



Policy for Retired Clergy regarding returning to the parishes from which they retire

As you anticipate your retirement, it is important to have in writing the expectations I hold of the retiring rector. The relationship of the outgoing rector to the congregation has a profound impact on the capacity of the congregation to accept the ministry of the incoming rector. Therefore, not only are the parameters of retirement important, but how you say “good bye” to each other is important also. The book *Saying Goodbye*, published by Alban Institute, can be a useful resource for your reflection.

To facilitate clarity, the items of importance are listed below.

- a The retiring rector may not attend worship, provide pastoral care, or officiate at any services of the church from which he/she is retiring/leaving. It is expected that the retiring rector will worship at another Episcopal church, or a different congregation of their choice.
- a If it is the wish of a member of the congregation to have such ministrations rendered, it is incumbent upon the retiring rector to refuse the request. Until there is another rector, or priest primarily responsible for the oversight of the parish, the retiring rector may not function as a priest in the parish.
- a If, at the wish of the next rector, the retired rector is asked to function as a supply priest, then the retired rector can accept or refuse the invitation.
- a During the time between rectors, the retired rector may not function as a priest in the parish without permission of the Bishop and at the request of the Senior Warden.
- a Because only the clergy are under the discipline of the Bishop, these expectations apply particularly to the priest. However, best practices indicate that the congregation is able to move forward with their life when the spouse also lives into these expectations.

This is a wonderful, challenging, and exciting time in the life of the clergy and the congregation.

The Standing committee affirmed the wisdom present in the Bishop’s policy regarding retirement of clergy from the parish. - March, 2010.

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