

Vestry Handbook

*The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina
2008, 4th Edition*

This handbook is intended for the use of vestry members of parishes and missions to enable elected members understand their role and work that lies before them.

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INTRODUCTION

More than any other church in the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church is deeply rooted in a representative form of church government. This is because the birth of the Episcopal Church in America coincided with the birth of the nation. The constitution of this church was signed the same year in which the Constitution of the United States was ratified. It was also signed in the same city (Philadelphia) and in the same building (Independence Hall). Lay participation in the governance of the church is a hallmark of our identity. Authority is conferred through representatives duly elected by the people. **Vestry** members are elected at the annual parish meeting; the vestry elects parish representatives to the annual diocesan **Convention**; and the diocesan **Convention**, made up of all canonically resident clergy and lay representatives from each parish, elects deputies (four clerical and four lay) to the **General Convention** of the Episcopal Church, which meets every three years.

It is important to remember that the Episcopal Church has a **representative** form of government and is not a pure democracy. Decisions on parish matters are not made by congregational meetings, except to elect vestry representatives. The vestry, along with the rector, is charged with making the decisions affecting the life and ministry of the parish. Authority, whether of the bishop, the rector or vicar, or the vestry, is conferred by the representatives of the church assembled in council at the various decision-making levels. This is a unique form of government for a church.

You were chosen by a majority of the members of your parish to serve on the vestry. It is both an honor and a great responsibility. A vestry member is a servant-trustee, a steward over the household of faith.

PART ONE UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF THE WORK OF THE VESTRY

I. THE BISHOP, THE DIOCESE AND THE PARISH

Diocese: A diocese is the fundamental geographical unit of the church. It is the only ecclesiastical entity whose boundaries are precisely defined by canon law. The Diocese of South Carolina consists of all the coastal area of South Carolina, bounded on the west by Columbia, north and south by the state border. The diocese has 28,988 baptized members in 76 churches. The parish is by canon law subordinate to the diocese, and a congregation may call itself “Episcopal” only because it is in union with the bishop, the diocese and the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Deaneries: The Diocese of South Carolina is also subdivided into 6 regional deaneries. (See pgs. 23-25). Each deanery is presided over by a dean, appointed by the bishop. Deaneries are charged with mission development in their area, building networks of support for clergy and laity, and providing shared worship and education opportunities.

The Bishop: The bishop is the chief pastor of the diocese, and because he is unable to be present in each congregation each Sunday, presbyters, or priests, serve as his delegates and representatives in local congregations and are members of the clergy of the diocese.

The bishop is required by canon law to visit each parish at least once every three years. The bishop’s “official” visitations are scheduled annually, but the bishop and the suffragan bishop frequently come on occasions other than the official visitation to teach, preach, meet with the vestry, celebrate new ministries, dedicate new buildings, lead special worship services and confirm. The bishop also works with parishes in conflict and congregations seeking new clergy. The bishop’s primary contact, however, is with the clergy of the diocese.

The purpose of the bishop’s official visitation is to be present as the chief pastor of the diocese to teach, preach, celebrate the Eucharist, baptize and confirm if there are candidates, and examine the parish register. The bishop is not a visiting dignitary or guest in the parish, but comes as the leader of the church in the diocese to learn of the parish’s vision of mission and ministry, to hear the hopes and concerns of the parishioners and to remind the congregation that it is part of a national and worldwide church, called to mission and ministry in some areas of the world where most members of that congregation are never likely to go.

To be a Parish: Canon III of the Diocese of South Carolina sets forth some specific requirements for a worshipping community to be a parish: Regular worship services throughout the year, Christian education, pastoral care and visitation; stewardship of time, talents and financial resources; and evangelism and outreach to the community in which it is located. “A parish exists when the congregation . . . is self-supporting and also contributes proportionately of its human and financial resources to the ministry of the Diocese and the Episcopal Church.”

Property: The title to parish property is held by the vestry in trust for the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina and is secured against alienation from the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina. This includes both real estate and financial resources. This in no way inhibits the right of the rector and vestry to the control of the property for the purpose of carrying out the mission and ministry of the congregation. The vestry is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the property.

Parish Bylaws: Parishes must be incorporated and have bylaws. A sample set of bylaws is available through the Diocese.

II. VESTRY ORGANIZATION

The Canons of the church give exclusive authority over the fiscal affairs of the parish to the vestry. But vestry members are also spiritual leaders who are committed to building up the Body of Christ so that it can be an effective instrument of mission and ministry in the world.

To be elected to the vestry, one must:

- 1) Be a confirmed member of the Episcopal Church enrolled as a member of the parish, 18 years of age or older.
 - 2) Have been regular in attendance at the services of the church in the year preceding election.
 - 3) Made and maintained a financial commitment to the parish, known to the treasurer, in the year preceding the election.
- These are qualifications not only for election but also for continued service on the vestry. A vestry member should lead the way in participation in the worship life and financial support of the parish.

Terms of Office: The term of a vestry member is usually for three years or five years maximum (Canon 7, Section 1) and a vestry member is not eligible for re-election in the year following the expiration of his or her term. A vestry may have not less than 3 or more than 15 members.

The Senior Warden may be elected by the vestry, or the bylaws may allow the rector to nominate the senior warden, or s/he can be elected at large by the parish. The senior warden is the “rector’s warden” and should be someone who is an enthusiastic supporter and co-worker with the rector. It does not serve the best interests of the parish if the senior warden and rector are working at cross-purposes.

The Junior Warden is traditionally the “people’s warden” and may be elected by the vestry or at large. It is not necessary and sometimes even undesirable, for the junior warden to be responsible for parish properties. Some junior wardens are unequipped and untrained for that role. The chair of property committee should be the person in the parish who is most knowledgeable and skilled in maintenance of buildings and grounds, whether a member of the vestry or not.

The Clerk, or secretary, of the vestry is always elected by the vestry and need not be a member of that body.

The Treasurer is elected by the vestry or at large and need not be a member. As with all offices, the treasurer should serve a specific term, e.g., three years. Treasurers do not control parish finances but are stewards of the vestry who serve under the direction of the vestry.

Some vestries have an **executive board**, empowered to act on behalf of the vestry in emergencies.

The parish also elects **delegates to the annual diocesan Convention**. The number of delegates is determined by the size of the congregation as set forth in the constitution of the diocese, Article III, section 3. It reads as follows: Each parish and each mission in union with the Convention shall be entitled to lay representation in the Convention: a parish by not more than four laypersons and a mission by not more than two laypersons. The election of said lay deputies shall take place in each parish and each mission, which has been admitted to union with the Convention, by ballot, from among the confirmed communicants, at a meeting to the members thereof, on the Second Monday in January each year, or some other day thereafter to be appointed, upon not less than one week’s notice given by the Rector, or the Vestry, if there be no rector. An equal number of lay deputies may be elected to serve as alternates or substitutes for such lay deputies, elected as above, who may not, from any cause, attend the Convention when it assembles, or who may not remain in such attendance; PROVIDED, that no votes shall be received from any parish or mission which has failed to comply with the requirements of the Canon as to parochial reports by February first (1) preceding the Convention, unless they be accorded such privilege by a majority vote of the Convention.

Meetings: The vestry usually meets once a month.

The rector may call a special meeting or such a meeting may be called by a majority of the vestry in writing. The reason for such a special meeting must be specific in the notice. If the parish is without a rector the senior warden may call a special meeting.

The rector presides at all vestry meetings but may delegate that responsibility to the senior warden. However, since the primary role of the rector is to preside at the Eucharist and over the spiritual life of the parish, the rector should be the presiding officer at vestry meetings. When the annual compensation of the rector is being considered, it is appropriate for the rector to ask the senior warden to preside and to leave the room so that the vestry can freely discuss compensation for the coming year.

Committees: The vestry is usually organized into committees or commissions. These may include finance, education, property, evangelism, mission or outreach, stewardship, parish life and worship. At least one member of the vestry usually serves each of these committees, but the chair of the committee need not be a vestry person.

Every vestry organization should be constructed so as to serve the mission of the congregation. Not all vestry organizations, therefore, will follow the same pattern. In smaller congregations such a committee structure may not be possible or desirable, and the vestry may function as a committee of the whole.

Annual planning weekend: There should be an annual vestry planning weekend. Such a time is best utilized when it is spent at a place out of town. Planning weekends are most productive if an outside leader is used, but parishes can also have very productive weekends using local talent. Included in these weekends is a time of worship, Bible study, community building, fellowship, mutual ministry evaluation, review of past goals and goal setting.

III. NORMS FOR WORKING TOGETHER

Prayer: Prayer and the study of Scripture should always be a regular part of the life of the vestry. Vestry members are spiritual leaders of the congregation. This means much more than having a perfunctory prayer at the beginning of the meeting. It is essential to take time to reflect and listen to God before taking up the business.

Consensus decision-making: Important decisions, such as the calling of the rector or establishing a major new direction for the parish, should be made by consensus. A consensus does not mean that everyone wholeheartedly supports a decision but that everyone can live with and support it. The vestry talks together and listens to what every one has to say long enough for “clearness” to emerge. If there is not consensus, then the decision is not acted upon.

On the other hand, routine decisions can be made by a majority vote. These decisions should not take up an inordinate amount of the vestry’s productivity. Items on the agenda not dealt with should be first on the agenda of the next meeting of the vestry, or authority to make the decision can be delegated to a committee.

Behavior: Our baptismal covenant commits us to respect the dignity of every human being. This includes our fellow vestry members and the clergy. We are to speak the truth in love and to build up the body of Christ. Vestry members are obligated to speak up in vestry meetings. Everything that needs to be said should be said there and not in the parking lot after the meeting or in telephone conversations. If a vestry member has differences with another vestry member or a member of the clergy, those concerns should be addressed directly to the party involved. *Triangling* is complaining to a third party in order to enlist that party’s support or simply to ventilate. The best way to end triangling is for everyone to understand that anything said about anyone will be reported directly to that person.

Conflict: To be alive is to be in some degree of conflict. A certain amount of conflict is healthy and normal, but conflict unacknowledged and unresolved is destructive. What we can learn through our conflicts is that grace abounds and that communities can grow from tensions. But do not let conflicts in your vestry and in your congregations go unattended. If so, they will escalate, and it may take your parish years to recover. The bishop and his staff stand ready not only to work with you to resolve conflicts but to anticipate them and help you deal with them productively.

Access to the bishop is immediate for clergy and parish wardens in time of conflict or pastoral need. Wardens may have access to the bishop without the rector being present, but they should know that the first person to be contacted after their visit would be the rector. Conflict cannot be resolved unless all the parties involved talk openly and honestly with one another, thereby building up the body of Christ by speaking the truth in love.

