



# CLERGY MANUAL

The **Episcopal Diocese** *of Texas*

**UPDATED**  
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# 1 - The Diocese of Texas

## Diocesan Mission

*We are One Church, reconciled by Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called by God through worship, witness, and ministry, building the Kingdom of God together.*

*Somos una Iglesia, reconciliada por Jesucristo, autorizados por el Espíritu Santo, llamados por Dios por adoración, testigo, y ministerio, construyendo el Reino de Dios juntos.*

## Diocesan Core Values

Grounded in our response to the Baptismal Covenant and Great Commission, the churches, schools, and institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas passionately hold these values:

- **Missionary Emphasis:** Making Jesus Christ known with a missionary spirit that honors our heritage of growth and expansion
- **Education and Leadership:** Forming disciples, both lay and clergy, to be effective agents of transformation
- **Meeting Human Needs:** Bringing the love of Christ to a hurting world
- **Responsive Stewardship:** Caring for and dedicating our abundant resources to the mission of the Church
- **Excellence:** Setting a standard for ministry driven by miraculous expectation

## Diocesan Beliefs

This is a brief introduction to our life and faith. We live out these core beliefs through:

- Worship and parish programs
- Reaching out to the community
- Sharing our story with others
- Seeking God's love together in study and prayer
- Giving of our means and talents to the greater purpose of God's work

# Diocesan Vision

*As followers of Jesus Christ, we are One Church within the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church. All are sought and embraced in worship, mission, and ministry in a spirit of mutual love and respect.*

*Como seguidores de Jesucristo, somos Una Iglesia dentro de la Comunión Anglicana y la Iglesia Episcopal. Todos son llamados y abrazados en adoración, misión y ministerio en un espíritu de amor y respeto mutuo.*

## **We are:**

**Youthful:** Our congregations and institutions are continually renewed and revitalized through the infusion and inclusion of younger members. Children, youth, young adults, their friends, and their families find in our Diocese significant and engaging programs and ministries that inspire, inform, and support them on their Christian journey.

**Multicultural:** Our Diocese is enriched through intentional efforts to reflect the communities in which we live. People of diverse ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds find respect, dignity, and opportunity in the life and ministry of the Church.

**Forming and Growing:** Those seeking a deeper relationship with Jesus are nurtured and equipped to share the love of Christ in the world. They find lifelong opportunities for spiritual formation and servant leadership grounded in scripture and our historic catholic faith.

**Reaching Out to Serve:** Those who serve and are served are transformed. People who are in need and who struggle, find hope, care, and restoration through the outreach and justice ministries provided by the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas.

**One Church:** We are a united, vibrant, healthy, and growing community of faith. The world will recognize us as Jesus' disciples because we love one another as Christ loves us.

# Regions

The Diocese of Texas is divided into three regions. Oversight is provided to the congregations in the respective region by means of the regional executive.

## **South Region**

### Convocations

East Harris  
Galveston  
West Harris

## **East Region**

### Convocations

Northeast  
San Jacinto  
Southeast

## **West Region**

### Convocations

Austin  
Central  
Northwest  
Southwest

# Regional Executives

The Rt. Rev. Hector F. Monterroso  
1225 Texas Avenue  
Houston, Texas 77098  
713-520-6444 or 800-318-4452  
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South Region

The Rt. Rev. Jeff W. Fisher  
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The Rt. Rev. Dena A. Harrison  
PO Box 2247  
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512-478-0580 or 800-947-0580  
[dharrison@epicenter.org](mailto:dharrison@epicenter.org)

West Region



# Diocese of Texas Ministries

Follow the link to the Diocese of Texas website to find a list of the various boards, committees, institutions and other organizations with contact information: [www.epicenter.org/diocese/governance/](http://www.epicenter.org/diocese/governance/).

The Journal of the Annual Diocesan Council, Volumes I and II and the Directory of the Diocese of Texas are published on the diocesan website: [www.epicenter.org/diocese/governance/diocesan-journals/](http://www.epicenter.org/diocese/governance/diocesan-journals/).

**Volume I includes:**

- Reports to Council
- Pending Business from the Previous Council
- Standing Committees of the Council
- Reports of the Bishops
- Reports of Officers of the Diocese
- Diocesan Committees
- Canonical Reports
- Executive Board Units, Divisions, & Departments
- Boards of Diocesan Institutions
- Additional Reports

**Volume II includes:**

- The Proceedings of Council
- The Council's Minutes
- The Bishop's Address
- Reports to Council
- Financial Summaries
- Statistical Reports
- The Directory

# Diocesan Staff and Functions

(See organizational chart [here](#).)

## BISHOPS' OFFICES

### Office of the Bishop Diocesan, Houston

Houston Diocesan Center: 1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002, 713-520-6444 or 800-318-4452

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**Special Assistant to the Bishop's Office** Julie Heath [jheath@epicenter.org](mailto:jheath@epicenter.org)

**Recorder of Ordinations & Clergy Licensing** Millie Longoria [mlongoria@epicenter.org](mailto:mlongoria@epicenter.org)

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### Office of the Bishop Assistant, Houston

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### Office of the Bishop Suffragan, Austin

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### **Office of the Bishop Suffragan, Tyler**

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### **MINISTRY DEPARTMENT**

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### **Transition Ministry**

**Diocesan Transition Minister** The Rev. Francene Young [fyoung@epicenter.org](mailto:fyoung@epicenter.org)

### **The Diaconate**

**Archdeacon** The Ven. Russell "Russ" H. Oechsel [roechsel@epicenter.org](mailto:roechsel@epicenter.org)

### **Wellness and Care Ministries / Safeguarding Team**

Located at the Austin Diocesan Center on the campus of the Seminary of the Southwest, PO Box 2247, Austin, Texas 78768, 512-478-0580 or 800-947-0580, secure fax 866-898-8976.

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**Accounts Payable Assistant** POSITION VACANT

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**Associate for Database Services** Sue Edmonson [sedmonson@epicenter.org](mailto:sedmonson@epicenter.org)

## **OTHER DIOCESAN ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Camp Allen Conference and Retreat Center**

18800 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868, 936-825-7175, [www.campallen.org](http://www.campallen.org).

**President** George Dehan [georged@campallen.org](mailto:georged@campallen.org)

### **Episcopal Health Foundation**

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**President and Chief Executive Officer** Elena Marks [emarks@episcopalhealth.org](mailto:emarks@episcopalhealth.org)

### **Texas Episcopal Service Corps**

**Director of Houston Episcopal Service Corps** Nick Puccio [npuccio@epicenter.org](mailto:npuccio@epicenter.org)

# 2 - Expectations of Clergy

## Expectations of All Clergy

### Terminology: “Clergy”

As referenced in this manual, the term “clergy” applies to all Episcopal clergy who function in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, whether deacon, priest, or bishop, active or retired, licensed or canonically resident, parochial or non-parochial, full-time, part-time or bi-vocational, residing within the Diocese or elsewhere.

### Membership in the Clerical Order

Clergypersons are not members of congregations. By virtue of their ordination, they are listed on the Roll of Clergy of the Diocese, under the authority of the Bishop, and are not eligible for participation as lay people in the local congregation.

### Clergy Orientation

All clergy new to the Diocese, whether licensed or canonically resident, will be invited to attend an orientation session at Camp Allen immediately prior to the annual Clergy Conference. This orientation is required and will be further scheduled by the Bishop on a periodic basis.

### Attendance at Meetings

All active clergy are required to attend the annual Clergy Conference in October and the Annual Diocesan Council in February, as well as any called meetings of Council. They also are expected to attend Clericus meetings and Clergy Days, which the Bishop may schedule from time to time. Licensed clergy are requested to attend the annual Clergy Conference and are expected to attend other clergy gatherings. Retired clergy are invited and encouraged to attend.

### Background Checks

The Bishop’s Office conducts background checks through Oxford Document on all incoming clergy and rechecks every five years. This is in addition to any background checks that may have previously been completed by another diocese and/or seminary. The initial background check, for all clergy new to the diocese, including those seeking licensing, consists of a 15-year check of references and public records (driver, credit, and criminal). Subsequent background checks, every 5 years, will recheck public records only. If clergy leave the Diocese to serve elsewhere, a complete 15-year background check will be conducted if they return to the Diocese to serve in any capacity.

### Sexual Abuse Prevention

All clergy are required to have three hours of training in the program *Safeguarding God’s Children* and five hours of training in the program *Safeguarding God’s People*. No other training programs are acceptable, and the training in EDOT is mandatory. Clergy must be recertified through the [Safeguarding Ministry of the Diocese of Texas](#) every five years.

All clergy are expected to be conversant with the [Diocesan Policy Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct](#). Additionally, all clergy are responsible for articulating, supporting, and educating others about diocesan abuse prevention policies in the local setting.

The only clergy who may be exempted from these requirements are retired clergy who certify to the Bishop that they are completely retired and do not exercise their ordained ministry in any context. (See [Appendix D.](#))

### **Cultural Competency Training**

Clergy who have entered the diocese since 2010 are required by the Bishop to have completed six in-class hours of *Fertile Ground* cultural competency training prior to licensing or within 9 months of canonical residency. Clergy applying for licensing may receive a conditional license once they have registered for the training, and will be fully licensed once the training is complete. Those who have been previously licensed will not have their license renewed unless they have met the requirement. The training is based on the work of The Rev. Dr. Eric Law, and anti-racism courses completed in other dioceses based on a different framework are unlikely to meet the EDOT requirement. Contact Denise Trevino, Missioner for Intercultural Ministry, at the Houston Diocesan Center ([dtrevino@epicenter.org](mailto:dtrevino@epicenter.org), 800-318-4452) to determine whether any previous training will meet the requirement and to register for a class. Training is offered approximately four times per year. The six hours of training may be applied as three personal and three professional continuing education units.

### **Continuing Education**

Canonically, all clergy must meet an annual continuing education requirement. See [Continuing Education](#) for detailed requirements. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) should be reported online at [www.epicenter.org/annual-ceu-report/](http://www.epicenter.org/annual-ceu-report/). For questions, contact Nina Gaspar, Technology Manager, Houston Diocesan Center, [ngaspar@epicenter.org](mailto:ngaspar@epicenter.org).

Every clergyperson receives time off each year for the purpose of fulfilling their continuing education requirement. The time and monetary allowance for fulfillment of this requirement will be stated in the Letter of Agreement.

### **Discretionary Funds**

Discretionary funds rest on the canonical authority embodied in TEC Canon III.9.6(b)(6). All clergy are expected to know and follow the Diocese of Texas policy on the use of discretionary funds. Members of the clergy who use discretionary funds for personal use may be subject to income tax reporting requirements, as well as ecclesiastical, civil, and/or criminal penalties. (See [Discretionary Funds](#).)

### **Identification of Candidates for Ordination**

All clergy are to nurture possible vocations to ordained ministry, being attentive to persons in the local setting who may have such gifts. The Commission on Ministry Office can provide additional guidance. The Rt. Rev. Dena A. Harrison is the Executive for Ministry and oversees the discernment process for Holy Orders.

Clergy also have the responsibility for redirecting nominees whose gifts may not support an ordained vocation, rather than nominating candidates who are unlikely to be accepted at the diocesan level. Please direct all questions about the local discernment processes to Ana G. May in the Commission on Ministry office in Austin at [agmay@epicenter.org](mailto:agmay@epicenter.org)

The Diocese of Texas offers three types of application processes: deacon, priest, and bi-vocational priest. Deacons and bi-vocational priests have non-stipendiary ministries and may not receive compensation from a church or institution of the Diocese. Application materials are available from the Commission on Ministry office in Austin.

### **Mentoring of New Clergy**

As part of the Curate Program of the Diocese, newly ordained curates will be mentored by an assigned supervising rector and will participate in Curate Camp. All supervisors are required to attend Supervising Rectors Orientation.

### **Pastoral Relationships after Transition**

Questions about clergy transition, including the expression of interest in transitioning within the Diocese of Texas, are properly directed to the Diocesan Transition Minister. (See [Clergy Transition](#).)

The Bishop expects that once a clergyperson leaves a congregation, he or she will bring closure to pastoral relationships with members of that congregation. The health of the congregation is dependent upon how well the transition is managed. Former parishioners should understand from the clergy in a positive and affirming way that it is not appropriate to continue a pastoral relationship.

The Bishop expects that the clergyperson will accept no further requests from members and former members of the congregation to provide pastoral services at weddings, funerals, baptisms, or any other occasion of public worship until at least one year after the new rector arrives.

After one year, clergy may accept invitations from the interim rector or rector, but may not solicit such invitations.

### **Clergy Wellness**

Clergy are expected to attend to their physical health, emotional, and spiritual wellness, and to their personal relationships. This is vital for the mission of the Diocese of Texas. Resources for clergy and family wellness can be found at [www.epicenter.org/wellness-and-care/](http://www.epicenter.org/wellness-and-care/), including counseling resources, and information and links for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), offered through Cigna Behavioral Health. (This is a free, confidential 24-hours-a-day service that assists members and their covered dependents with information, educational materials, resources, referrals, and ongoing support. The plan covers unlimited telephone consultations and up to 10 face-to-face counseling sessions per issue at no member cost.)

Clergy not covered by diocesan insurance who reside in the Diocese and are in need of counselling or other mental health services may contact the Canon for Wellness and Pastoral Care for assistance in locating services appropriate to their needs and available resources.

### **Clergy Addiction and Recovery**

Clergy who experience chemical abuse or dependency are responsible for their own recovery. The Diocese of Texas will provide resources for assessment, recovery, and support, [www.epicenter.org/wc-recovery-resources/](http://www.epicenter.org/wc-recovery-resources/). Addiction is a progressive condition; it will not get better or go away without treatment. Therefore, clergy who think they may have an addiction issue are *strongly urged* to seek diocesan guidance and support through the Bishop for Pastoral Care [jfisher@epicenter.org](mailto:jfisher@epicenter.org) or the Canon for Wellness and Pastoral Care [lhines@epicenter.org](mailto:lhines@epicenter.org).

Reports of clergy intoxication at parish/school activities are taken very seriously and will be addressed pastorally through exploratory questioning about chemical abuse or dependency and consideration of a formal chemical dependency assessment from a credentialed chemical dependency treatment specialist. Should addiction be diagnosed, rigorous pursuit of recovery is expected by--and will be supported by--the diocese. Unaddressed, untreated addiction imperils parish communities, as well as clergy families and is unacceptable.

