

Diocese of Missouri
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Discerning a Call to Ministry

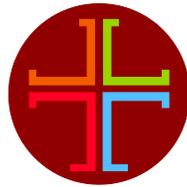
Discernment Process Handbook

Joint Taskforce on the ordination process and the
Discernment Seminar of the Episcopal School for Ministry
1/1/2015

This handbook may be used by anyone seeking to discern a call to ministry, lay or ordained, in the Diocese of Missouri. If in the process of discernment, a call to ordination becomes a possibility, the discernment committee and seeker should notify both the Commission on Ministry and the bishop.

Table of Contents

Welcome Letter from Bishop Smith.....	2
Introduction	3
Terminology	4
Discernment Process Overview.....	6
Session One: Organizational Meeting and Introductions	9
Session Two: The Mission of the Church / God’s Mission.....	12
Session Three: Being Christian.....	14
Session Four: Gifts.....	17
Session Five: Discernment.....	20
Session Six: Orders and Ministries in the Church.....	32
Session Seven: Matching Gifts and Ministry.....	35
Session Eight: Preparing the Report.....	37
Appendix A: A Theology of Ministry.....	39
Appendix B: Licensed Ministries.....	49
Appendix C: Discernment Forms	62



Diocese of Missouri
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

For too long the word “discernment” has carried with it various notions about arcane knowledge and practices. These notions are simply wrong, and more to the point, Christians historically have not limited discernment to questions about ordination. Discernment logically follows on an awareness among God’s people that God has a claim on their lives. The questions then become: To what is God calling me? To what is God calling us?

The Church has erred in treating discernment only in the context of questions about holy orders. Baptism establishes the full dignity and responsibility of every believer, and it is right for every believer to ask what shape these realities should take in his or her life. Discernment could be, and I dare say, should be, the normative practice for all the baptized. In various seasons, God’s holy meddling in human life becomes evident for persons and for communities, which is also to say that discernment is no once-for-all undertaking.

To make sense of this divine intrusion, the Church offers some very ordinary steps to take, mostly those of prayer, the study of scripture, and doing these things within a community of believers. This community necessarily asks hard questions and offers soft arms to catch one another. It is hard to over-emphasize the communal nature of discernment, especially in a western culture like ours given over to atomistic individualism.

This handbook arises from two ideas in particular. First, everything in this book acts to normalize the practices of discernment broadly, assuming that all the baptized are called by God. Second, all that is written normalizes community as the only suitable context in which to make sense of God’s claim on our lives.

The Task Force which developed this handbook for the Diocese of Missouri worked hard to reclaim discernment for all God’s people, for which I am deeply grateful. I hope that you will receive this work for the gift that it is.

Ever faithfully, in Christ,
The Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith
Tenth Bishop of Missouri

Introduction

The handbook you hold in your hands results from a broad collaboration across the Diocese of Missouri and its various bodies concerned with discerning and forming persons for the ministry of the Church in all its facets.

In the fall of 2013, Bishop Wayne Smith convened a special Task Force on the ordination process in the Diocese of Missouri, composed of the chair and two other representatives of each body concerned in one way or another with discerning and forming persons for ordination in the diocese: the Commission on Ministry, the Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains, and the Episcopal School for Ministry (ESM). The task force quickly discovered that each of these three bodies brought its own set of assumptions to the process, much to the consternation of those seeking to engage “the process.”

Beyond confusion about the mechanics of the process, the task force discovered that the three bodies, and indeed the diocese as a whole, did not have a clearly expressed theology of the ministry of the church. We set as our first task to write a theology of the ministry of the church, of the baptized and of each of the three ordered ministries. For the sake of concision, we set a limit of roughly 500 words for each of the six essays. The resulting booklet, “A Theology of Ministry” serves as a companion to this booklet, which makes frequent reference to those essays.

In that same time frame, the School for Ministry convened a seminar of alums, who themselves had engaged in discernment in their own congregations, and set for that seminar the task of drafting this discernment booklet. At the time, the discernment process used two booklets, one entitled “Diaconate Discernment Process Handbook,” and (not surprisingly) the other entitled “Priesthood Discernment Process Handbook.” These booklets clearly front-loaded the process, forcing the seeker to choose between discernment toward the diaconate or the priesthood. Evidently, lay persons did not need to discern their ministries.

This handbook begins with the assumption that every baptized Christian engages in the ministry of Christ in the world, and further, has a call to some way of living out that ministry as a member of the Church. At more than one point in their lives, persons may seek the help of the Church in discerning what form their ministries might take. This handbook will help such seekers in their discernment.

This handbook further assumes that the local congregation serves as the primary locus for that discernment. Members of the local congregation know the seeker and her gifts and her hopes and passions. However, outside voices will only enrich the discernment process. For this reason the process laid out in this handbook encourages the inclusion of someone from outside the congregation in the local discernment committee. A number of alums of ESM have offered themselves to participate in local discernment committees; they will bring the perspective of the wider church.

Terminology

Discernment — This term is used in two ways. In its broadest sense, it is a process of determining God’s calling in one’s life. This can apply when one is deciding whether to accept a promotion, or to enter into marriage, or to move to a new city. Of course, these decisions can be made on purely practical bases, but as Christians we know that “We do not live to ourselves...” (Romans 14:7). In Christian discernment, we ask for God to guide us so that we can live into a life and ministry that God wills for us.

The word *discernment* can also be used more narrowly to talk about the specific question of entering into holy orders. Historically in the Diocese of Missouri the formal process of discernment was only used for those considering the priesthood and the diaconate. This is changed in this current document, though some ambiguity in language may still occur.

Priest-in-charge — This is the senior minister in one’s home congregation. Since most churches have only one priest, that would be the church’s vicar or rector.

(Because the discernment process is required for those considering Holy Orders, many of the following definitions are focused on terms needed by those individuals.)

Holy Orders — This is a term encompassing bishops, deacons, and priests.

Seeker — In this document, the term *seeker* is used to describe someone in the process of discernment. It is intended to reflect someone who is actively seeking the will of God.

Postulant — The term *postulant* is a formal designation for someone who has been accepted for formation in holy orders. The authority to designate someone as a postulant resides with the bishop.

Candidate — A *candidate* is someone who is nearing the end of the formation process and who is scheduled for ordination.

Formation — When someone is training to become a priest or deacon, *formation* is the process of their intellectual and spiritual training. For priests this centers on seminary training. For deacons this centers on study at the Episcopal School for Ministry.

COM — The members of the *Commission on Ministry* are appointed by the bishop to assist in the process of discernment. They train discernment committees and advise the bishop about whether individuals discerning for holy orders should become postulants.

DBEC — The *Diocesan Board of Examining Chaplains* (DBEC) is a committee which works with postulants to the priesthood to develop formations plans. Formation plans are individualized to the academic and spiritual needs of the postulant, so they can vary widely. It is DBEC that determines if the postulant is making satisfactory progress in his or her training.

ESM — The *Episcopal School for Ministry* (ESM) is a training resource in the Diocese of Missouri for training leaders in the Episcopal Church. It currently holds its classes at Eden Seminary, but offers training through distance delivery as well. The centerpiece of ESM's offerings is a three-year Program for Theological Formation. This is normative (standard) training for deacons in the diocese, but is open to all and has many lay graduates.

ESM Board — The ESM is governed by the *ESM Board*. This body works with postulants to the diaconate to develop their formation plans. The ESM Board determines if the postulant is making satisfactory progress in his or her training.

Standing Committee — The *Standing Committee* is a body in the diocese which advises the bishop and which can stand in for a bishop in the event that the diocese temporarily lacks a bishop. The Standing Committee has an oversight role in the process of formation for holy orders.

BCP — The Book of Common Prayer.

Discernment Process Overview

1. The seeker begins the process by speaking with their priest-in-charge. They should have a frank and open conversation with the priest-in-charge about their life and articulate, insofar as it is possible, the issues that are moving them to ask for discernment.
2. Depending on the time of year, the priest-in-charge may recommend attending the diocese's annual discernment conference. This is typically held in early June of each year.
3. The priest-in-charge, at his or her discretion, contacts the diocesan office at 314-231-1220 or through the email address of discernment@diocesemo.org.
4. The diocesan office contacts the Commission on Ministry (COM). The COM then works with the priest-in-charge to create a discernment committee.

Forming a Discernment Committee

- A discernment committee is selected at the priest-in-charge's discretion. The minimum size for a discernment committee is three individuals from the seeker's community in addition to the seeker. Groups larger than five members are possible, but become increasingly difficult to schedule. *All members of the discernment committee need to be present at each meeting.*
- All members of the discernment committee should, if possible, be members in good standing of the Episcopal Church or of a church in full communion with the Episcopal Church, such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Exceptions to this rule may be approved by the Commission on Ministry liaison.
- There should be at least one person who knows the seeker well and one person who does not know the seeker at all. The diocese will attempt to provide an individual from outside the congregation who is specifically trained in the process of discernment. The COM liaison will discuss this with the priest-in-charge.
- The priest-in-charge should not be a member of the discernment committee.

5. The first meeting needs to be scheduled with a training team from COM. *Session One* in this Handbook will take place at that time.

6. Being part of a discernment committee is a substantial commitment of heart and of time. The handbook assumes meeting times of an hour and a half each, though they may run longer than that. It is assumed that there will be a one-month gap between meetings; there must be a minimum of a two-week gap between them to allow time for prayerful reflection. Gaps between meetings of much more than a month are strongly discouraged.

General Session Guidelines

- Confidentiality is vital in this process. The seeker must be allowed the opportunity to speak in all honesty with the discernment committee, so all matters discussed must remain within the group.
- One person (not the seeker) should take on overall leadership to ensure that the group meets regularly and stays on-task. One person may serve as a convener for each session, or that task may be rotated.
- Each member of the discernment committee should have a Bible and a Book of Common Prayer at each session. These are referenced frequently in the training materials.
- Other tasks that should be designated are a scribe and a timekeeper.
- A report will be produced by the discernment committee when it is complete. There are two templates that can be found in *Appendix C*. It is good to review these forms early in the process so as to be aware of the questions that are being asked.
- Members of the discernment committee should remember that the focus of these sessions is the seeker. It is natural and healthy to reflect on the material as it applies to one's life, but the focus should not shift to the committee members and their own discernment issues.

7. There are several possible outcomes for the discernment process.
- a. In the course of discernment, it may become evident that the seeker needs, at this time in his or her life, to prioritize assistance with an issue such as marital counseling or career guidance. The discernment committee should not attempt to work outside of its charge, and should seek assistance from the priest-in-charge or the COM to find appropriate professional assistance for the seeker. Depending on the gravity of the situation, this may cause the process to end before all lessons are complete.
 - In such cases, the discernment committee should complete report **DSC2**, “General Discernment Report” in Appendix C.
 - b. The seeker and discernment committee may hear a possible call to holy orders.
 - In such cases, the discernment committee should complete report **DSC3**, “Discernment Report Concerning Holy Orders” in Appendix C.
 - c. The process may complete with a call to lay ministry. This may be a new call or an affirmation of existing ministry.
 - In such cases, the discernment committee should complete report **DSC2**, “General Discernment Report” in Appendix C.

Session One: Organizational Meeting and Introductions.

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.
—Ecclesiastes 3:1*

You have been challenged to engage in a holy task. A member of the community of faith has offered up her life to the service of God and God’s work in the world. This is a precious gift laid on God’s altar and needs to be honored throughout the work of the discernment process.

Does the seeker¹, in fact, have a call from God? Absolutely. We are all called by God, and God has challenges for all of us. The discernment committee is not asked to discern *if* there is a call, but what *that call might be*. The seeker is asked to determine that call, not as a matter of private reflection or revelation, but in community. The call, whatever it may be, should not be an insight given to only one person.

All too often, both seeker and the Church assume that a call to ministry implies a call to ordained ministry. Such an assumption puts pressure on a discernment committee to say “yes” to a particular understanding of that call. This handbook instead assumes an open-ended process. Both seeker and committee begin with the assumption that every baptized child of God has a vocation to a unique and important ministry in the church and in the world. If one assumes at the outset that the goal of the process is to discern a call to ordained ministry, then if another vocation emerges from the process, both seeker and committee might hear that answer as “no” to ordination rather than as “yes” to a different ministry.

