

Parish Transition Process for the Diocese of Massachusetts

Office for Transition Ministry
138 Tremont Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02111
Phone: 617/482-4826
Fax: 617/482-8431
www.diomass.org

Director of Transition Ministry
The Rev. Dr. Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa, ext. 400
jbntagengwa@diomass.org

Guidance Prayer for a Parish that is in a search for a New clerical leader

O God, you know us better than we know ourselves. Guide us in our search for a new clerical leader. Empower each one of us to use our unique ministries, to share openly and honestly our thoughts, to respect the opinions of others, and to encourage humility, patience and joy. Instill in us a vision of the Church's family; that guided by your Holy Spirit we will be united in love and joyfully accomplish this mission of discovering the one you have called to serve with us as our Rector. All this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Revised – April 2018

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts:

Our Mission

We, the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, are living members of the body of Jesus Christ.

As Jesus gathered his disciples, took bread and blessed it, and then offered his body for us in order to bring reconciliation, forgiveness and healing, so may we offer ourselves in Christ's name.

Embracing brave change

*Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love. (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)*

God is calling to us to look ahead and to embrace brave change. As fewer people turn to the church as a source of solace and strength, more than ever we yearn to know and be known by God and one another. In a world plagued by grievous conflict, injustice and poverty, God gives us the courage to be agents of reconciliation, justice and abundance. There will be difficult choices for us as followers of Jesus. It is only through ongoing, prayerful discernment together that we will find a path to a faithful future.

Reimagining our congregations

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? (Isaiah 43:19)

With God's help, we can support our congregations as they reimagine the shape of discipleship in 21st-century Massachusetts. We believe in the power of Christian community to transform lives through God's grace, a promise that sustains us even as we adapt to meet the needs of a changing world. We will deepen our relationship with God and increase our capacity to speak of our faith. Rooted in a living tradition, we will joyfully and courageously invite all people to worship our Creator, to share the reconciling love of Christ and to participate in the work of the Holy Spirit.

Building our relationships

From Christ the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped...promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:16)

With God's help, we will address painful divisions within our diocese, that we might serve the world worthily as one body in Christ. Blessed by the manifold charisms of all of our diverse members and congregations, we will strengthen the bonding ligaments between individuals, congregations and diocesan bodies. Honoring the contributions of every generation and

working across differences to build each other up in love, we will share our varied gifts with one another and our world.

Engaging our world

*Just as you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me.
(Matthew 25:40)*

With God's help, we will continue to engage our world, working alongside our neighbors to share Christ's love through word and action. We will act as agents of God's compassion to those in need. We will work to reconcile ourselves and all people to one another, and all of creation to God, seeking justice and committing ourselves to the stewardship of our planet.

*Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine:
Glory to God from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.
(Ephesians 3:20-21)*

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Before you plunge into this guide: The Parish Transition Process for the Diocese of Massachusetts, step back for a moment and think about the major transitions in your personal lives. Pick one significant transition in your life: from being single to being married, from being married to being divorced, becoming a parent for the first time, a transition to a new vocation or job, a transition to losing a job, moving from middle age to old age, relocating your family to another part of the country, or any other significant transition in your life.

Now sit with those memories for a while. Try to remind yourself of what you felt at that time of transition. Were you anxious? Hopeful? Afraid? Where did you find your support? What surprised you about the experience? What did you learn about yourself during this transition? What did you come to know about God during this experience?

Often, even a few minutes of reflection on transitions remind us that if we are open to the Holy Spirit, a transition can be full of God's grace and revelation. Remember all that Jesus learned of God's power and continuing presence in the wilderness when he left his relatively serene life in Nazareth in order to begin his public ministry (see Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; Mark 1:12-13).

Transition in parish communities and discernment of call by clergy from the moment the rector leaves until the installation of new ordained leadership, and all the steps in between, can be an exciting grace-filled time. This guide is meant to support you during this time, and make possible the spiritual growth and renewal God desires for you as the opportunities presented by this transition unfold.

Your bishops, the diocesan staff, and lay and clerical leadership of the Diocese of Massachusetts will work closely with you to insure that qualified candidates are considered at every step in the process. Because inclusivity is always a sign of vitality in the church, our bishops are committed to the thoughtful consideration in your discernment process of candidates of other cultures, candidates of color, women, gays and lesbians, and the broad spectrum of theological opinion which is so much a part of the Episcopal Church. Recognizing the importance of clergy diversity to the life of the diocese as well as to the parish, the bishops may from time to time put forward candidates for consideration that fulfill this commitment.

Know of my prayers as you begin this time of exploration and discernment in the life of your parish.

Faithfully and fondly yours,

The Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates

April 2018

It is an essential part of the mission and responsibility of the Office for Transition Ministry to assist congregations in transition during their discernment of new ministry and clergy leadership in the Diocese of Massachusetts. To that end, we make no distinctions on the basis of gender identity, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, or marital status. The implications of this practice for your particular congregation should be addressed in the initial meetings with a representative of this office.

Parish Transition Process for the Diocese of Massachusetts
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION8

SEPARATION & PLANNING8

Notify the Bishop’s Office9

Provision for Clergy Leadership During the Transition9

Guidelines for Parishes Served by a Bridge Priest.....9

Transition Review.....10

Saying Good-bye11

CONGREGATIONAL DISCERNMENT11

If an Interim Priest is Appointed.....11

The Search Consultant.....11

The Search Committee.....12

Self Study/Discernment.....12

THE SEARCH13

Timeline.....13

The Vestry’s Charge to the Search Committee.....13

The Commissioning of the Search Committee.....14

The Parish Profile14

Filing the ECOTM (Episcopal Church Office of Transition Ministry) Community Portfolio....15

Receiving Names15

Communication and Confidentiality.....15

Narrowing the Field of Candidates16

The Short List.....17

Oxford Document Background Check.....17

Final Discernment.....17

Bishop’s Meeting with Final Candidates18

THE CALL TO NEW MINISTRY18

The Call18

The Letter of Agreement.....18

Honoring the Search Committee/Celebrating the Interim Ministry19

Welcome.....19

The Service of Renewal of Ministry and the Welcoming of the New Rector.....19

Conclusion20

WHO’S WHO AND DOES WHAT DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD.....20

SAMPLE PARISH SEARCH CHECKLIST23

OPTION II: WHEN A PRIST-IN-CHARGE IS APPOINTED.....25

A PRAYER FOR MISSION.....29

APPENDIX A	Exit Interview Questions	30
APPENDIX B	On Leaving A Parish	32
APPENDIX C	Liturgy for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship	38
APPENDIX D	Covenant of Ministry/Memorandum for Bridge Priest.....	47
APPENDIX E	The Interim Priest in the Diocese of Massachusetts	50
APPENDIX F	Template for the Covenant of Ministry for Interim Priest.....	53
APPENDIX G	Responsibilities of Transition Team.....	61
APPENDIX H	Parish Discernment Resources.....	62
APPENDIX I	Rector Search Consultant Role and Agreement	68
APPENDIX J	Search Committee Job Description.....	69
APPENDIX K	Sample Charge from Vestry to Search Committee	71
APPENDIX L	Sample Liturgy for Commissioning Search Committee.....	72
APPENDIX M	Search Options	73
APPENDIX N	Search Process Timeline	74
APPENDIX O	Sample Budget for Search Process.....	75
APPENDIX P	Parish Profile Outline	76
APPENDIX Q	Interviews, Interviewing Finalists & Sample Questions	77
APPENDIX R	Ground Rules for Finalists' Visits to Parish	80
APPENDIX S	Rector's and Congregation's Mutual Covenant of Ministry	81
APPENDIX T	Farewell Liturgy for Interim Ministry.....	88
APPENDIX U	To Welcome the New Rector.....	89
APPENDIX V	Transition Review Report.....	90
APPENDIX W	Covenant Ministry Model of Priest-in-Charge.....	93
REFERENCE I	99

A GUIDE FOR PARISHES IN TRANSITION IN THE DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Introduction

This guide provides an overview of the transition that takes place in a parish from the time when one clergyperson departs and a new clergyperson is installed. The main steps in the process of defining parish identity and calling new clerical leadership are outlined in the following pages as an aid to vestries, congregations, and search committees in understanding this challenging period.

Throughout this time of discernment and change, the Bishops, through the Office for Transition Ministry (OTM), support the parish by providing periodic consultation and written materials, identifying supply, bridge and/or interim clergy, recommending a search consultant to work closely with the search committee, and offering other guidance needed to move successfully into the next stage of parish life. Trust and two way communication between the parish and the Bishops' Office are an essential elements of a successful search.

This document is intended as a road map of the transition process. **(See, A Road Map: Preparing a Congregation to Call a New Rector)**. It is not, nor should it be used as, a step-by-step guide. Each congregational situation is unique and should be treated as such. The parish transition period for purposes of this discussion can be understood in four stages:

- 1) Separation & Planning,
- 2) Congregational Assessment,
- 3) Search process, and
- 4) Call of the New Rector.

Separation & Planning

Notify the Bishops' Office

It is essential that the Bishops diocesan and appropriate diocesan staff be a part of the process from the very beginning. The transition process begins when the departing priest meets with the Director of Transition Ministry and they determine together when the announcement to the Vestry and congregation will be made. Generally between 60 – 90 day notice should be given. In the case of a retirement, four to six months may be appropriate. As soon as the priest announces to the Wardens his or her intention to leave a parish, the Wardens will make an appointment with the Director of Transition Ministry to discuss the state of the parish as well as their options in the upcoming transition period. **(See Appendix B, On Leaving a Parish)**

At this meeting, the Wardens report generally on the congregation and are briefed in turn on what typically lies ahead for a parish in transition. **The Wardens and Vestry are the formal and canonical leadership of the congregation during the interim period**; as such, they hold the responsibility of choosing a course of action best suited to their particular parish and situation. With the help of the Bishops' Office through the Director of Transition Ministry, the

Wardens will make arrangements for the conduct of worship and pastoral care until an interim priest is appointed.

After the initial meeting of the wardens with the OTM, the Director of Transition Ministry (DOTM) will visit the parish. The visit may take the form of a meeting with the Vestry and/or the full congregation. The DOTM will share the various search options (**see, Appendix M, Search Options**) and provide an overview of the search process. Once the Vestry and the DOTM jointly determine an appropriate search option, the DOTM will discuss what the parish can expect during the interim period.

Provision for Clergy Leadership During the Transition

Pursuant to the canons of the Episcopal Church, the Bishop, in conversation with the wardens, appoints a priest to provide clerical leadership. Depending on the particular needs of the parish, the Bishop (in consultation with the OTM) will appoint either an Interim priest trained in interim ministry or, if appropriate, a Priest-in-Charge to serve the parish during the transition period. The appointment is confirmed (or not) following an interview with the Vestry. (A description of the two types of ministries, namely Interim Priest and Priest-in-Charge may be found at Appendix C and D.) For the sake of continuity, the Bishop recommends that a Bridge Priest be appointed and serves until an Interim Priest or a Priest-in-Charge is chosen. More information regarding Bridge Priests follows in the next section.

Occasionally, there may be an extended period of time between the priest's announcement of departure and the actual leave taking. At these times it may be appropriate for the Vestry to select a Transition Team. (**See Appendix G for Responsibilities of a Transition Team.**)

Guidelines for Parishes Served by a Bridge Priest

As noted above, congregations undergoing transition have the option of initiating a search for a new rector during which period an interim priest is assigned or requesting that the Bishop appoints a Priest-in-Charge.

In either circumstance, a congregation may wish to take a period of time to assess which path to choose. During such time the need for clergy may be filled by supply priests on a per diem basis primarily to perform services on Sunday and/or on other occasions (e.g., weekday services, funerals and weddings, etc.). However, there may be circumstances where there is a need for more regular clergy presence and continuity during this initial period of transition. In those circumstances the Bishop appoints a "bridge priest" for a specified period of time and hours per week to provide regular clergy presence and to perform agreed upon duties in addition to regular leadership of Sunday and other services.

Appointment and Determination of Duties of a Bridge Priest

A bridge priest is appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the vestry of the parish. The Bishop recommends one person at a time for the position. If the vestry believes that the person nominated may not be a good fit for the parish they may ask for another recommendation.

Typically a bridge priest would be appointed for a specified period of time (e.g., a month, three months, etc.). However, the appointment may be extended. It also may be indefinite, contingent on the appointment of an Interim or Priest-in-Charge. At the Bishop's discretion, a Bridge Priest may be considered for appointment as an Interim Priest or Priest-in-Charge, subject to the approval of the Vestry.

A Bridge Priest will have only the duties and responsibilities defined in the Covenant of Ministry negotiated between the bridge priest and vestry. The Office of Transition Ministry is available to assist in this process, if requested. A useful resource for identifying all of those functions and activities that are considered important to a parish's life is: Areas of Mutual Ministry Review found here http://www.diomass.org/webfm_send/1754. During the tenure of a Bridge Priest, the authority within the parish lies with the wardens and the vestry.

Unlike the appointment of a Priest-in-Charge there will not be assignment of a regular consultant. The continual communication with the Office of Transition Ministry is encouraged and the assistance of a consultant may be requested for specific projects.

Bridge Priest Compensation and Benefits

A bridge priest's compensation and benefits, including health insurance and pension contribution, will follow the Compensation and Benefits Committee Guidelines using the TCC standard for the parish prorated according to the agreed number of weekly hours. The TCC worksheet which can be found here http://www.diomass.org/webfm_send/2273 should be used to calculate the compensation and benefits for a bridge priest. All of the terms, including the length of appointment, number of weekly hours, and duties and responsibilities, should be incorporated in a **Covenant of Ministry/Memorandum for a Bridge Priest (see Appendix D)**

A Transition Review covering the parish's finances and other related matters will be completed immediately following the departure of the rector and before or after the appointment of a bridge priest, Priest-in-Charge or Interim Priest.

Transition Review

Whether a Priest-in-Charge or an Interim Priest is to be appointed, the Director of Transition Ministry, in consultation with the leaders of the diocesan congregational consultants, will assign a Consultant at the beginning of the transition time, to meet with the wardens, treasurer and any other appropriate people. The Consultant will help the congregation understand the state of its current business and financial practices, ensuring that such canonical requirements as parochial reports, audits and assessment payments are up to date. **A parish cannot call new clergy leadership until these requirements are all met.** A review of financial results, known as Transition Review Report (**see Appendix V**), may also help a congregation ascertain the scope of its future ministry, ensuring that the parish can properly compensate the new clergy person for the position the parish is seeking to fill.. This report will be shared with the finalists/prospective new clerical leaders before they accept the call. The Diocesan Congregational Consultants are

prepared to take the time to help guide a parish toward a place of financial vitality in preparation for new clerical leadership.

Saying Good-bye

The Vestry, parish, and rector together should plan and carry out the farewell and celebration of the rector's ministry. Whether the priest is leaving because of retirement, a call to another parish, or even because of differences with the parish, the elements of the separation process remain the same. Much of the energy of the parish during this time should be devoted to saying "good-bye." In the weeks prior to the rector's departure, the primary tasks are to arrange an exit interview, plan the current rector's departure and provide opportunities for people to say good-bye in a celebratory manner. **(See Appendix B, On Leaving a Parish, Appendix A, Exit Questions and Appendix C, Liturgy for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship.)**

Congregational Discernment

OPTION I: If an Interim Priest is Appointed (See Appendix E)

When the Parish and the Bishop decide to do a Search, the Bishop will appoint An Interim Priest.

Roles and Responsibilities During the Interim and Search Process

A) The Search Consultant

A consultant experienced in rector searches is assigned by the DOTM to the parish. The Search Consultant is engaged by the Vestry but is accountable to the Bishops' Office through the OTM for the search process. The Search Consultant meets with members of the Vestry at the beginning of the search process, explains her/his role in the process, and then works primarily with the members of the Search Committee in guiding them through the search. Once the Vestry decides to engage a Search Consultant, the Vestry and the consultant develop and sign a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) that determines the Search Consultant's compensation and duties **(See Appendix I)**

The consultant works with the Search Committee appointed by the Vestry (see the search Committee appointment process below) to plan and design protocols for the search. The consultant helps to prepare the Parish Profile and to fill out The Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry (ECOTM) Community Portfolio, the Transition Ministry Conference (TMC) Open Position Form, gather and interpret data, and develop questions and a design for the interview process. The Search Consultant serves as the principal link with the OTM in providing resources and guidance during the interim period and search process.

The consultant is essential to helping the search committee navigate the search process. While every transition is unique, it is helpful for the Interim Priest and Search Consultant to work together closely. E-mail communications among the Interim, the Search Consultant and the

OTM should be copied to everyone, and the Interim and Search Consultant should determine a system for being in touch, whether through a monthly or bi-monthly check-in or, at the very least, whenever the parish moves to a different stage in the search process (i.e. from “self-study” to “receiving names,” to “no longer receiving names,” to “interviewing finalists,” etc.). The greater the communication among all constituencies, the greater the opportunity for a smooth transition.

The parish is responsible to pay the consultant (**See, Appendix O, Sample Budget for the Search Process**). If the cost of a consultant will place an undue burden on the congregation, the Senior Warden is encouraged to contact the Bishop’s Office through the OTM.

B) The Search Committee

The Vestry is charged with the formation of the search committee. The composition of the Search Committee should be people of prayer and discernment. They should reflect the parish’s diversity, including people of different ages, race, and gender. Please note that this is not the time to recruit all those in the parish with human resource experience to become members of the Search Committee. Rather, the Vestry should attempt to select people with open hearts and minds who will be sensitive to the culture and dreams of the congregation as a whole and not be driven by particular agendas.

It is not appropriate that a priest, often retired, who is a member of the parish serve as a member of the search committee. Occasionally and only after consultation with the bishops may such a person serve as chaplain to the search committee, without vote.

It should not go without saying that openly disaffected persons are generally not helpful to a search committee, nor is it appropriate for a member of the parish staff to serve on a search committee.

A good target number for the Search Committee is eight to twelve members, and at least one member of the Vestry (whose term will cover the duration of the search) is encouraged to serve on the Search Committee as a liaison with the Vestry. This serves the purpose of keeping members of each body informed and connected. The wardens may serve without a formal vote and may observe Search Committee meetings when and as they wish. However, under no circumstances should a warden serve as chair or a voting member of the Search Committee. The DOTM strongly recommends that when it comes to the receiving names period, the wardens recuse themselves from search committee meetings.
(See Search Committee Job Description, Appendix J)

C) Self-Study/Discernment

The Bishop recommends a discernment retreat for the Vestry and Search Committee early in a search. The retreat encourages the participating members of both the Vestry and Search Committee to view their work as a spiritual journey, over the course of which decisions are made through prayer and reflection. The retreat is generally led by the Search Consultant and/or the Director of Transition Ministry.

