

Definition of Terms

In the Calling Process

1. This is a CALL – a call to ministry. We do not HIRE a priest. This is the union of a priest and congregation to further the mission of the Church through the Grace of God.
2. Vestry: That body of the congregation that works in concert with the rector of a parish to fulfill the mission of the congregation. This is not a Board of Directors, Regents, or oversight body. The Vestry:
 - a. • Helps to discern the vision toward which God is drawing that particular community
 - b. • Articulates and communicates the vision
 - c. • Holds the community accountable for its realization of that vision
 - d. • Keeps the mission of the Church and that of the individual congregation clearly before the parish community (*Diocese of Fond du Lac*)
3. Compensation: The compensation package of the rector/vicar/curate consists solely of:
 - a. Salary
 - b. Housing (Cash or Supplied)
 - c. Social Security Supplement
4. Business Expenses: the business expenses are not Compensation and should never be confused with the Compensation package. The business expenses are for the support of the ministry of the rector/vicar/curate and are provided by the congregation:
 - a. Travel Allowance -- either a monthly set amount* or a per mile/expense reporting system – Travel to diocesan events and continuing education events within the diocese are usually a part of this. Travel for continuing education outside the diocese – or for a program that is extra-diocesan – is usually budgeted elsewhere.
 - b. Office equipment, to include but not be limited to: computer, printer, office phone, fax, etc.
 - c. Cell Phone – usually the congregation pays ½ of the basic monthly rate for the priest to have a mobile phone.
 - d. Expense Account – sometime provided to support the priest in the ministry – business meetings, memberships, dues, etc.
 - e. Moving Expenses: includes the actual costs of moving the household goods of a priest to the new call; the mileage for the priest to bring one vehicle to the new call; the other travel expenses involved in the move – hotels, meals, etc.

f. Continuing Education: Continuing education is an expectation of every priest in the diocese and it is the responsibility of the Vestry to provide funds for such education and to hold the priest accountable for yearly participation in continuing educational programs.

5. Discretionary Account: By canon, (*Canon III.9.5(b)(6) of the Episcopal Church*) a discretionary account shall be established and the rector/vicar/curate shall have charge of that account. The monies deposited and spent are meant for charitable uses. Every letter of agreement in the Diocese of Western Louisiana outlines the accounting and use of the discretionary fund.
6. Benefits: Benefits are never compensation and should not thus confused as such. The congregation is responsible for providing the following benefits:
 - a. Church Pension Fund: paid monthly at the rate of 18% of the Compensation of the priest
 - b. Health Insurance for the priest and family
 - c. Workman's Compensation Insurance according to the laws of the State of Louisiana.
7. Letter of Agreement: In each call, a Letter of Agreement shall be signed by the rector/vicar/curate; Senior Warden; Bishop of the Diocese; Consultant for Transitions and Deployment. The LOA is an outline of the responsibilities of all parties involved. The ministry of the priest, as well as that of the vestry, is clearly outlined according to canon law. Local customs that are not consistent with canon law (either that of the Diocese of Western Louisiana or the Episcopal Church), shall not be a part of the Letter of Agreement, nor may they be enacted in any other way.
8. All paid staff members of the congregation (including assisting clergy) are under the supervision of the rector/vicar /dean of that congregation. Volunteers who are leading specific ministries within the congregation are also under the supervision of the rector/vicar/dean. The priest may choose to delegate such supervision to another staff member, but may not delegate that supervision to the Vestry or any other body within the congregation.
9. The priest-in-charge is the liturgical officer of the congregation (under the authority of the Bishop).
10. Mutual Ministry Review: Each year, a review of the ministry of the congregation is required. This review is not an evaluation of any one party, but a mutual review of all the ministry and leadership within the congregation so that appropriate goals and missionary opportunities may be addressed.
11. All priests of the Diocese of Louisiana are expected to participate fully in the life of the diocese, including, but not limited to: diocesan convention; clergy retreats; clergy meetings called by the bishop; mission meetings that relate to the ministry, deanery

meetings, etc. There are some opportunities for ministry that are voluntary, but are appropriate ministries related to the ongoing work of the congregation, including, but not limited to: diocesan camp, diocesan committees, boards, task forces, mission trips, etc.

12. Since there are canons that define the ministry of the vestry, and the priest-in-charge, the expectation is that those canons will be followed. The responsibilities of the priest and the vestry are meant to establish healthy, clear boundaries and support the mission of the Church. The leading of vestry meetings, oversight of all staff, determination of the use of buildings (within the policies established by the Vestry) are all areas of appropriately assigned to the priest-in-charge. The Vestry's ministry is to support the priest in those areas, holding the congregation accountable for living into the mission of the church, and providing the means by which that mission may be accomplished. All of this is clearly stated in the Letter of Agreement and in the canons of the Diocese of Western Louisiana and the Episcopal Church.
13. In every case in which the definition of a term is in question, the Bishop of Western Louisiana is the final arbiter.

**Travel allowance may be either a set amount each month, or the priest may submit a record of travel expenses. Travel expenses are to be paid following the current U.S. government rate established by the IRS for the calendar year. If a set amount is paid, the priest is responsible for reporting any of that amount that is not used for travel in a given year, and must pay personal tax and FICA on that unused portion – OR, return that amount to the Vestry.*