

A Ministry Covenant

between

The Wardens of the Church of the Incarnation, Oakville;
The Rev'd Canon R. Terry DeForest, Priest-in-charge; *and*
The Rt. Rev'd Michael Bird, Bishop of Niagara

Preface

This agreement sets out, in its first section, the goals towards which the parties undertake to strive and aspire during the incumbency of the Priest-in-charge at the Church of the Incarnation commencing on October 15, 2010. In its second section, it sets out strategies for pursuing those goals and the mutual expectations concerning roles and responsibilities of the Bishop or his designate(s) [hereafter referred to as "the diocese"], parish and Priest-in-charge, during the latter's incumbency. The entire agreement is intended to promote intentionality, transparency and accountability concerning our respective leadership ministries exercised for the vitality of the parish and its ministries faithful to Christ's call and in furtherance of God's mission.

The ministries each party exercises are expressions of our collective calling to pursue God's vision of shalom, and are undertaken with a view to advancing the diocesan Vision.

The Priest-in-charge is charged with the authority, duties and responsibilities of a Rector, and serves, at sixty percent (60%) of a full-time equivalent [FTE] position, by the appointment of, under the direction of, and during the pleasure of the Bishop of Niagara. This covenant will be renegotiated should the percentage of a FTE be changed and/or if the Priest-in-charge is to be appointed as Rector.

Review of progress towards the goals outlined herein and the achievement of specific strategies or the performance of specific roles and responsibilities will be conducted at six (6) month intervals. This agreement may be concluded at the pleasure of the Bishop, in consultation with the other parties. In any case, it will be subject to renegotiation, renewal or conclusion eighteen (18) months from the date of its being formalized.

I **Goals**

A generous culture of stewardship

It is our goal that the Church of the Incarnation exercise good and generous stewardship of all God's gifts, specifically:

- To receive, embody and proclaim a theology of abundance;
- To exercise prudent stewardship of the parish's financial and physical resources for ministry; and,
- To empower members' baptismal ministries, exercising caring stewardship of all members' gifts for ministry.

Prophetic social justice-making

It is our goal to sustain and build upon the Church of the Incarnation's historic engagement as stewards of the bounty of God's creation in social justice and environmental ministries, strengthening both

- (i) our collective, self-critical action, advocacy and education, and,
- (ii) our responses in our daily lives as individuals and households.

Specifically, the following objectives are declared:

- increase visibility of the Eco-Justice Committee and of eco-justice ministries in the wider parish;
- strive towards a Silver Accreditation in the Greening Niagara initiative;
- consider undertaking a refugee sponsorship in 2011; and,
- consider, develop and initiate a plan to come alongside local groups and or individuals experiencing need or injustice in our area, laying foundations for community development ministries.

Life-changing worship

It is our goal to sustain and build upon the Church of the Incarnation's tradition of innovative and progressive worship, grounded in the spiritual journeys of worshippers and responsive to the spiritual needs of the community in which we witness and serve.

Culture of innovation

It is our goal to pursue our part in God's mission resourced both by Anglican tradition and "outside the lines" innovation responsive to changes in church and society.

Specifically, the following two objectives are declared:

- A – To serve collaboratively; and,
- B – To nurture faith creatively and comprehensively in people of all ages.

Outstanding leadership in ministry

In this aspect of our diocesan vision, our goals are to:

A) to develop the foundations for an effective, defined, mutual, transparent, clergy-lay ministry partnership through:

- sustaining and enhancing the parish's strengths in lay ministry; and,
- developing clear and expressed expectations for, renewed confidence in and stability of clergy leadership; and,

B) to renew the parish's sense of its part in God's mission, attentive to God's presence and action in our local community and responsive to the needs of our neighbourhood and the wider world.

Communications

It is our goal to foster the Church of the Incarnation as an environment for regular & comprehensive communication, and, transparent & inclusive decision-making.

Caring community/Pastoral care

It is our goal to foster a caring community in which all members are invited to be channels and recipients of God's love.

II

Specific Strategies, Roles and Responsibilities

The goals to which we are aspiring are far-reaching indeed. The proposed strategies and articulation of our respective roles and responsibilities below are similarly ambitious. We recognize that limitations of the resources of time, money, clergy and other staff time, and volunteer hours need to be factored in as we realistically measure our progress in these undertakings. Nevertheless, seeking to embody a theology of abundance and grace, we believe that God can do “infinitely more than we can ask or imagine” in and through us and so we dare to strive for worthy goals and we commit ourselves to the challenge of working diligently towards them.

