

ACNA Canons on Ordained Ministry

TITLE III

Of Ministers, Their Recruitment, Preparation, Ordination, Office,
Practice and Transfer

Canon 1

Of Holy Orders in the Anglican Church in North America

Section 1 - *Concerning the Historic Three-fold Pattern for Holy Orders*

The Anglican Church in North America affirms what Anglicanism has always held, namely the normality of the threefold pastoral ministry of Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon. Persons shall be admitted to the office of Bishop, Presbyter or Deacon in this Church, and allowed to exercise any of these offices, who have been called, examined, and ordained according to an authorized ordinal of this Church, or ordained in some church whose orders are recognized and accepted by this Church.

Section 2 - *Concerning Canonical Obedience to Those in Authority*

Any person who has received authority to be a Presbyter or Deacon in any Diocese of this Church owes canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Bishop of the Diocese, and the Bishop of each Diocese owes canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Archbishop of this Church. In the absence of a Bishop, a Presbyter or Deacon owes such obedience to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese or to the Ecclesiastical Authority of a Diocese-in-Formation.

Section 3 - *Concerning the Domicile, Transfer, and Permission to Function of Presbyters and Deacons Generally*

In order to function as a Presbyter or Deacon one must be under the episcopal authority of the Bishop of a Diocese (that Diocese being one's "Domicile"). No member of the Clergy shall function in any Diocese other than the one in which the member of the Clergy is domiciled within the meaning of this section without written permission from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the member of the Clergy desires to officiate. Permission to function as a Presbyter or Deacon in a Diocese other than one's Domicile may be granted by the Bishop of such other Diocese. Transfer of one's Domicile to a different Diocese may be granted by the Bishop of such other Diocese upon consent of the Bishop of one's own Diocese. A Diocese may adopt canonical provisions not in conflict with these Canons concerning such Transfers or Permissions.

Section 4 - *Concerning Norms for Ordination Generally*

Except as hereinafter provided, the norms for ordination shall be determined by the Bishop having jurisdiction.

Canon 2
Of the Qualities of Those Who are to Be Ordained Deacons or Presbyters

Section 1 - *Concerning General Requirements*

Every Bishop shall take care that he admit no person into Holy Orders but such as he knows either by himself, or by sufficient testimony, to have been baptized and confirmed, to be sufficiently instructed in Holy Scripture and in the doctrine, discipline and worship of this Church, as defined by this Province, to be empowered by the Holy Spirit and to be a wholesome example and pattern to the entire flock of Christ.

Section 2 - *Concerning Requirements for Deacon According to Holy Scripture*

In accordance with Holy Scripture, a Deacon must be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, not pursuing dishonest gain, and one who holds the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested, and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Section 3 - *Concerning Requirements for Presbyter According to Holy Scripture*

In addition to the qualifications above, and in accordance with Holy Scripture, a Presbyter must be above reproach, not self-pleasing but self-controlled, upright, holy, disciplined, temperate, hospitable, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, not a recent convert, one who loves what is good and one who has a good reputation with outsiders. A Presbyter must be able to preach and teach, holding firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, in order to encourage others by sound doctrine and to refute those who oppose it (1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:6-9).

Section 4 - *Concerning Requirements for Married Candidates With and Without Children*

In the case of persons who are or have been married, and/or have children, every Bishop shall take care that such persons manage their own family well, for as Holy Scripture attests, “If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?” (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 12; Titus 1:6).

Section 5 - *Concerning Upholding the Sanctity of Marriage Especially for Those to Be Ordained*

Marriage as a lifelong covenant between a man and a woman, where the two become one flesh, is both an ordinance of Creation, affirmed as such by our Lord, and commended by Saint Paul as a sign of the mystical union between Christ and his Church (Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:22-32). As wholesome examples and patterns to the entire flock of Christ, all married persons to be admitted to Holy Orders shall remain married to their spouse for life, and in accordance with the vows they exchanged in Holy Matrimony. Subject to Section 6 of this Canon, no person shall be admitted into Holy Orders who has divorced and remarried.

Section 6 - *Concerning Pastoral Exceptions to Section 5*

The Archbishop of this Church, on an application made to him by the Bishop sponsoring a person who by reason of Section 5 of this Canon could not otherwise be admitted into Holy Orders may, upon a showing of good cause and particularly in light of the exceptions in Matthew 19 and 1 Corinthians 7, remove the impediment imposed by that section to the admission of the person into Holy Orders. Pastoral exceptions may be made in accordance with the directions given from time to time by the Archbishop acting in consultation with the College of Bishops.

