

## **Section E**

# **The lay officers of the Church**



## **E 1 Of churchwardens**

1. The churchwardens of parishes and districts shall be chosen in accordance with the Churchwardens Measure 2001, and any other Measure, Act, or scheme affecting churchwardens.
2. (a) At a time and place to be appointed by the bishop annually, being on a date not later than 31 July in each year, each person chosen for the office of churchwarden shall appear before the bishop, or his substitute duly appointed, and be admitted to the office of churchwarden after –
  - (i) making a declaration in the presence of the bishop or his substitute, that he will faithfully and diligently perform the duties of his office; and
  - (ii) subscribing a declaration to that effect and also that he is not disqualified under section 2(1), (2) or (3) of the Churchwardens Measure 2001.
- (b) In relation to a filling of a casual vacancy the reference in paragraph (a) above to 31 July shall be construed as a reference to a date three months after the person who is to fill the vacancy is chosen or the date of the next annual meeting of the parishioners to elect churchwardens, whichever is the earlier.
3. Subject to any provision of any Measure, Act, or scheme relating to the resignation or vacation of their office, the churchwardens so chosen and admitted shall continue in their office until they, or others as their successors, be admitted in like manner by the bishop or his substitute duly appointed or, if no person is so admitted by 31 July in the year in question, until that date.
4. The churchwardens when admitted are officers of the bishop. They shall discharge such duties as are by law and custom assigned to them; they shall be foremost in representing the laity and in co-operating with the incumbent; they shall use their best endeavours by example and precept to encourage the parishioners in the practice of true religion and to promote unity and peace among them. They shall also maintain order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service.
5. In the churchwardens is vested the property in the plate, ornaments, and other movable goods of the church, and they shall keep an inventory thereof which they shall revise from time to time as occasion may require. On going out of office they shall duly deliver to their successors any goods of the church remaining in their hands together with the said inventory, which shall be checked by their successors.
6. In this Canon ‘bishop’ means the bishop of the diocese concerned.

## **E 2 Of sidesmen or assistants to the churchwardens**

1. The sidesmen of the parish shall be appointed by the annual parochial church meeting or, if need arises between annual parochial church meetings, by the parochial church council.
2. No person whose name is not on the church electoral roll is eligible as a sidesman, but all persons whose names are on the roll are so eligible.
3. It shall be the duty of the sidesmen to promote the cause of true religion in the parish and to assist the churchwardens in the discharge of their duties in maintaining order and decency in the church and churchyard, especially during the time of divine service.

### **E 3 Of parish clerks and other officers**

In any parish in which the services of a parish clerk, sexton, vergger, or other officer are required the minister and the parochial church council may in accordance with the law appoint some fit and proper person to these offices to perform such services upon such terms and conditions as they may think fit.

## **E 4 Of readers**

1. A lay person, whether man or woman, who is baptized and confirmed and who satisfies the bishop that he is a regular communicant of the Church of England may be admitted by the bishop of the diocese to the office of reader in the Church and licensed by him to perform the duties which may lawfully be performed by a reader according to the provisions of paragraph 2 of this Canon or which may from time to time be so determined by Act of Synod.

2. It shall be lawful for a reader:

- (a) to visit the sick, to read and pray with them, to teach in Sunday school and elsewhere, and generally to undertake such pastoral and educational work and to give such assistance to any minister as the bishop may direct;
- (b) during the time of divine service to read Morning and Evening Prayer (save for the Absolution), to publish banns of marriage at Morning and Evening Prayer (on occasions on which a layman is permitted by the statute law so to do, and in accordance with the requirements of that law), to read the word of God, to preach, to catechize the children, and to receive and present the offerings of the people;
- (c) to distribute the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the people.

2A. The bishop may also authorize a reader to bury the dead or read the burial service before, at or after a cremation but only, in each case, with the goodwill of the persons responsible and at the invitation of the minister of a parish or an extra-parochial place within the meaning of section 1 of the Deaconesses and Lay Ministry Measure 1972.

When a cure is vacant the reference in this paragraph to the minister of a parish shall be construed as a reference to the rural dean.

3. The bishop of every diocese shall keep a register book wherein shall be entered the names of every person whom he has either admitted to the office of reader or licensed to exercise that office in any place.

## **E 5 Of the nomination and admission of readers**

1. A candidate for the office of reader in a parish or district shall be nominated to the bishop by the minister of that parish or district; and a candidate for the said office in a wider area by one of the rural deans or archdeacons after consultation with the minister of his parish or district.

2. The nominator in making such nomination shall also satisfy the bishop that the said person is of good life, sound in faith, a regular communicant, and well fitted for the work of a reader, and provide all such other information about the said person and the duties which it is desired that he should perform as the bishop may require.