Stewardship of the vestry: As leaders of the parish and trustees of the parish resources, vestry members should exemplify responsible commitment in their own giving and in the management of the resources of the parish. Each vestry member should be committed to the tithe or to moving toward a tithe in his or her own giving. Vestry members who are unwilling to support the mission of their parish and of the church should resign their positions. We cannot expect or ask others to do what we ourselves will not do. Vestry members should understand that giving away is an essential dimension of the Gospel. A vestry is called to risk and to have a vision of the mission of the church, which is beyond the immediate interests and survival needs of the local congregation. Stewardship involves not only maintaining but also reaching out and giving resources away to meet the needs of God’s people in the world and to extend the mission of the church. Experience has shown that only those congregations with this vision and commitment are healthy and thriving.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES & RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between the vestry and the rector is crucial. The fundamental characteristic of a healthy relationship is trust. This does not appear immediately in the pastoral relationship but must be developed and nurtured over a period of time. The early stages of a pastoral relationship are a time of testing as to whether the vestry and rector can trust one another. When trust is present, anything is possible. Without it, nothing can really happen.

A rector is called to a parish for life and the pastoral relationship may not be dissolved without the mutual consent of the vestry and the rector. If the consent is not mutual the bishop gets involved as an arbitrator to resolve the impasse. Needless to say, since the relationship is so permanent, it is to the benefit of the vestry, the rector, the bishop and all concerned to make sure that the match is an enduring one. A pastoral relationship is normally ended when the rector is called to a new parish. The vestry must give its consent to the resignation of the rector, and in these cases it almost always does.

Salary: Salary is negotiated at the time of the call. In the Diocese of South Carolina, The Diocese of South Carolina requires that any full-time cleric be paid according to the standards set by the diocese. Current salary package information is available through the

Diocesan Administrator at the Diocesan House. The package includes the base salary, housing allowance, wages to cover the cleric's self-employment taxes, travel/auto allowance, pension assessments, major medical insurance, dental insurance, and life insurance. Neither a vestry nor a treasurer may reduce or withhold the salary of a cleric.

Clergy Pension: Canon VIII of the Canons of the Episcopal Church authorizes the Church Pension Fund to administer the clergy pension system, which is mandatory for all active, parochial clergy. The current assessment rate is 18 percent of the total annual compensation defined as stipend, housing, utilities, and self-employment tax allowance and tax-deferred contributions. It is a defined-benefit plan with benefits determined by average annual compensation and time in service. Pension assessments are the responsibility of the parish and may not be deducted from the cleric's pay. For more information concerning reporting and paying the clergy pension premium, contact the Church Pension Fund or the Diocesan office.

Housing: Although many clergy now own their own homes, the wisdom of this practice is being increasingly questioned. There are some advantages to the parish owning a rectory: 1. It makes the priest more mobile. He or she does not have to sell a house before accepting a call elsewhere. 2. Home owning is no longer considered a windfall investment. In some places, clergy have suffered a severe financial loss when they sold their homes. 3. Owning a rectory is a good investment for a parish, because once a rectory is paid for the cash outlay for housing disappears except for maintenance. If the vestry decides to sell the rectory in order to buy a different one for a new rector with differing family needs, the vestry can afford to be less rushed with regard to the sale of old property. There is a major proviso in this, however; the vestry should provide an **equity** allowance for the rector, which will accrue throughout the rector's tenure so that at retirement time or when the rector moves to a place without a rectory, he or she will have a down payment.

Continuing education and sabbatical leave: It is expected that every cleric in the Diocese of South Carolina will have two weeks of continuing education leave annually. The bishop and vestry should have a copy of the cleric's continuing education plans. Time for continuing education may not accrue but it is to be used annually. After six years of service, the cleric is entitled to three months of paid sabbatical leave (this does not include vacation time). The vestry should budget for continuing education sabbatical leave. The unused funds in this account should accrue through the sixth year of service. Continuing education and sabbatical leave should not be considered extended vacation. This time is for professional training and enrichment and is absolutely necessary for the health, vitality, and renewal of both the cleric and the congregation. This is one of the best investments of time and money a parish can make.

Letter of agreement: All financial arrangements, vacation times, continuing education time, duties and responsibilities should be carefully written down in a letter of agreement, which is drawn up at the time of the call.

Rector's responsibilities: The canon law of the church spells this out in detail. In the Celebration of a New Ministry, the rector is given the keys to the church. This is a reminder that the rector has the control over and responsibility for the use of the parish facilities. The rector is responsible for the worship, music, education, and spiritual welfare of the congregation.

Vestry responsibilities: The vestry has the final responsibility for the fiscal well being of the parish property, and must see that the facilities are maintained and that all bills are paid. If there is a deficit at the end of the year, the vestry must eliminate it either by subscription from the parishioners or by personal contribution.

The vestry is responsible for seeing that each member of the parish is asked to make a financial pledge for the support of the mission of the church. The vestry approves the annual budget and is responsible for seeing that the parish's pledge to the mission of the diocese for the coming year is received at the Diocesan House by December 15th of each year for the next years' budget. The vestry is also responsible for seeing that there is an annual audit of all financial records which must be completed by September 1st for the previous year. Audits may be performed by an audit committee, by the diocesan internal auditor, or by a CPA. Contact the Diocesan Administrator for more information. The vestry is the sole representative of the congregation in its relationship with the clergy of the parish.

Full disclosure: All parish financial records, excluding individual pledge records or records of people helped through the discretionary fund, should be a matter of public scrutiny. The church is a public servant institution, and therefore our constituency has a right to full disclosure. There should be no secret funds, and salaries of all employees should be readily available.

Vestry meetings are usually open to members of the parish, who may observe without voice or vote. When the vestry goes into executive session to discuss personnel matters, the meeting is closed.

Collaboration: The vestry and rector work together as a team. Both the rector and the vestry should be concerned about the spiritual life of the congregation, and both should be concerned about the more mundane matters such as money and the leaky roof. When canonical rights and duties are too clearly adhered to, resentments emerge around who is treading on whose territory. The best working model for vestry and rector is the collaborative one, although both know in whose territory the buck ultimately stops.

Administrator: Some parishes have an administrator. This takes the administrative burden off the clergy and frees them to pursue their priestly and pastoral callings. A competent parish administrator can complement the work of the clergy. Good administration is good pastoral care, because behind every statistic is a real flesh-and-blood person.

Assistants: The assisting clergy, youth workers, educators, and organists are hired and serve at the pleasure of the rector. The rector may ask a nominating committee to help in the selection of assistants.

Staff Accountability: Clergy and lay staff should be ultimately accountable to the rector. In most cases the rector is directly involved in the administration, maintenance, education, worship and pastoral care of the congregation. It makes the working relationship very difficult if the staff is not accountable to the rector.

Hiring policy: It is a wise parish policy for members of the congregation *not* be employees of the parish. When the working relationship or the job performance of a staff member is unsatisfactory, needless conflict and tension develops in the life of a parish if the employee is also a member of the congregation. A firm hiring policy avoids this. Needless to say, vestries and rectors may not discriminate in hiring on the basis, of race, sex, or age. (*Church Guide to Employment Law, Julie Bloss, J.D., 1999*)

Lay employee benefits: Pension Plan: The Diocese of South Carolina implemented Resolution D-165-a of the General Convention of 1991 covering lay employees' retirement benefits as follows:

1. All Parishes, Missions and other ecclesiastical organizations, or bodies of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina which under the regulations of the Church Pension Fund have elected or shall elect to come into the pension system, shall provide all lay employees who work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually retirement benefits through participation in the Episcopal Church Lay Employees Retirement Plan (ECLERP) or in an equivalent plan, the provisions of which are at least equal to those of ECLERP. Such participation shall commence no later than January 1, 1993. At its commencement, if the plan is a defined benefit plan, the employer contribution shall not be less than 9 percent of the employees' salary; if the plan is a defined contribution plan, the employer shall contribute not less than 5 percent and agree to "match" employee contributions of up to another 4 percent.

2. The employer may impose a minimum age of 21 years and a minimum employment period not to exceed one year of continuous employment before an employee would be eligible to participate.

3. The Trustees of the Church Pension Fund shall have authority to increase or decrease the contribution percentages required for the lay pension plan.

Major Medical Benefits: (This information is included in the Diocesan Health Care Plan Booklet) Persons eligible for coverage shall include only regular, active employees of a diocese, parish or other organization, clergy or laity, affiliated with the Diocese of South Carolina regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week, who are at least 21 years of age, whose position is not temporary, and their eligible dependents. Participation eligibility is on the first day of employment. Also eligible for coverage shall be participants retiring prior to age 65 (including retirement due to permanent disability) under the clergy and lay medical plan (including eligible dependents) established by the Diocese or a participating unit of the Diocese and conforms to the National Canon. (*Further detailed information is found in the Diocesan Employee Health Care Plan*)

In September, 1999, the Diocesan Council passed the following resolutions concerning coverage for medical insurance:

1. Single coverage will be offered to all eligible employees, with the employer paying 90% of the cost and the employee paying the remaining 10% through a pre-tax deduction. Any employee may waive coverage.
2. Family coverage will be offered to all eligible employees, with the employer paying 50% of the additional cost and the employee paying the remaining 50% through a pre-tax deduction. Any employee may waive coverage.
3. The Diocesan Council reiterates the policy that all congregations participate in the diocesan health insurance plan.

Sexual Abuse: All parish and school employees *must have the sexual abuse prevention training* required by the diocese and the Church Insurance Co. Sexual abuse, which is a violation of the law, is to be reported immediately to the appropriate civil authorities. Staff and volunteers alike should be cautioned to be always above reproach, especially when dealing with children and youth. *For more information concerning training, contact the Diocesan Risk Manager at the Diocesan House.*

V. CALLING A NEW RECTOR OR VICAR

When a rector resigns, the bishop will meet with the vestry to outline the search process in detail. The vestry will appoint a nominating committee, which will work to prepare a parish profile, screen candidates, visit and interview them and present to the vestry two or three nominees for their consideration. Unless there has been an inordinate amount of conflict or unless the rector has had an extremely long tenure, the vacancy time should be kept at a minimum. Long vacancies are usually not in the best interests of the

parish. If the nominating committee works deliberately in preparing a profile and screening the candidates, a call can be made within six months. However, the process can take considerably longer.

The bishop does an initial screening of all candidates and works closely with the consultant and chair of the nominating committee. Those candidates who are on the “short list” will be more intensely screened by the bishop. The final nominees must have an interview with the bishop and have his approval before a final call is issued. The bishop issues the call of a vicar to a mission .

It is a diocesan policy that an assistant in a parish may not normally be called as rector of the parish, where he or she is currently serving. Extensive experience has taught us that the candidacy of an assistant for the rector’s position short circuits the search process and that the role change is a very difficult one to make in the same parish. When the rector leaves, both the assistant and the parish need to move on in a new direction.

Interim rector: Continuity is important when a rector leaves; therefore, parishes are increasingly using interims. An interim is a priest who has responsibility for the worship, pastoral care, education and leadership in a parish during the interim, and exercises a continuous ministry there until the new rector is called. An interim is different from a supply priest who fills in for a single service at a time.

It should be clear, however, that the wardens and vestry are the ecclesiastical authority in the parish. The interim serves at the pleasure of the vestry, within the terms and limits of the contract. The senior warden presides at vestry meetings.

If the interim period is short, the vestry may opt to use a part-time interim who can be present on Sundays and provide the essential priestly ministrations. There are many laity in most congregations who are quite competent to take over the pastoral, educational and administrative responsibilities during the interim.

