

# NOTES FOR MAKING COVENANTS

As at 24 August 2015

## Parish Ministry

### Parties to the Covenant

The covenant will be between the clergyperson, the parish and the Bishop and, where appropriate, include any other agency that is an integral part of the ministry.

### Primary calling and Core Business of the Priest or Deacon

The primary calling and core business of a priest or Deacon is set out in the **Ordinal** in *A Prayer Book for Australia* 1995 as follows.

#### Priest

This covenant acknowledges that (this person who is to be our priest) has promised:

- To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ; to seek the lost, announce God's justice, warn and correct those in error.
- To encourage and build up the body of Christ, preaching the word of God, leading God's people in prayer, declaring God's forgiveness and blessing and faithfully ministering the sacraments of God's grace with reverence and care.
- To take their part in the life and councils of the Church.
- To be a pastor after the pattern of Christ the great Shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep; and to be a teacher taught by the Lord in wisdom and holiness.
- To lead the people of God as a servant of Christ, to love and serve the people with whom they work, caring alike for young and old, rich and poor, weak and strong.
- Never to forget how great a treasure is placed into their care, for the Church they serve is Christ's spouse and body, purchased at the cost of his own life.
- To remember that they will be called to give account before Jesus Christ and therefore should apply themselves with diligence and care and fashion their life and ministry in accordance with Christ's example.
- To depend on the Holy Spirit and the grace of God, to put away all that does not make for holiness of life. They are to clothe themselves with humility; be constant in prayer; study the Scriptures wholeheartedly, reflecting upon their meaning, so that the priest's life and ministry may be shaped by Christ.

As part of the ordination service the people promise to support and encourage priests in their ministry. With this in mind we look now to how will we work together in God's service.

### **Deacon**

This covenant acknowledges that (this person who is to be our deacon) has promised:

- To be an ambassador of Christ, serving God as they serve others in Jesus' name.
- To proclaim the good news of God's love so that many may be moved to faith and repentance, and hearts be opened to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly in the presence of God.
- To let the transforming love of Jesus be known to all among whom they live and work.
- To strengthen the faithful, teach the young, search out the careless and indifferent.
- To encourage the members of Christ's body by word and example, ministering among the sick, the needy and all who are oppressed or in trouble.
- To take their place in public worship, assist in the administration of the sacraments and play their part in the life and councils of the Church.
- To preach the word of God in the place to which they are licensed and to pray and work for peace and justice in the world.
- To model their life according to the word of God.
- To study the Scriptures, reflecting with God's people upon their meaning that all may be equipped to live out God's truth in the world.
- To put away all that does not make for holiness of life.
- To be faithful in prayer.

As part of the ordination service the people promise to support and encourage deacons in their ministry. With this in mind we look now to how we will work together in God's service.

## Ministry Focus and Action

- Does the Parish have a mission statement or goals? How can these appropriately be incorporated in the covenant?
- Are there particular matters of Parish or community concern/need? How will the clergy and laity work together to address these matters, e.g. developing Parish goals, nurturing lay ministry/children's ministry, community outreach, visiting, pastoral ministry, ecumenical links?
- Are there any matters of special concern (e.g. issues that have caused problems in the past such as difficulties with previous clergy appointments, baptism policy, raffles, music)?
- How will you commit to working together? See Appendix A.

## Self-care and Support Issues

How will the parish nurture and care for the clergy and their family?

- Attendance at clergy conferences and retreats including clergy spouse conference. It is the expectation of the Diocese that the parish will cover these costs. If the cost is a burden please discuss this with the Regional Archdeacon.
- Study leave
- Supervision/membership of a peer group
- Other specific issues, e.g. additional time off after hectic or stressful periods.

## Resourcing of Ministry

It is important that all parties to the covenant are familiar with the Diocesan requirements for Resourcing Ministry as set out in the Administrative Circular Part 1 – Clergy Conditions of Service, 1 April 2015, Attachment A, 18-19. A copy is provided at Appendix B. **Parishes are to complete this summary and attach to the covenant document.**

In particular:

1. Does the basis of the appointment need to be stated e.g. part-time, house for service?
2. What issues need to be clarified e.g. the phone (mobile and landlines), internet access, provision of car, any parish expectations regarding use of the rectory?
3. Where the clergyperson has Diocesan responsibilities, e.g. as a member of a Diocesan committee, to what extent is the parish prepared to bear associated extra costs, such as postage and photocopying?

