

OUR DIOCESE – OUR PARISH

Glossary of Terms

Archdeacon

A priest delegated and appointed by the Bishop to assist in oversight of a group of parishes. Traditionally, archdeacons are the “oculi episcopali” – the eyes of the Bishop. Archdeacons operate within a territory known as an “archdeaconry” (hence the title “territorial archdeacon”) comprised of one or more deaneries, and assist the Bishop with personnel and administrative matters. An archdeacon uses the title “The Venerable” (see [Forms of Address for Anglican Clergy](#)).

Bishop

The chief pastor who gives oversight to a Diocese. There are three kinds of Bishops referred to in diocesan legislation, all consecrated by indelible ordinations: Diocesan, Coadjutor, and Suffragan. The Diocesan may appoint an Assistant Bishop.

Canons

The laws of the church in a Diocese, referred to as Canon Law, and; an appointment made and a title conferred by the Bishop to recognize special service to the Diocese and membership in the Cathedral Advisory Chapter. Honorary Canons are not members of the Chapter. Canons use the title “The Reverend Canon.”

The Anglican Church Act, 2003

An act of the Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick, which gives corporate status to the Office of the Bishop and the Diocesan Synod of Fredericton. It provides the legal framework for the establishment of parish corporations, for the writing and revision of the Constitution and Canons, and for the general function of the Anglican Church in the Province of New Brunswick. The 2003 Act was amended in 2017.

Deanery

A geographic area identified by the Bishop and incorporating several parishes in close proximity. There are nine deaneries in our Diocese. (Chaleur-Miramichi, Fredericton, Kingston-Kennebecasis, Lancaster, St. Andrews, Saint John, Shediac, Woodstock, York)

Diocese

A diocese is made up of local parishes in a given geographic area with a diocesan bishop as its chief priest and pastor. The boundaries of the Diocese of Fredericton are coterminous with those of the Province of New Brunswick.

Diocesan Council

The "Synod between Synods." The Diocesan Council is the main governing body of the Diocese when Synod is not in session. Its membership includes the Bishop, the Dean, Synod Officers, Archdeacons, clergy and laity elected at the Archdeaconry Greater Chapter level and four others (including a youth representative) appointed by the Council itself.

Incumbent

A specific designation of a priest, deacon or layperson appointed by the Bishop to minister in a parish or shared parish setting. Incumbents may be appointed as priest and rector, priest-in-charge, deacon-in-charge or any other designation the Bishop sees fit. Incumbents are installed/inducted to parish ministry by the bishop or an archdeacon during a public service.

Parish

The local level of the diocesan church. A Diocese is divided into parishes each with its own geographic boundary and with one or more churches (points).

Parish Corporation

The legally incorporated body of the Parish. Parishes in New Brunswick are incorporated by the Bishop, under The Anglican Church Act, 2003. The Parish Corporation is comprised of the Incumbent, Wardens, and Vestry of each parish. Churches within each parish are not normally incorporated (see [Canon Six](#)).

Regional Dean

A member of the Deanery clericus who has been appointed to assist the Bishop with Deanery administrative matters. The Regional Dean is usually appointed on nomination by his or her peers.

Vestry

Persons elected as members of the Parish Corporation. Vestry members assist the wardens in carrying out their duties (see [Canon Six](#)). The term "vestry" and "corporation" are often used interchangeably i.e. a meeting of "vestry" or a meeting of the "corporation", however, since the incumbent and wardens are not technically vestry members; the more accurate is "a meeting of the corporation."

Warden (Church Warden)

The principal elected lay officer of the Parish. Two church wardens are elected annually. As well as duties defined in [Canon Six](#), church wardens work with and support the incumbent in the wider mission of the church. Parishes with more than one church (worship point) may appoint Chapel Wardens. Although a chapel warden is not a canonical "warden," they can play an essential role in assisting church wardens in their duties.

Our Diocesan Church

Bishops

In Anglican episcopal governance every diocese is presided over by a diocesan bishop, often referred to as “the Diocesan.” Some dioceses have suffragan bishops (assistants) to help with the episcopal work of the Church. A bishop who is elected with the right of succession to the position of diocesan is called a coadjutor bishop.

