

# Senior Warden Job Description

The Senior Warden of the congregation is identified and selected following the process outlined in the by-laws of the congregation. What follows is a guideline of the requirements and responsibilities of the senior warden on the vestry. These are in addition to the requirements and responsibilities of all vestry members.

## *Requirements*

The senior warden must be a duly elected member of the vestry, a committed and prayerful believer and follower of Jesus Christ. He or she must be a person of high character who is a respected member of the vestry and within the congregation and community.

## *Responsibilities*

- Meet regularly with the rector (in some cases along with junior warden and church staff) to prayerfully review the life and work of the congregation, do future planning, and work through any issues or problems that exist.
- Perform regular annual performance review of the rector, giving feedback on performance and encouraging opportunities for growth.
- Provide leadership so the vestry, serving alongside the rector, can identify the mission, vision, and goals of the congregation; make and implement plans; assess programs; oversee the church budget and administration; make sure the vestry is well engaged in serving in appropriate ways that utilizes different gifts; and celebrate achievements in the life of the congregation.
- Provide leadership in the congregation by demonstrating a consistently positive attitude that seeks to resolve problems, recognize accomplishments, and give thanks for those things that build community and further the mission and vision of the church.
- Be available to discuss all concerns with the rector, being sure to maintain confidentiality where appropriate.
- Be available to discuss concerns with members of the congregation, always affirming healthy communication while avoiding triangulation by encouraging complainants to speak directly to those involved.
- Be a leader in fostering understanding, forgiveness, and reconciliation, in cases where there exists conflict or criticism involving the rector, staff, vestry or members of the congregation.
- Ensure that policies and procedures regarding employee or volunteer misconduct are in place and in line with diocesan policies and procedures. Immediately take any questions, concerns, and complaints to the rector and/or appropriate authorities.

- Support the rector in taking appropriate steps when employees or volunteers are charged with misconduct or inappropriate behavior.
- Take action to intervene promptly (with others as appropriate) if the rector is charged with misconduct, has problems with drugs or alcohol, or is acting in any ways that are inappropriate, drawing the bishop into the process if that becomes necessary.
- Petition the bishop on behalf of the vestry to intervene in cases where conflict or performance issues imperil the pastoral relationship between the rector and the congregation. Be sure to petition the bishop prior to any action being taken with the rector.
- Encourage the rector to identify and make changes in their work life in cases where he/she is overworked, disregarding his or her health and the well-being or the health of his/her family.
- Assist in the identification of persons for leadership roles and participate in inviting them to serve in those roles.
- Be prepared to assist the rector or to step in and do what is necessary (represent the congregation at community meetings, take responsibility for preparing the church for special events, advocate on behalf of the congregation, etc.)
- Have a detailed knowledge of the by-laws of the parish and the constitutions and canons of the diocese, assuring that he/she is overseeing the management of the parish while also fulfilling all the legal responsibilities.

### *When the Congregation is Without a Rector*

- When the congregation is without a rector, lead the congregation by ensuring that the worship services, program, staff oversight and pastoral care needs are being met, the search process for a new rector is initiated and carried out, and communications with the diocese are maintained.
- Ensure that the process of searching for and calling a new rector is in line with the process outlined by the diocese and communication with the diocese and bishop is maintained throughout.
- Prepare a Letter of Agreement with the proposed new rector, which outlines mutual responsibilities and is subject to the bishop's approval. Check with the diocese for sample letters if needed.

### *Times to Be in Touch with the Bishop*

- When the rector or priest-in-charge resigns, or at the beginning of a rector search
- When there are ongoing concerns with or about the rector which have already been addressed with him or her without resolution
- Before interviewing any potential candidates in a rector search
- Before offering a position to a new rector

- When there is a complaint of misconduct regarding a member of the clergy per Title IV of the provincial canons. In the case of clergy who are not the rector, the senior warden would be in collaboration with the rector on communication with the bishop

## *Additional Responsibilities*

The following responsibilities may not apply in all congregations. They are often more applicable in smaller congregations, especially those without full-time clergy. In cases where the clergy's role is limited to providing Sunday services and pastoral care, the wardens may provide more direct, primary leadership in the congregation.

- Conduct the vestry meetings in the absence of, or when delegated by, a rector or priest-in-charge. While the rector is normally the person to preside over vestry meetings, he or she may delegate this responsibility.
- Conduct the annual meeting. Again, the rector often does this but, in some congregations, the senior warden takes this responsibility.
- Visit anyone known to have a major problem with a program, vestry decision, clergy, etc. in consultation with, and often accompanied by, the rector.