



Anglican Diocese of
Edmonton

Proclaim the Gospel | Make Disciples | Further the Kingdom

ng the Earth

All Relations

The
GOSPEL

at the Center

All

Outward Focus

menical
Sharing

PARISH LIFE AND LITURGY HANDBOOK

November 2023

In the spirit of peaceful dialogue,
understanding, reconciliation and healing, we
walk alongside our Indigenous and Métis
relations on Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 Territory, the
traditional meeting ground of Cree, Saulteaux,
Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nakota Sioux, Dene, Métis,
and Inuit peoples.



Contact Us
780.439.7344



Diocesan Website
edmonton.anglican.ca



Synod Office
10035 103 ST NW, Edmonton

Diocese of Edmonton Parish Life and Liturgy Handbook

Table of Contents

<i>Wider Life of the Diocese</i>	3
Canons and Constitutions	4
Regions and Regional Deans	4
<i>Governance of the Parish</i>	7
The Corporation.....	7
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	8
Vestry.....	9
<i>Forms and Records</i>	10
Registers, Statistics, and Lists.....	10
Archival Records	11
<i>Welcoming the Bishop</i>	12
<i>Liturgical Guidelines</i>	13
Approved Resources.....	13
<i>Baptisms</i>	14
<i>Holy Eucharist</i>	16
Presiding and Prayers.....	16
Communion Under Special Circumstances	16
Communion From Reserved Sacrament.....	17
Reception of the Eucharist.....	17
<i>Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation</i>	18
Confirmation	18
Reaffirmation.....	19
Reception	19
<i>Marriage</i>	20
Authorised Liturgies and Canonical Requirements.....	20
Marriage Preparation	21
Marriage Outside a Church Building	21

Remarriage After Divorce	22
Renewal of Marriage Vows	22
<i>Funeral</i>	22
<i>Ecumenical Participation in Liturgy</i>	23
<i>Special Permission to Officiate</i>	25
Visiting Clergy	25
Former Incumbents	26
Permission to Officiate Outside the Diocese of Edmonton	27
Weddings Outside the Diocese of Edmonton.....	27
<i>Exorcism</i>	28
<i>Discernment of Candidates and Postulants for Ordination</i>	28
Principles.....	28
Definitions.....	29
Process.....	30
Formation and Training.....	32
<i>Other Parish Ministers</i>	32
Assistant Priests	32
Deacons	33
Newly Ordained	33
Honourary Assistants.....	34
Lay Evangelists	34
Lay Readers.....	35
Lay Reader Training.....	36
Lay Reader Licensing	37
Theological Students.....	38
<i>Shared Ministry</i>	40
Anglican Shared Ministry	40
Ecumenical Shared Ministry	41
<i>Bi-Annual Clergy Review</i>	42
Clergy Accountabilities.....	42

Wider Life of the Diocese

As clergy of the Diocese of Edmonton, we are part of a much larger church. The Gospel is lived out at the local level, the diocesan level, the provincial level, and the national level. As affirmed in your oaths taken at the time of ordination and re-affirmed at the time of appointment **and in the Bishop's Licence**, there is expectation that you will participate in the wider work of the diocese. As a college of clergy, we work together as leaders in this diocese for mutual support and for the building up of the Body of Christ. For full-time clergy these expectations include:

- Attending and participating in diocesan synod;
- Regular and faithful attendance of clergy days, regional days, clergy conference/retreat and other days called by the Bishop. (Please see the *Human Resources Policy Manual* for more details.)
- Committee work outside of the parish;
- Mutual support with the life of the clergy community including ordinations, inductions and funerals:
 - Attendance at ordinations is expected. If a clergy person is not available, they should contact the Bishop to offer their regrets;
 - Attendance at inductions is expected within the region you serve. If a clergy person is not available, they should contact the Bishop to offer their regrets;
 - Attendance at diocesan funeral services is expected by all active clergy. If a clergy person is not available, they should contact the Bishop to offer their regrets.

Clergy working less than full time should discuss attendance expectations with the Bishop.

*Note 1: College of Clergy refers to the truth that we are called to work together as colleagues for the work of the Gospel. **We embody within ourselves Christ's call** to love one another and to build one another up. Our calling is a challenging one, and we need one another. To minister in a silo is to deprive ourselves of the gifts and encouragement that comes from life in community.*

Note 2: Diocesan Committees refers to the committees that govern the diocese. There are four standing committees of Executive Council. They are the Administration and Finance Committee, the Social Justice Committee, the

Stewardship Committee and the Legislative Committee. There are several standing subcommittees that function under these four committees. We also create ad hoc committees from time to time to deal with specific issues.

Note 3: The Synod of the Diocese has three meanings. The first is the corporate body of the diocese which is comprised of the Bishop, all licensed clergy, all retired clergy geographically and canonically resident in the diocese, the officers of the diocese, the laity elected by their parishes, the laity appointed by the bishop, the synod secretary and the synod treasurer. The synod is represented by the Bishop and executive council between meetings. The second meaning of synod is the meeting of all eligible members of the synod which is convened every two years, or as called by the Bishop or executive council, to talk about the mission of the church and to do the business of the diocese. The third meaning is theological, in which the word synod speaks to the inherently communal nature of discipleship and our common vocation as followers of Jesus to always "walk together" in Christ. This third meaning is what gives the theological vision for why we create our institutional structures.

Canons and Constitutions

Familiarity with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Edmonton, the **Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, and the General** Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, will help to guide some of the basic expectations around your role as clergy in the diocese. Please take time to be familiar with these documents:

- [Diocese of Edmonton](#)
- [Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land](#)
- [Anglican Church of Canada](#)

Regions and Regional Deans

The Diocese of Edmonton has four regions, covering the north, south, east and west regions of the diocese. The regions were adjusted in 2023 to reflect active parishes throughout the diocese. They intentionally include rural and urban parishes, as well as larger and smaller congregations. Each region includes members of the clergy and laity within a geographical boundary.

Regional Deans are appointed to offer collegial pastoral support and leadership within their region. Leadership will endeavour to create opportunities for clergy and laity to support each other and share resources. Clergy are also encouraged to approach their Regional Deans for support, and to bring questions from within the region.

It is an expectation that the clergy of the regions meet for mutual support and learning opportunities twice a year. Additional meetings are permitted but attendance is not required.

Note 1: Clericus is the meeting of the clergy within the region.

Note 2: Region is a term to define a geographical region of parishes and includes the clergy of the area as well as the lay members of the congregations.

Purpose of Regional Meetings

To facilitate a collegial environment, offering:

- Mutual support;
- Learning and conversations around ministry;
- Diocesan communication and discernment;
- Opportunity to know one another;
- Opportunity for shared ministries and/or collaborative ministry (ie. regional confirmation classes, community Easter egg hunts etc.).

Role of Regional Deans

- Organise a minimum of two clericus meetings a year;
- Convene one yearly region-wide event per year (ie. a regional event could be a learning/social opportunity to grow together, a meeting to discuss diocesan events or a shared-ministry event);
- Be available for individual collegial pastoral support for regional clergy and check-in with clergy to offer support;
- Facilitate diocesan conversations as necessary within the region;
- Create opportunities for conversation with respect to the varying levels of need and comfort;
- Be knowledgeable about current diocesan information;

- Be a conduit of information between the Bishop and region;
- Learn and know the gifts of the region for the building up of the region / diocese.

Regional Clericus Meeting Expectations

- Attendance is required for all full-time clergy. (After a discussion, the Bishop may permit part-time and bi-vocational clergy to be absent from clericus meetings.) Within reason, Regional Deans should try to accommodate the work demands of those in part-time ministry, giving them an opportunity to attend;
- Honourary assistants, lay ministers in charge, deacons and clergy who serve in full-communion partnerships are welcome to attend;
- Meetings will be a safe, respectful space for all who are present, and participants will be mindful of healthy conversation boundaries.

