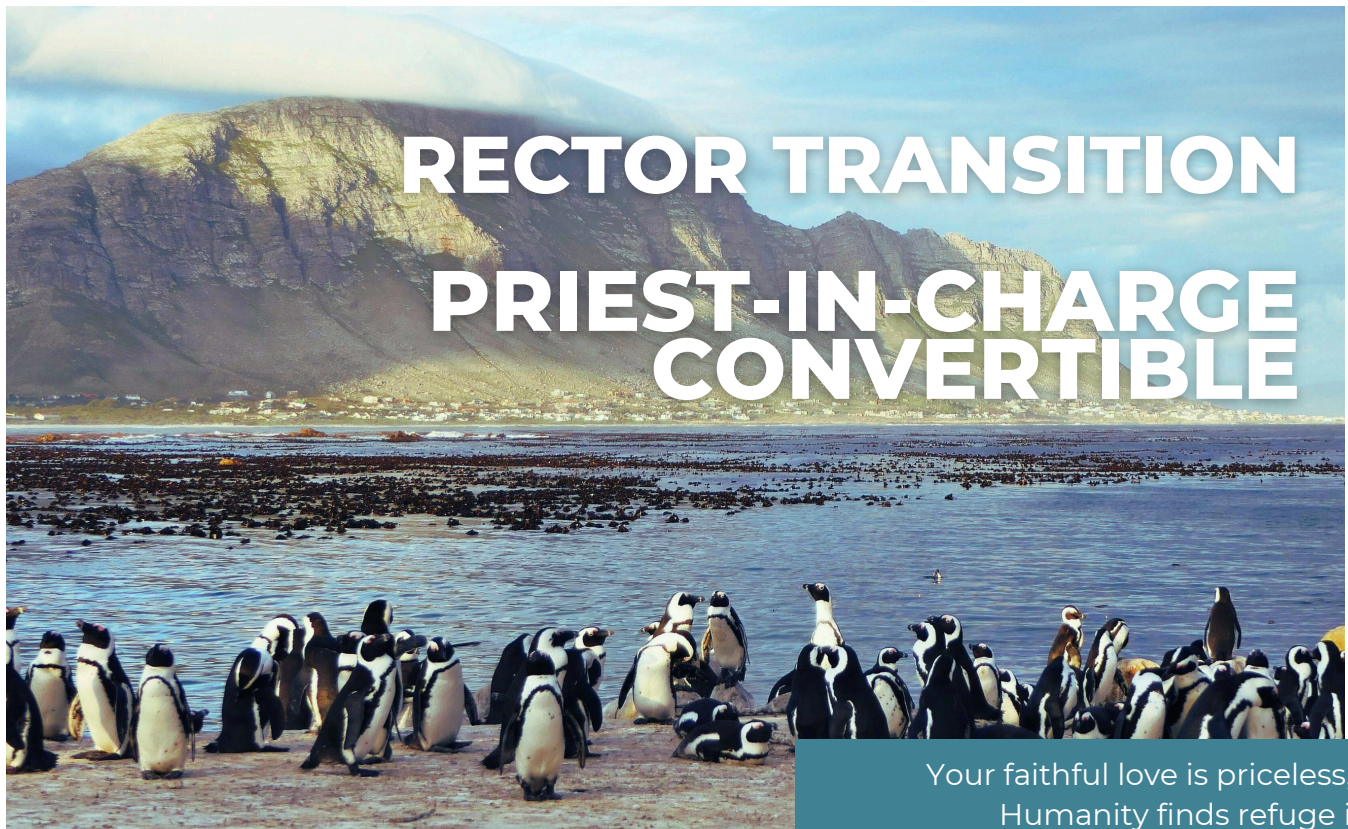




Nurture this Journey in Prayer

God in our courage, God in our caution:
on this beautiful day may we greet each
other as companions on a shared journey.
We acknowledge what we and others have
carried: gratitude and sadness, excitement
and anxiety; private struggles and collective
hopes. As we take this next step forward,
may we do so in the knowledge
that we do not walk alone.

In the name of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son,
and Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever.
Amen.

*Adapted from the Corrymeela Community,
Prayers in a Time of Pandemic, May 2021*

Book of Common Prayer Suggestions

These are found after the Psalter in the BCP

8 For the Mission of the Church
53 For Travelers: *naming this transition as an
experience of journeying*
57, 58 For Guidance

A Strange Change

Every congregation experiences pastoral
change. These re-deployments come into
the story in a variety of ways - retirement,
new call, discipline, dissolution. It is a
particularly complicated experience because
our relationship with clergy leadership is
unlike any other relationship in our lives. It
isn't family, nor is it just employment or
neighborliness, because our relationships are
centered in Jesus and the mission of
reconciliation he accompanies us in.