Instead, the seeker may enter the discernment process for a variety of reasons. She may need the affirmation of the Church that her life as a layperson and her vocation in the world is itself holy. She may have arrived at a point of transition in her life, and seek the help of the Church in finding a new direction. Or, she may have reached a point where ministries in the Church that once provided deep gratification no longer do, and she seeks to find refreshment in the ministries she performs in her congregation. A person can approach the discernment process for many reasons. And, of course, it is possible that God is using any of these reasons to nudge the seeker toward a call to ordained ministry. Both seeker and committee need to attend to all possibilities.

Done faithfully, there is an intimacy that develops in the discernment process. The discernment committee is asked to learn about the seeker at deep levels and assist her in matters that can be life-changing. For this reason, confidentiality is of utmost importance throughout the process. Hebrews 4:12-13 states, “Indeed, the word of God is living and

¹ Terminology: for the purposes of this booklet, we will designate the person seeking to discern God’s call in the Church as a “seeker.” We will refer to the seeker in the feminine gender.

active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.” If the discernment committee is to help the seeker hear the voice of God, she will need to share some of this vulnerability before God with the committee as well. The committee therefore needs to be scrupulous in protecting private information. Unless a matter rises to the level of triggering legally-mandated reporting, the committee must honor all confidences. If a matter does rise to the level of legally-mandated reporting, the committee should seek the counsel of the priest-in-charge.

In addition, discernment committees should remember the following:

1. The discernment committee is not constituted or professionally qualified to engage in counseling. If the conversation begins to become therapeutic, this is best handed over to persons with appropriate professional qualifications.
2. The discernment process is not simply evaluating the present fitness of the seeker for a particular ministry. The committee should remain open to God’s prophetic spirit, what that person might become. This is especially important when working with a younger seeker who may have gaps in experience and training.
3. The committee should be clear with the fact that ordination (should this topic arise) does not resolve crises of faith; it is far more likely to produce them. It is also not a way of “paying back” God for answered prayer and it is certainly not a penance for sin.
4. The work of the discernment committee should always be grounded in love. We are all imperfect creatures, but as Christians we are called to tap into the love that God has for all of humanity.
5. It may be tempting, given the practical challenges to assembling the discernment committee, to accelerate or condense the process. A discernment process may take more than the prescribed number of meetings, but for the sake of thoughtful reflection and to allow time for prayer, it is not allowed to take fewer.
6. If at any time the discernment committee feels that the process needs to be completed early and the committee dissolved prior to a formal outcome, it should feel free to do so. That is not a failure of the process; that is simply the process working itself out in a particular way. In such a case, we recommend that the committee make a report, either written or verbal to the priest-in-charge of the congregation.
7. While members of the discernment committee are invited to use this season as a time for their own self-reflection, the committee should not lose its focus on the one being presented for discernment.

Thank you for being willing to serve in this manner.

Go now in peace to love and serve the Lord!

Outline for Session One Meeting

GOALS: 1) Everyone will be introduced to the concept and process of discernment
2) Members of the group will begin to know one another more in depth

OBJECTIVES: 1) Prayer
2) Go over the ground rules and the process
3) Exercises for developing relationships

0:00 Opening Prayer

Free Prayer or Prayer 10, "For the Diocese" (BCP p. 817)

0:02 Greetings and personal introductions. This will briefly allow members to share their name, home congregation, and relationship to the seeker.

0:10 Bible Study

The group will take turns reading the call of Samuel (I Samuel 3) and consider the following questions:

- How did Samuel experience God's call?
- What was Eli's response to Samuel's call?
- Why do you think God chose this method to call Samuel?

0:25 Representatives from the Commission on Ministry will explain the Discernment process and emphasize the issues of openness, prayerfulness, and confidentiality. They outline the various steps in the process. They will answer questions posed by the members of the Discernment committee. They will explain the holiness of the process and give thanks for the individual seeking discernment.

0:55 Members of the Commission on Ministry will distribute copies of *A Theology of Ministry* to all members of the discernment committee (Appendix A).

1:10 The seeker will offer an overview of her spiritual history and explain why she has requested a discernment process.

1:25 Review assignments in preparation for Session 2

- Designate a facilitator, a scribe, and a timekeeper for the group.
- Read the Sessions and the Report that will be submitted at the end of the Discernment process.

1:28 Closing Prayer

Assignments before Session Two.

Read the sections "The Church" and "The Ministry" in "An Outline of the Faith, or Catechism" in the Book of Common Prayer (pp. 854-856).

Read "The Ministry of the Body of Christ" in *A Theology of Ministry*, from the Joint Task Force on the Ordination Process in Appendix A.

Read the following passages of scripture: Isaiah 42:1-4; Isaiah 61:1-4; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 10:41-44; Luke 4:16-21; John 17:20-24; Acts 1:8. Be prepared to reflect on God's mission as described in the passage.

Session Two: The Mission of the Church / God's Mission

The challenge for Session 2 is to explore how the church fits into God's plan for creation. We all know that the word church means different things in different contexts. It's nice to say that a church isn't a building, but if someone asks for directions to St. Swithins-in-the-Swamp, it's almost certain that they're looking for a building, not an immaterial group of people. The word church can obviously mean a building, and it might also mean a specific congregation, a diocese, a denomination, or Christianity as a whole.

For this session, the discernment committee will explore the nature of the church and its mission in the world. This is a vital question in an age when more and more people describe themselves as "spiritual but not religious." Why does the church exist? Why don't we each go about our lives as Christians simply believing in Christ and expressing of our faith as we each feel moved?

As Episcopalians, we see draw wisdom from the famous "three-legged stool" of scripture, tradition, and reason. For scripture, there will be specific passages from the Bible that talk about how God works with the human race. For tradition, we will look at the teachings found in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Finally, for reason, we will draw from our own experiences and the lessons that they have taught us.

The questions contained here about the nature of the church and its mission isn't intended as an academic exercise. The seeker and the discernment committee aren't tasked to produce a particular correct answer. Rather, they are asked to engage in holy conversation and reflection about a topic of profound significance.

Outline for Session Two Meeting

GOALS: 1.) The group will begin to reflect on the nature of God's mission in the world.

OBJECTIVES: 1.) Prayer
2.) Bible study
3.) Discuss the Catechism; the questions on "The Church" (BCP, pp. 854-855)

0:00 Opening Prayer

Free Prayer or Collect 16, "For the Mission of the Church" (BCP p. 257)

0:02 Description of the Session

0:05 Bible Study

Have different people read aloud :

Isaiah 42:1-4 Isaiah 61:1-4 Matthew 25:31-46 Mark 10:41-44
Luke 4:16-21 John 17:20-24 Acts 1:8

and be prepared to reflect on God's mission as described in the passage read.

0:15 As people report what they have found, list the various aspects on newsprint

- What recurring themes do you see?
- What does God do to achieve God's mission?
- How are human beings invited to participate in God's mission?
- What is the role of the church in God's mission?
- Where have you seen this understanding of God's mission?

0:35 "The church does not have a mission. God's mission has a church."
—Linda Anderson-Little, June 12, 2014 sermon to the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy
What do you understand this statement to mean in light of these scriptures?

0:45 Discussion and synthesis

- Read and discuss the Catechism questions on "The Church" (BCP pp 854-5), especially the last three questions.
- How does your congregation participate in God's mission?
- How does the congregation work to restore others to unity with God and one another in Christ?
 - How is this seen in the worship of the congregation?
 - How does the congregation proclaim the Gospel?
 - What is the congregation doing to promote justice, peace, and love?
 - What are members expected to do?
 - How are those expectations articulated / communicated?

1:25: Review assignments for Session 3

- Read the essays on Being a Christian
- Read the Baptismal Covenant (BCP, pp. 304-305)
- Read the following scriptures :

Matthew 25:31-46 Matthew 28:16-20 Mark 10:41-44 Luke 4:16-20
John 17:20-26 Acts 2:43-47 Acts 4:32-35 Philippians 2:5-11

Read the section "The Ministry of the Baptized" in *A Theology of Ministry* (Appendix A in the handbook)

1:28 Closing Prayer

Session Three: Being Christian

BEING CHRISTIAN

What does it mean to be a Christian?

...and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians." -- Acts 11:26

The word "Christian" probably began as a dismissive joke; the word means "little Christ." The church quickly embraced the term and we now consider it an honorable label.

In the Episcopal tradition, we believe that we become Christians when we are baptized. In Baptism, we believe that "God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ's Body, the Church, and inheritors of the kingdom of God." (BCP p. 858) We express our understanding of what it means to be a Christian in our Baptismal Covenant. That Covenant defines our understanding in this way:

- We embrace the historic definition of belief found in the Apostle's Creed.
- We promise to gather together, study the scriptures together, pray together, and celebrate the Eucharist together.
- We denounce the forces of evil and call ourselves to lives of repentance.
- We say that we will "proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ."
- We swear to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- We swear to promote justice among all peoples.

In the previous section, we identified the mission of the universal church as *working with God to redeem the world*. The church is simply the number of the saved, but also the Body of Christ, and as such, one of the instruments which God uses to save the world. We believe that God acts in the world through the whole body of the church, of which each denomination and congregation is a member.

We believe that God can use us both in our strengths and in our weaknesses. There is no single model of what it means to be a Christian. Paul frequently (Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4) compares the church to a single body which has different parts and different functions. The eye is not the hand and the hand is not the foot. Each performs a vital function, and though the body can survive the loss of an eye or a foot or a hand, it is diminished when it is not complete.

Being a Christian means participating in the Body of Christ, through which God is working out Christ's redemptive mission in the world. In baptism, each Christian accepts a vocation as a member of the church to proclaim and enact God's Good News. We are each expected to do this in ways which are authentic and loving and true to the person God has made us. It

is the work of the Holy Spirit to have believers throughout the world who can speak God's truth in the ways appropriate to different people.

We are not the same, but there many things which are expected of all Christians. The Baptismal Covenant gives us a picture of what should be true of all believers.

- We must know about our faith, at least in a basic way, so that we have something to share with people. *“Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you...”* (1 Peter 3:15)
- We must be a people united in love. The world is hungry for true community. *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another”* (John 13:35).
- We must be a prayerful people. It is in prayer that we spend time with God. Prayer is not just about asking for things. In addition to making requests for ourselves and others, we need to praise the God who made us and spend time listening for divine truth. *“...pray without ceasing...”* (1 Thess 5:17)
- We must be good people. The message of Christ will be judged, whether we like it or not, by the behavior of those who call themselves Christians. We cannot save the world if we ourselves are in slavery to evil. We need to set good examples and refuse to give the world an excuse to ignore our message because of our failings. *“...be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world.”* (Philippians 2:15)
- As Christians, we are called to testify to God's saving activity in our own lives. The world craves authenticity, not a polished speech that's focus-group approved. *“But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?”* (Romans 10:14)
- Christians must love all people, especially the least love-able. How can we save a world that we detest? *“And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you.”* (1 Thess 3:12)
- Christians must strive for justice. The message of Christ isn't simply about where people go when they die; we aren't fire insurance salespeople. We are to strive for peace and justice in a world that often seems entirely uninterested in such things. *“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”* (Micah 6:8)

If we are at all honest with ourselves, we'll realize that the preceding list is daunting. In truth, there are people that we find impossible to love. In truth, there are injustices that we would gladly preserve since they benefit us. In truth, we don't want to proclaim the Good News because it's socially uncomfortable.

Christians have no claim on perfection. Yet perfection has a claim on us. Weak and broken as we are, God wants to use our hands to heal the sick, and use our mouths to speak eternal truth.

Outline for Session Three Meeting

GOAL: Come to a group understanding of what it means to be Christian

OBJECTIVES: 1) Prayer
2) Bible Study
3) Review the Baptismal Covenant

0:00 Opening Prayer

Free Prayer or Collect 7, "For All Baptized Christians" (Traditional) (BCP p. 201),
Collect 10, "At Baptism" (Contemporary) (BCP p. 254)

0:02 Description of the Session

Come to a group understanding of what it means to be a Christian

0:05 Bible Study: How do Christians participate in God's mission?

(Put the questions on newsprint / board or screen before the session)

Have different people read :

Isaiah 42:1-4 Isaiah 61:1-4 Matthew 25:31-46 Mark 10:41-44

Luke 4:16-21 John 17:20-24 Acts 1:8

and be prepared to discuss God's mission as reflected in the passages read,
using these questions as a starting point:

- Who are we acting for?
- Can we evaluate our effectiveness?
- If the answer is No, why is this so? Can we change?
- If the answer is Yes, how does the most recent action propel us to future action?
- What is the learning here about spirit and the work of active service to others in the name of Christ?
- Do you believe attitude and action are intimately related? Why or why not?
- "Actions emerge from the way a person's spirit has been formed." True or false?
- "Spiritual formation results from action." True or false?