Guidelines for Healthy Conversation

- Everyone is welcome to participate, and no one will monopolise the conversation.
- Each person will decide when to share. It is okay to pass.
- By not expecting or demanding everyone to contribute in the same way at every meeting, we give each other space to show up on our good days and on our hard days.
- Our story belongs to us, we do not **tell other people's stories (ie. don't share what** others have shared in the group to anyone else without their permission).
- We respect all opinions.
- We hold confidentiality.
- Unless someone specifically asks for advice, we will not assume they want advice.
- We discuss, we do not debate.
- We are here to listen and share, we invite curious questions about experiences and understandings that differ from our own.

- We believe everyone is trying their best, we do not assume ill intent.
- If we unintentionally say something hurtful or offensive, we immediately try to clear up the misunderstanding.

Governance of the Parish

The parish church is a gathering of Christians who come together for worship and discipleship, and who then go back into the world in the mission of being a blessing. Good administration and stewardship of the parish allows Gospel ministry to thrive. The buildings and governance structures are meant to be supports of this ministry and are not an end in themselves.

The structures of governance within our diocese can be found in the document entitled: [*Act of Incorporation, Constitution and Canons*](#). Every clergy person in the diocese is expected to read and understand this document.

There are three main structures of governance for the parish.

The Corporation

The corporation of the parish is the legal entity of the parish. The corporation consists of the Incumbent **of the Parish, the Rector's Warden and the People's Warden**. The corporation has complete responsibility over the fabric of the parish. **It is the corporation's** responsibility to ensure worship happens on a regular basis, sign cheques and pay invoices, keep accurate records, file proper returns to the CRA and to the Diocese, keep buildings clean and in good repair, maintain an inventory of assets for insurance purposes. The full description of authority can be found in section 10 of the Acts of Incorporation.

*Note 1: The wardens are the main officers of the parish. **The Rector's Warden is appointed by the incumbent. The People's Warden is elected by parishioners at the Annual General Meeting.** The wardens and the incumbent work together and support one another in guiding the ministry of the parish. The wardens have access to everything in the parish with the sole exception of personal confidential documents. For more information about the role of warden, please see [*The Church Wardens' Handbook*](#).*

Note 2: If there are other assistant wardens, they are not members of the corporation.

Note 3: The corporation does not have authority to determine the structure or content of worship, just that it happens. The determination of the structure and content of worship belongs to the incumbent alone.

Note 4: There is a required set of documents (parish returns) that must be submitted annually to the diocese. It is the responsibility of the corporation to see these documents are submitted. The list of parish returns is found [here](#).

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Every year there will be an annual general meeting of parishioners. The purpose of the meeting is to hear about the state of the parish through submitted reports, to pass a budget for the coming year and to elect vestry members, and lay delegates to diocesan synod. It is also the place for other business to be considered. Conversations about the mission of the parish should be part of the AGM. Everything you need to know about the legalities of the AGM can be found beginning in section 5.84 of the canons of the diocese.

The key points are:

- Must take place between the first day of January and the last day of February;
- Must be advertised by written notice and affixed to the front door of the parish at least 10 days before the meeting (including two Sundays). It is strongly recommended to also distribute the meeting notice electronically;
- The AGM package must contain:
 - Agenda
 - The agenda must include:
 - Call to Order and Opening Prayers;
 - Consideration of the Minutes of the previous meeting;
 - Report of the Incumbent;
 - Presentation of the Financials for the previous year;

- Consideration of the Budget for the upcoming year;
 - Election of Parish Officers;
 - Consideration of motions;
 - Appointment of a Parish Accounts Examiner;
 - Closing Prayers.
- Reports of the clergy and ministry leadership, the minutes of the previous meeting, the financials for the previous year and the budget for the upcoming year. It must include the report of the Accounts Examiner for the previous year.
 - The meeting is chaired by the incumbent. If the incumbent is unable or unwilling to perform this function, then the Bishop or their delegate will chair the meeting.
 - A copy of the AGM package is to be sent to the synod office.

Vestry

The vestry is the representative governing body of the parish. It consists of the members of corporation, the assisting clergy of the parish, the treasurer, and the lay delegates to synod. If the parishioners so choose, they may also elect other members to vestry, include other parish officers and honourary clergy as members.

The parish leaders who assume responsibility for the work of the parish constitute the vestry. They assist with parish planning and programming, encouraging the parishioners in their Gospel ministry. From an administrative viewpoint, they advise the corporation and can give direction. In turn, members of the corporation are required to account for the decisions they make. However, the vestry cannot overturn decisions made by the corporation.

Note 1: The vestry will appoint a Vestry Clerk who will record the minutes of the meetings of vestry.

*Note 2: The vestry may appoint a treasurer. The duties of the Parish Treasurer shall be to assist the church wardens in the handling of offerings and contributions and to keep the parish accounts. For more information about the role of treasurer, please see the [Treasurer's Handbook](#). *If there is no treasurer, then the financial recording responsibilities belong to the wardens.*

Note 3: It is the responsibility of the corporation with the vestry to hold an annual stewardship campaign.

Forms and Records

Registers, Statistics, and Lists

Each parish is required to keep the following records:

- A record of services, attendances, communicants and collections taken;
- A record of baptisms, marriages, confirmations, burials and any other occasional offices;
- A Parish Roll;
- A roll of identifiable givers together with financial records for the parish – this includes information for tax-receipting;
- A record of all the insurable property of the church;
- The minutes of all meetings of parishioners and vestry.

Further details are found in [Canon 5.146](#)

Throughout the calendar year, parishes are required to submit documents for financial and statistical purposes. The list of required documents and when they are due is found [here](#). It is the parish corporation's **responsibility** to ensure that these documents are submitted.

Archival Records

The Anglican Diocese of Edmonton holds an agreement with the Provincial Archives of Alberta, whereby our archive materials are on **“permanent loan.” All documents not containing personal information** are available for public access through the Anglican collection of the provincial archives. Documents containing personal information (ie. Baptismal registers) are sealed for a set period of time and can only be accessed by the person(s) named within, or by special request of the synod office.

Archived documents are kept in a safe, climate-controlled location, accessible to the general public. We encourage all parishes to send, at minimum, the following information to the archives:

- Registers: Baptismal, Confirmation, Banns of Marriage, Marriage & Burial;
- Vestry books (sometimes referred to as service registers)
- Annual General Meeting Package
- Vestry minutes
- Annual reports of other parish organizations if not included in the AGM package
- Architectural Plans, including paintings & drawings of buildings
- Parish Cemetery or Memorial Garden Records
- Photographs: These are only of value and can only be accepted if they have the names of the people in the photo, the name of the parish, and the date. It is also preferable to label with the event, and to send a small selection from an event to the archives.
- Parish Histories, with the name of the author and the date.
- Financial Documents: Annual financial statements (often contained in the AGM package)

The provincial archives' comprehensive list of documents is found [here](#), as well as instructions on how to prepare these documents for submission to the archives.

Welcoming the Bishop

As the chief pastor of the diocese, the Bishop is called upon to seek and discern with the diocese the big picture of where God is leading us as an extended family of churches. Essential to the bishop's **ministry is visiting all** parishes of the diocese as regularly as it is practical to do so. These visits signify the connection of parishes to their wider church and are a tangible instrument of the connection between local congregational communities. The Bishop has a canonical requirement to visit every parish at least once in three years, if possible. However, the Bishop will strive for even greater frequency.

