.
3. The Regional Bishop and the Candidate will discuss the recommendations of DOVE and determine next steps.

Ordination

After the discernment process is complete, the Regional Bishop, in consultation with the House of Bishops, will decide if and when the Candidate will be ordained to the Diaconate. Ordination normally only takes place once a ministry position or placement has been secured.

Post Ordination Training and Support

Those who have been ordained will receive post-ordination training and ongoing supervisory support and evaluation – well into the early years of ordained ministry – by a Rector, Archdeacon, and/or Bishop. This may take the form of a Curacy, and would include attending the Increase Conference. Transitional deacons are usually ordained to the priesthood at least 12 months after their ordination to the diaconate.

Appendix 1. References

Personal References - Each applicant should provide written references from 3 people familiar with their ministry. These people should not be family members, clergy, or members of the Ordination Committee. They should be able to speak to the personal life of the applicant, especially home and family life. This is where we should receive information about their personal formation and temperament.

Spousal Reference - Each applicant should have their spouse (if married, or engaged) complete a personal reference, outlining their own perspective on their spouse's desire to serve in ordained ministry.

Appendix 2. The relevant sections on ordination, from ANiC Canons and Constitution

See Article 9 "Of Holy Orders in ANiC."

Appendix 3. Parish Training Plan

Each Parish must aim to provide training in conviction, competency, and character. The DOC will work with the Rector to develop an appropriate Training Plan.

Appendix 4. Framework for Parish Discernment Committee Summary Report

The DOC will provide a template as required.

Appendix 5. List of Relevant Documents:

1. Candidate's CV and personal references
2. Parish Discernment Committee Summary Report (with Rector's Cover Letter)
3. Three personal references
4. Criminal Record Check and Ministry Safety Training
5. Psychological Screening Process
6. Spousal reference (if applicable)
7. Church Planter assessment (if applicable)
8. Completion of Candidate Preparation for DOVE (will be handed out about 6 weeks prior to DOVE)

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