



# CUSTOMARY OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

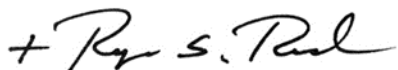
2025

## **From the Bishop**

This Customary is offered as a resource and guide to all the clergy and laity of this Diocese, in hope of strengthening our common life and ministry. It offers norms and standards, guidelines and policies which are intended to be helpful to all of us, both in terms of answering a variety of questions that come to the Diocesan Offices on a regular basis and in terms of establishing my expectations as your Bishop regarding the way we do things in the Diocese.

This has been updated since the previous Customary issued in 2022. Of note is the updating of Calling of New Clergy, the Section on Baptism and Paternity Leave provision.

As the Chief Pastor of the Diocese, I offer this Customary as one tangible way of providing pastoral direction and leadership. I know that I can count on the co-operation and support of all of you in following the spirit and aims of the policies I have set forth in the manner.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Rev. S. Paul". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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# I. The Ministry

## A. Policies concerning the Clergy generally

### i. Ethics

See our Diocesan Website for information regarding the *Diocesan Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry*.

### ii. Social Media

See our Diocesan Website for information regarding the *Diocesan Social Media Policy*.

### iii. Clergy Information Forms

Information on the basic life facts of the clergy members in this Diocese is essential to the Bishop in his role as Chief Pastor. Personnel data sheets for this purpose will be obtained through the Diocesan Office. They must be filled out, returned promptly, and reviewed at least annually.

### iv. Clergy Wellness

1. Clergy should practice good stewardship by setting the discipline of having thorough physical examinations regularly. Those accustomed to self-examinations know their benefit for spiritual health and must also care for the physical vehicle provided by God.
2. In taking responsibility for their physical, spiritual, and mental well-being, all clergy are to take time to be with their spouse and children.
3. All clergy are to take at least one full day off from work each week and an annual vacation (see I.A.vi).
4. Clergy retreats are offered by the Bishop at least once a year. If a member of the clergy cannot attend the retreat, the Bishop must be informed.

### v. Clergy Minimum Compensation Standards

**EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026**

The Diocesan minimum stipend for clergy is set by the Bishop annually. The **Stipend** along with an 16% contribution to the **Anglican Benefits Retirement Program**; as well as the premiums for the **Diocesan Benefits Program**, that includes health, group life, short term and long term disability and dental, which comprise the three required parts of clergy compensation.

## **vi. Vacation Policy**

Clergy are entitled to one month's vacation for every calendar year's work and ministry. Vacation time will be taken in consultation with the Vestry or Bishop's Committee. Should a priest leave his cure before completing a calendar year, he should expect only part of the vacation in proportion to the time served. Assisting clergy and curates must coordinate time off with their Rector.

## **vii. Clergy Travel**

Clergy should notify the Diocesan Office when they will be away from the Parish for more than five days.

## **viii. Sabbatical Leave**

1. **A sabbatical leave of eight to twelve weeks** is intended to provide active, full-time clergy the opportunity to be renewed through additional study and reflection after serving seven consecutive years in one cure. Typically, such study will focus on a topic that enhances one's ministry in the Parish or the Church at large. Sabbaticals are planned and discussed in cooperation with the Vestry or Bishop's Committee approximately every seven years.
2. **Submission of a Plan** – Sabbaticals are opportunities for in-depth spiritual and intellectual growth. As such, one should have a plan that describes the purpose of the study, a schedule of opportunities, and an anticipated outcome of the study made in consultation with the Bishop. Planning for a sabbatical should begin at least six months before the start of the sabbatical leave.
3. **Financial Considerations** - Funding for sabbaticals should be supported by a combination of personal funds, congregational support, and, when appropriate, assistance from the Diocese. Any Diocesan contribution will be given in the form of a grant to be requested in writing by the individual and submitted to the Bishop in a timely manner.
4. **Planning** - Congregations are encouraged to plan for a sabbatical and establish a fund for the future leave of their clergy. A certain amount may be set aside each year for the sabbatical, reducing the financial impact when the sabbatical is taken.
5. **Compensation** - In addition to the standard compensation paid to the Rector, the Parish will need to budget for the normal expenses of supply clergy should they be required during the sabbatical leave period.

6. **Length of Sabbatical Leave** – In most instances, the typical length of a sabbatical is 8-12 weeks. This does not include clergy vacation time. The time can be significant for developing and completing a particular project. Vestries may lengthen the sabbatical time at their discretion.

7. **General** – Sabbaticals should not be granted in anticipation of termination of employment.

## **ix. Paternity Leave**

Upon the birth of a child, the clergy shall be granted a 2-week paid leave of absence, with the permission of the Bishop.

## **x. Standard of Sexual Morality**

The clergy of this Diocese are obligated to model in their own lives the received teaching of the Church that all her members are to abstain from sexual relations outside of Holy Matrimony. The Bishop refuses to admit or license any clergy for service in this Diocese who will not subscribe to this standard.

## **xi. Sexual Misconduct**

1. Sexual misconduct of any kind by any clergy or laypersons in the employ of the Diocese will not be tolerated.
2. All employees of the Diocese (both clergy and lay) are required to receive training in the prevention of adult sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse and to comply with the *Policies on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry*.

## **xii. Clergy and Divorce**

1. No person who has divorced and remarried shall be admitted into Holy Orders. In the case of a possible pastoral exception, the Bishop may sponsor a particular individual and apply to the Archbishop to remove the impediment. (Title III, Canon 2, Sections 5 and 6 of the Provincial Canons).
2. When a member of the clergy is divorced under a cloud of scandal, he must resign his cure and will not be able to serve within the Diocese. This is not equivalent to the renunciation of Holy Orders, and in certain circumstances, it may be possible to transfer to serve in another Diocese. The Bishop will assist that person in seeking such a call, when appropriate.
3. Members of the clergy must model the values and principles they proclaim for their people. Nowhere is this more important than in the homes of the clergy.