Here are some things to consider as you prepare for the Bishop's visit:

- When the Bishop visits it is traditional for them to preach and preside unless other arrangements are discussed and made beforehand.
- Please fill in the [Bishop's Visit Form](#) on the diocesan website and **submit to the Bishop's Office at your earliest convenience, at minimum one week prior to the Bishop's visit.**
- A copy of the worship bulletin should be sent to the synod office by no later than the Thursday prior to the Sunday visit or 72 hours before other visits.
- The time of the service needs to be clearly identified.
- The liturgical colour should be agreed upon to avoid confusion. Generally speaking, red is used for Confirmation; white for Baptism and combined Confirmations and Baptisms. Major feasts take precedent over these directions. For example, a confirmation or **ordination on All Saints' Day would be white.**
- Please clearly note when a special anniversary or parish event is being marked.
- The Bishop greatly appreciates the assistance of a chaplain who has no other responsibility during the service.
- It is also important to note when **a children's focus is part of the** service, especially if the bishop is invited to lead it.
- For baptisms and confirmations, please list the names and ages of the candidates.

- The synod office will produce the certificates of confirmation. It is **the parish's responsibility to produce** baptismal certificates. (A template is provided [here](#) by the Anglican Church of Canada.)
- Please take care to identify whether the Bishop is expected for all services in a parish on a given Sunday, or only the main celebration.
- Parish issues and difficulties should be flagged in a conversation with the Bishop prior to their arrival at the parish. This enables the Bishop to be supportive of the clergy of the parish and sensitive to special concerns.
- The Bishop generally arrives 30 minutes prior to the service.
- Please provide a glass/cup of water next to the place where the bishop will sit during the service.

Liturgical Guidelines

Approved Resources

The universally authorised liturgical resources for public worship in the Diocese of Edmonton are the [*Book of Common Prayer \(1962\)*](#) and the [*Book of Alternative Services \(1985\)*](#). Other supplemental and occasional liturgical texts authorised by or approved for trial use by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada may also be freely used.

In addition to the above, the Bishop of Edmonton has further authorised the following:

- The *Standing Stones Rite* (2010) developed in the Diocese of Edmonton
- The *Common Worship* collection of the Church of England (CofE)
- Liturgical resources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCiC) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA)
 - *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006)
 - *All Creation Sings* (2020)
- Liturgical resources of the Moravian Church in North America
 - *Moravian Book of Worship* (1995)
 - *Singing From the Heart* (2010)
 - *Sing to the Lord a New Song* (2013)

- Any other approved liturgies of full communion partner churches of the Anglican Church of Canada

On certain occasions, and in particular contexts, there may be a desire to use the liturgical resources from other Provinces of the Anglican Communion, or those of other denominational traditions. In the case of smaller pieces of liturgy, such as opening prayers, prayers of the people, and so forth, this is occasionally permissible. For central elements, such as creeds or eucharistic prayers, or other major rites such as baptism, the use of approved resources is generally expected, and any occasional exceptions must be discussed with the Bishop. Some specific directions on this are given in the sections which follow. In all cases, care should be taken to preserve the overall integrity of liturgical rites, rather than piecing together a multiplicity of resources.

The *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)* of the Holy Scriptures is considered the standard bible translation for use in public worship in the Diocese of Edmonton. Other translations may occasionally be used at the discretion of the incumbent of a parish or other licensed minister. To reuse of alternative translations in public worship is a matter to be discussed with the Bishop.

The [*Revised Common Lectionary \(RCL\)*](#) is the default lectionary for the diocese.

Baptisms

Baptism is a sign of new life in Christ. Baptism is also a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through it we are brought into union with Christ, with each other and the church of every time and place. It entails participation in the community of the Holy Spirit and is, therefore, a sign of the kingdom of God and of the life of the world to come.

Baptism is administered only once, with water, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Alternative trinitarian formulas are not permitted during this rite. The Anglican Church accepts those baptised in this manner in other Christian denominations as baptised members of the church.

When anyone approaches the Anglican Church to inquire about baptism, the desired reception should be welcoming and affirming. Whatever motivation brought someone to our door, whether committed faith or family custom, we **should see in their approach an opportunity presented to us for God's** gracious love to be at work in their lives and in the life of the parish. This implies both openness to their situation, and faithfulness to proclaiming the Gospel through pastoral care, teaching and sacramental celebration.

The baptismal preparation process should be centered on teaching the basics of the Gospel, inviting and encouraging ongoing participation in the life of the church and teaching the fundamental meaning of Christian commitment. It is important to be open about our expectations of the potential candidate or the parents and sponsors, in the case of a child, so they have a clear understanding of the preparation process and the need for it.

If a candidate is presented from outside the parish, it is important that the priest from their home parish is fully appraised and consulted. Preparation **should take place in the candidate's home parish and a letter from their** priest confirming their preparedness and commitment should be presented. If possible, the parents should be encouraged to have the baptism take place in their own parish.

Each candidate is encouraged to have Christian sponsors, in addition to the parents in the case of a child, who are willing to participate in the ongoing faith development of the candidate. When a candidate does not have a sponsor who could function in this capacity, the clergy are encouraged to find supportive sponsors from within the parish and help establish this new relationship.

Whenever possible, sponsors should attend baptismal preparation classes with the parents and/or adult candidate and be mentors for the candidate (and parents if applicable), in their journey in faith.

All Saints', the Baptism of our Lord, Easter, especially at the time of the Easter Vigil, Pentecost and occasions when the Bishop is present provide obvious context for baptism, but *being rigid about dates is not recommended*. Baptism is primarily about **a person's** incorporation into **Christ's body as represented by the parish family**. If, however, members of **the candidate's family wish to be present and are travelling long distances** to do so, accommodations will be made.

Note: Private baptisms are not allowed except in the case of life-threatening situations. When no clergy person is available in these circumstances, a layperson may baptise with water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The layperson must report and register the baptism with the local church immediately. If the candidate recovers, they should be received into the body of the church as soon as possible.

Holy Eucharist

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the central communal act of the church gathered in worship. In it, the faith of the church is proclaimed, we are bound in communion with all our fellow disciples in the One Body of Christ, and we are nourished and strengthened to do the work of the ministry to which God has called us all.

Presiding and Prayers

While each celebration of the Eucharist is a local event of a specific gathered community, it is always also a celebration of the whole church across space and time. Because of its important emphasis on the unity and catholicity of the sacrament, it is those ordered to the priesthood/presbyterate, and licensed or given temporary written permission by the appropriate diocesan Bishop, who are authorised to preside at the celebration of the Eucharist in the Anglican Church of Canada.

It is for these same reasons of unity and catholicity why the Eucharist is to be celebrated only according to authorised liturgies (see the list previously given above). Any potential use of other liturgical resources for the celebration of the Eucharist must be approved by the Bishop. Please send your request to the Bishop, along with a template of the requested resource, a minimum of two weeks in advance of the service. Please indicate if you are seeking ongoing permission to use the resource in question, or permission for a specific service on a one-time basis.

Communion Under Special Circumstances

In situations where the Eucharist is to be celebrated for the sick or shut-ins in the place where they reside the liturgy may be pared down according to

pastoral need. Both the BCP and BAS provide guidance for this in the **services of “Ministry to the Sick” or “Communion under Special Circumstances.”** Deacons, lay Readers, or other lay ministers expressly authorised by the bishop may also carry the sacrament to sick or shut-in persons. In such cases **the “Communion Under Special Circumstances” should be used. Alternately, the service for “Ministry to the Sick” may also be used, following the directions for “when the Eucharist is not celebrated.”** In either case, the directions for use by deacons or lay persons should be carefully followed.

Communion From Reserved Sacrament

The consideration of the use of reserved sacrament should be discerned by the local community in consultation with the Bishop. In parishes where lay ministers or deacons are authorised by the bishop to administer the **“reserved sacrament,” careful teaching is needed to distinguish between the two services** (i.e., those in which the celebrant is a priest/presbyter, and those in which there is a lay leader, or deacon). The official entry in the parish register or vestry book must include a special note (i.e., writing **“with reserved sacrament” in the notes section, or “communion from the reserved sacrament” in the space for type of service**).

