

THE LICENSING, CALLING AND APPOINTMENT OF CLERGY FROM OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEWARK

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INTRODUCTION

The licensing and/or appointment (and in some instances, the calling) of clergy who are not United States citizens and who are not ordained in or canonically resident in any diocese of the Episcopal Church of the United States is complicated. Several significant issues must be addressed: among them, immigration status, canonical residence, knowledge of Episcopal polity and canons, and the clergy licensing requirements of the Diocese of Newark.

IMMIGRATION ISSUES

All clergy from outside the United States (i.e., those who are not United States citizens) who seek to be licensed to officiate or to attain canonical residence in this Diocese must be prepared to furnish the documents required by the Immigration & Naturalization Service for Employment Eligibility Verification. **It is the responsibility of the congregation to complete according to its requirements, an I-9 form as part of the hiring process.**

Clergy from outside the United States may qualify for employment if they are in the country pursuant to a student visa or religious worker's visa. F-1 visas (graduate studies) and M-1 visas (vocational and professional school studies) are granted to foreign students in order to pursue educational studies in the United States. Persons on an F-1 or M-1 visa are entitled to remain in the U.S. as long as they are a full time student. If previously ordained, the clergy may apply to the Diocese for a license to officiate as priest during his/her period of study in this Diocese.

For those foreign ordained clergy without a student visa who wish to be employed in the United States, he or she must have a Religious Worker's visa (R-1). The clergy person must have a position offered before he/she can receive an R-1 visa. Such visas expire and must be renewed. The initial application and renewal process is complicated and costly. It is strongly recommended that clergy consult with an immigration lawyer, particularly since the requirements and processes have become much more restrictive since September 11, 2001. **No clergy will be received, licensed to celebrate ministry, or granted canonical residence without first verifying that their immigration status permits them to be employed in the United States.**

CANONICAL ISSUES

Any priest who comes into the Episcopal Church from another church in the Anglican Communion must fulfill all the requirements of the national church canons (see Title III, Canon 10, Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Church).

License to Officiate

In order to receive a license to officiate, the clergy person must present a certificate of recent date (“letter of good standing”), signed by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the diocese in which he/she is canonically resident stating that the clergy person’s letters of Holy Orders and other credentials are valid and authentic. **The letter of good standing must be issued by a Bishop that is in communion with the Episcopal Church, and whose authority is acknowledged by the Episcopal Church.** The letter of good standing must testify that the clergy person has exhibited to the Ecclesiastical Authority satisfactory evidence of “moral and godly character” and of “theological qualifications”. In addition, a letter from the rector or vicar of the congregation in the Diocese of Newark with whom the clergy will be affiliated is also required.

Clergy Called to take Charge of a Congregation or Desiring Canonical Residence in the Diocese

Before being permitted to take charge of any congregation, or becoming canonically resident in this Diocese, the national canons require that the Ecclesiastical Authority (here, the Bishop Diocesan) receive Letters Dimissory or their equivalent from the bishop with whose diocese the clergy person was last connected. The Letters or credentials must be delivered within six (6) months from the date that they were issued.

Before receiving the clergy person, the Bishop of Newark will require a promise in writing from him/her to submit in all things to the Discipline of the Episcopal Church and to the declaration required in Article VIII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

The canons also require that the Bishop of Newark and at least one Presbyter examine the person as to his/her knowledge of the history of the Episcopal Church, its worship and government and be satisfied of the clergy person’s theological qualifications.

Also required by the canons is the successful completion of the physical, psychological and psychiatric evaluations. The cost of these evaluations is to be paid by the member of the clergy or the congregation in which he/she will be employed.

Meeting all requirements set forth above (including the associated expenses) are the sole responsibility of the clergy person making application in this Diocese, and there is no guarantee that an applicant will be granted a license to officiate or canonical residence. The final decision rests in all such matters with the Bishop Diocesan.

CLERGY APPOINTMENTS AND CALLING OF CLERGY

Clergy Appointments

Any clergy from outside the United States who is not canonically resident in the Diocese of Newark and who wishes to be considered for appointment by the Bishop in appropriate situations must also submit a Office for Transition Ministries (national church) portfolio, a current resume, and a completed application for Clergy License to Officiate (Diocese of Newark) to the Bishop's Office. Prior to appointment, the candidate will be interviewed by the Canon to the Ordinary and the Bishop of the Diocese, as well as the vestry and wardens of the congregation to which the clergy is to be appointed. **Neither the submission of an application by the clergy nor his/her consideration for any clerical vacancy is a guarantee of employment. The final decision as to all clergy appointments rests with the Bishop Diocesan.**

Calling of Clergy

Any clergy from outside the United States who is not yet canonically resident in the Diocese of Newark, and who wishes to be considered by a congregation for hire as rector is subject to all Diocesan policies and procedures clergy/congregation transitions in addition to satisfying the requirements for canonical residency set forth in this policy document. Congregations who wish to call as rector, priest-in-charge, interim ministry clergy, curate or assisting clergy someone from outside the United States should familiarize themselves with the requirements for establishing canonical residency in this Diocese.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Background Check

A background check performed by Oxford Document Management, Inc. is required of all clergy seeking license to officiate or canonical residence in the Diocese of Newark. All fees charged in connection with the background check are to be paid by the clergy. Forms are available from Randy Johnson, Administrator for Diocesan Ministries.

Safe Church Training

All clergy desiring license to officiate or canonical residency must submit proof of having completed six (6) hours of Safe Church Training. Workshops are offered periodically by the Diocese. Clergy who have not had training in the last four (4) years are required to take or re-take both the child and adult trainings. Completion of Safe Church Training is required before a license to officiate or canonical residence will be granted.

Anti-Racism Dialogue

Completion of anti-racism dialogue is required by the Diocese of Newark. Clergy should contact Randy Johnson, Administrator for Diocesan Ministries, for information and certification requirements. Anti-Racism training is offered periodically by the Diocese.

PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE DIOCESE

The Bishop of the Diocese of Newark encourages all clergy to participate in the life of this Diocese through his/her involvement with the work and activities of a parish, district, Episcopal-affiliated institution, or the diocese. At a minimum, all clergy are required to attend each annual and special meeting of the Diocesan Convention, Clergy Days, and Clergy Conference each year. In addition, some clergy (usually those serving by Bishop's appointment) may be required to submit periodic reports of the ministry and activities of the parish or mission in which they serve.

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