

Steps Toward Candidacy for the Diaconate

Application for candidacy may be made when the first year of the Oakerhater School is successfully completed.

The postulant is responsible for seeing to it that the Diocesan Office receives the following.

_____ Letter of application to the bishop from the postulant requesting candidacy and including: the date of admission to postulancy, a reflection on what has confirmed the postulant's gifts for the diaconate; a summary of learning to date; an indication of where the postulant sees his/her growing edges (what needs more attention); a description of what has been most inspiring in the process to date.

_____ Letter of support to the bishop from the postulant's congregation, dated and signed by the rector and at least 2/3 of the vestry. The postulant's faith community may also serve this purpose.

Not canonically required, but COM would also like the postulant to submit:

_____ Letter evaluating the postulant's Oakerhater School work from the Director or appointee.

_____ Letter of evaluation from the postulant's Directed Pastoral Care supervisor.*

_____ Letter of evaluation from the Parish Internship supervisor.*

_____ Letter of evaluation from the Field Pastoral Education supervisor*

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3. The Assignment:

Candidates should find a person in their community who has taken CPE training. This might be a parish priest, hospital chaplain, counselor, etc. During the course of the six months that person should direct and encourage the candidate to hone their listening and interpersonal skills. Weekly contact with the CPE mentor is expected. Any charges for that service will be negotiated between the candidate and the mentor.

4. The Assessment:

During that six months, the candidates will meet as a group with a CPE trainer once a month. This meeting is expected to last one hour. The purpose is to give the candidates an opportunity to reflect on their experiences. The candidates and the trainer are expected to coordinate their schedules and determine when the meetings will occur.

FIELD PLACEMENT EDUCATION (FPE)

In the training program for the diaconate in Western Michigan, candidates are given a wide range of exposure and training. This training may not be in-depth but does provide the tools with which the individual candidate may begin a more comprehensive individual program according to their interests and ministries. FPE follows that prototype. Individuals are expected to participate in a six month program toward the end of their schooling which will give them some exposure to the FPE process. The school is very clear that this is not Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training or a CPE equivalent and should not be claimed as such. This experience should, however, give the candidate some sense of listening, interacting, and reflecting on conversations in an intentional format.

1. The Setting:

Candidates may engage in this exercise in their current field of ministry. This might include their church, hospital, school, day care center, nursing home, etc.

2. The Time line:

During the latter part of the training, candidates should engage in a six month process of intentional examination of their interactions with others.

TITLE III - CANON III.6.5 - 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 Holy Scriptures, theology, and 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 response to evidence of abuse.

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

(4) the Church's teaching on racism.

(h) Each Candidate for ordination shall communicate with the Bishop in person or by letter, four times a year, in the Ember Weeks, reflecting 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.

students will preach twice during this four-month period. In addition, students will begin to develop a ministry proposal plan. **The** plan will be developed for this particular parish. The student will present this proposal to the parish priest as well as the Board and receive feedback. Suggestions for improvement and implementation will be made. If the plan can be implemented in the time allotted, the student must also design a way to transfer the ministry to others upon departure. Part of the learning will also include appropriate ways to say goodbye when leaving a parish.

During the second year of training, the student will return to their home parish. It is expected that they will continue to preach twice a trimester. They will also be engaged in some type of Clinical Pastoral Training (**CPT**). The type of training will be developed between the student, the Board and the **CPT** trainer. Defining the parameters of the **CPT** experience is still being developed. The student should be aware that there will be added costs for the **CPT** experience.

PARISH ASSIGNMENT

In addition to coursework, students will have other requirements such as attending training in anti-racism, sexual misconduct **prevention**, etc. The greatest assignments, however, involve working in parishes.

During the first trimester of the first year, students should try to complete all extra requirements of the diocese. Furthermore, in these months, the Bishop's staff will make parish assignments. This will be a time of acquaintance with reassignment, participating in closure with the home parish, and engaging in the educational processes of the parishes involved.

Typically, the second trimester of the first year will be a time of formal observation of the assigned parish. The student will describe the leadership style in the parish and identify 'family systems' issues. Students will also identify and become familiar with existing ministries both formal and informal. They will begin to think of ministries that might grow in the congregation that could involve a deacon. A system of assessment and reporting will be devised between the student and the Board.