The following guidelines must be followed in any service of Communion from reserved sacrament:

- 1) Consecrated bread and wine must be used in the administration of the reserved sacrament;
- 2) The consecrated elements are placed reverently on the altar;
- 3) The reserved sacrament is never carried forward at the offertory;
- 4) The deacon or lay person leads the service from the pulpit or lectern (or another suitable place, not behind the altar);
- 5) The approved forms of service for Communion from reserved sacrament when officiated by a deacon or lay person can be found at: https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Public-Distribution_201211.pdf

Reception of the Eucharist

Because the Eucharist is a sharing in the real presence of the body and blood of Christ, the norm is that only those who are accepting the commitment

and responsibilities of baptism are encouraged to receive. Those present who are not intending to receive the sacrament should be encouraged to come forward with others to receive a blessing. When encountering non-baptised persons who are receiving the Eucharist, pastoral care should be exercised to encourage them to be baptised. Care should always be taken to encourage people to deepen their faith through baptismal commitment, so as not to exclude but, rather, include them.

As the Eucharist is one of the principal sacraments of the church, it is important to provide ongoing formation and instruction about the Eucharist.

In all cases, the sacrament should be treated with reverence in the manner of its transport and handling, and ministrants need to be well instructed.

Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation

*"Confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation are various modes of response to baptism. **Whether they involve making promises on one's own behalf, seeking membership within a particular branch of the church, or reaffirming promises made long ago, each is directly related to the covenant made in baptism. The liturgy of baptism is consequently the primary context in which these renewals of the baptismal covenant take place.**" (The Book of Alternative Services, p. 149)*

Confirmation

Confirmation celebrates a certain maturity of faith, rather than a chronological maturity. It expresses an individual and personal life decision which is both interior and exterior. Confirmation, while it cannot be tied to a specific age, is most appropriate for young people typically over the age of 12.

Adults who have been recently baptised should wait to seek Confirmation or Reaffirmation of their vows. To prepare someone to receive this sacrament, the following must be included:

- 1) Review of basic Christian teachings;
- 2) The seasons of the church year;
- 3) The creeds of the church;
- 4) The discipline of regular prayer and reading of Holy Scripture;

- 5) Review of the baptismal liturgy and promises;
- 6) The ministries of the church (individual and corporate);
- 7) Knowledge of Holy Scripture (include knowledge of foundational stories from Hebrew scripture, a reading of the Gospels, and beginnings of the church);
- 8) Review of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) documents, the role of the Anglican Church of Canada in residential schools and movement toward reconciliation and reparation;
- 9) Holy Eucharist (including an instructed Eucharist if possible);
- 10) Symbols, vestments, furnishings and architecture;
- 11) Church history and organisation.

The ages and previous learning of participants will determine the depth of study. The period of preparation is also a time to encourage mentoring relationships with active members of the parish. These relationships may help the students **understand the ongoing commitment of living one's life in Christ**. They are also an opportunity for students to help their mentor with their duties and experience active ministry firsthand. Mentors can help the students wrestle with faith issues in a one-on-one relationship.

Reaffirmation

Although every celebration of baptism is an occasion for the whole community to renew their baptismal vows, there are often moments in life where one may feel called to recommit themselves to Christ in a formal and more intentional manner. It is also a reminder to the community who **celebrates together, that the free, open and generous response to one's baptism is a life-long process**. The preparation for receiving this laying on of hands with prayer by the Bishop would be determined by the priest of the parish and may involve joining those receiving confirmation.

Reception

Formal reception into the Anglican church is appropriate for adults who have been baptised in the name of the Trinity, confirmed in the episcopal tradition in another Christian denomination (ie. Roman Catholic or Orthodox), and

who wish to make the Anglican church their home. Appropriate preparation will be determined by the parish priest based on individual background.

Marriage

Marriage “is a gift of God and a means of God’s grace.” It is meant to be a life-long covenant relationship in which two people “become one flesh,” and “give themselves to each other, to care for each other in good times and in bad.”

Authorised Liturgies and Canonical Requirements

The gender-inclusive *Book of Alternative Services* marriage liturgy, authorised by the Bishop of Edmonton in 2018, as well as the service in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the two services in the *Book of Alternative Services*, and liturgies of full communion partners are authorised liturgies for marriage.

The vows and promises made and exchanged are central to the sacrament and must not be altered or rewritten. Couples must comply with both civil and canon law. Civil law requires that every couple obtains a Provincial Marriage License. Banns may also be read, but this does not remove the need to acquire a licence.

Marriage may only be performed by those duly licensed to do so. In the Diocese of Edmonton, this means those clergy licensed by the Bishop or having permission to exercise ministry, and having a “Registration of Clergy” certificate from the Government of Alberta.

Canon Law concerning Marriage in the Church is contained in [Canon XXI](#) of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Same gender marriage is authorised in the Diocese of Edmonton.

In situations where a couple has been married by a Justice of the Peace and now desires the formal blessing of the church, all of the above will apply. the book of [Occasional Celebrations](#) provides a form for the blessing of a marriage in these circumstances.

The church rejoices in the fact that the Celebration of Marriage often brings together people (including clergy) of different cultures and religious

traditions. However, from time to time, different understandings regarding the nature of marriage and details of liturgy may arise. It is appropriate to consult the Bishop in such cases.

Marriage Preparation

Marriage preparation is a pre-requisite for all couples to be married within the Diocese of Edmonton. Clergy may choose to encourage the couple to seek outside preparation courses, but this should be in addition to the preparation that the clergy will provide. Clergy must meet with the couple to establish a pastoral relationship and share the nature and implication of Christian marriage.

Please see Schedule E in [Canon XXI](#) of the *Handbook of General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada* for the suggested topics for discussion in marriage preparation.

Deacons and priests of the Diocese of Edmonton seeking marriage need to be in conversation with the Bishop of Edmonton.

Marriage Outside a Church Building

Marriage is a public service of the church, and it is normative for the wedding to be celebrated in the church building. Permission may be granted to officiate at marriage ceremonies held outside, or in another *public* location. Marriages in private homes or other private places are not permitted in the Diocese of Edmonton. Permission of the Bishop is required for any marriage not celebrated in the church building.

Marriages celebrated in a public space outside of a church building, must be recorded in the marriage register of the local parish. If the clergy person solemnising the marriage is not the incumbent of the local parish, they must ask for permission of the incumbent prior to the service, and they must make arrangements with the incumbent to enter the marriage in the parish register.

Remarriage After Divorce

Remarriage of a divorced person whose former partner is still living is allowed in the Anglican Church of Canada. (See [Canon XXI](#), section IV of the *Canons of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada*). Within the Diocese of Edmonton, the decision to perform the marriage of a one-time divorced person is that of the clergy person who has been asked to perform the marriage. Because there are many potential pastoral needs in such a circumstance, we ask that the clergy person complete the [Remarriage After Divorce](#) form on the diocesan website. As the form states, the wedding can be performed one calendar year after the divorce certificate is issued. In addition, the clergy person must check on the wellbeing of any children who will be affected by the remarriage. As well, it is expected that the clergy person inquire about any possibility of abuse in the former marriage and if counselling has been received. If a clergy person is unsure, please consult with the Bishop. The Bishop must be consulted about any proposed marriage where there has been more than one divorce.

In the case of remarriage by a Justice of the Peace when the couple also desires the formal blessing of the Church, the above pastoral considerations still apply.

Renewal of Marriage Vows

The Book of Occasional Celebrations provides a form of service for the renewal of marriage vows. Such services may take place in the church or in other venues deemed suitable for such an event.

Funeral

A Funeral service is often a complex, emotional process for a family. Pastoral generosity must be practiced by the officiant, both in the preparation for the service and during the funeral itself. Families will approach the church for a funeral service for many different personal reasons and it is both a privilege and gift to be able to walk with them during this time.

- Authorised liturgies may be used for the funeral service, and pastoral allowance is given to appropriately create a service for each family.
- A Eucharist is celebrated if it is meaningful to the family.
- A brief eulogy may be offered near the beginning of the service.
- The proclamation of the Gospel and homily should always be later in the service than the eulogy.