A Parish Search Prayer may also be developed by the Search Committee for the whole congregation that invites a spirit of thoughtfulness, collaboration, and faith-building. Many committees ask one member to act as their “chaplain” so as to keep them spiritually grounded by beginning and ending meetings with prayer and encouraging the use of the Parish Search Prayer by the congregation throughout the transition period. Some parishes have found it helpful for the Vestry and Search Committee members to form prayer “partners” to pray for each other throughout the search.

In its first phase, the Search Committee will take an in-depth look at the parish—its history, its identity, its mission and goals. In a real sense, the parish first searches for itself before looking for a pastor: What kind of community is it? What kind of parish has it been in the past? What new shape is God calling it to become? How can the parish realize its vision of itself in the future and, ideally, under what kind of leadership?

This self-study is a kind of discernment of what the faith community is at its best, of the parish as the Body of Christ in a special configuration. It is at best an imagining of what God’s dreams are for the community of the faithful.

The Search Consultant gives counsel to the search committee throughout this important stage. The self-study can take many forms, inviting the whole parish to participate by:

- Holding an Appreciative Inquiry Workshop;
- Conducting informational interviews within the congregation, in the community and with other churches (deanery and ecumenical community);
- Delving into archives for historical material;
- Gaining demographic information on the area in which the parish is located;
- Reviewing past history, written and verbal, as supplied by older members; and
- Envisioning the future in focus groups by imaginative and creative exercises.

Timeline

Depending upon the particular circumstances of each parish, a search may be as brief as nine months or extend to a year-and-a-half or more. The Search Consultant can be useful in setting up a realistic timeline designed to achieve a balance between efficiency and a pace that encourages thoughtful discernment, caution and thoroughness. **(See Appendix N for a detailed time-line)**

The Vestry’s Charge to the Search Committee

It is important that the Vestry give a written charge to the Search Committee determining the scope and extent of the search **(See Search Options in Appendix M and Sample Charge from Vestry to Search Committee, Appendix K)** as well as the budget for the search itself **(See Sample Budget for Search Process in Appendix O)** .

This charge should be in line with Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Parish by-laws. Some vestries delegate the power of selection entirely to the Search Committee and accept its choice

without meeting the candidate. The vestry should consult the parish bylaws at the time it issues its charge to the Search Committee to assure that the vestry's charge conforms to the bylaws.

Informed by the Transition Review Report, the Vestry also must decide on the range of the compensation and benefit package that it will offer the new rector. The Diocesan policy stipulates that any full-time parochial priest must be paid at least the minimum total clergy compensation (TCC) which includes salary and housing. Pension and health insurance and any other benefits are calculated in addition to TCC. Conversation between the Search Committee and the Vestry about the specifics of salary, benefits, and housing situation, is vital in order to give an accurate description of the position to be listed by the Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry and to be very clear with potential candidates, so the rector's tenure can begin in a healthy way. There are diocesan guidelines to be followed in setting the financial terms, a full description of which is available in the annual "Guidelines of the Compensation and Benefits Committee," obtainable on-line at <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/compensation-benefits-resources-parishes> or from the OTM.

The Commissioning of the Search Committee

The Vestry presents the members of the Search Committee to the Interim Priest who commissions them before they undertake their charge. The commissioning appropriately should take place during Sunday worship service to liturgically signal the significant responsibility and role Search Committee members are assuming in the life of the parish. **(See Appendix C, Sample Liturgy for Commissioning a Search Committee)**

The Parish Profile

The first task of the search committee is to work with the vestry and all the congregation to develop the written profile or "story" of the parish (details such as parish history, a listing of programs, parish ministries and personnel). This first task can take up to four months. When the profile is complete, the Search Committee brings it to the congregation to appreciate if that document represents them. The Search Committee then takes it to the Vestry for approval. Once approved by the Vestry, the Search Committee should send the profile to the OTM for review. Parishes then post their profile on their own website. The same profile will be posted on the Diocesan Website http://www.diomass.org/inside/parish_clergy_support/clergy_deployment **(See Appendix P, Parish Profile Outline)**. It is important to remember that the parish website is the first place potential candidates will visit and so it should be current and inviting.

The description of the parish contained in the profile is meant to be a representation of the parish on which the Wardens, Vestry, Search Committee, and congregation agree. In the experience of reflection and self-definition, a parish "grounds itself" in its own reality. The more honest and transparent a congregation is in telling its story, the greater its chance of attracting appropriate candidates and smaller its risk for experiencing disillusionment following the call. It is important to note that the profile is not mean to delineate the projected abilities of a new priest.

Filing the ECOTM (Episcopal Church Office of Transition Ministry) Community Portfolio

At the end of the self-study phase, the Search Committee, together with the Search Consultant, completes a "Community Portfolio" published by the Episcopal Church's Office for Transition Ministry and provided by the Diocesan OTM. When complete, the DOTM should be notified in order to request ECOTM to allow the Representative of the Search Committee to have access to the OTM database so that they can upload the Community Portfolio (CP). Once uploaded, the DOTM will be notified so that the CP is reviewed and published with the Episcopal Church's Office for Transition Ministry. Once the parish community portfolio is complete and published, it will be available online to priests throughout the Episcopal Church who are in active search. In addition, the parish's listing will appear in the Episcopal Church's monthly Positions Open Bulletin.

At this point the parish is said to be "Receiving Names" and begins accepting applications from interested priests. A computer-generated search can be done if needed at this point and the list of priests' profiles generated by the computer will be sent to the Search Committee.

The DOTM will also list the opening on the Transition Ministry Conference website using the Transition Ministry Conference Open Position form in order for the parish to appear listed in this major national publication read by clergy in search. A listing appears also on the diocesan website and in the monthly FYI diocesan newsletter. Search Committees should check with the DOTM in advance to insure that precise deadlines are met in order for notices to appear in a timely fashion.

Receiving Names

Once the Search Committee begins receiving names, they ask the potential candidates to send supporting materials such as resume and the Ministry Portfolio. The Search Committee may receive names from the following sources:

- candidates themselves, who submit their applications directly to the Search Committee;
- parishioners and/or others who know good candidates can ask them to submit their applications to the Search Committee;
- The Bishop, through the DOTM, may encourage particular candidates to apply;
- The Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry, if desired, can provide a list of priests whose profiles match the general characteristics of the parish in search. The DOTM can assist with this source.

Communication and Confidentiality

Communication with the parish is essential. While the conduct of the deliberations and the names of nominees are confidential, it is important that the Search Committee communicate on a regular basis the progress of the process, even if that means simply informing the congregation that the committee will not be meeting for several weeks.

Confidentiality is not secrecy. The Search Committee and the Vestry must assure that the interim period is going well and that progress, however seemingly invisible, is being made.

Otherwise, the parish may complain that “Nothing is happening.” The Chair of the Search Committee should give oral updates during announcements or parish functions. If new members are elected to the Vestry in the course of the search process, it is important to bring them up to date on the status of the process.

Members of the Search Committee should understand how important it is to maintain confidentiality, as often prospective candidates have not yet informed their own congregations that they may be in search. For Search Committee members to do otherwise is to risk great damage, both to the candidates and to their parishes. It is very harmful to the integrity of the process if a Search Committee member shares information with anyone in the parish including a spouse or other family member during the course of the search process. It is equally important to provide for the security of search committee files.

Narrowing the Field of Candidates

Once the period of receiving names has passed, generally two to three months, the Search Committee's task is to sort through the candidates' material efficiently and yet not arbitrarily, in order to narrow the field and to create a “long list” of ten to twelve serious candidates. The Search Committee reviews the candidates' initial materials. Eliminating candidates on the basis of the Episcopal Church OTM alone is not recommended unless it is clear from a close reading that the candidate is unsuitable (**See Appendix Q for Sample Questions**). The Search Consultant's guidance is beneficial to following a process that is both thorough and faithful.

Once the Search Committee has developed the “long list,” they should submit it to the Director of Transition Ministry, along with the names and the dioceses in which the candidates are canonically resident. The DPTM and the Bishop review the list of priests and conduct a preliminary red flag check (any concern). Through that process, the DOTM and Bishop are alerted to any issues that might prevent a priest from being considered. At the same time there may be candidates who have significant gifts that are not apparent on paper, and the Bishop, through the DOT, can share this information with the Search Committee where appropriate.

The DOTM will communicate regularly with both the Bishop and the Search Committee throughout the process. The Bishop reserves the right to add names if the list does not reflect the Diocesan commitment to diversity. The goal is to ensure the richest possible pool of potential candidates for the Search Committee to consider.

As the Bishop and the DOTM are discussing the Search Committee's long list of candidates and conducting the red flag check, the Search Committee is beginning to screen its long list of candidates by soliciting taped and/or written sermons for the committee to hear or read, reviewing references, and conducting telephone interviews. Once the list is reduced to five to seven names, in consultation with candidates, Search Committee members should plan to attend worship services in the candidates' own parishes. (**See Appendix Q for Interviews, Interviewing Finalists & Various Sample Questions**)

The number of parish visits is usually driven by time and cost – (e.g. if candidates are all serving in local parishes it is much easier to plan a visit). Committee members should be discreet when making such visits, and the “calling committee” should not include more than four persons, since the parish is often not aware that its priest is engaged in an active search.

Throughout the screening process, the Search Committee as a courtesy should notify in writing those candidates whose names are no longer under consideration by the parish. It is important to remember that clergy in search often put their lives “on hold” or have to make important decisions with respect to their lives and/or their families as their own search processes unfold. Not informing them in a timely manner about the progress of the search shows a lack of consideration for the candidates but also reflects poorly on both the parish and the Diocese at large.

The Short List

When the Search Committee has arrived at a short list of three or four names of final candidates, they should report those names and full, private addresses to the DOTM so that a full background check on each candidate may be initiated (for more information on the background, see the paragraphs below). It is the usual practice of the Search Committee to invite the final three to four candidates to meet with the Search Committee at the parish. By reviewing the Episcopal Church OTM parish or Community Portfolio, candidates are acquainted generally with the financial terms the parish may offer, but during the final interview stages discussion of the financial package should take place. The Search Committee should make candidates coming from outside the Diocese particularly aware of the high cost of living (especially housing) in Massachusetts and also share the Transition Review Report. **(See Appendix R, Ground Rules for Finalists’ Visits to Parish)**

Oxford Document Background Check

Background checks concerning misconduct and criminal offenses are required for all clergy at any point of transition (pre-ordination, licensing, and employment) in the Diocese of Massachusetts. This differs from the preliminary background screening performed by the OTM that simply insures that candidates are priests in good standing.

The time needed to complete a background check may be as long as three months. It is important for the Search Committee to understand that the Oxford Document Management Company cannot initiate a background check until they have received the signed forms from the candidate.

The parish is responsible for the cost of background checks, which vary depending on whether the candidate has previously completed a background check for the Diocese of Massachusetts or for Province I (New England). All finalists from outside the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts must have a complete background check. The cost of a full background check is \$165. If the person is canonically resident in Province I (New England) the result of a prior background may be transferred (at a cost of \$55) or updated (for a cost of \$85, if the earlier check occurred less than five years ago, for \$115 if the earlier check was more than five years ago).

Final Discernment

The final stage of selecting a nominee is one of close scrutiny, prayer, and reflection. When the Search Committee reaches the time for consideration of the final three or four candidates, a

special time of prayer should be set aside before, during and at the end of the final discernment.

Bishop's Meeting with Final Candidates

At this stage, the Search Committee Chair will contact the Bishop's office to schedule a meeting between each of the candidates and the bishop. The purpose of this meeting is to acquaint the candidate with the Diocese of Massachusetts and to establish a relationship with a bishop of the Diocese. This is normally done during the candidate's visit to the parish for the personal interview with the Search Committee. The Bishop may choose to give feedback to the Search Committee after meeting with the candidates. Search Committees need to understand that the bishops' schedules are often heavily booked and therefore should make their requests for appointments at least a month in advance of the candidates' visits.

The Call of the New rector

The Call

Once the Search Committee comes to consensus on whom it wishes to recommend as the next rector of the parish, the name is presented to the Vestry for consideration and a vote of approval. Depending on the process to which the Vestry has earlier agreed through its charge to the Search Committee, exposure to the candidate(s) by the Vestry is very important. The Office of Transition Ministry recommends that vestries meet the finalist(s) informally at a social occasion during their visit to the parish.

Before issuing a call, the Vestry must notify the Director of Transition Ministry who will inform the Bishop of the election and seek his approval. As required by our national canons, **no call may be issued or announced without the consent of the Bishop**. Upon receiving the Bishop's approval, a call is then issued, a privilege traditionally enjoyed by the wardens. Following that phone conversation, the call should be confirmed in writing. Announcement of the call needs to be scheduled to everyone's convenience. It is important to remember that that candidate will need time to inform his/her ministry that s/he is leaving.

The Covenant of Ministry

Details regarding the rector's terms of employment (amount of cash stipend, housing arrangements or allowance, moving expenses, benefits, and description of responsibilities) are negotiated with the Wardens with approval of the Vestry and these terms are later spelled out in a formal Covenant of Ministry which is drawn up by the new Rector and the Vestry, represented by the Wardens and the Clerk. Before obtaining the necessary signatures, it is appropriate to email the draft to the Director of Transition Ministry for review. After the signatures of the parish leaders and the Rector elect, it is then sent to the Bishop through the Director of Transition Ministry, for review and signature. As long as there is general agreement on the terms, there is no requirement that the Covenant of Ministry be filed by a certain date. Its signing completes the process and concludes it formally. It is recommended that this

Covenant of Ministry be customized as much as possible and the final copy be printed on the Parish Letterhead.

Assistance from the OTM is recommended in crafting a Covenant of Ministry. A sample template is available at <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/letters-agreement> in the Document Library. It also appears in **Appendix S**.

Honoring the Search Committee/Celebrating the Interim

The Search Committee is encouraged to finish its work by writing an evaluation of the search process and filing its report with the OTM. Materials left over from the search should be disposed of in an orderly fashion since much of it is confidential in nature and inappropriate for parish archives. Feedback from the Search Consultant on the experience of the search process and any aspect of it is usually welcomed by the Search Committee. Successful completion of the work of the Search Committee is also cause for celebration, either in the context of a parish event or simply by the committee itself.

Recognition of the ministry of the Interim priest and bidding him or her good-bye merits the attention of the congregation at the end of the transition period. **(A sample farewell liturgy may be found in Appendix T)** The DOTM encourages the departing interim to make an appointment for both an exit interview and to discuss future plans.

Welcome

When the call has been issued and accepted, it is appropriate for the vestry to appoint (if it has not been done at the beginning of the transition) a transition committee to serve as a committee of welcome, to introduce the new rector and his or her family to the community, to help in relocation and to assist in the beginning of the new ministry. The transition committee might plan coffee and dessert for small groups to assist the new rector in meeting people, for example, provide groceries for the first week, see to it that the rector's office is ready to be occupied, and/or provide maps and contact information **(See Appendix U, To Welcome the New Rector)**. The Director of Transition Ministry will notify the Dean of the deanery, so that he or she may welcome the new rector, as well.

Usually, the new rector is already employed in another ministry. He or she must allow time for a responsible departure, which includes setting a date in conjunction with the bishop and vestry, for saying "good-byes," perhaps for a bit of vacation, and for packing and moving before the new ministry begins. It is often at least two months after acceptance of the call before the new rector is in place; it is uncommon for a longer period of time to be required.

The Service of Renewal of Ministry and the Welcoming of the New Rector

It is customary that shortly after the arrival and settling in of the new rector for the parish to schedule a Service of Renewal of Ministry and the Welcoming of the New Rector. Most parishes use the rite found on page 559 of the Book of Common Prayer. The bishop will make every effort to officiate and preach at this service and the parish is encouraged to be in touch with the Bishop's office so that this service is reserved on the Bishop's calendar as soon as possible. Please remember to invite the clergy of the Deanery to attend and to participate as appropriate. It is a good way for the new rector to meet his/her fellow colleagues in ministry. The Vestry

should invite those people who have been helpful throughout this process, including the search consultant, the interim priest, the Canon for Congregations, the Director of Transition Ministry, diocesan staff, and any clergy (if desired) who have served the parish during the interim and prior period.

Conclusion

At last, the new rector is in place. This is, in itself, a significant accomplishment. But hopefully it is not the only benefit a parish has received from its involvement in the search process. Many parishes report discovery of exciting new dimensions in their ministry, an increased sense of identity and purpose, newly identified resources in lay leadership, or a new recognition of its relationship with the bishop and the wider church. May all these blessings be yours, and many more.

Who's Who and Does What During the Transition Period

The Bishop

The Bishop has ultimate responsibility for the ministry of all congregations in the Diocese. In a time of transition, the Bishop may meet with and advise the wardens as soon as the rector announces his/her departure either in person or through the Office for Transition Ministry. The Bishop meets with the departing rector for an exit interview, assigns diocesan resources to assist in the process, approves all final candidates and approves the election of the new rector. Ultimately, the Bishop installs the new rector.

The Wardens

The senior and junior wardens are the chief lay officers of the parish, responsible for many of the affairs of the parish in the absence of a rector. When the knowledge of an opening occurs or is imminent, the senior warden notifies the Office of the Bishop and maintains communication with the Office for Transition Ministry throughout the process. The senior warden (or in his/her absence, the junior warden) is responsible for working with the Director of Transition Ministry to obtain interim and/or supply clergy, presides at the election of the rector and communicates that election to the Bishop through the Office of Transition Ministry, negotiates on behalf of the parish with the newly called rector and assists the new rector as his or her new ministry begins.

The Vestry

The vestry chooses the Search Committee, approves the Diocesan appointment of the Interim or other transition clergy and the Search Consultant, prepares the budget for the search process, and formulates the charge to the Search Committee. The vestry assists the parish in participating in the process and, when the process is complete, may elect the new rector subject to the parish's bylaws. The vestry also sets goals in the Covenant of Ministry and then takes part in a Mutual Ministry Review one year after the new rector begins his/her ministry.

