

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 clergy fully and faithfully live into those ordination vows and the canons of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Newark, this diocese seeks to ensure that each of its presbyters engages in an active, balanced, and healthy ministry and personal life.

Every priest should faithfully live into their vows to be “a faithful pastor to all whom [they are] called to serve” and “to pattern [their] life (and that of [their] family, household or community) in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that [they are] 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? (BCP 532)

- Attendance at the following
 - Annual Convention of the Diocese of Newark.
 - Clergy Conference and Clergy Days announced by the Bishop.
 - Service for the Reaffirmation of Ordination Vows held on Tuesday of Holy Week.
 - Regional Clergy Network meetings with the Bishop.
- 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, the priest, or the priest’s immediate family.
- Announce to the congregation and prepare them for the Bishop’s Visit; provide information as to the state of the congregation, spiritual and temporal, in the categories requested by the Bishop.
- Publicly read or distribute all pastoral letters from the Bishop.
- Inform the Bishop or the Canons when seeking to discern a new calling or cure.

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? (BCP 532)

- Observe daily times for prayer, Scripture reading, and meditation or otherwise engage in some Rule of Life.
- Participate in Reconciliation of a Penitent (confession) as needed.
- Maintain a regular program of continuing education each year, including participation in workshops, seminars, and seminary courses designed to enhance clergy professional skills.
- Participate in an annual mutual ministry review with the wardens and vestry conducted by a facilitator from outside the congregation that has been approved by the Bishop’s Office.
- Plan with the vestry and congregation, a periodic sabbatical for refreshment, renewal and growth every 5-7 years.

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? (BCP 532)

- 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.

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? (BCP 532)

- 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.
- Encourage and participate in joint ministry with other diocesan congregations and clergy as well as other denominations, faith communities, and community organizations.
- Be creative in the exercise of your ministry.
- Encourage and work with wardens and vestry to ensure timely compliance with the filing requirements and other mandates of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Newark (e.g., parochial reports, diocesan pledge, financial audit).
- Establish and maintain a clergy discretionary fund.
- Maintain the Parish Register and Service Register.
- Engage in Regional meetings and activities and encourage lay participation in these events.
- Become involved in the life, councils, and activities of the Diocese of Newark.
- Attend services for the Ordination of Deacons and Priests, and the Celebration of New Ministry for clergy, especially within your Region.
- Maintain compliance for yourself and your lay leaders and all church staff with Diocesan-required anti-racism, anti-sexism, Safe Church, sexual 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? (BCP 532)

- 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.
- Pay adequate attention to physical health, including the completion of an annual physical and the responsible use of any medications, as well as responsible and legal drug and alcohol use.
- Pay adequate attention to emotional health, seeking professional help regularly from a licensed therapist.
- Observe the “times of work and times of leave” requirement in your letter of agreement, ensuring that you are taking regular days off each week.
- Observe each year the vacation and other time off for recreation and refreshment mandated by your letter of agreement.
- Participation in CREDO and similar programs designed to promote clergy professional, vocational, and personal development.
- Maintain regular contact with a spiritual director.
- Meet regularly with your clergy colleagues.
- Spend intentional and significant time “away from the congregation” with family, friends, and /or be engaged in community activities.

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Bishop of Newark
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