A clergyperson dealing with addiction of any kind, who might wish to be considered for transition or employment, will be assessed after a recovery period in the range of two to five years, depending on the following: motivation to obtain assessment and treatment, response to treatment of not less than two years, achievement of sobriety or cessation of the addictive behavior, and a record of relapse prevention.

### **Finances**

Clergy are expected to conduct personal finances with integrity, living within their means and modeling good stewardship. Should a clergy person find themselves in financial difficulty, they are encouraged to seek appropriate help from financial experts outside of the parish. As noted in Safeguarding God's People: Policies Prohibiting Sexual Exploitation, clergy are prohibited from receiving or requesting personal loans, substantial gifts and/or money from parishioners. The finance teams of the Church Pension Group and EDOT both can offer guidance for negotiating financial challenges. The Canon for Wellness and Care may be contacted for resource referrals.



### **Sabbatical**

All clergy will accrue two weeks of cumulative sabbatical time each year. A sabbatical cannot be taken until after the completion of six years of ordained ministry. The sabbatical will be with full pay and allowances, and may be taken in conjunction with annual vacation and continuing education time. For more information, visit the Wellness and Care webpage at [www.epicenter.org/wc-sabbatical-information/](http://www.epicenter.org/wc-sabbatical-information/).

In order for grant funds to be considered nontaxable to the clergyperson, funds received by the congregation must be accounted for with receipts for sabbatical expenses. If funds, either prepaid or reimbursed to the clergyperson, are not accounted for with receipts, then those funds will be reported as taxable income to the clergyperson.

### **Moral Discipline**

It is expected that all clergy will live moral and chaste lives, taking seriously their roles and ministries in the Christian community. All clergy must abstain from sexual relations outside of marriage, and abide by other standards of conduct outlined in C&C IV.4.

### **Diocesan Participation**

Clergy have a canonical responsibility to participate in diocesan activities, to serve on diocesan boards and committees, to attend clergy conferences called by the Bishop and to attend Diocesan Council. Such participation should complement local duties, not conflict with them.

Clergy are also expected and encouraged to identify local lay leaders whose gifts may be suitable for diocesan leadership and to commend them to the Bishop for possible appointment to various diocesan ministries.

### **Immigration Matters**

Clergy who are not citizens of the United States are required to have official permission to work before they may be placed in this Diocese. Non-citizen clergy are required to provide satisfactory documentation of their immigration status to the Diocesan Transition Minister, to cooperate in resolving any questions about their status, and to inform the Office of the Bishop of any changes in their status.

### **Relationships between Clergy of Different Congregations**

Clergy who are settled in a particular cure are expected to exercise pastoral oversight and care of persons in their given cure. To intrude, uninvited, into the cure of another clergyperson is a significant breach of professional ethics.

This proscription applies to retired and non-parochial clergy as well as to clergy with cure. If such a pastoral relationship is established, the clergyperson with oversight must be informed. (See [Clergy Transition](#).)

### **Constitution & Canons**

All clergy are expected to be familiar with the content of the Constitution & Canons of The Episcopal Church ([www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/2015\\_candc.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/2015_candc.pdf)), the Constitution & Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Texas ([www.epicenter.org/constitution--canons/](http://www.epicenter.org/constitution--canons/)), and the bylaws (if any) of the local congregation.

### **Pastoral Counseling**

Pastoral counseling, which is associated with ordained ministry, especially parish ministry, is quite different from the therapeutic disciplines. Pastoral counseling usually involves a conversation regarding a spiritual concern, a religious question, or a life-changing occurrence such as a death in the family or an upcoming marriage, and is brief in nature - usually three or four sessions, maximum.

Clergy must refer clients to a professional therapist/counselor when it becomes evident that the presenting concern is beyond the scope of pastoral counseling or when the maximum number of sessions is reached.

Most clergy are not psychotherapists, marriage family and child counselors, clinical social workers, or licensed counselors. Those who are not must establish boundaries to facilitate the appropriate care for individuals requesting counseling.

Some activities that take place on church premises, parish-sponsored activities such as lay spiritual direction, Stephen ministries, and renewal gatherings such as Cursillo and Faith Alive, may be interpreted by participants as counseling activities although they do not fit the definition of either type of counseling. Prospective participants in these activities should sign a release of liability and hold-harmless agreement stating that they understand the nature of the activity and accept personal responsibility for their participation (*as recommended by Church Insurance Agency Corporation*).

# Expectations of Heads of Congregation

## **Terminology: “Head of Congregation”**

This includes all rectors, vicars, pastoral leaders, interim rectors, interim vicars, priests-in-charge, or any other person in charge of a congregation.

## **Values, Mission, and Goals**

The head of congregation is required to attend to the health of the congregation, in addition to personal wellness. It is the responsibility of the head of congregation to assure that the congregation articulates its values and mission and sets appropriate goals. This focus provides a basis for mutual ministry review. Diocesan resources are available to assist in this process.

## **Instruction in the Faith**

The head of congregation is required to provide for appropriate instruction in the Christian faith for persons inquiring and for the spiritual development of congregational members.

Instruction for inquirers, termed *Discovery Classes* in this Diocese, includes information on the history and polity of the Episcopal Church. Membership in the Episcopal Church includes the presentation of such persons to the Bishop for confirmation or reception. Resources for the *Discovery Series* can be found at [www.epicenter.org/discovery-downloads/](http://www.epicenter.org/discovery-downloads/).

Other curriculum resources are available from the Christian Formation Resource Library (contact [jmartin-currie@epicenter.org](mailto:jmartin-currie@epicenter.org)), and on the diocesan website: [www.epicenter.org/formation/](http://www.epicenter.org/formation/).

## **Licensing Lay Ministers**

Lay licenses are issued for the institution requesting the license only and are not transferable to any other institution within or outside the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. Contact Sue Edmonson, [sedmonson@epicenter.org](mailto:sedmonson@epicenter.org), for a list of lay persons currently licensed in the congregation.

The head of congregation is responsible for requesting all lay licenses. “A confirmed communicant in good standing or, in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed.” (C&C III.4)

Lay licenses for worship leader, eucharistic minister, eucharistic visitor, catechist, and evangelist are requested by submitting a *Lay License Request Form* to Sue Edmonson, [sedmonson@epicenter.org](mailto:sedmonson@epicenter.org). The application can be downloaded from [www.epicenter.org/edotclergy/](http://www.epicenter.org/edotclergy/). (Scroll to the bottom; the form is under Other Forms and Resources.)

## **Licensing Lay Preachers**

Licenses for lay preachers must be requested by email to the Canon to the Ordinary: [kryan@epicenter.org](mailto:kryan@epicenter.org), 1225 Texas Ave., Houston, TX 77002. Your email should include the layperson’s name and contact information, a description of the context of anticipated preaching, a character reference, and a list of his or her qualifications to preach, if any.

All lay preachers, due to their pastoral role in the congregation, are expected by the Diocese to obtain and maintain certification in Safeguarding God’s People.

Beginning in January 2019, all licensed lay preachers will be required to have completed the Iona School for Ministry's Lay Preacher Track, which is a 1.5-year (3-semester) preaching course, which satisfies the Bishop's expectation for an adequate level of theological education for licensed lay preachers. If a licensed lay preacher has not completed the expected training by January 2019, their lay preacher license will no longer be valid.

Lay preacher licenses are issued for the institution requesting the license only and are not transferable to any other institution within or outside the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. They are only valid while the clergy who requested the license is serving at the institution where the license is held.

### **Parish Administration**

There are a variety of administrative matters that fall to the head of congregation, including oversight of the maintenance of church records, personnel matters, abuse prevention programs, requests to the Bishop for lay licensing for various ministries, and completion of the annual parochial report and its attendant schedules.

The head of congregation is charged with the supervision of all staff, whether clergy or lay, paid or volunteer.

Each lay employee is to have a personnel file that contains an application, appropriate background and reference checks, IRS Form W-4, and IRS Form I-9, if necessary, as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

The head of congregation is to provide for the regular review and evaluation of all staff and to document the process in the personnel files. These are confidential personnel records and are to be kept in locked cabinets in the church office. (See [Parish Administration](#).)

Personnel files for clergy are maintained by the Bishop's Office, who is also responsible for clergy background checks.

If a head of congregation receives any report of sexual misconduct or abuse, he or she is to immediately inform the Office of the Bishop and the Safeguarding Minister and receive instructions before taking action. The only exception: a head of congregation must also immediately report any allegation of child abuse to authorities and remove the person accused from any contact with children.

*Diocesan Policies for Safeguarding Children, Youth, and Adults* are available online at [www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/home/](http://www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/home/).

*Safeguarding Minister, The Rev. Canon Lisa Hines, The Diocesan Center in Austin: 512-478-0580 or 800-947-0580, [lhines@epicenter.org](mailto:lhines@epicenter.org)*

While the vestry or Bishop's committee is canonically responsible for financial matters, the head of the congregation has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance coverage, financial reporting capabilities, and financial internal controls are in place, as well as to ensure compliance with EDOT Canon I.4.5 regarding audits.

It is the responsibility of the head of congregation to consult with the Director of Foundations in the Financial Services Department before a congregation undertakes facilities renovation or expansion. The Church Corporation holds title to congregational property and by canon must approve all such proposals.

The Financial Services Department is available to assist or answer questions. Consult the diocesan website for information about compensation and reimbursement guidelines, rules and regulations of church governance

regarding financial matters, audit guidelines, property insurance, and many other important resources:  
[www.epicenter.org/diocese/the-office-of-financial-services/](http://www.epicenter.org/diocese/the-office-of-financial-services/).

The head of congregation is required to discharge the above named administrative responsibilities, and failure to do so may result in ecclesiastical discipline. The head of congregation is to be conversant with the policies related to these areas and to see that they are properly administered. The diocesan staff is available for consultation and assistance.

The head of congregation is required to ensure that the church's information on [www.episcopalchurch.org/diocese/texas](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/diocese/texas) is up-to-date. If your church's information is inaccurate, you must click "*Is this page accurate? Submit a change.*" at the bottom of your church's page and submit update information.

# Expectations of Assistants, Associates, Curates, and Non-Staff Assisting Clergy

Clergy who assist in congregations, including assistants, associates, curates, and non-staff assisting clergy, owe a duty of loyalty to the head of congregation, at whose pleasure they serve. In the course of ministry, they are to support the ministry, programs and administration of the rector/vicar. All assisting clergy must have a Letter of Call or Appointment and a Letter of Agreement. (See [Clergy Transition](#).) Templates for Letters of Agreement and Call are available from the Canon to the Ordinary's office.

In the event of serious disagreement between an assisting clergy and rector/vicar, every effort must be made to find resolution, and consultation should be sought if the two parties cannot resolve the situation satisfactorily. In any event, such matters are to be handled privately and without inappropriately involving members of the congregation.

If an assisting clergy cannot offer the appropriate support to the head of congregation, a report must be made to the Canon to the Ordinary.

Assisting clergy are to comply with the policy on rector transitions. (See [Clergy Transition](#).)

## Expectations of Bi-Vocational Priests

Bi-vocational priests are invited to attend Clericus meetings, the annual Clergy Conference and Diocesan Council, as permitted by their schedules. They must earn 12 Continuing Education Units per year.

### Compensation Policy for Bi-vocational Clergy in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas

The formation and ordination track for bi-vocational priests was created in the Diocese of Texas to be used at the option of the Bishop for the missionary need of small congregations without the resources to employ a priest. This ministry of bi-vocational priesthood has been particularly crafted for the health of mission in small congregations. The track includes formation at Iona School for Ministry and does not require or envision the earning of an M.Div. degree from an accredited seminary, otherwise required for ordination in the Diocese of Texas.

As agreed upon prior to ordination, the Diocese of Texas will continue the expectation that bi-vocational priests and deacons serve without compensation in the congregations of the Diocese. Because health insurance and other benefits are tied to employment and compensation, the Diocese cannot provide them for bi-vocational priests or deacons.

Bi-vocational priests and deacons serve during active ministry and post-retirement by appointment of the Bishop Diocesan. The Diocese expects bi-vocational deacons to work up to 5 hours a week in congregational ministry, and bi-vocational priests to work up to 12 hours a week. Each year, these clergy are to receive 2 weeks, including Sundays, off for continuing education and 4 weeks, including Sundays, off for vacation. It is the Bishop Diocesan's expectation that this time away is taken and these hours are kept. It is the congregation's responsibility, in living out the members' baptismal identity, to help cover ministry duties

requiring time in excess of hours given by the ordained leaders. Furthermore, we believe that time off should be used for rest and not for supply work in other congregations.

Upon retirement, bi-vocational priests will be encouraged to supply in parishes where other bi-vocational clergy are working. Expenses will be covered, but a supply fee will not be paid except with the express permission of the Bishop.

Our expectation is that bi-vocational priests and deacons will serve in their ministry a minimum of 6 years post-ordination before exploring a transition to compensated congregational ministry. Upon the invitation of the Bishop Diocesan, and after six years of non-stipendiary ordained ministry, individuals may be invited to do further study in order to transition to full-time or compensated work. The additional study will require a minimum of one year in an accredited and approved seminary, in addition to Clinical Pastoral Education and, in some cases, field work.

At any time after their ordination, upon initiation by the Bishop Diocesan, bi-vocational priests and deacons with specialized skills may be approved for compensation in cases of compelling missionary need.

### **Business Expenses**

Office and business expenses, including auto/travel allowances, are not typically part of a clergy person's compensation package, but are budgeted in the congregational budget. Bi-vocational priests should be reimbursed for reasonable business expenses as outlined in their letters of call and agreement.

## **Expectations of Vocational Deacons**

Deacons are invited to attend Clericus meetings, the annual Clergy Conference and Diocesan Council, as permitted by their schedules. They must earn 12 Continuing Education Units per year.

