

Clergy Handbook

Introduction

This handbook outlines the role of the clergy within a congregation in the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia. It is not a substitute for the canons of the diocese but intends to help clergy navigate their role as set out in the canons and regulations.

Together, the incumbent, wardens and the treasurer form the group of dedicated people who provide the core leadership for the local “vestry” or congregation.

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Section 1 Canon 3 - Clergy

The roles, responsibilities and duties of clergy are set out in a number of places in the canons and regulations. Canon 3 is the central applicable canon. [[Canons and Regulations | Diocesan Governance | Anglican Diocese of British Columbia](#)] Clergy should also review the wardens' handbook as many of the items in that handbook reflect on the way incumbents, associate clergy, honorary clergy and supply clergy work with wardens in the day-to-day operation of the parish. [[Handbooks | Congregation Resources | Anglican Diocese of British Columbia](#)]

While this handbook is designed to assist clergy in many respects, it is important for clergy to read and be familiar with all the canons, regulations and policies. Where there is any conflict between the way this handbook might be interpreted and the way the canons, regulations and policies might be interpreted, the canons, regulations and policies are to be followed. (If clergy find there seems to be such a conflict, they should let the executive archdeacon know so that this handbook can be edited to be clearer and in line with the canons, regulations and policies.)

Duties

- A. Incumbents have particular duties and authorities that other clergy do not. These are set out in Canon 3.4 Powers and Duties.
 - i. One of these powers is the right of an incumbent to authorize other clergy who hold a Licence to Officiate or a Permission to Officiate (PTO) from this diocese to conduct services (Eucharists, weddings, funerals, baptisms, and other worship services) in the parish. [Canon 3.4 A 3]
 - ii. There are some of these powers and duties that fall to the incumbent, alone. Others are shared with the wardens. [Canon 3.4 A 8 and Canon 3.4 B and Regulation R7.7.1 C 10, 15, 17, and 21]
 - iii. If the incumbent and the wardens cannot come to an agreement about issues where they have joint responsibilities, the matter may be referred to the bishop. [Canon 3.4 C]
- B. Clergy who are associates in a parish are, with the consent of the bishop, appointed by the incumbent. They assist the incumbent in their duties and may be terminated by the bishop or the incumbent (or if there is no incumbent, by the wardens) at any time within the terms of the employment agreement. [Canon 3.1 D and E]
- C. Clergy should not hire or terminate clergy without first discussing the matter with the Bishop and the Chancellor.

Responsibility of Clergy to Wider Diocese and Their Parish

Incumbents and other clergy have a responsibility to their respective parishes, and they also have a responsibility to the wider diocese, the ecclesiastical provincial, and the national church. This may include such things as attending as a delegate to Provincial or National synods, acting as archdeacon of a region, sitting on diocesan council or on a subcommittee of diocesan council, etc. While it is important to keep wardens and parish councils apprised of duties of clergy outside the parish, the cleric does not require their approval. If wardens have concerns about the amount of time clergy are spending in their extra-parish responsibilities after discussing these concerns with the clergy, both the

wardens and clergy may refer the matter to the bishop, or if the bishop wishes, to the Executive Archdeacon pursuant to Canon 3.4 C.

Incumbents and wardens share responsibilities in a number of areas, some of which require consultation with parish council and others of which do not. [Canon 3.4 A 4, Regulation R7.6.2 and R7.7.1 C 10, 17, and 21]

Ideally, incumbents and wardens work in collaboration for the good of the parish and the diocese as a whole. In some areas of responsibility, wardens act without the direct input of the incumbent, but in consultation with parish council. [Regulation 7.7.1 C 3, 11, and 14] In such cases, wardens will still regularly keep the incumbent informed of decisions being taken and will seek input from incumbents as appropriate, whether required by canons or not. In other words, incumbents and wardens will each manage their respective responsibilities without encroaching on the authority of the other but will work collaboratively as leaders of the parish.

Respective Roles of Clergy, Wardens and Parish Council

Item	Incumbent	Incumbent and wardens	Incumbent and Parish council	Wardens, alone	Parish council, alone
Spiritual concerns	X				
Liturgy	X				
Keys to church		X			
Christian education	X				
Permitting guilds, groups, etc	X				
Records as prescribed by reg		X			
Buildings and grounds		X			
Ensuring divine services occur				X	
Ensure policies are followed		X			
Set example by regular attendance			X	X	X
Supervision of finances				X	
Create budget for approval by Vestry				X (with Treasurer)	
Review budget	X				X
Ensure clergy are paid				X	
PIR, financials				X	
All buildings kept in repair				X	
Use of buildings, grounds		X			

Execute contracts for parish				X	
Manage church cemetery		X			
Maintaining all church records		X			
Annual statistics for PIR		X			
Care for parish during holiday of incumbent				X	
Appointment/employment of lay employees		X			
Filings for Income Tax				X	
Assist incumbent and wardens					X

Section 2 Continuing Education

The bishop encourages clergy who are covered by the continuing education plan of the Anglican Church of Canada to make use of the opportunities available to clergy for continuing education. Regulation R3.5.1 J sets out the educational leave available for clergy. There are three types of educational leave:

- One week, annually
- Six weeks every five years
- Up to six months unpaid sabbatical leave after six years continuous service in one parish.

