

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND COVENANT
FOR THE CARE AND WELL-BEING OF CLERGY

A DOCUMENT FOR
REFLECTION AND ACTION
FOR BISHOPS & THE
WIDER CHURCH

Approved by General Synod February 2019



Introduction

You will have heard that the General Synod of the Church of England voted overwhelmingly in 2019 to support a new way of improving the approach to the care and well-being of clergy across the Church. *The Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing* invites parishes, dioceses and the wider church, as well as individual clergy, to share responsibility for the welfare of ordained ministers and their households.

On behalf of the whole Synod – bishops, clergy and laity expressing a common mind – we now invite you to join us in that conversation. What we are seeking to do is to create greater awareness of issues of clergy care and wellbeing across the whole church. We believe that, when we care for and are accountable to one another, when clergy take some time to reflect on their own situation and needs, and when clergy are able to enter openly into dialogue with both the local and wider church about their wellbeing, this is a blessing for the whole church, and not just to the clergy themselves.

The text of the *Covenant* is found below, alongside a set of guiding principles and shared commitments. This document is written for a wider church audience, by which we mean Diocesan Bishops and their staff, the National Church Institutions and the Charitable Sector committed to the care and wellbeing of the clergy, their households and dependants. Equivalent documents have also been prepared for consideration by the local church and by ordained ministers.

We particularly wish to encourage bishops and others with oversight responsibilities to reflect and model the importance of care and wellbeing in your own ministry to other clergy and your congregations. We invite you to also spend time using the document directed at clergy alongside this one.

You can read the simple text of the Covenant below. Following the principles and commitments are some questions you may wish to take some time to reflect upon within the context you think most helpful in your setting. If you are looking at it within a diocese, we encourage you to think about how best to engage with your clergy and congregations/parishes as well. A separate set of questions for consideration by the local church and by clergy themselves has also been prepared.

Through this work, we hope clergy may find more sources of support, encouragement, challenge and love, and the ministry of the whole People of God thus enriched.

Thank you for your ministry in our Church.

+Justin Cantuar:

+ Sentamu Eboracensis

Reverend Canon Simon Butler, Prolocutor of the Province of Canterbury (and Chair of the Wellbeing Working Group)

Reverend Canon Chris Newlands, Prolocutor of the Province of York

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison, Chair of the House of Laity

Canon Elizabeth Paver, Vice-Chair of the House of Laity

The Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing



The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scripture and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in every generation

In its formularies, the Church of England recognises that God calls some to serve as deacons, priests and bishops to build up and equip the whole People of God.

Conscious that such a calling is both a privilege and a demand, we commit together to promote the welfare of our clergy and their households.

We undertake to work together to coordinate and improve our approach to clergy care and wellbeing so that the whole Church may flourish in the service of the mission of God.



Our Shared Commitments and Questions for Reflection and Action

Not all the questions below will be relevant, such is the variety of audiences this document addresses. Use them or ignore them as you see fit, adapting as appropriate to your own responsibility. It is up to you what action you take as a result of these conversations. We encourage you to share with others what you discover

The Baptismal and Ministerial Vocation of the Clergy



Scriptural Insights: Matthew 28:1-20; John 10:1-18;
John 21:15-19; 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Ordained ministry is relational, collegial, professional and accountable to others. Ordained ministers are called to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people and to be willing to work with and respect others. Disciple and teacher, the ordained minister follows Christ in prayer, reflection and study, growing in faith and resilience. Learning and teaching are part of shared discipleship, empowering and encouraging the people of God.

We invite the wider church, especially those exercising ministry as part of the office of the Bishop, to:

- Develop and sustain God's call and care in the lives of ordained ministers through prayer, provision of properly resourced education and training, supported through good policies and procedures
- Provide education and training opportunities that will help and encourage people to work in partnership with the ordained minister.
- Provide processes of selection and formation in which candidates for ordination become aware of their own need for care and are provided with training to help with this

- Understand how the life of the wider church is perceived and how it affects its ordained ministers
- Assess the impact of new missionary models of ordained ministry upon clergy care and well-being

Some Questions You Might Like to Ponder

- What policies, procedures, education and training are in place to promote and encourage the care and well-being of ordained ministers under your care, both for prevention and in crisis? How much of this training is undertaken by ordained ministers and lay people together?
- How have you embedded the 2008 Dignity at Work policy into your context?
- How do your ordained ministers know what care and well-being resources are available to them? How do you know what your ordained ministers value or need in this?
- How do you ensure that informal encouragement of and concern for ordained ministers is offered alongside more formal opportunities?
- How can you be better informed about successful programmes and ideas in place elsewhere in the Church of England and among our ecumenical partners? What can the NCIs do to promote such information sharing?
- What do you expect TEIs to do to prepare ordinands for the stresses and strains of ordained ministry? And what do you look for in training incumbents in IME Phase 2?

