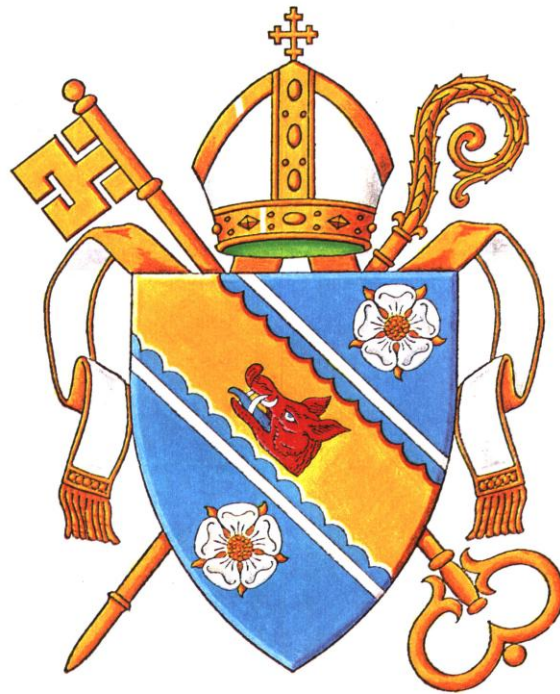


DIOCESE OF GEORGIA  
Clergy Handbook



October 2011

## **Expectations**

All clergy of the Diocese of Georgia are expected to:

1. Be competent in his [or her] preaching and teaching.
2. Modify his [or her] leadership style to fit the current needs of the church; to match his [or her] leadership style to a group's competence for a task, its maturity in faith and practice, and its level of commitment.
3. Nurture the church's life and ministry through an orthodox theology and a commitment to the core mission of the church, which is renewing people in their primary missional task and equipping them for their apostolate in the world.
4. Demonstrate congruence between her [or his] belief and behavior, and between the public and private dimensions of life, while coping with the typical stages of a relationship between clergy and lay leaders.
5. As a priest, understand and be comfortable with being both symbol and person.
6. Have a disciplined spiritual life that includes: daily prayer and study of the Scriptures, regular continuing education, and the stewardship of personal health.

Spiritual disciplines and a Rule of Life are covered in more detail below in the section on Wellness.

## **Compensation, Tax and Related Issues**

### **Letters of Agreement**

It is expected in every situation in which a cleric is employed by a congregation that a Letter of Agreement will be executed by all the appropriate parties and a copy sent to the Bishop's Office for the files there.

### **Clergy Compensation Guidelines**

The minimum total annual stipend for ordained clergy, which includes salary, housing, utilities and any self-employment tax (SECA) paid by the congregation is set by the Diocesan Council. These minimum salary expectations are posted in the Reference Library at the diocesan website. Every ordained priest and transitional (though not vocational) deacons, employed by a congregation in the Diocese is to be paid at least the minimum specified, unless specifically authorized otherwise by the Diocesan Bishop. If housing is furnished and a housing allowance is not provided, a reasonable amount of equivalent housing allowance should be determined by the vestry and subtracted from the diocesan specified minimum annual stipend to determine the minimum salary.

The Diocese may also recommend, based on the national economy and the financial status of the Diocese and its parishes, an annual increase in stipend for clergy in permanent or long-time and continuing employment within the parish. Vestries of each parish are to review the salary annually and are urged to any priest's total annual stipend by at least this amount, plus, when warranted, additional merit increases based on the competent performance of the clergy.

The Diocese publishes a survey of clergy salaries each year to assist vestries in setting appropriate compensation.

## **Supplementary Compensation**

Priests shall not charge fees for performing any rites of the Church (e.g. baptisms, marriages, funerals) for members of the congregation where he or she serves. A priest may, however, receive income from other sources, as approved by the vestry, such as honoraria for professional services performed on personal time for persons or groups unrelated to the congregation, or for sermons, books, or articles published outside the congregation.

## **Clergy Taxes**

At the present time, there is a difference between the ways that the IRS and Social Security consider clergy employment. For income tax purposes, clergy are considered employees of the parish or Diocese; for Social Security purposes, they are considered self-employed. Clergy therefore pay income tax on salary only, not including a housing allowance, but do have to pay self-employment tax on total stipend: salary, plus all allowances, less expenses.

It is recommended that parishes pay one-half of this self-employment tax (total is currently 15.3% of stipend; one-half is 7.65%) to the clergyperson as a part of a compensation package. However, since there are many differences in the individual circumstances of each clergyperson and the individual parish and because U.S. tax laws are subject to change, specific salary and allowance arrangements can result in wide variances in tax requirements. Therefore, guidelines for each individual clergyperson and parish are best determined by the vestry in consultation with the Diocese and a qualified clergy tax accountant.

## **Housing and Housing Allowances**

Employed clergy in each parish are to be provided either housing or a housing allowance.

If housing is provided, the parish is responsible for all utilities and maintenance, repairs, and initial decoration of the house and property. As a note of interest, in this case, the Church Pension Fund will assess the parish 30% of the total of clergy salary, plus utilities, plus Social Security payments, as an equivalent housing allowance for pension fund use only. As a guideline for budget preparation by the parish for maintenance, repairs, decoration, etc., a figure of approximately 5% of the market value of the property would be considered reasonable. It is very desirable that the budgeted amount be cumulative: the unexpended portion in any one year placed in escrow and added to future budgeted amounts to handle unanticipated major maintenance requirements.

When housing is not provided, a portion of the total clergy stipend must be designated, according to IRS regulations, by a vestry resolution before the beginning of each year as a housing allowance. This allowance is at the discretion of the vestry in consultation with the clergyperson, but a reasonable value may be calculated using the lowest of one of three methods:

1. The housing allowance can be calculated using actual expenses for the housing being used. These expenses include mortgage payments, insurance, taxes, utilities, maintenance of house and property, repairs, decoration, purchase of furniture and appliances, and any other expenses incurred by the clergy directly related to

- operating and maintaining a home. It is necessary to have actual records of previous expenses to use as a basis.
2. The housing allowance may be the estimated rental value of the home and property, including any other expenses directly related to operating and maintaining a home. In this case, it would be wise to have a real estate appraisal of the rental value of the property or similar property to use as a basis.
  3. The housing allowance may be the actual rental cost of property rented by the clergyperson, plus any other expenses, such as utilities, telephone, etc. directly related to operating and maintaining the rental property. As above, the records of actual expenses should be kept.

