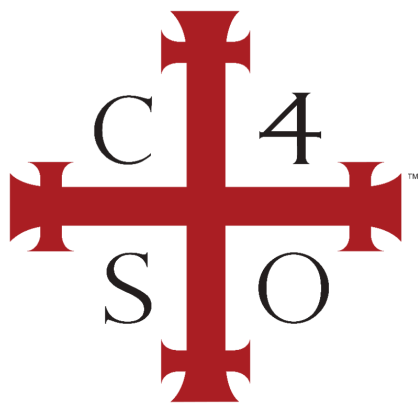




THE DIOCESE OF
CHURCHES
FOR THE SAKE
OF OTHERS

CANDIDATE GUIDE

Local, Deanery and Diocesan Processes

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CANDIDATE GUIDE

Welcome

Thank you for exploring a call to serve as a priest or deacon in one of the local C4SO churches. We are honored to walk alongside you as you seek God's direction for your life and ministry.

Discernment is not simply about deciding whether to be ordained. It is about listening to the Holy Spirit, growing in Christ, and discovering how God has uniquely equipped you to serve His Church. Throughout this journey, your Rector, local church, family, and C4SO will prayerfully discern with you.

The Local Process typically takes several months to complete, allowing adequate time for prayer, reflection, conversation, and mutual discernment. Depending on your theological education and ministry experience, the full Path of Discernment to Holy Orders may take several years.

THE PATH OF DISCERNMENT TO HOLY ORDERS

We believe Holy Orders is distinct from other forms of ministry. Ordination is both the lifelong setting apart of a leader for service in the Church and a sacramental act of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

Because of that, discernment is not a single decision—it is a journey.

C4SO's Path of Discernment to Holy Orders is a prayerful process we walk together. As you explore God's call, we'll help you discern how He has uniquely gifted you, whom He is calling you to serve, and where He is leading you in ministry.

More Than an Application

The Path of Discernment is more than completing forms and waiting for a decision. It is designed to help you grow spiritually as you seek God's direction for your life.

We hope that, by the end of the process, you will be better equipped for a lifetime of faithful ministry—whether God leads you to ordained ministry or to serve as a lay leader. We celebrate both callings because every member of the Church has a vital role in God's mission.

Discernment Happens in Community

While God's call is personal, discernment is never private. Throughout the process, your family, local church, and C4SO all play an important role in helping you recognize and confirm God's leading.

From the beginning, you'll be asked to consider the people you are called to serve and the ministry to which God may be calling you—whether that's planting churches, serving on a church staff, leading an existing congregation, or another ministry connected to a local C4SO church. Clarifying your calling early helps shape the rest of your discernment journey.

Who We Ordain

C4SO is committed to planting churches and multiplying apprentices of Jesus. Because of this, we ordain leaders who are called to plant churches or serve in significant vocational ministry within a growing local C4SO church.*

Candidates for ordination should demonstrate:

- **Character** — a life marked by ongoing spiritual formation and apprenticeship to Jesus.
- **Competency** — a demonstrated record of fruitful ministry affirmed by others.
- **Calling** — clarity about the people, place, and purpose of their ministry.
- **Alignment** — a commitment to C4SO's core values of Kingdom, Spirit, Formation, Mission, and Sacrament.
- **Vocational Readiness** — a sustainable ministry role with appropriate financial support.*

*Vocational deacons may serve outside a local church but should demonstrate a sustainable model for supporting their ministry with the support of a local church.

THE LOCAL PROCESS

Current Status: Aspirant

Purpose: Discern your calling within your local church.

The Local Process is the first stage of C4SO's Path of Discernment to Holy Orders. It is designed to help you, your family, your local church, and C4SO prayerfully discern God's call together.

What to Expect

Throughout the Local Process, you will:

- Meet regularly with your Rector and local church leaders.
- Begin ongoing Spiritual Direction.
- Reflect deeply on your life and calling through a Spiritual Autobiography.
- Participate in conversations with your spouse (if married).
- Meet with a Parish Discernment Committee over several months.
- Read the Canons of the ACNA and C4SO.
- Complete the required forms and assessments.

Most importantly, we hope this season forms you spiritually while helping you discern whether God is calling you to ordained ministry.

The following is a list of items that we will gather over the next few months. **Please do not work ahead.** Each of these items listed below gives you an overview of your discernment, not a checklist to accomplish. When you were accepted into discernment, you received access to an app that will facilitate your process.

