

## **Appendix D4 – An example of a completed Diaconal Discernment Worksheet**

*This appendix is for review by the parish discernment group, in order to provide an example of how the Diaconal Discernment Worksheet (Appendix D3) might be completed in the case of a fictional applicant named Anna.*

### **Diaconal Discernment Assessment Worksheet**

*This worksheet is a record-keeping tool for use by the parish discernment group as they complete their meetings with the enquirer, using the detailed process outlined at Appendix D5. It is based directly on the “Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate” (Appendix D1).*

*As the discernment process unfolds, individual members of the group are encouraged to use this worksheet to help organise their observations and thoughts, with a view to preparing a joint recommendation concerning the applicant’s suitability for ordained ministry. This recommendation (see Appendix D6) is made to the bishop and director of deacons. The notes made using this worksheet will inform that recommendation, but are not to be submitted as part of it.*

*In assessing suitability for ordination to the diaconate, the church considers the character, skills and knowledge of candidates. These are sometimes described as “character, charisms, and content,” or as proficiencies of the “heart, hands and head.” We are looking for the qualities described in the “Criteria for Ordination to the Diaconate.” Please note that no one is expected to possess these qualities in full. However, we do seek enquirers who show promise of growth, in addition to an evident affinity for the ministry of a deacon.*

<p><b>Diaconal Identity.</b> We seek someone:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• whose day-to-day ministry and commitments are already compellingly diaconal in nature;</li><li>• who is practised in the ways of both the church and the world, and who is committed to the wellbeing of both;</li><li>• with a growing understanding of diakonia within the mission of the church; and</li><li>• who can imagine how such diakonia could play out in their own church context.</li></ul>
<p><b>Experienced or Observed Strengths</b></p> <p><i>In the two years Anna has been in the parish, she has organized and led a homeless advocacy group that has both volunteered at a local shelter and participated in the ongoing dialogue about the issue of homelessness in our region. She sees this as a fundamental aspect of the role of the church. She is becoming known in the parish as someone who has knowledge and experience working with poverty, and especially those dealing with mental health issues.</i></p>
<p><b>Areas Needing Development</b></p> <p><i>Anna can be impatient with church members who consider her work with the homeless to be “activist” or “too political.” She will need to keep working on how to encourage the church to adopt and engage in outreach to the community.</i></p>

**Comments / Questions / Notes**

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**A pattern of spiritual practice rooted in a diaconal, Christ-centred, Anglican approach to spirituality.** We seek someone who

- is working with a “rule of life;”
- is regular in the daily offices, faithful in their participation in the eucharist, and active in the practice of personal and intercessory prayer;
- pays attention to their interior life;
- has or is initiating a relationship with a qualified spiritual director;
- can articulate how their spirituality relates to the vocation of a deacon.

**Experienced or Observed Strengths**

*As a recent “convert” to Anglicanism, Anna has much enthusiasm for weekly Eucharist and for the combination of order and open-mindedness that Anglicanism has at its core. Anna is very interested in learning new ways to practice spiritual life. She has a strong sense of the importance and breadth of intercessory prayer, especially for those who are vulnerable or at risk.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*Anna should learn more about and practice the Anglican pattern of Eucharist, Office and personal prayer. She should enter into the rhythm of praying the Office as well as find a spiritual director who could also serve as her confessor. Anna should begin serving in different capacities in the Sunday liturgy. We encourage her to continue to ground her diaconal self-understanding in the great themes of the bible.*

**Comments / Questions / Notes**

*Some wonder how Anna will feel about life in an Anglican Church once the initial euphoria wears off?*

**Personal awareness and understanding.** We seek someone:

- whose presence grounds, encourages and inspires others.
- who is working on self-awareness and who nurtures authentic and productive relationships with others. This includes:
  - an openness to, and respect for, differing social and cultural communities in church and society;
  - understanding and having the ability to communicate emotions; and
  - being attuned to the impact of one’s presence, words and actions on others.
- who responds appropriately to conflict, and who has the emotional resilience to persevere and remain in relationship with others when situations get difficult.

**Experienced or Observed Strengths**

*Given her background in counseling, Anna is adept at understanding and articulating her emotions. She is also strong in her ability to cultivate authentic, healthy relationships with others.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*Some wonder if Anna will be able to exhibit the kind of resilience needed to remain in relationship over time when things get difficult.*

**Comments / Questions / Notes**

*We wonder if Anna would benefit by some formal training in conflict management and resolution.*

**Community engagement.** We seek someone who:

- demonstrates knowledge of their local community, and eagerness to learn more about contemporary issues;
- shows sensitivity to human suffering and injustice;
- is committed to interpreting to the church the needs, concerns and hopes of the world.