In the Diocese of Texas, the ministry of the vocational deacon is as follows:

1. The deacon has a special servant ministry under the supervision of the Bishop Diocesan or the Bishop's designee, currently Archdeacon Russell Oechsel. The Bishop will make all assignments for deacons.
2. The deacon may be assigned to serve within a parish setting, within a diocesan institution, or within a secular setting.
3. The deacon is the bridge that links the Church and the world through both word and deed in servant ministry.
4. The deacon models servant ministry in the world. Deacons will continue their work at secular jobs or in the home.
5. The deacon will normally be non-stipendiary.
6. The deacon serves as an icon of servanthood within the liturgy. In doing so, the deacon does not replace the ministry of laypersons. The deacon reads the Gospel and may lead the Prayers of the People. The deacon serves at the Lord's Table, preparing and placing on it the offerings of bread and

wine, and assists in the ministration of the Sacrament to the people. The deacon dismisses the people at the end of the Eucharist to be Christ's ministers of reconciliation within the world. From time to time, it is also appropriate for the deacon to preach in order to proclaim the Gospel, to make the needs of the world known to the Church, and to exhort God's people to do Christ's servant ministry in their day-to-day lives.

7. As servant leaders, deacons will usually wear regular secular dress. To wear clericals is only appropriate when serving liturgically or when wearing clerical dress to facilitate ministry in the world (such as during hospital or prison visits).
8. If a vocational deacon feels called to the priesthood, he or she must begin a new ordination process.
9. The Order of the Deacon must not be confused with the Order of Priest. It is not consistent with the deacon's call to be head of congregation. There will be no "deacon's masses."
10. As stated in the Canons of the Diocese, a vocational deacon will have voice and vote within the Councils of the Diocese.
11. The Deacon will follow the [Rubrics for a Deacon Performing a Marriage in the Diocese of Texas](#).

#### **Business Expenses**

Office and business expenses, including auto/travel allowances, are not typically part of a clergy person's compensation package, but are budgeted in the congregational budget. Deacons should be reimbursed for reasonable business expenses as outlined in their letters of call and agreement.

## **Expectations of Non-Parochial Clergy**

Clergy who are not employed by a congregation of the Diocese are considered non-parochial clergy. They are encouraged to participate in all activities of the Diocese and must make the annual report required by TEC Canon I.6.2. [Expectations of All Clergy](#) also apply to non-parochial clergy.

## **Expectations of Retired Clergy**

Regardless of their ministry activities, or lack thereof, retired clergy are expected to continue to maintain an orderly relationship with the Bishop. They are to keep the Bishop informed of any address change or any other major change in their circumstances.

Retired clergy who are canonically resident have seat, voice, and vote at Diocesan Council and are encouraged to participate if possible.

Retired clergy should be especially mindful of their responsibility to support the ministries of the active clergy in



whose cures they reside or from whose cures they have retired. (See [Clergy Transition](#).)

Retired Clergy must follow the [Retired Clergy Active in Ministry](#) guidelines on income in order to be in compliance with the Church Pension Group.

## Expectations of Licensed Clergy

Licensed clergy are welcome in the Diocese and are encouraged to participate fully in its life. Please request the application for license from Millie Longoria at the Houston Diocesan Center, 713-520-6444, [mlongoria@epicenter.org](mailto:mlongoria@epicenter.org). Licensed clergy are subject to the same expectations outlined in the [Expectations of Clergy](#), including [Background Checks](#) and [Sexual Abuse Prevention](#). If they wish to serve as supply clergy, they must be conversant and in compliance with the policies outlined in [Clergy Transition](#). To be added to the supply clergy list, please contact Millie Longoria at the Houston Diocesan Center, 713-520-6444, [mlongoria@epicenter.org](mailto:mlongoria@epicenter.org).

In addition, licensed clergy are required to make an annual report to the Bishop and to request licensing for the next calendar year, if that is their desire. If no report or request for license is received, they will be removed from the list of licensed clergy and must reapply to be reinstated.

Licensed clergy are reminded that they are to comply with TEC Canon I.6.2, making an annual report to the Bishop of the Diocese in which they are canonically resident.

Licensed clergy serving as heads of congregations or as assisting clergy on the staff of diocesan congregations are expected to register for Diocesan Council. Although EDOT canons do not provide such licensed clergy a vote at Council, it is customary to grant them seat and voice when the Council organizes for business. Only those clergy who are canonically resident in the Diocese of Texas may vote; other clergy have a vote in the Diocese in which they are canonically resident.

Licensed clergy not serving as heads of congregations or as assisting clergy may register for Diocesan Council as visitors and are encouraged to do so.

ELCA clergy may be considered for license, if requested by a head of congregation. Such clergy must present, in addition to the standard licensing requirements, a letter from their bishop approving the license application. If they are not residing in their home synod, they must also have approval from the Lutheran bishop in whose synod they reside. Please request the application for ELCA clergy license from Millie Longoria at the Houston Diocesan Center, 713-520-6444, [mlongoria@epicenter.org](mailto:mlongoria@epicenter.org).

## Expectations of Pastoral Leaders and Pastoral Leader Interns

Pastoral leaders and pastoral leader interns are invited to attend Clericus meetings, the annual Clergy Conference and Diocesan Council, as permitted by their schedules. They are required to attend an annual

Bishop's Weekend for pastoral leaders and pastoral leader interns, vocational deacons and bi-vocational priests and to earn 12 Continuing Education Units per year.

Pastoral leaders and pastoral leader interns who are not yet ordained clergy are allowed a seat and a voice at the annual Diocesan Council, but have no vote since they are not clergy. They are not permitted to be lay delegates from the congregation they lead, but they may be seated with the delegates from their congregation.

## **Expectations of Clergy Not Ordained in the Episcopal Church**

### **Policy Regarding Participation in Congregational or Pastoral Settings**

Invitations to non-Episcopal clergy to serve on staffs, to participate in services, to preach or teach, or to lead any other activity must be considered carefully, and these policies must be followed. The Bishop's specific permission is required in certain circumstances. Failure to observe these policies may result in ecclesiastical discipline.

### **Staff Members**

The Bishop's specific permission is required to employ any ordained person on any basis. The specific duties that a non-Episcopal clergyperson will perform must be delineated in detail before approval is given, and no other duties may be subsequently assigned without the Bishop's approval.

A non-Episcopal clergyperson must function strictly as a layperson at all times while serving in this church. He or she may not wear clerical attire or vestments, other than those worn by laypersons, in worship, at meetings or activities, or at any other time of participation in the life of the Episcopal Church.

The prerequisites for obtaining the Bishop's approval are completion of a course of instruction about the Episcopal Church and a signed agreement to uphold the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church.

ELCA clergy licensed and approved as staff members may exercise the same rights and privileges as Episcopal clergy.

### **Volunteers**

If non-Episcopal clergy wish to volunteer for ministry in the Episcopal Church, the same policies apply.

### **Weddings and Funerals**

At their discretion, clergy may invite other qualified clergy to participate in certain pastoral services described herein. Clergy are never required to issue such an invitation. The officiant must always be an Episcopal clergyperson. With the specific permission of the Bishop, clergy of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may officiate, using *The Book of Common Prayer*. Qualified non-Episcopal clergy participating in a single pastoral service may wear the vestments that are customary in their tradition.

For all other clergy, participation is limited to the following roles:

## **Weddings**

- Declaration of Consent
- Readings from Holy Scripture
- Prayers of the People
- Dismissal
- When Holy Eucharist is celebrated, an Episcopal clergy person is to read the Gospel and serve as the celebrant. The clergy guest may stand beside the celebrant during the Prayer of Consecration and assist in the distribution of the elements, using the language specified in *The Book of Common Prayer*.

## **Funerals**

- Opening Anthem
- Readings from Holy Scripture
- Prayers of the People
- When Holy Eucharist is celebrated, an Episcopal clergy person is to read the Gospel and serve as the celebrant. The clergy guest may stand beside the celebrant during the Prayer of Consecration and assist in the distribution of the elements, using the language specified in *The Book of Common Prayer*.
- At the Commendation, the Anthem(s)
- At the Committal, the Anthem

Note: When a priest or deacon dies, the Bishop customarily officiates at the funeral, if available. The Bishops' Funeral Customary should be obtained from the Office of the Bishop, [smyers@epicenter.org](mailto:smyers@epicenter.org), as soon as possible when a death is anticipated or has occurred.

## **Occasional Joint Services with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)**

Permission is given for ELCA clergy to participate in joint services. Diocese of Texas clergy and congregations may also participate in these services with other ELCA congregations. If such a service is planned more than twice a year, the Bishop's specific permission must be obtained. When the service is held in an Episcopal church, *The Book of Common Prayer* is used. When worshiping in a Lutheran church, the *Book of Worship* may be used. More information about the common mission agreement with ELCA can be found here: [www.episcopalchurch.org/agreement-full-communion-called-common-mission](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/agreement-full-communion-called-common-mission).

## **Interim Eucharistic Sharing with the United Methodist Church (2006)**

Common, joint celebration of the Eucharist is permitted where it is deemed appropriate for the sharing of worship by congregations of the respective Churches. An ordained United Methodist elder or bishop and an ordained Episcopal priest or bishop stand together at the Lord's Table. The service of worship must be authorized and agreed upon by the United Methodist and Episcopal bishops involved. As a general rule, the normative patterns of Eucharistic worship in the host location should govern the joint worship service.

Please note that this provision is less permissive than provisions for sharing ministry with ELCA. For detailed guidelines, go to [www.episcopalchurch.org/files/Common\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/Common_Guidelines.pdf). (affirmed by Resolution at GC76 - [www.episcopalarchives.org/GC2009/18\\_ecu/2009-A072.pdf](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/GC2009/18_ecu/2009-A072.pdf).)

## **Ecumenical Agreement with the Presbyterian Church, USA (2009)**

In the Presbyterian Church, an Episcopal priest may celebrate communion and preside at the Sacraments, under certain conditions. In the Episcopal Church, a Presbyterian Minister of Word and Sacrament may preach, lead Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer, officiate at the Ministry of the Word, or preside at a communion service using an authorized rite of the Presbyterian Church (always with the permission of both the presbytery of the PCUSA and the diocesan bishop as liturgical authority). For more information about the agreement, go to [www.episcopalarchives.org/GC2009/18\\_ecu/2009-A072.pdf](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/GC2009/18_ecu/2009-A072.pdf).

**“Episcopal,” “Anglican,” or “Continuing” Splinter Groups not part of ECUSA:**

These groups undermine the geographical authority of the Bishop as defined in the *Constitution & Canons* of the Episcopal Church and observed in historic Anglican practice. Therefore, no clergy person from these groups may participate in any service of worship, and no joint services may be held. Episcopal clergy of the Diocese of Texas may not participate in any service held in or by these congregations.

## **Expectations Regarding Bishops Visiting from Outside the Diocese**

When a Bishop from outside the Diocese is invited to be present in a congregation, the rector or vicar should inform Bishop Doyle’s office well ahead of the visit and before the invitation. Confirmations and ordinations are reserved for the Bishops of Texas, except when express permission has been extended by Bishop Doyle. In the event that the visiting bishop is a primate from another Anglican province, courtesy suggests that the Office of the Presiding Bishop be informed of the visit and any planned public events (including worship).

# 3 - Safeguarding Ministry in the Diocese of Texas

The Diocese of Texas expects that all parishes, schools, and other diocesan entities will be environments of health, safety, and mutual care. The Safeguarding Ministry, a ministry of wellness and care, is an integral part of this expectation. Training requirements for clergy, along with certification requirements for laity, and policies for the prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, and reporting protocols (among many other resources) are all available online at [www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/home/](http://www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/home/). For all information about Safeguarding in Spanish, please visit [www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/salvaguandando/](http://www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/salvaguandando/).

The *Safeguarding God's Children* and *Safeguarding God's People* policies establish behavioral guidelines and boundaries for all people, lay and clergy, who minister to children, youth, and adults. These policies may be accessed from the diocesan website, [www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies/](http://www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies/). Electronic copies may be requested from the Safeguarding office, [safechurch@epicenter.org](mailto:safechurch@epicenter.org). Each of these policies is accompanied by specific and required administrative and record keeping procedures through the SRS (Safeguarding Record System).

Please direct questions about process, policy interpretation or misconduct to the Safeguarding minister, The Rev. Canon Lisa Hines, [lhines@epicenter.org](mailto:lhines@epicenter.org). Communications regarding records or SRS assistance should go to the Safeguarding Manager of Certification, Marty Brickley, [mbrickley@epicenter.org](mailto:mbrickley@epicenter.org). The Safeguarding office is located at the Diocesan Center in Austin on the Seminary of the Southwest campus, 512-478-0580 or 800-947-0580

## **Reporting Breaches of Policy and Boundary Violation**

Any person who notices a policy or boundary violation or receives a report of one is required to call the Safeguarding office and seek guidance in ways to address the issue. Most often, these lapses are due to forgetfulness or carelessness and are easily addressed and corrected. At other times, they indicate a deeper problem, which, when more extensive inquiry is made, may prevent more serious misconduct.

## **Responsibility for Administration**

The heads of congregations, the heads of schools, executive directors or any other person serving in these or equivalent roles in diocesan institutions are directly responsible to the Bishop for the implementation and administration of the policies and procedures outlined in EDOT's Safeguarding Policies, [www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies/](http://www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies/). The implementation and administration of these policies and procedures may be delegated to other staff members or volunteers, but the ultimate responsibility may not be delegated.

The administrator of these policies must be certified in Safeguarding God's People and be extensively familiar with the policies and procedures in order to make appropriate decisions about their application in the local ministry setting. The administrator is to contact the Safeguarding Minister for clarification of the policies or guidance in applying them. The administrator may contact the Safeguarding office, [safechurch@epicenter.org](mailto:safechurch@epicenter.org), at any time for assistance.

## **Required Safeguarding Certification in the Episcopal Diocese of Texas**

1. **For Clergy:** The Diocese of Texas requires all clergy to be certified in Safeguarding, by completing Safeguarding God’s Children and Safeguarding God’s People - Clergy training in our Diocese within 90 days of hire. This is in addition to any training, which may have previously been taken in another diocese and/or seminary. Recertification is required every five years. Clergy certifications are managed through the Safeguarding Office of The Episcopal Diocese of Texas. Contact the Safeguarding Office (in Austin) at 800.947.0580 to access training opportunities and verify certification.
  