The location of a funeral may be the parish church, a funeral home, a house or another local building.

If family or friends are to read scripture at the funeral/memorial service, they need to be made comfortable with respect to where they are to read from, how to introduce and conclude the reading, and, if possible, have a chance to practice beforehand. Similar courtesy should be extended to those offering a eulogy or leading prayers.

If another member of the clergy has the permission of their incumbent to assist or take a funeral in the parish where you are the incumbent, every effort should be made to assist the visiting priest while recognising that the incumbent is responsible for the service if it is in the church.

If you are asked by a family to preside at the funeral of a member (or resident) of another parish, you require the permission of the local incumbent. In the event that the funeral is out of your diocese, permission is required from the Bishop of that diocese.

Lay readers who are properly trained and licensed may officiate at the funeral (funeral office) in their parish, with permission of the incumbent. Deacons may officiate at a funeral office.

Note 1: A funeral is when the body or cremated remains are present.

Note 2: A memorial is when no bodily remains are present. Clergy may use the full funeral service at a memorial.

Ecumenical Participation in Liturgy

The unity of the one Body of Christ is both God's gift and our calling.

Anglicans deeply value ecumenical sharing and partnership and have, in recent years, prioritised bearing witness to and working for that unity. The Diocese of Edmonton is committed to maximising the possibilities for

ecumenical hospitality and collaboration, while continuing to respect the importance of various distinct convictions and boundaries around things like worship and church order that have been set in place by our own church and by others.

The Anglican Church of Canada maintains ecumenical partnerships with many different churches. Among those with whom we are able to work and serve most readily are those who are, like us, full members of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) ([a list of CCC member churches is available on their website](#)). Owing to decades of significant convergence in understanding and practice, today there is an even greater possibility for ecumenical and full communion cooperation between Anglicans and our Evangelical Lutheran, Moravian, Presbyterian, United Church of Canada, Mennonite Church Canada and Roman Catholic siblings. In the Diocese of Edmonton we are blessed to share close bonds with each of these communities.

Clergy and lay leaders from these full communion and ecumenical partners may be invited to share in liturgical leadership in regular Anglican services and offices of worship in the Diocese of Edmonton in the following ways:

- Reading the scriptures;
- Leading the intercessions and other prayers;
- Preaching and homiletical reflection;
- Officiating at offices of Morning and Evening Prayer;
- Distributing the elements of Holy Communion;
- Assisting Anglican clergy and lay ministers at celebrations of the rite of baptism, the solemnization of marriage, and funerals.

In each case, these duties are to be performed in manners that are in essential accordance with the forms and practice of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Invitations to function in this way are to be made to persons who are in good standing in their own church and who are permitted by the policies and practices of that church to perform these duties.

Invitations that are of an occasional nature may be made by the incumbent of the parish without the need to seek additional episcopal permission.

If such invitations are being made regularly, both the vestry of the parish and the Bishop must be consulted for affirmation and approval. Particularly, when the ecumenical participation includes officiating offices of prayer

and/or preaching, the church to which the guest belongs, and the order or role of ministry which they hold within it, should be clearly communicated.

Clergy and lay ministers of the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton may accept invitations to participate liturgically in an ecumenical partner church in these same ways provided they are permitted to do so in their own Anglican context.

Because the rite of Confirmation is an episcopal service in the Anglican tradition, appropriate ecumenical participation in a Confirmation liturgy must be discussed and approved by the officiating Bishop.

It is appropriate for Anglican clergy and other ministers, when invited, to participate in ordination services of ministers of word and sacrament in ecumenical partner churches, and especially those of churches with which their church is in communion. Anglican priests should not take part in the laying on of hands in the ordinations of ministers of word and sacrament in churches with which their own church is not in communion, but they may appropriately participate in the liturgy in other ways, if asked. Similarly, ministers from churches not in communion with the Anglican church should not take part in the laying on of hands at the ordination of Anglican priests, because this, too, belongs within the context of ecclesial communion. However, they may be invited to participate in the liturgy in other appropriate ways such as those listed above.

Special Permission to Officiate

Visiting Clergy

It is always a blessing to welcome visiting clergy and lay leaders to the Diocese of Edmonton for church ceremonies and events. A request must be made to the Bishop in advance of offering an invitation to preach, officiate, or celebrate. In this diocese, a letter of good standing is a for permission to exercise ministry.

In the case of a priest from outside the province requesting to perform a wedding, a minimum 60-day notice is required so that the required application forms can be completed.

Any Bishop, priest or deacon from another diocese, who is asked to take part in a service in this diocese, or to function as an honorary

assistant, *must* have the permission of the Bishop to do so. It is a serious matter for a cleric to be either unlicensed or to be acting without permission.

Any incumbent wanting to invite a curate, associate, assistant priest or honorary assistant from another parish in the diocese to take a service should first speak with the incumbent of the invited clergy **member's** parish.

Former Incumbents

The underlying principle is that when a priest takes up a new ministry in another appointment, or enters into retirement, they do not return to officiate at services, etc., in their former parish. It is also the expectation that the former incumbent will not remain in the parish as a member of the congregation (with the recognition that former priests who reside in a rural context may be an exception. In this case, it is expected that the former priest will meet with the Bishop and the newly appointed incumbent to discuss best practices in the transition of pastoral care and the realities of living within a smaller community).

However, long relationship and affectionate remembrance of the former priest often bring about such requests. In such cases, the following guidelines should be followed:

In the Interim

Before the new incumbent has been appointed or has arrived to begin their ministry, the former priest may return for weddings, funerals, etc., if requested and with the concurrence of the acting priest-in-charge and or the Bishop. The previous incumbent is not expected or required to fill these requests unless they deem it appropriate.

After the New Incumbent Arrives

Former clergy and others may be invited back, when requested, by the current incumbent. The incumbent, by their induction vows, now has the responsibility and the right to be in charge over all the church's **ministrations**

within the parish and should be respected by former incumbents. It is the responsibility of the former incumbent, prior to their leaving, to be clear that their pastoral relationship has come to an end and that they will no longer officiate or preach at the baptisms, weddings and funerals of the congregation.

Please see the Human Resource Manual for more information on how to leave a parish well.

Permission to Officiate Outside the Diocese of Edmonton

It is the expectation in the Diocese of Edmonton that a clergy person wishing to exercise ministry outside the diocese will request permission from the Bishop of Edmonton prior to approaching the Bishop in another diocese.

Weddings Outside the Diocese of Edmonton

Upon permission of the Bishop of Edmonton, the clergy person will have to:

- Request permission to officiate from the Bishop of the other diocese;
- Request permission of the incumbent to perform the wedding within their parish;
- Arrange with the incumbent to record the wedding in **the parish's register**;
- Arrange with the synod office of the diocese (if outside Alberta) for a temporary civil licence to marry in the province;
- Ensure that they are following all local requirements for performing a marriage in the diocese, provided they do not run contrary to [Canon XXI](#).

In addition, all aspects of premarital preparation will need to be completed the same as if the marriage was occurring within the Diocese of Edmonton.

Exorcism

In the Anglican tradition, exorcism is considered to be part of the healing ministry of the church and relates to the healing and wholeness of people. Because of the seriousness of this area, the Bishop, as chief pastor of the diocese, is the one who has complete oversight over this ministry. Therefore, nothing in the area of exorcism shall be planned or undertaken without the consultation and approval of the Bishop. The diocese will seek medical and legal opinion as deemed appropriate. In most cases, a blessing and prayers are sufficient. This, in no way, suggests a denial of the existence of evil, but it is an acknowledgement that there are always many aspects to be considered. In every instance the greatest care will be taken to ensure there is no spiritual or psychological abuse or harm to all involved. There is a small group tasked with this ministry which may include up to three others who are mature Christians.