However, the actual amount which can be excluded from the clergyperson's income tax is the *lesser* of: the amount designated by the vestry, the amount actually spent, or the fair rental value of the property and furnishing, including utilities and maintenance expense.

This discussion of housing allowances is based on the assumption that the clergyperson is employed full-time. If he or she is employed part-time, the housing allowance should be reduced to the ratio of part-time over full-time hours worked.

If there are any questions by the vestry, the Canon for Administration can assist, but it is always recommended that a public accountant with clergy tax experience be consulted when possible.

### **Utilities**

If housing is provided, the parish is also responsible for providing all utilities, including electricity, fuel, water and telephone. If housing is not provided, the vestry must consider all utility expenses in determining the proper housing allowance.

### **Travel**

It is recommended that all non-commuting automobile expenses and other travel expenses in the conduct of parish or diocesan business be handled by direct reimbursement of the clergyperson by the parish or other agency employing clergy, depending on the nature of the business and on the basis of mandatory and thoroughly documented travel records, as required by the IRS. It is also recommended that a fixed blanket travel allowance not be paid, as it is subject to the same IRS rules concerning justification by the same type of records as direct reimbursement and would probably be considered part of self-employment income by Social Security. It is possible, however, and may be desirable from a parish budget planning point of view, for the vestry to specify a not-to-be exceeded maximum yearly limit for a direct reimbursement travel allowance. The Diocesan Council set the travel reimbursement norm for mission clergy at \$3,600 a year.

If the parish does furnish an automobile for clergy use with all expenses paid, it is mandatory that the clergyperson keep detailed logs of all travel in accordance with IRS regulations. In these cases, it is also recommended that the parish budget contain a year-by-year cumulative "auto replacement" expense.

Auto/travel allowances, and other customary office and business expenses, are not a part of a clergy person's compensation package. These expenses are a part of the church's cost of doing business.

### **Pension**

The Church Pension Fund and Social Security are the main sources of retirement income for clergypersons. Detailed information on benefits, assessments, and operating procedures can and should be obtained from *The Church Pension Fund Handbook* and from other Fund publications, which can be acquired from The Church Pension Fund, 445 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016, telephone 1-800-223-6602. Social Security information can easily be obtained from your local Social Security office.

It is mandatory that the congregation or employing agency pay the Church Pension Fund an assessment for all stipendiary clergypersons below retirement age, as defined by the Fund. This includes any clergy making more than \$200 per month for three consecutive months. Participation in the Church Pension Fund is optional by clergypersons hired by a parish or other agency above the age of 65 years. Parish treasurers are cautioned that payments to the Pension Fund must be made on time and in the proper amount.

Clergy may also elect to set up a 503b account to augment retirement through the pension and Social Security. This comes out of the clergy salary pretax. Contact the Canon for Administration for additional information.

**Important Note:** Accounts that get more than six months behind causes more than a hundred thousand dollars in benefits to go on hold until the amount in arrears is caught up. This has led to an unacceptable loss of benefits for surviving spouses in our diocese in the past and will not be tolerated in the future.

### **Health and Life Insurance**

Each active clergy person who works directly for the church or a church institution for at least half time must be covered by adequate health and life insurance in conformance to the canons of the church. Coverage administered by the diocese is available through the Episcopal Church Medical Trust. Current rates are listed at the diocesan website. Contact the Canon for Administration for more information.

## **Clergy Life**

### **Wellness**

For your own sake, and for the sake of the mission of the diocese, we expect you to attend to your physical health, your emotional and spiritual wellness, and your personal relationships.

Clergy are to seek appropriate professional assistance for their own personal problems and conflicts, especially those that might impair their pastoral ability and judgment.

Clergy should not work in isolation but must be mindful of the need to maintain collegial and professional associations. It is necessary for the 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 highly encouraged.

The Diocese encourages clergy to find a spiritual director and to meet regularly with their director.

### **Rule of Life**

All clergy of the Diocese of Georgia are to have and uphold a rule of life that includes regular worship, weekly service, daily prayer and so on. Daily Morning and/or Evening Prayer with the reading of the Daily Office Lectionary are to be a part of that rule. More information on a Rule of Life is available at the diocesan website. A rule of life should usually be created and reviewed with assistance from your spiritual director.

### **Continuing Education**

All active clergy are required to engage in continuing education, in accordance with the Canons (III.7.5 for deacons) III.9.1 for priests). Adherence to these national Canons is mandatory. Although there is no national canonical requirement for lay professionals to seek continuing education, the Diocese encourages all lay professionals to continue to update their learning. It is strongly encouraged that full time clergy receive professional development leave (for continuing education) at the rate of two weeks per year, including one Sunday.

### **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 Convention. Such participation is considered to complement local duties, not to conflict with them. Clergy not able to attend Diocesan Convention and the two annual clergy conferences should notify the Bishop in writing giving the reason he or she cannot be present.

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.

Further, participation is expected at the convocation level. The Diocese of Georgia is divided into six convocations—Albany, Augusta, Central, Savannah, Southeast, and Southwest (a list of which congregation belongs to which convocation is found on the parishes page of the diocesan website). The dean of each convocation will—typically monthly—call together the clergy of the convocation for a Clericus Meeting. These meetings are important to the functioning of the Diocese and all parochial clergy are expected to attend; non-parochial and retired clergy are encouraged to do so as well.

### **Relationships Among Congregations**

It is expected that neighboring congregations may choose to hold some joint worship services or events. However, to intrude, uninvited, into the cure of another clergy person

is a significant breach of professional ethics. Clergy who are settled in a particular cure are expected to exercise pastoral oversight and care of persons in their given cure. This proscription applies to retired and non-parochial clergy as well as to clergy with cure.