0:45 Discussion and synthesis

Review the Baptismal Covenant, (BCP pp. 304-305)

A "mini" catechism used at baptisms and on Easter and other special occasions, the Baptismal Covenant opens with a question and answer version of the Statement of Faith that is the Apostle's Creed and adds five questions regarding how we, as Christians, are called to live out our faith.

1:25: Review assignments for Session 4

- Read the essays on Gifts and The Role of Discernment in the Life of the Congregation
- Read Romans 12 1 Corinthians 12 Ephesians 4:11-16

The seeker should finish work on the Spiritual Autobiography (the instructions for this document are in Appendix C) and bring copies to the next session.

1:28 Closing Prayers

Session Four: Gifts

The gifts Christ gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.... ~ Eph 4:11-12

From its very beginning, the church has recognized that when persons are baptized, they are made part of the Body of Christ *and* given gifts by God through the Holy Spirit to actively participate with God and the Body of Christ in God's mission. Each member of the Body of Christ is given particular gifts, including the gift of call to ministry so that they are able to minister with and for and to the Body of Christ in the world.

While the announcement of the giving of the gifts is given at baptism, the evidence of the gifts may be some time in coming. Rarely are the gifts complete; most will need care and nurture and practice to develop all the possibilities within them.

One of the responsibilities of the church is to be constantly looking for the gifts which are possessed by, but may be hidden within, its members. While the baptized are responsible for developing their gifts, it is never a do-it-yourself project. All members of the church should be able to expect pastoral oversight and care from the other members of the church. This includes naming gifts that are observed, sharing in the joy of exploring how God might be calling the gifts to be offered, and supporting persons as they seek to further develop and share their gifts. Though some gifts seem to be primarily for offering within the Body (as for example preaching), there are many ministry gifts which may enhance the work of a congregation (for example, if a congregation has a ministry of tutoring local students, the gift of teaching math would enhance that ministry) or may be used in ministry outside the life of the congregation (for example, a person with strong leadership skills might volunteer on a local non-profit board, or serve as an alderman). To see everything done by the members of the church as ministry and participation in God's mission is to see the world as God sees it and to claim the possibilities for mission God offers the church. This is the work of discernment and is the responsibility of all members of the church.

And discerning the gifts of the baptized is not simply a congregational responsibility. There are gifts given for ministries beyond a particular congregation and both congregation and diocese are called to support one another in discerning and calling forth such gifts.

A word about age: as noted, some of the gifts given a person may be hidden for a time, but there are always gifts — at any age — which are present and needed by the church and by the congregation. How will we learn how to enter the kingdom if infants and children are not encouraged to use their gifts to show us? Will we not become complacent in our understanding of our faith if not challenged by the gift of questions from children and teenagers? There are elementary age children quite capable of reading in worship and leading prayers, if properly taught. They are also capable of participating in congregational activities like gardening and cleaning up after storms. The more we look for the gifts of others, the more we learn to expect to find those gifts, and find them in unexpected and surprising forms.

Discerning gifts and call in the Life of the Congregation

"The gifts Christ gave were...to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ." Eph 4:11-13

TITLE III MINISTRY

CANON 1: Of the Ministry of All Baptized Persons

Sec. 1. Each Diocese shall make provision for the affirmation and development of the ministry of all baptized persons, including:

(a) Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to minister in Christ's name, to identify their gifts with the help of the Church and to serve Christ's mission at all times and in all places.

(b) Assistance in understanding that all baptized persons are called to sustain their ministries through commitment to life-long Christian formation.

In baptism, as persons are incorporated as members of the body of Christ by the power of Holy Spirit, they are also given gifts by the Spirit. These gifts are different, particular, and peculiar for each person. But despite their difference, the gifts have a common purpose:

They are for the work of ministry

They are for the building up of the body of Christ.

They are to promote the faith of Jesus Christ and the knowledge of Jesus.

They are to ensure that each member, by sharing their gifts within the community of faith, assists each other to grow to become as much like Christ as humanly possible.

These gifts are given to members *of* the community for use *for* and *by* the community. And the term "community" in this sentence can be understood both broadly and narrowly. In order for the congregation to engage in its mission to their larger community, they must receive the benefit of particular gifts within their fellowship to use particular gifts outside of their fellowship. The gifts of a teacher may be called forth within the congregation to teach members and/or they may be called forth by the congregation to teach residents of the surrounding community who are not in relationship with the congregation

Obviously, for any of this to happen, the gifts must be named and claimed by the persons to whom they are given ~ named, claimed, and freely shared. The fact that the gifts are as different as the members are different increases the challenge of identifying them. The purpose of discernment is to assist members to discover their gifts and then call for the sharing of those gifts.

Additionally, as gifts are identified and called forth within a congregation, the congregation will begin to get a sense of what God is calling them to be and do as the body of Christ. The intersection of the needs of the larger community and the gifts of the faith community must be seriously examined to find out what God is calling forth from the congregation. Because another of the gift God gives is the gift of mission, the invitation to join God in fulfilling God's mission in the world. To fail to name a gift of the Spirit is to miss the opportunity and joy of using that gift with God in God's mission of redemption and restoration.

In like manner, as congregations become more aware of their gifts of/ and for ministry, the diocese knows better the ways in which God is gifting and calling the regional body of Christ into mission and ministry.

Outline for Session Four Meeting

GOALS: 1) To name the gifts of the Spirit
2) To name gifts of the committee members

OBJECTIVES: 1) Prayer
2) Bible Study
3) Mutual reflection on gifts

- 0:00** **Opening Prayer**
Free Prayer or Collect 14, "For the Unity of the Church" (BCP p. 255)
- 0:02** **Description of the Session**
- 0:05** **Bible Study**
Read Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4:11-16 aloud,
and list the gifts on newsprint
- 0:20** Look at the lists and compare them
- How are they the same?
 - How do they differ?
- 0:25** What does each passage give as the purpose or reason for giving the gifts?
- 0:35** Are there gifts that belong to a particular order in the church?
- 0:45** **Discussion and synthesis**
- Where do you see these biblical gifts expressed in your congregation?
 - Where have you experienced the discovery of unexpected gifts?
 - What gifts have others seen in you that you didn't see in yourself?
 - How were they revealed?
 - Describe gifts seen in members of the discernment committee and in the seeker
 - What gifts are given for ministry beyond the local congregation?
 - What gifts does the Episcopal church need in the 21st century?
 - Are there gifts which are being stifled in the local congregation?
- 1:25:** **Assignments in Preparation for Session 5**
- Distribute the seeker's Spiritual Autobiography
 - Read "Discernment – the Call" and "How Do We Discern Calls to Ministry?"
 - Read "Call in Acts"
 - Read Acts 9:1-20; 13:1-4
- 1:28** **Closing Prayer**

Session Five: Discernment

Discernment – The Call

“But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed. And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard?. And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “Beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News”.

Call is an essential part of all ministry in the Church, All members of Christ’s body are sent – all are called. All have received the Great Commandment (Matt. 28:19-20) In becoming members of the Body of Christ in baptism all are covenanted through the promises. We would not be making those promises had we not been called and responded in baptism, or if baptized as a child in our renewal in Confirmation. Discernment is that ongoing process whereby we attempt to determine how we will respond to this call:

Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect with dignity every human being?

And the response, “I will, with God’s help”

So all are called and sent in Baptism to “proclaim by word and example”, and perhaps “I will, with God’s help” is nowhere better expressed than in the BCP Collect for the Second Sunday of Easter,

“Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ’s Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. *Amen.*”

All are called, all are sent, but some are commissioned to particular ministries. Through scripture, we see that the call is received from God, mostly in an intimate way. The recipients of the call are chosen by God, not the reverse. They are often not the people we might expect to be receiving a call, they are often reluctant recipients, and profess their inadequacy. But they are equipped by God to fulfill their call, even in their reluctance. One reflects on Abraham, an old man with a barren wife who received and accepted the call to

journey to The Promised Land. Moses, an exile who fled from Pharaoh and his own people, a refugee tells God at the burning bush that he is not a good speaker, but he went to Pharaoh and The Hebrews to proclaim God's Word and to lead. Jonah, fleeing to the sea to dodge his call to preach to the Nineveh's, preached to them and saved a city and a people. David, the youngest son was called from the sheepfold to be King of Israel. Jeremiah, saying to God that he is too young to be a prophet, fearlessly proclaimed to Kings and to the people. They are not self-appointed, neither are they voted in by a committee. They sense and respond to a call, they are equipped by God, and in their response they go, they proclaim, and they act, and, through their proclamation and actions they are received and heeded by those to whom they are sent.

In 1 Peter we read, "You have been made a nation of priests serving our God" from this comes our understanding of the priesthood of all believers". But Paul also tells us of the grace through which we are each granted and empowered to exercise various gifts to carry out the ministries to which we are each called. (Rom. 12, 1 Cor. 12, etc.) The purpose of the gifts and the ministries through which they are exercised is to build up the Church, the Body of Christ. These gifts range from leadership, pastoral care to the flock, liturgical service, prophetic works and action, preaching, teaching, as well as quiet participation in prayer and worship from the pews.

Discernment then is the process by which all believers seek to comprehend the calling and the gifts possessed by each member of the Body of Christ. It is not limited to those who are seeking affirmation of a call to ordained ministry. Discernment is a process which all should understand, all should undertake, and which some may choose to undergo in a formal process. It is an ongoing process for each member of the Body of Christ. Discernment is, however, not limited to persons, it is also the task of groups – congregations and parishes, chapters and vestries, dioceses, faith communities, orders of religious. All of the parts of the Body need to be in a continuing process of discerning and re-discerning God's call and the gifts provided to heed that call.

How Do We Discern Calls to Ministry?

It is understood, through the catechism of the Episcopal Church, that the mission of the Church is to “restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ”; that the Church pursues this mission “as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love; and that further, the mission is carried out “through the ministry of all its members.”²

In that it is understood, not only are all Christians called to exercise the vocation given to them by God to carry out the mission of the Church, each one has a duty to be in a lifelong process of discernment to determine that ministry. In addition, the baptism and confirmation vows found in the Book of Common Prayer require that a place of support will be given to those who have chosen to offer their lives in Christ.³ Therefore, the community is called into responsibility for the nurturing of each person.

While a person may discern a call to ministry in any number of ways, any discernment process must consist of three active participants: the person, the community, and the Holy Spirit. An invitation to a new mode of Christian living, perhaps including holy orders, can begin either with the community or with the person. The work of discernment, however, is ultimately to determine, within the scope of human weakness and limitation where a call is leading at this particular point in life. Discernment is not a means to an end; rather, it is the ongoing pathway to discover the next step that God desires for the person, the community, and the Church.⁴

In our baptismal vows, we promise to renounce evil, proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves, by striving for justice and peace among all people and by respecting the dignity of every human being. All of this, we believe, is only possible through the work of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. These vows constitute a covenant between the people who make these and God. This covenant is made as a community as One Body. To enter into such a covenant is transformational for these vows direct all our actions, our hearts and our minds toward God. We are "transformed by the renewing of [our] mind." (Romans 12:2)

As we intentionally love one another, as Christ loves us, we are knitted together as a community of God and as a result, each part within that community works properly, promoting the growth of the whole. Relationship with God and with community is necessary to discern fully God’s call. God calls persons, congregations, communities and the Church continually to discern their call to mission. Discernment must be entered into with

² Book of Common Prayer, p. 855.

³ Book of Common Prayer. p. 303.

⁴ Farnham, Suzanne G., Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward: Listening Hearts Discerning Call in Community. 1991. Christian Vocation Project, Inc. p. 13.

humility, care, and authenticity by all involved. The community has special responsibilities to those seeking formal discernment.

"...Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." Ephesians 4:16

We are called into community as one body with many members. (1 Corinthians 12). Our gifts from God are many. The community is made up of particular members with particular gifts. Some are called as apostles, some as prophets, and some as teachers. Some have gifts of healing, gifts of leadership, and/or gifts of mentoring/assistance. (Ephesians 4:16)

As all have gifts given by God; it is important to understand that God "activates all of them in everyone."⁵ These develop more fully as Christians live in relationship with God and with one another. In those relationships, a rootedness develops in a process of growth that comes from an integration of "desires, feelings, reactions and choices with a continuing commitment to abide in Christ."⁶

We discern calls to ministry by being restored to unity with one another and God, through the prayer and worship, by proclaiming the Gospel, and promoting justice, peace, and love as the one body of Christ. "The genuine call of any person in a Christian community is rightly the concern of all – and a shared responsibility."⁷

⁵ 1 Corinthian 12 NRSV.