Discernment of Candidates and Postulants for Ordination

It is sacred and important work to accompany people who are discerning the nature and shape of their call to ministry. For the sake of respect, clarity, consistency, and accountability, it presupposes a structured process that unfolds through a series of steps.

Principles

Before beginning the process, it is necessary that the following principles be understood and accepted by all who are involved:

- 1) All personal information gathered through this process is treated with care and sensitivity;
- 2) The following procedures will usually apply to all inquirers regardless of prior theological education;
- 3) The process of discernment is ongoing throughout the entire procedure. It belongs to the whole church and is arrived at through a process of consultation at various

times among inquirer/postulant, spouse, family, Bishop, Examining Chaplains, ministry supervisors, the assessors of the [Advisory Committee on Postulants for Ordination \(ACPO\)](#) for the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, academic institutions, and more;

- 4) If the home parish of the inquirer recommends against proceeding, or the Bishop recommends against proceeding, the Bishop shall ensure that pastoral care is provided to the inquirer;
- 5) The postulant will be expected to bear the financial cost of formation and training. The diocese will assist in exploring sources of support where possible;
- 6) The final decision to ordain, to either the diaconate or to the priesthood/presbyterate, rests entirely with the Bishop.

Definitions

Inquirer: A person who is entering the process of discernment for candidacy. Confirmation, reception, or status as a communicant in the Anglican Communion is normally required for at least two years prior to a request for consideration as an inquirer, as is at least one year of regular participation in the life and worship of a parish as a recognised worshipping community of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Candidate: An inquirer who has been recommended by the Parish Discernment Committee, interviewed by the Examining Chaplains Committee, and approved by the Bishop and Examining Chaplains to begin appropriate formation and training for ministry.

Postulant: A candidate for priesthood who has attended ACPO and been approved by the Bishop in consultation with the Examining Chaplains for ordination.

(Or)

A candidate for the diaconate who has been recommended by the examining chaplains sub-committee and approved by the Bishop in consultation with the Examining Chaplains.

Ordinand: A postulant who has completed all the required steps of preparation and formation and for whom a date of ordination has been established.

Process

- 1) The inquirer consults with their parish incumbent for an initial conversation about their desire to begin intentionally discerning their call. This initial assessment of the inquirer is an important part of the process. The incumbent should use care and discernment as encouragement raises expectations and will involve significant time, energy, and expense for the person, their family, and assessors.
- 2) At any time if the individual is not recommended to continue towards ordination they shall be provided with pastoral care and additional accompaniment in discerning other forms for their future ministry vocation.
- 3) The inquirer has an interview with the Bishop to discuss their emerging sense of vocational call.
- 4) The parish incumbent, after consultation with and at the request of the Bishop, shall convene a committee comprised of three members of the parish. This group will discuss with the inquirer various vocation and ministry options within the Anglican Church, including lay ministry, the diaconate, and presbyterate/priesthood, using discernment guides provided by the diocese.
- 5) The Parish Discernment Committee reports their recommendations for or against proceeding with this process to the Bishop. Other interviews may be requested.
- 6) The Bishop arranges for the inquirer to meet with the Examining Chaplains. The Examining Chaplains will interview the inquirer at least once. The Examining Chaplains will send a full written report to the Bishop with their recommendation for the inquirer entering candidacy. If they are recommended to proceed, the decision is communicated to the inquirer and their parish pastor. If the inquirer has not yet begun theological studies, the

Bishop and Examining Chaplains will also advise on approved formational programs.

- 7) If the inquirer is accepted as a candidate, the Chair of the Examining Chaplains will assign an Examining Chaplain to meet with them at least quarterly. The candidate will proceed with the required formation and training. The Bishop and Examining Chaplains continue to provide guidance and assistance to the candidate with respect to spiritual formation, clinical pastoral education, supervised ministry placement, finances, participation in the community of the diocese, and any other appropriate areas.
- 8) If it is recommended that the candidate proceeds, they will receive psychological assessment as to their suitability for ordination. This assessment will be arranged and paid for by the diocese, and the results of the assessment will be sent to the Bishop. Any further consultation with the **psychologist will be at the postulant's expense.**
- 9) It is determined whether and when the candidate should attend ACPO. If the candidate is recommended to proceed to ACPO, they can obtain all ACPO forms and information regarding ACPO conference dates and deadlines at the synod office. It is the responsibility of the candidate to meet ACPO requirements and deadlines, and to attend the ACPO Conference.
- 10) After the Bishop receives the ACPO assessment, they shall meet with the Examining Chaplains to decide whether or not the candidate should be accepted as a diocesan postulant. Admission as a postulant does not imply any guarantee or promise of ordination.
- 11) During the **postulant's** final year of studies, the Bishop will consult with the Examining Chaplains, any parish ministry supervisors, and the relevant educational institution(s) for a final assessment of satisfactory completion of all requirements.
- 12) The diocese will be notified through appropriate communication mediums of those postulants who have been approved as ordinands. Ordination does not imply

any guarantee of a future employed position within the diocese.

Formation and Training

Drawing upon national and international Anglican documentation on competencies for diaconal and presbyteral ministry, the Diocese of Edmonton has developed a system for recommended academic institutions and courses of study, and for assessing the equivalences of others which may be preferred by the candidate/postulant for specific reasons. The Examining Chaplains, in consultation with the Bishop, may make exceptions to the above based on such considerations as: previous degrees and training, life skills and experience, aptitude for specific ministry and other appropriate factors.

Other Parish Ministers

Assistant Priests

An assistant priest assists the rector of a parish in the daily life of ministry. They will serve in a wide variety of roles and, in addition to the Bishop, will report to the rector and corporation of the parish on their ministry.

In the event that the incumbency of a parish with an assistant priest becomes vacant, the assistant priest will need to be in conversation with the Bishop. Canon 5.22,23,23.1 states that the appointment of assisting priests expire with the termination of the incumbent. During the interim, a new licence may be issued by the Bishop. Following the appointment of a new rector, a decision about the ongoing ministry of the assistant priest will be made in conversation between the Bishop, the rector and the corporation of the parish.

Deacons

Diaconal ministry is a unique ordering of the common baptismal call to serve **the needs of others in Jesus' name with the grace and mercy of the Gospel**. Deacons are often among the first to see and recognise areas of need or injustice which are sometimes overlooked by others. Their leadership frequently serves to prophetically draw the church's **wider attention and** response to these areas. This vocation gives a distinctive shape to ministry, with deacons serving as a special link or bridge between the world and the church and the church and the world. In a time when so much of our witness as a church is likely to be taking place outside the walls of the places where disciples gather for worship, those who are ordered to the ministries of deacon have a significant leadership role.

For more on the principles and policies around the relationship between a deacon, the Bishop, a parish, and other clergy or lay parish ministers, please consult these background documents:

- [The Role and Calling of a Deacon](#)
- [Diaconal Covenant Template](#)

Newly Ordained

For a long time in the Anglican tradition, the practice of curacy served the purpose of providing mentorship opportunities for newer clergy. Where possible, the newly ordered ministers would not be sent out into ministry all on their own but would be placed in an assisting capacity to serve alongside a more experienced clergy person. It was a valuable way of ensuring collegial support during an important time of growth and transition into a new ministerial role.

In the Diocese of Edmonton, formal curacies are now quite rare. Yet the benefits for the newly ordained to receive mentorship in the early years of ministry remain the same. For that reason, "**Collegium**," a clergy mentorship program for the newly ordained, has been developed. It is the expectation that all newly ordained priests will participate in it during the first year of their first appointment. Based on the conviction that nobody is called to serve in ministry alone, this program is intended as a gift to support the

newly ordained. It is also a means to shape a culture of connection and cohesion among the college of clergy at every stage of ministry.

