

Introduction

This manual outlines the common roles found in an Anglican congregation in the Diocese of British Columbia. It is not a substitute for the canons of the diocese.

The roles of incumbent (clergy appointed by the bishop to serve in a parish) and churchwarden in the Anglican church were established centuries ago. Each congregation has one incumbent and two churchwardens (or warden).

One warden is elected by the congregation at its annual "vestry" meeting (or sometimes referred to as the annual general meeting [AGM]) and one is appointed by the incumbent. Together, the incumbent and churchwardens form the group of dedicated people who provide the core leadership for the local "vestry" or congregation.

This leadership triumvirate is quite Anglican in its creation—it is a pragmatic form of governance. The churchwardens, by and large, look after the "temporal" affairs of the congregation: money, property and governance. They always act jointly, never one without the other. The bishop has the chief responsibility for oversight of ministry in all parishes in the diocese. The incumbent, as the bishop's representative in the parish on a day-to-day basis, has primary responsibility for the "spiritual" affairs: liturgy, education and pastoral concerns.

That might seem like a clean and simple way of delegating responsibilities and authority. There is, however, often not such a simple or easy separation of duties. There is very little, if anything, we do in our churches that can be separated from our mission and God's holy work. Therefore, the churchwardens will always work very closely with the incumbent as nothing we do is totally "temporal" and everything we do here on earth is at least in part "spiritual."

As you proceed through this manual, if you find quite a few areas of "shared responsibility" then you are reading this correctly. Our system of governance, which relies on teamwork and collaboration is a source of support.

There is one more concept that you need to be aware of before you delve into the specifics in this manual. The Diocese of British Columbia is a legal corporation created under its own Act(s) of the BC Legislature dating from the mid 1800s. This means that the rules we refer to (our Canons or Canon law) are not "private rules" or bylaws of a private corporation; they are provincial statute.

Parishes

Traditionally, a parish or congregation has been associated with a defined mission field or geographic area set apart by the diocesan bishop. Although the incumbent has oversight of a parish, the incumbent is acting on behalf of the bishop.

Our parishes and congregations have a fairly independent form of governance and management. However, the parish always exists in the context of and works on behalf of the mission of the diocese. As such, it ministers to the local community on behalf of the whole diocese. In that respect, our parishes and our diocese always exist and work together in mutuality of interest. Each parish is the diocese in its local context.

Incumbent and Churchwardens

The incumbent and churchwardens are responsible for the leadership of the congregation. The incumbent holds office in a parish at the bishop's pleasure and is accountable to the bishop for worship, liturgy, sacraments and the ecclesiastical concerns of the congregation and its pastoral care.

In collaboration with the incumbent, the churchwardens are responsible for administering and managing the business (temporal) affairs of the congregation. It is expected that churchwardens become familiar with the canons and use it as an important reference document.

Churchwardens

As mentioned previously, each vestry will have two churchwardens. One is appointed by the incumbent and is often referred to as the "rector's warden." The other is elected by the vestry and is often referred to as the "people's warden." If the incumbent fails to appoint a churchwarden, the vestry shall elect two. If the vestry fails to elect a churchwarden, the incumbent shall appoint two.

Churchwardens must act jointly at all times; they cannot exercise their powers separately, nor can one act without the consent of the other. Additionally, they must always function in concert with the incumbent.

Duties

Churchwardens are charged with the responsibility for public relations and leadership within the congregation. They should:

- Maintain and develop their own spiritual life and live out their baptismal covenant.
- Be supportive of parish life by attending congregational events whenever possible.
- Be supportive of the incumbent and other staff, ensuring they take appropriate time off and maintain work-life balance.

The churchwardens, with the assistance of the treasurer, are responsible for the care and accounting of all money given to the congregation for any purpose and from any source.

The churchwardens are to carry out all legitimate directions arising from Synod and all legitimate directions of their vestry. The duties of churchwarden are outlined in Regulation 6.8.01—Churchwardens.

Qualifications

- Must be a member of the congregation or parish.
- Be at least eighteen years old.