The clergy of this Diocese are encouraged and expected to give due attention to their spouse and children. When marital discord arises, clergy are expected and encouraged to lay the matter before the Bishop, or at his discretion, some other competent pastor, and to seek the ministrations of the Church and other professionals that unity may overcome estrangement, forgiveness heal guilt, and joy conquer despair. The Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, or Archdeacon stands ready to assist clergy and their families in every way.

### **xiii. Letters Dimissory**

1. When members of the clergy accept a call and relocate to a new Diocese, they should request Letters Dimissory to be sent as they take up new residence and before being received by the Bishop of the new Diocese.
2. The Bishop may delay the issuance or acceptance of Letters Dimissory for cause.

### **xiv. Supply Clergy**

1. The Diocesan Office maintains a list of clergy available for supply. The minimum remuneration as of March 2024 is as follows:

One Principal Sunday Service	\$150
Two Sunday Services (one day)	\$225
Weekday Service	As agreed upon

2. The congregation is expected to reimburse the supply priest for mileage in addition to the schedule above. For the current mileage rate, go to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### **xv. Calling New Clergy**

1. Parishes and Missions must inform the Bishop as soon as possible after an incumbent member of the clergy has submitted his resignation. In no case should a search for pastoral leadership begin without consulting the Diocesan Office.
2. Parishes and Missions must consult the Diocesan Office before beginning the search process. The first step is normally a parish survey and profile. The Diocese can offer you several examples.
  - a) This should point to who you are now and what you would like to be.
  - b) It is also informative for priests trying to discern if they are a good fit and have the aptitudes and skills to take you there.
3. Any solicitation or request of possible candidates should not occur until the Incumbent has left office.

4. Then, names are solicited and submitted to the Diocese. The Diocese will also suggest names. The Bishop has the right to remove names and add names.
5. These individuals are contacted and asked if they are interested in being considered. If they respond yes, then a resume should be submitted.
6. At this point, the candidates could be approached with a series of questions to be answered in essay form. This will allow an apples-to-apples comparison.

**Important Point: Once you have eliminated a candidate from consideration, let him know as soon as possible. Phone them the next day at the latest.**

7. Zoom interviews may be the next step. They are very helpful as there are no travel expenses.
8. Based on all the above (resumes, questions and essays, Zoom), the field is narrowed to a short list of candidates, at which point background checks should be conducted.

## **xvi. The Dress of the Clergy**

### **1. General**

- a. Clergy must be mindful that their personal appearance, while performing official duties in public, is a reflection not only upon themselves but also upon their Parishes and the Diocese. Appropriate clerical attire, clean and pressed, shoes shined, etc., is always expected of all clergy – sports and leisure time excepted.
- b. The Bishop expects the "black suit, black shirt standard" as the norm for all Diocesan clergy. Clergy are encouraged to use common sense and appropriate demeanor when wearing other appropriate attire or colors depending on circumstances.
- c. The black cassock is the ordinary dress of the clergy, while in the Church. Cassocks should not be worn with red or purple piping unless the clergyman is a Canon, Dean, or Archdeacon *in this Diocese*.
- d. Clergy and laity may wear cinctures of various colors as a sign of an association with a particular religious order or a specific appointment within the Diocese, or as allowed by the Bishop.
- e. The wearing of a cross around the neck on the outside of the clothing of a clergy person is reserved to the Bishop. (Known as the Pectoral Cross, this is an outward sign of his episcopacy.)

- f. Deacons should wear clerical attire only when serving in a liturgical role, or when attending a clergy/Diocesan meeting e.g. Clergy Day.

## 2. Non-Eucharistic Vestments

- a. The surplice is the ordinary dress worn over the cassock for all services and ministrations, except when Eucharistic vestments are worn.
- b. The *mozzetta* (the closed shoulder cape) is restricted to Chaplains to the Bishop, Canons, Deans, Archdeacons, and Bishops *of this Diocese*. It should not be confused with the *pellegrina*, a shoulder cape that is open in the front and never worn with the surplice.
- c. Similarly, the use of the zucchetto during services and ministrations is restricted to Chaplains to the Bishop, Canons, Deans, Archdeacons, and Bishops *of this Diocese*.
- d. The stole is never worn over the surplice as mere decoration; it is worn when the occasion requires it. Therefore, the stole is worn over the surplice:
  - ◆ At Holy Eucharist (color of the day)
  - ◆ At Baptisms and Weddings (White)
  - ◆ While hearing Confessions and when administering Unction (Violet)
  - ◆ At Ordinations (White or Red, as determined by the Bishop)
  - ◆ While administering the Reserved Sacrament to the Sick (White)
  - ◆ While conducting a funeral (Black, Violet, or White)
- e. An academic hood and scarf should be worn with a traditional English surplice, not a Roman cotta. The academic hood should not be worn with a stole nor under a cope.
- f. Using any head covering in the presence of the exposed Sacrament is forbidden in this Diocese.

## 3. Eucharistic Vestments

- a. When Eucharistic vestments are worn, the following is strongly advised:
- b. The Celebrant is encouraged to wear the cassock, amice, alb, girdle, stole, maniple, and chasuble.
- c. The Deacon is encouraged to wear the cassock, amice, alb, girdle, stole, maniple, and dalmatic. The dalmatic may be omitted during penitential seasons.

- d. The Subdeacon is encouraged to wear the cassock, amice, alb, girdle, and tunicle. The tunicle may be omitted during penitential seasons.
- e. At some celebrations, where the above guidelines may not be appropriate, the Celebrant is to wear the same vestments as above, but assisting clergy are to wear a cassock and surplice. A stole may be worn by the assisting clergy if they are to assist in administering the Sacrament.
- f. The cassock-alb may be substituted for the amice and alb.

