OVERVIEW OF THE FORMATION AND ORDINATION PROCESSES

The formation process for those preparing for Holy Orders in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) seeks to offer flexible individualized programs for postulants and candidates. This process provides an opportunity to understand and begin to master the tools and resources critical to the life of the ordained ministry in the 21st century. The process is guided by the following principles:

COLLEGIALITY
Ordained ministry is best done in collaboration. From admission to postulancy, the process provides a colleague group for postulants and candidates. Formation occurs in the context of formal academic study and regular conversation (structured and spontaneous) with colleagues. Establishing these collegial relationships while in Formation supports a normative pattern that, with God’s help, extends into and throughout the life of the ordained minister. Once in a colleague group, the postulant or candidate will remain with that group for three years, regardless of their date of ordination.

HYBRIDITY
The diaconate is hybrid ministry by nature, as a deacon is expected to maintain employment status throughout the time of ministry, typically in the secular world. Given the increasing number of part-time positions, more and more priests must engage a hybrid ministry. While we do not assume that all priests will have more than one job or source of income, we recognize the increasing need for priests who are able to recognize and embrace this changed dynamic in the Church; priests who are able to serve God’s mission in a variety of ways — i.e., “in the Church” while employed “in the world.” The formation process is designed to enable the flourishing of those who will serve as hybrid priests.

INDIVIDUALITY
Each postulant begins his/her formation process by creating an individualized plan (see outlines for diaconate and priesthood plans). This plan takes into account the particular context, experience, and gifts that a postulant presents. Over the course of Formation the plan is assessed and refined, in consultation with the bishops, Commission on Ministry, the Dean of Formation and the colleague group.
MISSION
Our ordained leaders are formed to serve God’s mission in the world. Understanding how to explore what God is up to in a particular context or culture and how to equip the disciples to participate in God’s mission presumes a particular path in formation. A deep experience of God’s story — Incarnate in Jesus, told through the Scriptures, handed on through traditions and practices — enables the priest to more fully equip God’s people to participate in God’s work in the world. We seek to give our future leaders the tools for leading and supporting worshiping communities in the 21st century, particularly with an eye toward building up communities in new and creative ways.

For additional information on the various requirements for those in the process, see the guidelines for Priesthood and Diaconate. Questions? Contact Molly James, Dean of Formation: mjames@episcopalct.org.