Section 7 - Concerning Theological Training Requirements

No person shall be admitted into Holy Orders who has not been properly trained in Holy Scripture, and the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church.

**Canon 3
Of Deacons and Their Ordination**

Section 1 - Concerning Prerequisites for Ordination

No person shall be ordained a Deacon in this Church until that person shall have passed a satisfactory examination conducted by those appointed by the Bishop for this purpose, and shall have demonstrated sufficient knowledge of Holy Scripture, the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church, and any other topics the Bishop shall deem necessary for the office and ministry of Deacons.

Section 2 - Concerning the Required Declaration of Ordinands ¹

No persons shall be ordained a Deacon in the Church until such person shall have subscribed without reservation the following declaration:

“I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation, and I consequently hold myself bound to conform my life and ministry thereto, and therefore I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of Christ as this Church has received them. And I do promise, here in the presence of Almighty God and of the Church, that I will pay true and canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Bishop of _____, and his successors, so help me God.”

Section 3 - Concerning Length of Diaconate

1. We recognize the importance of the Vocational Diaconate as an essential and historic ministry of the Church.
2. A Transitional Deacon shall not be ordained to the office of Presbyter for at least one year, unless the Bishop having jurisdiction shall find good cause for the contrary, so that the Deacon’s manner of life and ministry may be tested and observed before admission to the order of Presbyter.

**Canon 4
Of Presbyters and Their Ordination**

Section 1 - Concerning Ordination Following Period of Diaconate

No person shall be ordained a Presbyter in this Church until that person shall have been ordained a Deacon.

Section 2 - Concerning Prerequisites for Ordination

No person shall be ordained a Presbyter in this Church until that person shall have passed a satisfactory examination conducted by those appointed by the Bishop for this purpose, and shall have demonstrated sufficient knowledge of Holy Scripture and the Doctrine, Discipline and

¹ This section was amended by the 2019 Provincial Council and ratified by the Provincial Assembly at its meeting on June 17, 2019. It becomes effective on August 16, 2019.

Worship of this Church by examination in the following subjects, and any other qualities that the Bishop deems necessary for the office of Presbyter:

1. Holy Scripture: The Bible, its contents and historical background and interpretive methods;
2. Church History;
3. Anglican Church History;
4. Doctrine: The Church's teaching set forth in the Creeds and the Offices of Instruction;
5. Liturgics: The contents and use of the Book of Common Prayer, and knowledge of the proper use of church music;
6. Moral Theology and Ethics;
7. Ascetical Theology: With an emphasis on the prayer life and spirituality of the minister, including the use of the Daily Office;
8. Practical Theology: The office and work of a Presbyter; the conduct of public worship; principles of sermon composition and delivery; principles and methods of Christian education in the parish; Constitution and Canons of this Church and the Diocese to which the candidate belongs; and the use of the voice in reading and speaking;
9. The Missionary Work of the Church: How the Gospel has been passed from one language, tribe and nation to another; basic principles of cross-cultural communication; mission strategies; and personal relational evangelism and apologetics.

Section 3 - Concerning the Required Declaration of Ordinands ²

No Deacon shall be ordained a Presbyter in the Church until the Deacon shall have subscribed the following declaration:

"I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation, and I consequently hold myself bound to conform my life and ministry thereto, and therefore I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of Christ as this Church has received them. And I do promise, here in the presence of Almighty God and of the Church, that I will pay true and canonical obedience in all things lawful and honest to the Bishop of _____, and his successors, so help me God."

Canon 5
Of Ministers Ordained in Jurisdictions not in Communion with this Church

Section 1 - Concerning Application for Holy Orders in this Church

When Ministers ordained in a Jurisdiction not ordered in the Historic Succession nor in communion with this Church desire to be a Deacon or Presbyter in this Church, they shall apply to a Bishop of this Church for ordination to the diaconate and presbyterate.

² This section was amended by the 2019 Provincial Council and ratified by the Provincial Assembly at its meeting on June 17, 2019. It becomes effective on August 16, 2019.

Section 2 - Concerning Pre-Ordination Requirements

If such ministers furnish evidence satisfactory to the Bishop for eligibility for ordination pursuant to Canons 2 through 4 of this Title, they shall be examined on the points of Doctrine, Discipline, Polity and Worship in which the Jurisdiction from which they have come differs from this Church, and any other subject which the Bishop deems necessary and appropriate.

