

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany



The Reverend Katherine G. Alonge-Coons, *President*
Janet Papa, *Secretary*

Interim Policies and Guidelines for the Deployment of Supply Clergy

May 16, 2022

Section A. Introduction

1. The Anglican stream of the Christian tradition has consistently upheld, as a central feature of Christian identity, observance of the Lord's Day with the liturgical celebration of Holy Communion, which has been consistent practice (occasional exceptions notwithstanding) since apostolic times.
2. Similarly, since apostolic times, local Christian communities have been marked by awareness of membership in one Body, and therefore of their responsibility of mutual aid to one another. Saint Paul's instruction to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" ([Galatians 6:2](#)) applies to relationships *among communities and congregations*, as well as to interpersonal relationships within communities. Our concern is not for parochial self-interest, but for the good of the *entire* Body.
3. The Anglican stream of the Christian tradition maintains that bishops not only exercise internal authority within a diocese, but also that it is *through the bishop* that congregations, people, and clergy relate to the Episcopal Church and to the congregations, people, and clergy of other dioceses. The see of Albany being vacant, the Standing Committee, as Ecclesiastical Authority, fills this role in the interim.
4. A number of congregations in this Diocese do not have a Rector or Priest-in-Charge, and the number of canonically resident or licensed priests and deacons available to assist with weekly worship and pastoral offices is low.
5. Some congregations, whether because of location, limited resources, or other circumstances, are at a disadvantage in their ability to engage supply clergy.
6. The Ecclesiastical Authority of this Diocese issues these interim policies and guidelines in order to promote reasonable distribution of access to the grace of the sacrament of Holy Communion, authorized preaching, and pastoral offices. Although not all of these provisions are reflected in canons, their establishment lies within the competence of the Ecclesiastical Authority.
7. Within the limits of the canons and policies of the Episcopal Church and this Diocese, the Standing Committee welcomes proposals for creative approaches.
(For example: a congregation with multiple services might combine services on at least some weeks of the month; or might reschedule its principal weekly worship to a different time or day of the week to enable clergy to supply other congregations; neighboring congregations might choose to celebrate the weekly Eucharist together; a deacon might administer Holy Communion from the reserved Sacrament; a deacon or authorized lay leader may lead morning prayer; etc.)
8. Owing to the wide variety of circumstances to be covered, these interim policies are necessarily lengthy. Every effort has been made to cover as many contingencies as possible and to set them out clearly. Clergy and congregations alike are to study and abide by these guidelines.

Disciples Making Disciples

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9. Clergy, wardens, and vestries are urged to familiarize their congregations with the principles and practices in this interim policy, and to work to build love and affection for fellow Christians and congregations of this diocese, and an atmosphere of gratitude and care for the clergy who serve us.
10. All are asked to recognize and accept that this will require generosity, flexibility, patient endurance, restraint, and occasionally sacrifice. We are concerned that everything be done in harmony, in accordance with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Albany.
11. We urge all to join in praying earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest ([Matthew 9:38](#)); to assist in efforts to encourage potential vocations to Holy Orders; and for individuals and congregations to offer support, both prayerful and material, to those who may be so called ([Romans 10:13-15](#)).

Section B. Priests and Deacons

1. If you are a **priest or deacon in non-parochial ministry**, or a **retired priest or deacon**, and are canonically resident or licensed in the Diocese of Albany, please consider prayerfully your ability to serve as supply clergy, and notify the diocesan Transition Minister, the Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Papazoglakis, of your availability.
 2.
 - a. If you are a **priest canonically resident in another jurisdiction**, you are reminded that you must be licensed to officiate in the Diocese of Albany; that you must seek licensure annually; and that your licensure requires the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority of the diocese in which you are canonically resident (TEC Canon III.9.8.b).
 - b. If you are licensed for a specific cure or ministry within this diocese, your license includes authority to function as supply clergy subject to the guidelines and principles in this interim policy.
 - c. The Ecclesiastical Authority of this Diocese interprets the two-month period mentioned in TEC Canon III.9.7(a) to mean a single, non-renewable period of 60 consecutive calendar days, beginning on the first day on which you officiate at any service or pastoral office anywhere within the Diocese of Albany. This time period applies personally to you, and does run separately in separate congregations or ministries.
 3. If you are **retired**, you are reminded that you must seek renewal annually of your tenure in any ecclesiastical office (TEC Canon III.9.8.a). Retired clergy who have formed an association with a particular parish are not automatically eligible to serve as supply clergy. In particular, clergy who maintain residence and relationships in a congregation they have previously served should consult the diocesan Transition Minister regarding service as supply clergy in that congregation.
 4. **Deacons** are reminded to maintain contact with the Interim Director of Deacons regarding your status and deployment. When a Deacon services as supply clergy, the principles in this interim policy apply.
 5. A **deacon canonically resident in another jurisdiction** is subject to licensure requirements similar to those for a priest, described in paragraph 2 above, *mutatis mutandis*.
 6. Congregations are **not** to approach any deacon for supply without *first* obtaining the consent of the deacon's supervising clergy (ordinarily the rector or priest-in-charge, or, if none, the wardens) in the parish where the deacon serves.
 7. Congregations may approach a **retired or unassigned deacon** for supply, provided the deacon is duly licensed or authorized to minister.
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Section C. The work of supply clergy

