



Churches Together

in the Merseyside Region

Registered Charity No: 51906

APPOINTMENT of CLERGY in LOCAL ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIPS (Category 2 –Congregations in Covenanted Partnership)

Guidelines for Ecumenical Consultation

The appointment of clergy in local ecumenical partnerships is a very sensitive matter and needs to be handled with care and discretion.

Category 1 LEPs (Single Congregation Partnerships), Category 4 LEPs (Chaplaincy Partnerships), Category 5 LEPs (Mission Partnerships) and Category 6 LEPs (Education Partnerships) will frequently include protocols for ecumenical consultation over appointments in their constitutions. Many Category 2 LEPs (Congregations in Covenanted Partnership) will not have such protocols and look to the Regional Sponsoring Body for guidance.

These Guidelines are offered particularly to Category 2 LEPs, but may also be useful for LEPs in other categories which do not have agreed protocols. Experience suggests that a framework which is known and acknowledged by all partners helps to create an atmosphere of trust and confidence in which the appointment is made.

Guidelines approved by the Regional Sponsoring Body, Autumn 2003

1. All appointments shall be made by the appropriate appointing body, following the normal practice for that church, with the variations from the normal procedure which are set out below.
2. When it is anticipated that a minister serving the LEP may leave, or before any major changes in the responsibility of the minister presently in post are considered, or if additional ministerial resource within the LEP is contemplated, the local ecumenical body representing the local churches in covenant with one another shall be invited to make representations to the appointing body setting out their understanding of the needs of the situation.
3. Where there is a Local Advisory Group or equivalent body, it will also be invited to submit comments.
4. The appointing body will be asked to take note of the comments received, and to arrange for any candidate for the vacancy to meet clergy from other covenanting churches prior to the appointment being confirmed.
5. Clergy of the other covenanting churches will be invited to make any observations to the appointing body prior to the confirmation of the appointment, but it must be clearly understood that the process is one of consultation and not veto, and that the appointing church retains the right to make the appointment.
6. In all cases, but especially where the appointment is to be made by the Roman Catholic Church, it is important that these procedures should be followed with great urgency.

Appendix

The following is a short summary of the normal appointing procedure for each of the denominations which have churches involved in Local Covenants. It is hoped that this will provide useful background information.

Baptist

In the event of a vacancy, the church secretary informs the Regional Minister (Pastoral) who consults the deacons about the type of ministry needed and sends a list of suitable ministers with curricula vitae. From this, or elsewhere, the deacons select and invite one person from the list to an informal meeting to meet other people and to visit the church and manse. They may then invite the candidate to conduct Sunday services which may be regarded as "preaching with a view", or they may invite him or her on a second occasion. For this purpose. On this or on another convenient occasion opportunity may be taken for an informal gathering to meet the minister and spouse. The church membership would be informed of the date and encouraged to attend. There may also be an informal weekday gathering to meet the minister and spouse. The deacons decide what recommendation to take to a specially convened church meeting. For an invitation to be extended a substantial majority is required, commonly a 75% majority of those present and voting.

Church of England

When a vacancy occurs in a benefice, the Diocesan Registrar informs the Patron (who may or may not be the Bishop) whose responsibility it is to choose the new incumbent. The Parochial Church Council are responsible for producing a statement of "the needs, conditions and traditions of the parish" commonly called a Parish Profile. The profile goes to the Patron and to the Bishop, and the Patron would normally consult with the Bishop about appropriate people to be considered for the post. The Patron then sends a person to meet with two people appointed as their representatives by the Parochial Church Council (who may or may not be the Churchwardens) and they have the right of veto over any person whom the Patron suggests. Once the Patron, the parish representatives and the candidate are all agreed, the Patron submits the name to the Bishop who then has the final decision as to whether or not he is willing to institute the nominee put forward. If the Patron has failed to nominate within nine months of the benefice being vacant the Patronage lapses automatically to the Archbishop of York.

The Bishop may suspend the Patron's right of presentation (this frequently happens at times of pastoral reorganisation), in which case no incumbent can be appointed. The Bishop may instead license a Priest-in-Charge, who lacks the legal status of an incumbent, but whose pastoral responsibilities are identical with those of a rector or vicar. A Team Vicar is usually appointed jointly by the Bishop and the Team Rector, in consultation with other members of the Team, as well as the Parochial Church Council. In the case of Assistant Curates, the Incumbent will recommend to the Bishop, who will at his discretion license the nominee.