Honourary Assistants

An honorary assistant is appointed to a parish in conversation between the rector, a vote by the vestry and the appointment of the Bishop. Prior to the appointment, it is important that the rector of the parish and the proposed honorary assistant have a conversation about expectations. Expectations to be discussed include, but are not limited to, frequency for preaching and celebrating the Eucharist, areas of ministry for the honorary assistant, attendance at meetings and planned participation in the life of the parish.

The role of honorary assistant does not include financial compensation, and it is expected that the appointment of an honorary assistant to a parish there will minimally impact parish finances. Ministry beyond the agreed upon role and expectations should be discussed carefully between the rector and the honorary assistant.

In the event that a rector leaves a parish, the licence of the honorary assistant will remain active during the interim ministry but will expire with the appointment of the new rector. A new appointment will once again need to be agreed upon between the honorary assistant, the new rector, the Bishop and by vote of the vestry.

Lay Evangelists

Lay evangelists are people who have a special gift and joy in communicating the Gospel of Jesus to others, by word and action. They enjoy having conversations about faith with non-Christian friends. They love watching the Holy Spirit drawing people to faith in Christ, and they like helping new Christians get established as followers of Jesus. **They don't pretend to have all the answers, but they live their lives transparently and honestly, so that others can see God at work in them.**

Lay evangelists look for opportunities to help the church connect with the non-Christian world in which it exists. They are always on the lookout for **new ways their congregations can serve their neighbours in Jesus' name.** They are comfortable on the edges of church life, building bridges for the

Gospel into the community at large. They are learning to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, so that they can relax and enjoy the work of evangelism without feeling that all the responsibility for leading people to faith is on their shoulders.

Evangelists are part of the ministry team of their parish, and their specific roles may include any of the following:

- Relational evangelism (learning to share the Gospel in the context of genuine loving relationships, and mentoring others to do the same);
- Helping new disciples grow in basic Christian practices;
- Taking a leadership role in helping their parishes welcome and integrate new members;
- **Leading inquirers' courses such as:** *Alpha, Christian Basics, Pilgrim, Emmaus*, etc.
- Sharing the Gospel with baptismal families and helping them come to faith in Christ;
- Finding creative ways to engage the people in their neighbourhoods;
- Taking a leadership role in Christian service projects in their communities to build bridges between the church and the world around;
- Helping organise Invitation Sundays (ie. Back to Church Sunday) and other special events by which a parish can share the Gospel with unchurched people in the neighbourhood;
- Pioneering outreach work in new areas where the Anglican Church does not presently have a Gospel witness.

People who are called to this ministry must be trained and are licensed in their local congregation. For more information about lay evangelist training and licensing, please see the information on the [diocesan website](#).

Lay Readers

Lay readers are vitally important ministry leaders in the Diocese of Edmonton. Therefore, the discernment, training and ongoing formation of lay readers is a critical area of parish life which requires close attention and support. Parishes and their clergy are encouraged to reflect regularly on who among their community might have the gifts and passions to make them a

good candidate to explore discernment and preparation for the ministry of lay reader. Becoming licensed as a lay reader requires the affirmation of the local vestry or vestries and of the supervising clergy colleague with whom they minister.

The contexts of ministry to which lay readers may be called can vary from place to place and circumstance to circumstance. Many lay readers will be more likely to serve in parish settings which also have clergy leadership and so will exercise their ministry in partnership with deacons and priests/presbyters, as well as other lay members of the congregation. Some lay readers may be called to ministry in a parish which does not have clergy leadership and thus will function as primary ministers within a local faith community. In these latter cases, a lay reader may be designated by the Bishop as a lay reader in charge of a particular parish, either in short-term or ongoing ways. This distinction should be kept in mind when considering appropriate education and training, with more extensive responsibilities typically suggesting the need for additional formation.

Following a course of appropriate training as outlined below, and after being licensed by the Bishop, lay readers are authorised to lead services of the Word, preach, administer the reserved sacrament in homes and in public services of the church, administer the chalice and/or bread at a celebration of the Eucharist, and to conduct funeral services. It is not permitted for lay readers to be marriage commissioners and, thereby, to offer to marry couples in the name of our church.

Lay Reader Training

General Training

All lay readers are expected to complete five training modules that have been developed in the diocese. The modules are designed to be facilitated either by the incumbent of the parish in which the lay reader will serve, or by another member of the college of clergy in the diocese. The following is an outline of the modules and their respective themes and content:

- **Module 1** – What is a Lay Reader and how do they serve alongside other ministers in the church?

- **Module 2** – Officiating services of the word and administration of communion from reserved sacrament.
- **Module 3** – Reading and interpreting scripture and the practice of preaching.
- **Module 4** – The ministries of prayer and pastoral presence.
- **Module 5** – Visiting the sick and dying and officiating funerals.

In addition to the completion of these modules, further opportunities for continuing education are also important. These will be organised and facilitated on a regular basis by the diocesan Chaplain for Lay Readers. Attention should also be paid to personal spiritual growth and health, including living a Gospel-shaped life, personal patterns of prayer, participation in Christian community, awareness of ministry context, etc.

Supplemental Training

Some Lay Readers will have additional parish responsibilities unique to their circumstances, in particular those who are called to serve as a lay reader in charge of a parish. In these cases, some lay readers will be asked to take on supplemental training. For more information, please speak with the Chaplain for Lay Readers.

Lay Reader Licensing

A licence is required for anyone to act as a lay reader in the Diocese of Edmonton. Licences may be issued upon nomination of the proposed licensee by the rector and vestry of the parish in which the nominee will serve. A licence is granted by and at the discretion of the Bishop and will be signed by the Bishop, and by either the Rector of the parish in which they will serve, or, in the case of a lay reader in charge, another mentoring clergy colleague to whom they will be accountable. The licence will be issued in a specific, localised context. The licence is valid for a term of five years, expiring on December 31 of the fifth year. It is renewable provided that the lay reader has participated in continuing education opportunities during the term of their previous licence. Should the clergy leadership of a congregation in which a lay reader is active in ministry change, this is an important opportunity for an intentional review of the lay reader's ongoing ministry to ensure that positive and collegial collaboration continues. If any concerns

arise from such a review, they should be discussed with the vestry and communicated to the Chaplain of Lay Readers. Requests for licence renewal are to be made to the Chaplain of Lay Readers who will consult with the Bishop.

Theological Students

To be designated a theological student of the Diocese of Edmonton entails more than simply being a student of theology. The category implies someone who has a formalised relationship with the Bishop, and who is in a process of discernment for ministry within the diocese. Ordinarily, this means they will already have been named as a candidate or postulant for ordered ministry. While as students they continue to minister according to the order of the laity, they are distinct from other lay ministries in the diocese, such as lay reader or lay evangelist in that they are explicitly pursuing the possibility of serving in holy orders in the future. In addition to undertaking coursework and other kinds of formation and education, they may also be appointed by the Bishop to ministry placements in the diocese on a short-term basis. Some such appointments may include financial remuneration depending upon their nature and duration.

General Expectations

A theological student who is appointed to a ministry placement is conducting Gospel ministry in the name of the Diocese of Edmonton and is, therefore, subject to the relevant Human Resources (HR) policies and other codes of conduct that apply to clergy and other ministers (police check, safe church training, etc.). They are to be informed of this policy prior to beginning any ministry placement to ensure their adherence.

At the beginning of a new placement, a *Ministry Covenant* should be established to identify a) the top three learning goals of the student; b) the roles and duties which they are assigned to perform; c) lines of reporting and accountability. This document will be essential to the success of a placement experience and will form the basis for reflection and evaluation upon completion.

In addition to being subject to the direct oversight and authority of the Bishop, the student will be assigned a ministry supervisor who will help them to develop their covenant document. If a theological student is placed in a

ministry setting which does not have an appointed member of the clergy to serve in a supervisory capacity, another appropriate supervisor will be identified.