The Office for Transition Ministry (OTM)

The Director of Transition Ministry is the Bishop's deputy in dealing with parishes during the time of transition. The Director assists the vestry in appropriate closure of the out-going priest's ministry. DOTM assists the wardens and vestry in planning the interim process and the DOTM assists the Bishop in appointing the Business Consultant, the Interim priest and the Search Consultant. The DOTM coordinates with the Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry, screens and consults with the Bishop about prospective candidates, provides resources and training for interim priests and search consultants. Also, the DOTM provides resources and advice for the search committee, vestry and wardens, keeps the Bishop informed of the progress of all searches, and assists in the final call. The DOTM assists in the negotiation of a Covenant of Ministry with the new rector. The DOTM also coordinates the announcement of the new call, and finally, assists in the start-up of the new ministry.

Congregational Consultant

A Congregational Consultant is assigned by the Director of Transition Ministry in coordination with the leadership of Congregational Consultants. He/she helps the congregation understand the state of its current business and financial practices, ensuring that such canonical requirements as parochial reports, audits and assessment payments are up to date. The Transition Review Report also helps a congregation ascertain the scope of its future ministry, ensuring that the parish can properly compensate the new clergy person for the position the parish is seeking to fill.

Search Consultant

The search consultant works with the wardens, vestry and search committee throughout the time of transition. He or she assists the parish in evaluating their strengths and resources, in identifying goals, in dealing with conflict, and in negotiating the procedural aspects of the search. The search consultant works with the interim priest and with the Office for Transition Ministry and, with their assistance, identifies and responds to any needs and problems that emerge as the process unfolds. He or she is the principal resource and point of communication between the vestry, the interim, the search committee, the Office for Transition Ministry and the Bishop.

Search Committee

The Search Committee fulfills the charge of the Vestry by conducting the search for a new rector. Working with the Search Consultant, the responsibilities of the Search Committee include: determining the means of self-assessment and carrying out that assessment in order to write a parish profile, developing a system for screening, evaluating and notifying candidates as candidate materials are received, determining the various interview processes—written, telephone and face-to-face, communicating regularly with the OTM in order that that office can conduct the various screening processes.

Interim Priest

In the Diocese of Massachusetts the term “interim priest” is used for those trained and experienced in the ministry of transition. The terms and conditions under which an interim priest is employed may vary with local circumstances, but generally the responsibilities include the conduct of worship, the continuation of pastoral ministries, support of programs and whatever else contributes to normal parish program. The interim priest is specially trained to assist a parish to evaluate its mission and ministry, to make any needed changes in parish administration or program, and to help the parish prepare for the arrival of a new rector. This work is done in consultation with the wardens, vestry, search consultant and other parish leaders. The Bishop, through the DOTM, appoints an interim priest, with the consent of the parish wardens and the vestry. **According to the diocesan policy, under no circumstances can an interim be considered as a candidate for rector.**

Deans

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts is divided into twelve geographical units known as Deaneries. The Deans should be informed of departing clergy and may take part, when possible, in their leave-taking. They should welcome new Interims and Priests-in-Charge and call on the new rector of a congregation as soon as possible. The Deans may preside at the Service of Renewal of Ministry and the Welcoming of the New Rector if asked by the Bishop.

The Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry (ECOTM)

The Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry is maintained by the Episcopal Church as a registry for all clergy whether or not they are actively seeking positions at this time. Computer files are maintained which show, among other things, the clergy person’s work experience, areas of special interest, expertise or training and developed skills. This data is presented in the form of a Ministry Portfolio. Portfolios for all clergy registered in the system are available through the Office for Transition Ministry. When a parish has identified its particular needs and preferences it may file through the Office for Transition Ministry a request that initiates a computer search for clergy matching most or many of the stated criteria. Information about the parish, in the form of a Community Portfolio, is also filed with The Episcopal Church Office for Transition Ministry where it is made available to interested clergy. This Office publishes a monthly listing of all parishes seeking clergy.

Sample Parish Search Checklist

- ___ Notification of Rector's departure;
- ___ Date of announcement ___/ ___/ ___ Expected date of departure ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ Wardens' visit to Office for Transition Ministry (OTM) ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ Visit to Vestry by Bishop and/or DOTM ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ Search materials received (Search Guide, compensation guidelines)
- ___ Interim Priest identified and in place ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ Search Consultant identified ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ Congregational Consultant appointed for Transition Review ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ Search Committee formed and commissioned; Vestry's charge given
- ___ TMC Open Position Form filed with the Office of Transition Ministry
- ___ Parish Profile completed, reviewed and copy sent to OTM
- ___ ECOTM Community Portfolio filed
- ___ Search Committee begins receiving names; applications acknowledged
- ___ Search Committee narrows the field to ten to twelve names
- ___ "Long" List of ten - twelve finalists identified and sent to OTM for "red flag" checks
- ___ Candidates not selected are notified
- ___ Preliminary OTM check completed
- ___ "Short" List (three to four names) submitted to OTM: Oxford Doc. and Bishop-to-Bishop conversations arranged
- ___ Bishop meets candidates on "short list"
- ___ Final candidate name given by Search Committee to Vestry (parish) for approval
- ___ Bishop approves the call of selected candidate
- ___ Call extended to _____ on ___/ ___/ ___
- ___ All other candidates informed of call

___ Covenant of Ministry/Letter of Agreement negotiated, signed, and sent to Office for Transition Ministry

___ Plans for Transition Committee

___ Start date ___/ ___/ ___

___ **The Service of Renewal of Ministry and the Welcoming of the New Rector** scheduled ___/ ___/ ___

OPTION II: When the Parish and the Bishop decide that an appointment of a Priest-in-Charge is the right way to go.

A Priest-in-Charge is appointed by the Bishop after consultation with the vestry and exercises the duties of Canon III.9.6 subject to the authority of the Bishop. A Priest-in-Charge generally is appointed for three (3) year time period during which the parish works on very specific, clearly articulated goals. At the end of this time he or she may be called to serve as Rector (**see A Timeline with Milestones for Priest-in-Charge's Tenure and the Guidelines for Parishes served by a Priest-in-Charge; not part of this document**).

THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE PROGRAM OF THE DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

A Priest-in-Charge (PIC) appointment occurs when a parish's wardens/vestry in conversation with the Bishop believes its congregation would be best served by a Priest-in-Charge appointment. Circumstances indicating that the appointment of a PIC may be called for could include any one (or more) of the following (no particular order):

- The parish is in a healthy place but has concerns about losing momentum.
- A period of instability or conflict has preceded or followed the departure of the clergy person
- A joint collaborative ministry (e.g. cluster, merger, etc.) appears worth exploring with other parishes;
- The necessary financial support for conducting a search for a new clergy is lacking and needs to be addressed;
- The parish would benefit from a period of stable and consistent ministry before it turns its attention to a search.

If there is agreement on the benefit of a PIC appointment, it is often helpful for the vestry to prepare a brief profile describing the current state of the parish and its hopes for the next few years, what it seeks in a PIC, and what it will offer towards the mutual ministry with the PIC.

A Priest-in-Charge is appointed by the Bishop after consultation with the vestry and exercises the duties of Canon III.9.6 subject to the authority of the Bishop. A Priest-in-Charge generally is appointed for three (3) year time period during which the parish works on very specific, clearly articulated goals. At the end of this time he or she may be called to serve as **Rector (see Timeline with Milestones for Priest-in-Charge's Tenure and the Guidelines for Parishes served by a Priest-in-Charge)**.

Selection of the PIC

- After the Vestry prepares an abbreviated parish profile and a Congregational Consultant conducts the transition review, the Bishop will choose an appointment from among qualified local or external candidates. Recognizing that the transition time is a period of intentional

transition and change, it is not customary or desirable that a current assistant or associate rector be appointed as priest-in-charge.

- The Bishop will recommend a candidate to the wardens.
- The candidate meets with the wardens for interview. If, at that level, the candidate and the wardens feel that they want to move forward the candidate meets with the vestry for interview. Even though **the candidate is not to be subjected to a prolonged “approval” process by the parish, the vestry has the right to say no if it has good reasons as why the candidate is not a good match.**
- Much more information on the Priest-in-Charge Program in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts is available in the Guidelines for Parishes served by a Priest-in-Charge and Timeline with Milestones for Priests-in-Charge’s Tenure.

If the vestry and the candidate recommended agree that there is a match, a Covenant of Ministry setting forth the mutual obligations and responsibilities of the PIC and the vestry is negotiated under the facilitation of OTM. A standard PIC Covenant of Ministry is found here as **Appendix W** of this document and as a part of the diocesan clergy compensation guidelines available on-line at <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/letters-agreement>. The appointment is official upon the determination of the existence of mutual fit and becomes public knowledge upon approval of the Covenant of Ministry by the Bishop but the PIC can start as soon as the agreement between him/her and the vestry is reached so long as the negotiations were facilitated by the OTM.

- One candidate is presented at a time. If the proposed appointment of the PIC is not felt to be a “good fit” by either the vestry or the clergy person, the Bishop will draw upon that experience in order to identify another candidate for appointment.
- The presentation of a subsequent candidate is dependent upon the identification and availability of suitable candidates.

Term of Appointment and Authority of PIC

- A PIC appointment is usually for a period of three (3) years, subject to modification only with the approval of the Bishop.
- With the approval of the Bishop, a PIC may become a rector following a period of mutual discernment undertaken after two full years. The PIC Consultant’s help in this process is highly recommended. A mutual ministry review facilitated by the PIC Consultant has to be done every year; a copy of the report should be sent to the OTM.
- It is expected that within six months of the appointment, the vestry and PIC will jointly establish mutually responsible short-term and long-term expectations/goals for the mission and ministry of the parish.
- A time for mutual ministry review by vestry and clergy must be set forth in the Letter of Agreement.

- The PIC shall have the authority to exercise the duties set forth in Canons III.9.3(b) and III.9.6 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church subject to the authority of the Bishop. See attached excerpt from the Canons as Reference I.
- The PIC is **required** to attend monthly PIC meetings through New Call.

Priest in Charge Consultant: The OTM will also assign a Priest-in-Charge consultant to work with each parish served by a PIC. The consultant is available as a resource to the priest and the Vestry/Wardens through the first 2 years and then able to walk through the third year of discernment (A PIC Consultant Handbook is provided to the PIC Consultant, PIC, and the Wardens at the time of the PIC Consultant appointment). All PIC consultants are trained as coaches, search consultants and/or business consultants, and thus understand the dynamics of congregational development and transition. There is no charge to the parish for the service of the PIC consultant.

Stages During the PIC Period (Please see Guidelines for Parishes served by a Priest-in-Charge; not as a part of this document)

Although each congregational situation is different, there are recognizable stages throughout the tenure of the PIC:

- Introductory Stage (Lasts 9-12 months): Getting to know each other; building relationships; becoming familiar with the rhythm of life together; identifying conflicts/challenges.

- Romance Stage (Lasts 9-12 months): Trust is built; develop confidence in working together, begin to do some future planning.

- Common characteristics: People may really like the clergy (and vice versa). Often a feeling that "We've done all we need to do". Be wary of making commitments too soon.

- Discernment Stage (Often the beginning of Year 3: lasts 6-9 months):

- Vestry/parish and clergy are visioning/discerning in relation to one another.

- Common characteristics: Vestry (or designated committee) undertakes a period of intentional self-study addressing such questions as:

- a) Where are we?

- b) What is our mission/ministry?

- c) What kind of clergy leadership do we need/want?

- Post Discernment: Is this PIC the right person to continue as Rector?

(Clergy should also be doing own discernment about call to parish asking for example: Do I have the gifts they need?)

-Options:

1. Request that PIC be called as rector New Covenant of Ministry is created and date set with Bishop's Office for Service of Installation.

2. PIC is not called but becomes Interim during clergy search.
3. PIC completes term of agreement and an Interim is appointed and the parish enters the search process as described in this guide.

- Closure Stage (Final 6-9 months): If PIC is called rector; focus becomes setting short/long-term goals and strategies. If PIC is not called rector, formal search process or new form of transition begins under the PIC or a new clergy Interim.

A Prayer for Mission

O gracious and loving God, you work everywhere reconciling, loving, and healing your people and your creation. In your Son and through the power of your Holy Spirit, you invite each of us to join you in your work. We, young and old, lay and ordained, ask you to form us more and more in your image and likeness, through our prayer and worship of you and through the study of your scripture, that our eyes will be fully opened to your mission in the world. Then, God, into our communities, our nation, and the world, send us to serve with Christ, taking risks to give life and hope to all people and all of your creation. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

EXIT INTERVIEW CHECKLIST FOR OUTGOING PRIESTS

In order to share important information with the incoming Bridge Priest or Interim Priest, please answer the following questions on this form and send it to the Rev. Dr. Jean Baptiste Ntagengwa, Director for Transition Ministry. He will share your responses with the new priest in confidence.

1. Please state your name

The name of your parish

City/Town

Date

2. Describe any administrative issues that may require prompt attention by the new priest.
3. What do you think are current parish strengths and current weaknesses that may require special attention?
4. What "special parish history" does the new priest need to know about?
5. Are the parish's finances in good order? Are there financial issues that need immediate attention?
6. Describe current parish staff along with any particular issues regarding their employment, tenure and performance.
7. Which lay persons are especially reliable and for what?
8. Which lay persons are good leaders, good at follow through and mature in their faith and practice?
9. Which parishioners need special attention?
10. Provide names, addresses and phone numbers of any individuals who will need pastoral attention during the first few weeks of the new priest's tenure.
11. Provide a list of parishioners who are sick or shut-in if not included in #8.
12. Describe any special pastoral routines including nursing home services, etc.
13. Describe current parish policies regarding baptisms, weddings and funerals.
14. Describe current parish policies regarding building and equipment use.

15. Describe any quirks in the liturgical practices of the parish that the new priest should know about.
16. What ecumenical relationships does the parish currently maintain?
17. What community relationships does the parish currently maintain?
18. What are two things you fear might be lost or lose momentum during the interim period?
19. Other concerns?

On Leaving a Parish: Pastoral and Practical Guidelines

Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts



These guidelines are intended to help clergy manage the termination of a ministerial relationship in a way that celebrates what has taken place and brings a sense of closure between priest and parish. Each situation, of course, is unique and presents its own challenges, but the principles underlying a good ending are constant. Saying a healthy, caring, and clear goodbye to a congregation helps effect a good beginning to the next chapter in one's vocational life as well as in the life of the congregation.

A. Pastoral Guidelines for Clergy Taking Leave of a Parish

When Jesus took leave of his earthly ministry, he called his disciples friends and gave them a new commandment: “love one another as I have loved you.”¹ Jesus’ disciples are called to abide in communities of love, loving one another and reaching out in love to the world. Jesus’ call to love is woven through the liturgy of Holy Baptism. The candidates for baptism are asked, “Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?”² And the gathered community prays that God will “teach them to love others in the power of the Spirit” and “send them into the world in witness to your love.”³

Jesus’ call and invitation to love are also reflected in the liturgy for the ordination of a priest and in the liturgies of welcome for a new rector. In the examination of the ordinands, the Bishop reminds them that they are “to love and serve the people among whom [they] work....”⁴ That call is echoed in the service for the Celebration of a New Ministry, wherein the Bishop prays that the new minister may “love and care for your people....”⁵ And in the liturgy for the “Welcoming of a New Rector” in *Enriching Our Worship*, the Bishop says at the end of the service, “I commend to your love and care the people of _____. My brothers and sisters in Christ, I commend to your love and care your new Rector, colleague and friend, N.”⁶

Our common prayer informs and illumines every aspect of our life together in the Church. As our liturgy makes clear, bonds of affection are naturally formed in Christian communities, grounded as they are in Christ’s love and his commandment to love one another. When clergy take leave of a parish, though the bonds of affection may remain, there is also a need to be clear that their pastoral relationship with parishioners is brought to a close when they depart. The leave-taking guidelines of the Diocese of New Jersey honor both realities: “The guidelines recognize that, during the tenure of a pastoral relationship, genuine and often lifelong relationships are formed and that there remains a need on the part of the priest and some former parishioners to maintain these long-standing, meaningful friendships. However, it should be noted that clear distinctions between the pastoral identity and the identity as personal friend must be clarified and appropriate boundaries concerning the former must be established.”⁷ This clarity helps the priest who succeeds the departing priest to exercise his or her ministry fully, free to love and serve those with whom he or she ministers.

In a review of the clergy leave-taking guidelines of twenty dioceses⁸, several practices appeared regularly. These practices, shown below, help departing clergy to let go of their pastoral responsibilities and make clear that their pastoral relationship with parishioners has ended.

¹ See John 15.12-15.

² From the service of Holy Baptism in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 305.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 305-306.

⁴ From the service of The Ordination of a Priest in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 531.

⁵ From the service of Celebration of a New Ministry in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 560.

⁶ From the service of The Renewal of Ministry with the Welcoming of a New Rector or Other Pastor in *Enriching Our Worship 4*, p. 10.

⁷ From “Leaving Well Guidelines - Clergy Leave-Taking” on the Diocese of New Jersey website (accessed October 2015).

⁸ The clergy leave-taking guidelines of the following dioceses were accessed on diocesan websites in October 2015: Atlanta, Chicago, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Lexington, Long Island, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Newark, Olympia, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, Western Louisiana, Western Massachusetts, Western New York, and Western North Carolina.

- Write a letter to the congregation in which you let parishioners know that after you leave, you will no longer serve as their pastor or priest; that it no longer will be your role to officiate at their baptisms, weddings, and funerals; that you will not discuss parish business with them; that you will not post on parish social media sites; and that you will return to the parish only at the invitation of your successor. (**See the Template for Letter Announcing a Priest's Departure from a Parish below.**)
- If asked by a former parishioner to officiate at a baptism, wedding, or funeral, be careful not to say that the person will need to check with the interim priest or new rector. It is always the responsibility of the departing priest to make clear that the pastoral relationship has ended.
- Be intentional about reflecting, grieving, and preparing for whatever is next in your life and ministry.
- Refrain from conversation with former parishioners about parish matters, so that you do not become triangulated with parishioners and your successor.
- Refrain from involvement with the search process, including giving names or offering opinions about candidates.
- Worship in a different church.
- Disengage from all parish-based social media platforms.