Never Alone

Our hope is that the length of time between
farewell and hello is about one year,
however, it always takes the time it takes.
This is an outline of the spiritual journey and
ministry work that is calling your next senior
clergy person. The Office of Transition will
walk with you every step of the way.

TRANSITIONS: BREATH PRAYER WONDER MERCY

Supply Clergy

For assistance with securing supply clergy, please get in touch with Pam Prell, Associate for Transitions. 267-486-6944
transitions@diopa.org

Self Directed Learning

YouTube

Fight, Flight... Part of the response is explained by the [Helpful Professor](#).

Bridges Transition Model - I recommend the YouTube video from the channel '[Everyday Change](#)'.

Suggested Book List

[Like Dating Only Worse](#) by Michael Durall

[Rector Transitions](#) by Van Sheets

[Uproar*](#) by Peter L. Stinke

[Being Christian](#), by Rowan Williams*

[Listening Hearts](#) by Farnham, Gill, McLean, and Ward

[Perserverance](#) by Margaret Wheatley

[A Change of Pastors](#) by Loren B. Mead

[Transitions](#) by William Bridges*

**are available as audiobooks*

Daily Office Podcasts

If you have never tried the practice of regular Morning or Evening Prayer there are several podcasts available that can lead it for you.

- We truly appreciate A MORNING AT THE OFFICE by Forward Movement for BCP texts.
- From our cousins in the Church of England we appreciate DAILY PRAYER.
- And from Irish Jesuits we also suggest an encounter with Ignatian spirituality through PRAY AS YOU GO.

The commitment to deeper spiritual practice is one of the balms for transition anxiety.

Trauma Informed Transition

Congregations experience a pastoral shift as a trauma, even in the best of circumstances. Behavioral sciences can help us understand some of the strange behaviors we may encounter in ourselves or others during this stretch of our life together. These are normal, and while we can rise into better behaviors, we cannot avoid their likelihood.

When people encounter significant challenges like this, we may:

fight flight fawn freeze OR Enter the **Fray**
Sometimes people can do all of the above in five minutes. How do you respond to changes?

Another lens for the emotional/social response to change is to think of how we retreat to basic functions - the metaphor is lizard brain or bird brain. Easily flustered by things we used to do well. Over reactions. Rapid shifts in emotions. It may resemble the behavior of adolescents - both the complicated and the astounding.

One of the best gifts for lessening anxiety is consistent, appropriate communication with the congregation. Be truthful and generous, and encouraging.

In all moments of 'bird brain', breathe deeply before responding, pray for guidance, wonder what is underlying this behavior, and hold fast to the mercy that Jesus offers us for the same.

The PiC model shifts the anxiety from multiple changes to 'is this the match', however, it offers a reasonable hope of steadiness. No process of change is without its emotions and unfiltered reactions; leaders are asked to choose a course towards the next nest.

The only real difference between anxiety and excitement was my willingness to let go of fear.

-Barbara Brown Taylor+, Learning to Walk in the Dark

SEEKING A PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

Change v Transition v Job Search

Change is an event: it is situational and external to us. Our universe is constantly in evolution and change; we love change when it is simple and/or offers obvious benefits. We resist the notion of change because we still cling to an idea of everything worthwhile being fixed and solid. However, if there was no horizon, no 'what's next', we would consider that a torturous tomb. Change is a sign of life.

Transition is the social and emotional process that people go through when change happens. It begins with an ending and, by definition, implies loss of some kind. It is also an opportunity to set the framework for what comes next, to embrace new attitudes and skills that can lead to a holier understanding of what we are here for.

Calling a new clergy person is a work of discernment. It is seeking a leader and companion to work closely with. This is unlike a secular job search; it is not an algorithmic dating app, nor is it about choosing the perfect shirt from a rack. Discernment is a vulnerability in community with our neighbors, scripture, and prayer. It is said that it is a saying yes until someone says no. Approached as a sacred journey into who God desires us to become, the path forward will become clearer. It may have bumps and stumbles, it always takes the time it takes, and hopefully, it will surprise you. Regardless, know that Christ is working in the heart of your next rector already, even if they don't know it yet.