### **Professional and Continuing Education Expenses**

The same principles should apply here as to travel expenses: all reasonable job-related expenses should be directly reimbursed upon submittal of evidence of the expense. Expenses for conferences, classes, seminars, etc. that improve the skills and knowledge of the clergyperson should also be directly reimbursed. No general unaccountable allowance should be made although a not-to-be-exceeded maximum amount may be budgeted by the vestry.

**Diocesan Continuing Education Fund**—Annually, a parochial or diocesan staff priest is permitted to deposit up to \$500 in the Continuing Education Fund of the Diocese. To use the fund, the amount must be matched by the parish/mission (or the diocese in the case of a diocesan priest). There is no established time limit as to when these funds must be expended. Funds may be held for the priest's benefit indefinitely. The priest's account does not earn interest. At the time a priest requests a draw on the account for the purpose of continuing education, the diocese will provide additional funds in an amount equal to 1/3 of the requested draw.

When a priest transfers within the diocese, all unexpended funds contributed by the priest and the former parish/mission remain in the priest's personal account. In the event the priest transfers outside the diocese, unexpended personal contributions are returned to the priest, unexpended contributions made by the parish/mission will be returned to that congregation, or, at their direction, will be retained in escrow for the priest's successor. In the event of the death of the priest, the unexpended portion of the funds contributed by the priest will be refunded to the priest's spouse or, in the case of a single priest, to his or her estate.

### **Time Off from Parish Duties**

One of the primary causes of clergy burn-out is addiction to the work ethic that everything needs an immediate response. This is self-defeating and every clergyperson remains a human being with human needs and these must be attended to responsibly. The effectiveness of each clergyperson in the Diocese depends upon his or her wellness and wholeness, which are influenced greatly by opportunities for relaxation and time away from the demands of the congregation.

Each employed clergyperson is entitled to at least the following time off from parish duties each year, although additional time off may be negotiated between the clergyperson and the vestry. Time off for clergypersons employed part-time should also be determined using the following as a basis for negotiation, where appropriate.

- Recognizing the irregular hours of church life, a priest's scheduled week will consist of approximately 5 and ½ days. No more than three evenings/week are expected. Priests are expected to preserve one continuous 24-hour period each week solely for personal and family, with the flexibility to accommodate parish

emergencies and other urgent and personal business. Appropriate compensatory time is appropriate when such pastoral needs take away a scheduled day off. The congregation should be made aware of the clergy person's scheduled time off (Sabbath time) and should be encouraged to respect it.

- At least four weeks vacation each year (including four Sundays), which can be prorated based on the time actually spent in parish employment during the initial year. There are no restrictions on how this time is spent. No days will be carried forward to succeeding years.
- Priests will have the following periods of leave at full compensation: National Holidays (to be taken so as not to interfere with worship for major occasions). The following list is in accordance with the Federal Calendar: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day.
- Clergy should devote fourteen days of each year to continuing education.
- Provision should be made in every Letter of Agreement for clergy sabbaticals. The norm for a sabbatical in the Diocese of Georgia is to accrue two weeks per year of service to the congregation for Sabbatical Leave, to be available after the third year, and a cumulative total of 12 weeks through the sixth year. Sabbatical arrangements shall be made in full consultation with the Vestry to insure benefits for both the parish and priest. Compensation for each week of Sabbatical Leave taken will be the equivalent of one week's salary plus church pension fund, health benefits and housing. There are some sabbatical grants available and information on this can be found through the diocesan office.
- 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 a priestly vocation.
- Sick leave and other health related leave are to be negotiated between clergy and vestry.

### **Clergy Cottage**

The Diocese of Georgia owns a cottage in the mountains of North Carolina just outside of Saluda. The house was built around the turn of the century, but it has been reasonably well maintained. It is an excellent place for a "no frills" vacation for diocesan clerics and their families during the summer. Although clergy families have priority in reservations, the cottage may also be used by lay employees and their families. Since the house has no heating facilities it is available for occupancy only from May through mid-October at a rate of \$150 per week. Linens must be brought with you – none are furnished. Occupancy is normally on a weekly basis, commencing on Saturday afternoon and terminating Saturday morning. Occupants are expected to maintain the cleanliness of the house. The Clergy Cottage is currently operated under the supervision of the diocesan office and it is there that reservations are made.

### **Discretionary Funds**

Maintaining a discretionary fund is a common practice encouraged for the clergy of the Diocese of Georgia. However, maintaining a discretionary fund brings with it a serious

fiduciary responsibility and opens one up to problems if the funds are not administered properly. The following offers the legal background and some specific recommendations:

**Canons and Tax Law** - The provision in the national canons of The Episcopal Church regarding discretionary funds lies in Canon III 9.5.b(6), which states:

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

This section originated at the Convention of 1814, at which time all of the alms and contributions received at the administration of Holy Communion were to be put to these uses (providing for the poor and pious and charitable uses). At that time it was customary to have only one celebration of Holy Communion each month. By 1904, however, most churches were having at least one celebration of Holy Communion each week, and often more. For this reason, the canon law was changed to apply to only one celebration per month, and then only to contributions otherwise undesignated. In other words, the loose offering from one communion service per month goes to a fund to be administered by the rector or priest-in-charge, together with “other offerings for the poor.”

It is now often customary to supplement the discretionary fund with gifts from individuals and also from the parish’s general operating funds. Of particular importance in the canon are the words “Alms,” “Contributions,” and “Offerings,” which clearly mean that these are funds given to the church and therefore belong not the rector or other member of the clergy, but rather to the church.

Canon I.7.1(f) of The Episcopal Church states as follows:

All accounts of the Diocese shall be audited annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant. All accounts of Parishes, Missions or other institutions shall be audited annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant, or independent Licensed Public Account, or such audit committee as shall be authorized by the Finance Committee, Department of Finance, or other appropriate diocesan authority. The Canons of The Diocese of Georgia require compliance with this provision. For the reasons set forth above, it is clear that discretionary funds are “accounts of the parish” and therefore are subject to being audited, although procedures may be utilized to keep confidential how the funds were used.