Section 3 - Concerning Ministers Ordained in Jurisdictions in the Historic Succession but not in Communion with this Church

When a Minister ordained in a Jurisdiction by a Bishop of the Historic Succession but not in communion with this Church desires to be received as a member of the Clergy of this Church, the person shall comply with Sections 1 and 2 of this Canon. Thereafter, being satisfied of the person's theological qualifications and successful completion of the examination specified in Canon III.3.1 and soundness in the faith, the Bishop may, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee or its equivalent:

1. Receive the person into this Church in the Orders to which already ordained by a Bishop in the Historic Succession; or
2. If the person was ordained by a Bishop whose authority to convey such orders has not been recognized by this Church, ordain the person as a Deacon conditionally, and, in accordance with Canon III.3.3.2, ordain the person a Presbyter conditionally (if previously ordained a Presbyter), having previously baptized and confirmed the person conditionally if necessary.

Section 4 - Concerning Receiving a Bishop from another Jurisdiction not in Communion with this Church

No Bishop from another jurisdiction not in Communion with this Church shall be received as a Bishop of this Church except by the consent of the College of Bishops and in accordance with the Canons of this Church.

Canon 6
Of the Acceptance and Dismissal of Clergy in this Church

Section 1 - Concerning the Transfer of Clergy from Jurisdictions in Communion with this Church

A Bishop may accept by Letter of Transfer a Deacon or Presbyter in good standing from any Jurisdiction in communion with this Church. The accepting Bishop shall inquire of the transferring Bishop concerning any past or existing disciplinary matter or other impediment affecting the ministry of the transferring member of the Clergy.

Section 2 - Concerning Transfers from One Diocese of this Church to Another

1. Any Deacon or Presbyter of this Church transferring into a Diocese or other Jurisdiction of this Church shall, in order to become a member of that Jurisdiction, present to the Bishop and Diocese, a testimonial from the Bishop or other Ecclesiastical Authority of the Jurisdiction in which he last had membership, setting forth the Deacon or Presbyter's true standing and character. The Testimonial, known as Letter of Transfer, which must be presented within six months from the date of issue, may be in the following words:

“We hereby certify that the Reverend A. B., who has signified desire to be transferred to the Ecclesiastical Authority of (name of Diocese Network or other Jurisdiction) is a Presbyter (or Deacon) of (name of Diocese Network or other Jurisdiction) in good standing.” (Signed)

2. The transferring Bishop shall disclose to the accepting Bishop any past or existing disciplinary matter or other impediment affecting the ministry of the transferring member of the Clergy.

Section 3 - Concerning Transfer to Another Christian Denomination or Jurisdiction Any Deacon or Presbyter of this Church in good standing may, at their own request, be released from the obligations of the ministry of this Church to unite with any other Christian denomination or jurisdiction by a commendatory letter, signed by the Bishop, and attested by one other person having ecclesiastical standing within the Diocese or other Jurisdiction of which the Deacon or Presbyter is a member. Upon the approval of the Standing Committee, the Bishop may remove the Deacon or Presbyter from the roll of clergy of the diocese

Section 4 - *Concerning Voluntary Resignation from the Ordained Ministry of this Church*

1. Any Deacon or Presbyter in good standing may resign from the Ordained Ministry of this Church by sending a resignation in writing to the Bishop with jurisdiction. The Bishop or other Ecclesiastical Authority shall record the declaration and request so made, and shall determine that the Deacon or Presbyter is not under discipline as defined in Title IV of these canons, and that the resignation is not occasioned by misconduct or irregularity, but is voluntary and for causes which do not affect the moral character of the Deacon or Presbyter.

Upon making this determination, the Bishop or other Ecclesiastical Authority shall defer formal action upon the declaration for two months, and meanwhile shall lay the matter before the Standing Committee or its equivalent for advice and consent. With its advice and consent, the Bishop or other Ecclesiastical Authority may pronounce that such resignation is accepted and that the Deacon or Presbyter is released from the obligations of the Ministerial office, and that the Deacon or Presbyter relinquishes the right to exercise in this Church the gifts and spiritual authority as a Minister of God’s Word and Sacraments conferred in ordination.

2. The Bishop’s declaration shall state that the resignation was for causes which do not affect the Deacon or Presbyter’s moral character, and shall, if requested, give a certificate to this effect to the person so removed from the ministry of this Church. In all other cases of resignation or renunciation of the ordained ministry, where there may be a question of misconduct or irregularity, the Bishop shall follow the procedures outlined in Canon IV.7.