2. **For all employees in diocesan churches, schools and institutions, full or part-time, and for all who work with or around children and youth in any setting, to be recorded in SRS:**
  - Completed application
  - Personal interview and reference check
  - Nationwide criminal and sex offender background check release and results
  - 3-hour training in Safeguarding God’s Children
  - Signed *Acknowledgement*
  
3. **All employees and supervisors of employees in churches, schools, and institutions must receive a copy of the *Sexual Harassment Policy Handbook***; view the *Safeguarding God’s People in the Workplace* video clip at [www.epicenter.org](http://www.epicenter.org); complete and sign the acknowledgment form, and return it to their employer, to be recorded in SRS.
  
4. **For members of congregations who participate in the ministries designated in the *Policy for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation*, to be recorded in SRS**
  - Completed application
  - Personal interview and reference check
  - Nationwide criminal and sex offender background check release and results
  - 3-hour training in Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation
  - Signed *Acknowledgement*

### **Five-Year Recertification:**

Trainings must be repeated every five years for employees and individuals still active in the designated ministries.

### **Trainers for Safeguarding Trainings**

Congregations, schools, and diocesan institutions are strongly advised to have their own trainers for *Safeguarding God’s Children*.

Each congregation (or a “cluster” of two to three small, adjacent congregations) needs to have their own trainer or trainers for *Safeguarding God’s People: Preventing Sexual Exploitation*.

# Policy Statement

## Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct

The Diocese of Texas is committed to providing a healthy, safe, and nurturing environment wherein, by God's grace, the full work of the Church can be carried out. Sexual misconduct on the part of any clergy person, employee, or volunteer of any congregation, institution, organization, school or agency within the Diocese violates the mission of the church, is prohibited, and will not be tolerated.

Below is a portion of the *Policies Prohibiting Sexual Exploitation and Harassment*. The full text of these and other policies can be found here: [www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies/](http://www.epicenter.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-policies/).

### **A. Definition of Sexual Misconduct**

Sexual misconduct encompasses a range of behavior(s) used to obtain sexual gratification against another's will or at the expense of another, or outside of one's own marriage covenant. Sexual misconduct includes sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse. This definition also includes sexual abuse of a minor (under 18 years of age) as set forth more specifically in the *Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*.

### **B. Abuse of Children and Youth**

Anyone who has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person has a legal responsibility to report it to the appropriate state or law enforcement agency. Anyone who becomes aware of sexual abuse or molestation involving a minor must also follow the reporting procedures outlined in the *Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*.

If a complaint of sexual misconduct is received by any person, that person shall report the complaint immediately to the Bishop so that an orderly response and investigation can be planned. If the alleged victim is a minor, the Diocese will follow all state law requirements for reporting abuse of a child, in accordance with the *Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*. All complaints will be promptly investigated.

It is intended that the privacy of the persons involved be protected, except to the extent necessary to conduct a proper investigation. If the complaint of sexual misconduct or sexual abuse or molestation of a minor has been reported to the criminal authorities, the Diocese will cooperate fully in any criminal investigation but will not undertake its own independent investigation unless requested to do so by the authorities.

No person who is known to have a civil or criminal conviction or record of child abuse, or who has admitted to sexual abuse, may be ordained, employed, or permitted to volunteer to work with or around children in the Diocese.

### **C. Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual misconduct also covers sexual exploitation. As set forth in the Diocese's Sexual Exploitation Policy, sexual exploitation is the development or attempt to develop a sexual relationship between a person in a ministerial position, lay or ordained, and an individual with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship.

### **D. Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is also included in the definition of prohibited sexual misconduct. Sexual harassment is defined in the Diocese's Sexual Harassment Policy as unwelcome sexual advances,

requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature in which:

- (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or relationship with the Diocese;
- (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by the individual is used as a basis for employment or other decisions affecting that person; or
- (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

**E. Reporting Sexual Misconduct between Adults**

Nothing in this policy requires the person complaining of sexual exploitation or sexual harassment to report the matter to the individual who is the subject of the complaint. Any person who believes that he or she is being subjected to any type of sexual misconduct between adults should bring the matter to the attention of the Church, regardless of the position of the offending person. Guidelines for reporting, including contact information, are contained in the Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Harassment Policies.

No one who reports sexual misconduct will be retaliated against or adversely treated because he or she made a complaint.

The Diocese may suspend any individual who is the subject of a complaint of sexual exploitation or sexual harassment during the pendency of the investigation. If the investigation substantiates that the complaint is valid, immediate corrective action designed to stop the misconduct and prevent its recurrence will be taken. Such corrective action may include discipline, up to and including discharge or dismissal of the offending person.



## Directives for Clergy

1. The development of a sexual or sexualized relationship between a clergyperson and a person with whom he or she has a pastoral relationship is forbidden.
2. Clergy are not to claim directly or by implication any pastoral or professional qualifications that exceed their actual qualifications or abilities. Clergy are expected to make appropriate referrals for matters that go beyond moral, spiritual, or religious guidance or whenever the needs of parishioners exceed those that can be competently handled by the clergyperson.
3. Clergy are to seek appropriate professional assistance for their own personal problems and conflicts, especially those that might impair their pastoral ability and judgment.
4. Clergy should not work in isolation but must be mindful of the need to maintain collegial and professional associations. It is necessary for clergy to develop and maintain such associations for the purposes of maintaining supervisory skills, theological and spiritual insights, educational acumen, and current knowledge of resources for ministry. Forming a clergy support group is encouraged.
5. Reconciliation of a penitent is a sacrament of the Church. When hearing a sacramental confession (the rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent), it must be remembered that “the secrecy of a confession is morally absolute for the confessor, and must under no circumstances be broken.” However, if the penitent confesses to child sexual abuse, the confessor can and should withhold absolution until the penitent notifies the authorities.
6. Clergy should treat all pastoral conversations as confidential; however, if a person communicates an intention to harm himself, herself, or others, this must be reported as appropriate.
7. Clergy must be familiar with and strictly comply with the *Diocesan Policy Prohibiting Sexual Misconduct* and *Diocesan Policies for the Protection of Children and Youth from Abuse*, including the requirement to report misconduct to the Diocese and, if it involves minors, to the authorities.
8. Generally, counseling is to be done in church offices during normal work hours. If counseling is done after hours, a staff member or volunteer must be present in the building.

# Weapons Policy

The Episcopal Diocese of Texas does not permit any person, including clergy, staff, students, volunteers, and visitors, to carry a weapon in our churches or schools. This prohibition applies even if the person is licensed to carry a weapon under Texas law. Law enforcement officers are the only exception to this policy.

The following are guidelines for keeping our churches and schools safe.

1. Churches and schools may hire off-duty police officers. These officers are trained in how to respond to threats to safety, including from armed intruders, and understand the degree of force necessary in various situations. When an officer responds, at whatever level, he or she is serving in the capacity of a law enforcement professional, with the legal safeguards that apply.
2. Churches and schools may consult with local police departments to learn what measures should be taken to prepare students and staff for emergency situations, including when an intruder enters the building or threatens harm. The police can assist in the development of a contingency plan including periodic safety drills. Schools should follow SAES, IAS, and/or NAES guidelines, depending on their association.
3. Churches and schools may hire private security firms. Some security firms hire retired police officers who have been trained in how to respond to threats of safety.

In all instances, churches and schools should be mindful of safety measures that can minimize the risk of harm to persons entrusted to their care, and should undertake a careful review of applicable policies, including those pertaining to access to buildings. All personnel must be vigilant in order to be able to identify and report any suspicious or threatening behavior. This awareness may prove crucial in our ability to diffuse a dangerous situation and prevent harm.

Please go to [www.epicenter.org/resources/policies/gun-law-and-policy/](http://www.epicenter.org/resources/policies/gun-law-and-policy/) for guidance on implementing this policy.

# Social Media Guidelines

(revised May 2016)

**All digital communications must comply with the same Safeguarding policies.**

The following guidelines, which apply commonly accepted principles of healthy boundaries for social networking, communication, online forums and gaming, **must be followed** by all EDOT ministries using social media of any kind.

- 1. Implement consistent privacy settings.** Settings must respect personal boundaries with all participants across all platforms.
  - a. Remember that privacy settings do not ensure confidentiality.
  - b. Each church/school/organization must develop and publish agreed upon privacy settings that staff and volunteers will use, and make that information available to parishioners, teachers, students, parents, and employees.
  
- 2. Be accountable.**
  - a. Adults (parents) should be aware of how leaders utilize social media platforms.
  - b. Communication should be with groups, in public areas rather than in private messages. This includes image sharing.
  - c. Ministry presence on social media platforms should have more than one administrator.
  - d. Frequently review accessible content and photos.
  - e. Keep informed about new and emerging social media platforms.
  
- 3. Report concerns promptly.** Laws regarding mandated reporting of suspected child abuse or exploitation of children, youth, elders and vulnerable adults apply to online communications too. Any suspected abuse must be reported to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: 800-252-5400 or [www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact\\_us/report\\_abuse.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_us/report_abuse.asp)
  
- 4. Use social media appropriately.** Do not use social media for sensitive matters that require pastoral care and attention. In those instances, a face to face meeting or phone call is preferable, as it allows for an assessment of tone and demeanor that can be helpful in evaluating the situation and determining both the urgency and appropriateness of a response. If an online communication raises any issue or concern about the health, safety, or well-being of any individual, it should be shared with the ministry leader and supervising clergy, who can help determine whether others, including parents, have a need to know about it.
  
- 5. Establish requirements for online groups.** In group communications, leaders should establish rules to govern group sites, clarifying the following:
  - a. Who may join and view group activity;
  - b. Content that can be posted or published on the site or page;
  - c. Appropriate & inappropriate language and behavior, including a prohibition against profane, derogatory, or discriminatory language;

- d. How images will be taken and shared;
  - e. Mandatory reporting requirements; and
  - f. Consequences for breaking the covenant, including removal from group.
- 6. Remove inappropriate material.** Any inappropriate material posted in online groups should be removed by the administrator. It should be saved and reported to the ministry leader and supervising clergy, who will determine what further action, if any, should be taken.
- 7. Be aware of surroundings.** When video chatting, be mindful of surroundings and attire, as they are visible to the viewer. One-on-One video chatting should follow the same safeguarding guidelines as face to face meetings. Video chatting should not occur behind closed doors.
- 8. Obtain releases.** If posting photos of children online or in any publication, obtain a photo release from parents. (This should be done annually for schools and programs). Do not provide personal or identifying information about the children or youth pictured.

The following Photo Release wording may be added to school and program registration:

*"I understand that photos or videos of my child and others may be taken during Sunday school and other church/school events. I consent to the use of my child's photo or likeness in promotional materials such as church/school website and other social media outlets. I understand that my child's identifying information will not be provided unless I give permission at a later time."*

- 9. Protect confidentiality.** Be aware that all communications sent digitally are not confidential and potentially may be shared or reposted to other platforms or people without an individual's permission or knowledge.
- 10. Consider timing.** Use prudent judgment in the timing of your communications. For example, consider work hours, school hours, meal times, vacations, and sleep schedules.

## 4 - Clergy Transition & Benefits

Please direct all questions regarding clergy transition to the Diocesan Transition Minister, the Rev. Francene Young, [fyoung@epicenter.org](mailto:fyoung@epicenter.org).

In the Episcopal Church, clergy may be placed only with the approval of the Bishop Diocesan.

### The Search Process

#### Participation in Searches

The Bishop expects clergy to notify the Diocesan Transition Minister when they are involved in a search process outside the Diocese of Texas.

#### Search Assistance

The Canon to the Ordinary is available to assist clergy in transition within and without the Diocese of Texas. The Office for Transition Ministry in the national church office is another resource, [www.episcopalchurch.org/page/transition-ministry](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/transition-ministry).

#### Eligibility

The Bishop Diocesan determines eligibility for transition ministry in the Diocese of Texas. It is based upon the clergy's qualifications. It is also dependent upon meeting the [Expectations of Clergy](#). No clergy is eligible to be called as rector or vicar in the church he or she currently serves or has previously served.

All clergy in good standing, bi-vocational priests and deacons included, may seek positions outside the Diocese. Clergy are encouraged to communicate their intentions to seek positions outside the Diocese to the Diocesan Transition Minister.

#### Staff Clergy Searches

Rectors who would like to call clergy or lay staff to join their congregational staffs from other congregations in the Diocese must consult the Bishop Diocesan, through the DTM, before they initiate conversations with clergy, and are expected, out of courtesy, to inform the potential candidate's rector of the intention to pursue the rector's staff member.

The Bishop Diocesan must be consulted, through the DTM, before any member of the clergy can be asked to join a staff.

The Bishop Diocesan must be consulted before a Rector of congregation contemplates calling assistants from outside the Diocese. The Bishop will not accept Letters Dimissory if not consulted in advance.

#### Deacons/Curates

The Bishop of Texas makes all ministry assignments for deacons and curates.

A rector may not recruit or hire a seminarian, deacon, or a curate without the Bishop's permission.

The Bishop must give approval for a rector to consider recruiting or hiring a curate or deacon from outside the Diocese of Texas. A curate or deacon is required to release a full canonical file. For assistance, contact the Diocesan Transition Minister.

## Expectations during Transition

The Bishop expects that once a clergyperson leaves a congregation, he or she will bring closure to pastoral relationships with members of that congregation. The health of the congregation is dependent upon how well the transition issue is managed. Former parishioners should understand from the clergy in a positive and affirming way that it is not appropriate to continue a pastoral relationship.

The Bishop expects that the clergyperson will accept no further requests from members and former members of the congregation to provide pastoral services at weddings, funerals, baptisms, or any other occasion of public worship for at least one year.

After one year, clergy may accept invitations from the interim rector or rector, but may not solicit such invitations.