Template for Letter Announcing a Priest's Departure from a Parish

Dear Parishioners of [*Parish*],

I am writing to let you know that I have been called as rector of [*new parish*] in [*place*]. [*This opening can be modified to reflect other reasons for leaving, i.e. retirement or resignation.*] My last day at [*parish*] will be [*date*]. As I prepare to take leave of [*parish*], please know that I value the friendships and ministry, the joys and sorrows we have shared, and our growth in the love of Jesus. [*It may be helpful to reflect briefly here on particular ministries or events that have special meaning for you.*]

After leaving [*parish*] on [*date*], I want you to know that I will no longer have a pastoral relationship with you. You will have a new pastor in your midst, and so it will no longer be my role to officiate at baptisms, weddings, or funerals for parishioners of [*parish*]; that privilege will belong to [*new priest*]. I will also take care not to talk about parish matters with you; those should be discussed with [*new priest*] or other parish leaders. After leaving, I will not post to [*parish's*] social media sites. And I will return to [*parish*] only at [*new priest's*] invitation. It is important for me to observe these practices so that [*new priest*] is free to exercise the ministry that [*he/she*] has been called to offer with you.

In the coming weeks, we will have a chance to say goodbye to each other and to reflect on the ministry we have offered together in Christ's name in this place.

I know that you will offer [*new priest*] your support, your encouragement, and your prayers as together you begin a new season of ministry. Please know of my prayers and gratitude for you and for the ministry we have shared.

Faithfully,

B. Practical Guidelines: Steps for the departing priest to take (See more details in the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church)

- Begin planning your departure early bearing in mind that the Bishop has to concur with the plans first. Sufficient notice to the Bishop is considered to be 6–8 weeks when accepting another call, and 4 - 6 months, if retiring, so that there is sufficient time for everyone to process feelings, to put parish business in good order, and to prepare the wardens and vestry for their role in the transition. Timing of the announcement(s) is critical.
- Inform the bishop of your decision in person and seek their approval and then inform the DOTM and the wardens in person as well. With the wardens, notify the vestry.
- With the wardens, send two letters to the congregation:
 - One from you, expressing gratitude for your mutual ministry and your intent to end the ministerial relationship with the parish. It is helpful to include information about what your future plans are (see the template above).
 - One from the wardens, setting forth the vestry's plan for leave-taking and the parish's future, expressing affirmation and hope.
- Notify in writing the Bishop's Office (including the date of your last service), community personnel, and the Church Pension Fund (especially on retirement).
- Schedule and plan an exit interview with the Bishop's Office and one with the vestry and parish leaders. Find a time to fill out Exit Questions provided by the DOTM.
- Plan for a liturgical ending with the parish in the context of worship (see Book of Occasional Services).
- Plan to say a formal goodbye to shut-ins, staff, and parish groups.
- Plan final visits with individuals with whom there may have been some tension or conflict.
- Issue an invitation to anyone who has "unfinished business" with you to come and talk.
- Plan ways of saying goodbye to those who have been particularly supportive.
- Change in a timely manner the mailing addresses on all periodicals and correspondence addressed to you.
- Make sure to clean out your office by the time of the official "last Sunday," but do so gradually.
- Clean out personal files, including computer files. You may wish to leave files that would be helpful to the interim.
- Let the congregation know--in writing-- that after your departure you will no longer do pastoral or priestly things with them (even in the interim period), such as leading a service or

preaching at a wedding, baptism or funeral (see the template above). You will come back for a parish event only at the new rector's invitation, and then in the capacity as the former rector.

- Prepare a thank-you and/or farewell piece for the parish newsletter.
- To facilitate the transition in pastoral care, summarize in writing any pertinent information about the sick, shut-ins or others needing pastoral care (Exit Questions).
- Within the context of preaching the gospel, name your feelings and issues of closure in sermons. Do so in ways that allow you to share the experience of change and loss with the congregation, but don't lure the congregation into taking care of your feelings of sadness or ambivalence.
- If there is a gap between your departure and the arrival of the next clergy person to serve the parish during the transition, be sure the vestry has made arrangements through the DOTM's Office for emergency pastoral coverage and notify the Dean and area clergy. Be sure that lay leaders know about these arrangements.
- Have a party, in whatever style is most comfortable for you and the congregation!
- Turn in all keys, passwords, etc.

Liturgy for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship (Template I)

Departing Minister:

On the _____ day of _____, _____, I was inducted as rector of _____, _____, Massachusetts. I have with God's help and to the best of my abilities, exercised this trust, accepting its privileges and responsibilities.

After prayer and careful consideration, it now seems that I should leave this charge, and I publicly state that my tenure as rector of this parish ends this day. Mindful that the call to serve God is a call which comes in prayer, I now pray.

O Lord my God, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; yet you called me to stand in your house and serve at this altar. To you and your service I have devoted myself, body, soul and spirit. In this ministry, you have filled my memory with the record of your mighty works; enlightened my understanding with the Holy Spirit; asking that I center my heart and will on what you would have me do, even as you have entrusted these people to my care.

As I leave this place, be always with me in carrying out the duties of my ministry. In prayer, quicken my devotion; in praises, heighten my love and gratitude; in preaching, give me readiness of thought and expression; that together we might fulfill the duties of a ministry of service, to you, to each other and to the whole creation of which we are stewards. All this I ask through the power of your most gracious Spirit.

Bishop or Dean:

N. (Departing Minister) the work of ministry is rooted in the gifts of ministry. The people of this parish and the town have been generous in their gifts to you. I invite you to share expression of some of these gifts with them.

Departing Minister:

N. (Wardens,) receive these keys and let the doors of this parish continue to be open to all people.

People: Amen

Departing Minister:

N. (A Deacon or Lector) receive this Gospel Book that the Word of God may be heard by these people of God.

People: Amen

Departing Minister:

N. (Outreach Committee Chair) receive this (symbol of parish outreach project) that you may continue to (whatever the outreach project is)

People: Amen

Departing Minister:

Receive this (other symbols of the ministries of the church as may be appropriate)

People: Amen

Bishop or Dean:

Having witnessed the exchange of gifts between (Departing Minister) and those with whom he/she has shared the honor of ministry, do you, the people of _____ Church, recognize and accept the conclusion of this pastoral relationship?

People: We do.

Departing Minister and Congregation:

O God, you have bound us together for a time as priest and people to work for the advancement of your reign on earth in this place: We give you humble and hearty thanks for the ministry which we have shared.

Silence

We thank you for your patience with us despite our blindness and slowness of heart. We thank you for your forgiveness and mercy.

Silence

Especially we thank you for your never-failing presence with us through these years, and for the deeper knowledge of you, each other and the world we serve.

Silence

We thank you for those who have been joined to this part of Christ's family through baptism, confirmation and marriage. We thank you for opening the hearts and minds of children and young people, that together with them, we might be fed by your sacraments.

Silence

And we pray for those whom we have loved whose lives we have celebrated and whose spirits live with you in eternity.

Silence

Now, we pray, be with those who leave and with us who stay; and grant that all of us, drawing ever nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of your saints. All this we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord, Amen

Liturgy for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship (Template II)

Introduction to the Prayers of the People at the Leave-taking of a Priest

The occasion of leave-taking invites our prayer, and so it is appropriate that a rite of leave-taking be incorporated into the prayers of the people. This particular rite is adapted from the Solemn Collects, an ancient version of the prayers of the people. The Solemn Collects offer a spacious form that easily incorporates prayers specific to the departure of a priest. The prayers offered here frame the event of leave-taking as an occasion to renew our commitment to God's service. They draw primarily on the riches of *The Book of Common Prayer*; citations are included in the Sources section.

Members of the congregation may be appointed to lead the biddings; it is especially appropriate for wardens to lead some or all of the biddings. Silence is kept for a time after each bidding; the Bishop or the Bishop's representative then says the collect. After the biddings and collects, the departing priest addresses the congregation, and all say together the concluding prayer.

The Prayers of the People at the Leave-taking of a Priest

A Leader says

On this day of leave-taking, let us pray together for the Church, for the world, and for the needs and concerns of this congregation.

Let us pray for the holy Church of God:

for its fidelity to the Gospel;
for its witness to God's love and mercy;
for all Christians, especially those whose faith is costly;
for *N.*, our Presiding Bishop, and *N. (N.)*, our Bishop(s), and for all bishops and other ministers;
for this congregation;
for *N. (and his family)*, who now take leave of this congregation.

Silence

Lord of the Church, you call us into your fellowship and send us into the world in witness to your love: Grant that those who leave and those who remain may be renewed for your service, that we might be salt, light, and leaven in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them:

for our President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court;
for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;
for this community, and for all who live and work in it;
for all who serve the common good;
for those who must act swiftly and surely for the wellbeing of their neighbors.

Silence

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: Kindle in every heart a love of peace and a longing for justice, and let those on whom authority rests be wise and gracious in its use, so that your will may truly be done on earth as it is in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit:

for all who are hungry or homeless;
for all who are sick or wounded;
for all who face loneliness, doubt, or despair;
for all who sorrow and all who grieve;
for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger;
for all in our congregation who are suffering;
for all whom we have served in this season of ministry now past.

Silence

Lord Jesus, lover of souls, whose eye is on the sparrow: Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted; and, as you sent out your disciples, send us out also in your Name to all who need your healing presence. *Amen.*

Let us pray for the departed:

for those who have died in the hope of the resurrection;
for those whose faith is known to you alone;
for those who die alone;
for those who will die today;
for the faithful of this parish who have died in this season of ministry now past.

Silence

O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered: We commend to your gracious keeping all who have died, that they may go from strength to strength in your heavenly kingdom; and we pledge ourselves to your faithful service as we continue our course on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the resurrection and the life. *Amen.*

The departing Priest then says to the congregation

By God's grace, I began my ministry as Rector of *(name of parish)* on *(date)*. It has been my privilege to love and serve you, sharing with you in the ministry of reconciliation to which God calls us at baptism. It is now time to relinquish my pastoral ministry in this place and for a new season of ministry to begin.

I commend you to the care of your new priest. So that *he* may freely exercise *his* pastoral ministry, I will not return to this parish for *(period of time)*, and then only with *his* invitation or blessing.

I commend you to God's care and keeping. May God bless and guide you in the days to come, strengthen you in all goodness, comfort you in sorrow, and give you the peace that passes understanding.

The departing Priest and the congregation then pray together

O God, you have bound us together for a time as priest and people, to share in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers; to love and serve our neighbors in the name of your Son; to witness in word and deed to your tender mercies and saving power. Thank you, dear God, for all you have given us, and all that you have forgiven us, in this season of ministry. As we take leave of each other, grant that all of us, by drawing ever nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of saints. All this we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

Sources

The First Bidding

"for the holy Church of God": from Form V of the Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 389.

"For N., our Presiding Bishop, and N. (N.), our Bishop(s), and for all bishops and other ministers": from Form VI of The Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 392.

"send us into the world in witness to your love": from the Prayers for the Candidates in the service of Holy Baptism, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 306.

"that we might be salt, light, and leaven in the world": from Matthew 5.13, 14; 13.33.

“who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many”: from Mark 10.45.

The Second Bidding

“Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them”: from the Solemn Collects of the Good Friday Liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 278.

“For our President, the Congress, and the Supreme Court”: from the Solemn Collects of the Good Friday Liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 278.

“For all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world”: from Form III of the Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 387.

“For all who serve the common good”: from the Solemn Collects of the Good Friday Liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 278.

“Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love”: from No. 4, “For Peace,” in Prayers and Thanksgivings in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 815.

“Kindle in every heart a love of peace”: from the Solemn Collects of the Good Friday Liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 278.

“so that your will may truly be done on earth as it is in heaven”: from the Lord’s Prayer, in Matthew 6.10.

The Third Bidding

“for all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit”: from Form IV of the Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 389.

“For all who are hungry or homeless; for all who are sick or wounded; for all who face loneliness, doubt, or despair; for all who sorrow and all who grieve; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger”: adapted from the Solemn Collects of the Good Friday Liturgy in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 279.

“lover of souls”: from the Collect at the Prayers, No. 5, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 395.

“whose eye is on the sparrow”: from the gospel hymn “His Eye is on the Sparrow,” and from Matthew 6.26.

“Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted”: from the concluding prayers in the service of Compline, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 134.

“as you sent out your disciples”: from Mark 6.7-13.

The Fourth Bidding

“For those who have died in the hope of the resurrection”: from Form I of the Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 384.

“For those whose faith is known to you alone”: from Form V of the Prayers of the People in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 391.

“O God, whose days are without end, and whose mercies cannot be numbered”: from Additional Prayers in the Burial Office, Rite II, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 504.

“go from strength to strength in your heavenly kingdom”: from Additional Prayers in the Burial Office, Rite I, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 488.

“as we continue our course on earth”: from the Burial Office, Rite II, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 493.

“the resurrection and the life”: from John 11.25.

The Concluding Prayers

“May God bless and guide you...comfort you in sorrow, and give you the peace that passes understanding”: from No. 51, “For a Birthday,” in Prayers and Thanksgivings in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 830.

“strengthen you in all goodness”: from the absolution after the Confession of Sin in Holy Eucharist, Rite II, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 360.

“O God, you have bound us together for a time as priest and people”: from A Service for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship and Leave-taking from a Congregation in *The Book of Occasional Services* (1994), page 248.

“to share in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers”: from the Baptismal Covenant in the service of Holy Baptism, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, page. 304.

“grant that all of us, by drawing ever nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of saints. All this we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.”: from A Service for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship and Leave-taking from a Congregation in *The Book of Occasional Services* (1994), page 249.

Covenant of Ministry/Memorandum for Bridge Priest

Bridge Priest and Congregation's Mutual Covenant of Ministry

COVENANT OF MINISTRY/MEMORANDUM

Between

St., Any City and The Rev.

Section A COMPENSATION

The Bridge Priest's salary will be(this will depend on how many hours you want the priest to work during the week + Sunday services—the good way to determine the TCC is to use the TCC worksheet found here <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/compensation-benefits-resources-congregations> or here http://www.diomass.org/webfm_send/2273) per annum commencing onfor ...hours per week. This includes housing cash stipend, housing allowance and SECA if applicable. This Memorandum is valid through ..., but can be extended by mutual agreement of all parties. This Memorandum/contract may be terminated by either party upon a 30 day notice.

Section B – PREMIUMS

1. The Vestry will pay the following premiums as required:
 - (a) Pension premiums as required by the Church Pension Group based on the Bridge Priest's annual TCC.
 - (b) The cost of Health Insurance premiums [specify whether individual or family coverage, which includes domestic partners, where applicable] according to the percentage prescribed by diocesan policy.
2. The Vestry will provide the following additional benefits [specify other benefits, e.g., dental, other insurance, life insurance for clergy not eligible for pension, etc. and allocation of premiums].

Section C—EXPENSES

The Vestry agrees to pay for the following expenses incurred by the Bridge Priest in fulfilling his professional duties.

The Vestry agrees to reimburse the Bridge Priest for church related travel at the current rate established by the IRS.

The use of the Parish phone and all postage for church business will be included in the parish budget.

All necessary furniture and supplies will be paid by the parish.

A fund will be provided for charities and expenditures at the discretion of the Bridge Priest in accordance with the Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds.

The cost of pulpit supply and pastoral services when the Bridge Priest is absent from the parish will be paid by the parish.

Section D:--LEAVE TIME

Four weeks of vacation per year, 1 week per quarter. Additional time off for clergy retreat is strongly encouraged.

The Bridge Priest is expected and encouraged to participate in Regional and Diocesan meetings. These will include monthly meetings with diocesan staff, Convention, Deanery Clergy meetings and others.

All fees for weddings, funerals and other fees will go into the Priest's Discretionary Fund.

Mutual ministry and responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the Bridge Priest are liturgy and pastoral care. The Bridge Priest is encouraged to meet with the Wardens, the Vestry, and committees as time allows. **Specific responsibilities can be drawn from this document (Areas of Mutual Ministry Review) found here: http://www.diomass.org/webfm_send/1754.** You can also consult the Template of Covenant of Ministry for Interim Priests posted here <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/letters-agreement> on the Diocesan website for specific tasks and responsibilities.

Vestry Responsibilities

All ministries other than those reserved to the ordained leadership are reserved to the Vestry. The Vestry shall lead the laity in support of parish goals and deciding on the next steps in the life of the parish. The Vestry is the legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property. It will offer support to the Bridge Priest, both personally and organizationally as well as its financial obligations to him. **Again, specific responsibilities can be drawn from the document mentioned above: Areas of Mutual Ministry Review.**

Parish Signatures

Date _____ Bridge Priest _____

Approved by the Vestry on (date) _____

Warden _____

Warden _____

Clerk _____

Reviewed by the Office of Transition Ministry

Date: _____

By: _____

BISHOP'S SIGNATURE

Reviewed by the Bishop:

Date: _____

Bishop: _____

THE INTERIM PRIEST IN THE DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Interim Priest is a priest trained to assist parishes during a time of transition, especially during the period between the leave-taking of one rector and the calling of another rector. It is an intentional ministry of sustaining the direction and ministry of a congregation as defined by the Vestry; reviewing the past, assessing the present, and evaluating the future. However, it is expected that the ministry during the interim period will be different from that experienced by members of the parish under the previous rector.

The major goal of the Interim Priest's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the coming of the next rector. To this end, the Interim Priest shall:

- Help the congregation deal with a sense of loss and any unresolved issues arising from the rector's departure.
- Deal with internal conflicts and help heal any divisions within the congregation.
- Help the Vestry, lay leaders and staff make such changes as may be needed to align parish life and administration with generally accepted standards in the Diocese.

Selection of the Interim Priest

- The Bishop, through the OTM, will choose an appointment from among qualified local candidates or recruit qualified "external" candidates for the position.
- The Bishop will recommend one candidate at a time to the wardens and vestry.
- The candidate meets first with the wardens and then with the vestry. **The Wardens and the vestry interview the candidate, do their due diligence and then approve him/her.**
- If the vestry and the candidate agree, a Covenant of Ministry/Letter of Agreement setting forth the mutual obligations and responsibilities of the Interim and the vestry is negotiated under the facilitation of OTM. A standard Interim Priest Covenant of Ministry may be found as part of the diocesan clergy compensation guidelines available on-line at <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/letters-agreement>. The appointment is official upon the establishment of the good match on both sides and becomes public knowledge upon approval of the Covenant of Ministry by the Bishop.
- If the proposed appointment of the Interim Priest is not felt to be a "good fit" by either the vestry or the clergy person, the Bishop will draw upon that experience in order to identify another candidate for appointment.
- The presentation of a subsequent candidate is dependent upon the identification and availability of suitable candidates.