## **B. Concerning the Episcopate**

### **i. Chief Pastor**

- 1. The Bishop, when present at Mass, is normally the Celebrant (*Book of Common Prayer 2019*, p.160)
- 2. Only a Bishop may confirm (BCP, p.176)
- 3. The Bishop holds spiritual oversight as Chief Pastor for all the churches in his Diocese (BCP, p.513)

### **ii. Episcopal Visitation**

- 1. The Bishop shall visit the congregations within the Diocese at least once in three years to examine their condition, inspect the behavior of the clergy, administer Confirmation, preach the Word, and, at his discretion, celebrate the Holy Eucharist.
- 2. An alternate Bishop, resident or licensed in the Diocese, may be directed to make a visitation on behalf of the Bishop.
- 3. During a visitation of the Bishop, the services are under his direction. The Bishop prefers the Propers of the Day to be used rather than the Propers for Confirmation/Baptism or other special services.
- 4. Undesignated offerings taken during the Bishop's visitation are to be directed to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund and should be forwarded to the Diocesan Office within the week following the Visitation.
- 5. The Visitation schedule is typically established at least six months to a year in advance. This requires clergy to make local needs (e.g., anniversaries, special celebrations, etc.) known far in advance.

6. The Chaplain to the Bishop will send notification of the Visitation to the Parish or Mission in a timely fashion. The Chaplain will request information from the Parish or Mission.
7. The Parish or Mission will make the parish records available for the Bishop's inspection at his Visitation.

### **iii. Assisting Bishop**

1. At his discretion, the Bishop may appoint an Assisting Bishop with duties and responsibilities as he deems necessary.
2. The Assisting Bishop is permitted to use a crozier when acting on behalf of the Bishop as a sign of the delegated jurisdiction he possesses.

### **iv. Canon to the Ordinary**

1. The Bishop tasks the Canon to the Ordinary to assist him in administering his office.
2. Parishes and Missions must inform the Bishop, as soon as possible, after the incumbent member of the clergy has submitted his resignation. In no case should a search for pastoral leadership begin until consultation has been had with the Canon to the Ordinary.
3. Parishes and Missions seeking interim clerical ministry following a resignation and during the search process must consult with the Canon to the Ordinary before engaging such an interim minister.
4. Parishes and Missions hiring associate clergy must inform the Canon to the Ordinary before making an offer or negotiating terms.
5. A parish should share all letters of agreement for clergy with the Canon to the Ordinary.
6. Clergy desiring to continue their education, pursue sabbaticals, or consider their career opportunities and options should consult with the Canon to the Ordinary.
7. Clergy experiencing difficulty with the Parish should consult with the Bishop or the Canon to the Ordinary as soon as possible.
8. Clergy considering retirement should consult the Canon to the Ordinary well before the contemplated retirement date.
9. In the absence of a Canon to the Ordinary, the Bishop may delegate these duties as he sees fit.

## **v. Archdeacon**

Similar to the Canon to the Ordinary, an Archdeacon is tasked by the Bishop to assist him in administering his office.

## **vi. Chaplain to the Bishop**

1. The Chaplain assists the Bishop in preparation for visitations, attends the Bishop during divine service, and ensures that the Confirmation information form is returned to the Diocesan Office.
2. Normally and historically, the Chaplain to the Bishop is a Deacon. For the celebration of the Eucharist, he vests in cassock, surplice, and stole (if in holy orders), if he is not the Deacon of the Mass.
3. Additional Chaplains may be appointed to attend to other bishops resident, visiting, or licensed in the Diocese, as the Bishop directs.

## **vii. Clergy Days**

The Bishop will regularly schedule Clergy Days to promote unity within the Diocese. Each conference will include time for the clergy to interact and to discuss matters of concern to the spiritual life of the Diocese with the Bishop. All canonically resident parochial clergy are expected to attend, unless excused by the Bishop.

# **C. Concerning the Presbyterate**

## **i. Rectors/Vicars**

1. The Canons protect the rights and privileges of incumbent clergy. These must be respected for the sake of good order.
2. Members of the clergy resident in this Diocese may function liturgically in the cure of another only with the permission of the Rector of that cure.
3. Upon the resignation or death of the Rector, or the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between a Rector and a congregation, and under such conditions as the Bishop and Vestry shall determine, an assistant may continue to serve the congregation, if invited by the new Rector/Vicar.
4. The exercise of shared respect and courtesy requires protecting the ministry of a successor. Should a request be made by a parishioner to a former Rector/Vicar to perform a marriage, funeral, or Baptism, permission to function must be sought from, and granted by, the Incumbent or, in the case of a vacancy in that office, of

the Diocesan Office. Additionally, a member of the clergy so invited should consult with and obtain permission from the Canon to the Ordinary.

5. Former parishioners may well continue to call upon a beloved member of the clergy for ministerial functions long after his departure, but the former Incumbent will refrain from accepting these requests for the sake of his former parishioners and the new Rector/Vicar, who is trying to establish his relationship with the people. It is painful to make this kind of sacrifice, but ethically, he is obliged to support his successor's pastoral relationship and ministry.

## **ii. Disputes between Vestry and Clergy**

1. In the event of a dispute, please consult Diocesan Canon 32.
2. Should a member of the clergy be removed from a cure, the Parish shall provide severance to the removed clergy. Severance is one week per year of service/years of ordination.

## **iii. Assistant Priest**

1. Rectors, Vicars, and Priests-in-Charge may call a priest as an Assistant on the condition that:
  - a. The Vestry or Bishop's Committee gives its permission for the position.
  - b. The Bishop shall be notified in advance of issuing a call.
2. Assisting Priests function at the pleasure of the Parish Rector/Vicar.
3. Assisting Priests may not be dismissed until the Parish Rector/Vicar has consulted with the Bishop.

## **iv. Interim Clergy**

The Bishop may alter these guidelines to fit the special and unique circumstances of each Parish. The transitional time between a Rector's departure and a new Rector's arrival may be an upsetting and uncertain time, filled with anxiety. Often, it may be a time of inaction and waiting. But it can also be a time of anticipation, hope, and expectation. It is the task of the Interim to offer a calm, stable, dependable, and encouraging presence and to give the new Rector the best possible chance of success.