In addition, particular attention should be paid to applicable civil law, specifically tax law, which includes the following principles:

1. Money flowing from an employer (a church) to an employee (the priest) for the employee's personal use is generally taxable as income to the employee.
2. Money given in exchange for services is generally taxable as income.
3. Gifts or donations are deductible by the donor only if given to an exempt organization, and are not deductible if given to an individual, either directly or indirectly.

**Guidelines** - To inform your use of a discretionary fund, the following specifics should be helpful. For additional guidance, please see the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs* issued by The Episcopal Church and available in the Documents Library at the Diocese of Georgia website.

1. **Funds are not the property of the clergy.** A clergy discretionary fund is not the money of the clergy. While he or she has discretion as to which permissible use the funds should be expended on, the funds are not to be used for the clergy member's personal needs, such as sending his or her children to college or taking the family out to eat. The funds are property of the parish. Discretionary funds, along with any items purchased with these funds (such as books and vestments), remain at the church when the priest is called elsewhere.
2. **Use of funds.** The person administering a discretionary fund is in a position very similar to that of a trustee. He or she is handling funds that are not his or her property. Such person is therefore obligated to use a high degree of care, to refrain from wasting the funds or commingling them with personal funds, and to use them for the purposes for which they were entrusted to his or her care.

As outlined in Canon III.9.5.b(6) above, permissible uses of discretionary funds are for the poor and for "other charitable and pious purposes." Obviously, gifts to the poor are the primary purpose. "Other charitable and pious purposes" includes gifts to any recognized charitable organization to which an individual could make a tax-deductible gift, gifts to the church itself, and the purchase of items used in the parish for its purposes, such as vestments, books, and other tools of the trade that will remain the property of the parish. (These are examples only, and not intended to be an exhaustive list).

It is preferable that checks be written to vendors, such as a utility company or landlord, rather than to individuals requesting assistance. In most areas clergy have made prior arrangements with drug stores, gas stations, grocery stores, etc. to have persons make purchases with approval of the clergy, and a check is written directly to the vendor upon receipt of a bill.

Discretionary funds may be used for any legitimate church purpose, but the better practice is for business expenses of the clergy to be paid by the church through an expense account or expense allowance, and not be funded through the discretionary fund. Purchasing books for the priest's personal library or paying other personal expenses of the priest are not proper uses.

3. **Recipient of gift: Clergy Discretionary Fund.** Because discretionary funds are property of the parish, rather than the clergy, checks for gifts should be made payable to the parish, rather than to the individual clergy member, even though the gift is intended to go to the priest's discretionary fund. A gift to the parish is tax deductible, whereas a gift payable to the priest is not.

4. **Restrictions on gift.** A gift to the discretionary fund may either be unrestricted or, if restricted, must be designated for one of the legitimate purposes of the church. In other words, funds cannot be donated to the discretionary fund with the restriction that they be used to pay for individual expenses beneficial to a relative of the donor, such as to pay for the donor's children's school expenses or the donor's aunt's stay at the nursing home, even if the intended individual beneficiary has a need. Such an attempt to make a gift tax-deductible by funneling it through the discretionary fund violates tax law. The gift will not be tax deductible, and the clergy should not look the other way if such a gift is made, but should instead refuse the gift.
5. **Bank account.** As provided in the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*, all discretionary funds must be deposited into the general operating account of the congregation, using its federal employer's tax identification number. With approval of the vestry, a separate bank account may be established into which discretionary funds are subsequently transferred. However, this account shall also be in the name of the congregation, such as "St. Swithen's Episcopal Church: Rector's Discretionary Fund." All gifts and donations intended for the discretionary fund, whether delivered to the church or to the clergyperson, shall be deposited into this account, and appropriate receipts should be given to the donors.

Some expenditures from this account will merit confidentiality, such as payments made on behalf of a member of the congregation with a personal financial need that has been made known to his or her priest in confidence. Therefore, it may be appropriate to handle this account differently from other church accounts. Cash disbursements and checks made out to "cash" should not normally occur, and if one does, a receipt in the file matching the amount should be available to verify the nature of the expense. In any case, the clergy must maintain detailed private records of precisely what is done with the proceeds of all such expenditures. This provides protection for the clergy member in case of an IRS audit or in case a question arises about the propriety of the expenditures. The IRS can and does audit churches, clergy and individual donors and a detailed record of expenses is not optional.

6. **Gifts to clergy.** The discretionary fund is not the proper vehicle for a gift to a member of the clergy. While it is possible for an individual to make a gift to a member of the clergy, such a gift is not tax deductible by the donor, nor taxable to the clergy member, and does not go into the discretionary fund. Funds given to clergy for services rendered, such as performing weddings, funerals, et cetera, if passed along to the member of the clergy for personal use, constitute taxable income.
7. **Audit.** Arrangements must be made for someone other than the clergy to review this bank account and the associated private records, on a confidential basis, as part of the annual audit. Ideally, a trusted representative of the firm or team doing the audit in the case of a professional audit, or the review team from a neighboring congregation in the case of an audit swap, will annually have a private conference with the clergy regarding the records and audit.

## **Canons**

It is important that each priest and deacon have in his or her personal library the latest edition of The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Georgia and also the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. The later is published every three years, after the last General Convention. Both documents are available in print form from the diocese and denomination respectively and are also linked in the Reference Library at the Diocese of Georgia website.

## **Clergy of the Diocese**

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.

## **Rectors**

This is the term for the duly-appointed priest in charge of a parish with all the rights and responsibilities as outlined in Canon III.9.5 and following. The rector shall have been appointed after the vestry and Bishop have certified that he or she is duly qualified, duly elected, and has accepted election.

The call process takes place with the consultation of the Canon to the Ordinary. The procedure for calling a new rector has been well established. See the Transition Handbook in the Reference Library at the diocesan website for more information. The Bishop should be contacted as soon as it is known that an opening will exist. *All assisting clergy on a parish staff are ineligible for consideration as rector.*

## **Vicars**

This is a term for a duly-appointed priest in charge of a mission congregation with all the rights and responsibilities as outlined in Canon III.9.5 and following. The Bishop appoints a vicar, though this may be done in consultation with the mission vestry.