Congregations and supply clergy alike are asked to keep the following principles in mind:

1. Supply clergy are canonically resident or licensed priests and deacons.
2. Congregations are *not* to engage unlicensed supply clergy from other jurisdictions who have performed any ministry in this diocese more than 60 calendar days before (see paragraph B.2.c above).
3. Supply clergy are available principally
 - a. to officiate and preach at principal Sunday worship and pastoral offices;
 - b. for pastoral care in urgent and dire circumstances;
 - c. for sacramental preparation (baptism, confirmation, marriage);
 - d. and for *occasional* other pastoral or congregational duties (e.g., reconciliation of penitents; sacramental anointing of the sick), or visiting when members of the congregation are prevented from doing so.
4. Supply clergy are *not* to be engaged on a regular or ongoing basis, or as long-term interim clergy. Congregations searching for a rector are to contact the diocesan Transition Minister to explore interim ministry options.
5. Supply clergy *do not* participate in the governance, life, or affairs of the congregation, for example:
 - vestry meetings;
 - social or fundraising functions;
 - ongoing pastoral involvement in the life of congregants;
 - educational programs (except as provided in paragraph 4.c above);
 - consulting for or advising the wardens, vestry, groups, or individuals within the congregation.
 Parochial clergy (or, if none, the wardens) of congregations that require assistance with any of these elements should contact the Standing Committee.
6. Accordingly, supply clergy are expected not to identify with the congregation, and *vice versa*; and not to establish a physical or moral presence outside of the specific worship service or pastoral office for which they are engaged.
7. Supply clergy and congregations should maintain healthy boundaries, and should neither offer nor accept invitations or requests to be involved with one another outside of the scope of the supply engagement.

Section D. Generosity

Congregations with multiple clergy are asked to share their clergy with other congregations as supply as often as possible, if necessary adapting their liturgy and their ministry schedules to allow them to do so at least one Sunday per month.

Section E. Moderation

a. General principles

1. Congregations are asked not to engage the same supply clergy for more than two weekends in a given calendar month, nor for more than three consecutive weekends.
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2. If other supply clergy are unavailable, congregations are asked to explore creative options for remaining weekends (see examples Section A.8 above, which is not an exhaustive list).
3. Except for pastoral offices requiring prior preparation (weddings, baptisms), or when supply clergy are needed to cover a scheduled, anticipated absence, supply clergy are not to be scheduled more than three months in advance.

b. Congregations served by a rector or priest-in-charge

1. Subject to the limitations in subsection (a) above, congregations may engage supply clergy to officiate at weekly worship or pastoral offices during any absence foreseen by the clergy covenant, or any excused absence.
2. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge, or, if the Rector or Priest-in-Charge is incapacitated, the Wardens, contact and engage supply clergy.

c. Congregations *without* a rector or priest-in-charge

1. The wardens of a congregation to which any deacon is assigned should contact the Interim Director of Deacons regarding the status, deployment, and supervision of the deacon(s).
2. Congregations with one or more deacons should, with the deacon's consent, arrange to have such deacon(s) cover a substantial portion of the need for supply.
3. Any deacon(s) serving a congregation should be consulted and included in deliberations and decisions regarding any decision to engage supply clergy or to institute alternative practices.

d. Compensation

1. Congregations are reminded of the reimbursement rates for supply clergy (<https://albanyepiscopaldiocese.org/supply-clergy/>).
2. Congregations should not compete with resource-challenged congregations by offering to exceed established reimbursement rates.
3. When calling a rector or receiving a priest-in-charge, congregations should make adequate budgetary provision for clergy supply to cover absences provided in the clergy covenant.

Section F. Extraordinary circumstances

1. This interim policy has been formulated to cover most foreseeable situations. In consideration of their many responsibilities, often in multiple roles, the Standing Committee and Diocesan Transition Minister will not be in a position to negotiate exceptions to these policies on a case-by-case basis.
2. Nevertheless, if situations not covered here arise, or should an *extraordinary* need present itself, congregations may approach the diocesan Transition Minister with questions or alternative proposals. The Transition Minister will then make a decision or refer the matter to the Standing Committee.
3. Decisions of the Transition Minister and Standing Committee in such cases will be final.

Thank you for the love you show in understanding and abiding by these interim policies, given to address an unfortunate reality. May the Lord raise up among us faithful ministers of Word and Sacrament. May you delight to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, proclaiming the Good News in season and out. May you feast on the Bread of Angels. May you grow into the full stature of the mature Christ. And may God bless you in all your ways.

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