

## Responsibilities of the Vestry in the Process of Discernment and Formation for Ordained Ministry

According to the Canons (Church Laws) of The Episcopal Church, the Vestry has specific responsibilities when a member of the congregation enters a process toward Ordination to the Diaconate or Priesthood. These responsibilities, in the order in which they are fulfilled, are as follows:

1. The Vestry provides a letter of support to accompany a Seeker's application for Postulancy. The letter must be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry, at a meeting duly convened, and by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Parish, and attested by the Clerk of the Vestry. Should there be no Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the letter shall be signed by a Priest of the Diocese acquainted with the nominee and the Parish. [Canon III.5.2(c)]. The letter must include a statement of the commitment of the community to
  - a. pledge to contribute financially to that preparation, and
  - b. involve itself in the Nominee's preparation for ordination to the Diaconate/Priesthood. [Canon III.6.2(a) and II.8.2(a)]
2. The Vestry provides a letter of support to accompany a Postulant's application for Candidacy. The letter must be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry, at a meeting duly convened, and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight. [Canon III.6.4(a) and III.8.4(a)].
3. The Vestry provides a letter of support to accompany a Candidate's application for Ordination to the Diaconate. The letter must be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry, at a meeting duly convened, and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight. [Canon III.6.6]
4. The Vestry provides a letter of support to accompany a Candidate's application for Ordination to the Priesthood. The letter must be signed and dated by at least two-thirds of all the members of the Vestry, at a meeting duly convened, and by the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight. [Canon III.8.6]

Forms for these letters of support are available on the website of the Diocese of Virginia, [www.thediocese.net](http://www.thediocese.net). Click on Resources, then click on Serving the Church.