Local Discernment Process

☐ 1. Initial Conversation

Meet with your Rector, the Canon for Ordinations, and, when applicable, your ministry leader to discuss your sense of calling and the Local Process. Together, you'll review the discernment journey and your next steps.

☐ 2. Complete the Candidate Self-Reporting Form

Submit the confidential Self-Reporting Form. This allows the Bishop and Ordination Team to address any significant life experiences or concerns early in the discernment process.

☐ 3. Begin Spiritual Direction

Select a Spiritual Director and begin meeting regularly. Spiritual Direction is an essential part of discernment and should continue throughout the entire process.

☐ 4. Write Your Spiritual Autobiography

Prepare a Spiritual Autobiography that reflects on your life, your relationship with Jesus, and your sense of God's call to ordained ministry within C4SO.

☐ 5. Read the Canons

Read the Canons of both the ACNA and C4SO and discuss them with your Rector. At ordination, clergy promise to uphold and submit to these governing documents.

☐ 6. Meet with Your Spouse *(if applicable)*

If you are married, meet with your spouse and Rector to discuss how ordained ministry may affect your marriage, family, and shared calling.

☐ 7. Submit a Spousal Support Letter *(if applicable)*

Ask your spouse to write a letter expressing their support for your discernment and pursuit of ordination. See the end of this guide for helpful prompts.

- ☐ **8. Speak with the Rev. Dr. Erin Moniz or one of the members of the College of Deacons, as directed.**

Erin will discuss with you the College of Deacons and the role of the Diaconate in C4SO.

- ☐ **9. Participate in a Parish Discernment Committee**

Your Rector will assemble a Parish Discernment Committee (PDC) of five members from your local clergy and congregation. The committee will meet with you for at least three months while prayerfully discerning your readiness for ordained ministry.

- ☐ **10. Parish Discernment Committee Report**

At the conclusion of the Local Process, the PDC will submit its report to your Rector.

If you and your Rector both discern that you should continue, your Rector will prepare a recommendation summarizing your discernment, ministry experience, observable fruit in ministry, and readiness for the next stage of the process.

The Canon for Ordinations will review these materials and contact you regarding next steps.

Thank you for your patience and your willingness to pursue discernment prayerfully.

THE DEANERY PROCESS

The Deanery Process typically takes several months to complete, allowing adequate time for prayer, reflection, conversation, and mutual discernment. Depending on your theological education and ministry experience, the full Path of Discernment to Holy Orders may take several years.

Current Status: Postulant

Purpose: Discern your readiness for ordained ministry within the wider C4SO community.

After completing the Local Process, you become a Postulant and begin the Deanery Process. This stage builds on the discernment that has already taken place in your local church. During the Deanery Process, your calling is affirmed more broadly within C4SO as you continue your formation, begin theological education, and meet with diocesan leaders who will help discern your readiness to move forward.

What to Expect

During the Deanery Process, you will:

- Complete the C4SO Holy Orders Application.
- Begin your required theological education, if you have not already done so.
- Meet with the Ordination Preparation Team (OPT), who will assess your character, competency, and calling. Unlike the Parish Discernment Committee, which discerns your call within the context of your local church, the OPT considers your readiness to serve within the wider C4SO community. The team will explore your understanding of the lifelong covenant of ordained ministry in the Anglican tradition, your commitment to C4SO's mission and values, and your desire to live and worship within this expression of the Church. This interview is typically conducted via Zoom or Google Meet. Following the interview, the OPT will submit a written recommendation to your Rector, Dean, and the diocesan office.
- Meet with your Dean for a formal interview, typically held via Zoom or Google Meet. During this conversation, your Dean will review the Ordination Preparation Team's recommendations with you, discuss your ongoing discernment and formation, and explore any areas for continued growth or study. Following the interview, your Dean will submit a written recommendation to the diocesan office.
- Continue growing in your spiritual formation, ministry experience, and vocational discernment.

The following is a list of items that we will gather over the next few months. **Please do not work ahead.** Each of these items listed below gives you an overview of your discernment, not a checklist to accomplish. When you were accepted into discernment, you received access to an app that will facilitate your process.

Deanery Process

☐ **1. Complete the C4SO Holy Orders Application**

Submit the Holy Orders Application and any requested supporting documentation.

☐ **2. Begin Theological Education**

If you have not already done so, begin the required theological education as outlined by the Canon for Ordinations before the beginning of your discernment.

☐ **3. Meet with the Ordination Preparation Team**

Participate in your interview with the Ordination Preparation Team.

☐ **4. Meet with Your Dean**

Participate in your Dean's interview.