The Call to Care and Self-Care



Scriptural Insights: Galatians 6:1-10; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

The ordained minister provides and receives guidance and pastoral care. Given the strong association between physical and psychological health and well-being, the ordained minister attends to their own health and fitness to promote resilience, thus linking care and self-care.

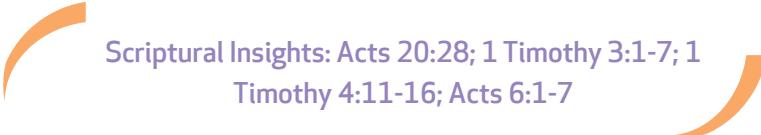
We invite the wider church, especially those exercising ministry as part of the office of the Bishop, to:

- Provide good role models of healthy ministry, encouragement and loving accountability
- Equip the minister for the ministry of care and provide opportunities to reflect upon their practice of pastoral care, supporting their engagement with the disciplines of prayer, spiritual direction and life-long learning
- Provide extended and professional support towards ordained ministers, including access to specialist occupational and psychological health services to work towards their greater resilience, rehabilitation or reparation.
- Communicate the resources that are available for the care of ministers and their households. This includes arrangements for the maintenance and improvement to clergy housing

Some Questions You Might Like to Ponder

- How are your bishops perceived as examples of giving care and attending to their own well-being?
- How are your policies, procedures and provision geared towards preventative care in promoting healthy ministry and preventing harm or evil? How are your senior team made aware of the latest research and developing good practice in clergy care and well-being?
- In achieving best practice in care, self-care must be matched by quality provision and explicit expectation from the wider church. What expectations and provision do you make available in your context?
- What resources do you make available to ordained ministers to reflect on their practice of pastoral ministry?
- In considering pastoral reorganisation or major initiatives across a diocese, how do you take into account issues of care and well-being among the clergy involved, including senior clergy?
- How well do you signpost resources available beyond the diocese that could help ordained ministers?
- How well do you facilitate support for, and mutual sharing of experience between, ministers with disabilities, as and when they judge appropriate?

The Ordained Minister as Public Figure



Scriptural Insights: Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1
Timothy 4:11-16; Acts 6:1-7

Ordained ministers are public servants of Christ called to represent the Gospel to all in their cure. By the nature of their calling, they are always in the public eye, as to some extent, are members of the minister's household.

We invite the wider church, especially those exercising ministry as part of the office of the Bishop, to:

- Support ministers in their public service through clear role descriptions, parish education, appropriate CMD, MDR and wise counsel
- Give proper consideration of, and provision for, the minister's care and well-being and that of their household, where any necessary interventions in a minister's work or ministry are required
- Equip those among their number charged with the care and well-being of the ordained ministers and their households with the necessary resources for their work

Some Questions You Might Like to Ponder

- What do you need to include in parish profiles and role descriptions in terms of pastoral care and well-being?
- What training do you offer to help ordained ministers in their role as public figures?
- In times of intervention in the life of a parish or minister (such as safeguarding, grievance or discipline) what additional resources for care and support are made available to those involved such as members of their household, churchwardens, Parochial Church Councils, and congregations? How to you obtain feedback on the experiences of those who have faced such interventions?
- Do your licensing services reflect the commitments of the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing?
- What training, reflective practice and support do you provide to those, such as Area Deans, Lay Chairs, MDR Reviewers, Archdeacons and Bishops who support ordained ministers in their work? How well do you consider they are resourced?

Ordained Ministers’ Households

Scriptural Insights: Titus 1:5-9; 2 Timothy 1:3-7;
Romans 12:9-13

The support and encouragement of those who share their private lives with ordained ministers is a significant contribution to their care and well-being, given the public nature of elements of their work. It is therefore part of the responsibility of the whole church to provide for the minister’s household.

We invite the wider church, especially those exercising ministry as part of the office of the Bishop, to:

- Offer pastoral care to the minister’s household
- Ensure that arrangements for the provision and the standard of maintenance of any property for a minister and their household are regularly monitored and, where necessary, improved

Some Questions You Might Like to Ponder

- What support do you offer to clergy spouses, partners, children and others with whom they share their household lives? How do you know you are offering what they need?

Taking It Further... Going Deeper

We invite each diocese and other part of the wider church to reflect on how it might best make itself aware of the needs and expectations of clergy and congregations/parishes in this field. We have encouraged both to enquire of senior colleagues and we invite you to reflect on how best to encourage such a dialogue from where you stand.

You can read the full report – including a very helpful and rich theological essay [here](#). There is also a short bibliography.

The report contained a number of specific recommendations to the wider, which we encourage you to engage with, as they are in the main addressed to the wider church.

Finally, the General Synod has appointed a small group to *encourage and evaluate progress in the field of clergy care and wellbeing across the Church of England*. That group will be keen to receive feedback and ideas in due course.