3. No person shall be admitted to the office of reader in the Church except it be found on examination, held by the bishop or by competent persons appointed by the bishop for this purpose, that he possesses a sufficient knowledge of Holy Scripture and of the doctrine and worship of the Church of England as set forth in *The Book of Common Prayer*, that he is able to read the services of the Church plainly, distinctly, audibly, and reverently, and that he is capable both of teaching and preaching.

4. Every person who is to be admitted to the office of reader shall first, in the presence of the bishop by whom he is to be so admitted or of the bishop's commissary, make the declarations set out below, the preface which precedes the Declaration of Assent in paragraph 1(1) of Canon C 15 (with the appropriate adaptations) having first been spoken by the bishop or commissary:

I, A B, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.

I, A B, will give due obedience to the Lord Bishop of C and his successors in all things lawful and honest.

5. The bishop shall admit a person to the office of reader by the delivery of the New Testament, but without imposition of hands.

6. The bishop shall give to the newly admitted reader a certificate of his admission to the office; and the admission shall not be repeated if the reader shall move to another diocese.

## **E 6 Of the licensing of readers**

1. No person who has been admitted to the office of reader shall exercise his office in any diocese until he has been licensed so to do by the bishop thereof: Provided that, when any reader is to exercise his office temporarily in any diocese, the written permission of the bishop shall suffice.

1A. A licence authorizing a reader to serve in a benefice in respect of which a team ministry is established may be in a form which specifies the term of years for which the licence shall have effect.

2. Every reader who is to be licensed to exercise his office in any diocese shall first, in the presence of the bishop by whom he is to be licensed, or of the commissary of such bishop, (a) make the declarations of assent and of obedience in the form and manner prescribed by paragraph 4 of Canon E 5; (b) make and subscribe the declaration following:

I, A B, about to be licensed to exercise the office of reader in the parish (or diocese) of C, do hereby promise to endeavour, as far as in me lies, to promote peace and unity, and to conduct myself as becomes a worker for Christ, for the good of his Church, and for the spiritual welfare of [my] \*all people. I will give due obedience to the Bishop of C and his successors and the minister in whose cure I may serve, in all things lawful and honest.

If the declarations of assent and of obedience have been made on the same occasion in pursuance of paragraph 4 of Canon E 5 it shall not be necessary to repeat them in pursuance of this paragraph and in the declaration set out above the words 'the Bishop of C and his successors and' may be omitted.

3. The bishop of a diocese may by notice in writing revoke summarily, and without further process, any licence granted to a reader within his diocese for any cause which appears to him to be good and reasonable, after having given the reader sufficient opportunity of showing reason to the contrary; and the notice shall notify the reader that he may, within 28 days from the date on which he receives the notice, appeal to the archbishop of the province in which that diocese is situated.



On such an appeal the archbishop may either hear the appeal himself or appoint a person holding the office of diocesan bishop or suffragan bishop in his province (otherwise than in the diocese concerned) to hear the appeal in his place; and, after hearing the appeal or, if he has appointed a bishop to hear the appeal in his place, after receiving a report in writing from that bishop, the archbishop may confirm, vary or cancel the revocation of the licence as he considers just and proper, and there shall be no appeal from the decision of the archbishop.

Where the see of the archbishop is vacant or the archbishop is also the bishop of the diocese concerned, any reference in the preceding provisions of this paragraph to the archbishop of the province shall be construed as a reference to the archbishop of the other province, but any bishop appointed by the archbishop of the other province by virtue of this paragraph shall be a bishop serving in the province which contains the diocese concerned.

Any appeal under this paragraph shall be conducted in accordance with rules approved by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; and any such rules may provide for the appointment of one or more persons to advise the archbishop or bishop hearing such an appeal on any question of law arising in the course thereof.

3A. Where a bishop has granted a licence to a reader to serve in his diocese for a term of years specified in the licence, the bishop may revoke that licence under paragraph 3 of this Canon before the expiration of that term, and where he does so that reader shall have the like right of appeal as any other reader whose licence is revoked under that paragraph.

4. No bishop shall license any reader to be a stipendiary in any place until he has satisfied himself that adequate provision has been made for the stipend of the said reader, for his insurance against sickness or accident, and for a pension on his retirement.

**\*Note:** *The word 'my' should have been removed by Amending Canon No. 23. A future Amending Canon will correct this omission, but in the meantime, the word should be omitted as required by the sense.*

## **E 7 Of lay workers**

1. A lay person, whether man or woman, who satisfies the bishop that he or she

- (a) is baptized and confirmed and a regular communicant of the Church of England;
- (b) has had the proper training; and
- (c) possesses the other necessary qualifications,

may be admitted by the bishop as a lay worker of the Church. A lay worker may perform the duties set out in this Canon or any of them, if authorized to do so by licence or permission of the bishop of the diocese in which he or she is to serve.