Clergy Today

- The average age is now 50
- ½ women and/or lgbtquia+
- Less likely to be a second career after a long career
- Usually converts from other traditions
- Most are two-income households
- Hesitant to move more than 100 miles
- More diverse than our congregations
- Absolutely religious
- Fiercely spiritual
- Tend to be theologically orthodox and socially progressive
- Commonly nerdy
- Can be 'unconventional'

Diocesan Expectations

- team players
- responsible caretakers
- humility and obedience
- ability to deal with complexity
- discipline and discipleship to Jesus
- vocation to love, serve, and teach
- commitment to the Episcopal church
- work hard, care for self, be playful

Rites of Ordination

Most of what we as the church intend regarding ordination is a part of the ordination rite. If you have never been to an ordination, we invite you to attend one, watch one online, and/or read the rite in the prayerbook. You can find past ordinations on our YouTube channel, as well as the Cathedral (where most deacon ordinations are celebrated), and St. John's Diocesan Center.

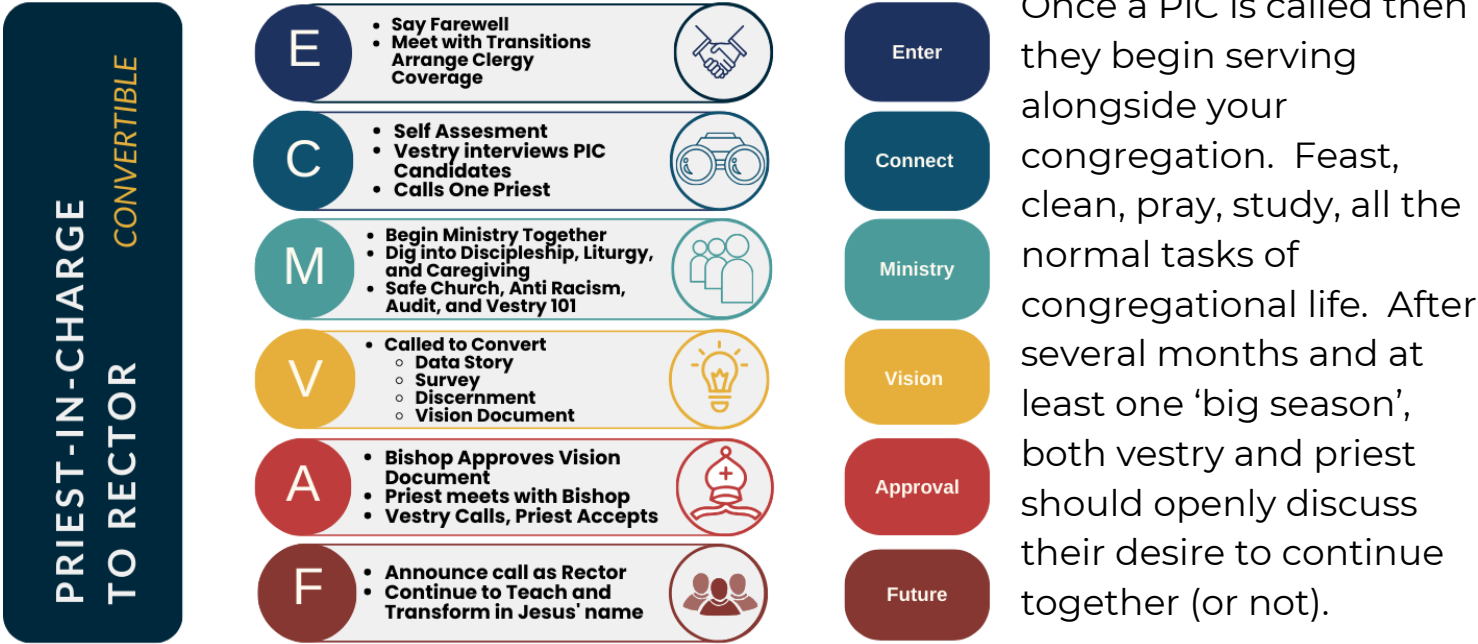
..the possibility of fulfilling its promise may depend upon a brave participation, a willingness to hazard ourselves in a difficult world.

-David Whyte, Consolations (Destiny)

Structure of the Priest-in-Charge Convertible Model

This model includes most of the same steps and total time as the classic model; however, some steps are taken in a different order. In this model, less time and funding is spent on sifting through the possibilities, and more is invested in building a relationship and launching into the next chapter.

For a PiC call, the vestry takes the lead in making the invitation to a clergy person. Typically, the wardens will have an initial conversation with candidates before inviting them to meet the vestry, preside and preach in your nave, and mutually discern if there is reason to be hopeful. The Office of Transitions hopes to present two candidates; however, sometimes there may only be one. If there is only one and either side hears a no, we will resume the above process with a new person.