## **Interim Priests**

In times of transition, the Bishop shall be in consultation with the vestry to appoint an interim priest. An interim priest temporarily fills the office of rector during the absence of the previous rector and during the calling process for a permanent rector. Since he or she is often needed by the parish with very little lead-time, considerable latitude in the calling process is available. The responsibility for calling the interim priest is the parish's but with the approval of the Bishop. Therefore the vestry should work very closely with the Bishop and the Canon to the Ordinary to create and evaluate a list of candidates and to negotiate an employment agreement.

While the interim performs the normal worship and pastoral duties of the parish, the Diocesan Bishop is the actual and legal rector of the parish during the interim period. Interim priests are not eligible to be called as the rector of the parish.

## **Priests-in-Charge**

In certain circumstances, the Bishop may, with the approval of the vestry, appoint a Clergyperson to be Priest-in-Charge of a congregation. Details of an employment agreement are to be negotiated between the priest and the congregation, with the

approval of the Bishop. The Priest-in-Charge will have all the duties, responsibilities and authorities pursuant to a called rector and will work closely with the vestry, but will still be directly accountable to the Bishop. The tenure of the Priest-in-Charge is at the discretion of the Bishop, with the approval of the Vestry. A Priest-in-Charge is eligible to be called as a permanent rector of the parish.

### **Parish Administration**

There are a variety of administrative matters that fall to Heads of Congregations (Rectors, Vicars, Interims, and Priests in Charge), including oversight of the maintenance of parish 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. Minutes of mission vestries must also be submitted each month to the Canon for Administration.

**Finances**—While the vestry 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. These must be in keeping with the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs* issued by The Episcopal Church and available in the Documents Library at the Diocese of Georgia website. This includes procedures for collecting offerings, paying bills, issuing regular financial reports, conducting annual audits and more. The clergy role is to make sure that proper policies are in place and followed as way of maintaining appropriate oversight of all finances of the congregation.

It is the responsibility of the Head of the Congregation to consult with the Bishop and the Standing Committee before a congregation undertakes facilities renovation or expansion. The Diocese of Georgia holds legal and/or beneficial title to congregational property and by canon must approve all such proposals as well as the sale of property and the taking out loans against the property of the church (The diocesan canons have more specific information on loans that should be reviewed if a loan is being considered). A Diocesan Architectural Commission may be asked to review plans before construction begins. It is important to notify the Bishop at the time new construction is first being considered and when plans are drawn they must be submitted to the Bishop for approval or possible revision.

**The Parochial Report**—This is a very important single way that the Diocese and The Episcopal Church measure the statistical and financial health and performance of individual congregations and the Diocese as a whole. Therefore, it is essential that the report be completed accurately and in accordance with the required format and submitted well in advance of the specified deadline. If help is needed, the diocesan office will be glad to assist. The report can now be filed on-line (at <http://pr1.dfms.org/>) using your parishes UEID and password. If you have lost this essential login information, contact the Canon to the Ordinary to retrieve them. A hard copy of the final report is to be filed with the Diocesan Office.

**Staff**—Heads of Congregations are charged with the supervision of all staff, whether clergy or lay. They are to assure that each lay employee has a personnel file that contains

an application, appropriate background and reference checks, IRS form W-4, and an I-9 form as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act.

They are to provide Mutual Ministry Review of all staff and to document this process in the personnel files, which are to be kept in locked cabinets in the church offices. A Mutual Ministry Review is also undertaken periodically among the Head of Congregation, Vestry and Staff. Information on this process is found in the Reference Library at the diocesan website.

**Background Checks**—The Bishop, who is also responsible for clergy background checks, maintains personnel files for all clergy canonically resident in the Diocese of Georgia.

**Sexual Misconduct**—If Heads of Congregations receive reports of sexual misconduct or abuse, they are immediately to inform the bishop and receive instructions before taking action. The only exception is to report immediately any allegation of child abuse to authorities and remove the person accused from any contact with children.

### **Use of the Buildings**

National Canon III.9.5(a)2 is very clear in stating that *“the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall, at all times, be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Parish buildings.”* That being said, it is suggested that unilateral action is not usually called for. A wise course is for the vestry to draw up and approve, with the member of the clergy in charge’s agreement, a schedule of fees (or non-fees) and availability (or nonavailability) for the use of church facilities by church members or other groups, either profit or non-profit, and whether connected to the parish or not. And, for insurance purposes, a waiver of liability form is also very desirable, no matter who uses the facilities.

### **The Celebration of a New Ministry**

Near the beginning of the ministry of a new rector, new assistant rector or interim priest in a parish, a service of the Holy Eucharist should be held in the parish, in accordance with the Prayer Book office of the “Celebration of a New Ministry”, to commemorate the new relationship of the priest and the parish. The Diocesan Bishop, or his appointed representative, will be present for this service. Participation by assisting clergy from the same geographical area is very desirable and their functions, the date, and the order of service must be coordinated well in advance with the Bishop’s Office. The selection of the preacher should be discussed with the Bishop prior to extending an invitation. Text to use in creating this service booklet is found in the Reference Library at the diocesan website.

### **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 this 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 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 which issue from the interim rector or rector.

### **Assistant Rectors (and other Staff Clergy)**

An assistant is called at the discretion of the rector when the position and its funding is approved the vestry. In calling assistants from outside the diocese, early consultation with the bishop is strongly advised; clergy coming into the diocese become the responsibility of the bishop as well as the calling rector. A rector may not recruit or hire a seminarian, deacon, or a curate without the Bishop's permission. The bishop may not accept Letters Dimissory if not consulted in advance.

Clergy who assist in congregations owe a duty of loyalty to the Head of the Congregation (whether Rector, Vicar, Interim or Priest in Charge), at whose pleasure they serve. In the course of their ministry, they are to support the ministry, programs, and administration of the rector/vicar. Assisting clergy should have a Letter of Agreement.