Note: Recognizing that the interim time is a period of intentional transition and change and that a priest specifically trained in interim ministry is the best person to

accompany a parish through this transition, it is not customary or desirable that a current Assistant or Associate become the Interim.

Tasks of the Interim Period

The interim period is seen as a prime time for reviewing the parish and adjusting, if needed, its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and Interim Priest are expected to work together to prepare for a healthy transition to the next Rector. Recognizing that the review of a congregation's total ministry should be a continuing process, the Interim Priest, Wardens and Vestry are expected to meet at least monthly to clarify expectations and to evaluate successes and raise concerns from the congregation, staff, leadership, or the Interim Priest in order to ensure the effectiveness of their joint ministry.

Focus Point during the Interim Period include:

- 1) Heritage: Coming to terms with the history of the congregation and its relationships with previous clergy.
- 2) Mission: Discovering the congregation's special identity and core values, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership; short-term tactical plans can be worked out here.
- 3) Leadership: Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively. New leaders might emerge, while seasoned ones may re-commit or decide to refocus their gifts.
- 4) Connections: Renewing and reworking relationships with the Diocese and the community, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other. Time to re-asses old links and to consider new ones.
- 5) Future: Building commitment to the leadership of the new rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities-Developing congregational and Pastoral Profiles.

Vestry Responsibilities

- All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the parish and the Interim Priest.
- The Vestry shall lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Interim Priest in pursuit of parish goals and in the performance of tasks of the interim period.
- The Vestry is the legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Interim Priest. The Vestry will see to it that the Interim Priest is properly supported, personally and organizationally, as well as in the Vestry's financial obligations to the Interim Priest.

Interim Priest's Responsibilities

- The Interim Priest represents and extends the ministry which is the Bishop's pastoral and canonical responsibility for congregations in leadership transition.
- The Interim Priest shall lead the parish as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this congregation and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop
- The Interim Priest shall work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain the regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms), calling upon the sick and shut-in, visiting newcomers, and ongoing administration of the parish
- The Interim Priest shall supervise all parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the Interim Priest.
- The Interim Priest supports the Vestry in its responsibilities, including the hiring, evaluation and termination of staff.

The Interim Priest shall not under any circumstances be eligible to be a candidate for Rector.

Attendance at monthly meetings of the Interims' group are expected by the Bishop.

Please customize this document as much as you can!

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Interim Priest's and Congregation's Mutual Covenant of Ministry

This Covenant of Ministry model contains recommended provisions that may be varied according to the particular facts and circumstances. For a part-time Interim Priest, the various sections should be prorated on the basis of a fraction (or percentage), e.g., half-time, three-quarters time, etc. Consult the current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.

**Interim Priest's and Congregation's Mutual Covenant of Ministry
BETWEEN**

The Rev. _____ and the Vestry of _____ Church, _____, Massachusetts, which has accepted [his/her] appointment by the Bishop to serve as the Interim Priest with the understanding that [he/she] will serve beginning _____ and expect to terminate upon the arrival of the new Rector or at a mutually agreed upon date with 30 days' written notice given by either the Vestry or the Interim Priest, or at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop and not requiring a 30-day notice. The parties agree that any changes in the terms and conditions of this agreement must first be approved by the Bishop.

The relationship between an Interim Priest and a Vestry is unique, and it evolves within a larger covenant of mutual trust and ministry to each other. The purpose of this Covenant is to strengthen that relationship by clarifying some of the practical arrangements and to reduce later misunderstandings.

Section A – COMPENSATION

1. The Interim Priest's salary will be \$ _____ per annum commencing on or about _____. It will be renewed annually.

The parties agree that the Interim Priest's Total Clergy Compensation ("TCC") will equal \$ _____ [including the amount of the Housing Allowance, if applicable] which corresponds to _____% of full-time based on current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.⁹

2. Housing ¹⁰

⁹ Specify other compensation received by the Interim Priest that may be considered part of TCC. Consult the current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.

¹⁰ The model contains two options relative to housing. "Option A" applies to those situations where the Interim Priest will not live in a Rectory. "Option B" applies to those situations where the Interim Priest will live in a church-provided Rectory.

[Option A – Interim Priest will not live in a Rectory]

The Vestry agrees to adopt annually the necessary resolution required by the Internal Revenue Service designating that portion of the TCC shown above as a Housing Allowance within the meaning of Section 1.107 of the IRS Code.¹¹

[Option B – Interim Priest will be living in the Rectory]

The Interim Priest and [his/her] family will be living in the church-owned Rectory. The Vestry will be responsible for the following expenses:

- (a) Insurance (and property taxes, if any) on the property.
- (b) Maintenance or replacement of some appliances: [Specify, such appliances, etc.];
- (c) Maintenance of the structure(s), renovations or capital improvements;
- (d) [Specify other responsibilities, e.g., snow and leaf removal, etc.].

The Interim Priest and [his/her] family are responsible for good stewardship in regard to the care of the Rectory and will remain responsible for the general care and upkeep such as [specify particular responsibilities].¹²

The Interim Priest is expected to present an annual report to the Vestry on the condition of the Rectory, with particular attention to items requiring maintenance.

The Vestry agrees to adopt annually the necessary resolution required by the Internal Revenue Service designating that portion of the TCC shown above as a Housing Allowance within the meaning of Section 1.107 of the IRS Code.

3. [Optional] Other Compensation: [Specify, e.g., SECA allowance, equity allowance, 403(b) contribution, etc.].¹³

Section B – PREMIUMS

1. The Vestry will pay the following premiums as required:

¹¹ The amount of the TCC designated as a Housing Allowance should be the lesser of (1) the fair rental value for the housing: including furnishings and appurtenances (such as garage) and utilities or (2) the amount the Interim Priest expects to spend on housing.

¹² The specific responsibilities of the Vestry and Interim Priest will depend on the particular facts and circumstances. Once these are determined, they should be delineated with as much specificity as possible.

¹³ Since the Interim Priest while living in a church-provided Rectory will not build any equity in a home, a number of Vestries have agreed to fund an equity allowance through contributions to a tax sheltered 403(b) plan. Such other compensation is includable as TCC.

(a) Pension premiums as required by the Church Pension Group based on the Interim Priest's TCC or will establish and contribute to an IRA-based plan for providing retirement benefits to the Interim Priest who is not eligible to participate in both the clergy pension plan and the defined contribution 403(b) plan (please consult the Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits and the U.S. Tax Guide). When necessary, the Church Pension Group provides all active and qualified clergy with a short-term disability benefit.

(b) The cost of Health Insurance premiums [specify whether individual or family coverage, which includes domestic partners, where applicable] according to the percentage prescribed by diocesan policy. In addition, because there is often a lapse of time between interim positions, it is recommended that the parish continue to pay an interim's health insurance for a period of up to 90 days, if needed, following completion of the interim's assignment in that parish.

2. The Vestry will provide the following additional benefits [specify other benefits, e.g., dental, other insurance such as long-term disability insurance, life insurance for clergy not eligible for pension, etc. and allocation of premiums].

3. In the event of a total and permanent disability of the Interim Priest, or in the case of the death of the Interim Priest, the following agreements apply:

(a) Regarding housing: ____month(s) in Rectory or ____month(s) Housing Allowance, to be negotiated by the Vestry, Wardens and the Interim Priest, or Interim Priest's spouse or other designee.

(b) Regarding compensation (in the event of permanent disability); ____month(s) salary per year of service, up to a maximum of ____ month(s).

Section C – EXPENSES

The Vestry agrees to pay for the following expenses incurred by the Interim Priest in fulfilling [his/her] professional duties:

1) Moving: The cost of moving the Interim Priest's family and household goods when the appointment has been accepted.

2) Travel: The Vestry agrees to provide the Rector with _____¹⁴

[Option A: reimbursement for all church-related automobile travel at the current rate established by the IRS.]

[Option B: a travel allowance of \$_____per year adjusted annually and included in the annual budget for all church-related automobile travel.]

¹⁴ Specify whether the Interim Priest will receive (1) travel reimbursement and, if so, at IRS rate, (2) an annual allowance or (3) an automobile. In any case, the Interim Priest will submit the expense reimbursement form. Note IRS mileage reimbursement in 2016 is \$.54/mile

[Option C: an automobile for purposes of church-related travel upon such terms as the Vestry and the Rector shall determine.]

- 3) Communications: To provide for a computer/laptop/pad, internet connection, and a telephone in the Interim Priest's office and a cell phone if necessary. All postage for church business will be included in the parish budget.
- 4) Office: All necessary office furniture, equipment and supplies will be paid by the parish, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
- 5) Discretionary Fund: A fund will be provided for charities and expenditures at the discretion of the Interim Priest in accordance with the Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
- 6) Guests and Hospitality: The Interim Priest will be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of hospitality and entertainment on behalf of the parish, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
- 7) Professional Fees: Dues of the Interim Priest to the Massachusetts Episcopal Clergy Association and other professional associations, the cost of the annual Clergy Conference with the bishops, and the cost of professional periodicals, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
- 8) Continuing Education: The amount of \$ _____ annually to support continuing education with the expectation that there be a report to the Vestry and/or parish on his/her continuing education work.
- 9) The Vestry agrees to pay the cost of pulpit supply and pastoral services when the Interim Priest is absent from the parish; the amount to be established in the annual budget.

Section D - LEAVE TIME

[Currently, four (4) weeks of vacation per year and one (1) week of continuing education/career development per year are the recommended minimum. Additional time off for clergy retreat is strongly encouraged.]

For employment periods longer than eight (8) months but less than one year, the normal vacation leave for clergy of four (4) weeks per year (including Sundays) may be prorated].

1. ____ weeks of vacation per 6 months, including Sundays
2. ____ weeks per year (in addition to vacation time) for continuing education and career development [and _____ days per year (in addition to the above) for time of retreat].
3. [Specify other leaves.]
 - a) The Interim Priest shall also have some negotiated additional time off after

- Christmas and Easter.
- b) Plans for personal and sick days (please specify as agreed upon with the Vestry).
 - c) Plans for public holidays (please specify as agreed upon with the Vestry).
 - d) Plans for parental leave In the event of childbirth or adoption. Please consult current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensations and Benefits.
 - e) Other

Section E - SUPPLEMENTARY COMPENSATION

The disposition of wedding, funeral and other church-related fees will be determined in conjunction with the Vestry and can be used to fund the Discretionary Fund.

The following understanding has been reached between the Interim Priest and the Vestry concerning the income the Interim Priest may receive performing [specify].

Section F - USE OF BUILDINGS

The Vestry shall make the decision for use of the church and buildings by outside individuals or groups in consultation with the Interim Priest.

Section G – MUTUAL MINISTRY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Recognizing that the review of a congregation's total ministry should be a continuing process, a meeting between the Interim Priest and the Wardens are required at least twice a month with encouragement to meet more often in periods and under circumstances where extra meetings would be helpful.

The Interim Priest, Wardens and Vestry agree to meet monthly (regular vestry meeting) to clarify expectations and to evaluate successes and raise concerns from the congregation, staff, leadership, or the Interim Priest in order to ensure the effectiveness of their joint ministry.

Focus Point during the Interim Period

The interim period is seen as prime time for renewal, re-energizing the parish in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and the Interim Priest shall work together to prepare for healthy transition to the next rectorship.

Specific tasks to be addressed include:

- 1) Heritage: Coming to terms with the history of the congregation and its relationships with previous clergy.
- 2) Mission: Discovering the congregation's special identity and core values, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership; short-term tactical plans can be worked out here.
- 3) Leadership: Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively. New leaders might emerge, while seasoned ones may re-commit or decide to refocus their gifts.

4) Connections: Renewing and reworking relationships with the Diocese and the community, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other. Time to re-asses old links and to consider new ones.

5) Future: Building commitment to the leadership of the new rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities-Developing congregational and Pastoral Profiles.

Vestry Responsibilities

All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the parish and the Interim Priest. The Vestry shall lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Interim Priest in pursuit of parish goals and in the performance of the focus point during the interim period.

The Vestry is legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Interim Priest. The Vestry will see that the Interim Priest is properly supported, personally and organizationally, as well as in the Vestry's financial obligations to the Interim Priest.

Interim Priest's Responsibilities

The Interim Priest represents and extends the ministry which is the Bishop's pastoral and canonical responsibility for congregations in leadership transition. The Interim Priest shall lead the parish as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this congregation and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop.

The Interim Priest is a priest trained to assist parishes during a time of transition, especially during the period between the leave-taking of one rector and the calling of another rector. It is an intentional ministry of sustaining the direction and ministry of a congregation as defined by the vestry; reviewing the past, assessing the present, and evaluating the future. However, it is expected that the ministry during the interim period will be different from that experienced by members of the parish under the previous rector.

The major goal of the Interim Priest's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the next phase of their life together.

To this end, the Interim Priest shall:

- help the congregation deal with a sense of loss and any unresolved issues arising from the departure of previous clergy,
- deal with internal conflicts if any and help heal any divisions within the congregation.
- help the Vestry, lay leaders and staff make such changes as may be needed to align parish life and administration with generally accepted standards in our Diocese.

The primary tasks of the Interim Priest shall be to:

- work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain the regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms),
- calling upon the sick and shut-in, visiting newcomers, and ongoing administration of the parish,
- supervise all parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the Interim Priest. If it is necessary in the interim time to hire or terminate staff, the wardens shall take those actions, given their canonical responsibility for the parish between rectors.
- support the Vestry in its responsibilities.

The Interim Priest is expected and encouraged to participate in regional, diocesan and churchwide responsibilities as well as community endeavors. Further, time given to such work shall be understood as an integral part of the Interim Priest's ministry in the parish.

Monthly attendance at meetings of the Interims Priests and Rector Search Consultants by Interim Priest is expected by the Bishop.

The Interim Priest shall not be eligible to be a candidate for Rector.

Section H – STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with diocesan and Episcopal Church principles, this congregation will not discriminate on grounds of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability.¹⁵

PARISH SIGNATURES

Date: _____ Interim Priest: _____

Approved by the Vestry on (date) _____

Warden: _____

Warden: _____

Clerk: _____

Reviewed by the Office of Transition Ministry

Date: _____ By: _____

¹⁵ Since its 2001 Report to Convention, the Compensation and Benefits Committee has included this option to reflect the concerns of both the Diocese of Massachusetts and Episcopal Church as reflected in a variety of resolutions presented in their respective conventions

BISHOP'S SIGNATURE

Reviewed by the Bishop:

Date: _____ Bishop: _____

Responsibilities of Transition Team

The Transition Team, created by the Vestry at the time of the announcement of a rector's upcoming departure, particularly when there may be a longer than average period of time between announcement and departure, serves primarily to oversee the over-all health of the clergy and parish in the interest of a life-giving and positive transition time. The Transition Team should be made up of about 6 – 8 members and meet as needed with greater time and attention focused during the time of leave-taking and again for the welcoming of the new Rector. The expectation is that they themselves may not do all of these tasks, but will find people to take on various responsibilities.

Their specific tasks might include:

- Provide support for whatever Clergy may be present. This means the departing Rector, the interim, the new Rector and their families.
- Coordinate celebrations and thanksgivings for the ministry of the departing Rector including the final service.
- Prepare ways of welcoming and orienting the new rector and his/her family to both the parish and the community, including social events, small gatherings in peoples' homes, showing the new rector where the stores, schools and medical services may be found etc.
- Undertake other transition-related tasks from time to time as may seem appropriate.

Parish Discernment Resources

Some Reflections, Questions, and Resources for Ministry with Parishes in Transition

Introduction

Ministry with parishes in transition is a privilege, full of surprises, blessings, and challenges. It also provides an opportunity for people to reflect on some fundamental questions that may not be asked when life is more settled. We have the chance to keep asking why, to help people uncover the deeper answer under the initial response.

The questions that follow, sorted into five categories, are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a helpful point of departure for those engaged in ministry with parishes in transition. For each set of questions, suggested resources are offered. The idea is to engage people in sustained conversation and reflection about these matters.

Ideally, the questions in this document are best explored before the start of a rector search process, so that parishioners have ample opportunity to reflect on their parish – its past, present, and future – and their ministry – how God is calling them to live the Gospel in this particular place and time. Such a process should also give search committee members greater clarity about how a new rector can best join the congregation in ministry.

Thoughts on how these materials can be used

The material below is flexible and can be used in a variety of ways. Some questions may be more relevant to a particular parish than others. Some resources can be used over several weeks or months, others lend themselves to a quiet day or workshop. So much depends on the culture and circumstances of the parish and how receptive people are to engaging questions of identity and purpose.

This document is meant to be used by those facilitating exploration of the questions below. Participants in gatherings would receive in advance the specific questions to be considered and an outline or schedule for a particular gathering. It would be helpful, at the start of each gathering, to ask, “What questions do you have?” In this way, people have the chance to clarify something discussed at a previous meeting or to refine a question so that it better suits the circumstances of the parish.

It’s important to keep in mind that people’s answers to these questions will evolve over time. For example, the spiritual landscape of a church soon after the departure of a long-time rector will be different from the landscape several months into the transition time.

There are several ways that this material could be presented:

- The material in this document could be the basis for a retreat for the Vestry and search committee that is open to all parishioners as well.
- The search consultant could lead the search committee in reflecting on one of the five sections, and the interim priest could lead the Vestry in considering the same section, so that both groups encounter the same material at roughly the same time.
- Some of the questions could be used as the basis for a parish-wide conversation.

However this material is used, it is essential that those facilitating the material offer it as an invitation to reflection rather than as a task to be checked off on the way to calling a new rector.

Prayer

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” (Romans 8.26-27)

The ministry of prayer is essential to the entire parish. We have an opportunity to help people deepen their prayer by introducing different ways to pray / spiritual practices. We also want to encourage parishioners to lay a foundation of prayer for the new rector.

- What is the place of prayer in your life and in the life of the congregation? How might it be deepened?
- What are you anxious about in this interim time? How can you pray about it?
- What are your hopes and dreams in this interim time? How can you pray about them?
- How might God be speaking to us individually and as a parish through Scripture?
- What gifts might God give us if we surrendered our anxiety about finding the right rector and claimed the truth that God is the center of our parish?