A generous culture of stewardship

Towards this goal, the Diocese will:

- continue to provide resources for stewardship education;
- review the parish’s appeal of recent Diocesan Mission and Ministry assessments and come to an agreement with the parish about the current applicable assessment and any historic amounts owing;
- work in partnership with the parish (Priest-in-charge, Wardens and Treasurer) to develop a debt management plan for retiring any aged diocesan receivables and building debt owed by the parish; and,
- apply to this incumbency (i) the diocesan pay-scale with respect to minimum stipend, pension and employee benefits, (ii) the average Oakville housing allowance; and (iii) the Interim Ministry policy with respect to travel expenses.

Towards this goal, the Priest-in-charge will:

- preach, teach and model a theology of abundance;
- promote awareness of life as a spiritual journey and of our Christian calling as stewards of God’s gracious gifts;
- exercise, as a member of the Corporation, prudent and caring stewardship of the parish’s gifts for ministry;
- guide and support lay leaders, especially the Wardens, Parish Council and Stewardship Committee in conducting a creative, comprehensive year-round stewardship programme;
- facilitate clarity of expectations of staff and volunteers;
- support, empower and oversee staff;
- support, empower and advise lay leaders, groups and committees in their respective ministries;
- encourage and promote ongoing compliance with diocesan Volunteer Management and Screening policies; and,
- facilitate comprehensive and transparent communication about stewardship responsibilities and opportunities.

Towards this goal, the Wardens will:

- assist in proclaiming and modeling a theology of abundance;
- work in partnership with the Priest-in-charge, Treasurer and diocese to develop a debt management plan for retiring any aged diocesan receivables and building debt owed by the parish;
- foster a cooperative environment amongst ministry leaders, groups and committees;
- exercise, as members of the Corporation, prudent and caring stewardship of the parish's gifts for ministry;
- guide and support other lay leaders, groups and committees in their ministries;
- assist and enable the Stewardship Committee in conducting a creative, comprehensive year-round stewardship programme and through acting on members' offers of gifts of time and talent;
- facilitate clarity of expectations of staff and volunteers; and,
- ensure ongoing compliance with diocesan Volunteer Management and Screening policies.

Towards this goal, the Stewardship Committee and other relevant bodies will be asked to:

- assist in proclaiming and modeling a theology of abundance;
- develop and conduct a creative, comprehensive year-round stewardship programme; and,
- disseminate information to all parishioners regarding stewardship responsibilities and opportunities.

Towards this goal, all active members of the Church of the Incarnation will be called to:

- respond to invitations to learn and grow as stewards of God's gifts; and,
- commit to support the mission and ministry of the Church of the Incarnation through gifts of time, talent and treasure given collaboratively, intentionally, prayerfully and generously.

Prophetic social justice-making

Towards this goal, the Diocese will continue to develop diocesan leadership capacity and make resources available for training, supporting and engaging in prophetic social justice and environmental ministries.

Towards this goal, the Priest-in-charge will:

- preach, teach and model a theology of shalom;
- promote awareness of life as a spiritual journey and of our Christian calling as agents of change for faithful responses to God's in-breaking reign; and,
- encourage, advise and assist the Wardens, Parish Council, EcoJustice Committee and other relevant parish groups in pursuing this goal and its attendant objectives.

Towards this goal, the Wardens will support and aid in implementing steps taken towards realizing this goal and its attendant objectives.

Towards this goal, the EcoJustice Committee and other relevant parish groups will be asked to:

- inform and educate parishioners concerning eco-justice ministries engaged by the EcoJustice Committee, parish and other levels of the church;
- promote and support involvement by the parish and parishioners in secular, inter-faith, and/or ecumenical eco-justice movements and initiatives;
- invite and enable wider engagement by parishioners in eco-justice ministries.

Towards this goal, all active members of the Church of the Incarnation will be challenged to:

- receive, grow in, and share a gospel of God's shalom (peace, justice, right relationship), proclaiming in our daily lives, *on earth as it is in heaven*, that gospel;
- participate in eco-justice events and initiatives;
- respond to calls for financial support; and,
- demonstrate openness to human diversity and responsiveness to the experience of injustice.