In the event of serious disagreements between assisting clergy and rectors, every effort should 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 assisting clergy come to believe that they cannot offer the appropriate support to the Head of the Congregation, they are to contact the Canon to the Ordinary for consultation.

Normatively, an assistant serves at the pleasure of the rector and will be expected to resign when a new rector is named. Consultation with the Bishop is advised when an assistant learns the rector will be leaving.

### **Clergy 72 and Older**

National Canon III.9.7 requires that a member of the clergy who reaches the age of 72 must resign his or her position and may not be rehired in that same position, although rehiring in other positions for one year, renewable year-by-year, is permitted.

### **Involuntary Terminations**

The relationship between parish and clergy is intended to be permanent, and neither party may terminate it arbitrarily. If it appears that the relationship is in peril by what seem to be irreconcilable differences, the parish or the clergy should notify the Bishop informally, but as early as possible. If differences do appear completely irreconcilable, the parish should notify the Bishop in writing, asking for intervention. In either case, after ascertaining the facts and extent of difference, the Bishop may then appoint a consultant to mediate the disagreements. All parties concerned are urged to approach mediation, either with the consultant or with the Bishop, with open minds, compassion and cooperation.

The procedures to be followed in this case are outlined in detail in National Canons III.9.12, "Of the Reconciliation of Disagreement Affecting the Pastoral Relation

and On the Dissolution of the Pastoral Relation”. If reconciliation does prove to be impossible, the provisions of National Canon III.9.13 will apply.

It is expected, if the relationship is terminated, that there be an appropriate period of financial support, counseling and training for the terminated clergy and their families, the timing and amount to be negotiated between the vestry and the Bishop.

### **Supply Priests**

The diocesan office will maintain a list of all those clergy who are canonically resident (active and non-active) and/or licensed to officiate in the Diocese. This list is maintained at the diocesan website. To be considered for the list, contact the Bishop’s office.

Honoraria for supply clergy for officiating and for travel should be paid at the time of service in accordance with the current guidelines found on the supply clergy page at the diocesan website.

### **Non-Parochial Priests**

Clergy who are not employed by a congregation or institution 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 the canons.

### **Retired Priests**

Regardless of their ministry activities, or lack thereof, retired clergy are expected to continue to maintain a relationship with the Bishop. They should keep the Bishop informed of any address change or any other major change in their circumstances. Retired clergy who are canonically resident have seat and voice at Diocesan Convention and are encouraged to participate if possible. Retired clergy only vote if they are serving a canonical appointment. 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.

If retired clergy choose to be deployed, the Church Pension Group governs the salary retired clergy may earn. The Bishop must submit an application for exemption from these guidelines.

### **Priests Licensed to Officiate**

Licensed clergy are welcome in the diocese and are encouraged to participate fully in its life. Licensed clergy are subject to the same expectations outlined for all clergy. If they wish to be deployed as supply clergy, they must be conversant and in compliance with the policies of the Diocese of Georgia.

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 and request for license is received, they will be removed from the list of licensed clergy and must reapply to be reinstated.

Licensed clergy serving as Heads of Congregations or as Assisting Clergy on the staff of diocesan congregations are expected to register for Diocesan Convention. Although diocesan canons do not provide such licensed clergy a vote at Convention, it is customary to grant them seat and voice when the Convention organizes for business.

Only those clergy who are canonically resident in the Diocese of Georgia 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 Convention 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.

### **Vocational Deacons**

In the Diocese of Georgia, the ministry of the vocational deacon will be expressed in this way:

1. All diaconal ministries are exercised under the oversight and care of the bishop with the assistance of appointed priests and others. The deacon is assigned and serves directly under the bishop (BCP p. 543).
2. The fundamental ministry of a deacon is to hold before the church the character of the whole ministry of the church as service and of the baptized (to which priest, bishop, and deacon belong) as servants of Christ and for Christ.
3. All deacons will be attached to a diocesan parish.
4. Deacons will normally be non-stipendiary concerning their work on behalf of the church. All exceptions must be approved in writing by the Office of the Bishop.
5. The bishop expects a non-stipendiary deacon to serve a minimum of ten hours a week in service to and through the assigned parish. This includes at Sunday liturgies, in congregational ministries as scheduled by the supervising priest, and in service ministries reaching out beyond the congregation as outlined in this letter of agreement. The deacon and supervising priest should take care concerning personal or family needs when scheduling time for service.
6. The deacon will be asked occasionally by the bishop to serve liturgically in other places in the diocese or at diocesan liturgies. In all cases, the deacon's responsibility to his or her family and to his or her secular employment will be respected.
7. The deacon is expected to serve at least one Sunday liturgy each week and at parish liturgies on major feasts and other significant observances. (When there is more than one deacon in a parish, this policy may be altered to ensure that lay persons are given adequate opportunities to serve as Eucharistic Ministers.)
8. The Deacon serves as an icon of servanthood within the liturgy. In doing so, the Deacon does not replace the ministry of lay persons. In the Eucharist, the deacon reads the Gospel, serves at the altar, receives the offering, serves the chalice, and dismisses the people. The deacon may lead the prayers of the people and be responsible for parish prayer lists seeing those intentions, according to parish custom, are offered before or during the prayers of the people.
9. Priests are the ordinary preachers of the parish and preaching is not a prerequisite for being a deacon. Deacons who are gifted preachers should be allowed to exercise that gift.