Deacons are not enrolled in the Continuing Education Plan of the Anglican Church of Canada. However, they are also encouraged to set aside time for continuing education and are eligible for educational leave in accordance with the same terms as stipendiary priests. Deacons may apply to the Educational Trusts Committee for assistance in program funding.

All three of these types of educational leave have specific requirements, such as approval of the bishop and approval of the employer or salary-paying source (usually, this means the parish). All continuing education leave must be well-timed and must be for educational purposes. They are not simply additional vacation weeks. For specific requirements for each, see Regulation R3.5.1 J.

Clergy should plan ahead in order to obtain the appropriate approvals, and careful consideration should be given to the Christian calendar as leave is unlikely to be granted if it interferes with Holy Week, Easter, or Christmas, and in most cases, Lent and Advent.

Salaried clergy can access their continuing education funds administered by the Pension Office to help pay for the cost of continuing education. Forms are available here and need to be signed by the Synod office before being submitted. <https://anglicanpension.ca/cep/>

All clergy, including non-stipendiary clergy and deacons, can apply for funds through the Educational Trusts Committee of the Diocese. <https://bc.anglican.ca/diocesan-governance/education-trusts-committee>.

Section 3 Leave for Clergy

Sick Leave

Paid clergy are entitled to accumulate sick leave with pay at a rate of one week per quarter year of employment to a maximum accumulation of one month. A doctor's certificate may be required. In the event of an illness that continues for more than thirty days, an application for short-term disability benefits must be completed and sent to the regional archdeacon, (or if there is no regional archdeacon, then to the executive archdeacon), with a copy to the bishop's office.

Clergy should record all of their sick leave in the payroll system.

Vacation - Preparation, Backfilling, Notice to Payroll

Incumbents should discuss with their wardens their intended vacation plans, including the dates they intend to be away from the parish and the way they intend to backfill their role.

Deacons and assisting clergy consult with the incumbent about proposed absences from the parish.

Once the vacation plans have been settled, the incumbent must submit leave requests through the payroll system. Clergy are also required to record their vacation in a place that the wardens can access it. In the event of a retirement or move, the payroll system will be used to calculate remaining vacation owed.

Clergy wishing to carry-over one week of unused vacation must seek the prior consent of the bishop. Any carryover vacation must be taken by December 31st of the following year and must be taken prior to the current year's vacation entitlement.

When planning for a vacation, the incumbent is required to find clergy or laity to offer "supply" for the time the incumbent is planning to be away. For clergy supply, the proposed clergy person must have a current Licence or Permission to Officiate from the bishop. For laity to offer services, they must be licenced by the bishop as a lay worship leader.

Section 4 Stewardship

While it is the wardens who must report to the executive officer the results of the annual stewardship campaign, Regulation R 7.6.3 provides that it is the incumbent and the wardens who are charged with designing and undertaking the annual stewardship campaign. The campaign may take different forms from parish to parish, depending on the local needs and style of the various parishes, but whatever the elements of the campaign, the regulation sets out the aim and purpose of the campaign.

Unless a stewardship campaign has been carried out in the previous twelve months, an application for diocesan grants will likely be declined by diocesan council.

Section 5 Clergy Retirement (or Movement to a New Parish)

When a cleric retires or resigns it is often difficult to let go of the role of their relationship with the people they have served and loved. It is important that good order in both our collegial and parochial life is preserved. Retiring clergy should review the full policy on leaving a parish [[Leaving a Parish Ministry.pdf](#)].

- a. When retiring or resigning, the cleric needs to give the bishop at least three months written notice of the intended retirement or resignation date. If the cleric is a deacon, this same notice should also be given to the director of deacons and their supervising incumbent. If the cleric is a curate or associate, this same notice should also be given to their supervising incumbent.
- b. Following that notice being given, the cleric should not advise anyone in the parish until speaking with the bishop. The announcement to the parish will be made by the bishop writing a letter to the parish that will be read at a Sunday service by one of the wardens or leaders. The bishop will discuss when and how the wardens should be told about the clergy's departure.
- c. Once the retirement has occurred, a retiring incumbent should not attend the parish for worship or parish events until at least one year *after the new incumbent has arrived*. The retirement policy sets out more fully the details and exceptions to this provision. Associate priests should discuss when and how it might be appropriate to return to a parish with the incumbent and bishop.
- d. Retired deacons may be invited at the incumbent's discretion to return to the parish after 6 months absence. They may serve as honorary assistants if asked and may also function liturgically so long as they continue to have a recognized diaconal ministry beyond the walls of the church.

Honorifics and Retention of Titles

When considering whether a particular honorific (Canon, Venerable, Very Reverend, etc.) is appropriate for a particular clergy member, please review the relevant honorifics policy [[Honorifics Retention of Titles.pdf](#)]. This policy deals with situations when clergy change their role, when they retire, and when clergy arrive from another diocese.