**Observed or Experienced Strengths**

*Anna has gone to considerable lengths to understand the history of our parish’s interaction with our indigenous neighbours, and recently read and led a book study on Bob Joseph’s book, “21 Things You Didn’t Know about the Indian Act.” She recently attended a seminar on MAID, as part of her ongoing education as a counselor, and has kept up to date on statements made by the Anglican Church in this regard.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*Anna does need some help discerning how best to bring what she has heard in her learning and practice to the attention of the church – should she preach? Teach? Write articles? Convene groups? And so on.*

**Comments / Questions / Notes**

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**Rootedness in the biblical narrative.** We seek someone who:

- has an awareness of the sweep of the biblical narrative, its content and themes, especially those foundational to diaconal ministry;
- is aware of the authority of scripture as understood in the Anglican tradition;
- can articulate some of the challenges put to scripture in our contemporary context.

**Observed Experiences or Strengths**

*Anna is gaining familiarity with the bible, and expresses appreciation for the more nuanced approach which Anglicans take in its interpretation. This was not her experience previously, when she felt that Christians were unable to reconcile the bible with contemporary social issues and scientific insights.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*As Anna becomes more familiar with scripture, we hope that she will be able to identify compelling examples of servant ministry (and ministers), as well as themes such as justice, mercy, law, grace, poverty, wealthy, exile, wilderness, and so on.*

**Comments / Questions / Notes**

*Does the church expect its clergy to have read the whole bible?*

**Gatherer and builder of community.** We seek someone who:

- is gifted in gathering diverse people into a community and then building and developing that community over time;
- can help groups of people come together around shared values and a sense of purpose;
- can assist others in identifying and developing their gifts and skills in service to God, the church and the broader community.

**Observed Experiences or Strengths**

*Anna is showing great promise in this area in the parish. In the two years she has been in the parish, she has organized and led the above-mentioned a homeless advocacy group. In addition, she has organized a successful young singles' social justice group. Anna is a natural gatherer of people and creator of community around a specific purpose. Within her work in the parish and in her work, she has great opportunity to interact with people of diverse backgrounds, ages and ethnicities.*

**Areas Needing Development**

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**Comments / Questions / Notes**

*She just needs to keep this up and needs to find a way to build in feedback on her leadership style.*

**A leader who both carries authority and can live productively in relationship to others in authority.** We seek a leader who:

- is comfortable exercising a style of leadership that is both relational and carries authority;
- having made ordination vows, acknowledges the authority and responsibility that others (ordained or lay) carry in relationship to them; and
- can nurture productive relationships with those in authority.

**Experienced or Observed Strengths**

*Anna seems to have no problem with exhibiting leadership in an "upfront" way that stays connected to others. She has shown this both in the parish and in her work as an Executive Director of a fledgling NGO.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*In that the Anglican Church is new to Anna, she will need to learn about and experience being in productive relationship with others who have authority in relationship to her, especially in the role of deacon.*

**Questions / Comments / Notes**

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**A listener who loves to learn.** We seek someone who:

- is committed to lifelong learning;
- sees God as moving and active in scripture, tradition and reason;
- is open to learning from other disciplines, and from the wisdom of the community.
- learns from their experience of both success and failure.

**Observed Experiences or Strengths**

*Anna is a learner and sees life as one learning opportunity after another. She is particularly interested in learning more about how Anglicans see things.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*In that Anna is new to the Anglican Church, she needs a full immersion in how Anglicans understand Scripture, tradition, reason, community life, liturgy, learning from other disciplines, Christian action and on and on!*

**Questions / Comments / Notes**

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**A good steward.** We seek someone who

- practises self-care of body, mind and spirit;
- nourishes the important relationships in their life;
- is committed to stewardship of the created order;
- gives generously of their time, talent and treasure in gratitude to God.

**Observed Experiences or Strengths**

*Anna has a strong ethic of giving of herself to her work, to her Christian faith and to the circle of friends she has cultivated.*

**Areas Needing Development**

*Anna openly admits that she needs help in cultivating greater balance in her life. More specifically, she needs encouragement in getting the rest and exercise she needs as well as a pattern of financial giving that reflects her commitment to the church.*

**Questions / Comments / Notes**

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