1. The Interim is to be a bridge between the former Rector and the new one. He takes, preserves, and passes on what he has been entrusted with.
2. The Interim may begin to teach what a Priest is and to instruct the Parish or Mission on the manner of life of a Priest and his wife (if he's married).

3. The Interim is vital in training the Vestry and congregation regarding the search process and what to expect.
4. The Senior Warden is the Ecclesiastical Authority in the Parish. The senior Warden should run the meetings, sign transfers, and other documents. The Interim cooperates with and works closely with the Senior Warden.
5. The Interim will attend Vestry meetings and other events to encourage and to engage the congregation to convey a sense of continuity and normality.
6. Schedule changes should be minimal and with the express advice and consent of the Vestry. If the newly elected Rector specifies a change, the Interim might implement it.
7. The Discretionary Fund should be turned over to the Senior Warden and used sparingly, and with the consent of the Senior Warden and the Vestry.
8. Liturgical changes should be minimal, if done at all.
9. The Interim is not eligible for consideration as the Rector.
10. The Interim should only take possession of the Rector's office with the necessities needed to be present for the Parish. This avoids the impression of permanence. The idea is to always direct the Parish to look forward to the new Rector.
11. The Interim should refrain from participating in the search process, except through prayer.

## **v. Diocesan Curate**

1. All newly ordained priests working at least half-time in parish ministry and related fields are supervised by the Bishop, acting through the Canon to the Ordinary.
2. Generally, each newly ordained Priest will serve the first two years of his ministry as Curate under the mentoring of an experienced Rector. The Rector and Curate are expected to cooperate with the Bishop and follow the guidelines and policies set forth by the Bishop. The cost of the program is shared by the Parish and the Diocese.
3. Curates will be expected to attend regular meetings for training and consultation as prescribed by the Diocesan Office. This time away from the Parish is to be considered part of their work and is not counted against routine time off or vacation time.

## **vi. Clergy in the Armed Forces**

Members of the clergy who are canonically resident in this Diocese and who desire to serve in the Armed Forces should contact the Diocesan Office, which will refer them to the Bishop of the Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplains.

## **vii. Non-resident Clergy**

1. Clergy invited to celebrate, officiate, or preach in another Diocese must obtain the permission of the Ordinary of that Diocese before proceeding.
2. The Bishop provides a hospitable welcome to other Bishops and Priests ordained in Apostolic Succession and in communion with this Diocese to participate in the services of the congregations of this Diocese.
3. Priests invited by a parish or Mission need not obtain permission from the Bishop to celebrate, officiate, or preach. However, the Parish or Mission is expected to write to the Bishop informing him of the invitation and occasion.
4. Bishops invited to celebrate, officiate, or preach within this Diocese must obtain permission from the Bishop before being invited to participate in services. The inviting Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge must request permission in writing prior to extending the invitation, and the Bishop's permission will be communicated to the invited Bishop.
5. Ordained clergy not canonically resident or licensed in the Diocese may not serve in any congregation longer than 60 days without the written permission of the Bishop.
6. Ordained clergy not in communion with this Diocese may preach with the Bishop's permission but may not preside at sacramental services. However, they may assist in a manner similar to the laity.

## **D. Concerning the Diaconate**

### **i. Terminology**

1. All persons ordained to the order of Deacons may be addressed in writing as "the Rev." and in both oral and written address as "Deacon." (For example, John Smith is addressed as "the Rev. John Smith" in writing and "Deacon Smith" in speech or writing.)
2. When a distinction is to be made among Deacons based on the nature of their vocation, all deacons are referred to simply as "Deacon," while those who will

soon be ordained to the priesthood may be qualified by the term "transitional deacon." Speaking of "permanent" or "vocational" deacons is inappropriate.

## **ii. Scope of Ministry**

1. Deacons serve under the direction and supervision of the Bishop and may serve only in a manner and in such places as the Bishop designates. When assigned to a congregation, the Deacon works under the supervision of the Parish or Mission or the Rector/Vicar/Priest in Charge.
2. Deacons desiring to relocate to another Diocese may do so only with the consent of both the Bishop of this Diocese and the Ordinary of the Diocese to which the Deacon desires to relocate.
3. Deacons are not authorized to be in charge of a congregation.
4. Deacons are not authorized to officiate at the rite of Holy Matrimony.
5. "Deacon's Masses" are forbidden without the express authorization of the Bishop.
6. It is the prerogative of the Deacon to read the Gospel and sing the *Exsultet*, set the Altar, read the Prayers of the People, and dismiss the people. Acolytes and other lay ministers may assist a Deacon in this role.
7. Deacons (with the exception of transitional deacons) may not enter discernment for the priesthood for at least seven years after their Ordination to the diaconate, and only with the permission of the Bishop.
8. For Deacon clothing, see Dress of Clergy.

## **E. Concerning Deaconesses**

- i. In this Diocese, a Deaconess is a woman who has been called to lay ministry in the Church. She has been educated and trained to fulfill the duties of her vocation. She has dedicated herself to lifelong service in the Church and has been set apart to the Office of Deaconess by the solemn laying-on of hands by the Bishop. She has, in faith, vowed to prayerfully execute the duties of her office in obedience to her Bishop and "those over her in the Lord."
- ii. Her duties are to assist in the work of the Parish, Mission, or institution to which she may be appointed, under the direction of the Parish or Mission, or to perform such functions as may be entrusted to her by the Bishop.
- iii. Functions of a Deaconess
  1. To care for the sick, the afflicted, and the poor.

2. To give instruction in the Christian Faith.
3. To prepare candidates for Baptism and Confirmation
4. To organize, superintend, and carry out the Church's work among women and children.
5. To read Morning and Evening Prayer in the absence of a member of the clergy.