Section 6 Authorized Liturgies

The bishop has authorized the use in our parishes of any liturgy that is authorized anywhere in the wider Anglican Communion, and any liturgy that is authorized by any church with which we are in full communion (e.g. the ELCIC and the Moravian church). However, the bishop discourages mixing and matching pieces of various liturgies. For example, if you choose to use the New Zealand "Liturgy of the Eucharist", you must use all of that liturgy and not substitute a part of the liturgy with, for instance, the confession from the BCP.

A complete list of authorized liturgies can be found on the diocesan website under Worship Resources. [[Authorized Liturgies](#) | [Worship Resources](#) | [Anglican Diocese of British Columbia](#)]

Section 7 Honorary Clergy

Incumbents who have retired clergy in their parish membership may wish to seek the bishop's appointment of those retired clergy as "honorary clergy" of the parish. The incumbent should ask the

cleric if they wish to be an honorary, and if they do, then the incumbent should send an email to the bishop to seek approval.

Honorary clergy are unpaid, except when they act as supply, filling in for the incumbent for Sunday services. In which case the parish may consider paying the usual supply rate. Honorary clergy may offer other assistance to the incumbent, such as leading Bible study, visiting homebound and sick parishioners, and the like. But it is important for incumbents not to abuse the good graces of honorary clergy. Deacons who officiate and preach in the absence of their parish priest are compensated in accordance with diocesan supply rates.

Section 8 Visiting Preachers and Clergy

An incumbent may choose to invite any cleric to preach or preside at the parish service(s) if that cleric holds a Licence or Permission to Officiate from the bishop.

When an incumbent wishes to invite someone to preach or speak during the liturgy at their service when that person does not hold a Licence or Permission to Officiate from the bishop, the incumbent should inform Bishop. A simple email will suffice setting out the person's name, a sentence or two about the proposed preacher's or speaker's background and the date that they will be preaching or speaking. This email should be sent prior to inviting the potential preacher or speaker, and before announcing or advertising them. If there are further questions the bishop wishes to ask, that follow-up may occur, but generally it is the responsibility of the incumbent to decide if the proposed preacher or speaker would be a good fit for the congregation and would preach/speak within the wide breadth of Anglican theology.

Where there is no incumbent, the same approach applies to the interim priest-in-charge or the wardens.

Section 9 Clergy Days and Clergy Conferences

Clergy are expected as a part of their employment to attend clergy days and clergy conferences. Clergy who are acting as interim clergy or working part-time in a parish need to discuss with the bishop whether they should attend.

Dates for clergy conferences and clergy days are announced well in advance and clergy should not schedule overlapping vacations, leaves or other events without the express permission of the bishop.

Deacons are encouraged to attend clergy conferences if at all possible and are always welcome at clergy days. The Archdeacon to Deacons will advise whether attendance at specific clergy days is required.

Travel expenses for clergy days and clergy conferences are set out in the travel policy on the diocesan website. [[Diocesan Travel Reimbursement.pdf](#)]

Section 10 Gifts and Planned Giving

The diocese encourages and solicits gifts of cash and real and personal property, either as outright gifts during the lifetime of the donor or through such planned giving vehicles as are permitted by Canada Revenue Agency and federal and provincial legislation. Incumbents have a significant part in encouraging planned giving and may wish to review the available resources on the diocesan website around [pledges and legacy giving](#).

Planned giving or legacy giving is the process by which a donor can arrange a gift to a charity for either its future or current needs. The emphasis is on planning and is focused on meeting the needs and objectives of the donor as well as the recipient. This may include a combination of financial, estate and tax planning. These considerations apply to gifts made during the lifetime of the donor as well as in planning for the distribution of assets on the death of the donor.

Details of the process and acceptability of gifts, whether during the lifetime of the donor or as a part of their estate are set out in policy. [[DoBCGift acceptance policy.pdf](#)]

Section 11 Talking to Media

From time to time clergy are asked by reporters to comment on issues related to the church, the diocese or the parish. Before responding, clergy must seek permission from the bishop. It is recommended to respond to the reporter: "Thank you for your question. What is your deadline? I will have someone get back to you with a response." Before clergy approach newspapers, radio, or television channels to offer comment on matters in the news, they need to get permission from the bishop to do so. In general, these types of comments need to come from the bishop.

Clergy do not need prior permission to simply advise media of dates and times of parish events.

Section 12 Marriage

Priests holding a Licence or Permission to Officiate from the bishop may perform Anglican marriage ceremonies in the province. Priests cannot perform a marriage outside of this diocese without the permission of the area bishop.

Provincial legislation requires that clergy must have applied for and received a Registration of Religious Representative number. This can be applied for but must be signed off by the bishop (or other signatory approved by Vital Statistics). The form can be found on the BC Vital Statistics web page. As this process is a government process, it is recommended that clergy seeking this registration should give themselves at least four weeks lead time, and perhaps more during government slow periods (e.g. during Covid lock-down the lead time was significantly longer). Once registered, the registration continues as long as the clergy member remains active in the diocese.

Additional Links:

- a. [Forms](#)
- b. [The Canons and Regulations](#)
- c. [Policies](#)
- d. [Other Handbooks](#)