The Diocesan Synod

The Anglican Church is “episcopally lead and synodically governed.” Through the Synod (the legislative body); the laity (people), clergy (those in holy orders), and bishops are involved in the life and governance of the Church.

Clergy licensed and resident in the diocese are members of Synod. Other members of Synod are diocesan officers (Treasurer, Secretary, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor), the President of the Diocesan Anglican Church Women (ACW) and Lay Evangelists (formerly Church Army Officers) when licensed and resident.

Parishes are represented at Synod by lay people elected at the parish annual meeting. Each parish may elect up to two lay delegates, or three as long as one delegate meets the current definition of youth delegate, and a like number of substitutes.

The Synod is a legislative body as well as an educational body where members learn of programs within the Church emphasizing ministry and outreach. It is only at Synod that the Constitution and Canons of the diocese can be changed. It is to Synod that the Diocesan Council and its committees and other groups report on their ministry and activities.

[The Anglican Church Act, 2003 \(as amended in 2017\)](#) and the [Constitution of the Diocesan Synod](#) has established a body called the Diocesan Council, which is the Synod between meetings of the Synod. Its membership includes the bishop, archdeacons, the dean, the diocesan ACW president, the chair of the Finance Committee, the officers of the Synod, clergy and laity from each of the seven archdeaconries, and three laity and one youth representative appointed by the Council itself.

There are a number of standing committees that report to the Diocesan Council and through them, to the Synod. They include Finance, Constitution and Canons, Nominating, Human Resources and the Diocesan Executive Committee.

In addition there are numerous other groups with various roles and responsibilities. These committees offer clergy and laity the opportunity to share gifts, talents and expertise in various aspects of the Church's work.

Synod also elects persons to represent the diocese at the (ecclesiastical) Provincial Synod and the General Synod levels. Provincial Synod ([Province of Canada](#)) is comprised of seven dioceses east of Ottawa and meets tri-annually.

The General Synod, also meets every three years and like our own synod, is a legislative and educational body. General Synod carries out the work of the [Anglican Church of Canada](#) nationally. In addition, the General Synod sends a bishop, priest, and lay person to the Anglican Consultative Council at which is represented all Provinces of the [Worldwide Anglican Communion](#) and which meets every three years to discuss and reflect on the work of mission, ecumenism, doctrine, and social justice issues.

Anglicans are linked by a common tradition and heritage, worship, ordained ministry and the three cornerstones of scripture, tradition and reason. One Body of Christ composed of churches which, united under the One Divine Head, and in the fellowship of One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church . . . and Worship One God and Father through the same Lord Jesus Christ by the same Holy Divine spirit who is given to them that believe to guide them into all truth. (Solemn Declaration - Book of Common Prayer, 1962)

The Regional Deanery

For the purposes of improving communication and encouraging the involvement of parishes in sharing concerns and needs, the Diocese of Fredericton is divided into nine Regional Deaneries. They are comprised of parishes in a given geographical area. Each deanery has a Regional Dean whose task is to provide leadership, convene meetings of the deanery clericus and to assist in the pastoral and administrative work in that particular area of the diocese.

The Archdeaconry

The diocese is divided into seven areas with one or more deaneries called Archdeaconries. Archdeacons are clergy appointed by the bishop to assist with matters within one's own archdeaconry. The archdeacons work with the regional deans to ensure that clergy receive the support and assistance they require to carry out the ministry. Archdeaconries currently include:

- Chatham (Chaleur - Miramichi Deanery)
- Fredericton (Fredericton and York Deaneries)
- Kingston and the Kennebecasis (Deanery of Kingston - Kennebecasis)
- St. Andrews (St. Andrews and Lancaster Deaneries)
- Moncton (Shediac Deanery)
- Saint John (Saint John Deanery)
- Woodstock (Woodstock Deanery)

Archdeaconry Greater Chapter

This is a broad cross section of clergy, and parish lay leadership, in an archdeaconry, which meets at the call of the archdeacon on a regular basis for information and to facilitate the ministry in that region.

Parish Structure

THE PARISH

At the local level in each diocese the unit of administration and pastoral responsibility is called a "parish." Some parishes have just one church and may be referred to as a "single point parish." Other parishes may have two or more churches and are referred to as "multi-point parishes."