## **F. Concerning Lay Ministry**

### **i. General Policies**

1. Applications for a license to serve as a Lay Minister in any of the several areas specified below may be made by confirmed adult communicants of this Church in good standing. The Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge of the applicant's congregation must approve the application.
  - A. Postulants for Holy Orders are granted, on a provisional basis, license to function in areas ii.-vi. below at the direction of the Bishop and their sending Parish or Mission.
  - B. License applications and renewal forms may be found on the Diocesan Website
2. Licenses for Lay Ministry are not transferable from congregation to congregation.
3. Lay Ministers duly licensed by the Bishop may function at Diocesan events when invited. They may exercise their ministries temporarily in any other congregation when specifically invited to do so by the member of the clergy in charge thereof.
4. Lay Ministers permanently relocating to a congregation other than the one for which they were duly licensed must apply for a new license.

### **ii. Worship Leaders**

A Licensed Worship Leader is a person who regularly leads public worship in a congregation under the direction of a member of the clergy. A Worship Leader may give the sermon, provided that the sermon is one published for Worship Leaders or supplied by an ordained Priest canonically resident in the Diocese.

### **iii. Preachers**

A Licensed Lay Preacher is a person who preaches sermons of their own composition on occasions of public worship. Both training and examination by the Diocese will be required before such a license is granted.

### **iv. Eucharistic Ministers**

A Eucharistic Minister is licensed to administer the chalice at services where there are not enough clergy present to do so. When there are enough vested clergy present, the clergy will administer the chalice regardless of the presence of Lay Eucharistic Ministers. Laity will not administer the Hosts.

### **v. Eucharistic Visitors**

A Eucharistic Visitor is licensed to take the consecrated Sacrament from the Holy Eucharist to members of the congregation who, because of illness or infirmity, cannot be present at the celebration. Rectors, Vicars, and Priests-in-Charge must appropriately and carefully train such Eucharistic Visitors.

### **vi. Other Lay Ministries**

1. Lectors are persons trained in the public reading of Scripture in the local congregation. The congregation's Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge is responsible for setting the requirements and preparing individuals for this ministry. A Lector is not authorized to read the Gospel at the Eucharist.
2. A Catechist is a layperson authorized and trained to prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, and Reception under the direction of a congregation's Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge.

## **II. The Liturgy**

### **A. General Policies**

#### **i. Standard of Worship**

The standard of worship is the *Book of Common Prayer 2019*, as it is printed in the Standard Edition, the Traditional Language Edition, and other translations approved by the Province.

1. All regularly scheduled public worship services will follow the Sunday and Holy Day Lectionary as printed in the *Book of Common Prayer 2019*.

2. Permission to use rites or lectionaries other than those provided in the *Book of Common Prayer 2019* must be requested in writing from the Diocesan Office. Where a parish has customarily used the American Prayer Book of 1928, the Bishop gives permission to continue using those rites regularly.

## **ii. Spiritual Jurisdiction**

1. The conduct of worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish is vested, according to the Canons, in the Rector or Vicar, subject to the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer 2019*, the Canons of the Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop. Matters not covered in this Customary, the Canons, or the rubrics are left to the discretion of the Rector or Vicar.
2. When present on Sundays and Holy Days, it is the prerogative of the Bishop or his duly appointed deputy to preach and officiate or celebrate at the principal service.

## **iii. Approved Versions of Scripture**

1. The versions of Holy Scripture authorized for use in the services of this Church are the Authorized Version of 1611 (the King James Version), the Revised Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the English Standard Version.
2. Permission for the use of versions of Holy Scripture other than those authorized above must be requested in writing from the Bishop, copying the Canon to the Ordinary or the Secretary to the Bishop.

## **iv. Holy Communion**

1. All baptized persons who are communicants in good standing in their own communion may receive the Sacrament in this Church.
2. Notwithstanding the statement above, we do not publicly announce that everyone may come to the Altar for Communion.
3. No persons who present themselves at Holy Communion will be turned away except:
  - A. In the case that the clergy have determined that the individual is not baptized.
  - B. In the case that the person is under discipline, as provided for by the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer 2019*, p. 143.

- C. In the case that the person is under discipline, having been excommunicated from the fellowship of this Church by the Bishop.
4. If a printed bulletin announcement is desired, the Bishop recommends the following words:

*All persons who have been baptized with water in the name of the Holy Trinity and have been admitted to Holy Communion in their own Church are welcome to receive Holy Communion with us.*

## **v. Intinction**

1. The normal practice for the reception of Holy Communion in this Church is to receive the Host and the Chalice separately. Ancient custom and Scripture indicate that reception in both kinds is normative. Intinction is normally reserved as a mode of communication to be used in cases of communicable diseases or infirmity.
2. When intinction is done, the Eucharistic Minister will take the Host, dip it in the chalice, and place it on the communicants' tongue with these or similar words:

*"The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, [which was given for you, preserve your body and soul to everlasting life]."*

## **B. Concerning Visitations**

### **i. General Information**

1. The Bishop will wear his miter to process, bless, absolve, and confirm. The Bishop normally wears an alb, stole, and cope to confirm.
2. It is customary to set out a slice of lemon and a piece of white bread for the Bishop to clean his hands with after using holy oils in the administration of Confirmation.

### **ii. Liturgy**

The liturgy used for the administration of Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation (as well as Baptism) will be that found in *The Book of Common Prayer 2019*.

### **iii. Chaplain**

The Bishop will be accompanied by his Chaplain (unless otherwise indicated prior to the visitation). If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, a member of the resident clergy (a deacon, if possible) at the Parish will read the Gospel and set the Altar for the celebration of the Eucharist.

#### **iv. Baptism**

The celebration of Baptism in conjunction with the rite of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation is highly recommended (*BCP 2019*, p.183). If the Bishop is present, it is normative that he administer the Rite of Baptism.