⁶ Farnham, Suzanne G., Joseph P. Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan M. Ward: *Listening Hearts Discerning Call in Community*. 1991. Christian Vocation Project, Inc. p. 25.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 74.

Session Five (cont'd): Call in Acts

- Forward
 - Working Definition of “Call”
 - Purpose
- The Paper
 - How the community may understand its call
 - How an individual may experience their call
- Generalized Observations about Call in Acts
- Excursus on **εφκκλησιωα** (ecclesia – called out, chosen, church)

Forward

WORKING DEFINITION OF “CALL” : That which God offers to a community or individual which allows them to participate with God in God’s plan for creation. It is an “offer” because each community/person has the possibility of accepting or rejecting the call. Only by accepting may they participate *with* God in God’s plan.

There is no single Greek word which Luke uses to denote “call.” Both **προσκαλεω** (*proskaleo* – call, summon) (2:39, 13:2, 16:10) and **εφκλωγωμαι** (*eklegomai* – call out, choose), which includes the element of being chosen (1:2, 1:24, 13:17, 15:7) are used, but there are many references to communities / individuals responding to God’s call which are implicitly rather than explicitly about call. **εφκκλησιωα** (*ecclesia* – called out, chosen, church) becomes a word which denotes the community which responds to God’s call.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to explore “call by looking at some of the stories of the early church as narrated and shaped by Luke in Acts. Particular attention is paid to how the call is understood by the community and by the individual and how a “call” may change to respond to historical / circumstantial specificity. (“Mechanics” are examined more closely than “content.”) Because of the breadth of the subject, only a few observations may be made in so short a paper. Generalized observations are gathered at the end of the paper and are referenced throughout with superscript numbers.

Call in Acts

How the community may understand its call

A major concern of Luke in Acts is the definition of the community called by God to be in relationship with God. The community which understood itself to be called by God, the Jews, had a definition of that community: The community consisted of those who could call Abraham “father” (7:2). It was quite a revelation to the community that its definition was too limited, that the community which God called included not only the Jews (who called Abraham “father”) but Gentiles as well (who may also be cleansed by God). Luke shows this revelation to be slowly accepted by the Christian community and, within the last half of Acts, to be a major source of friction between Jews and Christians.

Luke shows how the Christian community began to expand its definition of community, its understanding of the dimensions of its call to be God’s people, in chapter 10. Peter is prepared for a change in his understanding of who is called to be in community by the vision in 10:9-16.² However, he neither understands nor is he able to act on this new understanding until he has seen the Spirit given to Cornelius and his family. Only then is he able to say, “I perceive that God shows no partiality” and “Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people...?” (10:34, 47)

Even Peter’s leadership role in the church is not sufficient to cause the other parts of the community to automatically accept his new understanding of how God’s call is to shape the community (11:3). Peter (and the Holy Spirit) must persuade them. He does this by relating both his vision and Cornelius’ and his (Peter’s) experience in Caesarea. Only then is the “circumcision party” in Jerusalem able to accept that God also calls Gentiles into the community (11:18). By their statement, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life” they show that they understand the call of the community to be expanded beyond their previous understanding of that call.

Not everyone was convinced (accepted the expanded understanding of the community’s call), however, for by Chapter 15 Luke relates that “men...from Judea...were teaching” the necessity of circumcision for salvation (15:1). The response of the church was for representatives from the church outside Jerusalem together with the apostles and the elders to gather “to consider this matter.” (15:6) Within this mutual consultation and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they also accepted the expanded understanding of the shape of the community.

While Luke has presented the called community as made up of people from all parts of the world as a given (1:8), he shows that this was by no means the earliest understanding of the Christian community. The earliest understanding that the community was to be made up of Jews only gradually gave way to a fuller understanding of God’s call. The later

understanding of the call neither invalidated nor repudiated the call of those in the community earlier. Rather, it expanded their understanding of their call.⁶ That the community now was understood to include Gentiles in no way questioned the “Jewishness” of the earlier members. The “revolutionary” element was that neither was the “Gentileness” of the Gentiles called into question. Past ways of being were a part of the historicity of the persons called to be Christian, called to participate in God’s plan for creation by being in relation with God and thereby in relation with the Christian community. These past ways of being were not denied and could not be changed. What was critical was repentance of sin (necessary for both Jew and Gentile) and baptism in the name of Jesus (incorporation and recognition of incorporation into God’s family ~ the church ~ the ones called by God into community). The gift of Holy Spirit was the seal of this incorporation.

Acts 2:39 can be liberally interpreted to mean that all are called to “the Lord our God.” The problem with which the early church struggled was the negative response of so many Jews to the call of their God. The Jews, according to Luke, struggled with the inclusive nature of the church. Ultimately Paul is not heard by the Jews because of his insistence that God intends for the Gentiles to receive salvation along with the Jews (22:21; 26:23; 28:29).¹⁰ [Romans 9-11 would suggest that Luke has picked up Paul’s concern for trying to help the Jews understand the broadened nature of the call of their God (which proclaimed “light both to the people and to the Gentiles.” 26:23). While Luke does not show the pain that the Jewish rejection of God’s call caused Paul as emotionally as Paul does in Romans, Luke’s constant return to the point surely evidences equally deep concern ~ it is just expressed differently.]

How an individual may experience their call

Luke offers Paul as a model of many aspects of Christian life. Not surprisingly much can be learned about many of the aspects of Luke’s understanding of call by looking at his stories about Paul.¹

The call of Paul, particularly as narrated in chapter 9, has a number of simultaneous dynamics. Though Jesus “appears” directly to Paul, it is not to issue the call to work with God, but more to prepare him for receiving his call. (Peter’s vision in Chapter 10 is somewhat parallel to this.)² While Ananias (representing the church) has already responded to a call from Jesus, he is not completely prepared for the change / “adjustment” to that call which he is presented in 9:10-14. For Ananias to deliver Jesus’ call to Paul, Ananias must acknowledge that his own call has changed. To deliver the call to Paul is to accept into the community (**εφκκλησιωα**, *ecclesia* ~ the church) one who has violently rejected the call in the past. As does Peter in chapter 10, the circumcision party in Chapter 11, and the Jerusalem “church council” in Chapter 15, Ananias must struggle with this broadened call.³ It is Ananias ~ the church ~ which is to issue God’s call to Paul. Paul cannot, as Luke tells the story, begin to do the work to which he is called until Ananias / the church delivers that

call. God and Paul both wait for Ananias' positive response to this new dimension of his call.⁴ Nor is that all, for even after Ananias delivers the call and Paul is incorporated into the Christian community by Ananias' action and by baptism, there are other parts of the church (particularly Jerusalem) who have the same reservations as Ananias and who must be persuaded to affirm the call which Ananias has delivered and which Paul has accepted. The whole church must honor the work of a part of the church (9:26-30).⁵

Luke does not imply that everything is known about a call when it is first received nor is it fulfilled outside the church. In 9:30, it is the (Jerusalem) church which sends Paul to Tarsus. In 11:25-26 it was Barnabas, acting on behalf of the Antioch church, which brought Paul to Antioch to work. In the Antioch church, Paul received an expansion of his call.

Acts 13:1-4 describes worship by those called to the specific functions of prophet and teacher in the church at Antioch. In the midst of this worship they understood the Holy Spirit to be calling Barnabas and Paul to another work. Again their previous work was neither repudiated nor rejected, it simply was now to be past and a different work was to be done in the present / future. They received a new understanding of their call, they were given a new dimension to their call, their call was broadened / expanded to encompass activities not heretofore undertaken.⁶

In response to this new understanding, "new call / "additional" call, the church affirmed their call and sent them off. (That this was the work of the Holy Spirit is underscored by 13:4.) The church participated in the call by its presence when the call was given (and it would seem by its activity ~ worship and prayer ~ facilitating the issuance of the call) and by affirming the call with prayer, fasting, laying on of hands and sending them off.⁴

Luke is less detailed in describing how the Spirit / God says "No," but he does indicate that is a part of the call "process." In Chapter 16, he described two areas to which Paul thought or attempted to go. He was "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word" in one and not allowed to go to the other (16:6-8).⁷ In a vision, the church (church-to-be?) in Macedonia issued the call to Paul and his companions to come to them. Again, the church (though somewhat more tenuously than in the previous episodes) participated with God in issuing the call.⁴ Again, this represented a previously unknown / unrevealed aspect of Paul's call.⁶ Paul's earlier understanding of his call did not preclude his going to Macedonia, it simply had not included it specifically. Luke shows Paul's call evolving as he responded to his call in particular ways in particular places.¹

In 19:21, "Paul resolved in the Spirit" to go to Jerusalem and on to Rome. However, the church in Tyre "(t)hrough the Spirit...told Paul *not* to go to Jerusalem." (21:4, italics mine) Luke does not suggest a resolution for this seeming contradiction of the Spirit's urgings. It does point up how different people understand the "impulses" of the Spirit differently.⁸ A fuller description of the church's reluctance to have Paul go to the "imprisonment and affliction" awaiting him in Jerusalem is given about the church of Caesarea (21:8-14). When

Agabus symbolically enacts Paul's imprisonment, the people (not necessarily in the Spirit) "begged him not to go up to Jerusalem." (21:10-12) At this point, Paul rejects the advice of the church (as he obviously had at Tyre). The church up to this point had been unable / unwilling to accept the change in Paul's call (as they understood it) which could lead to his imprisonment. Paul, by his statement, "I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" indicated his full acceptance of the "revised" call. (Luke, in 9:16, had already alerted the reader that suffering was to be an effect of Paul's response to his call, that "he must suffer for the sake of my name.") In the face of Paul's steadfastness, the church, though possibly not fully persuaded, at least was also able to accept it, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." (21:13-14)⁸

(Note : While Paul knew that he was to be imprisoned and suffer affliction in Jerusalem, he did not know what else would "befall" him (20:22). Even as the call unfolded, it was not like a crystal ball "telling all." Also, Agabus' action is given a very neutral telling ~ he is neither approving nor condemning but simply stating the "facts." It is left to the people to interpret the facts for themselves.)

Immediately following Paul's rejection of the counsel of the Caesarean church, Luke shows him once again open and willing to follow the suggestions of the church. [But 22:17-26 is most un-Pauline. The author of Galatians would be an unlikely candidate to participate in the actions describes in these verses for the reasons given!]

In making his "defense" to the Jews, Paul identifies himself in the present tense as a Jew. His initial calling in life was as a Jew. As has been noted above, subsequent revelations about his call in no way repudiated nor rejected this initial calling. What he did, he did as a Jew, "being zealous for God." (22:13) Paul is never a Christian, he is always a Jewish Christian. (cf 23:6, "I am a Pharisee"; 24:14-15; 26:4-5)⁶

As Paul relates his call to the Jews, it is another Jew (Jewish Christian) who delivers his call to him. (Ananias' role in Chapter 22 is very like his role in Chapter 9 in terms of showing the church's participation in issuing God's calls to individuals to participate with God in God's plans.⁴) That Luke considered the expansion of the community to include the Gentiles to be the point of friction for the Christians and Jews is demonstrated here. When Paul indicates that God has "appointed (Paul) to know God's will" (22:14), Luke records no reaction by the Jews. Yet when he says God told him, "I will send you far away to the Gentiles" (22:21), the Jews refuse to listen any more. They are hearing a revision of their call to be the people of God and they refuse to accept the change.¹⁰ Like Paul prior to 9:4, Peter prior to 10:9, the circumcision party prior to 11:3, and parts of the council which met in Jerusalem (Chapter 15), they have heard and responded to the call to be in God's community in a particular way. Unlike Paul, Peter, *et al.*, however, the Jews in Chapter 22 are not open to God's call to community being revised. They are not open to broadening their understanding of the shape of God's community. They are unable / unwilling to hear

Paul issuing the call to be in a larger community. Because of their unwillingness, just the statement of the call by Paul is enough to endanger his life. (*cf* 26:21)⁹

Though Luke, in the way he has shaped the story, has already let the reader know that Paul will not die in Jerusalem (especially 19:21, *δειθ̅ με̅ και̅; Ρω̅σ̅μη̅ν̅ ι̅φ̅δ̅ει̅π̅ν̅*), he in no way minimizes the threat to Paul in issuing a call which is rejected by the persons to which it is addressed. Those who have accepted a call from God but are unwilling to have that call revised can be overtly hostile toward the messenger bearing the “revised” call. That Paul’s life is endangered is underscored by the plot to kill him (and by the witness of Stephen’s martyrdom in Chapter 7).

