

Clergy are from the
Sacristy,
Vestries are from the
Counting Room

Diocese of Newark

Vestry University 2015

RULES FOR RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION ("Sand Box Rules")

- R** Take **RESPONSIBILITY** for what you say and feel without blaming others. Use "I" statements.
- E** **EMPATHETIC** listening, allowing others to complete statements before beginning one's own.
- S** **SENSITIVITY** to differences in communication styles and to the need for all to be heard.
- P** **PONDER** what you hear and feel before you speak, allowing a moment of silence and giving space for reflection.
- E** **EXAMINE** your own assumptions and perceptions.
- C** Keep **CONFIDENTIALITY**
- T** **TOLERATE** ambiguity-- because we are **not** here to debate who is right or wrong.

IN OUR CONVERSATIONS

- We Listen----->That We Might Understand & Learn From One Another
- We Speak----->From Our Own Experience & Understanding
- We Accept----->Others' Experiences As Valid For Them
- We Honor----->Silence & The Feelings of Others
- We Learn----->There Is No Absolute Truth!

HANDOUT A

Characteristics of Healthy Vestry/Clergy Relationships

- Clergy and Vestry members are physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy
- All understand their ministry as collaborative and cooperative (There are no Lone Rangers, Chief & Indians, or personal agendas).
- High degree of trust is expected and established through mutually-agreed upon behavioral and procedural norms.
- Decision-making is open and transparent and dedicated to building consensus.
- Each member's competence and input is acknowledged and valued. Roles and boundaries are clear, understood, and respected. Responsibilities of members are clear, understood and respected.
- Members are mutually accountable for carrying out their agreed-upon responsibilities.
- Information is shared among the members and open communication is valued and practiced.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- Disagreements are resolved within the vestry. Clergy and Vestry members do not engage in unauthorized email, "parking lot", or personal appeals to constituents/congregation.
- A significant part of every Vestry meeting is devoted to some sort of spiritual practice.
- At least as much attention is paid to the dynamics of the meeting ("How well are we working together?") as to the outcome of the meeting ("How much got done?")

10/3/14 File. Vestry Healthy Relations

HANDOUT B

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLERGY IN CHARGE (From the Canons of The Episcopal Church)

- Directs spiritual matters (SUBJECT TO BISHOP) & has “full direction and control of all guilds, societies, and associations” within the parish
- Has full authority/responsibility for worship and all spiritual matters
- Chairs vestry meeting
- Has authority over use of all parish buildings and access thereto
- Responsible for instruction in the Faith
- Responsible for instruction in Christian Stewardship
- Prepares persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation
- Announces Bishop’s visitation. With vestry, presents the parish register and reports on spiritual/temporal affairs to the Bishop.
- Maintains a discretionary fund
- Reads House of Bishops’ pastoral letters
- Records all baptisms, funerals, confirmations, and marriages
- “Final authority in the administration of matters pertaining to music”
- Reports on spiritual status of parish at Annual Meeting
- Joint responsibility (with Vestry) for filing annual parochial report
- Selects and directs all assisting clergy and staff

HANDOUT C

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VESTRY **(From the Canons of The Episcopal Church)**

- Assume responsibility for property and business interests of congregation:
 - Vestry acts as the agent and legal representative of the congregation concerning church property and relationship between congregation and the clergy
- Create and maintain congregation's budget
- Compensate clergy per diocesan compensation guidelines
- Assures payment of diocesan pledge
- Provide for an annual audit as determined by the diocese.
- Cannot sell or encumber church property without approval of Bishop (advice and consent of Standing Committee required)
- Oversees investment of parish funds
- Keep order in the church during worship
- Inform bishop of clergy vacancy, oversee call of clergy, changes in clergy compensation or terms of clergy contract
- Assist in the "furtherance of the Gospel and well-being of parish"
- Joint responsibility with rector for filing of parochial report
- Report on status of parish on Bishop's Visit

HANDOUT D

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PRIEST IN THE DIOCESE OF NEWARK

It is the calling of the priest to “proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion [one’s] life in accordance with its precepts.” Book of Common Prayer (BCP 531). Desiring that all clergy fully and faithfully live into their ordination vows and the canons of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Newark, this diocese seeks to insure that each of its presbyters engages in an active, balanced, and healthy ministry and personal life.

Every priest should faithfully live into his/her vows to be “a faithful pastor to all whom [he/she] is called to serve” and “to pattern [his/her] life (and that of his/her family, household or community) in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that [he/she] is a wholesome example to [the]people” (BCP 532). To that end, the following expectations for priests in this Diocese are provided.

Will you respect and be guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of your bishop?