10. The deacon may take communion to the sick and housebound of the parish and may be responsible for scheduling Eucharistic Minister visits on a regular basis. Deacons may assist in pastoral offices such as burials and marriages at the invitation of the presiding priest.
11. 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 some hospital or prison visits).
12. The deacon is expected to participate in the annual deacons' conference of the diocese. If they are able to do so, Deacons are invited to attend clergy conferences as well. Deacons are also encouraged to attend the Deacons School for Ministry as a means of continuing education and supporting those in the process of preparing for ordination. The supervising priest and the bishop will work to encourage our congregations enjoying the service of a non-stipendary deacon, to provide funds for continuing education for the deacon serving them. We also will urge vestries to reimburse the costs of the ministry of the deacon.
13. In seeking ordination as a vocational deacon, one certifies that he or she does not feel called to the priesthood. Moving between orders in this way is not normative as it diminishes the Order of Deacons if it is seen as merely a stepping stone to the priesthood rather than a full order of ministry in its own right. If a deacon feels called to the priesthood, he or she has to begin an entirely new process.
14. The deacon is not to function as a supply priest and may not distribute communion at a Sunday liturgy outside of the parish in which he or she is assigned unless authorized by the bishop. There is one standing exception: the deacon may distribute communion in his or her congregation on a Sunday if the priest is taken sick within the 24 hours before the liturgy and it is the priest's direction that this be done (see BCP p.408, par. 5).
15. As stated in the Canons of the Diocese, active vocational deacons will have seat, voice, and vote at the Diocesan Convention.

The Diocese of Georgia acknowledges three categories of deacons:

1. **Active.** These are deacons assigned to a congregation and have an Annual Letter of Agreement on file with the diocesan office. This form is available in the Documents Library at the diocesan website. When licensed the deacon is authorized to serve liturgically and preach in any church in the diocese when properly invited to do so and with the approval of the supervising priest.
2. **Inactive.** Deacons who have not retired, but who do not have a current Annual Letter of Agreement on file in the diocesan office. Inactive deacons are not to wear clericals or function as a deacon in liturgy for any cause without the expressed permission of the Bishop.
3. **Retired.** Deacons must request a move to retired status by letter to the bishop. Retired deacons may serve as needed from time to time with the approval of the bishop.

If possible, assistance and support for the deacon's servant ministry should be specified to encourage the parish to be accountable in providing support for diaconal ministry. It

is expected that the deacon and supervising priest meet once a year to reflect on the deacon's goals and assignments for the coming year and for a review and renewal of this letter of agreement. After the review, the deacon will send the agreement letter to the bishop for his signature.

This annual agreement expires automatically when a supervising rector or vicar resigns the cure. In consultation with the bishop or his appointed representative, the vestry and the deacon may extend the agreement to cover the interim period. On the arrival of a new rector or vicar, the deacon will leave the congregation. After three months, the new rector or vicar may, with the bishop, draw up a new letter of agreement.

### **Letters Dimissory**

In accordance with National Canon III.9.3 no priest may be called to a new position (including rector, vicar, priest-in-charge, and assisting clergy of any title) without the prior advice of the Diocesan Bishop. According to the National Canons, the Bishop has 60 days to evaluate and make his or her decision, so it is imperative that the parish consult with the Bishop for input on qualifications and suitability as early as possible in the calling process, once the parish has narrowed the list of candidates significantly.

If an ordained clergyperson is changing his or her canonical residence, as in accepting a call to a new parish or for other reasons, Letters Dimissory must be presented to the new Diocese from the current one in order to effect the transfer in accordance with National Canon III.9.4. It is also mandatory that certification be made that all assessments for the Clergyperson's Pension Fund have been paid in full by the parish.

Deacons may not transfer Letters Dimissory without written consent from the Bishop of Georgia in accordance with National Canon III.7.6. As non-stipendiary clergy, deacons do not have to meet the full-time requirement below, but rather the usual expectations of deacons outlined in this Handbook.

Letters Dimissory are accepted when the following steps have been completed and when a clergy person has been called to *a full time, permanent position* within the Diocese of Georgia.

1. Certificates certifying that the clergy has completed the workshops for sexual misconduct prevention for adults and children should be sent to the Bishop's office. (If workshops have been completed outside the Diocese of Georgia, the clergy person is responsible for having copies sent to the Bishop's Office.)
2. A background check must be completed for all parochial clergy. The diocesan office will have the background conducted. The clergy person is responsible for making sure a background check has been initiated.
3. A Letter Dimissory is sent from the priest's canonical bishop to the Bishop of Georgia. (The clergy person is responsible for requesting his/her Letter Dimissory be sent from the previous diocese to the Diocese of Georgia.)

Letters Dimissory will not normally be accepted for newly ordained deacons from another diocese until they have been ordained priest. The bishop does not accept Letters Dimissory for interim clergy or retired clergy.

### **Deployment**

Any priest in the Diocese who is canonically resident or licensed and in good standing may submit her or his name and material to any congregation receiving names. Any clergyperson moving from one congregation to another must be current on all required trainings on the prevention of abuse of children and the prevention of sexual exploitation and harassment in congregations.

Three documents are part of the canonical appointment of a rector or vicar: the Letter of Call to the priest from the vestry, the Letter of Agreement between vestry and priest, and the Letter of Institution by the bishop. Priests-in-charge and interim priests also shall have a Letter of Call and a Letter of Agreement.

In the Episcopal Church, clergy may be deployed only with the advice of the diocesan bishop. Questions about deployment are properly directed to the Canon to the Ordinary who will coordinate deployment issues and guide clergy through the process including updating the Office of Transition Ministry Portfolio (which has replaced the old CDO profile), resume and finding possible calls which fit with the clergy's skills, experience and interest.

The bishop expects clergy to notify the Canon when they intend to be involved in a search process outside the Diocese. The Canon to the Ordinary will assist with calls both within and without the Diocese of Georgia.

### **Retirement**

Before advising the parish vestry of retirement plans, those plans must be discussed with the Bishop and any announcement must be coordinated with the Bishop. Also, as each clergyperson approaches retirement from the Episcopal Church he or she is urged to be in close contact with Church Pension Fund personnel and to utilize fully *The Church Pension Fund Handbook*. The Fund wants to be in contact with all clergy looking into retirement to make that transition as easy as possible. Call the Pension Fund at 1-800-223-6602.

### **Clergy Divorce/Remarriage**

Remarriage of any divorced priest or deacon (active or retired) requires the canonical consent of the Bishop. As each case must stand on its own merits, diocesan guidelines have not been prepared, but each clergyperson desirous of remarriage after divorce must confer with the Bishop, in person, to discuss the situation in detail and to request permission to remarry.

