



The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York
The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe

Dear Friends Considering the Licensed Preacher Process:

Welcome to a journey of faith and hope! Thank you for your interest in discerning a possible call to serve as a Licensed Preacher in the Diocese of Central New York. I am grateful you have responded to a sense of call and to engage in this process that allows us to explore God's ongoing work in our midst.

In our worship, preaching is a moment of proclamation and of invitation to draw closer to God's love. Each time I preach I am humbled by the privilege of engaging with the text and offering a word of hope to those present. Whatever has drawn you to explore this call to service, I give thanks for your faithfulness in responding.

In this process of discernment it is important to remember that a calling to preach is also a calling to prayer and to study. I encourage you to spend time in prayer and in reading scripture. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope." I pray you will rest in hope, knowing God is at work within you, and that your diocesan family is supporting you in this process.

Blessings of peace and hope for the journey,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan-Probe".

The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe

Bishop of Central New York

Licensed Preachers Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

Summary and Overview

All ministry, lay and ordained, is grounded in baptism. In our baptism, we are called to “proclaim by word and example” the Good News of God in Christ, and through our baptism we “share in Christ’s eternal priesthood.” From that grounding in baptism, people may discern a call to additional opportunities for lay ministry or for ordained ministry.

The Episcopal Church has a long history of licensed preachers. For years, the ministry of Lay Reader was a vital one in the church. Lay Readers often led Morning Prayer and preached in congregations that did not have clergy, especially on the frontier. It was not until the 1920s that The Episcopal Church had more ordained clergy than it did Lay Readers. Many other Anglican provinces have a similar ministry for laypersons licensed to preach or lead non-Eucharistic worship: for instance, there are over 7,500 licensed Readers in the Church of England!

The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York has several licensed ministries:

Worship Leader: leads public worship, usually Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer;

Eucharistic Visitor: brings the Holy Eucharist to persons unable to attend worship;

Eucharistic Minister: serves the consecrated Bread or Wine in a worship service;

Preacher: licensed to preach under certain regulations.

The bishop licenses persons for these ministries. Someone can be licensed in more than one of these ministries, though there are different licensing applications and separate training programs for each.

The Diocese of Central New York seeks qualified applicants for our Licensed Preacher program, a two-year course of reading, writing, preaching, and attending classes in preparation to become a Licensed Preacher. We are looking for people who are comfortable speaking in public, thoughtful about their spirituality, prayerful, and active in an Episcopal congregation. Participants should be organized and motivated to direct their own learning as much of the work is done on one’s own, with written communication with the Director(s).

Preachers are licensed by the Bishop for five years, at which point a request may be made for renewal. Licensed Preachers may preach in the congregation where they are a member, and in other congregations if invited by the clergyperson with charge of that congregation, or by the Bishop. There is also the expectation that Licensed Preachers will engage in ongoing continuing education as part of this ministry, and completion of continuing education will be a

required component for renewal of the license. As part of the process of training and formation, Licensed Preachers will complete the Diocesan Training Program.

Steps Towards Licensing

How does someone become a Licensed Preacher? Here are the steps towards licensure:

1. Person interested in Licensed Preacher program has initial conversation with the Rector or clergy person in charge of the congregation.
2. Contacts the relevant diocesan staff person for a preliminary conversation about the ministry of Licensed Preacher.
3. Submission of completed application, including essay and two letters of recommendation (one clergy, one lay). (The training program functions with two-year cohorts, so an applicant may need to wait until the following September for the next cohort.)
4. Completion of two-year training program.
5. After completion of program, application for Licensed Preacher submitted to bishop. Program director(s) and preaching mentor also send reports to bishop.
6. If Bishop approves the application, person may be licensed for five years.
7. No more than 6 months before expiration of license, person may apply for renewal. Licensed Preachers are expected to complete at least two Continuing Education opportunities offered by the diocese during their 5-year period of licensure.

Diocesan Training Program

Prerequisites for Application

Applicants for the Licensed Preacher program need to have been active members of an Episcopal congregation for at least two years. In addition, Licensed Preachers need to have been confirmed in the Episcopal Church or received by a bishop into the Episcopal Church from another Christian communion.

Description of Program

The Licensed Preacher Program is two years long. The program is designed around 2-year cohorts, with a group of students admitted together and moving through the program together. The program does not have rolling, annual admissions. Interested applicants may need to wait until the following September to join the beginning of the next two-year cohort. If a person does need to wait until the next cohort begins, there are opportunities to visit during a training weekend, to do some background reading in preparation for beginning the program, and to engage in conversations around discernment as a Licensed Preacher with the relevant diocesan staff persons, Director(s) of the training program, and with others.

The program provides participants with opportunities to study, discuss, and practice preaching. There are normally four Saturday classes each year. Each class includes a didactic session, a time for participants to preach, a worship service with preaching, and an interactive seminar and conversation with an experienced preacher.

Each participant will be assigned a preaching mentor from the wider diocese and will preach four times a year during public worship under that person's supervision. The mentor will work closely with the licensed preacher candidate as the sermon is prepared and will offer feedback after the sermon is given.

The course includes a commensurate amount of reading and writing. Over the two-year program, participants will submit a written response to a book on preaching every month and write a series of 14 reflections on their beliefs about various aspects of theology.