# The Calling Process

## Terms

- a. *Rector* is a term for the duly appointed priest in charge of a congregation with all the rights and responsibilities as outlined in TEC Canon III.9.6 and following. The rector shall have been appointed after the vestry and the Bishop have certified that he or she is duly qualified, duly elected, and has accepted election.
- b. *Acting Rector* [*Priest-in-Charge, TEC Canon III.9.3(b)*] is a priest who is recommended to the vestry by the Bishop Diocesan and who is officially accepted by the vestry to serve as acting rector for a year. At the end of six months, or sooner with the Bishop's permission, and prior to the conclusion of one year from the start date, the vestry may call the acting rector to serve as rector.
- c. *Interim Rector* is a priest from outside the congregation who is selected by the vestry in cooperation with the Bishop as the priest in charge whose Letter of Agreement designates the priest as rector for a period of time during a transition between rectors. An interim agreement may last for months or years depending upon the situation.
- d. *Vicar* is a term for a duly appointed priest in charge of a mission congregation with all the rights and responsibilities as outlined in TEC Canon III.9.6 and following. The Bishop appoints a vicar.
- e. *Priest-in-Charge* is the canonical term for a clergyperson in charge of a congregation who is not a rector or vicar. Priest-in-charge refers to any priest exercising the rights and responsibilities of the rector/vicar during an interim.
- f. *Pastoral Leader* refers to a layperson in the bi-vocational priest track who is called by the Bishop and appointed head of congregation.

## Documents of Call

Several documents are part of the canonical appointment of all clergy:

1. Letter of Call/Appointment
  - a. Letter of Call to a rector/vicar from the vestry / Bishop's committee
  - b. Letter of Call to other clergy staff from the rector/vicar
  - c. Letter of Appointment from the Bishop will be issued in certain cases
2. Letter of Agreement
  - a. between vestry / Bishop's committee and rector/vicar
  - b. between rector and other clergy staff
3. Letter of Institution from the Bishop Diocesan for rector/vicar only

Please contact the Diocesan Transition Minister to request clergy Letters of Call and Letters of Agreement forms, [fyoung@epicenter.org](mailto:fyoung@epicenter.org).

### **Celebrations of New Ministry**

A bishop of the Diocese of Texas will officiate at Celebrations of New Ministry for rectors and vicars. If a bishop is not available, the dean of the respective convocation will officiate at Celebrations of New Ministry for bivocational vicars/rectors. Contact the assistant to your regional bishop to request a date for a Celebration of New Ministry.

### **Canonical Residence**

In order to apply for canonical residence, clergy must have a full-time, stipendiary position (40 hours per week) at a church or institution of the Diocese of Texas.

### **Letters Dimissory**

Rector or Vicar: Clergy appointed as rector or vicar are required to present Letters Dimissory within three months of their appointment.

When a call to the Diocese of Texas has been issued and accepted, clergy should request that their Letters Dimissory from the Ecclesiastical Authority in the diocese of their canonical residence be sent to The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, Episcopal Diocese of Texas, 1225 Texas Street, Houston, TX 77002.

Assistant, Associate, or Curate: When a call to the Diocese of Texas has been issued and accepted, a two-year License to Officiate will be issued. Upon completion of a year of employment, the Bishop will advise if he will accept Letters Dimissory. If not, an additional year of employment must be completed.

Deacon: A clergyperson may not serve as deacon for more than two months unless he or she has been licensed in the Diocese of Texas. A deacon may not transfer Letters Dimissory without written consent from the Bishop of Texas. (TEC Canon III.7.6)

Interim/Retired Clergy: The Bishop does not accept Letters Dimissory for interim or retired clergy.

## **Clergy Benefits**

### **Compensation and Review**

The Diocese offers, through the Canon to the Ordinary and the Office of the Treasurer, consultation in determining clergy compensation based on a comparative model. A vestry or clergyperson may request a comparison and/or review at any time.

### **Health Insurance**

Participation by full-time clergy in the diocesan health insurance is mandatory; premiums are paid through the assessment budget. Clergy entering the Diocese after January 1, 2015 are covered with single coverage by the Diocese. When calling new clergy, adjustments to stipend may be necessary to enable them to purchase family coverage. Please contact Zee Turnbull, Human Resources Administrator, or Kai Ryan, Canon to the Ordinary, with questions.

### **Pension Contributions**

Participation in the Church Pension Fund by stipendiary active clergy is mandatory and is provided by the vestry through the parish budget.

### **Business Expenses**

Office and business expenses, including auto/travel allowances, are not a part of a clergyperson's compensation package, but are budgeted in the parish budget.

### **Mission Clergy Compensation**

The Bishop and the Diocesan Council determine compensation for mission clergy. The Office of the Treasurer administers payroll matters.

## **Vacation/Leave/Sabbatical**

Scheduled Time Off: All clergy must have one day per week in which there are no scheduled duties or functions. The clergy must inform the congregation or place of employment of scheduled time off. This time must be respected. When clerical duties arise during clergy's scheduled time off, appropriate compensatory time is given.

Spiritual Practices: Time spent in prayer, professional study, spiritual retreat, and theological reflection is not considered "time off." Rather, such activities are essential to the exercise of the priestly vocation.

Absenteeism: When clergy are absent from their place of employment or assigned duties on account of illness, death in the family, or for other compassionate reasons, they must obtain approval from their elected leadership or supervisors. Otherwise, stipend and allowances may be withheld for the period in question, if applicable.

Maternity Leave: All female clergy are entitled to a minimum of six weeks and a maximum of twelve weeks of maternity leave through the Short-Term Disability policy with no waiting period. During the two-year curacy period, maternity leave will be for a maximum of six weeks, unless longer leave is medically required. Clergy not in their curacy must negotiate the length of leave with the Vestry, Rector, or other appropriate body. Please contact the Human Resources Administrator for more information and assistance.

Paternity Leave: All male clergy are entitled to paternity leave for a birth or adoption of a child. During the two-year curacy period, paternity leave will be approved for a maximum of three weeks. Clergy not in their curacy must negotiate the length of leave with the Vestry, Rector, or other appropriate body. The time will be charged as vacation time or unpaid leave. Please contact the Human Resources Administrator for more information and assistance.

Clergy Supply: Clergy supply and pastoral services are funded by the place of employment during periods of clergy absence for vacation or continuing education. Clergy are expected to inform their elected leadership or supervisors at least 30 days prior to taking any vacation or continuing education time, if possible.

Continuing Education: Canonically, all clergy must meet an annual continuing education requirement. See [Continuing Education](#) for detailed requirements.

### Letters of Agreement Provisions:

Full-time stipendiary priests and transitional deacons must have provisions in their Letters of Agreement for the following:

- Paid Vacation: Diocesan policy designates paid vacation of at least 30 days each year, including four Sundays (or primary Eucharistic celebrations). No restrictions are placed on how vacation is spent.
- Continuing Education: Diocesan policy designates 14 days, including two Sundays (or primary Eucharistic celebrations), each year for continuing education pursuits, with full pay and allowances.
- Clergy Sabbatical: "Sabbatical" is defined as a period of at least three months away from a priest's primary employer for the purpose of enhancing his/her ministry by a period of study, travel, reflection, and rest. Two weeks of cumulative sabbatical time will accrue each year. Accrual begins at the time of ordination and continues each year, regardless of the ministry location in the Diocese. A sabbatical can be taken after the completion of six years of ordained ministry. The sabbatical will be with full pay and allowances and may be taken in conjunction with annual vacation and continuing education time. Sabbatical grants are available. To request a sabbatical grant, please contact the Rt. Rev. Jeff W. Fisher, [jfisher@epicenter.org](mailto:jfisher@epicenter.org). (Also see [Sabbaticals](#).)

Part-time stipendiary priests must have provisions in their Letters of Agreement for the following:

- Paid Vacation: Diocesan policy designates paid vacation, including four Sundays (or primary Eucharistic celebration days), with the total number of days proportionate to the number of days contracted to work per year, as compared with the full-time allotted vacation of 30 days per year. No restrictions are placed on how vacation is spent.



- Continuing Education: Diocesan policy designates seven days, including two Sundays (or primary Eucharistic celebration days), each year for continuing education pursuits, with full pay and allowances.

Vocational deacons and bi-vocational priests must have provisions in their Letters of Agreement for the following:

- Vacation: Diocesan policy designates vacation of four Sundays (or primary Eucharistic celebration days) away from the congregation. No restrictions are placed on how vacation is spent.
- Continuing Education: Diocesan policy designates two Sundays (or primary Eucharistic celebration days) each year for continuing education pursuits.

### **Retired Clergy Active in Ministry**

The Church Pension Group governs the salary retired clergy may earn. The Bishop must submit an application for exemption from these guidelines:

When clergy retire, they may serve in the Episcopal Church and continue to receive pension benefits as long as:

They are in good standing with the Episcopal Church

They will not be working in the church or institution from which you have retired

Their total compensation from Episcopal Church-related income does not exceed \$37,200 for any 12 month period, effective January 1, 2016.

If they are age 72 or older, they may serve in the Episcopal Church with no restrictions on income.

All retired clergy active in ministry must meet the Bishop's [Expectations of Clergy](#).

### **Supply Clergy Policy**

According to Canon 10.4, the senior Warden or Bishop's Warden is responsible for arranging for supply clergy. A list of clergy who are available to supply and the current standard rates for hiring supply clergy are available on the on the diocesan website at [www.epicenter.org/congregational-life/transition-ministry/about-transition-ministry/](http://www.epicenter.org/congregational-life/transition-ministry/about-transition-ministry/). To be added to the Supply Clergy List, please direct requests to the Canon to the Ordinary, [kryan@epicenter.org](mailto:kryan@epicenter.org).

Diocese of Texas non-parochial clergy and licensed clergy are eligible to supply, provided they are in good standing with the Bishop and meet the [Expectations of Clergy](#), including [Background Checks](#) and [Sexual Abuse Prevention](#).

### **Interim Clergy**

Please direct questions regarding interim ministry to the Diocesan Transition Minister.

Candidates for interim positions within the Diocese of Texas are expected to meet the Bishop's [Expectations of Clergy](#), regardless of canonical residence or active/retired status.

# 5 - Continuing Education for Clergy

## Mission

*Theological/Academic, Professional, Personal*

*Seeking the knowledge of such things as may make us stronger and more able ministers of Christ*

## Diocese of Texas Requirements

**24 CEUs** per annual cycle, from September 1 to August 31, for full-time stipendiary clergy serving diocesan congregations and institutions such as hospitals, human need facilities and schools.

**12 CEUs** per annual cycle for all other clergy exercising ordained ministry within the Diocese. This includes part-time, supply, bi-vocational priests, deacons, chaplains, and ordained persons who are not working full time, including retired clergy who are continuing to work part time.

Clergy who are canonically resident but not living or serving in the Diocese of Texas will be exempt from this requirement. Fully retired, non-active clergy are encouraged but not required to obtain CEUs.

Clergy who serve in religious professional capacities such as hospital chaplains or heads of schools who are required to have continuing education from a licensing/certification agency will be allowed to utilize the continuing education credits required by those agencies as long as they meet the contact hour requirements of the Diocese of Texas. If they do not completely meet the diocesan requirement, they can supplement their licensing CEUs with other opportunities. They are required to send a copy of their professionally required CEU accounting to the Diocese of Texas by August 31 of each year.

## Continuing Education Unit (CEU)

The standard for one CEU in the Diocese of Texas is one contact hour in a learning situation. This may include one-on-one instruction, online learning, classroom, conference, small group collaborative work, and the educational component of religious pilgrimages. Personal spiritual retreats and direction also qualify.

Independent study can also qualify for CEUs.\*

Opportunities that do not qualify for CEUs: worship; fellowship; breaks; mealtimes during a class; conferences and educational opportunities that do not support leadership; professional; theological or personal development; or classes to become proficient in hobbies or second careers.

## Educational Competencies

The three competency areas include Theological/Academic, Professional, and Personal.

It *is recommended* that the 24 CEU annual cycle requirement be balanced with eight CEUs in each of the three competency areas.

## Clergy are required to complete at least three CEUs in each competency area during an annual cycle.

Excess CEU hours over the minimum annual cycle requirement may not roll over for credit into the next annual cycle.

**SAMPLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE LISTED BELOW:**

**Theological/Academic**

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- Biblical Studies
- Doctorate of Ministry programs through accredited institutions
- Languages
  - Spanish,
  - Greek,
  - Hebrew
  - Other
- Ethics
- Church history
- Arts and theology
- Overview of contemporary works
- All seminary offerings
- Science and religion issues
- Diocesan seminars with theologians

**Personal**

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- Mind, body, health awareness
- Clergy wellness
- Counseling to deal with personal issues
- Maintaining balance in work and life
- Personal financial management
- Coursework that assists in self-awareness: strengths, development of giftedness, etc.
- Spiritual retreats
- Spiritual direction

**Professional**

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- Participation in facilitated Clericus meetings
- Congregational development including diocesan conferences and specific retreats for clergy
- Training or education in the following areas:
  - Safeguarding
  - Leadership skills
  - Conflict management
  - Staff management, team building
  - Leading change
  - Stewardship, fund-raising

**Accounting for CEUs**

The Diocese has instituted a self-accrediting and reporting system. No advance approvals are necessary.

The Diocese will not automatically award CEUs to individuals. Each clergyperson will need to account for the CEUs gained by referencing these guidelines and reporting them on the Annual CEU Submission Report form, which can be found online at [www.epicenter.org/annual-ceu-report/](http://www.epicenter.org/annual-ceu-report/). For questions, contact Nina Gaspar, Technology Manager, Houston Diocesan Center, [ngaspar@epicenter.org](mailto:ngaspar@epicenter.org).

**Maximum credits may be awarded in an annual cycle for the following:**

- 12 CEUs for each academic course taken from accredited institutions including DMin. programs; independent study\*; participation in a single event or learning opportunity; one-on-one work with counselors
- 10 CEUs for participation in facilitated Clericus meetings
- 6 CEUs for full participation in all offerings of the Annual Clergy Conference; participation in a spiritual retreat
- 3 CEUs for research and work done to develop new curriculum/courses for instruction; chaplain in residency week at Camp Allen

**\*Independent Study**

There are occasions when a clergyperson has an unusual learning opportunity that falls outside the situations listed in these guidelines. This might include a self-directed course of study, which incorporates numerous books/articles around a particular topic or work done with experts or consultants. A full explanation of this type of work is required in the accounting and may not be approved toward the CEU requirement. Criteria for approval will include the comprehensiveness of the study and the outcomes.