A churchwarden holds office for one year from the time of his or her appointment, or until their successor is appointed or elected. Some congregations elect their churchwardens for more than one year. It is also common for parishes to elect deputy or assistant churchwardens to provide continuity in the office. It cannot be assumed that such assistants will automatically move on to the position of churchwarden, they must be elected or appointed in the proper manner.

Regulation 6.8.01

Source: *Constitution, Canons and Regulations of the Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia*

- The specific duties of the churchwardens in the Diocese of British Columbia, whether chosen by the incumbent or the parishioners, shall be the same:
- See that the divine service is regularly and decently performed by the persons licensed by the bishop or holding the bishop's permission to officiate, and ensure that all things requisite for divine service are provided.

- Set an example of regular attendance and hearty response on the part of the congregation, and generally assist and support the incumbent by zeal and moral support in all matters affecting the welfare and advancement of the parish; to take care that order is preserved in the church, and to see that the parishioners are sufficiently accommodated in the church.
- Supervise all financial matters of the parish, and ensure that a financial statement is drawn up each month for presentation to the parish council.
- Ensure that the incumbent's stipend is paid in full regularly each month.
- Ensure that the yearly accounts, duly examined and reviewed, are laid before the parishioners at the annual meeting; and that a copy of such accounts is sent to the diocesan finance officer, as well as the parish annual return form sent from the synod office.
- Hand over to their successors in office any cash balance in hand after the approval of the accounts, together with the church goods and inventory.
- Ensure that all properties belonging to the parish are in repair and insured; and all premiums and taxes are paid (See Canon 6.6—Insurance)
- Execute contracts normally entered on behalf of the parish, having obtained the previous consent or subsequent ratification of the parish council.
- Undertake, with the incumbent, the management and control of the church cemetery or cemeteries within the parish, subject to the terms of any trust affecting the same, and subject to the regulations on cemeteries.
- At the beginning of the year assist the incumbent in preparing and promptly submitting a table of statistics on a form provided by the diocesan office.
- Provide for the care of the parish during the annual holiday of the incumbent.
- Report to the bishop the death of the incumbent, or the inability from any cause to fulfill the duties of the incumbent.
- Take care of the rectory.
- Assist the incumbent in the appointment of all lay employees.
- Assist in the timely completing, signing and remitting of filings under the Income Tax Act, so that the parish's standing as a registered charity is maintained.

Record Keeping

The following books or records are to be kept by the parochial authorities:

- Register book or books of baptisms, confirmations, banns, marriages and burials.
- A register of all services that take place in the church, with the names of the officiating ministers and the offerings received.
- Minutes and resolutions of the vestry meetings and parish council.
- Parish accounts.
- Constitution, canons, and regulations of the diocese, to be retained permanently in the parish, in addition to any other copies required by the incumbent and other officers;
- An inventory of all church goods and lands.

Appointment or election as churchwarden does not imply the assumption of any personal liability in the due performance of the duties of churchwardens as such.

Term of Office

Churchwardens shall normally continue in office until their successors are appointed or elected.

- If a churchwarden wishes to resign the office, notice in writing shall be given to the incumbent or if there is no incumbent, to the bishop or the commissary.
- If the office of churchwarden chosen by the parishioners shall become vacant, a meeting of the parishioners shall be called as soon as conveniently may be, to elect some other qualified person to the vacant office. If the office of churchwarden chosen by the parishioners shall become vacant during the year, with less than six months of the normal term remaining, a churchwarden may be elected by the parish council without the necessity of calling a meeting of the parishioners.
- If the office of the churchwarden appointed by the incumbent shall become vacant the incumbent shall appoint without delay some other qualified person to the vacant office.
- Immediately after the appointment of a churchwarden to fill a vacancy the incumbent shall publicly announce to the congregation during the time of divine

service, the name of such person, and shall have such person sign the required declaration required and advise the diocesan office of the name of such person.

Deputy Churchwardens

The canons for the Diocese of British Columbia are silent regarding deputy churchwardens. By practice, several parishes have elected and or appointed deputy churchwardens. They assist churchwardens in the performance of their duties. During the temporary absence or incapacity of a churchwarden and during a vacancy until such vacancy is filled, a deputy churchwarden, as requested by the incumbent, shall fulfill the duties of a churchwarden.