The course also depends on personal spiritual practices and assumes participants will regularly attend Episcopal worship. Participants will follow the weekly lectionary texts, read and listen to sermons, and write reflections.

Skills to be Developed and Competencies to be Assessed

- Thorough knowledge of the Bible and lectionary.
- Ability to interpret a passage of scripture with use of a commentary, placing the passage in historical context and within the sequence of biblical events.
- Ability to plan and write sermons using clear and appropriate language.
- Sensitivity to the range and differences in attitude toward Biblical criticism found in the Episcopal Church.
- Knowledge of the history of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, especially with respect to differences with other Christian bodies.
- Clarity, effectiveness and confidence in public speaking.
- Attention to, and the ability to articulate, theological and spiritual implications in sermons.
- Awareness and sensitivity of the impact of a sermon across circumstances and pastoral occasions for individuals, families, parishioners, and the wider community.

Upon completion of the program, participants will be assessed for these competencies by the Director(s) of the program and their assigned mentor. This assessment will be forwarded to the bishop.

Tuition

The course fee is \$150 per year. Participants will also be responsible for acquiring their own materials and books. Wherever possible, readings will be assigned in a way that allows for book sharing. Financial assistance may be available from the diocese; cost should not be a factor in determining whether or not to apply.

Course Dates

It is expected that participants will attend all Saturday classes each year and fully engage in assignments and activities. Before making application, please contact the Director(s) of the program or the diocesan office for the scheduled dates for the coming year.

Application

The required materials include a basic application form, a written essay, and two letters of recommendation, one clergy and one lay. The application and reference forms follow at the end of this manual and are available on the diocesan website.

Participant materials (application plus essay) and reference letters are submitted no later than August 15.

All materials must be submitted Ms. Kathy Dengler, Program Coordinator for the Episcopal Diocese at Central New York.. The email subject line should read, “Licensed Preaching Application” followed by the applicant’s surname.

All materials (including letters of recommendation) must be submitted together. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Applications submitted after the stated deadline will not be considered unless permission has been given by the Director(s).

Acceptance Decisions

Decision notifications will be emailed to each participant with a copy to the recommending clergyperson. Decisions will be made and applicants notified normally by August 15.

Questions

Questions can be emailed to the Director(s) of the program or to the relevant diocesan staff person.

Application for Licensed Preacher Program

Submit electronically with letters of recommendation and essay by August 15 to Kathy Dengler,
kdengler@cnyepiscopal.org

Email subject title should read “Licensed Preacher Application/(your surname)”

Name _____

Current Parish _____

Date and Place Confirmed or Received in the Episcopal Church _____

Home Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Occupation and Brief Description of Responsibilities _____

Educational Background _____

Other Experiences of Leadership, Interest, Expertise, etc. _____

References

Please provide two references from:

1. Your parish priest

Note: If your parish is currently without a priest, choose an Episcopal clergy person who knows you well enough to recommend you.

2. A lay person who knows you through your parish or the wider church

Reference forms are attached.

The subject heading for all emailed application forms should be titled “Licensed Preaching Program/(your surname)”.

Required Essay

Please write a 3-5 page essay about your spiritual journey.

The following prompts are not required, but may be helpful as you contemplate your written story:

- Your history of experiences with religious tradition(s)
- Beliefs and/or practices that have remained constant or changed over the years
- Your experience of relationship with God (including times of experienced closeness or distance)
- People who have impacted your spiritual journey (positively or otherwise)
- Ministries in which you have engaged that have been meaningful for you Why you believe you may be called as a licensed preacher
- Experiences, persons, reading, etc., that have inspired your faith
- Challenges to your faith, practice, or institutional trust
- How and where you experience the holy in everyday life and relationships
- What it means to be a “spiritual person” in this time and place

Licensed Preacher Reference: Clergy Form

Submit electronically to the applicant prior to August 15.

Applicant Name _____

Your Name _____

Title/Parish _____

Parish Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please write a reference letter no longer than 2 pages in length which includes (but is not limited to) your impressions of the following:

- How well you know the applicant, for how long, and in what context(s).
- The applicant's depth and quality of personal and theological reflection.
- » The applicant's degree of self-motivation, follow-through, self-direction and diligence.
- The applicant's capacity for and manner of communication, written and oral, including the use of shared language and experience.
- Characteristics, including "intangibles" which lead you to recommend this person as a potential licensed preacher of the Gospel.

Licensed Preacher Reference: Lay Recommender Form

Submit electronically to the applicant prior to August 15

Applicant Name _____

Your Name _____

Title/Parish _____

Your Email _____

Phone _____

Please write a reference letter no longer than 2 pages in length which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- How well you know the applicant, for how long, and in what context(s).
- Your reasons for believing this person would make an effective and faithful licensed preacher of the Gospel. Please include your impressions and give examples of the applicant in terms of the following:

Reliability; willingness to take responsibility; consistency and follow-through

Effectiveness as a communicator, public speaker, writer (if applicable)

Role and quality of presence within the life of the parish

Anything else, including “intangibles” which you would like to mention

Licensed Preacher Renewal Application

The form for renewal of license is done online, and may be found on the diocesan website. You will be asked how you continue to use your Licensed Preacher license, and what continuing education you have attended over the course of the previous five years.