

Preacher

Description, Role and Authority

The Ministers of the Church each offer different images of ministry as they preach. The Bishop, as preacher, expounds the universal faith of the Church, leading the diocese and its congregations in our shared walk of faith. The Priest, as preacher, expounds the sacramental nature of both Word and Creation. Teaching us to see Christ's reconciling work in Church and world, she or he calls us to participate in that work. The Deacon, as preacher, reminds us that Christ is encountered in acts of service and in those whom we serve. Highlighting the abundance of God's love, he or she reminds us that we have much to offer our broken and needy world. The Lay Person, as preacher, reminds us to bear witness to Christ wherever we may be; working, praying, and giving for the increase of the kingdom of God.¹

- The Preacher is a confirmed communicant in good standing who functions with the permission of the Bishop and under the direct supervision of the congregation's Rector.
- Once licensed the Preacher functions solely at the discretion of the Rector. The license is only valid for the congregation in which the Preacher is a member at the time of licensing. (The Preacher may be given special permission by the Bishop to preach in other circumstances or in other congregations provided he or she has received an invitation to preach by that Rector.)
- The Preacher, under the direction of the Rector, will pursue continuing education.

Training

The applicant for Preacher will be trained and found competent and knowledgeable to the Rector's satisfaction in the following areas of study:

- Holy Scriptures, interpretation, contents and background
- The Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal
- The conduct of public worship
- An overview of Church history including current events in The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion
- Christian ethics and moral theology
- Church's doctrine as set forth in the Creeds and An Outline of Faith, commonly called the Catechism
- Pastoral dynamics of preaching
- Homiletics, including use of voice

Training in the above areas will be supervised by the Rector and will include discussion of one book from the Study Bibliography in each of the following categories:

¹ <http://www.epischicago.org/congregation-resources/lay-licensing.cfm>

- Introduction to Anglican Christianity
- Worship and the Book of Common Prayer
- Scripture and Preaching
- Church History and Theology
- Christian Life in the World

Additionally the Preacher will be trained in Homiletics using the method found below, with supervision being provided by the Rector. The practicum will be structured within the context of a 6-8 member listening group and will include 4 to 6 practice sermons. Because the ministry of the Preacher primarily offers the fruits of the Preacher's theological education, the process of training and education is intensive and will require work over a period as long as one year.

Application for a License

- The Rector should send the Preacher Application (p. 7 of this document) to the Executive Assistant to the Canon to the Ordinary in the Office of the Bishop.
- The license can be revoked by the Bishop upon request of the Rector.

The term of a Preacher License is three years. Licenses for Preachers are not renewable and congregations should consider who should be raised up to fill this role when the license expires.

Documentation

The Rector will maintain a confidential personnel file for the Preacher which shall contain the following:

1. Documentation of training, examination and competency in the areas listed above in "Training"
2. A copy of the application sent to the Bishop by the Rector
3. A copy of the certificate from the Bishop licensing the person to be a Preacher

Homiletics Practicum for Preachers

The training will take place in a group setting which includes a seminary-trained priest, who may be someone other than the Rector, and will include the following:

- A sustained discipline of prayerful, theological reflection in which life experience is brought into dialogue with scripture and tradition
- Encouragement to hear, appropriate and apply the scripture to our daily lives
- Emphasis on the need to speak authentically, transparently, simply and directly to the listener, so that the experience is more dialogical than “preaching at”
- Recognition of the pastoral importance of preaching

Specific elements will include:

- Biblical interpretation
- Hermeneutics (Relating the biblical material to our contemporary context)
- Sermon building, preparation, organization
- Public speaking (Poise, posture, voice, engagement)

Method:

The Rector will form a listening group of 6-8 persons to discuss example sermons and to provide feedback on practice sermons given by the person seeking a license. The following should happen concurrently.

- The group will listen critically to at least six example sermons from someone other than the person wishing to be licensed, either in person or by video. Each person should complete the Sermon Feedback Worksheet and then the group should discuss it.
- The person seeking the license will preach four to six sermons for the listening group. This is most successful if done in the context of a worship service, but it should not be a public service. For example, the group could meet for evening prayer which includes a sermon and then discuss it, using the worksheet, after the service is over.
- At the same time, the candidate will read two or more books from the homiletics bibliography and discuss the contents with the group.

Bibliography

** *Preaching*, Fred Craddock, Abingdon Press, 1986.

** *Surviving the Sermon*, David Schlafer, Cowley, 1992.

** *The Witness of Preaching*, Tom Long, Abingdon Press, 2005.

Steeped in the Holy: Preaching as Spiritual Practice, Raewynne J. Whiteley, Cowley, 2008.

Go Preach, John Gilbert, Discipleship Resources, Nashville, TN. 2002.

As One Without Authority, Fred Craddock, Abingdon, Nashville, TN., 1981.

Preachers and Hearers of the Word, William Roen, (Alban Institute publication), 1989.

Lectures on Preaching (1877 Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale) Phillips Brooks.

The Preaching Event (1979 Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale) John Claypool.

The Bible in the Pulpit, Leander E. Keck, 1987.

The Preaching Life, Barbara Brown Taylor, 1993.

**** Highly Recommended**

For good examples of telling the Gospel creatively in a contemporary context, the following authors may be helpful: John Claypool, Frederick Buechner and Robert Capon.

Sermon Feedback Worksheet

Responder:

Text:

Theme:

“The preacher is both the revealer of his/her own soul and the messenger of God, sent as an ambassador to bring a message that will not always delight us, and sometimes does quite the opposite.....commissioned to bear witness to what he or she has heard.”²

1. How does the preacher attract and hold your attention?
2. How is the preacher's interest in the subject communicated to the listeners?
3. What is the main point or unifying thread of the sermon?

² The Inward Ear – A Sermon Evaluation Method for Preachers and Hearers of the Word, William H. Roen, An Alban Institute Publication, 1989.

4. Are there any distractions from the main message that should be left out of the sermon?
5. Does the sermon illustrate the connection between the Biblical texts and our life today?
6. What decision did the sermon call you to make in your own life?

Preacher



To Bishop Robert O'Neill:

As the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of

_____, I am requesting a
Congregation _____ Location _____

license for _____

_____ Title _____ Full Name _____
to serve in our congregation as a Preacher and regularly preach during public worship.

He/She was confirmed/received into the Episcopal Church

at _____ on _____
Location _____ Date _____

I hereby certify that this applicant is baptized, is a confirmed or received adult communicant in good standing, has been appropriately trained per diocesan policy, and is a fit and responsible person to be a Preacher in this congregation.

Date _____ Signature _____

Print Name _____

Licensee Address _____

Email _____

Send this form to:
Executive Assistant to the Canon to the Ordinary
The Office of the Bishop
1300 Washington Street
Denver CO 80203-2008