

LICENSING and CALLING of CLERGY FROM OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES

The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

January 1, 2013

INTRODUCTION

The deployment of priests who are not United States citizens and who are not ordained in or canonically resident in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America is complicated. Significant issues need to be addressed: immigration status, canonical residence and licensing, knowledge of the polity, worship, authority, and Canons of the Episcopal Church, and the search process. We hope the following will be helpful.

IMMIGRATION MATTERS

All clergy from outside the United States (i.e. those who are not United States citizens) who seek to be licensed to officiate or attain canonical residence in this Diocese must be prepared to furnish the documents required by the Immigration & Naturalization Service for Employment Eligibility Verification. You must obtain all necessary Visas as may be required and must establish your legal right to work as a member of the clergy in the Diocese of Long island.

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.

CANONICAL MATTERS

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

For Person's Requesting a License to Officiate as a Priest

The granting of a license to officiate is a process distinct from granting canonical residence. A license to officiate must be renewed after 12 months time, the bishop having full authority to grant or revoke a license.

In order to receive a license to officiate, the clergy person must present a "letter of good standing," signed by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the diocese in which he or 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.” Applicants should submit a letter to the bishop outlining why he or she is requesting the license and how he or she hopes to serve in the diocese and a letter from the rector or vicar of the congregation in the Diocese of Long Island with whom the clergy will be affiliated is also required.

Clergy Called to Take Charge of a Congregation or Desiring Canonical Residence

Before being permitted to take charge of any congregation, or becoming canonically resident in the Diocese of Long Island, the national canons require that the bishop 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 months from the date that they were issued.

Before receiving the clergy person, the Bishop of Long Island 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 Long Island and at least one presbyter examine the person as to his/her knowledge of the history of the Episcopal Church, its workshop and government and be satisfied of the clergy person’s theological qualifications. In some instances the bishop may require the person to take courses in Episcopal polity.

Also required by the canons is the successful completion of the physical, psychological and psychiatric evaluations. Provisions for the psychiatric and psychological evaluations are made through the bishop’s office. The cost of these evaluations (approximately \$1700) is paid by the member of the clergy or the congregation in which he/she will serve.

Additionally, any member of the clergy making application to a parish in this Diocese must have an Office for Transition Ministry portfolio (OTM). Clergy from outside the Episcopal Church may request permission to obtain access to the OTM at www.otmportfolio.org

Meeting all requirements set forth above (including the associated expenses) is 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 is made by the Bishop of Long Island after reviewing the final reports.

Additional Requirements

All clergy serving in the diocese, either under license or canonical resident must have a background check performed by the Oxford Document Management, Inc. and must participate in Diocesan Safe Church and Anti-racism training programs.

THE CALLING OF CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF LONG ISLAND

Positions in the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island are not generally filled by placement or appointment. They are filled by a process of discernment whereby candidates apply, interview, and compete with a field of other candidates. In order to participate in that process, candidates are expected to submit a resume and an Office of Transition Ministry Portfolio and be available to participate in a series of interviews in the parish. Members of parish search committees expect to visit candidates in their home parishes. Often the cost of interviewing and moving of a priest from overseas is too prohibitive for many of our parishes. No position is filled without the approval of the Bishop of Long Island. Open positions are found on our Diocesan web site.

All clergy from outside the United States who are not yet canonically resident in the Diocese of Long Island and who wish to be considered by a congregation for a cure as rector are subject to all Diocesan policies and procedures clergy/congregation transitions contained in the *Congregation Transition Process Manual* in addition to satisfying the requirement 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 (cf. above)

SHARING IN THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH

The bishop encourages all licensed and canonically resident clergy to participate in the life of this Diocese through his or her involvement with the work and activities of a parish, deanery, & affiliated institutions of the diocese. At a minimum all clergy are required to attend Clergy Days, Clericus/Deanery Meetings, Clergy Conference, and each annual meeting and special meetings of the Diocesan Convention. We also highly encourage clergy to attend the institution ceremonies of new rectors and ordinations. Some clergy may be required to submit periodic reports of the ministry and activities of the parish or mission in which they serve.