



Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Bishop's Customary for Ordinations

Updated November 1, 2025

No public announcement or invitation will be made until the Standing Committee has given its final approval and the Bishop has given his final consent.

Location and Timing of the ordination

An ordination for deacon (vocational) will usually occur at the church that raised the person up for Holy Orders. Ordinations to the Diaconate (transitional) may as well, but just as often may occur as part of a Diocesan gathering. Ordinations to the Diaconate may also take place at other times and in other places, but only after the consultation and approval of the Bishop.

Ordinations to the priesthood will normally take place in the parish of one's first call or assignment at a day and time to be determined by the Bishop in consultation with the ordinand and the Rector of the parish.

Propers

Ideally, ordinations will take place on Feasts of the Church. In the case of Major Feasts, the Propers are to be those of the Feast. In the case of Lesser Feasts, the Propers may be those of the Feast, of Ordination, or an appropriate combination of the two, approved by the Bishop. For ordinations that do not take place on Feasts, the Propers will be those for ordination. Except on the most exceptional of circumstances, we will not schedule ordinations during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Liturgical color and vestments

The liturgical color is that of the Feast. For ordinations that do not take place on Feasts, the default color for ordination is red. An exception can be made if the ordinand is given a set of white vestments for the occasion and using that color will permit the gift to be worn in the liturgy.

The ordinand vests in a plain white alb (not a cassock and surplice) wearing no insignia of office. Clerical collar with black shirt should be worn under the alb. While this may feel awkward or presumptuous, it is logistically not possible to put on a clerical collar in the midst of the liturgy. Rest assured that I and all of your fellow clergy have all experienced the same awkwardness of wearing a clerical collar before the liturgy starts.

For the ordination of a deacon, the altar party will be dressed in a plain white alb and red or white stole as described below. Those attending, but not serving at the altar, should wear a cassock and surplice with a tippet. Any clergy without a tippet may wear the appropriate colored stole with their cassock and surplice.

All clergy participating in the liturgy should be dressed in a plain white alb and stole.

In all cases, ecumenical clergy present are invited to vest and process, wearing what they would for a liturgy in their tradition.

Presenters

The Prayer Book only requires two presenters, a priest and a layperson. It is fine to have additional presenters, but having too many presenters makes it difficult for the congregation to see and participate. Although family and close friends are often invited to present, please remember that the parish you serve has called you to this ministry and it is their call to you, on behalf of the whole church, that makes it possible for the ordination process to proceed. Therefore, the parish you serve should be properly represented among the presenters.

Only one priest presenter and one lay presenter will sign the certificate of ordination during the liturgy. Family members and close friends can participate in other ways in the liturgy, such as oblation bearers, lectors, etc.

Deacons in the Liturgy

There should be two deacons involved in the ordination: the Bishop's Deacon and the Deacon of the Liturgy. Often the Archdeacon of the Diocese will be one of these two. Normally, the deacons, chosen by the ordinand, should be deacons of the Diocese of Georgia. If there are deacons assigned to the parish in which the ordination takes place, out of courtesy those deacons should serve. Typically, the Bishop's Deacon accompanies the Bishop and assists with the Prayer Book (or bulletin), crozier, and serves communion with the Bishop, while the Deacon of the Liturgy reads the Gospel, prepares the altar, serves communion with the new priest, and offers the dismissal. These roles should be confirmed in the rehearsal prior to the ordination.

The crozier is placed in the stand when the Bishop and Deacon arrive at the chair and is there for the consecration of a deacon or priest. The Bishop's Deacon stands on the Bishop's right and holds the Prayer Book, service book, or the Bishop's iPad in churches where the lighting makes it difficult to see the printed liturgy.

The Litany

The Litany for Ordinations is often chanted. The decision on whether it is said or sung should fit with the gifts present and the traditions of the church hosting the liturgy.

The ordinand may lie prostrate or kneel during the Litany of Ordinations. If prostration is chosen, one's face is down with arms outstretched.

The Readers

Laypersons, chosen by the ordinand, should read the first two readings. Whether the Psalm is read or chanted depends on the church where the ordination is held. The Deacon of the Liturgy should read (or chant if that is the norm of the congregation) the Gospel. The Deacon need not go to the Bishop for a blessing before reading the Gospel, but may if desired.

The Preacher

As provided in the Book of Common Prayer, it is the Bishop's prerogative to be the Preacher at all liturgies at which the Bishop presides. That said, the ordinand may request a different preacher. If the Bishop is not the preacher, then any priest or deacon in good standing in the Diocese of Georgia is a preferred option, with someone outside the Diocese being the least common choice, but a possible one. This request should be made to the Bishop *before* inviting a preacher. The ultimate invitation comes from the Bishop, rather than the ordinand.

Vesting and Symbols of Office

At the time of the vesting of the new priest or deacon, a family member or friend, chosen by the ordinand, will place the stole on them. Others present may then vest the priest in a chasuble and in some cases the ordinand will also elect to be vested in a dalmatic, which will happen at this time.

After the Bishop gives the Bible to the new priest or deacon, other instruments or symbols of office may be given after consultation with the Bishop. For example, if a new priest receives a chalice or paten, they should then be used in the Holy Communion that follows. The Bishop will bring a Bible to present to those being ordained as a deacon. Those being ordained to the priesthood will bring that Bible to the ordination for a second formal presentation of the same book.

Roles after the distribution of the sacrament

After the post-communion prayer during an ordination to the priesthood, the Bishop will ask the new priest to bless the people. A newly ordained priest will want to be prepared to bless others following the liturgy as they kneel one at a time.

For the Ordination of a Deacon, the newly ordained Deacon, or newly ordained deacons, shall offer the dismissal.

Questions

All questions or clarifications should be addressed to the Bishop.