The interim priest is present to lead the parish during the time between the leaving of the previous rector and the arrival of the new rector, and he or she should not be distracted from the priestly and pastoral duties by becoming a candidate for the rector’s position. It is considered a serious violation of pastoral trust when an interim gets caught up in the political process and becomes a candidate. It is the policy of this diocese and in almost every diocese in the Episcopal Church that an interim may not become rector of the parish where he or she is serving. The bishop may make a rare exception.

VI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The following are some actual questions frequently or occasionally asked about the role and relationship of vestry, rector and diocese.

Q. The rector is out of town and the vestry wants to have a meeting to discuss the rector’s salary. May they do this?

A. No. The vestry meets at regularly scheduled times. Special meetings of the vestry may be called only by the rector or by a majority of the members of the vestry in writing, stating the purpose of the meeting. The rector always presides unless the rector asks the senior warden to do so.

Q. A member of the parish wants to have a referendum on the rector’s tenure at the annual parish meeting. Can this be done?

A. No. The vestry is the sole representative of the congregation in its relationship with the rector. The congregation does not vote on the clergy of the parish.

Q. Who calls a rector?

A. The vestry with the consent of the bishop calls the rector. The congregation neither hires nor fires a rector.

Q. May the vestry terminate a rector?

A. No. A rector has life tenure, and leaves a parish only by death, resignation (with the consent of the vestry) and removal under provisions of canon law. When both parties do not agree to a termination of the pastoral relationship, the bishop is at first a mediator and as a last resort an arbitrator, in which case the bishop’s decision is final and must be obeyed by both parties.

Q. Who hires the assistant?

A. The rector. The assistant always serves at the pleasure of the rector.

Q. Our organist has a Ph.D. in music and 15 years of experience in Episcopal churches. Our rector knows nothing about music and sings badly, even in the shower. Who has the final say about music in the parish?

A. The rector.

Q. Who hires and fires the organist?

A. The rector.

Q. Who elects the vestry?

A. The congregation at the annual parish meeting. A third of the vestry is elected each year and serves for a three-year term. Vacancies may be filled by the vestry to serve until the next annual parish meeting.

Q. May the rector screen the list of candidates and remove those who do not agree with him or her about parish policy?

A. No. Any confirmed person who is regular in worship, is 18 years of age or older and has made and maintained a financial commitment to the parish in the previous year is eligible to serve on the vestry. There should always be opportunity for nominations to be made from the floor or for names of nominees to be submitted prior to the election, which will appear on the ballot if canonically qualified. It is very desirable for there to be at least two nominees for each vacancy to be filled.

Q. Does the congregation approve the parish budget at the annual meeting?

A. No. The vestry is fully responsible for the financial matters of the parish. At the same time it is incumbent on the vestry to give a full accounting to the congregation as to the financial health of the parish.

Q. May the treasurer or the vestry withhold the salary of the rector if they do not believe that the rector is doing his or her job?

A. No. Canon law states that the compensation agreed upon must be paid on the date agreed upon.

Q. What if there is no money to pay the salary?

A. The vestry is responsible for paying all salaries, either through soliciting additional financial contributions from the members or through borrowing the money needed. If long-term financial viability is problematic, then the parish may need to go to a part-time priest and/or become a mission, in which case the bishop is the rector.

Q. May the vestry reduce the rector's salary as an expression of disapproval?

A. No. The courts have held that the compensation agreed upon by the rector and vestry is a legal contract.

Q. When the rector leaves, may the assistant be a candidate for the position of rector?

A. No. It is the policy of the bishop that assistants may not normally succeed to the position of rector in the parish in which they are serving.

Q. May the interim rector become a candidate for the position of rector?

A. No. It is a violation of the agreement made at the time the interim accepted the position, and it is a policy of the bishop that the interim may not become rector.

Q. How should a vestry respond to a rector who is not performing well or respond to a growing conflict between the rector and a faction of the parish?

A. Members of the vestry should voice their concerns to the rector either privately or in a vestry meeting. The rector should always be part of the conversation. If this is not fruitful, wardens have immediate access to the bishop and should contact him. Following this conversation, the bishop will contact the rector and arrange for a meeting.

Q. Must a parish financially support the mission of the diocese?

A. Yes. Canon law states that every parish must give financial support to the mission of the diocese.

Q. How much of our parish income are we expected to give to outreach and to support the mission and ministry of the diocese?

A. Ten percent of the net disposable budget income (NDBI).

Q. What do we get for the money we give to the diocese? You get:

1. A priest. Every priest goes through a lengthy and costly discernment and education process. Your money pays for the recruitment, selection, training and ongoing nurture of clergy. In some instances the diocese shares in the cost of transitional deacons and provides them with a year-long training program.

2. A bishop - that's what the word *episcopal* means. Each priest is the representative of the bishop in a local congregation, and the bishop provides oversight to clergy and congregations and shares responsibility for the mission of the church in the nation and the world. The bishop ordains, confirms, teaches, helps congregations get clergy, mediates disputes and is chief pastor of the diocese.

3. Support and consultation for your education programs and access to a well-stocked resource center, which includes videos, curricula and other printed resource material.

4. The *Jubilate Deo*, our diocesan newspaper, which is received by every family in the diocese at no charge.

5. Administration of the Church Pension Fund, in which all clergy and many laity participate, and our insurance programs - health, life, dental and property.

6. Trained intervention when there is a conflict in your parish and consultation when the parish is without a rector.

7. A conference center and summer camp facility on Seabrook Island.

8. Help in planning new buildings through the diocesan Commission on Architecture.

9. Help to support congregations that can't yet fully support themselves financially.

10. A full-time diocesan youth ministries coordinator; training and support for parish youth ministry; assistance with deployment of youth ministers; wide variety of youth conferences; diocesan-level training and service opportunities for senior high student through the Youth Commission.

11. A full-time director of Christian Faith Formation and full-time CFF resources support services.

12. To support outreach programs all over this diocese, which you would not be able to support and sustain by yourselves.

13. To support the national and world mission of our church in our own country and around the world.

14. To support college chaplains who minister to young adult members of our church when they are at college, as well as other students and faculty.

15. Various workshops and educational events sponsored by the diocese:

- Clergy days, clergy and family retreat, clergy conferences
- The Treasurer's and Administrator's Annual Workshops
- Christian Faith Formation Conferences

16. Support and consultation concerning administrative and financial matters.

17. Payroll processing service through the Diocesan office.

18. On site administrative support from the diocesan office.

Housing Allowance:

Q. The assistant wants the vestry to designate 100 percent of her salary for housing. May they do this?

A. Yes. Any cleric employed by a parish may designate any percentage of his or her salary as housing, and the vestry must do this. But the actual amount of housing claimed on the cleric's tax return must be the actual amount used for housing.

Q. John Smith is an ordained Methodist minister employed by St. John's to do Christian education. May he claim part of his salary as housing allowance?

A. No. The IRS maintains that in order to qualify for the housing allowance exclusion, a person must be ordained and performing duties that are ordinarily the duties of a priest.

PART TWO

Managing the Temporal Affairs Of the Parish

The responsibility and accountability for the stewardship of church money and property required of the vestry and treasurer are described in the canons. The Department of Finance assists parishes in identifying and implementing these areas of responsibility. Below is a listing of various canons, resolutions and policies of which a vestry member should be aware.

Business Methods and Accounting Principals: The responsibility and accountability for stewardship of church money and property is delineated in Title I, Canon 7, of the Canons of the Episcopal Church. General Convention approved certain business methods and accounting principles and practices in 1979, to be implemented in every parish and diocese. By resolution, the General Convention authorized the publication of the Manual of Accounting Principles and Recording Practices for Episcopal dioceses, parishes and missions. The General Convention authorized the Executive Council to revise and update the Manual periodically. The current edition is now titled the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*.

Full-disclosure reporting: Non-profit organizations have the responsibility of reporting to their contributing sources (which includes the parishioners in a parish) all the assets, liabilities and fund balances belonging to the organization.

Full disclosure requires that all funds of a parish, regardless of source, structure or separation of management, should be reported on a single set of financial statements with appropriate supporting exhibits and data relating to the various fund balances. For example: operating funds; endowment and trust funds; discretionary funds; funds of parish organizations; real estate funds including land, buildings, furniture and equipment and the cost of any improvements. The expenditures within a fund should be properly outlined.

Annual audit: All accounts of parishes and missions shall be audited annually by an independent certified public accountant, the diocesan internal auditor or an audit committee selected according to guidelines recommended by the diocesan Department of Finance.

All audit reports, including any memorandum issued by the auditors or audit committee regarding internal controls or other accounting matters, together with a summary of action taken or proposed to be taken to correct deficiencies or implement recommendations contained in the memorandum, should be filed with the bishop not later than 30 days following the date of the report, and in no event later than September 1st of each year, covering the financial reports of the previous calendar year. (*National Canon 1.7.1.g*)

It is recommended that the larger parishes will comply with an audit by a CPA though in some cases, a diocesan internal audit may suffice. If the parish uses an audit committee, it is recommended that the parish conduct a CPA audit or a diocesan audit every three years. Audit guidelines and procedures are available from the assistant treasurer.

Parochial Report: Each congregation is required to submit an annual report on the appropriate parochial report form by March 1st of each year. (*National Canon 1.6.1*)

Diocesan Commitment: Each congregation is required to submit its financial commitment to the diocese by December 15th for the next year. Ten percent of the projected Net Disposable Budget Income (NDBI) shall be the expected minimum level of giving in support of the Ministry and Mission Budget of the Diocese.

Business methods for trust and permanent funds: Parish trust funds, permanent funds and securities must be deposited with a bank, diocesan corporation or other approved agencies. Two signatures must be required for withdrawal. Records of trust funds must be kept, showing source and date, terms governing use of principal and income, frequency and recipients of reports of condition, and how the funds are invested. (*National Canon 1.7.1.b-c*)

Fidelity bond: Treasurers and custodians for any funds, which exceed \$500 during any year, shall be bonded. (*National Canon 1.7.1.d*) The Diocese provides a blanket fidelity bond of \$25,000 on each congregation.

Financial reporting: The Department of Finance of the diocese may require copies of any or all accounts of a parish. (*National Canon 1.7.1.d*)

All parishes and missions must prepare financial statements on a monthly basis. The standard financial statements required of each parish and mission are: 1) statement of assets and liabilities resulting from cash transactions (balance sheet); 2) statement of cash receipts and expenditures; and 3) when applicable at Dec. 31st, analysis of changes in fund balances.

Budgeting of parish income and expenses is essential to proper planning and control. It is essential that the monthly financial reports to the vestry compare actual income and expenditures with the budget.

Cash basis accounting: Parishes and missions may keep their records and prepare financial reports on the cash basis. This does not preclude the use of accrual basis accounting by those desiring to do so.

Fiscal year: The fiscal year shall begin Jan. 1st. (*National Canon I.7.1.j*)

Operating Fund Deficit: If the treasury is deficient, the vestry shall collect, as far as practicable, by subscription or otherwise, a sum sufficient to liquidate all of the current annual obligations of the parish.

Payment of employee's compensation: The vestry shall pay with punctuality, at the intervals agreed, the stipulated salary of the rector or vicar and others.