#### **v. Name Tags**

1. The Christian name of all Confirmands should be written in clear, block letters on their nametag.
2. Nametags should be worn on the Confirmand's right side and be easily visible.
3. If the name's pronunciation is difficult, it should be drawn to the Bishop's attention early.
4. In the lower right corner of the nametag, a designator with a single letter should be placed as follows:

**C** = Confirmation

**R** = Reception

**A** = Reaffirmation

### **C. Concerning Ordinations**

#### **i. General**

Any costs associated with the Ordination (honoraria, musician's fee, reception cost) are the responsibility of the Ordinand. For Ordinations, the Bishop is always willing to preach but customarily grants permission for the Ordinand to invite the preacher of his choosing. If not resident or licensed in the Diocese, the preacher must be invited according to the process described in Section I.C.vii of this Customary.

#### **ii. The Color of the Day**

Ordinations are normally celebrated on a feast day in the Church calendar or on an Ember Day. The Color of the Day will reflect the feast day of the Ordination. Invitations should include the following or similar words: "Clergy: Cassock, surplice with red/white/violet stoles." Sacred ministers should vest according to the practice of the host church.

#### **iii. Service Booklets**

Service booklets must accurately reproduce the content and rubrics of the rite prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer 2019*, either in contemporary language, tradi-

tional language, or Spanish. A copy for editing must be submitted to the Diocesan Office for the Bishop's review before publication.

#### **iv. Liturgy**

The liturgy for the Ordination, including the celebration of the Eucharist, is strictly according to the *Book of Common Prayer 2019*. Permission will not be granted for additions, changes, or deletions. The Diocesan Office must approve the text of the liturgy.

#### **v. The Name of the Ordinand**

The name of the Ordinand will be given in full in parts of the presentation where the siglum "*N.N.*" is found. In the remaining parts of the service, the given Christian name is sufficient at the siglum "*N.*".

#### **vi. Concerning the Declaration**

A table or lectern is to be set in a convenient place to one side before the Bishop and in the sight of the People for the signing of the Declaration. A pen with indelible ink should be placed on the table or lectern. (Test the pen in advance.) The Bishop's Office will provide the printed Declaration. The Declaration should be given to the Canon to the Ordinary or Bishop's Chaplain at the conclusion of the celebration. The Declaration must be given and signed in English, as authorized in the Canons of the Anglican Church in North America.

#### **vii. Vesting**

The Ordinand is vested for the beginning of the service in a cassock, amice, alb, and girdle, without stole, maniple, academic hood, crosses, etc.

#### **viii. Vestments and Vessels**

Vestments and Vessels to be given to the Ordinand after the Consecration are presented to the Bishop before the service begins, at which time he will bless them.

# III. Parish and Mission Policies

## A. Vestry

- i. The Term "Vestry" is used in Parishes.
- ii. Each year in the congregations of this Diocese, a number of Vestry members are elected at the annual meeting in accordance with Diocesan Canons. Members of the congregation choose these men and women to act as their representatives in the congregation's relations with its clergy and the management of its corporate property. The Vestry may be considered the Parish management team. It is accountable to the congregation for supervising and conducting temporal affairs. Vestry members share responsibility with the Rector or Vicar for setting the pace, shape, and direction of Parish or Mission life. Lines of communication between the congregation, Vestry, and clergy promote frank discussion and mutual confidence.
- iii. The Vestry is not responsible for the liturgy of the Parish. Direction of the liturgy is the prerogative of the clergy, in conjunction with the directions laid out by the Diocesan Office.
- iv. The Constitution and Canons of the Diocese make clear that it is the duty and responsibility of the Vestry to see that the Diocesan Assessment is paid promptly (Canon 25.9).
- v. The Annual Meeting of each Parish shall be held no later than the 31st of January.

## B. Bishop's Committee

- i. A "Bishop's Committee" shall be formed in each Mission congregation with the same responsibilities as a Vestry (above).
- ii. Members of the Bishop's Committee are elected in the same manner as members of a Vestry. However, they serve at the pleasure of the Bishop, who appoints the committee Wardens upon the Vicar's recommendation.
- iii. The Bishop's Committee functions in the same capacity as a Vestry, guided by the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.
- iv. When a Mission attains Parish status, the congregation of the new Parish elects a Vestry, as prescribed in the Canons. When that Vestry is in place, the Bishop's Committee is dissolved.

## **C. Audit**

- i. Each Vestry is responsible for the fiscal affairs of the Parish. The Diocese requires an annual audit of the Church's financial records. This audit may be done by a professional audit firm, a CPA, or an Audit Review Committee appointed by the Vestry using the Financial Guide provided on the Diocesan Website. A copy of the completed audit for the prior year shall be due in the Diocesan Office no later than the 1st of September each year.
- ii. Every Treasurer handling money in the name of the Church or any of its organizations is covered under a blanket bond in the Diocesan Insurance Policy up to \$100,000. A congregation only needs to acquire additional bond coverage where there is a desire to supplement the amount of the Diocesan Bond.

## **D. Parochial Reports**

Each Rector and Vestry, and every Vicar and Bishop's Committee, is expected to comply with the requirements of the Diocese and Province in preparing and submitting annual Parochial Reports on schedule. The report for the preceding year is due no later than the 1st of March of the succeeding year. In addition, the clergy and Vestry and Bishop's Committees are responsible for promptly supplying any information requested by the Diocesan Office, including Delegate Certificates and up-to-date Vestry information.

## **E. Convention Delegates**

Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Annual Convention of the Diocese are elected at the Annual Parish Meeting of the congregation and serve until their successors are elected. Delegates and Alternate Delegates must be Communicants in Good Standing of the Parish they are to represent, and at least 18 years of age. The reported size of the congregation determines the number of Delegates to be elected according to Diocesan Canon 1 (Sec 1.1). If a Delegate cannot serve and no elected Alternate Delegate is available, the Rector or Vicar may certify another person to serve in place of the elected Delegate.

## **IV. Diocesan Policy**

### **A. General Policies**

#### **i. Historic Designation**

No church or church-owned structure of this Diocese may be designated an historic landmark without the written permission of the Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth and the Standing Committee.