Resources

- *You Are Already Praying* (Cathy George)
- Richard Rohr’s works and his Center for Action and Contemplation (<https://cac.org>)
- SSJE and Bethany House
- Daily Office online – www.missionstclare.com

- *The Story: Read the Bible as One Seamless Story from Beginning to End* (Zondervan; Ben Irwin, ed.) – a 400-page abridgement of the Bible, divided into 31 chapters
- The Bible Challenge (www.thecenterforbiblicalstudies.org)

Church

“Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?” (from The Baptismal Covenant in *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 304)

Before focusing on the gifts, challenges, and needs of a particular parish, it would be fruitful to explore what a church is. The interim time is also perfect for a solid review of the polity and worship of The Episcopal Church, especially as many parishioners were raised in different traditions.

- What does it mean to be a church?
- What can we learn about the church from the Bible?
- What does it mean to be the church today, when religion is now a choice rather than the expected thing to do?
- What are the unique gifts of The Episcopal Church? How is it organized for ministry?
- How are we bigger than our parish?
- What does it mean to move from another denomination to The Episcopal Church?

Resources

- Welcome to the Episcopal Church Series (Christopher Webber, Vicki Black, Peter Wenner)
 - *Welcome to the Episcopal Church*
 - *Welcome to Sunday*
 - *Welcome to the Bible*
 - *Welcome to the Book of Common Prayer*
 - *Welcome to the Church Year*
 - *Welcome to Anglican Spiritual Traditions*
 - *Welcome to the Christian Faith*
- *The Episcopal Way (Church's Teachings for a Changing World: Volume 1)* (Eric Law and Stephanie Spellers)
- *A People Called Episcopalians: A Brief Introduction to Our Peculiar Way of Life* (John Westerhoff)
- *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity* (Dwight Zscheile)

Ministry

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” (1 Corinthians 12.4-6)

Some parishioners may assume that ministry is something that only clergy do. Some may also have very little idea of what the rector does, and yet assume that the rector is responsible for inspiring parishioners and attracting people to the congregation. A time of transition, then, is ripe for engaging parishioners in reflecting on what it means to be a member of the body of Christ. As the call to ministry is rooted in baptism, not in ordination, a transition provides an opportunity to explore the “varieties of gifts and services” that the Spirit has given parishioners. It is also essential to deal with the projections and expectations that clergy often bear and to offer a realistic understanding of what parish priests do.

- What does it mean to be a Christian?
- What are the responsibilities of every Christian?
- What responsibilities do Christians have to their parish?
- What is ministry?
- What does a rector do?
- What expectations do you have for a new rector?
- What are reasonable expectations for a rector?
- Do you want your rector to challenge you? To comfort you? To teach you? Is there one that is most important for you?
- Are you calling a rector primarily to help you maintain an institution? To equip you for ministry? To help move the parish forward? All of these?

Resources

- “Areas of Parish Mutual Ministry” (www.diomass.org / Clergy Deployment & Transition Ministry / Compensation & Benefits Resources for Congregations / Mutual Ministry Review Supplement) – sorts through what work must be done by a priest and what can be done by parishioners
- An Outline of the Faith: The Ministry (p. 855 ff.) in *The Book of Common Prayer*
- Canons of The Episcopal Church

Parish

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every

ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love." (Ephesians 4.15-16)

Taking time to delve deeply into the unfolding history of the parish – where they've been, where they are now, where they want to go – will lend clarity to the formal discernment process. Letting the past, present, and future come into focus will help ensure a "truer" parish profile and provide a solid basis for talking with rector candidates.

- What story do you tell about your parish? What is the narrative of your parish?
- What are the major milestones and events in your parish's history? What do they mean? How has God used them?
- Is there anything in your history as a parish that especially helps your progress on the journey? How could you use this strength intentionally during this time of transition?
- Is there anything in your history as a parish that might hinder your progress on the journey? If so, how do you wish things had been different? What do you need to move forward?
- Imagine your parish five years, ten years, even twenty-five years from now. What do you hope to be doing by way of worship, outreach, education, etc.? What resources do you need to make this vision a reality? What might you need to let go of?
- Is your parish's current approach to ministry sustainable? How could you increase the sustainability and vitality of your parish?
- Are there issues in the "psychology" of the parish that are influencing behavior in the parish and the direction the parish is taking?
- Do you see new leadership emerging in the parish? Are there areas of the parish that are ripe for new leadership?
- Are there unhealthy patterns of communication in your parish? If so, what is needed in order to resolve them?
- What has been your experience of transition?
- What is the joy and the passion of your parish?

Resources

- Appreciative Inquiry / Clergy Leadership Institute (www.clergyleadership.com)
- Congregational Development: Resources for Parish Viability and Vitality (www.congregationaldevelopment.com)
- Alban Institute resources (<http://alban.org>)

Discernment

"And when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left, your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way; walk in it.'" (Isaiah 30.21)

We can help people to think about and to practice discernment before the formal discernment process begins. The work that people do in the preceding areas – Prayer, Church, Ministry, Parish – will also provide some common ground for discernment.

- How do we know the difference between God's will and our will?
- If discernment is seeing as God sees, how is God inviting us to see in a new way?
- Where is God moving right now in our parish?

Resources

- *Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church* (Danny E. Morris & Charles M. Olsen)
- *Listening Hearts: Discerning Call in Community* (Suzanne Farnham, Joseph Gill, R. Taylor McLean, Susan Ward)
- *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (Parker Palmer)
- SSJE and Bethany House

Rector Search Consultant Role and Agreement

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Rector Search Consultant Role and Agreement

The search consultant is engaged by the parish vestry but is assigned by and accountable to the bishop's office through the Office for Transition Ministry (OTM) for the search process. S/he meets with members of the vestry at the beginning of the search process, explaining her/his role in the process. Thereafter s/he works primarily with the search committee members and guides them through the search.

Specifically, the consultant works with the search committee to help plan and design protocols for the search. S/he helps review and comments on the parish profile and OTM community portfolio. S/he helps compile and interpret data and to put together the TMC Open Position Form. S/he helps develop interview questions and a design for the interview process.

The search consultant serves as the search committee's principal link with the OTM. Often the interim priest plays a significant advisory role in the process.

The OTM strongly recommends that communications be as open as discretion allows throughout the search process, with frequent updates to all participants and the congregation. Emails among the search consultant, search committee, interim priest, and OTM should be generously cc'ed. This practice will make for fewer surprises and a smoother transition.

The parish is responsible for the fees paid to the consultant and must make an arrangement with the consultant for regular payment. If the cost of the consultant will place an undue burden on the congregation, the senior warden is encouraged to contact the bishop's office, through the OTM. The search consultant's fee is negotiated with the vestry; it can be \$75 per session, or a flat rate fee for the entire process, plus travel at the IRS mileage reimbursement rate.

Parish_____City_____

Warden Name_____Consultant Name_____

Warden Signature_____Consultant Signature_____

Date___/___/___

Date___/___/___

Search Committee Job Description

Formation of the Search Committee

The Search Committee is a creation of the Vestry and works for and on behalf of the Vestry. The Committee should be formed shortly after the previous clergy leaves the parish. The entire Vestry appoints members to the Search Committee. It is important to keep in mind that in accordance with the canons of the church, only the Vestry can elect the Rector and the Wardens issue a call and then only with the approval of the Bishop. However, the parish by-laws should be consulted before the charge is given to the Search Committee for process conformity purposes.

Composition of the Search Committee

The Search Committee should be as broadly representative of the parish as possible in a manner carefully selected by the Vestry. It should be made clear to the congregation that, though volunteers for the Committee are given careful consideration, because balance of the Committee is so crucial to the search process, volunteers may or may not be appointed. **It is not appropriate for staff or other clergy to serve on the Search Committee.**

The chair of the Search Committee may be designated by the Vestry or elected by the Committee itself. As a rule, the warden should not serve on the Search Committee since all their energies should be devoted to keeping the church going during the interim period. They may attend meetings as non-voting if they so choose. A Search Committee is normally somewhere between 8-12 persons. At least one Vestry member (often two) whose term will extend through the transition time should be appointed to serve on the Search Committee in order to act as liaison and information link between the two bodies.

Desired Characteristics of Search Committee Members

In the body of Christ, no one member possesses all the gifts: rather we need one another. Likewise, no one Search Committee member will have all the desired characteristics, but together we can discern the will of God for the community. Here are some desirable characteristics for all Search Committee members:

- Good organizational skills (Essential for the Chair of the Committee)
- Team player
- Person of prayer
- Member in good standing (attends church regularly, giver of record, gives of time and talent)
- Willing to work for the good of the church and not partisanship
- No hidden agendas
- Can maintain confidentiality

Note: The conduct of a search for new clergy differs in many ways from the traditional executive corporate search. Therefore, it is not desirable for the Search Committee to adopt a corporate search

model during its discernment and deliberations. By the same token, vestries should resist the temptation to stack the Committee with persons having human resources or executive search backgrounds.

Job description for the Search Committee

The job description for this committee is detailed in the Sample Charge from The Vestry to the Search Committee, See Appendix K below.

Sample Charge from the Vestry to the Search Committee

The following letter of understanding between the Vestry and Search Committee communicates the objectives and responsibilities of the Search Committee in the filling of the Rector position at _____ Episcopal Church in _____, Massachusetts.

The Vestry and Wardens are the formal leadership of the parish in the absence of a Rector. It is their responsibility to:

- Work with the Congregational Business Consultant to perform the Transition Review
- Secure the services of clergy during the interim time
- Engage a Search Consultant as recommended by the Office for Transition Ministry to assist in the search process
- Appoint and charge a Search Committee
- Provide both a scope and a budget for the search
- Maintain the congregation while the search is being conducted
- Develop a salary and housing package for the new rector
- Ultimately elect and call a new rector
- Negotiate the package and Letter of Agreement with the new rector

The Vestry requests that the Search Committee assume the following responsibilities on behalf of the Vestry:

- Elect Search Committee leadership, including a Chair and Vice-Chair (or Co-chairs), Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and a Chaplain
- Work with the Diocesan Search Consultant contracted by the Vestry
- Determine and employ appropriate group dynamics exercises in order to build a sense of community and common purpose, strengthen knowledge of each other and develop strong communication levels
- Establish, and revise periodically as necessary, a projected timetable for fulfillment of the Search Committee's responsibilities
- Determine the format for and conduct a self-study of the congregation
- Develop a parish profile which briefly describes the parish – its passions, hope and dream for the future and gifts for ministry desired in a new rector.
- Complete the Community Portfolio and upload it on OTM website and the Transition Ministry Conference Newsletter form
- Develop and implement a process for screening candidates including written questions, reference checks, telephone interviews, visits and interviews with final candidates
- Develop a uniform system of rating and ranking candidates
- Communicate the progress of the Search Committee regularly to the parish through announcements, bulletins and newsletter articles
- Communicate with candidates promptly their status in the process
- Recommend one (1) final candidate to the Vestry for election and call*

* The procedure for electing a new rector may vary from parish to parish. The parish By-laws should be consulted during the process of creating the letter of understanding/Charge.

Sample Liturgy for Commissioning Search Committee

The Congregation, being seated, the celebrant stands in full view of the people. The Wardens and candidates stand facing the Celebrant.

Warden: I present to you these persons to be admitted to the ministry of the Search Committee.

The Celebrant says the following words:

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we are all baptized by the one spirit into one Body, and given gifts for a variety of ministries for the common good. Our purpose is to commission these persons in the Name of God and of this congregation to a special ministry to which they are called.

The Celebrant asks the warden:

Are these persons you are to present prepared by a commitment to Christ as Lord, by regular attendance at worship, and by the knowledge of their duties, to exercise their ministry to the honor of God, and the well-being of God's church?

Warden: I believe they are.

Celebrant: You have been called to a special ministry in this congregation: to serve on Search Committee. Will you, as long as you are engaged in this work, perform it with diligence?

Candidates: I will.

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Eternal God, the foundation of all wisdom and the source of all courage: enlighten with your grace the Search Committee of this congregation, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsel that in all things they may seek your glory and promote the mission of your Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

In the Name of God and of this congregation I commission you as members of the Search Committee of _____ Church.

Search Options

In the absence of the Rector, the Wardens and Vestry are the formal and canonical leadership of the congregation during the interim period; as such, they hold the responsibility of choosing a course of action best suited to their particular parish and situation. After the Rector has announced his/her departure, the DOTM explores the various search options and shares with the Vestry (and Congregation if necessary) an overview of the search process as well. Then the Vestry determines an appropriate search option to take. The following are available search options:

- a. **Full search** (as outlined in this document)
- b. **Short list Search:** After the parish completes its self-study which ultimately produces the Parish Profile and the Community Portfolio and has completed its Transition Review (**see Appendix R**), the Bishop, through the OTM, names three or four candidates for the search committee to consider, thus eliminating the steps of sorting through the papers of many prospective candidates. It is in fact the task of the OTM in this instance to carry out the extensive groundwork of narrowing the field, and that process, done carefully and sensitively, takes time. Upon reception of the short list (containing 3–10 names, depending on an agreement with the vestry), the committee conducts its work as it would normally, in reviewing and—as required with a short list—interviewing the candidates. If a rector is not called as a result of the discernment process, the congregation may ask for more names or choose one of the other search options.
- c. **Appointment of a Priest-in-Charge**, allowing a period of stability to occur in parish life which usually lasts three years.

Search Process Timeline

Self-Study (Retreat to develop the process and the materials and writing of the parish profile) 2 – 3 months

Receiving Names 2 – 4 months

Reading Applications
Narrowing the Field
Choosing Long List 2 – 3 months

Phone Interviews
Deployment check
Choosing Short List 1 ½ – 3 months

Interviews and Final Selection 2 – 3 months

Time between call and arrival of new Rector 2 – 3 months

Total Time 11 – 18 months

Each parish moves at its own pace and according to its own process of discernment; this timetable is suggested only as an aid in gauging progress and holding to a certain schedule.

Sample Budget for Search Process

The DOTM recommends that parishes set aside some money years in advance for new rector call so not so much of a drain on the budget during the search year.

Search Consultant (Retained for a fee to be negotiated with the Vestry; it can be \$750-\$850 or \$150/session or between \$ 800 and \$1,500 & travel @ IRS mileage reimbursement \$0.565 per mile [2013])

Telephone and Fax costs \$ 200

Oxford Document Background checks (\$160 per person \$ 480

Visits to Candidates \$ 500 - \$?*

Final Candidates' Visits to Parish \$ 200 - 500*

Moving Expenses of New Rector \$3,000 –\$12,000 *

Celebration of New Ministry + Transition Dinners/Parties \$ 300?

* These figures are estimates only and vary greatly depending on the size of the parish and how wide the search is extended geographically in the final stages. A total search budget might range from \$2,000 to \$20,000.

Parish Profile Outline

Every parish story is different; hence every profile will reflect those differences and have its unique style. Some churches find carrying a theme throughout helps them to focus their story, but this is not necessary. The Search Committee should decide the right format of the profile (a brief – 1 – 2 page profile or the traditional multi-page booklet) that will help them to meet the needs and expectations detailed in their job description. Additional back up materials may be placed on the parish website. The essential parts of any profile should include:

Introduction: **Who we are**, including a brief history of the parish.

Where we are located: A brief geographical and demographic overview of the community in which the church is located.

Our Mission & Ministry: An overview of the church's mission goals, visions and dreams. More detailed information about the buildings and property, including photographs, can be put on the web site.

A statement about the **Diocesan Mission**, which can be found on the web site at <http://www.diomass.org/content/our-mission>.

A statement of financial information about the parish.

Finally a statement about the kind of person the parish is searching for to be a companion with them in their journey toward fulfilling their mission and vision, including leadership style, clergy gifts for ministry sought by the parish and other expectations and challenges for the new rector.

A profile of the parish may be posted on the parish's website.

Interviews, Interviewing and Various Sample Questions

The most important aspect of the interview process is to be clear about what one hopes to learn in asking a question. In the first stage, the written questions are used to cull the initial list down to something more manageable, the aim is to get an accurate and comprehensive snapshot of the person. During a phone interview, the aim is greater depth into who the person is and the suitability of that person as a match for the parish.

Finally, when interviewing the finalists face to face, the questions need to be evidence-based: specific examples. In other words, what has the person done in the various areas that are important to the parish? The best indicator of what a person will do is what that person has done. In any interview, avoid asking questions that can be answered by a single word, generally "yes" or "no". Rather ask open-ended questions that ask for specific examples of past job behavior. Try not to give the person the answer you are asking for in the context of the question. In other words if you are a parish with a strong youth component, don't say, "We have a lot of young people in our parish and are seeking someone to build our youth programs. Tell us, how do you feel about young people?" But instead try to have them tell you what you want to know without telling them what you want.

After asking a question, take the time to listen. The longer one listens, the more evidence one is able to gather. Let the candidates talk first. Taking time to share concerns and issues in the parish comes only after the candidate has had his/her opportunity to talk about him/herself, her/his ministry, his/her hopes and dreams.

These questions are all just sample ideas. The Search Committee in consultation with the Search Consultant will no doubt come up with the questions they feel are appropriate to the particular parish, but these are offered to provide a place to start in the thinking process.

Sample Written Questions (Use no more than 4 – 5)

- In the past 5 years of your ministry, what is the accomplishment of which you are most proud?
- What drew you to the priesthood?
- What do you see as your role in church growth and stewardship?
- What leads you to consider a new position at this time?
- How do you continue to peel back the layers of discovery and Christian growth in the midst of your work right now?
- How do you bring your own brokenness into your ministry?

- Include at least one question based on past performance relevant to the needs of the particular parish i.e. Please tell us about a time when.....

Sample Questions for Phone Interviews

- Please comment on our profile. Do you see something missing that is important in your ministry? Is there something present that would be a challenge to you?
- What do you do for fun? Or, what book is by the side of your bed right now?
- What has brought you the greatest joy in your ministry? What do you enjoy the least?
- Describe a situation in which theological difference led to conflict in your parish. What did you do to handle the situation?
- When you first came to your present parish, if you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?
- Have you seen our Diocesan Mission strategy on the DioMass website? Please comment.
- How do you handle the balance between vocation and home life?
- Describe your prayer life/spiritual discipline.
- Describe your sermons. How do you prepare them, what kinds of topics do you address, what is the place of the Bible, current events, your own experiences?
- How would you describe your leadership style, with staff, Vestry, parishioners, the community?
- Tell us about your involvement in community and Diocesan activities.

Sample Questions for Finalists

- (This is the most important question of all and should be asked of all final candidates!) Tell me about a time in your ministry when you felt most alive, most energized, most excited. What was this time, who was involved and why does this particular incident stand out?
- Tell us about a time when things weren't going well
- In the past 3 years has your parish reached its stewardship goals, and if not, why not? What is your theology of stewardship and how do you see your role?
- What would you like to tell us about yourself that will help us know you better? / What can we tell you about us?