Offerings: The vestry shall inform themselves of the orders and times of ALL offerings required by the canons of the diocese and take measures for the obedient fulfillment and due liquidation of these obligations.

Bishop's visitation: It is customary that the plate offering received at the time of the bishop's visit be designated to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund.

Clergy pension: All parishes must pay the Church Pension Fund assessments due on the salaries and other compensation of the clergy. (*National Canon I.8.3*)

For any cleric who is engaged in compensated church work for a period of three consecutive months in the same church and receives a minimum of \$200 per month, assessments must be paid on his or her behalf at 18 percent of that compensation by that church. This applies to full-time, part-time, supply or interim work.

For purposes of calculating clergy pension assessments, use the cash salary, housing allowance, utilities allowance, tax-deferred contributions and any compensation for self-employment (Social Security) taxes. If living quarters are provided rent-free by the parish, the housing amount is figured as 30 percent of the cash salary, utilities allowance, tax-deferred contributions and any compensation for the self-employment tax combined.

Lay pension: All Lay employees who work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually should be provided retirement benefits through participating in the Episcopal Church Lay Employees Retirement Plan or in an equivalent plan, the provisions of which are at least equal to those of ECLERP. If the plan is a *defined benefit plan*, the parish's contribution shall be not less than 9 percent of the employee's salary, and if the plan is a *defined contribution plan*, the parish shall contribute not less than 5 percent of the employee's salary and agree to match employee contributions up to another 4 percent of the employee's salary. The parish may impose a minimum age of 21 years and a minimum employment period not to exceed one year of continuous employment before an employee would be eligible to participate. (*Resolution D165a of General Convention, 1991*)

Workman's Compensation: Every parish or mission employing three or more persons must provide Workman's Compensation insurance coverage.

Aided Congregations: Diocesan financial support of aided congregations is based on the expectation that aided congregations should plan internally to phase out diocesan support over a mutually agreed period of time, depending upon the circumstances of each case. The following policies are extensions of this expectation:

- a) Each aided congregations is expected to conduct a face-to-face every-member commitment stewardship program each year. Financial support will not continue to any aided congregations, which fails to conduct its stewardship in terms of commitment. Diocesan assistance for inaugurating such a program is available from the Canon to the Ordinary.
- b) Each aided congregation will be contacted annually to ascertain how much more financial support can be assumed by the parish in the coming year without diminishing its diocesan commitment. It is expected that each aided congregations will have a five-year plan in place to reduce and ultimately eliminate the diocesan aid.
- c) Each aided congregation is required to submit quarterly financial reports to the diocesan finance office. Monthly aid checks from the diocesan operating fund will be contingent on the timely receipt of these reports. Additionally, no aid checks will be sent to any congregation not having a current audit on file in the diocesan office.

Reporting clergy earnings to IRS: All clergy employed by parishes and missions are considered employees for income tax purposes. They are considered self-employed for *Social Security tax purposes only*. Therefore, all clergy so employed must file a 1040SE return and pay the self-employment tax.

Clergy should not receive a Form 1099 for reporting income from parishes. They should receive a Form W-2 showing the salary received. The W-2 differs from that of a lay employee of the parish. The primary differences are:

- a) Social Security taxes are not withheld, because clergy are considered self-employed for Social Security purposes.
- b) Federal income taxes may be withheld or not, as the cleric wishes. The cleric may also request withholding to cover amounts due for self-employment tax.

- c) The income reported on the Form W-2 should include salary, compensation for self-employment tax, auto allowance and any other compensation for which the cleric has not reported in detail to the parish. The auto allowance would be excluded in this amount if the cleric were required to “account” to the parish for the expenses. A housing allowance is not required to be reported on Form W-2, provided the entire amount of the allowance is excluded under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. However, the IRS prefers that the housing allowance be reported on Form W-2 as a separate memo notation.

The cleric should use Schedule C for reporting income and expenses related to self-employment, such as individual fees for performing marriages, baptisms and other personal services.

Accountable plan: An employee of a parish may establish an *accountable or reimbursement plan* with the parish for expenses paid or incurred by him or her solely for the benefit of the parish. Accountable plans can cover business expenses such as travel and automobile expenses paid or incurred by him or her solely for the benefit of the parish. Accountable plans can cover business expenses such as travel and automobile expenses, meals and lodging when away from home overnight; allowable educational expenses and other expenses which are solely for the benefit of the parish.

Under an accountable plan, the vestry establishes a written plan and adopts a resolution up to the budgeted amount. The plan must require the employee to substantiate within 60 days all business expenses using an account book, diary or similar statement. The plan must require that the employee return any amount in excess of the substantiated expenses covered by this arrangement within 120 days. If the employee conforms to all of the above, the amounts paid to him or her may be completely excluded from the tax return and Form W-2.

Clergy housing allowance: The housing allowance is the most important single tax break available to clergy. Money spent by the cleric to provide, furnish and maintain a principal residence is excluded from federal income tax, subject to certain limitations. The vestry must pass a resolution stating the cleric’s housing allowance prior to the first paycheck each year. The cleric advises the vestry of the amount of his/her compensation to be designated as housing allowance. There is no limit on the cleric’s compensation that can be designated by a church as a housing allowance. The cleric is responsible for reporting to the Internal Revenue Service the lowest of the following amounts: a) actual cash spent; b) fair rental value of the house (if parish does not provide residence for cleric), fair rental value of the furnishings, maintenance, taxes, insurance, and utilities; and c) amount specified in the vestry minutes before the money is paid. The cleric should be given a letter from the vestry stating the resolution for the IRS compliance and documentation.

Churches that fail to designate an allowance in advance of the calendar year should do so as soon as possible in the new year. The allowance will operate prospectively. Churches should consider adopting a ‘safety net’ allowance to protect against the loss of this significant tax benefit due to the inadvertent failure by the church to designate an allowance. It is also recommended that the parish budget reflect a separate line item for the housing allowance. The amount of the housing allowance may be amended during the year if the original allowance proves to be too low. However, the amended allowance will only operate prospectively. Under no circumstances can a cleric exclude any portion of an allowance retroactively designated by a church.

A housing allowance is excluded from federal income tax; however, it must be included in a cleric’s self-employment earnings.

Who is eligible for a housing allowance? The Tax Court ruled that a minister is one who satisfies all five of the following factors: 1) administers sacraments; 2) conducts religious worship; 3) management responsibility in a local church or religious denomination (control, conduct, or maintenance of a religious organization); 4) ordained, commissioned, or licensed; and 5) considered to be a religious leader by one’s church or denomination. If a person serves as a “minister of music” or “minister of education”, or serves in an administrative or other function of his/her religious organization, but is not authorized to perform all of the religious duties of an ordained minister in the church, even though he/she is commissioned as a “minister of the gospel,” he/she cannot exclude from income a housing allowance or the value of a home provided.

Examples of the vestry resolution, letter from the vestry to the cleric stating the approval of the resolution, and a form for estimating housing allowances can be found in Appendix I, of this handbook.

Discretionary funds: The primary purpose of a discretionary fund is to assist people in time of need. The alms and contributions, not otherwise specifically designated, at the administration of Holy Communion on one Sunday in each calendar month should be allocated to the rector’s discretionary fund. (*National Canon III.9.5b6*). In some parishes, the discretionary fund is included in the annual operating budget.

The discretionary fund must be an account of the parish. Although the cleric may write checks and maintain the confidential records of the fund, the fund itself belongs to the parish. The bank account is in the name of the parish; i.e., “Christ Church Rector’s Discretionary Fund” or “Christ Church Assistant Rector’s Discretionary Fund” with the parish’s tax identification number on the account. To preserve confidentiality, the cleric can be the only signer. Discretionary funds remain at the parish when the cleric is called elsewhere. Discretionary funds are included in the annual parish audit. (For more detailed information consult the “Manual for Business Methods in Church Affairs” under Sources).

Tax-exempt status: The Episcopal Church has been determined to be exempt from federal income tax as an organization described in Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. Copies of this exemption are available from the diocesan finance office for the parish's use applying for grants under this status.

Church building and financing: The vestry should notify the bishop of any plans for new construction and/or building renovations. The bishop should also be notified of any plans to borrow funds and encumber property.

If new construction or renovation of worship space is planned, the vestry should contact the Architecture Committee prior to any plans being developed. The liturgical consultant on the commission will consult with the building committee and parishioners in articulating the vision and needs for liturgical space according to the use of the Book of Common Prayer.

All parishes and aided missions should secure the advice of the Architecture Committee regarding new buildings, structural alterations or additions to any present building on the church property. The parish or aided mission is encouraged to submit to the committee the following: a) intention to initiate; b) schematic drawings and specifications; c) design development drawings and specifications; and d) such other plans as shall be required by the commission. Following construction, as-built drawings and specifications should be securely stored by the parish.

The bishop and Department of Finance must be notified before any short or long term indebtedness is incurred.

Encumbrance of Property: No real property may be encumbered or alienated by a parish without the written consent of the bishop and Standing Committee of the diocese. (*National Canon I.7.3*)

Property: All parish and mission property is to be held in trust for the Episcopal Church and the diocese, with the local congregation retaining control only so long as it remains part of and subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Church. (*National Canon I.7.4*)
All Buildings and their contents shall be kept adequately insured. (National Canon I.7.1.h)

Annual report of the Vestry: The vestry shall write and deliver to the congregation a full, accurate and faithful statement of the temporal condition of the parish at the annual parish meeting. This statement should show what money, lands and other property have been received during the past year and from what sources; what money has been expended and for what objects; what property has been exchanged or mortgaged or sold and for what purposes; and what debts are owing by the parish and what security, if any, has been given; and what money, lands or other property are then owned by the parish.

The vestry shall also furnish a separate statement of the money and property held in trust by or for the parish, which show: a) the nature and purpose of each trust; b) when and by whom the same was created; c) the names of the beneficiaries; d) the total value of the original trust fund and the amount of principal at the end of the preceding fiscal year; e) the total value of the original trust fund and the amount of the principal at the end of the preceding fiscal year; a brief description of the securities in which the same were then invested; f) the rate of interest on each investment and the amount of interest in default, if any; g) the disposition of the income during each year; which statements shall also show whether or not fiduciary bonds required for the funds by canon have been approved and delivered, the surety or sureties, and the principal amount of each bond.

PART THREE Resources

COMMUNICATION

Publications useful to vestry members:

The Journal of the Annual Diocesan Convention is the official record of the yearly legislative meeting. A copy is sent to each parish office; additional copies are offered as available to lay delegates and to anyone in the diocese. An update of the diocesan Constitutions and Canons can be found in the back of the journal.

Jubilate Deo is the newspaper of our diocese, with a circulation of a 21,000 reaching our church members and other readers. The paper is published bi-monthly and is free. We depend on the church offices to keep the mailing list current.

Diocesan Web Page: The Diocese of South Carolina has its own web page and can be found at:

www.dioceseofsc.org

The web site was designed specifically as an information source. Information included is addresses, frequently used forms, telephone numbers, and e-mail information for all churches of the diocese, diocesan institutions and committees, Diocesan House contacts, and calendar of events around the diocese. Check out this site which is regularly updated.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

The primary function of the Commission on ministry is to oversee the recruitment and training process of aspirants for ordained ministry. It is also responsible for assisting people in discerning their vocations to lay ministry in the church and the world.