2. A man or woman admitted to the office of evangelist is thereby admitted as a lay worker of the Church.

3. A lay worker may in the place where he or she is licensed to serve, and under the direction of the minister, lead the people in public worship, exercise pastoral care, evangelize, instruct the people in the Christian faith, and prepare them for the reception of the sacraments.

4. A lay worker may:

- (a) in accordance with Canon B 11 be authorized and invited to say or sing Morning or Evening Prayer (save for the Absolution);
- (b) distribute the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the people and read the Epistle and the Gospel.

5. The bishop may also authorize a lay worker to perform any of the following duties at the invitation of the minister of a parish or an extra-parochial place within the meaning of section 1 of the Deaconesses and Lay Ministry Measure 1972:

- (a) to preach at divine service;
- (b) to church women;
- (c) with the goodwill of the person responsible, to bury the dead or read the burial service before, at or after a cremation;

- (d) to publish banns of marriage at Morning and Evening Prayer (on occasions on which a lay person is permitted by the Statute Law so to do and in accordance with the requirements of that law).

When a cure is vacant the first reference in this paragraph to the minister of a parish shall be construed as a reference to the rural dean.

6. Paragraph 5(b) and (c) of this Canon shall not apply to the Channel Islands.

## **E 8 Of the admission and licensing of lay workers**

1. A bishop shall give to every person admitted by him as a lay worker of the Church a certificate of admission as a lay worker, and the admission shall not be repeated if the person admitted thereby moves to another diocese.

2. No person who has been admitted as a lay worker of the Church shall serve as such in any diocese unless he or she has a licence so to do from the bishop thereof: Provided that, when any lay worker is to serve temporarily in the diocese, the written permission of the bishop shall suffice.

2A. A licence authorizing a lay worker to serve in a benefice in respect of which a team ministry is established may be in a form which specifies the term of years for which the licence shall have effect.

3. Where any person is to be a stipendiary lay worker in any place in a diocese, the bishop shall not license that person as a lay worker unless he is satisfied that adequate provision has been made for his or her salary, appropriate insurance and a pension on retirement.

4. Every person who is to be admitted or licensed as a lay worker shall, in the presence of the bishop or his commissary, make and subscribe the declarations set out below, the preface which precedes the Declaration of Assent in paragraph 1(1) of Canon C 15 (with the appropriate adaptations) having first been spoken by the bishop or commissary:

I, A B, do so affirm and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and to which the historic formularies of the Church of England bear witness; and in public prayer I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon.

I, A B, will give due obedience to the Lord Bishop of C and his successors in all things lawful and honest.

5. The bishop of a diocese may by notice in writing revoke summarily, and without further process, any licence granted to a lay worker within his diocese for any cause which appears to him to be good and reasonable, after having given the lay worker sufficient opportunity of showing reason to the contrary; and the notice shall notify the lay worker that he may, within 28 days from the date on which he receives the notice, appeal to the archbishop of the province in which that diocese is situated.

On such an appeal the archbishop may either hear the appeal himself or appoint a person holding the office of diocesan bishop or suffragan bishop in his province (otherwise than in the diocese concerned) to hear the appeal in his place; and, after hearing the appeal or, if he has appointed a bishop to hear the appeal in his place, after receiving a report in writing from that bishop, the archbishop may confirm, vary or cancel the revocation of the licence as he considers just and proper; and there shall be no appeal from the decision of the archbishop.

Where the see of the archbishop is vacant or the archbishop is also the bishop of the diocese concerned, any reference in the preceding provisions of this paragraph to the archbishop of the province shall be construed as a reference to the archbishop of the other province, but any bishop appointed by the archbishop of the other province by virtue of this paragraph shall be a bishop serving in the province which contains the diocese concerned.

Any appeal under this paragraph shall be conducted in accordance with rules approved by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; and any such rules may provide for the appointment of one or more persons to advise the archbishop or bishop hearing such an appeal on any question of law arising in the course thereof.

5A. Where a bishop has granted a licence to a lay worker to serve in his diocese for a term of years specified in the licence, the bishop may revoke that licence under paragraph 5 of this Canon before the expiration of that term, and where he does so that lay worker shall have the like right of appeal as any other lay worker whose licence is revoked under that paragraph.

6. The bishop of every diocese shall keep a register book wherein shall be entered the name of every person either admitted or licensed by him as a lay worker, together with the particular duties which that person has been licensed to perform.