Life-changing worship

Towards this goal, the diocese will continue to:

- encourage the development, use and evaluation of innovative liturgies and resources; and,
- provide mechanisms for requesting and obtaining episcopal approval for new liturgical texts.

Towards this goal, the Priest-in-charge will:

- exercise the Bishop's delegated authority over worship conducted in the parish;
- attend to and promote good conduct of worship;
- promote spiritual growth and wholeness of members through preaching, teaching, planning and conduct of worship;
- facilitate wide and broad involvement by parishioners in planning and leadership of worship;
- facilitate the review of and assist in the articulation and clarification of the respective roles of the Priest-in-charge, Music Director, Worship Planning group, Altar Preparation and Décor group and Music Selection group;
- enable and support the resulting parish liturgy planning and preparation groups and persons;
- assist in developing job descriptions for staff;
- share in the support and oversight of lay staff.

Towards this goal, the Wardens will:

- encourage transparency and directness of communications with the Priest-in-charge re: worship matters;
- assist in developing job descriptions for staff; and,

-share in the support and oversight of lay staff.

Towards this goal, the various relevant worship groups will be asked to:

- assist in the review, articulation and clarification of the worship leadership roles of clergy, lay staff and groups;
- invite, enable and engage input, ideas and constructive feedback about worship from the wider worshipping community;
- assist in recruiting, training for and support of worship leaders (anyone exercising a role in the planning or conduct of worship); and,
- respect the contributions and the potential diversity of perspectives of various worship leaders and groups.

Towards this goal, all active members of the Church of the Incarnation will be invited to:

- worship regularly and actively;
- take part in the discernment of worship directions and development of worship plans; and,
- share in worship leadership roles.

A continuous culture of innovation

Objective A) To serve collaboratively

Towards this objective, the diocese will convene, facilitate and bless dialogues amongst Oakville parishes promoting collaborative approaches to Anglican ministries.

Towards this objective, the Priest-in-charge will:

- preach, teach and model a collaborative, mutual approach to ministry, informed by the Lund Principle of the World Council of Churches, that the default assumption of the church is that we engage in ministry together, doing separately only what we must;
- promote awareness and encourage the development and strengthening of connections with wider church partners in ministry; and,
- assist in facilitating any dialogue with prospective ministry partners.

Towards this objective, the Wardens and all active members of the Church of the Incarnation will be challenged to being open to dialogue and to embody a wideness of vision.

Objective B) To nurture faith creatively and comprehensively in people of all ages

Towards this objective, the diocese will continue to:

- promote, train for, support and resource parish-based family ministries;
- conduct such ministries to children and youth as can best be undertaken at the diocesan level; and,

-promote, receive, celebrate and honour the ministries of children and youth.

Towards this objective, the Priest-in-charge will:

- preach, teach and model a comprehensive theology of baptismal ministry;
- promote awareness of life as a spiritual journey and of our continuous, life-long Christian calling to grow in faith and in the Spirit as ministers of the gospel;
- assist in the review, development, delivery and evaluation of such programmes as foster growth in faith and enable the baptismal ministry of all members;
- assist in accessing such resource persons and materials as may assist in conducting such programmes;
- visit Children's Church and youth group;
- convene gatherings of children, youth, parents and adults to develop relationships with each group and to discern with each their faith nurture needs; and,
- work with Parish Council and others to sustain, reinforce, strengthen or create programmes designed to respond to those faith nurture needs.

Outstanding leadership for ministry

Towards these goals, the diocese will:

- assist in the development of a template for a Rector's job description;
- carefully consider, develop, implement and evaluate mechanisms for exercising regular, ongoing and responsible oversight and evaluation of ordained ministers;
- continue to provide a policy framework for Volunteer Management and Screening in Faith and assist in promoting compliance with said policy, and,
- convene and take part in six-, twelve- and eighteen-month reviews of this ministry covenant.

Towards these goals, the Priest-in-charge will:

- report regularly to Wardens, Parish Council, parish, Regional Archdeacon(s), Director of Transitional Ministry, Executive Officer and Bishop about his practice of ministry in the parish;
- undertake an annual evaluation and professional development review;
- schedule and attend an, at least, annual pastoral oversight visit with the Bishop;
- monitor and manage hours worked within covenanted limits;
- participate in six-, twelve- and eighteen-month reviews of this ministry covenant;
- assist in developing position descriptions for Rector, Music Director, Administrative Assistant;
- assist lay leaders in promoting compliance with diocesan Volunteer Management and Screening in Faith policies, including reviewing, updating or, where necessary, creating position descriptions for individuals and Terms of Reference for committees and groups;
- encourage and promote a culture of personal self-care in their practice of ministry and self-critical review of members' evaluation of their own practice of baptismal ministry;
- support and assist in the review of the ministries of current lay leaders;

- assist lay leaders in refreshing and renewing their involvement and making transitions where desired; and,
- assist and encourage the recruitment, enabling, support of, incorporation of new lay leadership.

