

# THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE PROGRAM OF THE DIOCESE OF NEWARK

A Priest-in-Charge (PIC) appointment occurs when a congregation's wardens/vestry in conversation with the Bishop believes its congregation is not best served by initiating a search for new clergy at present. It is a recognition that the congregation "has some issues to work through" and would be better served by a significant period of time devoted to strategic planning/discrimnentation and/or consideration of significant issues (e.g., finances, conflict) before it proceeds with the search. Circumstances indicating that the appointment of a PIC may be called for might be any one (or more) of the following:

- The parish has been served for many years by the same clergy person;
- A period of instability or conflict has preceded or followed the departure of the clergy person
- A joint or collaborative ministry (e.g., cluster, merger, etc.) appears worth exploring with other parishes
- The necessary financial support for hiring new clergy is lacking and needs to be addressed;
- The parish would benefit from a period of stable and consistent ministry before it turns its attention to a search;
- The congregation needs to devote significant time to explore its mission/ministry identity or engage in strategic planning.

If there is agreement on the benefit of a PIC appointment, the vestry should prepare, after soliciting the congregation's input, a Position Description Outline describing the parish, what ministry and skills it seeks in a PIC, and what it will offer to the PIC (e.g., total compensation, administrative support, its own gifts and skills). A copy of the outline is available from the Canon to the Ordinary's office.

## Selection of the PIC

1. The Bishop's Office will identify possible candidates from among qualified local candidates or recruit qualified "external" candidates for the position. Recognizing that the interim time is a period of intentional transition and change and that a priest specifically trained in interim ministry (or with commensurate skills and experience) is the best person to accompany a parish through this transition, **it is not customary or desirable that a current Assistant or Associate be appointed as priest-in-charge.**
2. The Bishop will next recommend a candidate or candidates to the wardens and vestry.
3. The candidate(s) meet with the vestry. Note: Normally, this should take the form of an informal parish or vestry conversation (greet/meet) and/or a visit by a small group to observe the clergy at the parish presently being served by him/her. **The process is not intended to mirror a "rector search."** **The candidate(s), therefore, is not to be subjected to an extended "approval" process by the vestry.**
4. If the vestry and the candidate agree, a **covenant of ministry** (letter of agreement) setting forth the mutual obligations and responsibilities of the PIC and the vestry is negotiated. A standard PIC covenant of ministry is available from the Bishop's Office and at the Diocesan web site. The appointment is official upon the approval of the covenant by the Bishop.

5. If the proposed appointment of the PIC is not felt to be a “good fit” by either the vestry or the clergy person, the Bishop’s Office will draw upon that experience in order to identify another candidate for appointment.
6. The presentation of subsequent candidates is dependent upon the identification and availability of suitable candidates, and may require weeks or months.

### **Term of Appointment and Authority of PIC**

- A PIC appointment may be for a period of one to three years, subject to modification only with the approval of the Bishop.
- The PIC shall have the authority to exercise the duties set forth in Canons III.9.3(b) and III.9.5 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church (2009) subject to the authority of the Bishop. (See attached excerpt from the Canons).
- It is expected that within six months of the appointment, the vestry and PIC will jointly establish mutually responsible short-term and long-term expectations/goals for the mission and ministry of the parish.
- A time for mutual ministry review by vestry and clergy must be set forth in the covenant of ministry.
- With the approval of the Bishop, a PIC may be considered as a candidate for rector following a period of mutual discernment (mutual ministry review) undertaken after two full years. Materials for mutual discernment are available from the Canon to the Ordinary. **The PIC may not without the express approval of the Bishop be considered as a candidate for rector once a formal clergy search is undertaken.**

**Note: The PIC will be required to attend regular meetings of PICs and may be required to submit periodic reports to the Bishop’s Office.**

## **OVERVIEW OF PRIEST-IN-CHARGE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS**

**Time Frame: 3 years**

### **Stage I: Clergy and Congregation Go Mining**

**Time Frame: 1-1 1/3 years**

- Getting to know one another
- Building relationships and clarifying roles/responsibilities
- Figuring out the congregational culture
- Identifying changes and effect on congregation
- Identifying challenges
- Working through grief
- Identifying conflict
- Digging into congregational history
- Identifying and assessing leadership
- Discovering congregational identity
- Doing congregational assessment/self study
- Identifying contextual opportunities
- Developing short term goals
- Use mutual ministry to assess progress, clarify roles, establish goals and expectations

