Options for Parish Clergy Transitions

Our context: What is a parish in the new missional age?

It is a community ...

of theological imagination
...where our hearts and minds are moved by God’s presence in our lives and in the world;

fed by Word & sacrament
...where our stories connect with God’s story in Holy Scripture, and where we experience God’s grace in baptism and Eucharist;

forming disciples and apostles in God's mission
...where people grow as followers of Jesus and are sent by the Holy Spirit into the world to join God’s work of restoration and reconciliation;

and connected to the wider body of Christ
...by sharing our lives with companions in Christ across the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and the wider Church.

Pathways for Transition in ECCT

When the clergy person in charge of a parish departs, one of the following models of Priest in Charge (PIC) is appointed by the Bishop, in consultation with the Vestry. In all cases, the PIC fulfills roles and responsibilities of Rector (but does not have tenure). Please note that today’s reality calls for flexibility and agility. These pathways are spelled out to make today’s options clear, not to be written in stone forever.

INTERIM Priest in Charge  (6-12 month Transition)
Historically called “Interim Rector”.
- Helps congregation envision faithful future in God’s mission
- Appointed by bishop after interview with the Vestry
• Normally leads the congregation for about 12 months, cannot be a candidate for rector, and must leave before the new rector arrives
• Interim tasks determined in consultation with Canon for Mission Leadership and the Bishop, who also appoint Transition Consultant (TC)
• With TC, Vestry appoints and empowers a Transition Team (four sub teams)
• Website content/portfolios prepared by Discernment Team and approved by vestry and Bishop
• Recruitment Team interviews candidates and recommends 3-4 to vestry
• Vestry calls next rector, with approval of Bishop
• When the departing rector has served less than five years and the congregation has clear vision for its participation in God’s mission and financial stability, a 6-9 month Transition can be accomplished by the Vestry completing an OTM profile, updating the parish website, and interviewing pre-screened candidates

**PROVISIONAL Priest in Charge (2-3 year Transition)**
Designed for congregations where circumstances are not ideal for “traditional” transition because other work must be attended to before call is made (3 years) or for use in stable parishes with half-time or ¾ time clergy (2 years).
• Helpful when the congregation needs immediate stability
• The Bishop sends one candidate (as soon as identified) to the vestry
• Vestry interviews and affirms bishop’s appointment of PIC
• If no call, the Bishop sends another candidate when one is available
• Signs Letter of Agreement for time certain (2 or 3 years)
• Goals are set for 3 year PIC time, with help of bishop-appointed PIC consultant
  o at 24-30 month mark, the Congregation and PIC may begin Transition/Call
  o If call is mutually discerned and approved by the Bishop, PIC may be called as rector
  o If not, congregation conducts a shortened traditional transition with the PIC serving as Interim, or a short-term Interim PIC is called and parish embarks on shortened discernment/recruitment for next rector
• Two year PIC is called with intention that PIC will convert to rector
  o At 18-month mark, the Congregation and PIC participate in Mutual Ministry Review and discern if PIC is to be called as Rector
  o If call is mutually discerned and approved by the Bishop, PIC is called as Rector
  o If not, situation is reviewed and next steps are determined
**MISSIONAL Priest in Charge**

Designed for use in parishes who have capacity and will to imagine a different future with less than half-time clergy.

- The Bishop sends one candidate to the vestry
- Vestry interviews and affirms bishop’s appointment of MPIC
- If no call, the Bishop sends another candidate when one is available
- One year Letter of Agreement, renewable

The parish leadership utilizes the resource Roxburgh’s *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World*, and agrees to move into a missional future by:

- doing the work outlined in *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World*
- having regular rotation of lay leadership
- participating in God’s mission outside their walls
- actively seeking partners in mission
- participating in ECCT convention and Region convocations

If they cannot make or keep a missional commitment, they move to a Conditional PIC.

**CONDITIONAL Priest in Charge**

Designed for use in parishes who want to maintain the status quo with less than half-time clergy OR for whom closing might be a faithful option at this point in their life.

- The Bishop sends one candidate to the vestry
- Vestry interviews and affirms bishop’s appointment of CPIC
- If no call, the Bishop sends another candidate when one is available
- Parish begins to think about its legacy
- One year Letter of Agreement, renewable