

Policy for the Licensing of Lay Preachers

The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i

PURPOSE AND NEED

Authorization for laity to preach in any setting has historically evolved from charism, to nothing for several centuries, to canonical mission in order to supply for missing clergy, to authorization in order to supply for clergy, to authorization in recognition of expertise.

Recognizing the current needs of the Diocese of Hawai'i, and the increasing possibility of bi-vocational priests, this Diocese wishes to encourage the formation of Lay Preachers to both assist in meeting the needs of the congregation, specifically with respect to homiletics and interpreting the Word of God, as well as offering members of the congregations access to new voices and ideas. It is not expected that Lay Preachers will be assigned to a regular preaching rota; positions are non-stipendiary.

It is our purpose in the Diocese to identify, affirm, equip and utilize those laity with the charism, desire and ability to preach in a liturgical context. To be licensed as Lay Preachers, the applicants will be required to complete a process of evaluation, preparation and instruction within the Diocese, and demonstrate both competency and orthodoxy. Following successful completion of the process as outlined in the following paragraphs, they will meet with the Commission on Ministry (COM) and, if approved, will be recommended by the COM to the Bishop for licensing. The license will allow the Lay Preacher access to the pulpit in his/her home congregation. With the Bishop's permission and direction, access to other pulpits within the Diocese may be granted.

APPLICANT SELECTION CRITERION

Those selected and presented as applicants will:

- Be baptized and in good standing in the Episcopal Church
- Demonstrate a potential to develop the skills needed to be effective ministers of the Word
- Demonstrate an aptitude for or have experience in public speaking
- Demonstrate good communication skills
- Demonstrate competency in Biblical studies and Theology. While it will not be required that applicants have a degree in these disciplines, they must be able to demonstrate competency either through participation in Biblical studies within the congregation and with the congregation's priest, or through personal studies using such programs as Education for Ministry (EfM), Kerygma, Disciples of Christ, or other nationally credentialed courses.
- Demonstrate good character; a background check will be required, which will be paid for by the congregation and administered through the Office of the Bishop
- Demonstrate a desire or aptitude to make the Scriptures relevant to their listeners' life experiences
- Demonstrate a desire to commit to the process required for licensing
- Demonstrate a willingness to work with the congregation's priest as their mentor

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IDENTIFICATION AND DISCERNMENT

Potential applicants will be identified and called forth by invitation from the congregation's priest, in consultation with the congregation's Discernment Committee and Vestry/Bishop's Committee. After acceptance into the process leading to licensing, the congregation's priest and Vestry/Bishop's Committee will continue to participate, as appropriate, in the training process. The congregation's priest will mentor the applicant throughout the process. As needed, the congregation's priest will outline a course of study to prepare the applicant.

THE LICENSING PROCESS

The licensing process will fall under the mentorship of the congregation's priest and the general supervision of the COM.

The congregation's priest will make the initial determination of the applicant's abilities, and will recommend a course of study as needed for preparation to meet the Core Competencies, outlined below. It is expected that such studies will be from resources that are readily available within the congregation. The cost, if any, of these studies will be those of the applicant and congregation.

COM will:

- a) Conduct an initial interview with the applicant, at the congregation's priest's request, to validate the congregation's and priest's recommendations that the applicant has the appropriate qualifications, abilities and potential to successfully complete the process and participate in the preaching ministry;
- b) Take an active role in the training process by offering constructive critique and feedback of the applicant's preaching. A minimum of two sermons will be presented in person by the applicant to the COM during the course of the training program. As it would be especially desirable to have the Bishop present for these as well, the Bishop will be invited by the COM to attend. If the Bishop's schedule prevents his/her attending, the sermon will be video recorded for review;
- c) Following completion of the second preaching exercise and upon successful completion of the preparation, or course work, as outlined by the congregation's priest, the COM will make a decision regarding a licensing recommendation to the Bishop.

The Bishop will personally interview the Applicant to make the final licensing decision.

CORE COMPETENCIES PRIOR TO LICENSING

- Holy Scriptures (content and background)
- Book of Common Prayer
- Church History
- Doctrine (Catechism)

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- Ability to make Scriptures relevant and meaningful to people's lives and experience

CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) FOLLOWING LICENSING

Eight contact hours annually will be required. Credits will be self-reported to the Office of the Bishop. As possible, CE opportunities will be provided by the Diocese. Examples of appropriate CE would be:

- Christian Ethics and Moral Theology
- Homiletics and Public Speaking
- Methodology; ability to make the Scripture relevant to people's lives and experience
- Anglican/Episcopal Church History/ Ethos
- Episcopal Liturgy
- Topics of specific Theological interest (as reviewed and approved by the congregation's priest)

LICENSING AND RE-LICENSING PROTOCOLS

The Lay Preacher License will be valid for the current year, plus two years and will expire on the First Sunday of Advent in that third year after the License is issued (ex: if a License is issued on October 7, 2019, it will expire on the First Sunday of Advent in 2021; if a License is issued on December 13, 2019, it will expire on the First Sunday of Advent in 2022).

The Lay Preacher License will be renewable:

- a) Upon evidence of successful completion of the continuing education coursework
- b) Upon the review and recommendation of the Lay Preacher's congregation's Vestry/Bishop's Committee and the COM
- c) At the Bishop's final discretion

Recommended by the Commission on Ministry, Feb 2016, in consultation with the Rt. Rev. Robert Fitzpatrick, Bishop. Approved by Standing Committee May 2016.