Discernment is Saying Yes until Someone Hears No

When both vestry and priest are ready to move forward in the mission of Jesus in this place and time, then begins the work of building a vision document. This is similar to the profile in a classic search, except that the priest and congregation work on it together. The diocese can provide access to amazing neighborhood data through FaithX, we recommend a Congregational Assesment Tool with Holy Cow Consulting, and storytelling groups.

The congregation and priest will put together their vision document and submit it to the office of the Diocese, and the priest will meet with the Bishop to discuss this call. If all are in agreement we move into a new letter of agreement and all the steps for a new rector call.

If at any point above either the clergy person or the congregational leadership hear a 'no', then the PiC can remain in place until a rector is called, or they may take leave and we will see that there is priestly support while the profile is built and the call put out for Rector candidates.

MATCHMAKING AND ADAPTATION

A Good Match

What qualities does a good settled clergy and parish match exhibit? The Gottman Institute is focused on couples; however, its work is often applicable to healthy congregational dynamics. A life-giving match from their research includes these hallmarks:

- Mutual respect, trust, and admiration
- Managing conflict constructively
- Candid communication
- Favorable interaction ratio of 5:1
- Avoid sharp criticism, contempt, and stonewalling
- Growth mindset

Furthermore, these qualities are life-giving in the priest and parish relationship:

- Playfulness
- Adaptation
- Joy in one another's joys
- Realism about who we are not
- 'We are all in this together'
- Commitment to discipleship with Jesus

No clergy person nor congregation is perfect, and we never know what lies ahead on the path we walk. The more we lean into the places where God is stretching us, and accept the growth that rumble moments offer, the closer we are to Jesus' reign.

College for Congregational Development

Do you desire that your congregation could be more ready to adapt, grounded in its purpose, as well as more informed about how this community of Christian practice works best? DIOPA strongly encourages every cleric and congregation to participate in the immersive training offered by the College for Congregational Development. This invitation is particularly emphasized for congregations following the PiC model.

Their goals include goals that every congregation should also hold:

- More vital, sustainable congregations capable of responding to cultural and community context and to the unique and changing opportunities and issues before them.
- Congregational leaders who are grounded in their own Christian, Anglican/Episcopal traditions have a wider range of ways to lead and intervene in the life of their congregations.

CCD is a two-year program, with one week of intensive learning each summer. These weeks are filled with teaching by practitioners, dialogue, and worship each year. The nearest dioceses offering CCD are those in Maryland, New York, and Rochester. A full list of options is found on the CCD webpage. It is a tremendous value for what is offered; however, we can help with cost if needed.

True Cost in 2026

A full-time non-retired priest living in a rectory with benefits for one person is approximately \$153k

TELLING GOOD NEWS: VISION DOCUMENT

Every church calling a new settled priest should have clarity about :

- Who We Are and
- Who Are Our Neighbors?
- What is Jesus calling us to become in this place and time?

The vision document should have an eye to the places of vitality that are already present and the new paths that are opening for being creative compelling witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This document should tell stories and share images, and reflect the data from the CAT and FaithX exploration.

The Diocese of Pennsylvania has a wonderful tool to enhance this investigation: Casting Nets. Furthermore, we strongly encourage a team attend a College for Congregational Development training.

Preparing for Success in the New Call

Before the new priest is called as Rector, we ask that:

- A leadership team and the priest attend a first segment of the College for Congregational Development. This is not required but strongly recommended.
- At least two vestry persons are up to date on [Safe Church](#) training. Contact Kionna Lipscomb to get started.
- At least two vestry persons have begun, or have completed, [Anti-Racism Training](#). This is a multi-session synchronous Zoom training. Learn more about the next offering and registration on our website (arcdiopa.org).
- At least two vestry persons have completed the Serviam [Vestry 101](#) course, findable on our website, or have read the Vestry Resource Guide.
- Congregation is up to date on the [audit](#) schedule.
- More vestry members are subscribed to the diocesan publications and tuned in to the amazing sacred witness to Jesus that together we share with our region.

Priest Says Yes!

The Rector Letter of Agreement between the new priest and the Congregation is facilitated by the Canon for Transitions and must be approved by the Canon for Finance. We have templates and can help you through the process. The LOA must be in compliance with the diocesan compensation guidelines.

Every church is in transition all the time, so use this experience to prepare for the unknown future and deepen your discipleship. God is with us, bird-brains, superheroes, and all of us in between.