The ministry supervisor and theological student will meet together on a regular basis for an equivalent of one hour every two weeks. Meetings may be scheduled in ways that are mutually convenient for the student and supervisor, and they may take place either in person, or by phone/online. The purpose of the supervisory meetings is to debrief experiences of growth, identify areas of difficulty or challenge, and plan ways to pursue other learnings.

Other Expectations for the Student

Basic principles for embracing the role of theological student in the Diocese of Edmonton include:

- Humility and honesty;
- Attention to established ministry regulations and appropriate interpersonal and professional boundaries;
- Openness to explore new areas of learning which are both comfortable and challenging;
- Willingness to be guided and mentored and to receive constructive feedback.

Theological Students of the diocese should be sure to maintain regular contact with the Bishop of Edmonton during their studies, including while serving a ministry placement. They should plan to speak or write to the Bishop at least two times per year on or near any of the traditional Ember Days (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after Advent III, Lent I, the Day of Pentecost and Holy Cross Day).

Expectations for the Supervisor

The supervision of diocesan theological students will normally be given to experienced clergy in the diocese, as invited by the Bishop. Taking on the supervision of a theological student is a rewarding opportunity to mentor emerging leaders and colleagues in ministry. It can also be demanding in terms of extra time and attention required above and beyond normal ministry duties.

A few general characteristics of a good theological student supervisor include:

- Respect and kindness;
- Clear and consistent communication;
- Commitment to mutuality in ministry;
- **Ability to work with the student's identified learning goals;**
- Desire to cultivate the art of spiritual and theological reflection.

Theological student supervisors are also likely to be consulted by the Bishop **and Examining Chaplains Committee in relation to the student's process of** formation and education towards ordered ministry.

Shared Ministry

The need to explore and establish new expressions of congregational churches and ministries that are organised differently than the common Anglican parish model, is an important reality of the Diocese of Edmonton. Though broad and varied in what it includes, shared ministry represents one categorisation. Under this heading, there are two main forms: Anglican Shared Ministry and Ecumenical Shared Ministry. In both cases there are directives and guidelines in place which have a bearing on the respective formation and operation thereof.

Anglican Shared Ministry

Canon 5 of the Canons and Constitution of the Diocese of Edmonton describes how two or more prior Anglican parishes can take steps to become organised into a regional unit of co-operation, so as to share as may be determined everything from ministry and mission to clergy to buildings to budgets. The pertinent sections include Canon 5.97-5.110 and 5.128-5.133. As outlined, an essential element in the process of becoming a unit of co-operating parishes includes the development of an *Agreement of Co-operating Parishes* which stipulates the nature of the partnership and how it will be overseen. Each such sharing arrangement is different, and consulting the agreements that have been drafted by other parishes in the diocese can be a helpful place to start.

Ecumenical Shared Ministry

Ecumenical shared ministries (ESM) include similar kinds of agreements to share life and resources together as churches. In this case, however, an ESM will include an Anglican parish in partnership with one or more other church communities that belong to the jurisdiction of a church with which the Anglican Church of Canada is in communion with or is a close ecumenical partner denomination. In the Diocese of Edmonton, the canonical provisions on Co-Operating Parishes can also include full communion and ecumenical partner churches and, therefore, these same sections of Canon 5 must also be kept in view.

Because there are additional complexities involved in sharing ministry with partners from other churches and traditions, a variety of helpful resources and guidelines should also be consulted. These include the following:

- [*The Ecumenical Shared Ministries Handbook*](#)
- [*Guidelines for Anglican and Lutheran Priests and Pastors Serving Term Appointments in Each Other's Churches*](#)
- [*Guidelines for Common Worship for Lutherans and Anglicans in Canada*](#)

Given the nature of ecumenical shared Ministry it is important to maintain regular communication about the state of the partnership with the Bishop and other relevant staff of the synod office.

Bi-Annual Clergy Review

Every two years, members of the clergy will meet with the Bishop to talk about their ministry in terms of its joys and successes, and in terms of its struggle. The purpose of the meeting is to provide relationship and encouragement, as well as help in areas of struggle. The clergy will reflect beforehand on the areas of accountabilities as they are applied in their ministry. These reflections will form the substance of the conversation with the Bishop.

Clergy Accountabilities

1) Lead and Facilitate Worship

At the heart of our lives as Christians is the worship of the Triune God. The clergy are instrumental in preparing and leading worship in the parish.

Key Accountabilities:

- Leading and organising worship on Sunday mornings according to the authorised liturgies of the church;
- Leading and organising worship for special worship services like Holy Week;
- Arranging worship when you are unable to be there;
- Giving laity the opportunity for leadership roles in the liturgy;
- Properly preparing people for their role;
- Maintaining a worship schedule for the parish.

2) Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is about taking care of the spiritual wellbeing of the people in your parish.

Key Accountabilities:

- Visiting people in the hospital;
- Keeping in touch with members of the parish;
- Educating about the need to let us know;
- Keeping an intercession list;
- Creating a care team;
- Regular visits to certain groups of people;
- Walking with people in hard diagnoses;
- Knowing what gifts/resources you have and when to use them.

3) Discipleship and Formation

Discipleship is about a life-giving relationship with God. Every Christian is called to follow Jesus and fashion their life in obedience to his commandments. Part of the role of the priest is to help people grow.

Key Accountabilities:

- To provide regular educational opportunities. These include but are not limited to bible study, book studies and courses;
- To provide a place for people to pray together and grow in relationship with God;
- To regularly speak about the need for growth in discipleship;
- To be available for discipleship coaching;
- To consider creating small groups in the parish.

4) Mission and Evangelistic Outreach

We are called to reach out to our communities and proclaim the Good News in word and deed. First and foremost, we are a sent people to bring blessing to the world. Part of the role of the clergy is to promote and facilitate this community outreach.

Key Accountabilities:

- To clearly articulate the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
- To help the laity be able to tell their Christian story;
- To discern ways to engage the community;
- To partner with other groups.

5) Administration

Administration provides the framework for Gospel ministry to happen. Part of the responsibility of the clergy is to properly administer your ministry.

Key Accountabilities:

- Organise and map out the structures of the church;
- Create clarity within the organization;
- Ensure transparency in the handling of money;
- Record statistics;

- Communicate clearly and continuously;
- Carefully attend to the Safe Church protocols;
- Facilitate groups;
- Keep schedules;
- Ensure the completion of required paperwork for the diocese in a timely fashion.

6) Part of the Wider Church

We are part of a much larger church. Part of your responsibility is to participate and add your voice to the councils of the church.

Key Accountabilities:

- Participate in synod;
- Serve on committees;
- Participate in clericus;
- Become a member of local ministerial;
- Seek opportunities for ecumenical cooperation;
- Keep informed through reading.

7) Personal Prayer Life

We know that our ministerial leadership flows from our relationship with God in Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Part of our responsibility is to develop a strong personal prayer life.

Key Accountabilities:

- Maintain a regular rhythm of prayer;
- Have a spiritual director;
- Look for Continuing Education Opportunities (Note: as part of your employment with the diocese, you have access to the Continuing Education Plan. More information on those resources can be found [here](#).)

8) Sabbath

God rested as part of the work of creation, and God's peoples have consistently understood that we, too, are expected to rest and to periodically set aside our work to take care of ourselves and give attention to other responsibilities and relationships. For clergy and other leaders in ministry this can sometimes be a

challenge, as it is difficult to separate the bounded duties and demands of our working life from the totality of our vocational identity. Nevertheless, observing the principle of sabbath by taking time for sabbath is part of how we praise God, care for others, respect creation, honour our health and capacity limits, grow in humility and express faithfulness to our call.

Key Accountabilities:

- Keeping regular days off;
- Ensuring time-off-in-lieu following periods of significant extra work;
- Taking all annual vacation time;
- Making use of study leave;
- Striving for a balance between work and other productive and leisurely pursuits;
- Attending to social, physical, and mental health needs, including the use of employee benefits.