With his defense before King Agrippa, Luke had shown that Paul had fulfilled his call as described in 9:15. (*cf* 26:19-20) This, of course, in no way means that Paul ceases to respond to his call. Beyond the end of the book of Acts, Paul continues to respond to his call to preach the kingdom of God and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul’s faithful response to his call becomes both a model for the whole church and a call to the whole church, for each of the “called out” are to do likewise.

Generalized Observations about Call in Acts

1. There is a historical concreteness in the call of God. It is to particular persons in particular situations at particular times. Thus, each call is unique to its person, situation and time. The specifics of a call may only be revealed with the passage of time and subsequent changes in the person and/or situation.
2. There may be an incident, which upon reflection, is preparatory for a new understanding of God’s call (to the community or to the individual).
3. There may be changes in the call, or at least the called persons may experience a deepening / broadening / expanding of their understanding of their call. Accepting this “change” in the call may be as difficult as accepting the “initial” call was.
4. The church, the ones called out by God and who have responded affirmatively to God’s call, may be the agent of delivering God’s call to individuals. Both God and the individual are then dependent on the church delivering the call correctly and expeditiously. Additionally, the church may also have a commissioning function.
5. The whole church must honor / affirm the work of individual churches.

6. A new call or a broadened, “revised” understanding of call is not necessarily a repudiation of the validity of the previous call or understanding of it. However, it is a sign that the previous response(s) to the call are no longer adequate and new / different responses will now be expected / needed.
7. A call may be to refrain from a specific action as well as to engage in a specific action.
8. The church’s understanding of what a person is called to do and that person’s understanding of their own call may be diametrically opposite. (In one instance Luke shows no resolution by means of one side acquiescing to the other. In the other instance, it is the church who finally agrees to not impede the individual from responding to their call as they understand it.)
9. To respond faithfully to their call, individuals may be faced with rejection of themselves and/or physical abuse.
10. Not everyone who is called is willing to accept their call. Not everyone who has acknowledged their call will necessarily be open to or accepting of a change / revision in their understanding of that call.

Excursus on εφκκλησιωα (ecclesia)

εφκκλησιωα (ecclesia) seems to be used after the fact. The εφκκλησιωα is that group which has understood itself to have been called out by God and which has responded to that call in particular ways. The first undisputed use of εφκκλησιωα in Acts (5:11), does not have a clear definition of who made up the εφκκλησιωα. The second use (7:38) is the “fathers” (whose father is Abraham, 7:2) who, having heard the call of God had followed Moses into the wilderness. These are the fathers of the Jews in Acts. The point of Stephen’s sermon is that the “fathers” refused to listen and respond appropriately to God’s call as it came to them through “the angel” and through Moses. As a result of the “sons” responding as their “fathers” had to God’s call, those who were called out, the church (the ones who responded appropriately to God’s call) were persecuted (8:1, 3).

At this point, the use of εφκκλησιωα seems to reflect the differing understanding of God’s call to the community. Those who have accepted the broader, less restricted understanding of God’s call to the community are part of the εφκκλησιωα, those who refuse to accept this fuller understanding are then in opposition to the εφκκλησιωα.

Later in Acts ἐφκκλήσιωα is used in various ways referring to the local Christian community. Its first use is probably referring to the Jerusalem Christian community ~ those Christians within a specific and limited geographical area (5:11?, 8:1, 3). The next reference is to a more general and larger geographical area which would contain identifiable subunits (9:31). After this ἐφκκλήσιωα is used to refer to both individual communities in specific locales and to the whole body of Christians.

There is also a use of ἐφκκλήσιωα in a purely secular sense in Chapter 19 (19:32, 39, 40) where the word seems to mean “assembly” and is in no way related to its use in defining the Christian community.

Session Five Meeting Outline

- GOAL:** To understand the seeker's journey with Christ
- OBJECTIVES:**
- 1) Prayer
 - 2) Bible Study
 - 3) Discussion of person's spiritual autobiography

0:00 Opening Prayer

Free Prayer or "Collect for Guidance" (BCP p. 57 or p. 832)

0:02 Description of the Session

Obtaining a clear understanding of the discerner's journey with Christ

0:05 Bible Study

Read Acts 9:1-20

- Saul and Ananias react very differently to the voice/presence of Jesus. Why?
- What is Ananias called to do?
- How is Ananias equipped to receive Saul?

Read Acts 13:1-4

- What is the significance of Paul and Barnabas being commissioned and sent forth by the Church in Damascus and not by the Apostles in Jerusalem?
- What is significant about the fact that the Holy Spirit did not specify the work to which she was calling Paul and Barnabas?
- What is the role of the community in these two passages?

0:45 General Discussion

Discussion of the seeker's spiritual autobiography

What are the significant features of the seeker's call?

What signs are there of a call?

How has a call been experienced?

How does the seeker perceive this?

How do others perceive this?

Does the seeker sense a call, at this point, to a particular ministry?

1:25: Review assignments for session 6

- Read "What Do 'Laity,' 'Bishop,' 'Priest,' and 'Deacon' Mean?"
- Read "The Ministry of the Baptized," "The Ministry of the Episcopate," "The Ministry of the Priesthood," and "The Ministry of the Diaconate" in *A Theology of Ministry*, from the Joint Task Force (Appendix A)
- Read "The Ministry," in the Catechism, BCP, pp 855-6
- Read "Ordination Vows," BCP, pp 511-55
- Read "Licensed Ministries in the Diocese of Missouri." (Appendix B)
- Read Acts 6 Romans 10:14-15 1 Timothy 3:1-13

1:28 Closing Prayer

Session Six: Orders and Ministries in the Church

What Do “Laity,” “Bishop,” “Priest,” and “Deacon” Mean?

The ministry of the laity is the ministry of all the baptized, which is to represent Christ and his Church by bearing witness to him wherever they may be. They are able to do this according to the gifts given to them by God both personally and collectively. Exercising those gifts in all their God-given diversity, they carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world. The laity bring these diverse gifts, likewise, into the life, worship and governance of the Church.

The life of the Church in which the ministries of all the baptized occur alternates between gathering for worship, education, and fellowship and dispersing into the world for service to others. Together the laity gathers to deepen their knowledge of and commitment to the Baptismal Covenant. The laity disperses to share in the mission of the Church to restore and reconcile all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. They gather to bring the lives and concerns of the world to Christ’s table. They disperse to witness to the transforming power of Christ.

The life of the Church is enriched by the diverse gifts for ministry that the Holy Spirit bestows on all the baptized. Some are called to various ministries within the life of the gathered Church in areas such as worship and education, hospitality and compassion, justice and peace, administration and facilities. All are called to be a Christian presence through their vocations in their families, their workplaces and their communities.

In summary the ministries of the laity of all the baptized are those of the whole Church, the Body of Christ, Christ’s continuing presence in our own world. They gather to be fed by Christ in Word and sacrament. Empowered by the Holy Spirit they disperse to be his agents in the world so that it might be transformed into an ever greater approximation of the Kingdom of God.

Within the ministry of all the baptized are three distinct and equal ordained orders. They exist to equip, animate and oversee diverse ministries within the Church. In the Episcopal Church those ordained orders are bishops, priests and deacons. All three are authorized to represent Christ and the Church in their own distinct ways.

Bishops are called to represent Christ and the Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese. In the bishops’ apostolic role they proclaim the Word of God throughout the congregations and in their diocesan conventions. As chief priests of their diocese they preside at the Eucharist whenever they are present and especially as they administer the rite of Confirmation. They gather the diocese in convention and the clergy in convocations to strengthen the mission of the Church. They represent their dioceses in

their communities by acting in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world. They are called to build up the Church by ordaining others to continue Christ's ministry. They are further called to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the Church, whether it be within their dioceses, the national Church or even in the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Priests are called to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people of their congregations. They do so by proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. On behalf of the priesthood of Christ in and through the whole Church, the priest offers to God the fruits of God's creation and human labor for God's purposes in reconciling the whole world to God and each other. God blesses those offerings by building up the members of the congregation as they receive their offerings back, now becoming the Body and Blood of Christ. Through presiding at the Eucharist the priest assists the Church to remain part of Christ's ongoing sacrifice offered for the life of the world. The priest also serves as a pastor, who acts as the steward of the congregation's common life and by providing pastoral care. In the life of the diocese the priests share with the bishop the overseeing of the Church.

The deacons represent Christ and his church, particularly as servants of those in need. They bring the needs of the world to the attention of the Church and help organize, animate and oversee the Church's response to those needs. Together with the bishops and priest they share in the governance of the Church and in public worship. At all times they are called to show Christ's people that in serving those in need they are serving Christ himself.

Session Six Meeting Outline

GOAL: To identify and distinguish between orders by naming examples.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Bible Study
- 3) Discuss Catechism, questions "The Ministry" (BCP pp. 855-6)
- 4) Discuss "Ordination Vows" *BCP* pp 511-555

0:00 Opening Prayer
Free Prayer or Collect 15 III "For All Christians in their Vocation" (BCP p. 256)

0:02 Description of the Session

0:05 Bible Study
Read Acts 9:36-38; 6:1-7, Romans 10:14-15, 1 Timothy 3:1-13

- Tabitha/Dorcas is not said to have had a formal "office," but she obviously played an important role in her community. What was her role? And why was it important?
- In Acts 6 we read about the formation of the diaconate. How did the church discern the need for deacons? How were individuals selected for that office?
- In Romans we read of the need for preachers and evangelists. What does that passage have to say about the qualifications for preachers and evangelists?
- 1 Timothy describes the qualifications for bishops and deacons. What do these lists have in common? In what way are the roles different from each other?

0:45 General Discussion

- Having reviewed the document, "Licensed Ministries in the Diocese of Missouri" (Appendix B) what are the various licensed ministries that can be performed by licensed members of the Diocese?
- Having looked at questions and answers about the Ministry found in the Catechism (BCP, pp 855-6) and the Ordination Vows (BCP pp. 511-555), consider how the Episcopal Church has defined the duties and responsibilities of bishops, priests and deacons. What are the common elements of their oaths? In what ways do their roles diverge (i.e., what can one ordained order do that others cannot?).
- How do the seeker's gifts fit within the ministry of the Church?

Note : This session may need to be supplemented by an individual with expertise in an order that is not well understood by the Discernment committee. So as not to interfere with the other activities prescribed for this session, it is suggested that an additional meeting be scheduled for that visit. For example, if the seeker is sensing a call to the diaconate and the discernment committee comes from congregations without a deacon, it would be extremely helpful to meet with a deacon currently serving in the Diocese.

1:25: Assignments in preparation for Session 7

- Read Judges 6:11-40
- Review the seeker's Spiritual Autobiography
- Choose one or two items in the seeker's Spiritual Autobiography with the description of "call" in Acts.
- Review previous session materials

1:28 Closing Prayer

Session Seven: Matching Gifts and Ministry

It's tempting to consider God's call to be a simple matching of needs and abilities. "You're an accountant? Great! You can be the congregation's treasurer." If we were simply a human organization relying on human wisdom, this might be sufficient. But throughout the history of God's people, God has demonstrated an ability to do incredible and surprising things with imperfect servants.

When God called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of slavery, Moses protested that he was a terrible public speaker (Exodus 4:10-13). When God called Gideon, Gideon complained that he was a nobody – "He responded, "But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family" (Judges 6:15). Through Jael and Esther, God was able to use women to save his people despite the constraints on them mandated by their societies. Paul was an enemy of the church, but Christ turned him into one of the greatest champions of the faith.

In prayerful reflection, the discernment committee is now asked to dare to enter into God's courts and share in a measure of divine wisdom. It is for this purpose that the discernment committee was formed. As stated so many times previously, the committee should be confident that there is a call to be heard.

The discernment committee is being asked to weigh a number of things, some of which may appear contradictory. The committee must be at once loving and critical, both practical and audacious.

First, the committee should know the seeker well enough to know her strengths and weaknesses of character and talent. Certainly the seeker has been given charisms which can be brought to service by the church. She may also have limitations which must be faced honestly; a tone-deaf person shouldn't lead a choir no matter how great their love of music.

Second, anyone entering Discernment should be active in their local congregation. What roles does the seeker currently fill? Which might change if she directs her energies in a new direction? What might be gained — both for the seeker and for the congregation and for the larger church? What joy and satisfaction does she find in her present activities?