As the third trimester of the first year arrives, students will begin the process of preparing and **delivering** a sermon. It is hoped that

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAM

In order to be admitted to the *Oakerhater School for Deacons* (OSD), applicants must have first successfully completed our diocesan *Vocational Discernment Program* (VDP). The VDP runs each year from the end of August to the beginning of December. Program brochure and application materials are available on the diocesan website www.edwm.org.

During the VDP, aspirants—those discerning vocations to the diaconate, priesthood, religious life or advanced lay ministry—come together in community prayer and study to listen for God's call. The director, three teaching faculty and a group spiritual director walk with aspirants and spouses along their path of discernment. At the conclusion of VDP, the teaching faculty gathers to write a recommendation to the Bishop and to the Commission on Ministry (COM) stating their view of each aspirant's call. VDP teaching faculty is the aspirant's designated faith community who, by canon, may nominate aspirants as postulants for diaconate or for priesthood.

For admission to OSD, applicants must be postulants. After completion of VDP, the evaluation process continues with the COM, the requisite physical and psychological exams, background checks, etc. Finally, the aspirant has an interview with the Bishop who will decide about promoting a person to postulancy.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

While the student should keep original copies of all letters, assessments, and approvals in a safe place, the school will also maintain a permanent file of personal documents which will be archived in the office of the Bishop

Therefore, copies of all papers pertinent to the diaconate should be forwarded to the Director, as the Director of the School is the student's direct link to the Bishop.

It is the duty of the Director to maintain a record of all tuition accounts, attendance, progress toward ordination, and performance reports.

Furthermore, if the student has any personal needs that may impact the program such as health concerns or personal issues, these should be immediately reported to the Director for a discussion of establishing reasonable accommodations.

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Name _____

YEAR TWO _____

1. _____ First trimester tuition paid
2. _____ June Ember Letter sent
3. _____ First Trimester work complete
4. _____ First Trimester grade recorded
5. _____ September Ember Letter sent
6. _____ Second Trimester tuition due
7. _____ December Ember Letter sent
8. _____ Second trimester work complete
9. _____ Second trimester grades recorded
10. _____ Completion of parish assignment
11. _____ Third trimester tuition due
12. _____ March Ember Letter sent
13. _____ Third trimester work complete
14. _____ Third trimester grades recorded
15. _____ Complete Field Pastoral Education ***
16. _____ Sexual Misconduct Prevention Training ***
17. _____ Anti Racism training completed ***
18. _____ Instruction in reporting abuse to civil authorities ***
19. _____ Meet with Commission on Ministry
20. _____ Canonical Exams

*** Denotes activities in which flexibility in completion can be arranged.

CHECKLIST FOR ORDINANDS

NAME _____

Check when complete

Prior to Coursework

1. _____ Physical exam.
2. _____ Psychological exam.
3. _____ Background check
4. _____ Interview with the Bishop
5. _____ Completion of Biographical Application
6. _____ Read The Diaconate: A Full and Equal Order (Barnett)

YEAR ONE _____

1. _____ First Trimester tuition paid
2. _____ First Trimester work completed
3. _____ First Trimester grades recorded
4. _____ September Ember Letter sent
5. _____ Second Trimester tuition paid
6. _____ Ministry placement Assignment
7. _____ Second Trimester work finished
8. _____ Second Trimester grades recorded
9. _____ December Ember Letter sent
10. _____ Third Trimester tuition paid
11. _____ Third Trimester work finished
12. _____ Third Trimester grades recorded
13. _____ March Ember Day letter sent
14. _____ June Ember Letter sent

COURSE WORK

Instructors are recruited by the Dean, recommended by the Board, and then appointed by the Bishop. Instructors are encouraged to design their courses around the following course descriptions. Noting that class time will be limited, however, instructors will develop their own emphases and create their own syllabus. Each course will have assigned readings from texts that are not a part of the tuition expenses.

Prior to the beginning of the academic training component, students will be given a comprehensive two year calendar by the Director which will detail the meeting times and trimester dates.

Each course will have requirements of written papers, presentations and projects. It is expected that final assessments will be given in a way that does not take up class time...Mail in, take home exams will be the norm.

The instructor will provide a course calendar as part of the syllabus before the first class meeting along with an assignment and reading schedule listing all materials needed for the course.