- One of the particular areas for growth at _____ is _____. Tell us how you have addressed this in other parishes in which you have served.
- Having come this far on your journey with us, what excites you about coming here? What do you think you could bring us?
- MA is somewhat unusual in that we have many ordained gay and lesbian priests. How would you reply to a parishioner questioning the election of a gay bishop?
- It has been said there are two distinct styles of ministry leadership: ministry developer and ministry deliverer. Which would you say is your style of leadership and what evidence can you offer to support this?

Grounds Rules for Finalists' Visits to Parish

- Do remember that this time is a two- way interview. The candidate (and his or her family) is as interested in finding out about you as you are about him/her.
- Do contact the Bishop's Office as early as possible to set up face to face meetings with the Bishop. Scheduling these meetings can require up to a month in lead time. Please remember to call before you make travel arrangements for out of town finalists.
- Do plan to show the candidate the surrounding area and some of the local high spots.
- Do allow for some "down time" for the candidate to reflect on his/her experience in your parish.
- Decide in advance with whom the candidate should meet (i.e., search committee only, search committee & vestry etc.) and be consistent. Candidates and church staff, including the Interim, should also have some time to meet each other as well, if possible.
- Do take care of all logistics prior to the candidate's arrival. Arrange for his/her pick-up at the airport, book (and pre-pay) a hotel room, make arrangements for the family to visit the local school (if appropriate) etc.

Covenant of Ministry Model for a Rector

Please customize this document as much as you can!

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Rector’s and Congregation’s Covenant of Ministry

This Covenant of Ministry is intended to be negotiated after the Vestry has extended the initial call to the Rector and it should be reviewed annually. Negotiations will be facilitated by the Office of Transition Ministry. The model contains recommended provisions that may be varied according to the particular facts and circumstances. For a part-time Rector, the various sections should be prorated on the basis of a fraction (or percentage), e.g., half-time, three quarters time, etc. Consult the current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensations and Benefits.

Rector’s and Congregation’s Covenant of Ministry

BETWEEN

The Rev. _____ and The Vestry of _____ Church, _____, Massachusetts, which has elected [him/her] to be Rector with the understanding that [his/her] rectorship shall continue until dissolved by mutual consent and affirmed by the Bishop or by arbitration and decision as provided by Title III, Canon 9 or Title IV of the Episcopal Church.

The relationship between a Rector and a Vestry is unique, and it evolves within a larger covenant of mutual trust and ministry to each other. The purpose of this Covenant of Ministry is to strengthen that relationship by clarifying some of the practical arrangements and to reduce later misunderstandings.

Section A – COMPENSATION

1. The Rector's salary will be \$ _____ per annum commencing on or about _____. It will be reviewed annually.

The parties agree that the Rector’s Total Clergy Compensation (“TCC”) will equal \$ _____, including the amount of the Housing Allowance, if applicable, and _____.¹⁶

¹⁶ Specify other compensation received by the Rector that may be considered part of TCC. Consult the current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.

If in the event of significant budget deficits the vestry votes to reduce the salary of the Rector, any such reduction shall not become effective for at least six months after the vestry vote has been taken and after the Rector has been notified of the vote. Any such reduction shall be accompanied by an appropriate reduction in the % time to be worked by the Rector and by such other amendments and additions to the agreement as shall be negotiated between the parties at the time.

2. Housing¹⁷[**Option A** - Rector will not live in a Rectory]

The Vestry agrees to adopt annually the necessary resolution required by the Internal Revenue Service designating that portion of the TCC shown above as a Housing Allowance within the meaning of Section 1.107 of the IRS Code.¹⁸

[**Option B** - Rector will be living in a Rectory]

The Rector and [his/her] family will live in the church-owned Rectory. The Vestry will be responsible for the following expenses:

- (a) Insurance (and property taxes, if any) on the property;
- (b) Maintenance or replacement of the following appliances:
[Specify, such as refrigerator, dishwasher, etc.];
- (c) Maintenance of the structure(s), renovations or capital improvements;
- (d) [Specify other responsibilities, such as snow and leaf removal, etc.].

The Rector and [his/her] family are responsible for good stewardship in regard to the care of the Rectory and will remain responsible for the general care and upkeep such as [specify particular responsibilities].¹⁹

The Rector is expected to present an annual report to the Vestry on the condition of the Rectory, with particular attention to items requiring maintenance.

The Vestry agrees to adopt annually the necessary resolution required by the Internal Revenue Service designating that portion of the TCC shown above as a Housing Allowance within the meaning of Section 1.107 of the IRS Code.

¹⁷ The model contains two options relative to housing. "Option A" applies to those situations where the Rector will not live in a Rectory. "Option B" applies to those situations where the Rector will live in a church-provided Rectory.

¹⁸ The amount of the TCC designated as a Housing Allowance should be the lesser of (1) the fair rental value for the housing: including furnishings and appurtenances (such as garage) and utilities or (2) the amount the Rector expects to spend on housing.

¹⁹ The specific responsibilities of the Vestry and Rector will depend on the particular facts and circumstances. Once these are determined, they should be delineated with as much specificity as possible.

3. [Optional] Other Compensation: [Specify, e.g., SECA allowance, equity allowance, etc.].²⁰

Section B – PREMIUMS

2. The Vestry will pay the following premiums as required:
- (c) Pension premiums as required by the Church Pension Group based on the Rector's TCC;
 - (d) The cost of Health Insurance premiums [specify whether individual or family coverage, which includes domestic partners, where applicable] according to the percentage prescribed by diocesan policy.
2. The Vestry will provide the following additional benefits [specify other benefits, e.g., dental, other insurance, life insurance for clergy not eligible for pension, etc. and allocation of premiums].
3. In the event of a total and permanent disability of the Rector, or in the case of the death of the Rector, the following agreements apply:
- (a) Regarding housing: _____month(s) in Rectory or _____month(s) Housing Allowance, to be negotiated by the Vestry and the Rector, or Rector's spouse or other designee.
 - (b) Regarding compensation (in the event of permanent disability of the Rector); _____month(s) salary per year of service, up to a maximum of _____ month(s).

Section C – EXPENSES

The Vestry agrees to pay for the following expenses incurred by the Rector in fulfilling [his/her] professional duties:

1. Moving: The cost of moving the Rector's family and household goods when the initial call has been accepted.
2. Travel: The Vestry agrees to provide the Rector with _____²¹

[Option A: reimbursement for all church-related automobile travel at the current rate established by the IRS.]

²⁰ Since a Rector while living in a church-provided Rectory will not build any equity in a home, a number of Vestries have agreed to fund an equity allowance through contributions to a tax sheltered 403(b) plan. Such other compensation is includable as TCC.

²¹ Specify whether the Rector will receive (1) travel reimbursement and, if so, at IRS rate, (2) an annual allowance or (3) an automobile. In any case, the Rector will submit the expense reimbursement form. Note IRS mileage reimbursement in 2013 is \$.565/mile

[Option B: a travel allowance of \$_____per year adjusted annually and included in the annual budget for all church-related automobile travel.]

[Option C: an automobile for purposes of church-related travel upon such terms as the Vestry and the Rector shall determine.]

3. Communications: To provide for a computer/laptop/pad, internet connection and a telephone in the Rector's office and a cell phone if needed. All postage for church business will be included in the parish budget.
4. Office: All necessary office furniture, equipment and supplies (computer, lap top, pad, etc.) will be paid by the parish, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
5. Discretionary Fund: A fund will be provided for charities and expenditures at the discretion of the Rector in accordance with the Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
6. Guests and Hospitality: The Rector will be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of hospitality and entertainment on behalf of the parish, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
7. Professional Fees: Dues of the Rector to the Massachusetts Episcopal Clergy Association and other professional associations, the cost of the annual Clergy Conference with the bishops, and the cost of professional periodicals, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
8. Continuing Education: The amount of \$_____ annually to support the Rector's continuing education and will be established in the annual budget. The Rector is expected to make an annual report to the Vestry and/or parish on his continuing education work.
9. The cost of pulpit supply and pastoral services: when the Rector is absent from the parish; the amount to be established in the annual budget.

Section D - LEAVE TIME²²

The Vestry agrees that the Rector shall have the following periods of leave at full pay:

1. _____ month(s) of vacation per year, including Sundays, plus[_____].²³
2. _____ weeks per year (in addition to vacation time) for continuing education and career development.

²² Currently, one month of vacation per year and one week of continuing education/career development per year are the recommended minimum. Additional time off for clergy retreat is strongly encouraged.

²³ Specify additional leave, e.g., amount of time after Christmas, amount of time after Easter and amount of other time as agreed upon with the Vestry.

3. Sabbatical Leave: The Priest is eligible for 3 months of sabbatical leave for every 5 years of parish ministry, for the purpose of renewal, study, travel, and continued spiritual growth. [*Congregations may wish to adapt this time frame to fit their needs, or the needs of their clergy. For example, a Priest may wish to have a longer leave after a longer number of years of service, or may wish to have shorter leaves after fewer years.*] An amount of \$_____per annum will be deposited in an account established for sabbatical preparedness.

Applications for diocesan support from the bishop's Clergy Sabbatical Program can be obtained from the Chair of the Sabbatical Committee. Application materials are also available for download from the web: <http://www.diomass.org/content/clergy-sabbatical-program>.

Planning for the Priest's sabbatical shall begin at least nine months prior to the first day of the leave. The Priest and Vestry shall agree to the form this planning shall take. Both the Priest and Vestry will participate in this planning, which shall include financial and activity information about the sabbatical, provision for congregational life and continuity, and clergy support during the Priest's absence.

4. [Specify other leaves.]²⁴

Section E - SUPPLEMENTARY COMPENSATION

The disposition of wedding, funeral and other fees will be determined in conjunction with the Vestry and may be used to fund the Discretionary Fund.

The following understanding has been reached between the Rector and the Vestry concerning the income the Rector may receive performing [specify].

Section F - USE OF BUILDINGS

In addition to his/her use and administration of parish buildings for the discharge of his/her duties, the Rector shall have the right to grant use of the buildings to individuals or groups from outside the parish under general conditions to be determined in conjunction with the Vestry.

Section G - REGULAR PARISH GOAL SETTING

- a) Meeting between the Rector and the Wardens are required at least twice a month with encouragement to meet more often in periods and under circumstances where extra meetings would be helpful.

²⁴ Other such leave may include parental leave in the event of childbirth or adoption. Consult current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.

b) The Rector and Vestry will review the mutual ministry of the parish, vestry, and clergy on or about _____

_____ (in no event more than one (1) year) from the Rector's assumption of his/her duties on the basis of goals and expectations set at the time of the call of the new Rector. These initial goals and expectations are to be included in the Covenant of Ministry document and will be forwarded to the Bishop through the Office of Transition Ministry to be reviewed and signed by the Bishop. Subsequently, periodic reviews (every year or two years) will be scheduled. These reviews for the purpose of goal-setting will cover the following items:

1. What are the mission and goals of the parish as presently understood?
 2. What are the roles and tasks of the parish leaders (Rector, Vestry members, and others) in accomplishing the goals?
 3. How well have the previously set goals been met?
 4. What goals and expectations will be set for the next period in the life of the parish?
- c) The Rector is expected and encouraged to participate in regional, diocesan and Episcopal Church responsibilities as well as community endeavors. Further, time given to such work shall be understood as an integral part of the Rector's ministry in the parish.

Finally, this Covenant of Ministry will be revised as desired with the mutual consent of Rector and Vestry, and at any rate it shall be reviewed and revised no later than _____. The Bishop will review and sign the revised Covenant of Ministry.

Section H—TRANSITION REVIEW

The Rector was shown and is fully aware of the content of the Transition Review Report performed by _____ before the call was extended to him/her.

Section I – STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with diocesan and Episcopal Church principles, this congregation will not discriminate on grounds of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability.²⁵

PARISH SIGNATURES

Date: _____ Rector: _____

²⁵ Since its 2001 Report to Convention, the Compensation and Benefits Committee has included this option to reflect the concerns of both the Diocese of Massachusetts and Episcopal Church as reflected in a variety of resolutions presented in their respective conventions.

Approved by the Vestry on (date): _____

Warden: _____

Warden _____

Clerk _____

Reviewed by the Office of Transition Ministry

Date: _____

By: _____

BISHOP'S SIGNATURE

Reviewed by the Bishop:

Date: _____ Bishop: _____

Farewell Liturgy for Interim Ministry

Following the post-communion prayer, the Interim Priest kneels at the communion rail. All come forward to lay hands on him/her, or on the shoulder of the person in front of you. When all are in place, the Sr. Warden says,

N, you have been among us as priest through the period of our search for a new Rector. You have been a faithful steward to us in bringing God's word and sacraments, in tending to our spiritual needs through prayer and teaching, and in your pastoral leadership of this parish.

The Jr. Warden continues,

We give thanks to God for your presence among us and pray for God's abundant blessings upon you as you go forth from here in your continued ministry to Christ and the Church.

The Sr. Warden asks the congregation,

My sisters and brothers, do you recognize and accept the conclusion of this pastoral relationship?

People: We do

Priest:

Let us pray. O God, you have bound us together for a time as clergy and people to work for the advancement of your kingdom in this place. We give you humble and hearty thanks for the ministry which we have shared in the time now past. We thank you for your never-failing presence with us through these years, and for the deeper knowledge of you and of each other which we have attained. We thank you for those who have been joined to this part of Christ's family through baptism. We thank you for opening our hearts and minds again and again to your Word, and for feeding us abundantly with the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of your Son.

People:

Gracious God, be with N. as he/she leaves, grant that all of us, by drawing ever nearer to you, may always be close to each other in the communion of your saints. All this we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen

The Departing Interim gives the final blessing

To Welcome the New Rector

- Have the rector's office cleaned, including the drapes and carpet where appropriate
- If there is a closet, see that it is emptied, cleaned out and has some hangers
- If there is a storage closet, have it cleaned out
- Have desks, shelves and cupboards emptied, and wiped down, and windows and windowsills washed
- Have a set of keys ready that will include a master key, keys to the main office, staff offices and the sacristy
- Prepare a folder that includes the following information:
 1. Current membership list and the most recent pictorial directory if there is one
 2. A roster of vestry members
 3. A copy of the budget and minutes of the last three vestry meetings
 4. A directory of ministries if there is one
 5. Letters of agreement for current staff members and their job description
 6. A schedule and list of the duties of office volunteers
 7. A copy of any policies, procedures, or personnel guidelines
 8. A copy of the parish bylaws and diocesan canons
 9. The last two or three issues of the parish newsletter, weekly news bulletin and Sunday service leaflet
 10. A roster of active committees
 11. A map of the area
 12. If there are guilds for men or women or other groups that meet regularly, provide a description of their activities and meeting schedule and their expectations of the rector
 13. A calendar with key dates marked of upcoming parish events and what is expected of the rector
- Assemble any passwords the rector will need such as those to a computer, security system, or special accounts.
- Any liturgical customary or instruction manual for Eucharistic visitors, acolytes, altar guild, chalice bearers, lectors and intercessors along with current Sunday schedules
- Offer a tour of the building
- Offer to arrange lunch with a neighboring priest and/or the dean who can provide information on the Deanery, clergy meetings, MECA (Massachusetts Episcopal Clergy Association), Diocesan Convention dates, clergy days and other ecclesiastical matters

Transition Review

Objective

Before a new priest is called by a Parish, the Bishop requires a review of the business affairs of that parish. This review helps the parish confirm its ability to compensate a new clergyperson at the percent time that the parish desires. In addition, the process encourages a strong relationship between the diocesan consultants who conduct the Transition Review, so that they can be a resource to the parish, going forward.

Audience

The audiences for the Transition Review process are **the parish leadership, the Diocese, and, very importantly, the clergy considering employment by the parish.** The Transition Review Report will be useful to all three, though each will have a slightly different use for the information. The Report will assist parish leadership in assessing its financial health and ability to compensate new clergy. It will assist the Bishop in making the decision to endorse the parish's plans. Finally, it will aid the potential clergyperson in his/her discernment of a call, by providing a full report of the business affairs of the parish. The Vestry shares the Transition Review Report with the priest during negotiations of the compensation package and the Letter of Agreement.

Steps

The Director of Transition Ministry initiates the process by sending an email (or other communication) to the congregation's leadership, introducing the appointed consultant and briefly explaining the nature of the ministry that consultants are called to do. The Director of Transition Ministry also sends a copy of the email to the appointed consultant and the Consultants Coordinator. The consultant then contacts the warden(s) of the parish, reiterates what he/she will be doing, and sets up a meeting to get the process started.

The consultant usually asks the parish leaders to assemble a set of documents in advance of their first meeting, namely, the **Parochial Report, the Audit Report, the most recent bank, brokerage, and investment statements, the Balance Sheet, the last few years' income statements, and the most recent Treasurer's Report to the Vestry.** The leaders should have these documents available for the meeting or, better yet, forward them to the consultant in advance.

The first meeting should build and trust confidence between the consultant and the congregational leaders so that the balance of the process will go smoothly. A tour of the property (including the rectory and any other outbuildings if applicable) is appropriate. At this point, it is important that parish leaders familiarize themselves with diocesan compensation guidelines, because the Vestry will calculate the "Total Clergy Compensation" (TCC), using these guidelines, and then use the resulting calculation in salary and benefits negotiations with the incoming priest. The diocesan compensation guidelines are included in the annual report of the Compensation and Benefits Committee and can be found on the diocesan website at <http://www.diomass.org/inside/docs/compensation-benefits-resources-parishes>.

In the review process, the consultant will pay particular attention to the draw from the congregation's endowment. If the congregation is drawing more than 4% (or so), it is depleting its resources significantly.

The consultant also will check to see that restricted funds are being used properly.