Third, what roles outside of church are active in the seeker's life? What duties of work and family press on her and her energies? Which obligations can be changed, and which may not? How does the seeker identify a holy calling in which might otherwise be seen as purely secular work? What role would the congregation be called to fill — for the seeker, her family, and the congregation — in response to the call under discernment?

Fourth, the committee should recognize that none of us are fully formed and that God may be calling us into new areas of growth. What is the trajectory of the seeker's life? What weaknesses in experience and education can be filled in by a thoughtful formation process? Especially in the case of a younger seeker, the discernment committee needs to be able to see the oak tree in the acorn.

Finally, the committee should have a sense of the needs of the greater church. Obviously the "big picture" is a challenge even for those at the level of the Diocese and the national church, but there needs to be a reflection on the match between the specific charisms of the seeker and the needs of the church.

Session Seven Meeting Outline

GOAL: Locate the individual's call

OBJECTIVES: 1) Prayer
2) Review previous six sessions
3) Where have we been? What do we think?

0:00 Opening Prayer
Free Prayer or Collect 15II, "For the choice of fit persons for the ministry" (BCP p. 256)

0:02 Description of the Session

0:05 Bible Study
Read Judges 6:11-40, listening for the humor and irony

Notice

- God's opinion of Gideon is higher than Gideon's opinion of himself
- Gideon's willingness to engage with the God who is engaging with him
- The irony and humor which pervades the story

Compare the story with the 10 Observations in "Call in Acts" (from Session Five).

- Which elements are found in this portion of Gideon's story?

0:35 Discussion and synthesis
Discuss the seeker's strengths and weaknesses

- What personal limitations have been identified in the seeker?
- What are her current activities and sources of joy and satisfaction?
- How is the seeker's call currently being expressed (Consider her life in her family, in the church and in the community)
- How are others blessed by what she is doing
- What potential does the Discernment committee see in the person?
- What might the person need to move into the future in terms of training, formation, or education?
- What role would the congregation be willing to take in terms of training, formation and education?

1:25: Assignment in preparation for Session 8
Prayerful consideration of all previous material

1:28 Closing Prayer

Session Eight: Preparing the Report

This session will be different in character from the other sessions.

- First, it will be focused on the practical task of completing either form **DSC2** or **DSC3** (both in Appendix C).
- Second, the priest-in-charge may be invited to attend this session to assist in the preparation of the report.
- Third, it will require the greatest amount of flexibility as it needs to do the work that needs to do — the discernment committee and seeker have invested many hours in the process and they should have a strong collective sense of the work that needs to be accomplished.

The seeker should be present for this work.

Session Eight Meeting Outline

GOAL: Prepare either report DSC2 or report DSC3

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Preparation of the report
- 3) Renewal of the Baptismal Covenant

The session should open by praising God. This can either be done using free prayer or A Song of Creation, which begins on p. 88 of the BCP.

Working together, the discernment committee should draft either **DSC2** or **DSC3**. The report should be prepared on a word processor, and a final draft may need to be circulated after the meeting for final proofreading.

The signed report will be given to the priest-in-charge. Copies will be sent to the Office of the Bishop and to the seeker.

If the form being completed is **DSC2**, the greatest effort needs to be taken to determine that any unfinished questions are forwarded to appropriate individuals or resources. COM is glad to act as a resource in locating needed resources.

Depending on the content of **DSC2**, a celebration of the ministry may well be appropriate. The priest-in-charge should be consulted about appropriate thanksgiving for the seeker and their call.

DSC3 is the report for those weighing holy orders. It involves both a collective report and sections completed by each member of the Discernment committee. It will be reviewed by the priest-in-charge as he or she completes **DSC4**, which is a separate but similar report.

At such time as the Committee has completed their report, the Committee should close with the Renewal of Baptismal Vows found on p. 292 of the BCP. This can be led by a layperson if a priest or deacon is not present.

APPENDIX A: A THEOLOGY OF MINISTRY

The Ministry of the Body of Christ

Q. What is the mission of the Church?

A. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Q. How does the Church pursue its mission?

A. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace and love.

--Q&A from The Book of Common Prayer (in "An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism")

The Church shares Christ's ministry of bringing the created order into relationship with its Creator. The Church, in its corporate reality as the Body of Christ, animated by the Spirit, extends the Incarnation of Christ throughout history. As the continuation of the Incarnation, the Church incorporates both the divine and human natures of Christ.

“As the father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21)

The whole Church shares in the mission of the apostles as it witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. In the baptismal vows, each Christian promises to “proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ.” The Church proclaims the Good News as it reads and interprets the Scriptures, as it administers the Sacraments, and as it models in its common life the reconciliation and restored relationships between creation and its Creator. The Church both invites others to enter into the community of the Body of Christ and seeks to establish relationships of justice and dignity among all people through proclamation of the Gospel.

A shared priesthood

The whole Church shares in the priesthood of Christ. It carries out its mission of restoring the created order to its proper relationship with itself and the Creator as it gathers for its worship of God, as it prays for the world and as it proclaims the good news of God in Christ. As it gathers for worship, members of the Church bring the fruits of their labor in the world as an offering to God. The bread and wine of the Eucharist represent both God's free grace in the fruits of nature – grain and grapes – and the labor and economy of the human community in the effort that transforms those gifts to bread and wine.

The Church offers to God its own common life and the whole economy of the household of God under the signs of bread and wine to be consecrated to God's purposes. In the Church's worship, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, God transforms the Church's offering into the Body of Christ for the world. Gathered as that Body, the Church

intercedes on behalf of the world, endeavoring to discern God's purposes and intentions in the specific context of each gathered local community.

A shared servant ministry

The whole Church also shares in the servant-ministry of Christ. As members of the Church return to the world, transformed and empowered by the Spirit, they endeavor to realize in the Church's common life, and in the economies from which they presented their gifts, the relationships that characterize the Incarnate Body of Christ.

As the Body of Christ for the world, the Church serves to make relationships within the various communities in which they live and work more worthy of being offered to God. The Church does this through the ministry of its members as they seek to heal broken relationships and economies in the world, as they uphold the dignity of all the creatures of God and seek to discern the divine energies working through the whole created world. Its members bring these relationships back to the assembly gathered to worship.

Through the ministry of all its members

The whole Church shares the apostolate, the priesthood and the servant ministry of Christ as it offers itself to embody Christ in the world, bringing the divine and created natures into relationship in the Body of Christ.

Through the ministry of all its members, lay and ordained, the whole Church participates in the divine life of the Trinity, and seeks to draw all creation into that life of love.

The Ministry of the Baptized

Q. What is the ministry of the laity?

A. The ministry of the laity is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given to them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.

--Q&A from The Book of Common Prayer (in "An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism")

Gifts of the Baptized

Baptized persons are called to be actively involved in Christian life. Each baptized person brings unique gifts to ministry, including gifts of time, talent and treasure. Baptized persons

are musicians, teachers, learners, leaders, workers and supporters of work, and have the opportunity to move in and out of various roles as they discern where the needs of the community, gathered and scattered, match with the gifts of the individual.

Baptized persons, through their faithfulness, integrity and compassion, carry on the work of reconciliation in the gathered community and in their witness and service to the community at large.

Ministry of the Baptized Within the Community

Baptized persons are called to continue in the Apostle's teachings and in prayer. The liturgy begins with the gathering of the people whose faithful presence in prayer and praise enables the creation of a community that is welcoming, inclusive and reconciling.

The baptized may serve with the clergy in the ministry of word and sacrament, as ushers or hosts, acolytes, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, lay preachers, Eucharistic visitors and worship leaders, as well as through music and preparation of the altar.

Baptized persons have roles within the life and governance of the parish. They financially support the work of the Church through prayerful stewardship. Their presence on vestries, committees and boards assures the orderly management of parish affairs, including business matters, stewardship of property, the work of hospitality to all, and ministry in pursuit of social and economic justice.

Baptized persons have roles as teachers and continuing learners in the formation of mature Christians who seek to develop a Christ-centered pattern of life.

All of this work is sustained through the prayers and gifts of the faithful.

Scattered throughout the community, baptized persons witness in word and deed to the good news of reconciliation through Christ; such witness is their most powerful tool for evangelism. This includes faithfully joining with others in ecumenical and interfaith actions, witnessing to the spirit of reconciliation within the community.

Through secular employment and work with community agencies, they are called to carry out their baptismal vows to "seek Christ in all persons" and to "strive for justice and peace among all people."

Ministry of the Baptized in the Diocese

Baptized persons serve with clergy as delegates to regional convocations and to the annual diocesan convention, representing the people in the formation of vision and policy. They serve on a variety of boards, councils and commissions for the diocese.

Through the diocesan cycle of prayer, they support the work of parishes, missions and ministries throughout the diocese.

Within the region, the Diocese of Missouri exercises its prophetic voice to call for compassionate justice for God's people and care for God's Earth. The work of the diocese is supported through faithful stewardship of the baptized.

Ministry of the Baptized within the Church and the World

Bearing the message of reconciliation to a broken world, baptized persons are found serving through national and international ministries, including representation at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, the National Council of Churches and the Anglican Communion. They join in prayer for people throughout the world and for peace in the world.

Through gifts of time, talent and treasure, baptized persons reach out in love in the name of Christ throughout the world.

The Ministry of the Episcopate (Bishop)

Q. What is the ministry of a bishop?

A. The ministry of a bishop is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese; to guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; to proclaim the Word of God; to act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the Church; and to ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.

--Q&A from The Book of Common Prayer

(in "An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism")

When someone is baptized or we all renew our baptismal covenant, the first action we take is to recite the Apostles' Creed, the ancient summary of apostolic faith and teaching. We follow that with the promise to continue in that apostolic teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers.

From the earliest times, the order of ministry that has continued and guarded that faith has been the episcopate.

Bishops have modeled that ministry in their own proclamation of the Gospel and in administration of the Sacraments throughout their dioceses. In their regular teaching and preaching, and in the baptizing and presiding at the Eucharist, they seek to encourage and

support the apostolic ministry of all the baptized to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, to serve Christ in all persons, to strive for justice and peace, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

Bishop as link

From the beginning, the bishops' apostolic ministry has been extended by the priests and deacons of the diocese. A major responsibility of bishops is to ordain sufficient numbers of priests and deacons to work beside the bishops in strengthening the work of the laity in their various congregations.

The discernment of ministries — both lay and ordained — is vital to a healthy and spirit-filled Church. The bishop has the unique opportunity to be the link between those congregations, and to encourage the discovery of spiritual gifts both within individual congregations, as well as mutual ministries among them.

The chief pastor

As the chief priest and pastor of the entire diocese, the bishop also is responsible for overseeing these apostolic ministries, so they remain faithful, united and disciplined.

Bishops regularly do so by being the chief presider in the congregations of their dioceses as they make their circuit of parish visitations. They also do so when their dioceses gather for their annual conventions and on other occasions, as well as at regular meetings with the clergy of the dioceses.

Governance and oversight

Bishops share the ministry of oversight with the laity and the clergy through the various forms of governance in our Church. The fundamental purpose of that governance at every level of the Church—congregational, diocesan, provincial, national and even international—is to assist the mission of the Church to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

The bishops are in a unique position to do so as they represent their dioceses in the councils of the province, the Episcopal Church and of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Each level of our Church has gifts of ministry to enrich the whole Church. One way that is demonstrated is that bishops participate in the ordination of other bishops.

The reconciliation of the world

Finally, bishops have the responsibility both individually and collectively to act in concert with others in our civic communities for the reconciliation of the world in the name of Christ.

The world naturally looks to our bishops to provide such leadership as our communities strive to live in peace with justice, respecting the dignity of every human being.

The Ministry of the Priesthood

Q. What is the ministry of a priest or presbyter?

A. The ministry of a priest is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the Gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and pardon in the name of God.

--Q&A from The Book of Common Prayer

(in "An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism")

The whole Church shares in the priesthood of Christ, reconciling the world to God. The Church offers to God the fruits of God's creation and human labor for God's purposes. As the Church gathers for worship, it presents its corporate life under the signs of bread and wine to God, and receives that life back again from God, blessed as the Body and Blood of Christ. The Church itself becomes part of Christ's sacrifice, the Body of Christ offered for the life of the world.

Modeling Christ's priestly ministry

Priests are set aside by the call of the Church and ordination by the Bishop to model for the Church the priestly ministry of Christ. As pastors and teachers, priests gather and equip the people of God to take their share in the ministry of Christ and the Church. Through the sacramental life of the Church, a priest is the instrument of Christ nurturing the life of the congregation.