- Attendance at the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Newark.
- Attendance at the Clergy Conference and Clergy Days announced by the Bishop.
- Attendance at the service for the renewal of ordination vows and rededication held on Tuesday of Holy Week.
- Attendance at the Clergy Conversations with the Bishop or Canon to the Ordinary.
- Inform and/or seek the advice of the Bishop’s Office for any serious legal, financial, pastoral or professional matter affecting the life of the congregation or the priest.
- Announce to and prepare the congregation for the Bishop’s Visit and give information as to the state of the congregation, spiritual and temporal, in the categories requested by the Bishop.

Will you be diligent in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ?

- Observe daily times for prayer, Scripture reading, and meditation or otherwise engage in some Rule of Life.
- Maintain a regular program of continuing education each year, including participation in workshops, seminars, and seminary courses designed to enhance clergy professional skills.
- Participation in an annual mutual ministry review with the wardens and vestry conducted by a facilitator from outside the congregation.
- Plan with the vestry and congregation, a periodic sabbatical for refreshment, renewal and growth.
- Participation in diocesan clergy groups as appropriate or required by letter of agreement (e.g., Fresh Start, Transition Ministry Clergy)
- Participation in CREDO and similar programs designed to promote clergy professional, vocational, and personal development.

Will you endeavor so to minister the Word of God and the sacraments of the New Covenant, that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received?

- Ensure that all persons in the congregation receive instruction in the faith and ministry of the Church.
- Ensure that all persons in the congregation are instructed concerning Christian stewardship.
- Ensure the preparation of persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation.

HANDOUT E

Will you undertake to be a faithful pastor to all whom you are called to serve, laboring together with them and your fellow ministers to build up the family of God?

- Encourage the development of “shared ministry” as the model for congregational life that seeks to hold both clergy and the people they serve accountable for that ministry, and emphasizes the partnership that must exist if that ministry is to be realized.
- Engage in creative ministry however the Holy Spirit may choose to manifest herself
- Encourage and participate in joint ministry with other diocesan congregations and clergy as well as other denominations, faith communities and community organizations.
- Encourage and work with wardens and vestry to insure compliance with the filing requirements and other mandates of the national church and diocesan canons (e.g., parochial reports, diocesan pledge, financial audit).
- Provide all information to and cooperate with the Church Pension Fund.
- Establish and maintain a clergy discretionary fund.
- Maintain the Parish Register
- Active engagement in district meetings and activities, and encouragement of lay participation in these events.
- Involvement in the life, councils, or activities of the Diocese of Newark.
- Attendance at services for the ordination of Deacons and Priests, and at the celebrations of new ministry for clergy within your district.
- Inform volunteers, lay employees and leaders of and encourage their compliance with Diocesan- required anti-racism, Safe Church, sexual harassment/exploitation prevention and similar trainings required by state law, canons or resolutions of Diocesan Convention.

Will you do your best to pattern your life [and that of your family *or* household, *or* community] in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may be a wholesome example to your people?

- Practice responsible stewardship of financial resources, adopting the tithe as the minimum standard of giving, or engaging in a systematic plan of moving towards that minimum.
- Adequate attention to physical health, including responsible use of alcohol and drugs.
- Adequate attention to emotional health, seeking professional help when there is a need to do so.
- Observe the 48-hour /week time off requirement in the letter of agreement.
- Observe each year the vacation and other time off for recreation and refreshment mandated by the letter of agreement.
- Maintain regular contact with other clergy, spiritual director, and/or professional therapist.
- Spend intentional and significant time “away from the congregation” with family, friends, and /or be engaged in community activities.
- Report to the Bishop any incident or allegation that may constitute a violation of the disciplinary canons (Episcopal Church Canons, Title IV).

Mark M. Beckwith
Bishop of Newark
September 2011

The Collective Responsibilities of Vestry Members

- A. To work with the Rector to help the congregation discern and carry out its God-directed mission and ministry.
- B. To create and approve the annual budget.
- C. To be the legal representative and agent of the church in the conduct of the church's affairs.
- D. Insure that all the church's business affairs are conducted in accordance with the diocesan and national canons and parish by-laws.
- E. To assist in stewardship, membership, and leadership development.
- F. To keep parishioners aware of what's going on in the church, the diocese, and the worldwide communion.
- G. To provide clergy and members of the lay pastoral ministry with information about parishioner needs.
- H. To act as liaison between the clergy, staff and the congregation.
- I. Provide adequate compensation for and evaluation of rector, staff, and lay professionals.
- J. To provide financial support and oversight for parish ministries and programs.
- K. Identify & encourage new blood" for vestry, programs, and ministries.