**All clergy will be required to complete the online *Annual CEU Credit Submission Report* by August 31 of the annual cycle in which credit is needed. Supporting documentation verifying attendance is no longer required. Information will be included in each clergyperson's records and an annual report will be created for the Bishop's review. Each record may be a determining factor at times of transition and other situations that arise concerning the individual clergyperson.**

# 6 - Worship

All canons governing worship are found in Title II of the Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Church as adopted and revised by General Convention 2015

## **Prayer Book**

The 1979 *Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* is the standard prayer book for worship. The *BCP* is to be used at the principal services on Sunday morning.

## **Trial Use**

Congregations may request permission from the Bishop for trial use of materials approved by General Convention pursuant to Article X of the National Constitution.

## **Enriching Our Worship**

The *Enriching Our Worship* series may be used for worship that is not the principal worship service on Sunday. If you wish to use *Enriching Our Worship* for special services at which a bishop will be present, such as a celebration of new ministry, please consult the participating Bishop well in advance of the service for his or her guidance and permission.

## **Anglican Prayer Books**

Permission must be requested of the Bishop in writing for the use of any prayer book other than the *BCP* for principal Sunday worship.

Permission is granted for congregations to use current prayer books from other churches of the Anglican Communion for services other than the principal Sunday service.

## **Marriage and Remarriage**

Canons governing remarriage are found in TEC Canon I.19.2-3. Clergy are responsible for knowing the requirements and initiating communication with the Office of the Bishop. (See [Remarriage Petitions.](#))

## **Baptism/Confirmation/Reception**

Canons governing baptism, confirmation, and reception are found in TEC Canon I.17.

*Baptism:* All persons who have received the sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in this church or another Christian church, and are duly recorded in the parish register are members of this church.

*Adult Members:* Members 16 years of age and older are considered adult members.

*Confirmation:* Confirmation is the normative rite for adults who desire to make a public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their baptism, following instruction in the faith of the Church. *Adult confirmed members* are therefore those who have been baptized, confirmed, and are now at least 16 years of age.

*Reception:* Adults who are baptized and who have been confirmed by bishops of churches in historic succession as well as adults who are baptized and previously made a mature public commitment in another church may be received or confirmed. If an adult was confirmed by clergy other than a bishop, including those confirmed by priests in the Roman Catholic Church, he or she should be confirmed rather than received.

*Reaffirmation:* Reaffirmation is for adults who wish to reaffirm their baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

## **Deacon's Mass**

Deacon's masses are not authorized.

## **Rubrics for a Deacon Performing a Marriage in the Diocese of Texas**

1. A deacon needs the permission of the Bishop to preside over the Celebration of a Marriage. In cases when the marriage is to take place in a sanctuary, permission of the rector or vicar must also be obtained. If a priest is available, a deacon should not preside, but can do parts of the service that express the pastoral relationship with the couple.
2. When presiding over a marriage, a deacon should use the traditional liturgy beginning on page 423 of the BCP with the understanding that the nuptial blessing, which follows the Prayers on page 431 of the BCP, is to be omitted.
3. When a deacon presides at a marriage for a couple connected to an Episcopal congregation, the deacon should encourage the couple to get their marriage blessed by a priest at a later time.
4. A deacon must ensure that the engaged couple receive adequate pre-marital counseling and preparation.
5. In the case of a same-gender marriage, all guidelines with respect to Diocesan policy and approved liturgies apply and must be upheld, a summary of which can be found at [www.epicenter.org/unity/](http://www.epicenter.org/unity/).

## **Episcopal Visitations**

All questions regarding episcopal visitations are to be directed to the assistant for the bishop who will be visiting. In order to facilitate a bishop's visit to the congregation the following information is offered:

### **Vision and Mission**

When a bishop makes a parish visitation, he expects to meet with members of the parish during the visitation. The bishop also may request a meeting with the vestry to receive a presentation on the challenges and accomplishments of the parish. Please send the following ahead of time: core values, vision and mission statements, and goals.

### **Liturgical Readings and Colors**

The readings should be those appointed for the day. The confirmation readings are only used for a weekday confirmation service at which there is no baptism. If confirmation occurs on a Holy Day, the Holy Day readings take precedence. For confirmation, the color should be the color of the day; for baptism with confirmation, the color is white.

### **Bishop's Chaplain**

If present, a Canon or the Archdeacon of the Diocese shall be the Bishop's Chaplain. Otherwise, another person is to be appointed to serve in this capacity. It is expected that the deacon serve in the diaconal role and as chaplain. If there are two deacons, they may divide the role and the work. *Priests should not read the Gospel or say the dismissal if a deacon is present.*

### **Pew Bulletins**

Please send an advance copy of the Order of Service (even if only a draft) to the visiting bishop and the bishop's assistant.

### **Parking Space**

Please have a designated parking space clearly marked "Bishop."

### **Discretionary Fund Check**

Please announce, in the bulletin and/or in the verbal announcements, that funds collected during a

Bishop's visitation will go to that Bishop's discretionary fund. Such funds are used in furthering their work for the mission of the Church. Please send one check from the congregation, payable to Episcopal Diocese of Texas, Memo - Bishop (Name's) Discretionary Fund. Mail to Office of the Treasurer, Episcopal Diocese of Texas, 1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002

Sample announcement for service bulletin or publicity:

"All funds collected during the offertory will be given to the Bishop \_\_\_\_'s discretionary fund, to be used as he/she determines will best further the mission of the Church and the Diocese of Texas."

### **Bishop's Customary, Visitation, and Confirmation Record Form**

These forms should be sent in advance of a bishop's visitation. For information about the forms or other questions, please contact the assistant to the bishop who will be visiting. (See [Diocesan Staff and Functions](#)).

### **Expectations Regarding Bishops Visiting from Outside the Diocese**

Episcopal or Anglican bishops from outside the Diocese may be invited to visit congregations and may preach and/or teach. Confirmations and ordinations are reserved for the Bishops of Texas, except when express permission has been extended by Bishop Doyle. When a Bishop from outside the Diocese will be present in a congregation, the rector or vicar should inform Bishop Doyle's office well ahead of the visit. In the event that the bishop is a primate from another Anglican province, courtesy suggests that the Office of the Presiding Bishop be informed of the visit and any planned public events (including worship).

# 7 - Marriage

## Remarriage for Church Members Questionnaire and Petition

NOTE: All petitions should be submitted with a cover letter, if not in letter form, at least 30 days prior to the proposed blessing date and should be addressed to:

The Right Reverend C. Andrew Doyle, Episcopal Diocese of Texas  
1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002

The following information must be provided:

1. The full names and ages of both parties to the proposed marriage
2. The name(s) of the Episcopal congregation(s) in which these persons are active members
3. The name(s) of the former spouse(s)
4. The date(s) of the final divorce decree(s): For a second marriage, a waiting period of one year from the date of the final decree is normally required. If a lengthy separation (in excess of two years) has occurred, a six-month waiting period *may* be granted. NOTE: If the clergyperson making the request has seen a copy of the divorce decree, it is not necessary to include a copy of the decree with this petition.
5. If any children of the divorced spouse are minors, a statement of the court-ordered financial arrangements for their support and whether all such payments are current.
6. Based upon counseling with the couple, a separate statement from the clergyperson as to why the prior marriage(s) failed; why the couple feels the proposed marriage will be different; and how the couple intends to place God at the center of their marriage and home.
7. Based upon your counseling with the couple, a separate statement from the clergyperson affirming that he or she is firmly convinced that the petition should be granted and giving reasons for this opinion.

In the event of a third marriage by either party, the parties to the proposed marriage must consult with a licensed marriage therapist as to their readiness for marriage. The written opinion of the therapist must be conveyed to the petitioning priest and included with the petition to the Bishop.

Insofar as fourth marriages by either party are concerned, no petitions will be considered except under *very* unusual circumstances.

Regarding the blessing of marriages performed by civil authority, the Diocesan Guidelines state: "Marriages may be blessed for those who marry outside the Church once sufficient time has elapsed that would have made it possible for them to apply for remarriage in the Church according to the regular Diocesan Guidelines."

Only a priest can serve as the petitioner in a request for a marital judgment. Letters written by others cannot and will not be considered.

NOTE that if the priest making the judgment is not the rector or priest-in-charge of the church in which the proposed ceremony is to take place, there must also be a letter from that person assuring the Bishop of his or her concurrence with the petition.



# Blessing of Same-Sex Marriage for Church Members

## Questionnaire and Petition

NOTE: All petitions should be submitted with a cover letter, if not in letter form, at least 30 days prior to the proposed blessing date and should be addressed to:

The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, Episcopal Diocese of Texas  
1225 Texas Avenue, Houston, Texas 77002

This petition is to be used by priests for all those seeking to bless a same-sex marriage. The following information must be provided:

1. Date of request
2. Place and date of ceremony and name of priest performing blessing
3. The name of the Episcopal congregation(s) in which one or both of these persons are active members
4. If in a church, has the congregation received the bishop's approval for the trial rite to be used in the sanctuary of the church? If by an associate/assisting priest or curate, has the rector been contacted and given permission? (Please see note below.)
5. The full names and ages of both parties to the proposed blessing
6. How long has this couple been together? Has either been married previously? If so, confirm that the divorce degree is dated a minimum of one year prior to the ceremony, and follow guidelines found in the remarriage petition.
7. Based upon your counseling with the couple, include a separate statement of your understanding of the manner in which the couple intends to place God at the center of their relationship and home and a clear request for the Bishop's approval of the petition, with your signature.

Only a priest can serve as the petitioner in a request for a marital judgment (letters written by others cannot be considered).

NOTE: If the priest making the judgment is not the rector or priest-in-charge of the Church in which the proposed ceremony is to take place, there must also be a letter from that person assuring the Bishop of his or her concurrence with the petition.

*If there has been a prior marriage, please use this section.*

1. Regarding a blessing after prior marriage: the name(s) of the former spouse(s).
2. Please include your separate statement as to why the prior marriage(s) failed.
3. Based upon your counseling with the couple include your separate statement as to why they feel the proposed marriage will be different from previous long-term relationships?
4. If there has been a prior marriage, please provide the date(s) of any final divorce decree(s).
5. If there are any children from the previous marriage or relationship who are minors, state the financial arrangements for their support and whether all such payments are current.
6. Based upon your counseling with the couple include a separate statement that you are firmly convinced that the petition should be granted and give your reasons for this opinion.

In the event of a third marriage or blessing of a relationship by either party, the parties to the proposed marriage must consult with a licensed therapist as to their readiness for this commitment. The written opinion of the therapist must be conveyed to the petitioning priest and included with the petition to the Bishop.

Insofar as fourth marriages by either party are concerned, no petitions will be considered except under very unusual circumstances.

# Same-Sex Marriage Policy & Frequently Asked Questions

If a priest wants to officiate a same-sex marriage in an Episcopal sanctuary, he or she may do so if the church has already been through a formation/discernment process and has received the Bishop's approval. Churches that have received the Bishop's permission to bless same-sex unions are automatically approved. Once a church is "approved," priests at the approved congregation may perform same-sex marriages without further approval, unless it is a second marriage in which case they must petition the Bishop.

If a rector wants to officiate a same-sex marriage outside an Episcopal sanctuary, he or she may do so. He or she does not necessarily have to serve at an "approved" congregation. An associate should ask permission from their rector before performing a same-sex marriage.

A priest is no longer permitted to perform a "blessing of a same-gender union." Furthermore, the same remarriage petition process applies to same-sex marriages and traditional marriages. Any information needed on what liturgy to use or how to get approved as a church to perform same-sex marriages can be found at [www.epicenter.org/unity/](http://www.epicenter.org/unity/) in Bishop Doyle's policy paper.

## Frequently Asked Questions

Why does the Bishop allow for clergy and congregations to choose whether or not they will marry same-sex couples?

*Our chief value in navigating this particular issue is unity as we work together in God's mission of reconciliation. Reconciliation means living with difference, celebrating our diversity, and building a peaceful commons.*

What does the Bishop expect of his clergy as they navigate the issue of same-sex marriage?

*The Bishop expects his clergy to act in accordance with their conscience, to understand and respect the viewpoint of those who see this issue a bit differently, and to adopt a posture of humility. A posture of humility requires clergy to place their perspective and practice with respect to same-sex marriage behind our common commitment to God's mission of reconciliation.*

Am I required to officiate at a same-sex marriage?

*No. Episcopal polity provides that each clergy be given the discretion to decline or solemnize any marriage.*

May I still perform a "blessing of a same-gender union," as opposed to performing an actual same-sex marriage?

*No.*

Why does the final decision on marriage belong in the parish? Isn't this congregationalism?

*We are drawing on the Anglican principal of subsidiarity, which means that "non-essential" issues are made at the local level. At the heart of our Episcopal ethos is a willingness to walk the via media, or the "middle way," which means that we live with difference and celebrate our diversity. Our unity is found in common prayer, as opposed to a common perspective on non-essential issues.*

If a congregation wants to change their bylaws to self-differentiate as having traditional values, what would that process look like?

*They will need to request permission from the Bishop Diocesan prior to proceeding. The vestry will be asked to go through a brief formation process to make sure their decision is fully informed.*

If a congregation wants to marry same-sex couples, what would that process look like?

*They will need to request permission from the Bishop Diocesan, who will require that the rector and vestry work through a process of preparation. The rector and senior warden will write the Bishop to confirm that a sufficient time of discernment has been carefully undertaken before the marriage takes place.*

What if I am a clergy person serving in a congregation that has not received permission to marry same-sex couples? May I officiate a same-sex marriage?

*Yes. Episcopal polity provides that each clergy be given the discretion to solemnize any marriage. However, the marriage needs to take place outside the sanctuary of the Church and you will still need the permission of the Bishop.*

Do I need permission each time I officiate the marriage of a same-sex couple?

*No. Congregations that have gone through a formation process and who have been approved to marry same-sex couples do not need to get permission with each subsequent marriage. The same principle holds true for clergy who have received permission from their Bishop.*

Does our congregation have to go through a process and “choose” a particular course of action?

*No. Not every congregation wants to deal with same-sex marriage or even discuss it. That is an acceptable option. However, it may be preferable for a congregation to be proactive and to go through a discernment process so that they are ready to offer a prayerful response to gay couples seeking marriage.*

# 8 - Clergy Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

This policy is based upon TEC Canon I.19.

## **Clergy Marriage and Remarriage**

The Bishop expects that any clergyperson, when considering marriage, will meet with him for consultation before proceeding. In the case of remarriage, all the provisions found in [Remarriage Petitions](#) will also apply to clergy.