The instructor will provide a written evaluation of each student. Grades will be assigned as follows:

High pass (HP)

Pass (P)

Unsatisfactory (U) (with options to correct)

Incomplete (I) (stating requirements to complete)

COURSES IN DIACONAL FORMATION

Year One

Homiletics
Hebrew Scriptures
Hermeneutics/Exegesis
Church in Society/Deacon in Ministry in the World
New Testament
Church History
Pastoral Care

Year Two

Systematic Theology
Book of Common Prayer/Deacon in Liturgy
Gospel Parallels
Christian Ethics
Exam Review
Pastoral Care

COSTS

At this time, there are no diocesan funds that support the School. Therefore, the cost of the program is covered entirely by tuition and gifts from parishes and individuals. The amount charged to each group will be determined by the number of students enrolled.

Books are not included in the tuition costs.

It is expected that the entire payment for the term will be received prior to the first meeting unless other arrangements have been made. Refunds will not be possible.

It is also expected that the costs of the school will be shared between the candidate and the sponsoring parish and possibly the parish in which a postulant might be placed.

Amounts do not include personal expenses. It is also assumed that each student will have access to a computer and maintain an email account.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

(THEO 510 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will demonstrate a strong Christian ethic and articulate how it is similar to and different from the culture or popular ethic of our day.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understanding the history of ethics
2. Learning various approaches to ethics
3. Understanding Jesus as the cornerstone of Christian ethics
4. Understanding Christian ethics and the deacon
5. Awareness of steps and issues in the process of making ethical decisions
6. The ability to articulate the relationship between ethics and contemporary social issues

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSES

HOMILETICS

(LIT 500 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will construct and deliver sermons.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Accurate and careful use of scripture
2. Awareness of Jesus' concern for those in need
3. Finding the good news or life giving message in scripture passages
4. Story weaving or "stringing pearls"
5. Analyzing the exegetical idea
6. Formulating the message of the homily
7. Determining the sermon's purpose
8. Constructing a sermon outline
9. Preparing an introduction and a conclusion
10. Delivery
11. Finding the voice of a deacon
12. Awareness of congregation and the strengths and needs of the hearer

GOSPEL PARALLELS

(SCRIP 530 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will gain a deeper knowledge of the gospels by comparing Matthew, Mark and Luke, the writings of the early church fathers, and the non-canonical gospels.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understanding footnote references
2. Awareness of types of text
3. Awareness of Greek manuscripts
4. Awareness of versions of the New Testament
5. Awareness of the work of the early church fathers
6. Awareness of the non-canonical gospels
7. Understanding of Matthew, Mark and Luke
8. Identifying the relationship of the synoptic gospels to the Gospel of John

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER AND ROLE OF THE DEACON

(LIT 520 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will explore the Book of Common Prayer and understand liturgical roles of a deacon.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Identifying the ministries of all four orders and their appropriate roles in liturgy
2. Understanding the Daily Office...service and rubrics
3. Understanding the Great Litany
4. Awareness of the collects, traditional and contemporary
5. Awareness of liturgies for special days, especially the deacon's role in Maundy Thursday and the Great Vigil of Easter
6. Understanding baptism
7. Understanding The Holy Eucharist, order for worship, rubrics, focusing on deacon's role and Prayers of the People
8. Understanding Pastoral Offices, especially to the sick, the dying, and leadership of Lay Eucharistic Ministers
9. Awareness of Episcopal services especially Ordination of a Deacon
10. Understanding the Psalter, Prayers, Catechism, Historical Documents and finding dates of Easter and Holy Days
11. Use of the Sunday and Daily Lectionary
12. Understanding of Title IV
13. Understanding the Customary for the Diocese of Western Michigan

HEBREW SCRIPTURES

(SCRIP 500 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will understand the Hebrew Scriptures as historical, literary, and religious works and the influence they have on Christendom in general and Anglicanism specifically.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understanding events, figures and themes
2. The creation of a people Israel
3. Israel becomes like the nation.
4. The covenant community is renewed
5. Understanding the scriptures' influence on our life in the world today
6. Understanding the source theory of biblical development
7. A working knowledge of available references
8. The ability to use the Bible as story in diaconal ministry