Ordination: In the Episcopal Church, it is understood that ordination is a result of a call from the community of faith to the individual. Therefore, the vestry is involved from the beginning of the ordination process. The rector/vicar and the vestry must sign letters of recommendation and certificates of endorsement for any person seeking postulancy, candidacy or ordination to the diaconate or priesthood.

In order for a person to participate in the diocesan discernment process for either the diaconate or priesthood, the parishioner must be known in the parish and a confirmed communicant in good standing for a period of at least one-year. The vestry must sign a letter of recommendation for the person to enter the discernment program.

Once a person completes the initial discernment program, it is expected that the parish will assist with the cost of the postulant's seminary education.

CHURCH GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Congregational Development offers guidance to Diocesan Council and diocesan congregations in three areas: new church planting, leadership development within congregations, grant administration via the diocesan budget, and Builders for Christ resources.

The department is charged by the Diocesan Council with strategically directing funds towards congregations that have developed clear ministry momentum, united leadership, and strong stewardship support by the congregation. Whenever possible, resources are prioritized and targeted toward those congregations whose development stand to have the most immediate and positive impact on the Diocese as a whole.

COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

The Department of Social Ministries is structured to enable the department to pursue a large span of study and action. A summary of these ministries can be found on page 21.

Companion diocese: Our companion diocese is the Dominican Republic.

DIOCESAN FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Assistant Treasurer is available to work with individual parishes regarding financial and accounting matters. The assistant treasurer is also available to present a program in parishes to explain the diocesan operating budget and its allocation to specific ministries and our worldwide mission.

The financial office provides information to the parishes regarding the group medical *insurance* plan, clergy and lay employee *pension* plans, and *all other insurance*, such as property, liability and worker's compensation.

The assistant treasurer also works with the Trustees who are charged with the duty of overseeing the investment of the various trust funds held by our diocese and bishop. Limited funds are available for mission, repair of mission properties, theological education scholarships and assistance for infirm and disabled priests.

The Diocesan Department of Finance sponsors an annual **Church Business Workshop**, focusing on standard accounting principles and reporting practices for parishes, tax reporting, parochial report preparation, employee benefits, responsibilities of vestry members, etc.

St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center

St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center, located on Seabrook Island, about 45 minutes from downtown Charleston, is owned and operated by the Diocese of South Carolina. The Camp is represented at Diocesan Council by the Saint Christopher Department of Camps and Conferences. The Center serves the Diocese and beyond with its' ministry of Christian hospitality, sponsoring several youth programs including Summer Camp (1,400 children annually), and the Barrier Island Environmental Education Program (8,000 children annually). Additionally, the Center produces Summer, Thanksgiving, and Advent programs annually for families in addition to its popular schedule of Personal Retreats for Clergy and Laity.

Many others come to the Center as it hosts parish family, vestry, and clergy retreats, and over 100 community- based not-for-profit organizations annually. These include adult and youth organizations from other church denominations, staff, students, faculty, and board members from local educational, social, governmental, and medical organizations. Specialty programs include a camp for severely burned children, residential programs with Hospice, and several mental health organizations.

Saint Christopher is preparing for the future. The first phase of additions and improvements to the campus are completed and include: a new 7,000 square foot open space, multi-purpose facility; increased large and small group meeting spaces; and upgraded support utilities, and sixteen additional lodge rooms. Additional improvements and additions are planned for the near future.

For further information on the Camp you can call 843/768-0429 or check the web site: www.stchristopher.org

Diocesan Programs, Departments and Committees:

Christian Faith Formation

The mission of the Department of Christian Faith Formation in the Diocese of South Carolina is, through proactive involvement, to provide Biblically sound and theologically orthodox resources. Both human and material, that assist congregations in making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and equipping the saints for the work of the ministry; thereby building up congregations for the work of the Gospel.

The Diocesan Resource Center continues the acquisition of new and diverse resources, including audio-visual, curricula, professional and programmatic resources to make available to the parishes of the diocese for their various age-level and ministry needs. An updated catalog of all resources is available to all parishes. The Department has undergone changes in its structure in order to more effectively accomplish its mission. Representation from each deanery and the different commissions meet regularly to discuss issues and ideas and to plan deanery and diocesan events.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the diocesan Christian Faith Formation assistant, Susan Burns at 843/722-4075 or e-mail: sburns@dioceseofsc.org or by viewing the CFF page on the diocesan website: www.dioceseofsc.org

Youth Ministries

The Mission of the Department of Youth Ministries is to impact students with the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit that they may come to know him as savior and follow Him as Lord in the ministry and fellowship of His Church.

Vision Statement: the Department of Youth Ministries is working together, raising up a biblically literate generation that is leading the Church and changing the world.

Youth Ministers Network

Known as Fusion, this group meets regularly for prayer, worship, encouragement, networking, and business. The vision, planning and communication for our events and initiatives come from this group.

Conferences

The Department of Youth Ministries sponsors weekend conferences for Junior High and Senior High youth at various levels of spiritual growth. The purpose of these retreats is to provide safe, quality programs that will build up the youth ministry within each parish.

Youth Commission

Consisting of older teens, this youth group represents each deanery by agreeing to serve and lead over the course of a year. Selection is by an application process during the summer for the following school year. Youth Commissioners undergo training in small group leadership and assist in the leadership of Junior High Retreats.

Deployment

The Department works to help churches employ youth ministers (lay or ordained). Our desire is to work with churches through all facets of the hiring process. Our website lists churches currently searching for youth ministers.

Further information can be obtained on our website www.scyouth.org or by contacting the Administrative Assistant for Youth Ministries, Lisa Jones at 843/722-4075 or e-mail: lisaj@dioceseofsc.org

Anglican Fellowship of Prayer

An international prayer movement that seeks to support the Church with continual intercession, annual international prayer conferences, regional and diocesan retreats and schools of prayer.

Camps and Conferences

Works towards optimum operation and use of Camp St. Christopher for the benefit of the children, parishes, clergy and the communities of the surrounding areas.

Cathedral Chapter

Parishioners of the diocese who lend support to the Cathedral and its life and help link it to the diocese.

Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy

The primary focus of this ministry is to the citizens and police officers in the greater Charleston area. This ministry offers comfort and counsel to the victims of crime whose lives have been suddenly changed due to a violent act or unexpected tragedy. The ministry is also for police officers and their families. This Judeo-Christian ministry has 21 ordained clergy who are trained and part of the emergency response team. A support group was formed for survivors of tragedy and is comprised of lay volunteers who have had specialized training. The Coastal Crisis Chaplaincy Program was originally started in 1991 by the Rev. Rob Dewey who became the first full-time police chaplain in the state of South Carolina. The Chaplaincy can be reached at 843/724-1212.

College Ministries

Works through chaplains on a number of college campuses in our diocese. The Diocesan coordinator for this ministry is Daron Taylor and can be reached by the following: 843/737-2697 cell, or daront@dioceseofsc.org.

Commission on Church Architecture and Church Construction

Reviews design and financing of new buildings and additions proposed by parishes.

Commission on Ministry

Five clergy and five lay persons, appointed by the bishop, who through interviewing and other processes assist him in discernment of applicants for postulancy, candidacy, the diaconate, and the priesthood.

Congregational Development

Offers guidance to Diocesan Council and congregations in three areas: new church planting, leadership development within the congregations, and grant administration via the Diocesan budget, Builders for Christ resources, and loan administration from the revolving loan fund.

Cursillo

An international movement, under the authority of the Bishop, for strengthening adult leadership in the church and other environments. Method includes a 3-day weekend in which a team of laity and clergy presents the fundamental principals for Christian living and ongoing meetings thereafter.

Daughters of the King An order for the lay or ordained woman who, by the reaffirmation of the promises made at baptism, pledges herself to a lifelong program of prayer, service and evangelism, dedicated to strengthening the spiritual life of her parish.

Diocesan Council

The Diocesan Council is comprised of clergy and lay persons elected at the Diocesan Convention to serve a three-year term. Elected officials have seat, voice and vote. The council also consists of non-elected members who have seat and voice but no vote.

The Diocesan Council's purpose is to administer and carry on the missionary, educational, and social work of the Church by this Diocese and such other work as may be committed to it by the Diocesan Convention and for the initiation and development of new work between meetings of the Diocesan Convention as it may deem necessary and to receive and administer all funds raised within the Diocese subject, however, to the provisions of the Constitutions and Canons of the Diocese.

Ecumenical Officer

Maintaining ecumenical relationships with the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed and Methodist churches in the diocese and the state of South Carolina.

Episcopal Church Women

An offering to women of the diocese of a program of worship, study, service, fellowship and opportunities for development of ministries which will deepen and strengthen their own spiritual lives and lead them into service for the Church in the parish, community, the diocese, nation and world.

Faith Alive

A program of renewal for the entire parish family, reflecting on commitment to Jesus Christ as stated in vows of Baptism and Confirmation. Strong builder of small groups reaches out to those on the periphery of church membership. Provides materials and voluntary lay leadership under authority of the church's rector or vicar.

Hispanic Ministries

With the growing Hispanic population in the Charleston area, a Spanish-speaking ministry has been established by the diocese and headed by a full-time missionary, The Rev. Mercedes Julian. The goal has been to establish a Spanish-speaking congregation on John's Island, tutors for English lessons, transportation to church services, doctor appointments and youth events. Other Spanish services are held in the diocese in Marion ,Charleston and Pawley's Island.

Kairos

A prison ministry which is active in twelve correctional institutions in South Carolina.

Episcopal Relief and Development Fund

The principal national fund mechanism of the Episcopal Church for collecting and distributing voluntary contributions in times of catastrophes, storms, etc.

Social Ministries

Social Ministries is structured to enable the department to pursue a large span of study and action. Ministry categories are: Criminal justice, disabilities, economic justice, education, environmental stewardship, government relations, health, HIV/AIDS, homeless, housing, hunger, poverty, seafarer's, social justice, violence and volunteer recruitment and development.

Detailed information on all these ministries can be obtained on www.socialministries.com or by contacting Ed Dyckman at: edward.dyckman@att.net or 843/856-6225.

Spiritual Directors' Program

Through ecumenical inclusiveness Spiritual Direction people learn to understand, value, and appropriate their own religious experience and deepen their intimacy with God. The church is beginning to learn that this ministry is meant to be, not a privilege for the few, but a means for many to come to maturity as women and men of God.

PART FOUR

Deaneries of the Diocese of South Carolina

(March, 2008)

Please also refer to the Diocesan Website for current information.

