

Customary: Celebration of A New Ministry

Celebration of A New Ministry for a new Rector uses the following customary, including the participation and involvement of the Bishop. In the case of a Priest-in-Charge, the congregation is encouraged to find ways to celebrate that new beginning. The service in Enriching our Worship 4 (“The Renewal of Ministry with the Welcoming of a New Rector”) is somewhat easier to adapt for those cases and emphasizes shared baptismal ministry. Canon Wright can assist with service design as needed. The Bishop is not directly involved in the case of a new Priest-in-Charge.

This customary may be altered by Bishop Hughes at any time.

Note: Pandemic provisions

Currently, in 2020 and 2021, the coronavirus pandemic makes worship gatherings challenging. Any Celebration of a New Ministry must follow diocesan Journey Forward guidelines and any State of New Jersey requirements for public gatherings in force.

The website <https://covidactnow.org> sets color coded risk levels used in our diocese to determine how to proceed with in-person gatherings or not. At Severe and Very High Risk Levels in a county (Dark Red or Red), it is not possible to gather in person for this service and it will either need shift to an online or streamed version (or be rescheduled). When the Risk Level for the county is High Risk (Orange), Medium Risk (Yellow), or Low Risk (Green), a gathering is possible, following Journey Forward Guidelines.

There are three options for these services during pandemic:

Option A - Online - the entire service can be done as an online service, just as visitations are all online. This is not a service that necessitates in-person participation (unlike Ordination or Confirmation).

Option B - Outdoors - the Bishop is available to come in person to preside at an outdoor service for this, using Journey Forward guidelines, since outdoor events are safer for in-person gatherings.

Option C - Indoors - the Bishop is available to come in person to preside at an indoor service for this, using Journey Forward guidelines with the additional limitation that total in attendance is limited to allow for 6’ social distancing in the space, for seating and movement.

Determining which of these options you and your congregation wish to use will be one of the initial decisions along with the preliminary material below.

Preliminaries

Some clergy prefer to schedule the service shortly after their arrival. Others prefer to wait several months until a relationship and rhythm have been established. Either way is fine, but it is important to talk this through with your Wardens and Vestry, because they may have some assumptions about when the service should be scheduled. Generally, these services are scheduled for Saturdays (morning or afternoon), but weekday evening may be possible, depending on the Bishop's calendar. The clergyperson is responsible for contacting the Bishop's assistant, Kay Lark at klark@dioceseofnewark.org to schedule a date. The more lead time provided, the better.

Once the date is set, you'll start thinking about invitations. Should you wish to mail an invitation to each clergyperson, please follow this link to an Avery template for labels for every church: <http://www.dioceseofnewark.org/directory/church-mailing-labels>. Some prefer to email the notice to all clergy and that is accomplished with an email from the clergyperson's address to this email address: clergy-all@dionewark.org. The date and time will be included in our web calendar and mentioned in the VOICE Online.

Concerning the Service

The BCP outlines the basic outline for the Celebration of a New Ministry. (page 558). However, in the Diocese of Newark, the celebration is of new ministry between the living Christ and all the members of the congregation, including the priest.

You are welcome to use the Prayer Book liturgy or the liturgy from *Enriching Our Worship 4*. Please work directly with Canon Andrew Wright (awright@dioceseofnewark.org) at least two weeks prior to the service, as he will review the order of service draft with you. The Celebration of A New Ministry liturgy sets a tone for your ministry in the congregation. It is also an opportunity to introduce new music or a different liturgical expression that you may want to later incorporate in the worship life of the congregation.

As a rule, I will not preach at Celebrations of New Ministry services. You may choose a layperson, a deacon, a priest or a bishop to be the preacher. Please inform me of your choice at least one month ahead of the service. If you are inviting a bishop from another diocese, I will need to extend that invitation.

Some specific suggestions about the service.

The color can be the color of the day, if a feast day, or of the season. White is always an appropriate option. A Bishop's Chaplain should be selected from your congregation to assist Bishop Hughes during the service.

Since the Bishop stands for the Institution (BCP 559; EOW 4) and the Induction (BCP 561), the Bishop's chair does not need to be moved.

The Bishop's Office will provide the printed Letter of Institution, and either Canon Wright or the Bishop will read it where indicated in the rubrics.

The service outlines symbols of ministry (BCP 561-562; EOW throughout the rite) to be presented to the new Rector. You may wish to consider adding a few that highlight a particular ministry in your church (e.g. after school program, a tenant congregation, a community ministry). It is a very good idea, when possible, to have children from the parish present a symbol of their life in the congregation. You may also wish to consider having members of your family present a symbol that clearly suggests that you have a life and relationship with them outside of church (e.g. theater tickets, dinners at a favorite restaurant, etc.).

It helps if all the symbols are on a table beforehand. The presenters present the symbol to you and you can then give the gift to the MC or someone else appointed to take them and put them on another table.

In the Book of Common Prayer service, after the symbols have been presented, the priest then kneels in the middle of the nave and says the prayer on page 562. This prayer uses language that not all are comfortable affirming. Please consult with Canon Wright if you feel the need to change this language. EOW 4 doesn't have this prayer at all, so you may wish to consider using the EOW 4 liturgy if you do not wish to use the BCP prayer.

After the prayer on page 562-563, the Prayer Book has the bishop make the invitation to greet the new Rector. Before being introduced, the Bishop will acknowledge the search committee along with the Wardens and Vestry. The Bishop would also wish to introduce your family to the congregation, provided you and your family give permission. (In EOW 4, this takes place after the Postcommunion prayer.)

In either BCP or EOW 4 versions, you will introduce the exchange of the Peace.

During the announcements, you as the new Rector make your own acknowledgements. You would likely want to include two things, at the least:

1. Indicate the recipient of the offering (most of the time it goes to the Priest's discretionary fund)
2. Indicate to the congregation who can receive communion and how to do so. There may be people who are not familiar with the Episcopal Church, and a brief explanation is an important dimension of hospitality.

After the service, you should stand near a door to greet people. The Bishop will stand near you, but people should have the opportunity to greet you first.

Resource Date:
September 1, 2021