### **Stage II: Clergy and Congregation Roll Up Their Sleeves**

**Time Frame: 1-2 years**

- Develop vision and strategic plan
- Identify and build resources and support for vision/strategic plan
- Build lay leadership
- Build stewardship
- Redefine, redevelop mission and ministry
- Explore ministry options: e.g., joint ministry; unification; collaboration
- Use mutual ministry to assess progress, clarify roles, establish goals and expectations

## **Stage III: Mutual Discernment**

### **Time Frame: 3-6 months**

- Taking stock of where congregation is
- Create congregational profile
- Discernment training and/or formal mutual discernment process involving clergy, vestry, and congregation
- What kind of clergy leadership is needed going forward?
- Discernment of clergy's own present and future call
- Jointly exploring clergy ministry options of congregation

### **Ministry Options for Mutual Discernment by PIC and Congregation**

- Request to Bishop that PIC be called as rector- New covenant of ministry is created;
- PIC is not called as rector but becomes Interim during clergy search;
- PIC completes covenant of agreement and an Interim or another PIC is appointed
- PIC covenant agreement with congregation is renewed for an additional period

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# Applicable Canons of the Episcopal Church 2009

## Canon III.9.3(b) Priests-in-Charge.

After consultation with the Vestry, the Bishop may appoint a Priest to serve as Priest-in-Charge of any congregation in which there is no Rector. In such congregations, the Priest-in-Charge shall exercise the duties of Rector outlined in Canon III.9.5 subject to the authority of the Bishop.

## Canon III.9.5 Rectors and Priests-in-Charge and Their Duties

### (a)

(1) The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall have full authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish, subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop.

(2) For the purposes of the office and for the full and free discharge of all functions and duties pertaining thereto, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall at all times be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Parish buildings together with all appurtenances and furniture, and to access to all records and registers maintained by or on behalf of the congregation.

### (b)

(1) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure all persons in their charge receive Instruction in the Holy Scriptures; in the subjects contained in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism; in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church; and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons.

(2) It shall be the duty of Rectors or Priests-in-Charge to ensure that all persons in their charge are instructed concerning Christian stewardship, including:

- (i) reverence for the creation and the right use of God's gifts;
- (ii) generous and consistent offering of time, talent, and treasure for the mission and ministry of the Church at home and abroad;
- (iii) the biblical standard of the tithe for financial stewardship; and
- (iv) the responsibility of all persons to make a will as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.

(3) It shall be the duty of Rectors or Priests-in-Charge to ensure that persons be prepared for Baptism. Before baptizing infants or children, Rectors or Priests-in-Charge shall ensure that sponsors be prepared by instructing both the parents and the Godparents concerning the significance of Holy Baptism, the responsibilities of parents and Godparents for the Christian training of the baptized child, and how these obligations may properly be discharged.

(4) It shall be the duty of Rectors or Priests-in-Charge to encourage and ensure the preparation of persons for Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and to be ready to present them to the Bishop with a list of their names.

(5) On notice being received of the Bishop's intention to visit any congregation, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall announce the fact to the congregation. At every visitation it shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and the Wardens, Vestry or other officers, to exhibit to the Bishop the Parish Register and to give information as to the state of the congregation, spiritual and temporal, in such categories as the Bishop shall have previously requested in writing.

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

(7) Whenever the House of Bishops shall publish a Pastoral Letter, it shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to read it to the congregation on some occasion of public worship on a Lord's Day, or to cause copies of the same to be distributed to the members of the congregation, not later than thirty days after receipt.

(8) Whenever the House of Bishops shall adopt a Position Paper, and require communication of the content of the Paper to the membership of the Church, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall so communicate the Paper in the manner set forth in the preceding section of this Canon.

### (c)

(1) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to record in the Parish Register all Baptisms, Confirmations (including the canonical equivalents in Canon I.17.1(d)), Marriages and Burials.

(2) The registry of each Baptism shall be signed by the officiating Member of the Clergy.

(3) The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall record in the Parish Register all persons who have received Holy Baptism, all communicants, all persons who have received Confirmation (including the canonical equivalents in Canon I.17.1(d), all persons who have died, and all persons who have been received or removed by letter of transfer. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall also designate in the Parish Register the names of (1) those persons whose domicile is unknown, (2) those persons whose domicile is known but are inactive, and (3) those families and persons who are active within the congregation. The Parish Register shall remain with the congregation at all times.