BEAUFORT DEANERY – The Very Rev. Charles Owens, Dean

Allendale Beaufort	Holy Communion St. Helena's	Bill Rose, Supply Jeffrey Miller, Rector Mark Avera, Associate Robert Batts, Associate Alden Hathaway, Bishop in Residence Charles E. Owens, III, Rector Jay F. Slocum, Associate Michael Clarkson, Associate
Bluffton	The Cross	Bill Rose, Supply Johnnie Davis, Jr., Vicar Sally Putnam, Supply Richard Lindsey, Rector Charles Minifie, Associate Sandra Grant, Deacon Greg Kronz, Rector Thomas Hendrickson, Associate Kathleen Phillips, Deacon
Estill Grahamville Hampton Hilton Head	Heavenly Rest Holy Trinity All Saints' All Saints'	Vacant Randall Morgan, Rector
Walterboro	Atonement St. Jude's	

CHARLESTON DEANERY – The Very Rev. John Burwell, Dean

Charleston	Calvary Grace	Theodore R. Lewis, Jr., Rector Michael Wright, Rector Kirtley Yearwood, Associate Paul Gilbert, Associate Alistar Votaw, Associate Todd Oswald, (Sundays) Dow Sanderson, Rector Daniel Clarke, Associate Patrick Allen, Associate Mark Chaplin, Deacon William McKeachie, Rector Mark Cooke, Associate Ed Davis, Deacon Daniel Messier, Rector Al Zadig, Rector Peet Dickenson, Associate Robert Lawrence, Associate Fred Thompson, Deacon Haden McCormick, Rector Hank Avent, Associate David Dubay, Associate Kenneth Wendell, Associate Hazel Wilkerson, Associate David Williams, Rector Greg Smith, Deacon
	Holy Communion	
	Sts. Luke & Paul (Cathedral)	
	St. Mark's St. Michael's	
	St. Philip's	
	St. Stephen's	

McClellanville Mt. Pleasant	St. James Christ	Jennie Olbrych, Vicar Ted McNabb, Rector William Lantz, Associate Jimmy Gallant, Associate Judith Ewing, Deacon Steve Wood, Rector John Burley, Associate Anthony Kowbeidu, Associate John Burwell, Rector George R. Cormeny, Associate Robert Ott, Associate John Zahl, Associate Thomas Simmonite, Deacon
	St. Andrew's	
Sullivan's Island	Holy Cross	

WEST CHARLESTON – The Very Rev. Craig Borrett, Dean

Charleston	Holy Trinity	Peter Mitchell, Rector Ed Rosenleib, Deacon Marshall Huey, Rector Karl Burns, Associate James Yarsiah, Vicar Arthur Jenkins, Rector Louise Weld, Associate Shay Galliard, Rector Joseph DiRaddo, Associate Chris Huff, Vicar Weyman Camp, IV, Rector Henry Cheves, Associate Anthony Kowbeidu,, Vicar Penelope Swithenbank, Interim Gregory Snyder, Rector Joe Gibbs, Associate Ron Warfuel, Deacon James Taylor, Rector Robert W. Switz, Supply Robert Schwarz, Interim Michael Lumpkin, Rector Becky Coerper, Associate Doug Gray, Associate Craig Borrett, Rector Kendall Harmon, Associate
	Old St. Andrew's	
	St. Andrew's Mission St. James'	
	Good Shepherd	
Edisto	Westshore Trinity	
Goose Creek Johns Island	St. Mary's Our Saviour St. John's	
North Charleston Summerville	St. Thomas' Epiphany St. George's St. Paul's	
Yonges Island	Christ St. Paul's	

FLORENCE DEANERY – The Very Rev. Dr. John M. Barr, III, Dean

Bennettsville Cheraw Darlington Dillon Florence	St. Paul's St. David's St. Matthew's St. Barnabas All Saints'	Terence Lee, Rector William Oldland, Rector Andrew O'Dell, Rector Fred Gough, Priest-in-charge Mark Riggs, Rector Jed Hermes, Deacon Vacant Ron Heister, Associate J. Michael Burton, Supply Vacant Michael Ridgill, Rector Vacant Tom Allen, Rector Vacant John Barr, III, Rector Hamilton Smith, Associate Vacant
	St. John's	
Hagood Hartsville Marion Stateburg Sumter	Christ Ascension St. Bartholomew's Advent Holy Cross Good Shepherd Holy Comforter	
Wedgefield	St. Augustine's	

GEORGETOWN DEANERY – The Very Rev. Edward Kelaher, Dean

Conway	St. Paul's	Julian Jeffords, Rector Iain Boyd, Associate Paul Fuener, Rector
Georgetown	Prince George	
Myrtle Beach	Trinity	Rob Sturdy, Rector
N. Myrtle Beach	St. Stephen's	Wilmot Merchant, Rector
Pawley's Island	All Saints', Waccamaw	Ed Kelaher, Rector
Pawley's Island	Holy Cross/ Faith Memorial	Tommy Tipton, Rector Callie Perkins, Associate Vacant
Pineville	Redeemer	Ed Kelaher, Rector
Surfside Beach	Resurrection	James Lewis, Associate Tom Woodle, Associate James Murray, Deacon

ORANGEBURG DEANERY – The Very Rev. John Scott, Dean

Barnwell	Holy Apostles'	Chuck Owens, Vicar
Blackville	St. Alban's	Closed
Denmark	Christ Church	Vacant
Denmark	St. Philip's Chapel	Ira Johnson, Vicar
Eutawville	Epiphany	John Scott, Rector Ed Hancock, Deacon Michael Hub, Vicar
Fort Motte	St. Matthew's	Jeffrey Richardson, Vicar
Kingstree	St. Alban's	Closed
Moncks Corner	Holy Family	Frank E. Larisey, Rector
Orangeburg	Redeemer	Vacant
Orangeburg	St. Paul's	Hal Fenters, Rector
Pinopolis	Trinity	Jeffrey Richardson, Vicar
St. Stephen	St. Stephen's	David Thurlow, Vicar
Summerton	St. Matthias'	Ed Hancock, Deacon

Diocesan Institutions:

Bishop Gadsden Retirement Community

William Trawick, Director

One Gadsden Way
Charleston, SC 29455
843/ 762-3300

Canterbury House

Peggy Pye, Director

175 Market St.
Charleston, SC 29401
843/ 723-5553

St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center

The Rev. Chris Warner, Rector

2810 Seabrook Island Rd.
Johns Island, SC 29455
843/ 768-0429
843/ 768-0918 fax
website: www.saintchristopher.org

Porter-Gaud School

300 Albemarle Point
Charleston, SC 29407-7593
843/ 556-3620

Associated Diocesan Institutions:

Episcopal Church Center

815 Second Ave.
New York, NY 10017
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828/ 696-3589 fax
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SC Episcopal Home, Still Hopes

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Policies of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina

Previously, some of our policies were written, some were oral and others were rumored. What follows is not an attempt to codify but to clarify and articulate. Our policies are always in a state of review and revision, and it is our hope that we will continue to evaluate these policies in a collegial context.

Michael T. Malone
Canon to the Ordinary, Retired

Pension Fund Policy

Approved July 1991 by the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that all parishes, missions and other ecclesiastical organizations of bodies subject to the authority of this Church, and any other societies, organizations or bodies in the Church which under the regulations of the Church Pension Fund have elected or shall elect to come into the pension system, shall provide all lay employees who work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually retirement benefits through participation in the Episcopal Church Lay Employees Retirement Plan (ECLERP) or in an equivalent plan, the provisions of which are at least equal to those of ECLERP. Such participation shall commence no later than January 1, 1993. At its commencement, if the plan is a defined benefit plan, the employer contribution shall be not less than nine percent of the employee's salary; if the plan is a defined contribution plan, the employer shall contribute not less than five percent and agree to "match" employee contributions of up to another four percent; and be it further

Resolved, that the employer may impose a minimum age of 21 years and a minimum employment period not to exceed one year of continuous employment before an employee would be eligible to participate; and be it further

Resolved, that the Trustees of the Church Pension Fund shall have the authority to increase or decrease the contribution percentages required for the lay pension plan; and be it further

Resolved, that each diocese of this Church shall implement this resolution by diocesan canon or appropriate resolution.

Approved by the Convention of the Diocese of South Carolina (Passed in 1992)

Resolved, that the Diocese of South Carolina hereby implements Resolution D-165-a of the General Convention of 1991 concerning lay employees' retirement benefits as follows:

1. All parishes, missions, and other ecclesiastical organizations, or bodies of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina which under the regulations of the Church Pension Fund have elected or shall elect to come into the pension system, shall provide employees who work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually retirement benefits through participation in the Episcopal Lay Employees Retirement Plan (ECLERP) or in an equivalent plan, the provisions of which are at least equal to those of ECLERP. Such participation shall commence no later than January 1, 1993. At its commencement, if the plan is a defined benefit plan, the employer contribution shall be not less than 9 percent of the employees' salary; if the plan is a defined plan, the employer contribution shall not be less than 9 percent of the employees' salary; if the plan is a defined contribution plan, the employer shall contribute not less than 5 percent and agree to "match" employee contributions of up to another 4 percent.
2. The employer may impose a minimum age of 21 years and minimum employment period not to exceed one year of continuous employment before and employee would be eligible to participate.
3. The Trustees of the Church Pension Fund shall have authority to increase or decrease the contribution percentages required for the lay pension plan.

WORSHIP

1. **PRAYER BOOK NORM:** One prayer book has been the Anglican norm. Except for pastoral necessity, this remains the norm in the Diocese of South Carolina. The *1979 Book of Common Prayer* is the only authorized prayer book of this church, and it is expected that it will be used at all services of public worship on Sundays and weekdays. Within the framework of our official *Prayer Book* and its rubrics, the authority and responsibility for the conduct of worship is vested in the rector. From time to time, the bishop may authorize texts from other editions of the *Prayer Book* for use. The *1982 Hymnal* is normative, although appropriate music from other sources may be used from time to time. Copyright laws should always be observed.
2. **SUNDAY EUCHARIST:** The Holy Eucharist is the Sunday norm in all of our congregations, and the bishop encourages and supports this. Where Morning Prayer is read on Sundays, it is appropriate to do so prior to the celebration of the main Eucharist rather than as a substitute for it.
3. **LICENSING AND TENURE OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS AND WORSHIP SERVICE LEADERS:** Licenses are required only for lay Eucharistic ministers and those who regularly lead worship services (such as mission locations where clergy are not available on a regular basis). Lectors and those who read the Prayers of the People do not need to be licensed. Lay readers and lectors should not wear clerical attire. Lay people are not licensed to preach except under extraordinary circumstances. Ordinarily the preacher, just as the celebrant, should be a priest or bishop.
4. **INTINCTION:** Intinction in the diocese is approved only in the two following methods:
 - The wafer is to be held in the palm of the communicant's hand and dipped by the cleric or eucharistic minister and placed on the tongue of the communicant, or
 - The communicant may dip the wafer himself/herself.

