# Priest-in-Charge (interim tasks) letter of agreement

*between*

**the Wardens and Vestry of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Episcopal Church, in**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (location: town, village, city), the Bishop/Ecclesiastical**

**Authority of the Diocese of Central New York, and the Rev. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,**

who has been appointed Priest-in-Charge for a term of three (3) years, beginning \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_. An evaluation of this relationship should take place at six month intervals. After 24 months, the relationship may be made permanent, with the Bishop's prior approval, by the Vestry electing the Priest-in-Charge as Rector, and executing the appropriate Letter of Agreement. If the Vestry, Priest-in-Charge, or the Bishop decide after 24 months that the Priest-in-Charge will not become Rector, the relationship shall continue for a period of at least twelve months, unless earlier dissolved by mutual consent, subject in any case to the prior approval of the Bishop. This period shall be used by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (parish) to initiate the search and calling process, or otherwise address the question of clergy leadership, and by the Priest-in-Charge to seek another call while continuing to function as Priest-in-Charge.

## Developmental Tasks of the Interim Period

The present interim period is seen as prime time for renewal, reenergizing the parish in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and Priest-in-Charge will work together to prepare for healthy transition to the next Rector. Specific tasks to be addressed include:

Coming to a clear understanding of the history of this parish, and its relationships with previous clergy.

Discovering the parish’s special identity, understanding what it is that God is calling it to be and do, apart from previous clergy leadership.

Dealing with the changes in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively.

Renewing and redeveloping relationships with the bishop’s office and the greater diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to each other.

Building commitment to the leadership of the new Rector, so that the parish is prepared to move into the future with energy and openness to new possibilities.

## Vestry Responsibilities

All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the parish and the Priest-in-Charge. The Vestry will lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Priest-in-Charge in pursuit of parish goals and in the performance of the developmental tasks of the interim period.

The Vestry is legal agent for the parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the Priest-in-Charge. The Vestry will see that the Priest-in-Charge is properly supported, personally and organizationally, as well as in the Vestry’s financial obligations to the Priest-in-Charge.

## Priest-in-Charge Responsibilities

The Priest-in-Charge represents and extends the ministry that is the Bishop’s pastoral and canonical responsibility for parishes in leadership transition. The Priest-in-Charge will lead this parish as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this parish and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop. The Priest-in-Charge’s work includes not only activities directed to the parish and its well-being, but also labors on behalf of the diocese and community. The Priest-in-Charge will:

Work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain the regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms), calling upon the sick and shut-in, visiting newcomers, and the ongoing administration of the parish.

Supervise all parish staff, both lay and ordained, in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they will be accountable to the Priest-in-Charge.

Function as Chair of the Vestry, and support the Vestry in its responsibilities.

The major goal of the Priest-in-Charge’s ministry is to prepare the parish for the coming of the next rector. To this end, the Priest-in-Charge will:

Help the parish deal with the various emotions related to the change in a congregation due to the departure of the former rector, as well as any other unresolved issues arising from the rector’s departure.

Facilitate the constructive process of coming to terms with the change that may include internal conflicts within the parish.

Help the Vestry, lay leaders, and parish staff make such changes as may be needed to align parish life and administration with generally accepted policies and standards in the diocese.

## Section A: Times of Work and Leave

1. The Priest-in-Charge’s work period will be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_% time, usually consisting of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ hours a week. The distribution of the hours will be negotiated with the Vestry. In general, no more than two evenings per week are expected. The Priest-in-Charge is expected to preserve at least one continuous twenty-four hour period each week solely for personal and family use.
2. The Priest-in-Charge, Wardens, and Vestry recognize and affirm the importance of making every reasonable effort to ensure the successful foundation of this ministry, and therefore agree that the Priest-in-Charge will participate fully in the diocesan Dayspring Program conducted through the Office of the Bishop. Dayspring is a diocesan led program for clergy in new cures and their parishes, which seeks to strengthen the relationships among Episcopal Clergy, parishes and diocese during critical periods of transition in clergy leadership

## Section B: Mutual Ministry Review

There should be a semi-annual (every 6 months) discussion and mutual review of the total ministry of the parish, in order to:

* Provide the Priest-in-Charge, Wardens, and Vestry opportunities to assess how well they are fulfilling their responsibilities to each other and to the ministry they share.
* Evaluate progress on the developmental tasks, and, as required, establish and adjust goals for the work of the parish during the transition.
* Plan healthy closure to the transition ministry and prepare for the coming of the next Rector.
* Identify areas of conflict or disappointment that may not have received adequate attention and may be adversely affecting mutual ministry.
* Clarify expectations of all parties to help keep any future conflicts in manageable form.

## Section C: Annual Evaluation

The Priest-in-Charge, Wardens, and Vestry recognize and affirm the fact that Clergy Evaluation is an entirely separate process from the Mutual Ministry Review, and that the Priest-in-Charge is entitled to an Annual Performance Evaluation. This process is designed to focus on their own personal gifts and skills, their effectiveness in applying those gifts to the stated demands of their particular ministries, and the identification of areas for future professional development.

It is further recognized that meaningful evaluation is extraordinarily difficult with out the previous existence of specific, clear, measurable, and achievable, goals. Initially, this will be based on the Position Description as described in the Preamble, and the Responsibilities of the Priest-in-Charge. Future modifications to that description are to be by mutual agreement of the Priest-in-Charge, Wardens, and Vestry.