Ultimately, after one or more sessions, the Transition Review will address the following questions:

1. Is the parish in compliance with its administrative and financial obligations? If so,
 - a. Health Insurance payments are current
 - b. The Diocesan Assessment is current.
 - c. The latest Parochial Report is recorded at the diocese
 - d. Insurance (property/casualty) is adequate and paid currently
 - e. Pension payments are current
 - f. The parish Audit is current
 - g. Loan payments, to the diocese or other entities, are current
 - h. No other significant payables exist

2. Is the parish's infrastructure sufficient? If so,
 - a. The Treasurer and Financial Committees are capable
 - b. The congregation is using appropriate software
 - c. The congregation's banking and investment arrangements are sound
 - d. There are financial resources available for an emergency
 - e. The physical plant (including rectory and/or outbuildings) is in good shape

3. Can the parish support the level of clergy (full-time or part-time) that it plans to search for? If so,
 - a. The parish is properly computing the minimum and actual Total Clergy Compensation ("TCC"), using diocesan guidelines
 - b. The parish can afford this TCC over a period of years
 - c. The parish knows the cash effect of the proposed compensation (including fringe benefits that may not be in the TCC) and the secondary effects (e.g., reduced income from rental of a rectory)
 - d. The parish can afford the Search it is intending to conduct

4. Are there any "red flags" that warn of impending problems? Is there:
 - a. An unusual concentration of pledge income, with only a few pledgers?
 - b. An unusual amount of revenue from outside sources (e.g., rentals)?
 - c. An unusual number of important donors who are elderly?
 - d. An unusually high building cost/pledging unit (e.g., over \$1,000)?

- e. An unusually high ratio of sanctuary capacity to Average Sunday Attendance (ASA)?
- f. Any Property tax issues?
- g. An excessive draw (over 4% annually) from endowment funds?

Product (Transition Review Report)

After the product of this review has been approved by the Consultants Coordinator, the Bishop will review it and approve the plan to call new clergy. The Director of Transition Ministry will share this Transition Review with all potential candidates on the short list. As noted above, the vestry ultimately will share this Transition Review with the new clergy during the negotiation of the compensation package and the Letter of Agreement.

Covenant Ministry for a Priest-in-Charge

Please customize this document as much as you can!

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Priest-in-Charge’s and Congregation’s Covenant of Ministry

This Covenant of Ministry is intended to be negotiated after the Bishop has appointed the Priest-in-Charge and it should be reviewed annually. Negotiations will be facilitated by the Office of Transition Ministry. The model contains recommended provisions that may be varied according to the particular facts and circumstances. For a part-time Priest-in-Charge, the various sections should be prorated on the basis of a fraction (or percentage), e.g., half-time, three quarters time, etc. Consult the current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.

Priest-in-Charge’s and Congregation’s Covenant of Ministry

BETWEEN

The Rev. _____ and The Vestry of _____ Church, _____, Massachusetts, which has accepted [his/her] appointment by the Bishop to serve as the Priest-in-Charge. The Priest-in-Charge will serve at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop. The Priest-in-Charge may terminate this agreement on thirty day notice. The expectation is that the Priest-in-Charge will serve beginning on _____ and will serve for _____ months [years] at _____ hours per week subject to the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop. The parties agree that any changes in the terms and conditions of this agreement must first be approved by the Bishop.

As stated in the church Canons²⁶, "...[T]he Priest-in-Charge shall exercise the duties of Rector as outlined in Title III Canon 9.5, subject to the authority of the Bishop."

The Office of Transition Ministry will appoint a Priest-in-Charge Consultant who will serve as an advisor for the Priest-in-Charge, the Vestry and the Congregation during that period of transition. The relationship between a Priest-in-Charge and a Vestry is unique, and it evolves within a larger covenant of mutual trust and ministry to each other consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and this Diocese.

The purpose of this Covenant of Ministry is to strengthen that relationship by clarifying some of the practical arrangements.

Section A - COMPENSATION

1. The Priest’s-in-Charge salary will be \$_____per annum commencing on or about _____ and will be reviewed annually to keep the pace with the guidelines of Compensation and Benefits Committee.

The parties agree that the Total Clergy Compensation ("TCC") for the Priest-in-Charge will equal \$_____, including the amount of the Housing Allowance, if applicable, which corresponds to _____% of full-time based on current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.²⁷

If in the event of significant budget deficits the vestry votes to reduce the salary of the Rector, any such reduction shall not become effective for at least six months after the vestry vote has

²⁶ Title III Canon 9.3 Canons of the Episcopal Church

²⁷ Specify other compensation received by the Priest-in-Charge that may be considered part of TCC. Consult the current Diocesan Guidelines for Compensation and Benefits.

been taken and after the Rector has been notified of the vote. Any such reduction shall be accompanied by an appropriate reduction in the % time to be worked by the Rector and by such other amendments and additions to the agreement as shall be negotiated between the parties at the time.

2. Housing²⁸

[Option A - Priest-in-Charge will not live in a Rectory]

The Vestry agrees to adopt annually the necessary resolution required by the Internal Revenue Service designating that portion of the TCC shown above as a Housing Allowance within the meaning of Section 1.107 of the IRS Code.²⁹

[Option B - Priest-in-Charge will live in a Rectory]

The Priest-in-Charge and [his/her] family will live in the church-owned Rectory. The Vestry

will be responsible for the following expenses:

(a) Insurance (and property taxes, if any) on the property;

(b) Maintenance or replacement of some appliances;

(c) Maintenance of the structure(s), renovations or capital improvements;

(d) [Specify other responsibilities: e.g., snow and leaf removal, etc.].

The Priest-in-Charge and [his/her] family are responsible for good stewardship in regard to the care of the Rectory and will remain responsible for the general care and upkeep, such as [specify particular responsibilities].³⁰

The Priest-in-Charge is expected to present an annual report to the Vestry on the condition of the Rectory, with particular attention to items requiring maintenance.

The Vestry agrees to adopt annually the necessary resolution required by the Internal Revenue Service designating that portion of the TCC shown above as a Housing Allowance within the meaning of Section 1.107 of the IRS Code.

3. [Optional] Other Compensation: [Specify, e.g., SECA allowance, equity allowance, etc]³¹

²⁸The model contains two options relative to housing. "Option A" applies to those situations where the Priest-in-Charge will not live in a Rectory. "Option B" applies to those situations where the Priest-in-Charge will live in a church-provided Rectory.

²⁹The amount of the TCC designated as a Housing Allowance should be the lesser of (1) the fair rental value for the housing: including furnishings and appurtenances (such as garage) and utilities or (2) the amount the Priest-in-Charge expects to spend on housing.

³⁰The specific responsibilities of the Vestry and Priest-in-Charge will depend on the particular facts and circumstances. Once these are determined, they should be delineated with as much specificity as possible.

Section B-PREMIUMS

1. The Vestry will pay the following premiums as required:
 - (a) Pension premiums as required by the Church Pension Fund based on the Priest's-in-Charge TCC; and
 - (b) The cost of Health Insurance premiums [specify whether individual or family coverage, which includes domestic partners where applicable] according to the percentage prescribed by diocesan policy.

2. The Vestry will provide the following additional benefits [specify other benefits, e.g., dental, other insurance, life insurance for clergy not eligible for pension, etc. and allocation of premiums].

3. In the event of a total and permanent disability of the Priest-in-Charge, or in the case of the death of the Priest-in-Charge, the following agreements apply:
 - (a) Regarding housing: _____month(s) in Rectory or _____month(s) Housing Allowance, to be negotiated by the Vestry, Warden and the Priest-in-Charge, or Priest's-in-Charge spouse or other designee.
 - (b) Regarding compensation (in the event of permanent disability);
_____month(s) salary per _____ year of service, up to a maximum of _____month(s).

Section C - EXPENSES

The Vestry agrees to pay for the following expenses incurred by the Priest-in-Charge in fulfilling [his/her] professional duties:

1. Moving: The cost of moving the Priest's-in-Charge family and household goods once the appointment has been made and confirmed.

2. Travel: The Vestry agrees to reimburse the Priest-in-Charge for church-related travel at the current rate established by the IRS up to the amount specified in the budget.

3. Communications: To provide for a computer/laptop/pad, internet connection and a telephone in the office of the Priest-in-Charge and a cell phone if necessary. All postage for church business will be included in the parish budget.

4. Office: All necessary office furniture, equipment and supplies will be paid by the parish, the amount to be established in the annual budget.

5. Discretionary Fund: A fund will be provided for charities and expenditures at the discretion of the Priest-in-Charge in accordance with the Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds, the amount to be established in the annual budget.

6. Guests and Hospitality: The Priest-in-Charge will be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of hospitality and entertainment on behalf of the parish, the amount to be established in the annual budget.

³¹ Since a Priest-in-Charge while living in a church-provided Rectory will not build any equity in a home, a number of Vestries have agreed to fund an equity allowance through contributions to a tax sheltered 403(b) plan. Such other compensation is includable as TCC.

7. Professional Fees: Dues of the Priest-in-Charge to the Massachusetts Episcopal Clergy Association and other professional associations, the cost of the annual Clergy Conference with the bishops, and the cost of professional periodicals, the amount to be established in the annual budget.
8. Continuing Education: The amount of \$_____ annually to support continuing education for the Priest-in-Charge. The Priest-in-Charge is expected to make an annual report to the Vestry and/or parish on his continuing education work. The amount to be established in the annual budget.
9. The cost of pulpit supply and pastoral services when the Priest-in-Charge is absent from the parish; the amount to be established in the annual budget.

Section D - LEAVE TIME

[Currently, four (4) weeks of vacation per year and one (1) week of continuing education/career development per year are the recommended minimum. Additional time off for clergy retreat is strongly encouraged. For employment periods longer than eight (8) months but less than one year, the normal vacation leave for clergy (including Sundays) may be prorated.]

The Vestry agrees the Priest-in-Charge shall have the following periods of leave at full pay:

1. _____week(s) of vacation per year, including Sundays,
2. _____weeks per year (in addition to vacation time) for continuing education and career development.[and ____days per year (in addition to the above) for retreat time.]
3. Other leaves: Sabbatical leave after five years in the parish if called as Rector; related preparations will be done in consultation with the Diocesan Guidelines and \$_____per annum will be deposited in an account established for sabbatical preparedness. The Priest-in-Charge shall also have a day off after Christmas and Easter.³²

Section E - SUPPLEMENTARY COMPENSATION

Wedding, funeral and other fees allocations will be decided upon by mutual agreement of the Priest-in-Charge and the vestry. Such fee allocations may be used to fund the Discretionary Fund. The following understanding has been reached between the Priest-in-Charge and the Vestry concerning the income the Priest-in-Charge may receive performing [specify].

Section F - USE OF BUILDINGS

In addition to full use and administration of parish buildings for the discharge of his/her duties, the Priest-in-Charge shall have the right to grant use of the buildings to individuals or groups from outside the parish, which is consistent with both the church canons and the parish bylaws. From the church canons, "For the purposes of the office and for the full and free discharge of all functions and duties pertaining thereto, the Priest-in-Charge shall at all times be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Parish buildings together with all appurtenances and furniture, and to access to all records and registers maintained by or on behalf of the congregation" (Title III Canon 9.5 (a) (2))

Section G – MUTUAL MINISTRY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Recognizing that the review of a congregation's total ministry should be a continuing process,

1. The Priest-in-Charge and both Wardens are expected and encouraged to meet at least once every two weeks to discuss matters pertaining to the well-being of the people and

³²Other leave may include parental leave in the event of childbirth or adoption or family leave. Consult the Guidelines for Compensations and Benefits.

facilities of the parish.

The Priest-in-Charge and the Vestry agree to meet at least once a month (regular Vestry meeting) to clarify expectations and to evaluate successes and raise concerns from the congregation, staff, and leadership. Such meetings are intended to ensure the effectiveness of joint ministry of the lay leadership and clergy. Details of building status and church finances from the month shall be reviewed at each vestry meeting.

Suggested Tasks during the Period of Transition

The clergy person's tenure as a Priest-in-Charge is seen as prime time for renewal, re-energizing the parish in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and Priest-in-Charge shall work together to prepare the congregation for a healthy future. Specific tasks to be addressed include, as needed:

- 1) Coming to terms with the history of the congregation and its relationships with previous clergy.
- 2) Discovering the congregation's special identity, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership.
- 3) Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively.
- 4) Renewing and reworking relationships with the Diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other.
- 5) Building commitment to the leadership of the new rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities.
- 6) Help the congregation to develop and implement a successful stewardship campaign
- 7) Help the congregation explore evangelism and how it can be practiced in the parish and community
- 8) Help the congregation engage in Christian formation

Vestry Responsibilities

All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the parish and the Priest-in-Charge. The Vestry shall lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Priest-in-Charge in pursuit of parish goals and in the performance of the developmental tasks of the interim period. The Vestry is legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Priest-in-Charge. The Vestry will see that the Priest-in-Charge is properly supported, personally and organizationally, as well as in the Vestry's financial obligations to the Priest-in-Charge.

Priest-in-Charge's Responsibilities

The Priest-in-Charge represents and extends the ministry which is the Bishop's pastoral and canonical responsibility for congregations in leadership transition. The Priest-in-Charge shall lead the parish as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this congregation and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop. During the term of this agreement, and subject to the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop, the Priest-in-Charge shall have authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish, subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop.

The major goal of the Priest-in-Charge's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the next phase of their life together. To this end, the Priest-in-Charge shall:

- a) Strive to implement the above tasks,

- b) Maintain the regular church ministries (worship service, preaching, pastoral care, education, etc.),
- c) Supervise all parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the Priest-in-Charge,
- d) support the Vestry in its responsibilities.

The Priest-in-Charge is expected and encouraged to participate in regional, deanery, diocesan and churchwide responsibilities, as well as community endeavors. Further, time given to such work shall be understood as an integral part of the Priest-in-Charge's ministry in the parish. The Bishop expects the Priest-in-Charge to attend monthly meetings of the Priests-in-Charge group also known as Fresh Start. Participation in such events is considered church-related business for the Priest-in-Charge.

Mutual Review of Ministry

Six months after the Priest-in-Charge has been appointed by the Bishop, under the guidance of the Priest-in-Charge Consultant, the Priest-in-Charge and the Vestry will have a retreat together to establish short term and long term goals for the parish. After 18 months of the Priest-in-Charge appointment a Mutual Ministry Review will be done under the guidance of the Priest-in-Charge Consultant. A second Mutual Ministry Review initiates the discernment year, which is the final year of the Priest-in-Charge's tenure. The consultant will forward the reports of both reviews to the Office of Transition Ministry. Throughout the process, the Priest-in-Charge Consultant will be in regular communication with the Office of Transition Ministry. The Priest-in-Charge and wardens are welcomed and encouraged to consult with the Office of Transition Ministry as needed throughout the process.

Section H—TRANSITION REVIEW

The Priest-in-Charge was shown and is fully aware of the content of the Transition Review Report performed by

_____ before his/her appointment.

Section I – STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Diocesan and Episcopal Church principles, this congregation will not discriminate on grounds of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, or disability.³³

PARISH SIGNATURES

Date: _____ Priest-in-Charge: _____

Approved by the Vestry on (date) _____

Warden: _____

Warden: _____

³³ Since its 2001 Report to Convention, the Compensation and Benefits Committee has included this statement to reflect the concerns of both the Diocese of Massachusetts and the Episcopal Church as reflected in a variety of resolutions presented in their respective conventions.

Clerk: _____

Reviewed by the Office of Transition Ministry

Date: _____ By: _____

BISHOP'S SIGNATURE

Reviewed by the Bishop:

Date: _____

Bishop: _____

Reference I

Canons of the Episcopal Church: Priests in Charge and Rectors

Canon III.9.3(b)

CANON 9: Of the Life and Work of Priests

(b) Priests-in-Charge. After consultation with the Vestry, the Bishop may appoint a Priest to serve as Priest-in-Charge of any congregation in which there is no Rector. In such congregations, the Priest-in-Charge shall exercise the duties of Rector outlined in Canon III.9.5 subject to the authority of the Bishop.

Canon III.9.5

Of Priests and Their Duties

Sec. 5.

(a)

(1) The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall have full authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish, subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop.

(2) For the purposes of the office and for the full and free discharge of all functions and duties pertaining thereto, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall at all times be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Parish buildings together with all appurtenances and furniture, and to access to all records and registers maintained by or on behalf of the congregation.

(b)

(1) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure all persons in their charge receive Instruction in the Holy Scriptures; in the subjects contained in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the catechism; in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church; and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons.

(2) It shall be the duty of Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure that all persons in their charge are instructed concerning Christian stewardship, including: (i) reverence for the creation and the right use of God's gifts; (ii) generous and consistent offering of time, talent, and treasure for the mission and ministry of the Church at home and abroad; (iii) the biblical standard of the tithe for financial stewardship; and (iv) the responsibility of all persons to make a will as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.

(3) It shall be the duty of Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure that persons be prepared for Baptism. Before baptizing infants or children, Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall ensure that sponsors be prepared by instructing both the parents and the Godparents concerning the significance of Holy Baptism, the responsibilities of parents and Godparents for the Christian training of the baptized child, and how these obligations may properly be discharged.

(4) It shall be the duty of Rector or Priest-in-Charge to encourage and ensure the preparation of persons for Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and to be ready to present them to the Bishop with a list of their names.

(5) On notice being received of the Bishop's intention to visit any congregation, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall announce the fact to the congregation. At every visitation it shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the Wardens, Vestry or other officers, to exhibit to the Bishop the Parish Register and to give information as to the state of the congregation, spiritual and temporal, in such categories as the Bishop shall have previously requested in writing.

(6) The Alms and Contributions, not otherwise specifically designated, at the Administration of the Holy Communion on one Sunday in each calendar month, and other offerings for the poor, shall be deposited with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge or with such Church officer as the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall appoint to be applied to such pious and charitable uses as the Rector shall determine. When a Parish is without a Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Vestry shall designate a member of the Parish to fulfill this function.

(7) Whenever the House of Bishops shall publish a Pastoral Letter, it shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to read it to the congregation on some occasion of public worship on a Lord's Day, or to

cause copies of the same to be distributed to the members of the congregation, not later than thirty days after receipt.

(8) Whenever the House of Bishops shall adopt a Position Paper, and require communication of the content of the Paper to the membership of the Church, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall so communicate the Paper in the manner set forth in the preceding section of this canon.

(c)

(1) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to record in the Parish Register all Baptisms, Confirmations (including the canonical equivalents in Canon I.17.1(d)), Marriages and Burials.

(2) The registry of each Baptism shall be signed by the officiating Member of the Clergy.

(3) The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall record in the Parish Register all persons who have received Holy Baptism, all communicants, all persons who have received Confirmation (including the canonical equivalents in Canon I.17.1(d)), all persons who have died, and all persons who have been received or removed by letter of transfer. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall also designate in the Parish Register the names of (1) those persons whose domicile is unknown, (2) those persons whose domicile is known but are inactive, and (3) those families and persons who are active within the congregation. The Parish Register shall remain with the congregation at all times

NOTES