A wet wafer is not to be placed in the hands of the communicant. The Prayer Book rubrics require that the chalice always be made available to communicants. The chalice should always be available at any communion station where intinction is administered.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

1. **TENURE OF CLERGY WHO DIVORCE AND REMARRY:** When a priest decides to remarry following a divorce in that parish, it is expected that he or she will resign his or her cure and seek a call elsewhere. A clergy divorce and remarriage in the parish usually put inordinate stress on congregational life. The new spouse and/or the priest can be resented or blamed or not accepted by some members of the parish, and loyalties to the former spouse may linger. However, there may be exceptions to this general policy, and each case will be carefully reviewed by the bishop, who will take into consideration causes and conditions of the divorce, the length of time the couple was in the parish prior to the divorce, the involvement of the former spouse in the parish, the attitude and feelings of the congregation, the relationship of the cleric and the spouse to be, and the recommendations of a consultant familiar with family and parish systems.
2. **PERMISSION FOR REMARRIAGE OF DIVORCED PERSONS:** The church teaches that marriage is a lifelong and monogamous union between a man and a woman, and we are called to uphold that standard. When the church is asked to solemnize this covenant within the community of faith, the priest who represents the church in this action must be reasonably assured that the couple is both spiritually and emotionally able to sustain a lifelong relationship. When a divorced person wishes to remarry, the priest who is to officiate must receive consent from the bishop. If there has been only one previous marriage, and if the divorce has been final for a year, and if one of the parties is a member of this church in good standing, then the bishop's consent will generally be given.

The bishop has 30 days to respond to all remarriage requests, but if all is in order, the bishop will respond in a few days. The date of the marriage may not be announced until the bishop's consent is given. Please use the proper form available through the bishop's office for all petitions for remarriage and include a copy of the divorce decree(s)

3. **THE BLESSING OF A CIVIL MARRIAGE:** When the priest has concluded that the couple is able to sustain a Christian marriage, the priest may, after a period deemed appropriate (normally a year or more), bless the civil marriage. No permission or consent from the bishop is required or called for by canon.

4. **THE BLESSING OF A SAME SEX UNION:** Ordained people represent the whole church and may not do what the church has not authorized them to do. Our understanding of Holy Matrimony is stated in the *Book of Common Prayer* and in the canons of the church. Clergy are in “holy orders,” and, therefore, no person in Holy Orders may officiate at any union of two people that is not in accordance with the understanding of marriage as stated in the Prayer Book and the canons of the church. This is a pastoral directive of the bishop.

MEMBERSHIP

1. **AGE AT WHICH ONE IS CONSIDERED AN “ADULT CONFIRMED MEMBER”:** The canons state that one is an adult confirmed member when he or she is 16. The intent of the Prayer Book rubrics and the Canon is for Confirmation to take place when one is ready to make a mature Christian affirmation of faith. Confirmation, however, is increasingly administered to older candidates.
2. **AGE FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION:** Normally five or six years old. The final decision about this, of course, is to be made by the parents and the child.

WHO IS PRESENTED FOR CONFIRMATION, RECEPTION AND REAFFIRMATION? The formula in *Prayer Book Rubrics Expanded*, p. 119 states: “The form of words used when the bishop lays on hands is determined by the context; **Confirmation** for those making a mature commitment for the first time; **Reception** for those who have made a mature commitment and who have received the laying on of hands from a bishop in the historic succession in another denomination; **Reaffirmation** for those baptized by a presbyter as adults and for those returning to the practice of their faith after a post-confirmation lapse.” The bishop will use the formula designated on the nametag of the candidate. The priest presenting the candidates should determine which formula is to be used.

Ordination Process

1. **THE ROLE OF THE CLERGY:** Rectors and vicars play a primary role in recruiting and screening aspirants for holy orders. The rector or vicar of a congregation is in a key position to identify those in the parish who do or do not have the gifts for ordained ministry. It is important to be pro-active toward those who have the gifts and to be firm in saying no to those who do not. Clarity up front can save a person who is not suited for ordained ministry a lot of time, money and emotional investment—to say nothing of grief and anger—if the rector or vicar will say no at the outset.
2. **DIOCESAN DISCERNMENT FOR ALL ASPIRANTS:** Everyone seeking ordination in the Diocese of South Carolina, including those who have been ordained in other communions, goes through our discernment process. Regardless of previous experience or education, this program has proven very helpful both to the diocese and the aspirants in discerning the call to ordained ministry. A description of the programs of discernment for deacon and priest is included in the Clergy Manual and is available from the Suffragan bishop’s office.
3. **ONE-YEAR PAROCIAL RESIDENCE BEFORE ENTERING THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS:** Aspirants must be active in their parishes for at least one year before entering our discernment process. Ordained ministry emerges out of the parish, and, therefore, it is essential that candidates have demonstrated leadership in their parishes for a significant period of time prior to entering this program and have the full support of their parishes in exploring ordained ministry.
4. **BACHELOR’S DEGREE:** A Bachelor’s degree is required for one to participate in the discernment process for ordination to the priesthood, as well as a satisfactory score on the Miller’s Analogies Test.
5. **DISQUALIFIERS:** Aspirants may not ordinarily participate in our discernment process if they:
 - Are already in seminary
 - Are going through a major life change or crisis
 - Do not have the support of their rector and/ or vestry
 - Are not able to move to a new location
 - Are unwilling to attend an Episcopal seminary
 - Are in a sexual relationship outside of marriage.
6. **TRANSFERS OF TRANSITIONAL DEACONS:** Transitional deacons from other dioceses may not be called to work in this diocese until all of the transitional deacons from our diocese have been placed. Transitional deacons coming from other dioceses are not required to go through our discernment program. After deacons are ordained priests by their own bishops and have been called to a full time ministry in this diocese, the bishop of this diocese may receive their Letters Dimissory.

7. **POSTULANCY AND CANDIDACY:** Postulancy means that a person is considered by the bishop to have the necessary gifts for functioning as an ordained person. It is not a commitment to ordain. Candidacy, on the other hand, is a probable commitment to ordain, provided that an academic, ecclesiastical or personal crisis does not develop, and provided that there are positions available for the candidacy in the diocese. The primary decision regarding candidacy is made by the Standing Committee, Commission on Ministry, and the bishop.
8. **PLACEMENT OF DEACONS:** A person ordained as a **transitional deacon** is usually placed in a parish or institution in the diocese. However, with the consent of the bishop, a deacon may accept a position outside the diocese. **Permanent Vocational Deacons** (known simply as deacons) are usually assigned to work in their home parish, although they may be assigned elsewhere, as mission need dictates. They generally do not receive a stipend. However, it is appropriate for a deacon to have a discretionary fund and to be reimbursed for expenses. This assignment is made by the bishop.
9. **ORDINATION AND SEXUALITY:** The 1988 General Convention passed the following resolution:

Resolved, that this 69th General Convention affirm that the Biblical and traditional teaching on chastity and fidelity in personal relationships is a response to, and an expression of, God's love for each one of us; and that all Christians are called to be exemplary in all spheres of morality, including sexual morality; and that holiness in life is particularly required of Christian leaders.

The 1979 General Convention resolved that, bishops, pastors, vestries, commissions on ministry and standing committees consider the following as they exercise their proper canonical functions in the selection and approval of people for ordination: "Every ordinand is expected to lead a life which is 'a wholesome example to all people.' " (*Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 517, 532, 544). There should be no barrier to the ordination of qualified persons of either heterosexual or homosexual orientation whose behavior the church considers wholesome. We reaffirm the traditional teaching of the church on marriage, marital fidelity and sexual chastity as the standard of Christian sexual morality. Candidates for ordination are expected to conform to this standard. Therefore, we believe it is not appropriate for this church to ordain a practicing homosexual or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage.
10. **THE DIACONATE:** The program for selecting and training (vocational) deacons is separate from the program for discerning priestly vocation.

POSITIONS OPEN AND DEPLOYMENT

1. **ASSISTANT CLERGY NOT TO SUCCEED RECTOR:** Experience has shown that changing roles from assistant to rector in a parish is very difficult to achieve. An assistant's candidacy for the rector's position tends to polarize the parish and makes an open search extremely difficult. When a rector leaves it is important that the parish, for its own health, move into the future with new leadership rather than holding on to the present or the past. Therefore an assistant in a parish may not be a candidate for the position of rector of that parish. When an assistant is called, this policy should be clearly stated in the Letter of Agreement. There are rare exceptions to this policy.
2. **INTERIM NOT TO BE CANDIDATE FOR RECTOR:** The role of the interim is to bridge the gap between the past and the future. The task of the interim is to be a pastor and leader of the parish. If the interim were to become a candidate for rector, his/her role would be diminished by politicking for the office. Therefore, an interim may not be a candidate for the position of rector in the parish where he or she is serving, and should be gone from the parish prior to the arrival of the new rector. This policy should be clearly stated in the Letters of Agreement. Rare exceptions are considered by the bishop to this policy.
3. **LETTERS DIMISSORY FOR ASSISTANTS:** Rectors are required by the canons to consult with the bishop before an assistant is called. The diocese also requires a thorough background check of all clergy coming into the diocese. This check is conducted through the Canon to the Ordinary's office. Once an assistant has been duly installed, a letters dimissory may be requested.
4. **LENGTH OF SEARCH PROCESS:** With our present search process, it is not uncommon for a parish to remain without a rector for less than a year. This is appropriate in parishes where there has been a long tenure, the death of a rector, or where there has been a great deal of conflict. The search process can be shorter, and should be shorter in some parishes, but this depends on how efficiently the nominating committee works together. Continuity is especially important, and when a lengthy search is anticipated the use of an interim is recommended. In larger parishes the interim will be a full time position. In smaller parishes a part time interim usually will be adequate. Having a different priest each Sunday during the time the parish is without a rector is usually destabilizing, although some experience of various preaching and liturgical styles can be helpful.

5. **THE BISHOP'S ROLE IN THE SEARCH FOR A RECTOR:** As soon as the rector's resignation is announced the bishop will meet with the vestry to explain the search process. The bishop will suggest names of clergy to the nominating committee for consideration, but candidates are not limited to the bishop's list. It is expected that candidates from the diocese will be given priority consideration, and that women and minorities will be considered in all searches. The role of the bishop and his staff is to facilitate and support the search process of the parish in finding and calling the best-suited and most qualified person. The bishop's office will help in screening candidates, and the bishop will interview the final candidates and consent to the call before it is issued.
6. **PARISH CONSULTATION:** The diocesan or suffragan bishop will work with the nominating committee to provide the parish with the necessary objectivity, expertise and experience to help the committee gather and process relevant data, compile a profile, screen and interview the candidates, and make recommendations to the vestry.