The Annual Performance Evaluation Process should be conducted or overseen by the Warden(s) or by the appropriate supervisory group, and the findings and recommendations communicated in a meeting between the Priest-in-Charge and Wardens.

## Section D: Financial Considerations

Consideration is given to adjustments for (a) change of cost of living and (b) performance merit. The compensation package will be reviewed annually.

1. General
   1. Cash Salary $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. Social Security (SECA) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
      (paid to the priest as cash)
2. Parish Responsibilities
   1. Housing
      1. Rectory Provided (*determine  
         Fair rental value of house*) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (house value)
      2. OR Cash Allowance $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Benefits
   1. Pension (annual premium-  
      Church Pension Fund) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. Health Insurance $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. Group Life Term Insurance
      1. provided by pension fund   
         up to $100,000 $\_\_\_no charge\_\_
      2. $20,000 may be added by parish $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   4. NYS Workers Compensation Insurance $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   5. Equity Allowance(*to be deposited in a tax-  
      deferred account) for priests in church-owned  
      housing* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Other Considerations
   1. Section 125 Flexible Benefits Plan (Optional) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
      *(Employee funded; need vestry resolution to  
      establish plan. Plan must be registered with  
      the State and IRS and made available to all paid   
      employees of the parish.)*

## Section E: Work Environment

A reasonable work environment will be provided to the cleric, with all expenses paid by the parish and will include: telephone service (cell phone, if applicable) to both office and rectory (personal calls paid by the cleric). Office equipment, (computer with internet connection, if applicable) furniture, supplies and provisions for maintenance of office space as well as staff services (secretarial and janitorial) shall be provided.

## Section F: Expenses/Professional Matters

The Vestry will pay the following expenses incurred by the Priest-in-Charge in fulfilling the duties of office: (*Note: the following expenses are not intended to be additional compensation above the annual cash salary expressed in Compensation & Benefits, Section D. In the event this Priest-in-Charge position is vacated, such funds shall remain within the parish.*)

1. Automobile expenses and travel. The use of the priest’s private automobile for church business is to be reimbursed at the rate per mile, which is the current IRS allowable amount, plus out-of-pocket expenses, such as parking, tolls, etc., and other travel expenses, to an annual limit of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. The normal expenses of the church’s office operation, such as telephone, postage, office equipment, supplies, computer, internet service, etc.
   1. Professional Development Leave, two (2) weeks per year
   2. Consideration of a Professional Development Expense Allowance (for course or seminar enrollment, books, vestments, periodicals, etc.) to a limit of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_per year
   3. The cost of a cell phone—this phone number to be published to insure the priest’s accessibility in case of emergencies.
   4. Sabbatical Time—three months earned after 6 years according to Diocesan policy and stated in Times of Work and Leave, Section A, 3 (d).
   5. Consideration of a Sabbatical Time Expense Allowance (sabbatical course or seminar enrollment, travel, books, vestments, periodicals, etc.) to a limit of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and a Supply Clergy Expense Allowance to a limit of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It is recommended $1,200/year be accrued over six (6) years for a total of $7,200 with $3,600 (50% of accrued amount) being applied to Supply Clergy and parish expenses with the remaining $3,600 (50% of accrued amount) being applied to sabbatical assistance for the priest.

## Section G: Discretionary Fund

In accordance with the Canons of General Convention, a Discretionary Fund is to be established under the Priest-in-Charge’s sole direction. It is to be funded from the following sources: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and from gifts given the Priest-in-Charge for the purposes of the Discretionary Fund.

All deposits to the Discretionary Fund are to be made through the General Fund of the congregation, are to be audited annually at the time of the required parish audit, and are not to be used to defray clergy expenses that are subject to reimbursement from the operating budget, or personal expenses, or to supplement the clergy person’s compensation.

In every case, the administration and operation of the Discretionary Fund is to be in accord with the current edition of the National Church’s “Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs.”

## Section H: Leave Time

The cleric accepts the obligation to take periods for rest and recreation for which he/she/they will receive full compensation.

* Two full days off per week
* Vacation – One month (equal to month of July)
* Legal secular holidays
* Illness

The vestry shall provide for worship leadership and pastoral care for the parish necessitated by leave or illness. Payments to supply clergy shall be in accordance with Diocesan scale for supply work and the wardens shall inform the Bishop’s office in case of an unanticipated absence or disability of the cleric in excess of ten days.

## Section I: Use of Church Property

In addition to his/her/their use and control of the parish property in connection with the exercise of his/her /their office as provided by Title III, Canon 9, Section 5 (a.2), the cleric may authorize use by other persons outside of the parish with provisions for such issues as fee scales, breakage rates, janitorial charges, etc.

## Section J: Term of Agreement

The salary provisions considered in terms of the position description shall be reviewed and appropriately revised on or before \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (reviewed annually). The other provisions of this agreement, including parish objectives goals and laity task descriptions, shall be fully reviewed on or before \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (end of 2nd year).

## Section K: Amendments

Changes of this agreement adopted in writing by mutual consent of the parties may be incorporated at any time by attachment, without rewriting or renegotiating the whole.

## Section L: Interpretation

If, during the term of this agreement, the cleric and vestry cannot agree upon the interpretation of this agreement, the vestry shall obtain the services of a consultant and the parties agree to engage in an attempt to find the underlying causes of the disagreement and to attempt to deal with those causes. This failing, either party may apply for binding arbitration by the Bishop or his/her/their designee.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date Priest-in-Charge

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please print name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date Warden

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please print name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date Warden

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please print name

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Transition/Deployment Officer Date

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bishop Date