Towards these goals, the Wardens will:

- report regularly to Parish Council and parish about their practice of ministry in the parish;
- encourage direct and transparent communication between parishioners and the Priest-in-charge;
- provide constructive feedback to the Priest-in-charge on an ongoing basis;
- support the Priest-in-charge in managing hours worked within covenanted limits;
- participate in six-, twelve- and eighteen-month reviews of this ministry covenant;
- assist in developing position descriptions for Rector, Music Director, Administrative Assistant;
- recruit a Volunteer Coordinator and assist that person, Parish Council and other lay leaders in promoting compliance with diocesan Volunteer Management and Screening in Faith policies, including reviewing, updating or, where necessary, creating position descriptions for individuals and Terms of Reference for committees and groups;
- encourage and promote a culture of personal self-care in their practice of ministry and self-critical review of members' evaluation of their own practice of baptismal ministry;
- support and assist in the review of the ministries of current lay leaders;
- assist lay leaders in refreshing and renewing their involvement and making transitions where desired;
- assist and encourage the recruitment, enabling, support of, incorporation of new lay leadership;
- assist the congregation in reviewing, reflecting upon and integrating its history; and,
- facilitate the discernment (including examining the suggestion that the parish's mission is to be a validating or affirming church) and development of a renewed sense of mission.

Towards these goals, all members of the Church of the Incarnation will be invited to:

- review, reflect upon, integrate and celebrate its history;
- support the priest-in-charge, open to receiving his distinctive gifts of leadership for ministry;
- be open to growing as individuals engaged in ministry; and,
- help equip the Church of the Incarnation, corporately, to engage its part in God's mission with renewed clarity and vigour.

Communications

Towards this goal:

- (i) All active members will be urged to engage in direct and transparent communications with one another and with the Priest-in-charge.
- (ii) Recognizing that a community thrives on a diversity of values, experience and perspective and that such diversity may lead to conflict amongst members, all members will be encouraged to approach differences with one another constructively, responsibly, respectfully, empathetically, and directly with affected persons with a view to fostering reconciliation and unity in diversity.

Caring Community/Pastoral Care

Towards this goal, the Priest-in-charge will:

- offer support, sacramental ministries and a ministry of presence to those in need of physical, emotional or spiritual healing;
- assist members in exercising care of one another: newcomers and visitors, at times of illness or injury, loss & bereavement, and at times of joy and celebration;
- reach out, with lay assistance, to inactive members with a view to inviting them to return and/or re-engage with the congregation, or assisting them to establish themselves in another faith community as needed; and,
- assist the Parish Council in undertaking a review of existing and possible pastoral care practices and initiatives to fulfill this goal.

Towards this goal the Certification Committee (Priest-in-charge, Wardens and Lay Delegates) will be struck to produce current lists of those eligible to vote at Vestry and of friends of the parish.

Towards this goal, the Parish Council will be asked to:

- review existing and possible pastoral care practices & initiatives and to ensure the effective functioning of mechanisms for express our corporate pastoral care;
- revisit and review the Community Development Report of 2007, making recommendations for action steps; and,
- review, brainstorm, consider and recommend strategies for church development and increased awareness & visibility of the parish's ministries and within the wider community.

Towards this goal, all active members will:

- be called to exercise care of one another: newcomers and visitors, at times of illness or injury, loss & bereavement, and at times of joy and celebration;
- reach out, with the assistance of the Priest-in-charge, to inactive members with a view to inviting them to return and/or re-engage with the congregation.

Signed this 19th day of January, 2011.

The Rt. Rev'd Michael A. Bird, Bishop of Niagara

The Rev'd Canon R. Terry DeForest, Priest-in-charge

Mr. Graham Hughes, Rector's Warden

Ms. Anne Moniuk, People's Warden

Ms. Beth Hanna-Morrison, Deputy Warden

Ms. Julia Lockhart, Deputy Warden