Parishes in the Diocese of Fredericton are incorporated under The Anglican Church Act, 2003 and are referred to by a specific name, which may reflect the name of a church in the parish or the geographic area of the parish. The standard format for the naming of a parish corporation is: "The Corporation of the Anglican Parish of _____."

A parish is spiritually lead by an incumbent, usually a person in the holy order of priesthood, appointed by the bishop. The appointment of a new incumbent to the parish is celebrated at a special service called a Celebration of New Ministry. When two or more parishes are served by one incumbent or priest-in-charge, those parishes retain their own corporate identity and status. An arrangement is normally made with regard to the sharing of the costs of the ministry appointment including, stipend and related expenses and the rectory costs.

MEETINGS

Parish Meetings

All parishes are required to hold an annual general meeting of parishioners not later than the last day of February (Canon Six (2)). The meeting is normally called and chaired by the incumbent. From time to time there may be need for "special" meetings of parishioners and they are called and conducted in a manner similar to that of the annual meeting.

Corporation (Vestry) Meetings

The Parish Corporation is required to meet at least six times per year (Canon Six (4)). Such meetings are an integral part of the life of the parish. While the incumbent calls, and normally chairs, vestry meetings there is provision in some circumstances for them to be called by the church wardens.

[Canon Six](#) contains helpful information regarding annual meetings, special meetings and corporation meetings.

PARISH OFFICERS

The Incumbent

A cleric appointed and licensed as rector or incumbent holds an office of the parish corporation (the incumbent, wardens, and vestry), is a full participating member and its chair.

The incumbent of the parish is the "chief liturgical officer" and as such is solely responsible for the liturgy. All those who assist in public worship do so under the direction of the incumbent (organists and choir directors and choirs, layreaders, visiting and assisting clergy, etc.). While clergy are part of the parish corporation and are provided a stipend by the parish, they are appointed by, and responsible to, the bishop of the diocese.

A person appointed to have charge of a parish but is not an incumbent is not a member of the parish corporation, but is entitled to attend corporation meetings with voice but no vote (Canon Six 1(3)). Parish corporations will often by resolution appoint the priest (or deacon)-in-charge to the role of chair of meetings of a corporation, as well as request the fulfilment of other duties normally performed by an incumbent.

The Church Wardens

Church Wardens are the principal elected lay officers of the parish, and a mutual sharing of duties and responsibilities with the incumbent is recommended by Canon Six. Wardens are elected each year at the parish annual meeting (Canon Six 2(1)(b)). The limit to consecutive terms as warden is five years. Wardens must be members of the laity and otherwise meet the qualifications for voting member of the parish.

There is no canonical distinction between junior and senior warden, although many parishes have internal by-laws or custom which make that distinction.

Canon Six 6(1) and 6(7) outline the duties and responsibilities of the church wardens. Wardens are called upon to attend to many functions, including regularly evaluating the overall life of the parish, to recommend and offer ideas for effective ministry and to give leadership towards the achievement of the purpose of the parish.

Canon Six (3) makes provision for the election of Chapel Wardens in cases where there is more than one church building in the parish. The duties of the chapel wardens are generally restricted to the care of the local church building.

The Treasurer

The Parish Treasurer is appointed by the corporation (Canon Six 9(1)). The treasurer may, but need not be, a member of the corporation. The treasurer shall not be a church warden or a member of the same household as any other parish financial signing authority.

The responsibilities of the treasurer are defined in Canon Six 9(2). Beyond those specific canonical definitions, from a functional standpoint, the treasurer's work represents a broad range of responsibilities:

- Keep a full record, using accepted accounting procedures, of all the financial affairs and transactions of the parish. This will include collecting and transmitting of all funds for diocesan and parish commitments on time and in full, paying all bills, balancing bank accounts, and generally recording and

reporting on the financial affairs of the parish subject to direction by the corporation.

- Inform the wardens and the corporation if any unforeseen financial problems arise within the parish or churches, or if any irregularities should occur.
- Present a current financial position of the parish to the corporation at least quarterly (and preferably at all meetings).
- Submit complete year-end financial statements to the corporation so they may be audited and presented at the annual meeting of parishioners.
- Should be actively involved in the process of preparing the parish budget and should be a member of any parish financial committees.
- Ensure that required financial reports to the diocese and to any government agencies is provided within the appropriate and legislated time frames.