As pastor to the people, a priest acts as steward of the congregation's common life and fosters the relationships that constitute the Body of Christ. Priests invite congregations to discern the ways they may best engage in God's ministry of reconciliation in their particular settings, then elicit the gifts of all for that ministry.

Our story, as community together, and in the world

In proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed, a priest helps the congregation understand its own story in terms of God's saving acts in history. A priest helps a congregation see God's saving grace active in its common life: in joy, in suffering, in welcoming new members into the Body, in care given to one another, and at the last, in commitment of its members into God's hands (BCP 569). The priest also helps the congregation see God's saving grace in its ministries to the world outside its doors, and in so doing, connects the congregation's mission to the story of God's grace in God's people and in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Holy Communion

Presiding at the Eucharist, a priest speaks on behalf of the whole Church as the Body of Christ, presenting the congregation's common life to God. The priest gives thanks to God for God's saving acts, particularly in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and invokes the Holy Spirit over the gifts and the people.

Through the praise and thanks of priest and people, God transforms gifts and people into the Body and Blood of Christ, which strengthen the congregation to offer itself for the life of the world.

Ministry together

In all this, priests work with the diocese, gathered with the bishop, to help guide the whole Church in the reconciling ministry of Christ to the world.

The Ministry of the Diaconate (Deacons)

Q: What is the ministry of a deacon?

A: The ministry of a deacon is to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need; and to assist bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.--Q&A from The Book of Common Prayer (in "An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism")

All Christians are called by Christ to lives of service. Deacons are set aside by the Church to take on the task of servant leadership. Individually, their responsibility to service in the world is no different from that of other Christians. However, as deacons, they lead the Church in its mission of service.

A Deacon's call

First, they serve as icons of service, constant reminders of the call to serve the needy, the dispossessed and the marginalized. Second, they are to seek out the needs of the community and bring those to the Church, offering a prophetic voice on behalf of those in need. Third, deacons are called to discern the God-given gifts in their fellow Christians and to call each Christian to live into the mission given them by God.

Distinctive clerical vestments signify a holy trust placed on deacons by the larger community of faith: A diagonal stole signals hands ready to do God's work. In the liturgies of the Book of Common Prayer, we see deacons serving at the table, proclaiming the Gospel, offering up the Prayers of the People and sending the Church out into the world at the end of the service.

Belonging to the whole diocese

Deacons live under the authority of their bishop, and are placed in congregations at the discretion of the bishop. However, deacons do not belong to congregations, and they may be called to operate as agents of their bishops in service to the whole diocese.

All deacons are expected to assume positions of leadership in the diocese. In the Diocese of Missouri, the provisions of some diocesan bodies specifically call for representatives from the diaconate. All deacons in the diocese are accorded voice and vote at the annual diocesan convention.

Between the Church and the world

As icons of servant ministry, deacons serve a distinctive role in relation to the larger world. Deacons are, to use a modern idiom, an interface between the Church and the world. They live in the border between the sacred and the profane. With one hand, they pull the world into the Church; with the other, they pull the Church into the world.

Discernment

Q: What is the mission of the Church?

A: The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Q: Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?

A: The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members. (Q&A from the Book of Common Prayer: An Outline of the Faith commonly called the Catechism)

The Holy Spirit calls the Church and its people into and empowers them for the ministry of the reconciliation of all. Discernment is the process of work, thought, prayer, and listening which makes possible the recognition and understanding of the Spirit's call to an individual or group.

A lifelong process, a role for everyone

Each of us has a duty to be in a lifelong process of discerning the ministries through which we may use our gifts in the service of God's purposes for the restoration of the world. Each Christian and each Christian community has a role to play in God's ministry of reconciliation. We carry out those roles both in our lives in the world and in our corporate life in the Church. We often need the help of the Spirit and of others to discover how best to live into our share of God's ministry. Like young Samuel, we may find ourselves confused about the nature and source of the call.

Where are you being called?

The process of discernment involves the individual, the community, and the Holy Spirit. The notion of a call may begin with the individual's sense of being drawn into a new ministry, or it may emerge from the community's identification of a person's gifts for a particular ministry. Exploration of a call may lead to a deeper sense of vocation in secular employment, to community service, to specific ministries within the Church, or to consideration of ordination.

Discernment is a prayerful attempt, within the scope of human weakness and limitation, to identify a pathway to meeting God's will for the individual, the community, and the Church.

Which is the 'better' call?

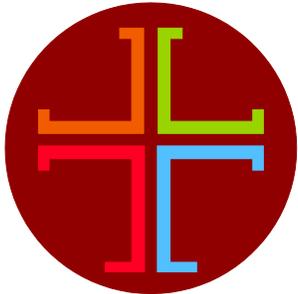
It is important to recognize and value the gifts of each person in the course of discernment. All baptized persons are called to ministry in their whole life in the world. A call to ordained ministry is not a "better call." The ordained have unique ministries to help empower the baptized for their roles in God's purposes of salvation.

Discernment is a matter of identifying the gifts of a faithful individual that are suited to a particular form of ministry.

When one's call seems to be toward Holy Orders, the Church has a great responsibility to participate in the discernment process. This includes prayerfully joining in seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, supporting the individual in further exploration of the call, and considering the individual's gifts in the context of the needs of the Church.

This work of discernment will first be carried out locally, but eventually, a call to ordained ministry involves a wider circle of concerned persons within the diocese continuing the work begun at the local level.

A congregation considering its ministry is engaged in discernment. The work of discernment includes recognizing needs, resources, and gifts, and prayerfully seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Diocese of Missouri
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Licensed Ministries in the Diocese of Missouri

Guidelines

CONTENTS

	PAGE
General Licensing Expectations	50
General Licensing Suggestions and Assumptions	50
Definitions of Licensed Ministries.....	51
Worship Leader	52
Preacher.....	54
Eucharistic Minister	56
Eucharistic Visitor.....	58
Catechist.....	60

Licensed Ministries in the Diocese of Missouri

General Licensing Expectations

ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS. Licensed individuals are expected to be active participants in their faith communities (i.e. “confirmed communicants in good standing” Title I.17(3)). This includes, but is not limited to, regular attendance in Sunday worship and making a financial pledge. Some licenses require a deeper knowledge of how a faith community, the diocese, and the Episcopal Church function. Where additional participation would be beneficial, recommendations are listed within the details of these guidelines under a specific license.

FAITH COMMUNITY ENDORSEMENT. The individual seeking licensure must receive the formal endorsement of his or her faith community (vestry, bishop's committee or other governing body, and resident clergy, if any) which includes verification that he or she is an upstanding example of Christian living, is believed to have a call to said ministry and is demonstrating competency for said ministry. This formal endorsement shall be communicated to the bishop at the time of the request for licensure.

TERMS AND RENEWAL. A license is valid for one year and may be renewed. The Lay Licensure Committee recommends a sabbatical after a license has been renewed three times. During the sabbatical, the licensed individual is encouraged to reflect upon his/her ministry and to explore other ministries to which God may be calling him or her.

General Licensing Suggestions and Assumptions

TRAINING. The clergy-in-charge or other leader exercising oversight of the faith community (“other leader”) is charged with overseeing the design and implementation of training for licensure. The assumption here is that trainings may take place on a congregational, convocation, or diocesan level at the initiation of local clergy-in-charge or other leaders. The following pages contain resources for initial and continued formation. Requests for additional or assistance with training resources may be made of the Commission on Ministry.

EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE. A licensed individual and clergy-in-charge (or other leaders) are encouraged to discuss the licensed individual’s role and expectation of service (how, when, and with what frequency) for exercising the licensed ministry.

COMMUNITY OF MINISTERS. Ministries are not carried out in a vacuum but, rather, occur in the context of a community. A licensed individual is encouraged to meet with fellow ministers, a certain type of study group, or with a member of the clergy for support, feedback, and continued formation.

CULTURE OF FORMATION. Licensed individuals are encouraged to seek out continuing formation and educational opportunities in a commitment to life-long Christian formation. Clergy-in-charge or other leaders are encouraged to provide for such continuing formation opportunities through identifying applicable grants (i.e. diocesan lay continuing education grants, locally budgeted funds, et al), coordinating local training, communicating availability of applicable diocesan trainings/events, and/or coordinating the establishment of focus groups.

Definitions of Licensed Ministries

by Title III, Canon 4 of the 2003 Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church

“A **Worship Leader** is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the [clergy-in-charge or other leader].” A Worship Leader was formerly titled “Lay Reader.” A Worship Leader is not licensed to function as the lector. No license is required for an individual to be a lector.

“A **Preacher** is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the [clergy-in-charge or other leader].” A Preacher was formerly titled “Lay Preacher.”

“A **Eucharistic Minister** is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist. A Eucharistic Minister should normally act under the direction of a deacon, if any, or otherwise, the [clergy-in-charge or other leader].” A Eucharistic Minister was formerly title “Chalice Administrator” and/or “Lay Eucharistic Minister B.”

“A **Eucharistic Visitor** is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reason of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration. A Eucharistic Visitor should normally act under the direction of a Deacon, if any, or otherwise, the [clergy-in-charge or other leader].” A Eucharistic Visitor was formerly titled “Lay Eucharistic Minister” and/or “Lay Eucharistic Minister A.”

“A **Catechist** is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the [clergy-in-charge or other leader].” A catechist is a new category of licensure for the Diocese of Missouri.

The bishop is not currently issuing licenses for “**Pastoral Leader**” as defined by the Canons.

**Specific Licensure Expectations and Guidelines and Resources
for Training and Continuing Formation**

Worship Leader

DEFINITION: Title III.4.4: “A Worship Leader is a lay person who regularly leads public worship under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.”

REQUIREMENTS: Expectations for a worship leader in the Diocese of Missouri in addition to the *General Licensing Expectations*:

Clergy Mentor. A worship leader is expected to serve under the direction of the clergy-in-charge. In the case where there is no resident clergy person the worship leader should be assigned a clergy mentor with whom he or she will meet regularly.

Report to the Bishop. A worship leader shall make an annual report to the bishop about his or her activities by Advent I.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR COMPETENCY: The worship leader will demonstrate the ability to articulate a working knowledge of the theology of worship or be taking steps in this direction. This includes the workings of the church calendar and rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer pertinent to the services that the worship leader will be using, the possible worship resources available for use in those services, and the effective use of the voice. The worship leader will be involved in continuing education opportunities to strengthen his or her grasp of these matters. Whenever possible a licensed worship leader will meet with others in this ministry to explore matters of mutual interest and to strengthen their common ministry.

SUGGESTED COMPETENCY FOR LICENSURE INVOLVES SHOWING AT THE BASIC LEVEL:

LEVELS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to describe the nature and purpose of Christian worship. • You will be able to show a basic knowledge of the Christian year and the development of Sunday offices.
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to produce leader’s notes or orders of services from 5 services including at least 2 from within church (children, young people, adults and all age regular and occasional attenders), and, one outside a church service (home, school, youth group, hospital, group residential home, residential event, day conference). • You will be able to evaluate the origins and development of three from the following: theology of worship, the Christian year, hymnody, Morning and Evening Prayer, and a Service of the Word, which includes preaching • You will be able to evaluate the practice of non-sacramental worship in three different traditions. • You will be able to critique the program of services from a particular parish. • You will be able to show a critical understanding of the liturgical theology of daily prayer, the calendar and sanctorale, and how this theology applies to parish life.

CONTENT WHICH INFORMS THE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- 1) Knowledge about the nature and purpose of worship includes:
 - a) Identifying the elements within worship from the Judaeo-Christian tradition.
 - b) Contrasting and comparing worship from different Christian traditions.

- 2) Ability to design worship includes:
 - a) Understanding how the church calendar works.
 - b) Utilizing a wide range of resources.
 - c) Choosing hymns \ songs for services.
 - d) Designing worship for ordinary and special occasions.
 - e) Working within the Canons and rubrics of the Episcopal Church, including “direction from a Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or community of faith.”

- 3) Ability to lead in worship includes:
 - a) Creating an environment conducive to worship.
 - b) Being sensitive to the needs of the congregation.
 - c) Leading appropriately across the range of formal and informal options provided by the Episcopal Church.
 - d) Using voice and body appropriately.

RESOURCES

Basic:

Hatchett, Marion. *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*

Lee, Jeffrey. *Opening the Prayer Book* (The New Church’s Teaching Series)

Smith, George Wayne. *Admirable Simplicity: Principles for Worship Planning in the Anglican Tradition*

Weil, Louis. *A Theology of Worship* (The New Church’s Teaching Series)

Continuing Education:

Jones, Cheslyn (ed). *The Study of Liturgy*

**Specific Licensure Expectations and Guidelines and Resources
for Training and Continuing Formation**

Preacher

DEFINITION: Title III.4.5. “A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.”