HERMENEUTICS/EXEGESIS

(SCRIP 510 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will be able to do critical analysis of passages of scripture.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understanding literary criticism---J,E,P,D
2. Understanding form criticism---Sitz im Leben
3. Understanding redaction criticism---modified to the author's point of view
4. Understanding transmission of scripture
5. Awareness of other ways of reading the text: i.e. liberationist, feminist, as deacons
6. Identify literary forms in scripture
7. Awareness of Bible versions and use in Episcopal worship
8. Avoiding misuse of scripture
9. Know how to use study books:
 - *Interpreter's Bible
 - *Young's Analytical Concordance
 - *Unger's Bible dictionary
 - *Richard's Expository Dict. of Bible Words
10. Know how to use a study Bible:
 - *kinds of helps
 - *finding what the text says
 - *finding what the text means
 - *how to look up references
 - *other explanations

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care is woven throughout the coursework. Some topics for discussion/reflection include:

Role of the Deacon, Ember Day letters, Family Systems, Grief counseling (divorce issues, death & dying), Hospital/home visits, Listening skills, Substance abuse, Parenting, Parish as helping network, Social/economic needs/issues, Being with people on the 'edge', Diversity in ministry, Ministry with women and children, Assessment of parish ministries, Healthy boundaries, Domestic violence, Group process/motivational interviewing, Beginning and ending parish ministry

The student will demonstrate:

1. The ability to describe a program of pastoral care for the local congregation
2. Knowledge of the outreach ministries within a community and how to access their services
3. Knowledge of volunteer opportunities
4. Understanding the dynamics of pastoral care
5. Knowledge of family systems theory and its application for pastoral care
6. Understanding interpersonal communications
7. Understanding self-care and self-awareness in the role of pastoral care giver
8. Understanding boundaries, with the use of personal limits and referrals
9. The ability to lead a parish into outreach ministry in the community or world

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

(THEO 500 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will acquire an interpretation of the Christian message which is relevant to them in their life today.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understanding the nature of systematic theology
2. Awareness of the method and structure of systematic theology
3. Understanding reason and revelation
4. Being able to articulate what it means to be human
5. Being able to articulate one's understanding of the reality of God
6. Being able to reflect theologically on contemporary concerns
7. Being able to enter into dialogue with those who differ, including those who have different interpretations of theology and scripture

NEW TESTAMENT

(SCRIP 520 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will demonstrate understanding of the twenty seven books of the New Testament.

Special attention will be given to understanding:

1. The gospels
2. The Acts and the general catholic letters
3. The Pauline letters
4. The apocalypse
5. The Origin of the gospels...the time and reason for each of the four writings of the gospels
6. The spread of the Christian movement in Acts and the epistles
7. Classification, form and dispatch of New Testament letters
8. Jesus' call to move the believers to be His body at work in the world

CHURCH IN SOCIETY: DEACON'S MINISTRY IN THE WORLD

(CCS 500 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will be able to articulate the transforming social role of the church and the deacon's ministry between church and world.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understanding the gospel's call to the Christian
2. Reading the "signs of the times:", scripture and tradition, analysis of contemporary society, dialogue within the church
3. Using resources for servant ministry: prayer as petition and action, daily newspaper, the sacraments: baptism, altar, reconciliation
4. Conceptions of society and the church
5. Awareness of circumstances and issues for moral choice and action
6. Understanding the theology of the church's response to the needs of the world
7. Understanding contemporary commitment to mercy and justice
8. Biases in race, sex, culture and class
9. Dealing with people of diverse generations
10. Understanding the principles and methods of social ministry
11. Developing congregational leaders for ministry in the world

CHURCH HISTORY

(CH 500 – School for Ministry Course Catalogue)

Each student will have knowledge of the history of the church.

Special attention will be given to:

1. Understand early councils and heresies
2. Identify ancient heresies in our life today
3. Understanding the Great Schism
4. Understanding the Reformation
5. Understanding the church coming to England and the development of Anglicanism including Celtic roots, Henry VIII, Cranmer, and the Oxford Movement
6. Understanding the development and spread of the Episcopal Church USA
7. Understanding the role of deacon throughout history including famous deacons and their contributions to the faith
8. Understanding the governance of the Episcopal Church on the local, convocational, diocesan, provincial, and national levels