The Individual Commitment of Vestry and Executive Committee Members

Commitment to Provide Leadership

- Help to carry out the mission and shape the vision of the congregation: Vestry member is an agent for change and transformation
- Assumes role as leader and models leadership for the congregation.
- Challenge the parish to be what God is calling it to be
- A discipline of daily devotion and prayer.
- Should be active witnessing for the gospel; "Walking the walk..."
- "Faith in God" and an ability to live it and articulate it.
- Models stewardship of time and talent
- Should "Strive to tithe" and commit to leave bequest to the church
- Identifies and helps train future lay leaders
- Constructive participation in the deliberations of the church (congregation and diocese)

Commitment to Vestry

- Prompt and regular attendance at all vestry meetings and retreats.
- Regular and prompt attendance at church services.
- Frequent contact with your constituency and with the clergy and staff.
- Participation on vestry committees
- Adherence to vestry norms of conduct
- Basic knowledge of the parish by-laws and pertinent diocesan and national canons.
- Basic knowledge of the policies and procedures of the parish; baptism, marriage, funeral, memorials and gifts, church use
- Basic knowledge of what clergy and staff do and their letter(s) of agreement
- Basic knowledge of what parish committees and organizations do.
- Maintaining a vestry notebook; monthly meeting papers, canons, by-laws, policies & procedures, congregation newsletter
- Ability to understand church's finances and explain them to parishioners.

Commitment to Congregation

- Providing clergy and staff with information concerning parishioner concerns, needs, and issues.
- Represent parishioners to best of your ability
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate with congregation, diocese, community, and one another
- Participation in one or more parish organizations or lay ministries of the church. Attendance at most church functions.
- Active participation in outreach activities.

Ethical Responsibilities of Vestry Members

1. Take the broad view, representing the interests of all of the people who are served by the congregation
2. Maintain confidentiality.
3. Do not use the vestry or the congregation itself for personal gain or advantage.
4. Make decisions for the good of all, not representing any particular constituency or position within the congregation.
5. Have an open mind; do not pre-judge issues or ideas.
6. Build a community of trust, doing nothing to violate the trust of the vestry or of the entire community of faith.
7. Focus on mission and policy, not attempting to manage the day to day affairs directly.
8. Work with the Rector through direct information sharing, not through second-guessing.
9. Exercise my vestry authority as a within the confines of the vestry itself or as delegated by the vestry.

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR CLERGY-WARDENS MEETINGS

- Prayer For Our Time Together
- Sharing Scripture (e.g., “Dwelling In The Word”)
- Personal Sharing (What’s going on in our lives?)
- Check In (Clergy and Wardens): What are the positives, the challenges, and the concerns in our congregation?
- Creating Agenda for next Vestry Meeting
 - Review minutes of prior meeting
 - Consideration of any unfinished business
 - What needs follow-up (and who will do it)?
 - Priorities for next Vestry meeting
 - New matters to be addressed
- Review of tasks to be done by clergy and wardens: What?, When?, Who?
- Prayer of Thanksgiving For Our Time Together

10/2/14 File: Clergy-Wardens Agenda

HANDOUT I

EXPECTATIONS FOR CONDUCTING VESTRY AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- A Vestry Notebook for each member
 - ✓ Parish by-laws
 - ✓ Diocesan canons
 - ✓ Contact information: vestry, clergy and staff
 - ✓ List of programs/ministries and chairs
 - ✓ Minutes and reports from annual meeting
 - ✓ Parochial Report
 - ✓ Monthly financial statement
 - ✓ Parish budget

THE AGENDA

- Wardens will meet with clergy prior to meeting to discuss issues and plan agenda
- Agenda, minutes of last meeting, financial reports, and meeting materials to be distributed prior to vestry meeting if at all possible
- Agenda should contain all items to be discussed (suggest providing corresponding time frame for each item) **Note:** Additional items should not be added to agenda at the meeting
- Make certain most pressing items are near the top of the agenda
- Agenda should contain time for clergy's report and wardens' report
- Financial report should be part of each agenda

THE MEETING

- Meetings held at regular intervals with sufficient notice of time and place
- All meetings should be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
- Meeting should be no longer than two hours unless body of the whole expressly approves extended time.
- End on time even if parts of agenda items must be postponed
- Time limits for discussion should be observed and enforced
- Determine at outset if quorum is present: who is expected to arrive , excused absences, etc.
- Meetings should begin on time regardless of who is present
- Rector normally presides throughout the meeting unless discussion concerns sensitive issues involving clergy (e.g., performance, salary, etc.)
- In absence of clergy-in-charge, senior warden is to preside
- Written minutes must be taken by the clerk or designee at each meeting
- Minutes of prior meeting should be clear, concise and conform to agenda with pertinent documents attached
- A Treasurer's Report (written) should be presented at each meeting with appropriate documents and explanation.
- Meeting opens with prayer (Spiritual reflection or Bible Study strongly recommended). Consider time for individual check-in
- Encourage written reports (distributed ahead of time) rather than oral presentations by members
- No issue should come up for final decision if critical documents are not present. Instead request persons gather information and report back on date certain.
- Abide by meeting norms of conduct (See "Rules Of Engagement")
- End with a closing prayer

