



The Episcopal Diocese of Nevada
The Rt. Rev'd Elizabeth Bonforte Gardner
Bishop

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Ordination to the Priesthood

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." (Genesis 22.1)

Phase 1 - Discernment

Either you or someone you trust believes you have a calling to ordained ministry.

- Speak with your rector or church leader.
 - They will explore your call and form a Discernment Committee where you will work together listening and exploring what God might be saying to you.
- You will be asked if you are:
 - A communicant in good standing. The canons of The Episcopal Church define this as "communicants who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God."
 - At least 22 ½ years of age.
 - Baptized.
 - Confirmed in The Episcopal Church for at least one year.
- Your Discernment Committee will meet periodically for at least six months to determine your readiness (not whether you are fit - no one expects a finished product!) for ordained ministry.
 - Using *Ears to Hear: Recognizing and Responding to God's Call* by Edward S. Little, you and your committee will work together to see if ordained ministry is an appropriate or necessary next step for you.
 - You will commit to praying the Daily Office during this time of discernment.
 - You will submit a History Package to the Discernment Committee.

- You will complete a Spiritual Autobiography to submit to the Bishop, rector or church leader, and your Discernment Committee before the first meeting.
- The Discernment Committee will make a recommendation to the rector or church leader at the end of your time together.
- If the Discernment Committee recommends you pursue ordained ministry, your rector or church leader will NOMINATE you to be a Postulant to the Bishop and Commission on Ordination and Licensing.
 - There are a number of forms that go with this step. Please contact the chair of the Commission on Ordination and Licensing.

Phase 2 - Nomination

As a nominee you will begin exploring the complexities of ordained ministry. This includes being a servant leader under the authority of your Bishop.

- Before you do anything, read Title III, Canon 8 of the Canons of The Episcopal Church.
- If your Nomination is accepted by the Bishop, you will be moved to a new church for a period of one year.
 - The move will be arranged by the Bishop in conversation with the new church. There will be consideration of your family obligations, responsibilities at your current church, and other needs of the diocese.
- During the Nomination Year you will look at approved seminaries where you can attain a Masters in Divinity. They include:
 - Seminary of the Southwest
 - Berkeley Divinity at Yale University
 - The University of the South
 - Virginia Theological Seminary | General Seminary
 - Bexley-Seabury Seminary
- During the Nomination Year you will take one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education from a certified trainer.
- You will get a Spiritual Director and meet with them at least once every month during this year.
- You will meet with the COOL chaplain to check in during

this time.

- The Bishop, after this year, may or may not accept the nomination of you to be a POSTULANT.

Phase 3 - Postulancy

Postulancy is the time between nomination and candidacy and initiates a formal preparation for ordination.

- After accepting your nomination to be a Postulant, the Bishop will meet with you to discuss seminary choices and next steps.
- As canonically required, you will communicate with the Bishop on Ember Weeks reflecting academic experiences and spiritual and personal development.
- You will meet with the Bishop at least once each year during postulancy.
- A Field Education placement will be required at a church that is not your Sending Parish nor your Discernment Parish.
- You will attend seminary and begin your formal training for the Priesthood.
 - Your seminary must report your progress and work to the Bishop at least once a year but preferably with each grade reporting period.
- Any Postulant may be removed at any time at the sole discretion of the Bishop.

Phase 4 - Candidacy

Candidacy is a time of education and formation in preparation for ordination to the Priesthood, established by a formal commitment by the Candidate, the Bishop, the Commission, the Standing Committee, and the congregation or other community of faith.

- This phase usually happens in the final year of seminary before your scheduled ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.
- As canonically required, you will communicate with the Bishop on Ember Weeks reflecting academic experiences and spiritual and personal development.

- Your preparation shall include theological training, practical experience, emotional development, and spiritual formation.
- You must pass the General Ordination Exam before applying for Candidacy. The subject areas of study will include:
 - The Holy Scriptures.
 - History of the Christian Church.
 - Christian Theology.
 - Christian Ethics and Moral Theology.
 - Christian Worship according to the use of the Book of Common Prayer, the Hymnal, and authorized supplemental texts.
 - The Practice of Ministry in contemporary society, including leadership, evangelism, stewardship, ecumenism, interfaith relations, mission theology, and the historical and contemporary experience of racial and minority groups.
- You will get training in church norms and expectations including:
 - Prevention of sexual misconduct against both children and adults.
 - Civil requirements for reporting and pastoral opportunities for responding to evidence of abuse.
 - The Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, particularly Title IV thereof, utilizing, but not limited to use of, the Title IV training website of The Episcopal Church.
 - The Church's teaching on racism.
- A letter of recommendation from your seminary will be required before applying for Candidacy.
- Before applying for Candidacy you must complete
 - A background check, according to criteria established by the Bishop and Standing Committee.
 - A medical and psychological evaluation by professionals approved by the Bishop, using forms prepared for the purpose by the Standing Commission on Ministry and Formation in accordance with principles and directions adopted by the General Convention, and if desired or necessary, psychiatric referral.
 - Note: Reports of all investigations and examinations shall be kept permanently on file by

the Bishop and remain a part of the permanent diocesan record.

- After completing the above, you will apply for Candidacy through a series of meetings and compliance with canonical requirements including, but not limited to
 - Meeting with the Commission
 - Approval by the Standing Committee
- The Bishop admits you to Candidacy after consulting with your community of faith, seminary dean, and others.
- Any candidate may be removed at any time at the sole discretion of the Bishop.

Phase 5 - Ordination and Placement

A Candidate must first be ordained Deacon before being ordained Priest.

The Bishop shall obtain in writing and provide to the Standing Committee:

- An application from the Candidate requesting ordination as a Deacon under this Canon.
- A letter of support from the Candidate's congregation or other community of faith, signed and dated by at least two-thirds of the Vestry and the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight.
- Written evidence of admission of the Candidate to Postulancy and Candidacy, giving the date of admission.
- A certificate from the seminary or other program of preparation showing the Candidate's scholastic record in the subjects required by the Canons, and giving an evaluation with recommendation as to the Candidate's other personal qualifications for ordination together with a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.
- A certificate from the Commission giving a recommendation regarding ordination to the Diaconate under this Canon.

On the receipt of such certificates, the Standing Committee, a majority of all the members consenting, shall certify that the canonical requirements for ordination to the Diaconate under the Canons have been met and there is no sufficient objection on

medical, psychological, moral, or spiritual grounds and that they recommend ordination, by a testimonial addressed to the Bishop.

When ordained, the Deacon will sign a Declaration of Conformity as required in Article VIII of the Constitution.

A person may be ordained Priest after at least six months since ordination as a Deacon and eighteen months from the time of acceptance of nomination by the Nominee as provided in Title III.8.2.b.

No Deacon shall be ordained to the Priesthood until having been appointed to serve in a Parochial Cure within the jurisdiction of this Church, or as a Missionary under the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese, or as an officer of a Missionary Society recognized by the General Convention, or as a Chaplain of the Armed Services of the United States, or as a Chaplain in a recognized hospital or other welfare institution, or as a Chaplain or instructor in a school, college, or other seminary, or with other opportunity for the exercise of the office of Priest within the Church judged appropriate by the Bishop.

Notes and Questions for Bishop Elizabeth