#### **ii. Games of Chance**

The Bishop's policy is to allow congregations or organizations within a congregation to host, sponsor, or participate in raffles and games of chance (e.g., Bingo), provided they are conducted with discretion and have no connection with an outside commercial organization. He does not condone Parishes, Missions, or other agencies going into the gambling business (sponsoring Bingo halls, etc.).

#### **iii. Alcoholic Beverages**

1. No congregation will engage in the sale of alcoholic beverages or mixed drinks at any function of the congregation or any of its organizations. The sale of any alcoholic beverage or mixed drink without proper license is also contrary to the laws of the State of Texas.
2. The serving of alcoholic beverages (without charge) at wedding receptions, suppers, picnics, etc., either on or off the church property, is left to the discretion of the Parish or Mission. When alcoholic beverages are served, alternative non-alcoholic drinks must be provided and equally displayed.

#### **iv. Safety Policies and Procedures**

1. General Safety Policies
  - a. Information regarding Church Safety Policies and Church Safety Procedures may be found on the Diocesan Website.
2. Firearms
  - a. At no time is any person other than an active-duty, uniformed law enforcement officer allowed to openly carry a firearm on church premises.
  - b. A "No Weapon Allowed" or "No Open Carry" (30.07 sign) notice shall be posted conspicuously at the entrance of the building.

- c. No one is permitted to carry a shotgun or a rifle on church premises at any time.

## **V. Facilities**

### **1. Diocesan Center for Ministry**

Contact the Diocesan Office to schedule the use of the various meeting facilities at the Diocesan Center. These facilities include a chapel, conference room (40-50 people), kitchen, and two smaller meeting rooms.

### **2. Camp Crucis**

- a. Camp Crucis is a year-round camp, conference, and retreat center owned and operated by the Diocese, under the direct supervision of a Camp Director. It has a Board of Managers, which is responsible to the Bishop. It offers a variety of retreats and conferences for all ages, as well as summer camping sessions for young people.
- b. The facilities can accommodate a maximum of 303 persons as follows: 10 in the Bishop Davies Lodge, 16 in Bishop Pope Lodge, 36 in Bishop Mason Youth Lodge, 2 in St. Leo's, 9 in the Friary, 10 in the Infirmary, and 220 in the camper cabins, all of which have heating and air conditioning.

## **B. Title to Property**

Article 14 of the Constitution of the Diocese states:

*The title to all real estate acquired for the use of the Church in this Diocese, including the real property of all Parishes and Missions, as well as Diocesan Institutions, shall be held subject to the control of the Church in The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth acting by and through a corporation known as "Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth." All such property, as well as all property hereafter acquired for the use of the Church and the Diocese, including Parishes and Missions, shall be vested in the Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.*

Forms for the sale or purchase of property, and church loans, are to be obtained from the Diocesan Finance Department. The Finance Committee, the Standing Committee, and the Board of Trustees of the Corporation must approve such transactions.

## **C. Baptism/Confirmation**

- i. Except in emergencies, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism should be administered within the principal service on a Sunday or other Major Feast Day. Holy Baptism is especially appropriate at the Great Vigil of Easter/Easter Eve, within the Octave of Easter, at the Vigil of Pentecost, within the Octave of Pentecost, on All Saints' Day, the Sunday after All Saints' Day, and on the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. It is recommended that, as far as possible, Baptisms be reserved for these occasions or when a Bishop is present.
- ii. Each person to be baptized is to be sponsored by two or more baptized persons who are themselves practicing Christian believers and active members of the Church. It is the duty of the clergy to provide adequate pre-baptismal instruction to all sponsors, parents, and mature candidates.
- iii. In the Baptism of infants and children, it is the Bishop's expectation that at least one of the parents will be an active communicant member of the congregation where the Baptism is to take place. In pastoral situations where this is not the case, the Priest is to consult with the Parish or Mission where the family belongs prior to proceeding. Active participation in the life of the Christian community is expected of all parties involved, both before and after the Baptism.
- iv. The normative age for a child seeking Confirmation is 13 years of age (in the year of their confirmation).

## **D. Marriage**

### **i. General**

1. The Priest is in charge, not only of the marriage service, but also of the decoration of the Church and the choice of music. No wedding date may be set without his consultation and approval. Marriages are expected to be celebrated in the Church as a worship service, not as private affairs or social spectacles.
2. No marriage is to be celebrated during Advent or Lent, except for special or unusual reasons. In such cases, consulting with the Bishop before proceeding is customary. The clergy are required to provide careful preparation and instruction to the couple prior to the solemnization of any marriage. For this reason, the officiating Priest must be contacted at least 60 days prior to the anticipated date of the proposed wedding.
3. Every congregation is expected to have clear and precise written policies regarding marriages and the use of the parish hall for receptions. Matters to be ad-

dressed include food, the use of flowers, candles, photographers, videos, music, rehearsals, and fees.

4. Marriage is a Sacrament celebrated by, for, and with the Christian community; therefore, it is the normative practice of this Diocese to celebrate all services of Holy Matrimony within the normal place of worship. Any other practice, such as garden weddings, or on bridal paths, at lakeside, in private homes, or wedding chapels are discouraged.
5. Marriages of communicant members of the Church are normally celebrated in the context of the Holy Eucharist, during which all communicants are to be given the opportunity to receive communion.
6. When the clergy of this Diocese are asked to officiate at a service of Holy Matrimony outside this Diocese, they need to discuss and receive permission from the Bishop prior to accepting the invitation.
7. The principal purpose of celebrating the rite of Holy Matrimony in the Church is to receive the nuptial blessing. Therefore, a Priest or Bishop is the Chief Celebrant/Officiant.

## **ii. Marriage Annulments**

If, for pastoral reasons, an ecclesiastical annulment is requested, the application form provided on the Diocesan Website is to be accompanied by the following:

1. A letter from the petitioner explaining the grounds for a judgment of the nullity of this marriage.
2. A letter from the Priest of the congregation where the petitioner is a member, stating his assessment of the basis for an annulment.
3. Written statements from a minimum of two witnesses, supporting the application, based on their personal knowledge of the marriage in question.