☐ **5. Candidate Status**

After all application materials and recommendations have been received and reviewed, you will be notified that you have been approved to move forward. At this point, you become a **Candidate** and enter the Diocesan Process.

☐ **6. Ordination Retreat**

Once you have completed the Deanery Process and 50% of your required education, you will be invited by the Canon for Ordination to attend the next available Ordination Retreat.

THE DIOCESAN PROCESS

The Diocesan Process typically takes several months to complete, allowing adequate time for prayer, reflection, conversation, and mutual discernment. Depending on your theological education and ministry experience, the full Path of Discernment to Holy Orders may take several years.

Current Status: Candidate

Purpose: Prepare for Holy Orders through final assessment, formation, and approval. After completing the Deanery Process, you become a Candidate and enter the Diocesan Process.

This is the final stage of discernment before ordination. During this phase, C4SO completes the remaining assessments and reviews while continuing to invest in your spiritual formation and preparation for lifelong ordained ministry.

What to Expect

During the Diocesan Process, you will:

- Complete the required background check and safeguarding requirements.
- Participate in psychological and marital assessments (if applicable).
- Continue your theological formation through the Anglican Foundations Program.
- Prepare for and complete the required ordination examinations.

- Attend the Candidates' Retreat.
- Meet with the Bishop for a final interview.
- Receive final approval for ordination, pending the Bishop's affirmation.

Throughout this stage, the Canon for Ordinations will review your file to ensure all requirements have been completed before your interview with the Bishop.

The following is a list of items that we will gather over the next few months. **Please do not work ahead.** Each of these items listed below gives you an overview of your discernment, not a checklist to accomplish. When you were accepted into discernment, you received access to an app that will facilitate your process.

Diocesan Process

☐ 1. Complete Your Background Check

Submit the required authorization forms and successfully complete the diocesan background check.

☐ 2. Complete MinistrySafe Training

Complete the required MinistrySafe safeguarding training.

☐ 3. Complete Required Assessments

Participate in a psychological assessment and, if applicable, a marital assessment as part of your preparation for ordained ministry.

☐ 4. Complete Ordination Examinations

Prepare for and complete the required ordination examinations.

Vocational deacons normally complete these examinations before ordination to the diaconate. Those preparing for the priesthood complete the examinations before ordination as a priest. If additional study or remediation is recommended, a plan will be developed with your Rector and/or Dean.

☐ **5. Attend the Candidates' Retreat**

Participate in the Candidates' Retreat as part of the Anglican Foundations Program.

☐ **6. File Review**

The Canon for Ordinations will review your file to ensure all requirements have been completed before your interview with the Bishop.

☐ **7. Meet with the Bishop**

The Bishop will conduct a final interview, prayerfully reviewing your readiness for Holy Orders. Following the interview, the Bishop will determine whether to grant final approval for ordination.

LOOKING AHEAD

After completing the Path of Discernment to Holy Orders and upon the Bishop's approval, you will be ordained according to the Canons of the Anglican Church in North America and C4SO.

Ordination marks the beginning—not the culmination—of a lifetime of ministry. Whether you are called to serve as a vocational deacon, priest, or both, our prayer is that you will continue to grow as an apprentice of Jesus, serving His Church with humility, faithfulness, and joy.

Thank you for allowing C4SO to walk this journey with you. It is a privilege to discern God's calling together.

RESOURCES

The following resources will help you throughout the Path of Discernment to Holy Orders:

- Spiritual Autobiography Guidelines (coming soon!)
- [ACNA Canons](#)
- [C4SO Canons](#)
- Parish Discernment Committee Guide (coming soon!)
- Ordination Preparatory Team Guide (coming soon!)
- [Safe Church Training](#)

SPOUSAL SUPPORT LETTER PROMPTS

Dear Bishop,

I support XX's ordination because:

- Details about how you have seen your spouse's call lived out in his/her life and ministry so far (past)
- Details about how you have seen your spouse grow in his/her ministry over the years (present)
- What are your hopes for your spouse and his/her ministry in the future? (future)

Part 2

- Acknowledge that there will be a difference in how your spouse will be seen by the parish at large, and write about how you two have worked out seasons shifting in your marriage before, if applicable.
- Acknowledge that this shift in ordained ministry may make your spouse less available in some ways to your family. Imagine what that might be like and how you will both make a way for this work.
- You might write about how this will impact your own ministry as well. What does this change mean for you, and what might it mean for you in your relationship to the parish and your own ministry?
- Pick a few adjectives describing how you feel about this next season and how you two might stay united in this process.