Methodist

All appointments are to the Circuit, not to the local church, and run from 1st September. Vacancies will normally be confirmed by the Circuit Meeting following the Conference the previous summer. Vacancies and the names of ministers available are published in booklet form in the autumn and negotiations between Circuit Stewards and ministers take place within a prescribed and limited period (currently October – December) Negotiations between ministers and a Circuit may only be initiated by the Chair of the District containing the Circuit. Negotiations are understood as beginning at the point when an arrangement is made for a minister to visit a

Circuit.

Provisional invitations require the approval of the Circuit Meeting (or the Circuit Invitation Committee acting on its behalf). The Methodist Conference (June/July) makes appointments and fills outstanding vacancies..

In duly constituted ecumenical areas and in Circuits where an appointment has to be made in an approved local ecumenical partnership, the Chair of the District, in the course of considering with which ministers to initiate negotiations by the Circuit Stewards, must confer with the Sponsoring Body.

Initial invitations to ministers are normally for five years, but in duly constituted ecumenical areas, where the constitution of the area allows, may be for seven years.

Roman Catholic Church

Priests are incardinated into a diocese by ordination, and will normally serve in that diocese for life. The Bishop in that diocese is responsible for all appointments the priest may receive, including appointments which may take him temporarily into another jurisdiction, such as Chaplain to the Forces.

The Bishop will discuss prospective appointments with his advisers, including the Dean of the area where a Parish Priest is to be appointed, or the Parish Priest who is to receive a new Assistant. The priests themselves will also be consulted, and the laity may choose to make their considerations known, but the Bishop makes the final decision.

In the case of parishes committed to the care of a Religious Order, the Religious superiors would designate the member of their order who is to have pastoral care there under the Bishop. Religious are not restricted to the service of one diocese.

Permanent Deacons are normally ordained for the service of a particular parish, but this does not preclude their subsequent acceptance elsewhere, with the Bishop's approval.

The Salvation Army

Church leaders, known as officers, are appointed by the Salvation Army to a corps (church), residential social centre or chaplaincy. An officer's first appointment would be normally for a minimum of 3 years, which can be extended, the second and subsequent appointments would be usually for a minimum of 5 years with possibility of extension.

The Salvation Army in UK is divided in to 18 divisions, each with its own leader - the Divisional Commander, who has responsibility with his/her team for the personnel resources in the Division. Any extension of appointment or change of appointment is discussed with the local Pastoral Care Council or relevant local team in the presence of the current leader(s). Consultation centres around the needs of the mission of the corps/centre/chaplaincy. A personal profile of each officer is drawn up as well as a profile of the appointment to be filled. The Divisional Commander and her/his team make the final recommendation for extension or change, dependent upon the mission needs of the appointment, the officers, and the wider Salvation Army. This information is shared openly with the officers and their people. Formal notification of the new appointment is received in February, with the move to the new appointment taking place in June.

An officer may be appointed from one division to another, if there is no appropriate opening for their gifts and skills in their present division. Such instances are discussed annually at a week-long conference of the 18 Divisional leaders. The personal profiles of the officers and the profiles of the openings are discussed and appointments are made on the information shared.

United Reformed Church

An impending vacancy is notified to the District Council, which has responsibility in consultation with the Synod Moderator and the church(es) in question of deciding on "the scope of the pastorate" (full or part-time). The District Council also appoints an interim moderator to give oversight until a settlement is made. The Synod Moderator discusses with the elders the style of ministry needed and shares this with the other Synod Moderators. From this consultation, the name of a minister for consideration is suggested. The church(es) are free to consider other names after checking with the Synod Moderator. The church invites a minister (always one only at a time) to talk with a vacancy committee (usually elders and some other leaders) about the possibility of his/her becoming the minister. If both committee and minister wish to proceed further, he/she is invited to meet the church and conduct worship. Thereafter, if there is a substantial majority in favour, the church meeting issues a call, which the minister may accept or decline. The invitation has to receive the concurrence of the church's District Council and of the District Council where the minister is currently serving.