## **iii. Marriage of Divorced Persons**

1. A petition to the Bishop is necessary when either party has been previously married, and a former spouse is still living. The Church is not a business for marrying people, and only those who are part of the Christian community, or those who are seeking to become part of it, are to be considered. Both parties must be baptized and should ordinarily be members of the Parish where the wedding is to take place.

2. A petition is something that seeks a decision. Therefore, certain information is necessary on which to base that decision. The pastoral relationship established between the Priest and those coming to him seeking permission to marry in the Church is essential. The findings of the Priest are the most important part of the petition upon which the decision is based. Therefore, thorough counseling and teaching are expected.
3. The information presented to the Bishop, along with the completed form of *Information & Petition to be Married in the Church*, found on the Diocesan Website, must include:
  - a. A letter from the divorced person(s) indicating what went wrong in the previous marriage, whether counseling was sought, what positive insights or understandings were gained from the experience, why it is believed that the proposed marriage will be successful, what moral and financial responsibilities continue with respect to the former spouse and any children of that marriage, and the reason(s) the person wishes to be married in the Church.
  - b. A letter from the Priest indicating his opinion in the matter and his willingness to officiate at the marriage.
4. A petition for remarriage of a person who has been twice married will not be considered by the Bishop unless the Priest can present data that indicate that there were specific impediments to one or both of the previous marriages. These impediments are consanguinity or affinity; mistaken identity; sufficient mental deficiency; failure to have reached the age of puberty; undisclosed impotence, sexual perversion, or venereal disease; bigamy; concurrent contract inconsistent with the marital contract; or fraud, coercion, duress, or personality defects which make competent and free consent impossible.
5. Communicants of one Diocese who wish to be remarried by a Priest in another Diocese must first secure the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese in which they are canonically resident, and then have it endorsed by the Bishop of the Diocese in which they wish to be married.
6. The Bishop will receive petitions for permission to bless marriages of those married outside the canonical provisions of the Church. A letter, summarizing the circumstances of the marriage, and stating that the couple has been instructed in the Church's teaching on marriage, is necessary. The Priest involved with them shall determine the time within these limits. During this period, the couple is expected to show their sincerity of commitment by regular attendance at services of worship, financial support of the Church, prayer, and involvement in the life of the congregation.

7. Letters assuring communicants of their continued good standing are available if requested when they are not requesting permission to be married. Such a letter does not carry permission to be married in the Church at some future date. A petition must always be submitted to the Bishop whenever a divorced person, whose former spouse still lives, desires to marry in the Church.
8. All requests for the Bishop's consent to the marriage of divorced persons must have the completed Petition form(s) to the Bishop at least 60 days before the ceremony is desired, and no announcement of the marriage may be made until the consent of the Bishop has been received. The Bishop will normally consider such applications only when the divorce has been finalized for at least one year.

## **E. Vacancy**

Whenever a Rector resigns or retires, and a Parish is left vacant, the following steps are to be taken:

### **1. Notification of Vacancy**

The Senior Warden will notify the Bishop in writing that the Parish is vacant. The Bishop appreciates a telephone call as well.

### **ii. Special Vestry Meeting**

The Bishop will call a meeting of the Vestry to advise it on a comprehensive search process, which will lead to the calling of a new Rector. A brief description of the search process may be found in Canon 33.

### **iii. Formation of a Search Committee by the Vestry**

It is expected that the Vestry will serve as the Search Committee. Ordinarily, the Search Committee is the Vestry plus additional parishioners who possess abilities and skills that will help the Vestry with its task. The Vestry alone is authorized to make the final decision (in consultation with the Bishop) and to issue the call. It should be noted that at the end of this process, those who have served on the Search Committee who are not members of the Vestry will not be allowed a vote to elect the new Rector.

## **F. Deans and Deaneries**

The Diocese is divided into geographical groupings of congregations called Deaneries, whose purpose is to enable the clergy and laity to share common interests and concerns, and to work together with more strength than is sometimes available to a single congre-

gation. The Bishop appoints the Dean of each Deanery, who serves at the Bishop's pleasure, and he is a member of the Executive Council with voice but no vote.

## **V. Departments and Committees**

### **A. World Mission Committee**

The committee members are appointed by the Bishop, whose goal is "for every church in the Diocese to participate in global mission through prayer, study, financial support and the sending and receiving of missionaries." The committee assists the Bishop in encouraging and coordinating our relationship with our Companion Diocese in Northern Malawi, the La Gran Familia Children's homes in Mexico, and any other international outreach relationships.

### **B. Finance Committee**

- i. The Finance Committee, consisting of appointed members of the Executive Council, normally one from each Deanery, is responsible to the Executive Council for oversight of accounting, assessments, loans, and the budget of the Diocese.
- ii. All forms of loans, sale of property, and all other financial matters may be obtained from the Director of Finance at the Diocesan Office.

### **C. Risk Management Committee**

- i. The Risk Management Committee, whose members are appointed by the Bishop, oversees insurance, ethics and integrity, and safety. Members include at least one member of the clergy.
- ii. The Ethics Manual, found on the Diocesan Website, outlines requirements regarding background checks, Ministry Safe training programs, and other standards for behavior designed to prevent misconduct.
- iii. The Diocese has adopted minimum standards of insurance (Canon 29:1:E) and requires each Parish, Mission, and Mission Station to participate in the Diocesan Insurance Program. The program covers property, liability, directors and officers, and Workers' Compensation.
- iv. The Diocesan Insurance Program also includes the Diocesan Benefits Program which offers health, life, dental, and voluntary vision insurances. Congregations are required to participate in the Diocesan Benefits Program, which requires congregations to pay 100% of all premiums for all full-time clergy and staff, including their

families, unless the Clergy spouse's insurance meets this standard and can be reimbursed.

- v. Additional life and vision insurance is voluntary and will be payroll deducted by the congregation.