



LAY PREACHING LICENSING PROGRAM



The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

Walking in Love. Making Jesus Known. Transforming Lives.

Dear Aspiring Lay Preacher,

We at the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana are proud to offer a pathway for you to obtain a Lay Preaching License! Bishop Duckworth is excited to support this new ministry and sees this licensing program as one more way we can honor and raise up the gifts of our parishioners and empower the lay leaders in our church! We welcome you into this time of discernment and study and promise our prayers and support as you navigate this program!

In this packet, you will find the following items:

- A Program Overview & Timeline
- An Application Form (Personal Information & Discernment History)
- A Guide for Your Sponsoring Priest
- A Report Template for Your Sponsoring Priest
- A One-page statement on your Vocation as you understand it now

You may go ahead and begin filling out this packet, but it will not be complete and ready to submit to the diocese until you have participated in the necessary discernment steps we have outlined in the Guide for your Sponsoring Priest. Please read over all documents in this packet carefully.

Once your packet is complete and all items have been checked off, please submit it to the diocesan office no later than Monday, August 5, 2024. You may submit the packet before the deadline if you finish early. Once we have received your completed packet, our office will be in touch with you about scheduling an interview with the Canon to the Ordinary and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry. During this meeting, we will speak about your discernment thus far and also talk to you about the specifics of your educational program through the A.C. Marble School. Please note that the program lasts 18 months and includes the study of scripture, theology, and the practice of preaching. If you are unable to commit to this educational component, this license may not be right for you at this time.

As always, if you have any questions along the way, we are happy to help! Please feel free to contact the Canon to the Ordinary by calling the church office (504) 895-6634.

Blessings,



The Rev. Canon Morgan M. MacIntire
Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Louisiana

WELCOME

LAY PREACHING DISCERNMENT & EDUCATION 18 MONTH TIMELINE

Jan

Discernment Meetings

- Meet with your sponsoring Priest a minimum of 2 times.

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Book Study

- Read “A Lay Preacher’s Guide” by Karoline Lewis

Jul

Application

- Begin completing:
- Personal History
 - Sponsoring Priest Report
 - Articulation of Call

Aug

- Submit your completed application
- Meet with Canon to the Ordinary & Commission on Ministry Chair
- Enroll in A.C. Marble School - Lay Preaching Program

Sept

Complete the first two semesters (Biblical Studies & Theology)

–

Meet with your sponsoring priest

May

- Sponsoring Priest Submits Letter of Recommendation
- Updated Articulation of Call

Jun

Lay Ministry Conference at SECC
Meet with Bishop Duckworth & COM

Sept

Complete last semester (Practice of Preaching)

–

Graduation from A.C. Marble School

Dec

Receive Lay Preaching License

LAY PREACHER APPLICATION FORM

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Date of Birth:

Marital Status: S/M/W/D

Highest level of education:

Occupation:

+ + + + + + + + +

I have resided in this diocese since,

My religion as a child was,

and as an adult,

I was baptized in

Church, on

by The Rev.

I was Confirmed in

Church, on

by The Rt. Rev.

Bishop of

+ + + + + + + + +

I have / have not previously applied for a lay preaching license. *If you have, please give details*

LAY PREACHER ARTICULATION OF CALL

Vocational Statement – Please articulate your sense of call as you understand it at this time. What does it mean to be called as a lay preacher? How would being licensed to preach allow you to serve and minister in a way that your current vocation as a lay person does not? (Minimum of 250 words)

LAY PREACHER UPDATED ARTICULATION OF CALL

Since you have now been on a path of discernment and formation for the past year in pursuit of your lay preaching license, how has your sense of call either changed or been affirmed? Please explain. (Minimum of 250 words)

LAY PREACHER DISCERNMENT & APPLICATION CHECK LIST

JANUARY - JULY

- Meeting #1 with Sponsoring Priest
- Read "A Lay Preacher's Guide" by Karoline Lewis
- Meeting #2 with Sponsoring Priest
- Fill out Lay Preacher Application
 - 1. Personal History
 - 2. Sponsoring Priest Report
 - 3. Articulation of Call

AUGUST

- Submit your completed application
- Meet with Canon to the Ordinary & Commission on Ministry Chair
- Enroll in A.C. Marble School
- Background Checks & Safe church & Racial Healing training, if not completed

SEPTEMBER - MAY

- Complete the first two semesters of education (*Biblical Studies + Theology*)
- Meeting #3 with Sponsoring Priest
- Safe church & Racial Healing training if not completed
- Submit the following to the Canon to the Ordinary + Commission on Ministry Chair:
 - Sponsoring Priest Letter of Recommendation
 - Updated Articulation of Call

JUNE

- Formal Interview with Commission on Ministry & Bishop Duckworth
- Safe church & Racial Healing training if not completed

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER

- Complete last semester of education (*Practice of Preaching*)
- Safe church & Racial Healing training if not completed

GUIDE FOR SPONSORING PRIEST

As the Sponsoring Priest, it is your responsibility to make sure that all parishioners who may be feeling a sense of call to become lay preachers understand the process of discernment and formation they are about to undertake. Interested parties must be:

- active, confirmed communicants in good standing
- have attended your parish for at least 6 months

They must have already completed:

- a background check through Praesidium - prior to enrollment in A.C. Marble School)
- viewed and passed all Safe Church modules required for “Lay Leadership”(please consult this [CHART](#)) - by the end of the 18-month program.
- attended an Anti-Racism course led by our own Racial Healing Commission or another diocesan-approved organization - by the end of the 18-month program
- if they are not already engaged in on-going Spiritual Direction, they must meet consistently with a Spiritual Director throughout the 18-month program

You are also responsible for aiding them in beginning their discernment. As such: an initial meeting with interested lay persons must occur where the following questions are discussed:

1. Give a brief summary of your life of faith. *How did you find the Episcopal church? What brought you to your current congregation? What keeps you at your current congregation?*
2. Why do you sense a calling to become a lay preacher? *How does this differ from a call to Holy Orders?*
3. What is your understanding of discernment? *How does it differ from other periods in your life where you have had to make big decisions? What does/should discernment involve?*
4. Do you have any prior experience with writing or public speaking? *What did you do to prepare for those presentations? Have you had prior experience writing and/or giving theological reflections? Was the preparation for that different and in what ways was it different?*
5. Understanding the difference between public speaking and preaching, how do they differ? *Discuss Acts 2:14-36 (Pentecost) or 14:15-17 (Barnabas and Paul at Lystra)*
6. How do you feel about theological education and all that it involves - studying, note-taking, writing papers, etc.? *If there are any obstacles or impediments to your education, what are they and what support might you need to put in place to overcome them?*
7. What prior experience do you have leading worship? *Describe what service around the altar means to you.*

GUIDE FOR SPONSORING PRIEST

Based on your discussions, it will be up to you to recommend whether or not you think each individual should move forward to engage in further discernment and begin their theological preparation to preach. If you believe this to be the right course of action, the next step is:

- to recommend that the individual read “A Lay Preacher’s Guide” by Karoline Lewis. Upon completing this book, you will recommend that the individual return to your office for a follow-up discussion about the content.

Once these two meetings have occurred:

- you will officially fill out and submit to the diocesan office a Report of a Sponsoring Priest (template included in this packet).

Upon receiving the completed application packet, our office will set up an interview between the potential lay preacher, Canon to the Ordinary, and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry. We will engage in a conversation about their discernment thus far and also talk to them specifically about the educational components and further discernment steps involved in the process (for a full timeline of these steps, please consult the chart at the beginning of this packet). We will advise the Bishop about whether or not they should proceed and help them enroll in the A.C. Marble School in August.

The entire first year of study should be just that - a period of intentional theological formation where discernment is ongoing.

As such, no potential lay preacher will be allowed to preach in any parish until the Fall of their final semester at A.C. Marble School.

Please do not add them to your preaching rota or recommend them for supply work!

GUIDE FOR SPONSORING PRIEST

Upon completion of their first year of study:

- The potential lay preachers will meet with you in May to discuss their theological formation and whether or not they still feel called to this ministry within the church.
- If they are, you will need to write a “Letter of Support” and send it to the Canon to the Ordinary and the Chair of the Commission on Ministry.
- The layperson will also need to submit an updated “Articulation of Call” statement to display how their understanding of this vocational calling has changed and grown over the past year. Once these items have been received and reviewed, the potential lay preacher will come before the Commission on Ministry for a formal interview and will also meet in person with Bishop Duckworth in June. The COM will give its recommendation to the Bishop and she will notify the lay person of her decision to allow them licensure upon completion of their studies. At this point, potential lay preachers will be allowed to preach within their sponsoring parishes under the direct guidance and supervision of the Sponsoring Priest.

All students enrolled in the lay preaching program at A.C. Marble School who have completed 18 months of study and have been approved by the Bishop for licensure will receive said license upon their graduation. At that point in time, they will be free to preach from any pulpit in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana upon invitation from another rector or from a Senior Warden (when a parish is in transition or without full-time clergy). We will be developing supply rates for lay preachers so that they will be adequately compensated for their efforts.

Financial Obligations: The Sponsoring parish will be responsible for paying for the Praesidium Background check for each potential lay preacher enrolled in the program (\$22). Though tuition for the program will be covered by the diocese, the student will be responsible for purchasing all textbooks associated with their educational courses. Parishes are not obligated to cover those costs but may choose to support the potential lay preacher in this way.

REPORT OF A SPONSORING PRIEST

Date:

Name of Sponsoring Priest & Parish:

Name of Inquirer:

List of dates you met with inquirer:

Give a brief summary of the nature of your book discussions, noting any insights that inquirer discovered and your impressions of their aptitude for study.

REPORT OF A SPONSORING PRIEST

Is it your recommendation that the inquirer be called to Lay Preaching? Please explain.

Any additional comments:

Signature of Sponsoring Priest:

**The Rev.
Rector/Interim/PIC of St.**



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