PERSONAL AND COLLEGIAL CONCERNS

1. **ATTENDANCE AT DIOCESAN CONVENTION, CLERGY CONFERENCE AND CLERGY DAYS:** Our collegiality is a very high priority, and we cannot be collegial if we remain parochial and isolated. We need to meet together. The bishop prefers that attendance at Clergy Conference not be 'required,' and that clergy come because they value their collegiality and wider perspective and support that they gain from their brothers and sisters in ministry. **It is expected that clergy will let the bishop know if they cannot be present at clergy conference or clergy days.** It is a pastoral concern to the bishop if a priest does not take part in the life of the diocese and regularly misses clergy days, clergy conference and other diocesan events, and the bishop will respond to that person pastorally. **Presbyters are required by their ordination vows and the canons of the church to be present at Diocesan Convention. Any priest with an insuperable hindrance should state in writing to the bishop the reasons that he or she will not be present.**
2. **SABBATICAL LEAVES, CONTINUING EDUCATION AND VACATION:** Sabbatical leaves, continuing education and vacation time should be included in every Letter of Agreement. The norm is for **sabbatical time** to accrue so as to allow a priest three months off after the sixth year of service. Sabbatical time is not in lieu of continuing education and vacation time. Every cleric should be allowed two weeks of **continuing education** annually. This time should not accrue so that clergy will be motivated to use it up each year. It is expected that there will be an item in each parish budget for continuing education and that the unused portion of this will be allowed to accrue into the seventh year so that it can be used toward a sabbatical or a more costly continuing education experience. Parishes should budget an annual amount which may accrue to pay supply clergy during sabbatical and continuing education times. Every stipendiary cleric is entitled to one-month **vacation** annually. This applies to part-time clergy as well. Since they are part-time, they are compensated only for the portion of the time they serve the parish.
3. **SUCCESSORS AND PREDECESSORS:** The primary pastoral relationship is between the rector or vicar and his or her parishioners. Therefore, when a rector leaves in order to accept a new call or to retire, that particular pastoral relationship ends. It is inappropriate for the former rector to come back to officiate at weddings, baptisms, and funerals of former parishioners. It should be the personal policy of priests, who have left their parishes not to come back for such occasions, except as part of the congregation. The new rector is now the pastor and should be the officiant at these events. The former rector/vicar should find a new parish home if there is another parish near where he/she lives. This does not mean that friendships end, but it does mean that appropriate boundaries must be observed.

The new rector should not give ear to complaints about his/her predecessor. We all like to 'look better' than our predecessor and it is easy to be seduced into delighting in the flaws of the old rector. But remember, unless this is your first parish, you too will be someone's former rector.
4. **PRO-FORMA RESIGNATIONS DISCOURAGED:** It is to be understood that all staff serve at the pleasure of the rector of a parish, but we discourage a new rector from requesting pro-forma resignations from the parish staff at the outset of a new ministry. The staff is the source of a great deal of valuable information and experience vital to a start up, and while there may be some with whom the new rector can't work, others may prove to be loyal and effective co-workers. This can only be known over a period of time. Our baptismal covenant calls on us to respect the dignity of every human being, and a categorical dismissal of staff does not respect or honor those who have served the parish faithfully.
5. **ANNUAL REPORTS OF NON-STIPENDIARY CLERGY:** Non-stipendiary clergy are clergy who are canonically resident in the Diocese of South Carolina and employed in secular occupations. Clergy who are employed at least 20 hours a week in a parish are considered parochial clergy.

Non-stipendiary clergy are required by canon to report to the bishop annually on the exercise of their ministry as ordained persons. This should be done each year in January. Clergy who do not do this for two years in a row and do not continue to exercise an active ministry are required by canon law to resign from the ministry of this church.

6. **LICENSE TO OFFICIATE:** The bishop accepts Letters Dimissory only for clergy called to full-time ecclesiastical employment in this diocese. Other non-canonical clergy must request a license to officiate. In order for a license to be renewed, the cleric should send to the Bishop of South Carolina, a copy of the annual report as required in January of each year. Renewal licenses will be sent to the clergy before the beginning of the new year.
7. **SACRAMENTAL ACTS OF NON-STIPENDIARY CLERGY:** Sacramental acts of non-stipendiary clergy, such as marriages and baptisms must always be administered in the context of a parish with the consent of the rector or vicar of that parish and be entered into the parish register. No priest in this diocese is licensed to function “at large.”
8. **PRO BONO SERVICE:** It is hopeful that all non-stipendiary clergy and clergy in multi-staff parishes will give at least one Sunday a year, *pro bono*, to supply at a smaller parish where the priest is either on vacation or doing continuing education. This is not only enormously helpful in reducing the financial burden of small congregations, but it fosters a strong sense of mutual ministry and widens the horizons of clergy and laity alike throughout the diocese. The bishop pays for travel expenses of pro bono clergy. Arrangements for *pro bono* work are coordinated through the Discernment office.
9. **COMPLAINTS ABOUT CLERGY:** It is the bishop’s policy not to hear complaints from vestries or individuals in a congregation about their priest without that priest being present. The bishop will meet with parish wardens regarding a problem, but it should be understood by all that the first call after such a conversation will be to the rector or vicar. While at some point in a conflict it may be necessary for a vestry to meet in executive session concerning personnel, every priest shall have full opportunity to meet with the vestry and the bishop to discuss thoroughly the issues at hand.
10. **DISCIPLINE OF CLERGY:** Title IV of the national Canons outlines grounds and procedures for the discipline of clergy. The bishop may only present a cleric for trial when that cleric has failed to heed a written pastoral directive from the bishop. In all other cases some other group files a presentment: the vestry, the Standing Committee, lay people and presbyters. The bishop does not get involved in gathering evidence or investigating charges. All allegations are referred to a response team, which may then present its findings to the Standing Committee. This frees the bishop to function in a more pastoral role. The bishop, however, will not keep secret any information which might constitute grounds for a presentment. The bishop will share such information with the Standing Committee, which is his council of advice. It is an ancient tradition that the bishop not be confessor to the clergy. The bishop may not inhibit a cleric from the exercise of his or her ministry unless a presentment has been filed.
11. **TRAINING ON SEXUAL ABUSE AND MISCONDUCT:** All clergy and lay persons who serve in any capacity in the Diocese of South Carolina must have received the mandated training on sexual abuse, child abuse and sexual harassment within one year of establishing canonical residence in the diocese. This is a **written pastoral directive**, and failure to receive this training is an offense for which a cleric may be presented for discipline. If transferring from another diocese, the priest must show documentation of recent training.
12. **BACKGROUND CHECKS:** As required by the Diocesan Canon XXXVI, a background check is required concerning clergy, youth workers and others before hire. The diocese conducts background checks as a matter of course, concerning applicants for postulancy and for letters dimissory from another diocese. The diocese has the apparatus to conduct inquiries concerning criminal, driving and credit information. If you are contemplating hiring someone as your paid youth worker, or are perhaps down to several candidates, please be certain to let Lisa Jones for youth and Linda Bunting for all others know, so a background check can be conducted. No one should be considered as hired before we can certify satisfactory evidence for clearance. In the event you would like the diocese to augment your local screening by obtaining credit, criminal and driving records, we will be happy to do so. The information can be returned to you within several days for a nominal charge. Contact Linda Bunting at 843/ 722-4075 for assistance.
13. **COUNSELING:** Parish clergy are not to function as therapists or to engage in long -term counseling. The Church Insurance Company requires that clergy not counsel a parishioner or other individual for more than six sessions. Transference is a very powerful phenomenon, and this happens in double measure when one is functioning as both priest and therapist. In fact, the overwhelming majority of clergy are not trained to do such counseling, and this is not their priestly calling. Clergy who are professional pastoral counselors must have individual liability insurance.
14. **ADDICTION AND THE PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP:** Alcohol or substance abuses are not grounds for the dissolution of the pastoral relationship if that person has consented to treatment and is in a recovery program. Refusal to receive help and ongoing addictive behavior does constitute grounds for dissolution.

15. **EMPLOYEE HEALTH INSURANCE:** In September, 1999, the Diocesan Council passed the following resolutions concerning coverage for medical insurance:
1. Single coverage will be offered to all eligible employees, with the employer paying 90% of the cost and the employee paying the remaining 10% through a pre-tax deduction. Any employee may waive coverage.
 2. Family coverage will be offered to all eligible employees, with the employer paying 50% of the cost and the employee paying the remaining 50% through a pre-tax deduction. Any employee may waive coverage.
 3. The Diocesan Council reiterates the policy that all congregations participate in the diocesan health insurance plan.
16. **DISCRETIONARY FUNDS:** The Discretionary fund is the property of the parish and must remain in the parish when the cleric leaves. A discretionary fund is intended primarily for the relief of those in need, but it may be used from time to time for special non-budgeted needs. Anything purchased with money from the discretionary fund belongs to the parish, and the fund must be audited annually.
17. **ALCOHOL AT PARISH EVENTS:** A parish policy concerning whether or not alcohol is to be served at parish events is a decision of the vestry and the rector. It is a diocesan policy, however, if alcohol is to be served, that a non-alcoholic alternative always be presented in an equally attractive and accessible manner. It is strongly urged that mixed drinks not be a part of parish social events.
18. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** This diocese advertises all position openings for full-time permanent employment and considers all applicants without regard to race, age, sex, or national origin.

Appendix I

Sample Resolution and Letter for Housing Allowance (Parish Does Not Provide a Residence for Clergy)

Sample Resolution

The Vestry on the 21st day, December 2001, after discussing the amount to be paid to The Rev. John Smith as a parsonage allowance, on motion duly made and seconded, adopted the following resolution:

Whereas, The Rev. John Smith is employed as Rector of Saint Francis' Episcopal Church, Southdown, South Carolina, which does not provide a residence for him, the Vestry resolves that the total compensation of \$36,000 to be paid to The Rev. John Smith during 2002, that \$15,000 be designated as parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.

Sample Letter to Cleric

Dear Father Smith:

This is to advise that a meeting of the Vestry held on the 21st day of December 2001 was officially designated and fixed as follows:

The Vestry resolves that of the total compensation of \$36,000 to be paid to you during 2002, that \$15,000 be designated as parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.

Under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Codes, an ordained minister of the gospel is allowed to exclude from gross income the parsonage allowance paid to him (her) as part of his (her) compensation to the extent used by him (her) to provide a home.

The amount of money excluded from income for federal income tax purposes is the lowest of the following amounts:

1. Fair rental value of the house, furnished, plus utilities.
2. Actual cash spent.
3. Amount specified in the Vestry minutes before the money is paid.

You should keep an accurate record of your expenditures to rent or provide a home to be able to substantiate any amounts excluded from gross income in filing your federal income tax return.

(Signed) Jackie Jacks, Sr. Warden

Sample Letter from Realtor

I have visited the house at 123 Main Street, Southdown, South Carolina, on December 22, 2001, and believe that the fair rental value of the house furnished as it has been by The Rev. John Smith is about \$18,000 per year.

(Signed) Jane Doe, Realtor

Housing Allowance Estimation Worksheet

The following amounts are estimates of costs I expect to pay during the (year) to
Provide a home for myself (and family):

Signed

Date

Clergy Who own their home	
Category of Expense	Est. Amount (year)
Down payment on a home	
Mortgage payments on a loan to purchase or improve A home (include both principal and interest)	
Real estate taxes	
Property insurance	
Utilities (electricity, water, trash pickup, local phone charges)	
Furnishings and appliances (includes purchase and repair)	
Structural repairs and remodeling	
Yard maintenance and improvements	
Maintenance items (household cleaners, light bulbs, pest control, etc.)	
Homeowner's association	
Miscellaneous	
Total estimated expenses for (year)	
Clergy who rent their home	
Category of expense	Est. amount (year)
Rental payments	
Property insurance	
Utilities (electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, local phone charges)	
Furnishings and appliances (purchase and repair)	
Structural repairs and remodeling	
Yard maintenance and improvements	
Maintenance items (household cleaners, light bulbs, pest control, etc.)	
Miscellaneous	
Total estimated expenses for (year)	

Sources:

“Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs,” The Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Ave., New York, NY 10017-4594, 800/ 334-7626.

“Church Guide to Employment Law,” Bloss, Julie, J.D., 1999.