## **Special Factors**

Are there any factors particular to this ministry which need to be covered in the covenant?

## **Covenant Review**

A covenant may be reviewed to reflect changing circumstances. Any party to the covenant may initiate a review but only after consultation with the Regional/Portfolio Archdeacon.

## **Statement of Covenant's Role**

It needs to be stated that "We enter this covenant, not as a legal document, but as an instrument of trust in God's grace believing that by so doing we will be better able to fulfil the purposes of His kingdom through our joint ministry. We acknowledge that the covenant is undergirded by the ordinal and the Diocesan Governance Ordinance."

Episcopal & Archdeacons Group, 24 August 2015

## **Appendix A: How will you commit to working together?**

In working together we affirm:

- We will pray regularly for each other for family, personal and ministry needs.
- We will be truthful and honest in our communication with each other. We will be willing to share our reflections, concerns and ideas with each other.
- We will acknowledge the value of having different personalities, leadership styles and God given gifts. We will respect and accept each other and learn to serve alongside each other.
- We will not avoid disagreement and will be able to resolve conflict in a healthy context by following Biblical principles. We will seek assistance when needed.
- We will be loyal in our support of one another in discussions with other Parish Council members and with members of the congregation. We will avoid allowing ourselves and others to be divided.
- We will be diligent in providing each other with information and other resources needed to fulfil our roles in the context of the Parish Council and the congregation as a whole. We will be mindful of the expectations others have of us.
- We will be intentional in giving appropriate priority to Parish Council relationships and meetings.
- We will be accountable to each other to develop a balanced lifestyle, to fulfil our responsibilities to the church and to maintain spiritual health.
- We will be purposeful in encouraging and stimulating each other in our commitments to learn, grow and explore new ideas.
- We will care for and support each other.
- We will keep confidential things which are shared with us in the context of a trusting environment on Parish Council.

**Appendix B**

# **Attachment A – Agreement on Conditions of Service**

**Extent of ministry**

The ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ includes not only activities directed to the parish and its well-being, but also ministry on behalf of the Diocese and the community.

**Leave**

The Parish affirms that \_\_\_\_\_ is entitled to leave as outlined in the Diocesan Administrative Circular Part 1 including (strike out that which does not apply):

- Annual Leave
- Long Service Leave
- Study Leave
- Parental Leave
- Public holidays or suitable days in lieu of public holidays where he or she has ministry or civic responsibilities.

At \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ had outstanding annual leave entitlements of \_\_\_\_\_ days.

The Parish has agreed to the following additional leave:

**Remuneration**

The Parish has agreed to pay \_\_\_\_\_% of the recommended minimum clergy/SLM (strike out that which does not apply) stipend.

\_\_\_\_\_ has full use of the Rectory or Church House as a personal residence,

*OR* (strike out that which does not apply)

Has been offered a housing benefit amounting to \$\_\_\_\_\_ per annum.

Attendance at diocesan Clergy Conferences and Synod are to be paid by the Parish.

Expenses connected with the Rectory or Church House shall be handled as follows:

- Energy and utilities -
- Care and maintenance –

Office expenses shall be handled as follows:

- Telephone (landline and/or mobile) –
- Internet -
- Computing –
- Postage –
- Photocopying/printing –

Travel costs are to be reimbursed/handled using the following method (strike out that which does not apply):

1. Fully maintained vehicle (owned by the Parish or leased)
2. Travel allowance and cents/km (agreed km/yr: \_\_\_\_\_)
3. Casual travel reimbursement cents/km.

A Ministry Allowance is to be paid at \_\_\_\_% of the stipend equaling \$\_\_\_\_per annum. It is to be paid into \_\_\_\_\_ account at \_\_\_\_\_ frequency.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Minister

\_\_\_\_\_

Presiding Member/Warden/Treasurer

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_