## **Clergy Marriage**

All members of the clergy, having subscribed to the Declaration required by Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church, shall be under obligation to model in their own lives the received teaching of the Church that all of its members are to abstain from sexual relations outside marriage.

Marriage shall mean the physical and spiritual union between two persons entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of the heart, mind, and will, and with intent that it be lifelong.

## **Clergy Divorce**

If the marital relationship between a clergyperson and spouse is threatened, it is expected that they will counsel with the Bishop, who will aid and support them in seeking appropriate professional help toward reconciliation.

If every effort to preserve the marriage fails, and either spouse seeks a divorce, the clergyperson shall immediately inform the Bishop.

# 9 - Addiction and Gambling Policies

## Addiction Policy

The Diocese of Texas will follow the outlined guidelines for clergypersons who experience chemical abuse or dependency:

- Exploratory questioning about chemical abuse or dependency;
- Consideration of a formal chemical dependency assessment from a credentialed chemical dependency treatment specialist;
- For consideration for employment, the person will be assessed after a period in the range of two to five years, depending on the following:
  - motivation to obtain assessment and treatment
  - response to treatment of not less than two years of sobriety
  - achievement of sobriety
  - record of relapse prevention

## Gambling Policy

Gambling is defined as participation in any game or activity where money or objects of value may be won by chance.

Gambling must not be a regular or frequent part of the activities of any congregation, school, or diocesan institution. Occasional special events or fundraisers that include bingo or a raffle are permissible, provided the value of any prize does not exceed the \$600 IRS reporting threshold.

This policy applies to any event or activity of a diocesan institution, congregation, or church-related entity such as a school, youth group, outreach ministry, and the like, regardless of the location of the event or activity.

All congregations, diocesan institutions, schools, and church-related entities must comply with this policy if any form of gambling is permitted at all.

# 10 - Alcohol Policy

The Episcopal Church acknowledges the need for exercising a healing ministry and for offering guidance to victims of addiction and to members of their families.

The Church calls on all its members to take to heart the seriousness of the illness of addiction as a disrupter of family, economic and social life, and to do everything in their power to offer the love of Christ in a healing ministry to those afflicted persons and families. It is expected that the leadership of each congregation will be aware of local resources and programs that can provide assistance. The Diocesan Recovery Ministries are also a resource.

It is the responsibility of the vestry of each congregation to develop, adopt, and publicize a policy in accordance with these guidelines for the use or prohibition of alcoholic beverages.

## Use of Alcoholic Beverages in the Local Congregation

Many churches do not serve alcoholic beverages. Those that do must comply with this policy.

1. The Church must provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.
2. All applicable federal, state, and local laws should be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
3. Some dioceses and congregations may decide not to serve alcohol at events or gatherings. Others may decide to permit a limited use of alcoholic beverages at church-sponsored events. Both can be appropriate if approached mindfully.
4. When alcohol is served, it must be monitored and those showing signs of intoxication must not be served. Whenever alcohol is served, the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge must appoint an adult to oversee its serving. That adult must not drink alcoholic beverages during the time of his or her execution of his or her responsibilities. If hard liquor is served, a certified server is required.
5. Serving alcoholic beverages at congregational events where minors are present is strongly discouraged. If minors are present, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.
6. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such. Food prepared with alcohol does not need to be labeled provided the alcohol is completely evaporated by the cooking process; however, it is recommended that even in this case the use of alcohol in cooking be noted on a label.
7. Whenever alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.
8. The serving of alcoholic beverages at church events should not be publicized as an attraction of the event, e.g. "wine and cheese reception," "cocktail party," and "beer and wine tasting."

9. Ministries inside or outside of congregations will make certain that alcohol consumption is not the focus of the ministry and that drinking alcohol is not an exclusively normative activity.
10. Food must be served when alcohol is present.
11. The groups or organizations sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the clergy or the vestry. Such groups or organizations must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated and must provide alternative transportation for anyone whose capacity to drive may be impaired. Consulting with liability insurance carriers is advised.
12. Recognizing the effects of alcohol as a mood-altering drug, alcoholic beverages shall not be served when the business of the Church is being conducted.
13. Clergy shall consecrate an appropriate amount of wine when celebrating the Eucharist and perform ablutions in a way that does not foster or model misuse.
14. We encourage clergy to acknowledge the efficacy of receiving the sacrament in one kind and consider providing non-alcoholic wine.

# 11 - Parish Administration

Finance and business administration matters are handled through the Office of the Treasurer, Linda R. Mitchell, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), [lmitchell@epicenter.org](mailto:lmitchell@epicenter.org).

## **Clergy Pension**

The Church Pension Group has a website for information regarding benefits. Participants may choose to personalize their information and track their benefits on a regular basis. [www.cpg.org](http://www.cpg.org)

## **Health Insurance**

Zee Turnbull administers health insurance in the diocesan office. Please contact her with questions or help in understanding benefits, [zturnbull@epicenter.org](mailto:zturnbull@epicenter.org).

## **Property Insurance**

David Fisher is the diocesan coordinator for property insurance. [dfisher@epicenter.org](mailto:dfisher@epicenter.org)

Episcopal schools, day care centers, nursing homes, and camps will be on separate policies obtained with Church Insurance Corp. or the insurance company the institution chooses, as long as they are in compliance with the EDOT canons, which require that adequate insurance coverage be held on all church property.

Any congregation or institution not using Church Insurance Corp. for coverage must provide a copy of its insurance policy to David Fisher for review.

## **Third Party Lease Agreements**

If a congregation wishes to enter into an agreement with a prospective third-party tenant involving the leasing all or a portion of the church campus, before entering into such an agreement the rector or senior warden must contact David Fisher in the Foundations Office, 713-520-6444. All third-party lease agreements must be approved by the Church Corporation. Third party leases create an encumbrance on the property, which requires by Canon the authorization of the Church Corporation.

## **Bonding**

Vestries and Bishop's committees are responsible for insuring that both the treasurer and business administrator, if applicable, of the congregation are bonded for a minimum of \$250,000.

## **Audits**

Every congregation and institution must have an annual audit. (Diocese of Texas Canon 13.5)

In implementing this canon, the Executive Board has adopted a procedure whereby an audit committee of individuals from the congregation may be authorized to perform the annual review of the financial records of any congregation or institution. For these guidelines, contact Andre Kierkiewicz, controller.

Andre Kierkiewicz is also available to assist with questions or inquiries, [akierkiewicz@epicenter.org](mailto:akierkiewicz@epicenter.org).



## **Parochial Report**

The requirement to file a parochial report is outlined in TEC Canon I.6. Each church is required to file the report online. The diocesan staff can access the report after a church has marked it as complete.

The diocesan office does not require submission of a hard copy. The diocesan deadline for filing is earlier than the filing deadline for the national church. In this Diocese, the parochial reports are due by February 1, before our Annual Diocesan Council. Failure to file the report prior to the Annual Diocesan Council can cause the affected church to have seat but no voice or vote.

Every year a copy of the blank report, workbooks, and a cover letter is sent to each church from the national church office. Do not use the national church deadline in the cover letter or the report will not be submitted by the diocesan deadline of February 1.

Please address questions to Nina Gaspar, [ngaspar@epicenter.org](mailto:ngaspar@epicenter.org).

## **Discretionary Funds**

Discretionary funds rest on the canonical authority embodied in the Canons of the Episcopal Church, TEC Canon III.9.6(b)(6).

### **Authority:**

The alms and contributions, not otherwise specifically designated, at the administration of Holy Communion on one Sunday in each calendar month, and other offerings for the poor, shall be deposited with the clergy person in charge of the parish or mission or with such church officer as shall be appointed by him, to be applied by him or under his supervision, to such pious and charitable uses as shall be fitting. During a vacancy, the vestry shall appoint a responsible person to serve as almoner.

### **Sources:**

The sources of discretionary funds vary. The TEC canon referenced above is generally interpreted to mean that at a minimum of one Sunday a month, the loose offering at the Holy Eucharist is first deposited with the parish treasurer and then set aside for the rector's discretionary fund. In some parishes, the loose offering at all services of the Holy Eucharist on a designated day is set aside for the rector's discretionary fund. Some congregations have trusts, the income from which is designed for the discretionary fund. Other congregations set aside a budgeted amount for the discretionary funds of the clergy in addition to the traditional sources or as a substitute for them.

### **Clergy:**

Some clergy place gifts received for weddings, funerals, and baptisms into the discretionary fund. Because of income tax considerations, it is recommended that clergy either adopt the practice of putting all such fees and gifts into the discretionary fund or none.

It is improper to mingle personal funds of any kind with discretionary funds.

### **Records:**

Some congregations maintain the discretionary fund as a line item in the parish books, and the parish treasurer draws checks on vouchers signed by the clergy. This form of recordkeeping is the safest method of ensuring adequate records. When the clergy person controls the checkbook of the discretionary fund, it is required that all contributions to the discretionary fund be made payable to the church, recorded in the books of the church, and then subsequently transferred by the treasurer to the discretionary fund.

Clergy who maintain their own checkbooks for discretionary funds are required to record the purpose of every check drawn on the account and the source of all deposits into it.

If a clergyperson receives a check payable to the church, with no other designation, the clergyperson is required to deposit it with the parish treasurer and receive vestry authorization before that money is deposited into the discretionary fund.

**Uses:**

The traditional uses of the discretionary fund are to assist the poor of the congregation and the larger community. Examples of appropriate discretionary spending for those in need include rent, utilities, medical bills, etc.

The clergy may also use discretionary funds for expenses related to the exercise of ministry that are not covered in the budget, such as attendance at conferences, purchase of books and journals, and membership in groups that are related to the exercise of ministry.

However, items purchased from discretionary funds are the property of the church, at least until such time as they may be given to the clergy as a gift by the vestry.

Clergy may employ a professional consultant with discretionary funds. When a clergyperson provides meals or refreshments for groups of individuals directly related to the work of ministry and in the normal course of ministerial work, such expenses may legitimately be paid from discretionary funds. It should be noted that when such business expenses are paid from the discretionary fund, they are not subsequently allowable as income tax deductions by the member of the clergy.

When the discretionary fund is used to provide a gift to a particular individual; for example, as a retirement gift to a parish secretary of long standing or a young person in need of scholarship assistance, such use is a legitimate function of the fund. However, care should be taken to advise donors that contributions whose sole intention is to benefit a named individual are not deductible contributions on the donor's income tax returns.

Discretionary funds are not to be used to sustain the ongoing program of the church. There may be occasions when clergyperson may wish to develop a program in mid-year where there is no budgeted money available or where the clergyperson may wish to supplement some particular program through discretionary fund expenditures; however, these should be exceptions to the general rule.

**Accountability:**

The discretionary fund account is to be reviewed on a confidential basis, as part of the annual audit. Ideally, a representative of the firm doing the audit would have a private conference with the priest. In other cases, it may be more practical for the Senior Warden or some other responsible member of the congregation to serve in this role.

The clergyperson must keep a private record of exactly what is done with the proceeds of checks written on the discretionary fund account. This is both a protection to the priest in case of an IRS audit and also a protection for the congregation, should a question arise as to the use of the funds.

The clergyperson is to make regular reports to the vestry on general uses of the fund, maintaining the confidentiality of individual recipients.

**Income Tax:**

Since the discretionary fund is to be used for the benefit of the church, it is not subject to income tax. Members of the clergy who improperly use discretionary funds for personal use may be subject to income tax reporting requirements, as well as ecclesiastical, civil, and/or criminal penalties.

- A. Discretionary funds are to be maintained in bank accounts in the name of the congregation and carry the church's taxpayer identification number.
- B. An additional signatory, approved by the vestry, must be designated.
- C. Clergy are to be in compliance with TEC Canon I.7.
- D. Neither the funds nor items purchased from the funds may be transferred to another cure with the rector, but must remain with the congregation.

**Review:**

At the beginning of a new ministry, the rector/vicar and the vestry / Bishop's committee are urged to address the administration of the discretionary fund.

**Resource:**

The Episcopal Church Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs, Chapter Five.

**Nepotism**

To avoid the appearance of favoritism and conflicts of interest, the employment of relatives of clergy (those related by blood or marriage) in the same congregation is strongly discouraged. This includes employment on the church staff, school staff or faculty, or other church-related organizations. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the Bishop Diocesan. Relatives of clergy (those related by blood or marriage) will not be hired as Diocesan staff in any capacity.

Clergy couples desiring to serve in the same congregation may do so subject to a written agreement negotiated between the clergy persons, the vestry, and the Bishop Diocesan.

With the exception of clergy couples, no relative of a clergy person shall be employed in any capacity that results in a direct or indirect supervisory or reporting relationship to the clergy person.

No relative of a clergy person shall serve in any financial capacity in the congregation including, but not limited to, signing checks or as a member of the finance committee or personnel committee.

For laypersons, relatives shall not be employed in the same congregation if it results in a direct or indirect supervisory or reporting relationship.

No current employee, or any relative of a current employee, shall serve on the vestry, the Bishop's committee, or on any committees of the Annual Diocesan Council.

**Master Planning, Design, Capital Fundraising, Financing, Renovation, Repurposing, and Construction**

The Diocese maintains a list of individuals and firms with proven experience working with congregations for the planning, design, and construction of new facilities, renovation/repurposing of existing facilities, and the capital stewardship campaigns to support such efforts.

Please contact Bob Schorr in the Congregational Development Office for a copy of the latest version of "Church

*Renovation, Remodeling, Master Planning, Real Estate Transactions, & Construction - Requirements and Guidelines for Congregations.*” This document provides detailed information on the steps involved, key diocesan resources, information on financing sources and debt limit guidelines, budgeting suggestions, and an overall project timeline.

While the decision to hire a particular individual or firm for such purposes is rightly made by the appropriate leadership of the local congregation, the Diocese stands ready to assist and advise. The Congregational Development office is available to share its experience, recommendations, expertise, and guidance in the early stages of a congregation’s consideration of major renovations, major maintenance, master planning, architectural design, construction, and capital fund drives.