REQUIREMENTS: Expectations for a preacher in the Diocese of Missouri in addition to the *General Licensing Expectations*:

Annual Continuing Education: Lay persons licensed to preach must attend either:

- 1) An annual one-day event held by the diocese at which one or more experienced preachers will:
 - (a) Hear each licensed lay preacher preach one or more sermons and
 - (b) Lead a critique of their sermons and a discussion of the theory and methods of preaching; or
- 2) A preaching continuing education training approved by the Commission on Ministry.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR COMPETENCY: A lay person licensed to preach will have acquired, or be taking steps to acquire, a working knowledge of the Scriptures and of homiletics. This may mean completing the Education for Ministry course, the Episcopal School for Ministry’s Old Testament, New Testament, and Preaching courses, the basic Bible course offered by the Kerygma program, or other program(s) recommended by the Commission on Ministry. Meeting regularly with a lectionary or other Bible study group may be an informing and forming option for gaining competency for a license to preach.

SUGGESTED COMPETENCY FOR LICENSURE INVOLVES SHOWING AT THE BASIC LEVEL:

LEVELS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to describe a theology of preaching. • You will be able to show text or notes with feedback from four sermons or talks. • You will be able to deliver sermons or talks in at least three settings (including one outside a church service) and will include variety of people (children, young people, adults, the elderly) • You will show a broad knowledge of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and be able to articulate three main themes found there.
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to develop and justify your understanding of preaching. • You will be able to give a critical evaluation of your own practice on 4 varied occasions • You will show detailed understanding of the history of preaching, use of the Bible in preaching and the place of preaching in modern communication. • You will be able to produce a critical report on a sermon series of not fewer than four sermons looking at hermeneutical issues and the place of this series in the life of the church. • You will engage in deeper study of one or more books of the Bible and be able to articulate how this informs your preaching.

CONTENT WHICH INFORMS THE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- 1) Knowledge about the nature and purpose of preaching by:
 - a) Describing a theology of preaching.
 - b) Recognizing the function of preaching within worship.
 - c) Identifying various goals of preaching.
 - d) Describing the role of the preacher.

- 2) Knowledge about preparing for preaching by:
 - a) Demonstrating a working knowledge of the lectionary and calendar.
 - b) Relating scripture to the contemporary world, and the experience of the congregation.

- 3) Ability to preach by:
 - a) Preaching at a range of formal and informal services.
 - b) Using language clearly and at a level appropriate to the congregation and content.
 - d) Making effective and appropriate use of story, illustration and humour.
 - e) Showing an effective and appropriate use of voice and body.
 - f) Showing an effective and appropriate use of visual symbols and other media.

RESOURCES

Basic:

Killinger, John. *Fundamentals of Preaching*. second edition, Fortress Press, 1996.

Long, Thomas G. *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Fortress Press, 1989.

**Specific Licensure Expectations and Guidelines and Resources
for Training and Continuing Formation**

Eucharistic Minister

DEFINITION: Title III.4.6. “A Eucharistic Minister is a lay person authorized to administer the Consecrated Elements at a Celebration of Holy Eucharist.”

REQUIREMENTS: Expectations for a eucharistic minister in the Diocese of Missouri in addition to the “General Licensing Expectations:”

Clergy Mentor: A eucharistic minister will meet regularly with the deacon of the congregation or the clergy-in-charge of a faith community, or a clergy mentor appointed by the bishop for supervision, feedback, support, and to share any questions and to address any issues that merit further learning.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR COMPETENCY: The eucharistic minister must demonstrate a working knowledge of the Eucharistic rite(s) used by the congregation and the normal manner in which the Sacramental Elements are administered.

SUGGESTED COMPETENCY FOR LICENSURE INVOLVES SHOWING AT THE BASIC LEVEL:

LEVELS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to describe the basic structure of the Eucharistic rite. • You will acknowledge the importance of a sense of reverence about what is being done. • You will be able to adapt to the different ways of receiving the Bread and Wine. • You will be able to adapt to the different needs of those receiving. • You will know how to properly dispose of remaining Elements, according to local custom.
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to reflect on experience in the Eucharist. • You will be able to evaluate the historical development of the Eucharist. • You will be able to articulate the theology of the Eucharistic rites being used by the congregation. • You will be able to compare the Eucharistic liturgies of the Episcopal Church and two other traditions.

CONTENT WHICH INFORMS THE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- 1) Knowledge about the Eucharistic rites by:
 - a) Understanding the history of the development of the rites.
 - b) Understanding the structure of the rites.
 - c) Understanding the theology of the rites.
 - d) Understanding the history and theology of the Reserved Sacrament.

- 2) Ability to administer the Sacramental Elements by:
 - a) Knowing the different ways to administer Bread (in the hand, on the tongue).
 - b) Knowing the different ways to administer the Wine (hands-on Chalice, hands-off Chalice, intinction).
 - c) Knowing the proper way to use the purificator.
 - d) Understanding the different needs of those receiving (children, elderly, handicapped).
 - e) Knowing the proper disposition for the remaining Elements, according to local custom.

RESOURCES

Basic:

A Manual for Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors Beth Wickenberg Ely Morehouse (2005)
Commentary on the American Prayer Book Marion Hatchett HarperCollins

Continuing Education:

A Lay Minister's Guide to the Book of Common Prayer Clifford W. Atkinson Morehouse
By Water and the Word: The Scriptures of Baptism Daniel B. Stevick Church Publishing
I Have Called You Friends: An Invitation to Ministry Kevin L. Thew Forrester

**Specific Licensure Expectations and Guidelines and Resources
for Training and Continuing Formation**

Eucharistic Visitor

Title III.4.6. “A Eucharistic Visitor is a lay person authorized to take the Consecrated Elements in a timely manner following a Celebration of Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, by reasons of illness or infirmity, were unable to be present at the Celebration.”

REQUIREMENTS: Expectations for a eucharistic visitor in the Diocese of Missouri in addition to the “General Licensing Expectations:”

Clergy Mentor: A eucharistic visitor will meet regularly with the deacon of the congregation or the clergy-in-charge of a faith community, or a clergy mentor appointed by the bishop for supervision, feedback, support, and to share any questions and to address any issues that merit further learning.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR COMPETENCY: The eucharistic visitor must demonstrate a working knowledge of the Eucharistic rite(s), especially “Communion under Special Circumstances,” and the normal manner in which the Sacramental Elements are administered.

SUGGESTED COMPETENCY FOR LICENSURE INVOLVES SHOWING AT THE BASIC LEVEL:

LEVELS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to describe the basic structure of the Eucharistic rite. • You will be able to articulate a basic theology of the Eucharist. • You will acknowledge the importance of a sense of reverence about what is being done. • You will be able to meet and understand people of different temperaments and circumstances. • You will be able to listen and maintain confidentiality, reporting special pastoral needs as appropriate. • You will understand the need for flexibility and creativity in physically setting up the communion table, as well as the individual needs of those receiving communion. • You will know how to properly dispose of remaining Elements, according to local custom, and where to return the communion kit in a timely manner.
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to reflect on experience in the Eucharist. • You will be able to evaluate the historical development of the Eucharist. • You will be able to articulate the theology of the Eucharistic rites being used by the congregation and “Communion under Special Circumstances.” • You will be able to better understand the spiritual and personal needs of those who are receiving “Communion under Special Circumstances.” • You will be able to evaluate how the Episcopal Church and two other faith traditions provide for “Communion under Special Circumstances.”

Content which informs the Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Knowledge about the Eucharistic rites by:
 - a) Understanding the history of the development of the rites.
 - b) Understanding the structure of the rites.
 - c) Understanding the theology of the rites.
 - d) Understanding the history and theology of the Reserved Sacrament.

- 2) Ability to administer the Sacramental Elements by:
 - a) Knowing how the communion kit is to be prepared and given for use.
 - b) Knowing how to set up for the service with an individual, being flexible as to space and the needs of the person receiving.
 - c) Knowing the different ways to administer Bread (in the hand, on the tongue), and having the flexibility to adapt to the needs of the individual receiving.
 - d) Knowing the different ways to administer the Wine (hands-on Chalice, hands-off Chalice, intinction, spoon), and the flexibility to adapt to the needs of the individual receiving.
 - e) Knowing the proper use of the purificator.
 - f) Knowing the proper disposition of the remaining Elements, and the return of the communion kit to the church.

RESOURCES

Basic:

[A Manual for Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors](#) Beth Wickenberg Ely Morehouse (2005)

[Meditations for Lay Eucharistic Ministers](#) Beth Maynard Morehouse

[Commentary on the American Prayer Book](#) Marion Hatchett HarperCollins

“Materials Prepared for Use by Lay Eucharistic Ministers” (now referred to as Eucharistic Visitors) Diocese of Missouri

Continuing Education:

[Lay Shepherding: A Guide for Visiting the Sick, the Aged, the Troubled and the Bereaved](#)

Rudolf El Grantham Judson Press

Any of the materials listed under the Eucharistic Minister Resources

**Specific Licensure Expectations and Guidelines and Resources
for Training and Continuing Formation**

Catechist

DEFINITION: Title III.4.8. “A Catechist is a lay person authorized to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.”

REQUIREMENTS: Expectations for a Catechist in the Diocese of Missouri in addition to the *General Licensing Expectations*:

Clergy Mentor. The Catechist will meet regularly with the clergy person in charge of his or her faith community or the clergy mentor appointed by the Bishop for supervision, feedback, support, and to share any questions and to address any issues that merit further learning.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR COMPETENCY: A Catechist must demonstrate or be taking steps towards being able to articulate a working knowledge of the Sacrament of Holy Baptism and the social, theological, and practical implications of the Baptismal Covenant as well as how baptism relates to the rite of confirmation (and all of the complexities thereof); the basic tenets of Christian faith and practice; the Episcopal Church, its structure and governance, its history, its worship and Sacramental life (including the Book of Common Prayer).

SUGGESTED COMPETENCY FOR LICENSURE INVOLVES SHOWING AT THE BASIC LEVEL:

LEVELS	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to describe the authorized services of initiation in the Episcopal Church. • You will be able to show a basic knowledge of one of the following: baptismal policy issues, baptism in the context of the main Sunday eucharist, the role of confirmation, communion before confirmation. • You will be able to explain the baptismal promises and describe how you try to keep them in your life.
Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will be able to reflect on experience in one of the following: baptism preparation, confirmation program, catechumen, children and communion, adult baptism. • You will be able to evaluate the historical development of baptismal liturgy and theology. • You will be able to describe and critique one contemporary issue from: baptismal policy, communion and confirmation, infant communion, baptism, confirmation and the Spirit, anointing and baptism, modes of baptism, 're-baptism', infant dedication, baptism in the Spirit. • You will be able to evaluate the baptismal liturgies of the Episcopal Church and of two other Christian traditions. • You will be able to produce a critical evaluation of the baptismal theology and practice three Christian traditions. • You will be able to produce an appraisal of the initiation policy of a faith community.

CONTENT WHICH INFORMS THE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Knowledge about Christian initiation by
 - a) Describing and reflecting upon the theology of baptism and confirmation.
 - b) Comparing and contrasting various Christian practices of initiation past and present.
 - c) Describing current initiation liturgies.
 - d) Describing current issues in initiation.
 - e) Describing the baptism policy of the local community of faith in which the licensed individual is actively involved.

2. Ability to prepare people for baptism and/or confirmation by
 - a) Describing the significance of baptism and/or confirmation in people's lives.
 - b) Discovering and using resources for preparing people for baptism and /or confirmation.
 - c) Leading preparation appropriately.
 - d) Describing ways of follow up.

3. Ability to lead and/or share in services of initiation by
 - a) Taking part appropriately.

RESOURCES

Basic:

Stephen Holmgren. Ethics After Easter (The New Church's Teaching series).

Marianne Micks. Deep Waters: An Introduction to Baptism.

Questions Along the Way.

Tammany, Klara, Living Water: Baptism as a Way of Life Church Publishing

Continuing Education:

Laurence Hull Stookey. Baptism: Christ's Act in the Church.

Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight. The Study of Anglicanism.

APPENDIX C: FORMS

- DSC1: Spiritual Autobiography
- DSC2: General Discernment Report
- DSC3: Discernment Report Concerning Holy Orders
- DSC4: Priest-in-charge Report