In some parishes there is more than one treasurer. While this does reflect local custom, it is not encouraged (or allowed by Canon). The spirit of Canon Six is that one person is responsible for the financial administrative affairs of the parish corporation. When that task is divided it can lead to confusion and serious administrative difficulty. This needs to be recognized and steps need to be taken to ensure an orderly flow of information and financial accountability.

It should be noted as well that treasurers are not responsible for making decisions concerning the expenditure of parish or church funds, but are to keep records of such actions. Such decisions are the responsibility of the corporation. Canon Six does not stipulate a term of office for the treasurer.

The Vestry Clerk

The Vestry Clerk is the official, legal secretary of the corporation and is appointed by the corporation (Canon Six 8(1)). He or she may, but need not be, a member of the corporation. The vestry clerk's responsibilities are listed in Canon Six 8(2). It does not stipulate a term of office for the vestry clerk.

Members of the Vestry

Vestry members are elected at the annual meeting (Canon Six 2(1)(a)). The canon calls for a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve persons to be so elected. A parish may establish local practice or by-law as to term of office to provide continuity of leadership, as long as this does not conflict with the canon.

Lay Delegates to Synod

Delegates and their substitutes to Diocesan Synod are elected at the parish annual meeting (Constitution s. 4).

Delegates who attend a synod session are considered Members of Synod and should have an appreciation for the wider church to which we belong. Synod is not comprised of separate and competing interests, but instead, it is essential that we see ourselves as individual parts who are united into one body.

Delegates to synod should make an effort to understand the nature and function of the Diocesan Synod. While there are a number of responsibilities related to attending a synod session itself, there are other aspects to being a member of synod. Delegates should be aware of and accept the commitment of time and effort required prior to, during, and after a synod session. Delegates should be prepared, if called upon, to allow their gifts and talents to be used at the diocesan level (see [Policy B-2 Responsibilities of a Member of Synod](#)).

The decisions of Diocesan Synod are collective and are based on discussion and debate at synod and, once made, they are the decisions of the whole church in the diocese. Each synod member has an important role in that decision making process and, of equal importance, is a vital link in the chain of carrying the decisions forward to their parishes.

The Corporation (often referred to as the "Vestry")

Canon Six s. 4 outlines the structure of the parish corporation as operating in a "shared" way. This means that no one individual alone bears the responsibility for the activities of the parish. All vestry members, with the incumbent, wardens and other elected members, have a responsibility to be alert to the state of the overall life of the parish and congregation(s) and be active in recommending ideas for effective ministry and leadership. Vestry members normally share in the leadership and help maintain a healthy parish environment.

Signing Officers

It is vital that all bank accounts and investments which are the property of the parish be in the name of and under the control of the corporation. This control is evidenced by the appointment of signing officers as per Canon Six 10. Cheques and other money instruments issued by the parish corporation require two signatures; that is, any two of the parish treasurer, the incumbent and a church warden.

Occasionally, it comes to light that a bank account, a fund, or some form of investment, owned by the corporation, is under the direct control and oversight of a single individual. This situation is unacceptable. As a corporation in receipt of charitable donations, and in respect of the implied trust that accompanies those gifts, it is imperative that all accounts be under the direct control of the parish.

This does not mean that local churches and organizations in the parish cannot hold accounts - if that is the accepted practice and it is endorsed by the corporation. However, in cases where these accounts do exist, and there is a desire to continue them, a corporation must ensure the following accountability provisions are in place:

- a financial report to be filed regularly,
- accounts and transactions included in the annual audit of parish books,
- signing officers appointed specifically by the corporation, and
- the accounts named in a manner that reflects the corporate ownership of the funds, i.e., including the parish name.

It is vital, as well, that a parish has control over the appointment of persons authorized to sign income tax receipts for charitable gifts. This person is often the appointed Envelope Secretary.

Auditors

Canon Six 4(1)(k) states that the books of account be audited annually, prior to presentation to the annual meeting. The canon calls for an “audit” to be done “by a professional accountant or by two competent persons.” The corporation should appoint the auditors accordingly. A “checklist” is available as part of the [Parish Financial Audit](#) to assist in the orderly audit of parish financial records.