As a reminder, all congregations are required to receive the approval of the Protestant Episcopal Church Council of the Diocese of Texas (“Church Corp.”) prior to buying or selling land, borrowing money (in which either the property or a negative pledge on the property would be used as collateral to secure the loan), leasing church property or building space, entering into an agreement that would create an encumbrance on the church property (i.e. Easement Agreements, Cell Tower Leases, Encroachment Agreements, etc.), or making commitments or initiating projects involving demolition, major renovation, or construction of new facilities.

### **Conflicts of Interest Policy**

**Each head of congregation is responsible for ensuring that the congregation and any affiliated school or other entity, particularly those incorporated as tax-exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, has, either in its bylaws or separately, a conflict of interest policy substantially similar to the following:**

#### **Section 1 - Purpose**

The purpose of the conflicts of interest policy is to protect the corporation’s [if your congregation, school, or other entity is not incorporated, substitute the name of the entity] interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the corporation or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

#### **Section 2 - Definitions:**

- a. **Interested Person:**  
Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with board-delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
- b. **Financial Interest:**  
A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment or family:
  1. an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the corporation has a transaction or arrangement,
  2. a compensation arrangement with the corporation or with any entity or individual with which the corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
  3. a potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial. A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. A person who has a

financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the board or appropriate committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

### Section 3 - Procedures:

#### a. Duty to Disclose:

In connection with any actual or possible conflicts of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of his or her financial interest and must be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with board-delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

#### b. Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists:

After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, the interested person shall leave the board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

#### c. Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest:

1. An interested person may make a presentation at the board or committee meeting, but after such presentation, such person shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
2. The board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

#### d. Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy:

1. If the board or committee has reasonable cause to believe that a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
2. If, after hearing the response of the member and making such further investigation as may be warranted in the circumstances, the board or committee determines that the member has in fact failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

### Section 4 - Records of Proceedings:

The minutes of the board and all committees with board-delegated powers shall contain:

- a. the names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed; and
- b. the names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection therewith.

### Section 5 - Compensation Committees:

- a. A voting member of the board of directors who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

- b. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- c. No voting member of the board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the corporation, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

Section 6 - Annual Statements:

Each director, principal officer, and member of a committee with board-delegated powers shall annually sign a statement affirming that such person:

- a. has received a copy of the conflicts of interest policy;
- b. has read and understands the policy;
- c. has agreed to comply with the policy; and  
understands that the corporation is a charitable organization and that in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Section 7 - Periodic Reviews:

To ensure that the corporation operates in a manner consistent with its charitable purposes and that it does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its status as an organization exempt from federal income tax, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and are the result of arm's-length bargaining.
- b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the corporation's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

Section 8 - Use of Outside Experts:

In conducting the periodic reviews provided for in Section 7, the corporation may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used their use shall not relieve the board of its responsibility for ensuring that periodic reviews are conducted.

# 12 - Appendices

## Appendix A Addresses & Links

**Episcopal Church Center  
Episcopal Relief & Development**  
815 Second Ave, New York, NY 10017  
800-334-7626, [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org)

**Church Pension Group**  
445 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10016  
800-223-6602, Fax: 212-592-9400  
[www.cpg.org](http://www.cpg.org)

**Church Insurance Corporation**  
Contact: John Scheffler, VP Client Services  
940-241-2803, Fax: 940-241-2820  
[jscheffler@cpg.org](mailto:jscheffler@cpg.org)

**The Bishop Quin Foundation  
Episcopal Foundation of Texas  
Great Commission Foundation  
Church Corporation**  
Contact: David Fisher, Diocesan Center  
1225 Texas Ave, Houston, TX 77002  
713-520-6444, Fax: 713-521-2218  
[dfisher@epicenter.org](mailto:dfisher@epicenter.org)

**Episcopal Heath Foundation**  
Elena Marks, President and CEO  
500 Fannin St, Ste 300, Houston, TX 77002  
713.225.0900, [www.episcopalhealth.org](http://www.episcopalhealth.org)

**Camp Allen**  
George Dehan, President  
18800 FM 362, Navasota, TX 77868  
936-825-7175, [www.campallen.org](http://www.campallen.org)

**Anglican Communion**  
[www.anglicancommunion.org](http://www.anglicancommunion.org)

**National Church Offices**  
[www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org)

**Episcopal Diocese of Texas**  
[www.epicenter.org](http://www.epicenter.org)

**Constitution & Canons - Diocese of Texas**  
[www.epicenter.org/constitution--canons/](http://www.epicenter.org/constitution--canons/)

**St. Vincent's House**  
Lisa Odom, Executive Director  
2817 Post Office St, Galveston, TX 77550  
409-763-8521, Fax: 409-763-0572  
[www.stvhope.org](http://www.stvhope.org)

**Episcopal High School**  
Ned Smith, Head of School  
4650 Bissonnet St, Bellaire, TX 77401  
PO Box 271299, Houston, TX 77277  
713-512-3400, [www.ehshouston.org](http://www.ehshouston.org)

**St. Stephen's School**  
Chris Gunnin, Head of School  
6500 St. Stephens Dr, Austin, TX 78746  
512-327-1213, Fax: 512-327-1311  
[www.sstx.org](http://www.sstx.org)

**Seminary of the Southwest**  
The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Dean & President  
606 Rathervue Pl, Austin, TX 78705  
P.O. Box 2247, Austin, TX 78768  
512-472-4133, [www.ssw.edu](http://www.ssw.edu)

**El Buen Samaritano**  
Iliana Gilman, Chief Executive Officer  
7000 Woodhue Dr, Austin, TX 78745  
512-439-0700, [www.elbuen.org](http://www.elbuen.org)

**Constitution & Canons - TEC**  
to read online: [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org)  
to order: [www.churchpublishing.org](http://www.churchpublishing.org)

**Office for Transition Ministries**  
[www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org)  
[www.otmportfolio.org](http://www.otmportfolio.org)

# Appendix B

## Commission on Ministry

The Diocese of Texas offers three tracks for ordination: deacon, priest, and bi-vocational priest.

Deacons and bi-vocational priests are locally prepared through the Iona School for Ministry. See [Expectations of Bi-Vocational Priests](#), p. 2.7, and [Expectations of Vocational Deacons](#), p. 2.8.

Bishop Dena Harrison serves as the Executive for Ministry, the Reverend Francene Young is Chair of the Commission, and the Reverend Patricia Ritchie is Chair of the Committee for the Diaconate.

Application materials are available from the Commission on Ministry office in Austin. All requests for applications and general inquiries may be directed to Ms. Ana Gonzales May, who is the Assistant to the Commission on Ministry [agmay@epicenter.org](mailto:agmay@epicenter.org).

### **Identification of Nominees for Ordination**

The Commission on Ministry seeks persons of spiritual maturity and commitment who have proven leadership abilities and who have discerned a call to ordination. All clergy are to nurture possible vocations to ordained ministry, being attentive to persons in the local setting who may have such gifts. The Commission on Ministry can provide additional guidance if needed, as well as materials for the required Discovery retreat and the regional discernment process.

Certain policies are in place related to eligibility to enter the process. Persons with three divorces will not be considered, and a high level of debt is a barrier to entering the process. The preferred age for seminary track applicants is no older than age 55 at the time of entry to seminary. Candidates for the seminary track must be geographically mobile in order to relocate with their families for seminary and for eventual placement; if a candidate is not mobile, consideration should be given to the bi-vocational track.

Bi-vocational priests and deacons are not expected to relocate. Deacons may generally be placed in any geographical area. Acceptance into the bi-vocational priest track is dependent upon the projected needs of the Diocese in a given geographical area. If no placements for bi-vocational priests are projected in the area of residence, applicants from that area may be asked to delay application until such placement can be determined.

In addition to identifying potential nominees for ordination, clergy also have the responsibility of redirecting those aspirants whose gifts do not suggest an ordained vocation. Assistance should be given in discerning the nature of their gifts and how those gifts may be developed and exercised in lay ministry.

Please direct all questions about the discernment processes to the Commission on Ministry office in Austin at [agmay@epicenter.org](mailto:agmay@epicenter.org) or to the Reverend Francene Young at [fyoung@epicenter.org](mailto:fyoung@epicenter.org).

### **Application Deadlines**

The Diocese of Texas typically sends five persons into the seminary track to ordination each year. These individuals are the candidates best equipped to provide vibrant missionary leadership. The selection of these persons will occur in the early spring. The application deadline of **November 1** is important because of the need for further testing, Commission on Ministry discernment, and timely seminary and scholarship applications.

The deacon and bi-vocational priest track deadline of **January 1** is designed to allow for testing, discernment, and orderly planning for the Iona School for Ministry.

#### **Application Deadlines:**

**Seminary track**

**Deacon and Bi-vocational Priest**

**November 1**

**January 1**



## Appendix C

### On Intellectual Honesty and Pastoral Integrity in Preaching

The formal proclamation of the gospel through the vehicle of preaching carries a weight of responsibility shaped by rules and expectations related to intellectual honesty as well as those impacting pastoral integrity. Both aspects define the acceptable use of materials within the sermon.

#### Pastoral Integrity

- 1) Congregations, individual worshipers, and the Church expect the preacher to invest his or her prayer, study, and time in the work of preparation for preaching, the most tangible element being the sermon as composed. Specifically, the Church expects the preacher, informed by the doctrine of the Church, to interpret the scriptures through the lens of life in a certain context, and to interpret life in a certain context through the lens of Holy Scripture.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) As a result, congregations listening to sermons receive them as the original work of the preacher, unless directly informed that the preacher is relying on someone else's work.<sup>2</sup>
- 3) The preacher violates the relationship of trust on which the pastoral relationship between preacher and congregation depends when she presents as the fruit of her own labors material that is the product of the creativity, research, or composition of another.<sup>3</sup>
- 4) For these reasons, the failure to acknowledge his reliance on sermons, stories, or exegesis drawn from websites, books, sermon collections (whether written or recorded), and other sources, damages the pastoral integrity of the preacher and the reputation of the congregation, diocese or institution with which the preacher is affiliated.

#### Intellectual Honesty

- 1) Intellectual property is protected by law in the United States, and habits of citation are designed to protect the author's rights to his or her own creative work.
- 2) Academic institutions, including seminaries, instruct students in the habits of citation in order to insure 1) that students do their own work, and 2) that authors and speakers receive the benefits of their own efforts.<sup>4</sup> More than simply an academic exercise within the school setting, the practices of citation and attribution are considered the norm for ethical persons in the United States whatever the setting in which they work.
- 3) Institutions, including congregations and seminaries, must also be concerned that copyright violations,

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Lisa Hunt and the Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, 3/5/14, email and personal conversations on the expectations of preachers.

<sup>2</sup> Ron Forseth, *Just What Is Pulpit Plagiarism?* Blog Post [www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/138301-just-what-is-pulpit-plagiarism.html](http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/138301-just-what-is-pulpit-plagiarism.html) and from research and thoughts compiled by the Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, 3/4/14. Ron Forseth is Editor-at-Large for SermonCentral.com and ChurchLeaders.com.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, Forseth says, "Using someone else's content extensively requires permission from both the source and from your audience."

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Haddon Robinson, public speaker and Christian apologist, offers the following definition of plagiarism: "In a world of preaching, a pastor who takes sermons from other preachers – word-for-word – without giving credit is guilty of plagiarism. That is stealing what is not yours." In Forseth's *Just What is Pulpit Plagiarism*, cited in 1 above.

- whether in the use of music, images, movies, or sermons, may expose them to legal action and expenses.
- 4) Even the use of open source or “okay to copy” sermons and other materials without attribution violates the standards to which we expect preachers in the Diocese of Texas to adhere.

#### Basic Rules

Sanders L. (Sandy) Willson has been the senior minister of Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee since 1995. A well-known protestant preacher, he uses the following rules, applicable for our Diocese, as well:

1. “Any direct quote is always attributed to the author in full.”
2. “Any ideas that I found in my reading that are uniquely attributable to one scholar or author are normally attributed to him.”
3. “If there are a number of unique ideas from one author, I may make a general attribution to his overall influence on my thinking at the beginning of my sermon.”
4. “Ideas that I discovered from several others that were not my own are usually covered by simply saying, “a number of scholars suggest that . . .”
5. “Books or articles that I have found helpful are often shared with the congregation for their own edification.”
6. “If sermons are published or sold on websites or CDs, I must be even more scrupulous to acknowledge all of sources through footnotes and comments in order to avoid “stealing” from my brother or sister.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to Willson’s six points, we would add that preachers who use sermons entirely or primarily drawn in structure and content from the work of another, must attribute them in a public way – verbally when preaching, or in the printed bulletin, and as a clear and obvious citation wherever a sermon appears on any website, social media post or preacher’s blog. As Willson points out, if preachers or congregations record and place links on congregational websites to sermons preached by their clergy, but composed by someone else, preachers must be even more zealous to attribute appropriately.

#### A Word on Teaching

Much of what is written above on preaching could also be applied to teaching materials, though the temptation to present as original content created by others may not be as strong when we are at the lectern, as when in the pulpit. Even so, proper attribution is honest, transparent, and just plain good practice! Credit where credit is due, even when not demanded by the creator, please.

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<sup>5</sup> Web article from Gospel Coalition: 5 Leaders Examine Plagiarism in Preaching  
[www.sermoncentral.com/articlec.asp?article=five-leaders-examine-plagiarism-in-preaching](http://www.sermoncentral.com/articlec.asp?article=five-leaders-examine-plagiarism-in-preaching)

# Appendix D

## Retirement from the Exercise of Ordained Ministry

I certify to the Bishop of Texas that I am completely retired from the exercise of ordained ministry in any context.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date

**Return to:**

*The Rt. Rev. C. Andrew Doyle, D.D.  
Episcopal Diocese of Texas  
1225 Texas Avenue  
Houston, Texas 77002*

# Appendix E

## Clergy Manual Acknowledgment

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge receipt of the Clergy Manual dated \_\_\_\_\_ (on the cover page).

\_\_\_\_\_ I will abide by the policies of the Bishop of the Diocese of Texas as provided in this Manual.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understand the contents of this Manual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**MAIL TO:** Bishop's Office  
Attn: Kathryn Herman  
1225 Texas Avenue  
Houston, Texas 77002

**EMAIL TO:** [khorman@epicenter.org](mailto:khorman@epicenter.org)

***(A fillable PDF of this form can be found [here](#) for easy emailing.)***