When clergy wish to remarry following a divorce in his/her parish, a decision will be made on a case-by-case basis as to whether the priest should resign. This decision will be made in consultation with the Bishop and will take into consideration causes and conditions of the divorce, the length of time the couple was in the parish prior to the divorce, the involvement of the former spouse in the parish, the attitude and feelings of the congregation, the relationship of the cleric and the spouse to be, and the recommendations of a consultant familiar with family and parish systems.

### **Policies & Procedures on Sexual Misconduct**

*The policy of the Diocese of Georgia is that sexual misconduct involving pastoral care by any member of the clergy, lay employee or volunteer will not be tolerated.*

The Diocese has adopted a policy and procedure manual that outlines the process that will be used for any allegations in sexual misconduct that comes before the Bishop. Parishes are expected to adopt this manual as a congregational policy. Clergy, lay employees and volunteers who work with youth are also required to complete the Safeguarding God's Children training and supply proof of training to the diocesan office.

Copies of the Policy and Procedure manual are available at the diocesan website. Specific questions regarding sexual misconduct prevention and training should be directed to the Canon for Youth and Young Adults.

## **Parish Life**

### **Episcopal Visitations**

Before the arrival of the Bishop at a parish for a scheduled periodic Episcopal visit the Diocesan Office will send the parish a notification, requesting details of those to be Confirmed, Baptized, Received or Reaffirmed, as applicable.

Bishop Benhase requests that there be only one liturgy on the day of his visitation. Please see his current visitation calendar to see when his visit to your congregation is scheduled.

- Sunday morning visitations will be at 10:00 a.m.
- Sunday afternoon visitations will be at 4:00 p.m.
- Weekday visitations will be at 5:30 p.m.

The bishop recognizes that these service times might be different from your usually scheduled services and asks that you be flexible and understanding given the complexity of his calendar.

In addition to the liturgy, visitations will normally include two meetings, one with the parish priest and one with the vestry. The meeting times will fluctuate depending upon the diocesan and bishop's calendar. Details of meeting times will be on the form that you will receive from the bishop's office 30 days prior to the bishop's visitation. (Februarys might be a little less than 30 days due to the pressures of convention preparation.)

Despite the term, the Bishop is not a visitor in any church in the diocese in the usual sense of that word, but the chief pastor. A copy of the Order of Service bulletin should be sent to the Bishop well in advance of the service.

### **Special Offerings**

The Canons of the Diocese call for three special offerings during the year: on the Bishop's visitation the undesignated offering goes to the Bishop to assist in furthering the Bishop's work in the Diocese; on the Sunday before or after Thanksgiving Day an offering is taken for Episcopal Youth and Children Services; and on a Sunday in April or May an offering is taken for the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. Provision is made in the Canons (Title II, Canon 10) for the EYCS and Sewanee contributions to be made through budget line items rather than a special offering. No provision is made for the contribution not being given. All such offerings are to be made through the diocesan office.

### **Congregation Records**

The diocesan canons (I.7.2) place the responsibility for parish records with the rector or vicar and the wardens who are to preserve all official records of the church together with any documents of historic interest. This is best accomplished through creating and following a plan of document retention that will address such items as the Parish Register and vestry minutes. Actual preservation of the documents may be delegated to any qualified person.

### **Non-Episcopal Clergy Serving in Weddings and Funerals**

The pastoral issues surrounding weddings and funerals make it appropriate at times to have clergy from other denominations involved in the liturgy. A priest may use her or his discretion, and invite other qualified clergy to participate in these liturgies as appropriate. A priest is never required to issue such an invitation. Qualified non-Episcopal clergy participating in a single pastoral service may wear the vestments that are customary in their tradition and may preside at the wedding or funeral, but not the Eucharist (ELCA clergy excepted, in keeping with our agreement with that denomination).

### **“Anglican” or “Continuing” Splinter Groups not part of TEC**

As these groups are not in communion with The Episcopal Church and their clergy are not licensed in this Diocese, no clergyperson from these groups may officiate in any service of worship, and no joint services may be held with any congregation of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia without the consent of the Bishop. Episcopal clergy of the Diocese of Georgia may not liturgically participate (celebrate or preach, for example) in any service held in or by these congregations except with written permission from the Bishop.

Attendance at a wedding or funeral held in such congregation, is an exception to this more general statement and requires no such permission. The same holds true for ecumenical services in a community with participation from a number of denominations, including an Anglican congregation.

### **Pastoral Care Concerns**

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.

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 “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.

Clergy should treat all pastoral conversations as confidential; however, if a person communicates an intention to harm himself, herself or others, this should be reported as appropriate.

Clergy must be familiar with and strictly comply with the diocesan policies regarding sexual misconduct including the requirement to report misconduct (of which they become aware outside of the sacrament of confession) to the diocese and, if it involves minors, to the authorities.

### **Worship**

The 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* is the standard for worship in The Episcopal Church.

Heads of Congregations are to use their discretion in the use of any other worship resources and should notify the Office of the Bishop of uses of other materials, which must be consistent with the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church* (which includes the 1979 Prayer book). Permission is granted for congregations to use current prayer books from other churches of the Anglican Communion for non-principle Sunday services.

Those congregations seeking to use the 1928 Prayer Book for principle Sunday services may request to do so through the process of a Congregational Covenant with the Bishop by showing how use of this Prayer Book fits with the goals of the parish in spreading the Gospel in their community. The same rule applies to the use of liturgical material found in *Enriching Our Worship*. No blanket permission is authorized outside of this process and a congregation must make the request as prescribed herein.

**A Note of Thanks:** Each of us stands on the shoulders of those who have gone before. This document is not a wholly original work, but borrow freely from the Clergy Handbooks and documents of other Episcopal dioceses. These include the Dioceses of Olympia, Western North Carolina, Tennessee, Central Florida and Mississippi and may include materials from other dioceses by way of the work of those we consulted. The end product however, is tailored to the policies of this diocese with new material added to that created by the above sources. We are thankful to the dioceses who freely offered their original work for this purpose.