Mutual Ministry Review and Performance Review

Mutual ministry reviews and performance reviews are two separate processes. The **mutual ministry review** (MMR) is designed to occur after the first six months of a new ministry and annually thereafter. The purpose of the MMR is to examine the partnership between clergy and laity. It is intended to assess how the congregation is doing. The MMR is an opportunity to celebrate what has been done well and to identify what might be done better. The focus in the MMR is on the **common ministry** engaged by the whole community. The starting point is often the vestry/clergy relationship, but in some forms the MMR can include a congregational survey or contributions from key representative constituencies within the congregation. The MMR should be facilitated by a congregational consultant from outside the congregation in order to permit full participation by all vestry persons and to promote a fair and objective review of mutual ministry. Materials relating to MMRs are available on the diocesan website.

A **performance review** is considered to be a periodic review of an individual's performance in a given position, measured by defined job duties and roles. The aim of the performance review is to clarify job responsibilities and expectations. The review evaluates performance against agreed-upon criteria and notes areas where performance has exceeded, met, or failed to meet expectations. In the church context, the aim is to develop the unique ministry of the priest and the nurturing of new and complementary gifts. The review is most often conducted by a performance review team of vestry persons which may also include selected members of the congregation.

How are they related?

The **MMR** is uniquely dedicated to focus on the way the clergy and the vestry work together as a **team** to achieve the goals of the congregation and to fulfill the mission of the church. The clergy's **performance review** focuses on the **individual** gifts and skills that she/he brings to the congregation.

When done well, the MMR results in the members of the vestry and the clergy understanding what each must do working together to realize the agreed-upon goals of the congregation's ministry. The focus of the MMR is never on the clergy alone, but also recognizes the responsibility of the vestry to be a partner in the mission and ministry of the congregation.

Both the MMR and performance review should be built on a foundation of trust and conducted in a constructive and objective manner. The expected outcome of the MMR is an agreed-upon plan for future ministry that includes specific goals and clear responsibilities of clergy and vestry (and congregation) in meeting those goals. Each understands what their particular role is for attaining the goals and objectives. Therefore at the end of the MMR process, it should be possible for both clergy and vestry to determine where efforts need to be focused, what the roles and responsibilities of the parties (vestry, clergy and congregation) are, and what the ministry priorities will be for the coming year.

Conducting A Performance Review

Reasons to Conduct a Performance Review

- A time to celebrate and recognize what is going well
- Need to identify and address in a constructive manner ministry areas needing improvement.
- Provide clear and reliable feedback
- Strengthen relationships by sharing information
- Minimize/eliminate unrealistic expectations
- Renews personal and congregational goals and commitment

Characteristics of a Positive Performance Review

- Based on agreed-upon objective criteria and pre-established goals
- Provides opportunity for give and take in discussion
- Conducted in a supportive climate and “safe place” that helps clergy hear what is being said about the effectiveness of their ministry
- Results in clear, measurable expectations and goals
- Provides opportunity for individual development and ministry skills enhancement through continuing education, agreed time off for study, or recognized weekly “Sabbath”.

Key Steps

- Develop an agreed-upon process for conducting the review
- Form a team (vestry or vestry+congregation representatives) to conduct the review
- Conduct review on a regular cycle
- Collect and use relevant information—current , specific and attributable
- Encourage the clergy to engage in self evaluation and discernment of ministry
- Share findings and arrive at conclusions
- Agree upon specific measurable goals and objectives for next review period
- Summarize conclusions for vestry
- Enlist vestry as active supporters of the action plan

Performance Reviews and Clergy Compensation

The Diocese of Newark recommends that clergy should receive an annual merit review to determine if an increase in salary is warranted. The performance review is one element in determining the appropriate increase percentage. Other factors to be considered include:

- Scope of duties
- Length of service
- Salary paid to clergy in congregations of comparable size and ministry*

The Diocese publishes guidelines on the recommended percentage increase that equates to different levels of performance. Also available on the diocesan website is the **Clergy-in-Charge Performance Appraisal**, a sample form for vestry use.

*The Church Pension Fund publishes an annual report with compensation information by church size in each diocese at www.cpg.org/research