



THE RECTOR'S (OR SENIOR) WARDEN

Presented by

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My Background

- Not a life time Anglican
- Confirmed 33 years ago in the American Episcopal Church (AEC)
- Most my Anglican experience is outside the REC attending conservative 1928 BCP Episcopal, Independent, and Continuing Anglican Parishes
- My Vestry experience includes:
 - Former Sr. Warden at Good Shepherd Church, Tyler TX, before they joined the REC and into the transition to the REC
 - Served as a Junior Warden at Church of The Resurrection (TEC), Clarkston MI
 - Most recently served 5 years as Sr. Warden for two rectors at Saint Andrew's Cheney Memorial Church, Tinley Park IL
- This is not an exhaustive study, but my personal experience and observation
- Not an expert and still learning



Reference Documents

- [A Short Manual for Vestries Parish Councils](#) *
- St. Andrew's Cheney Memorial Parish By-Laws
- [How Does The Government of an REC Parish Work](#) *
- [A Customary for the Diocese of Mid-America](#) *
- [The Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Mid-America](#) *
- [The Constitution and Canons of the General Council of the REC](#) *
- [An Office of Institution of Ministers into Parishes or Churches](#) (BCP 575-579) *
- [The Admission of Lay Ministers and Officers](#) (BOS 35-39) *

* Found at the REC or DMA websites



The Keys of Leadership

An Office of Institution of Ministers into Parishes or Churches

¶ *And then shall the senior warden ... present the keys of the church to the new Incumbent, saying,*

IN the name and behalf of [the] parish ... I do receive and acknowledge you, , as Presbyter and Rector of the same; and in token thereof, give into your hands the keys of this church.

¶ *Then the new Incumbent shall say,*

I ... receive these keys of the house of God at your hands, as the pledges of my Institution, and of your parochial recognition, and promise to be a faithful shepherd over you...



The Keys of Leadership

Admission of Lay Ministers and Officers

¶ The Priest shall appoint a Sponsor who shall instruct and examine the Candidates in the duties of their Office, and present them for Admission.

¶ ... The Priest shall take each Candidate by the right hand, saying the words of Admission, ...

“I ADMIT you to the Office of Warden ... in this Church; and I give you this Book of Canons as a token of your ministry ...”



What is a Rector's or Senior Warden?

Reference Documents

- An Office of Institution of Ministers into Parishes or Churches
- The Constitution and Canons of the REC and Diocese of Mid-America
- How Does the Government of an REC Parish Work
- A Short Manual for Vestries Parish Councils

Summary

- The principal Lay Officer of the parish
- Receives and acknowledges the Rector as head of the parish
- The advocate to the Vestry concerning the Rector's welfare and needs
- In the absence of the Rector, he has the responsibility to chair the Vestry meetings
- In the event the parish is without a Rector, he consults with the Bishop about plans for filling the Pulpit and conducting of services



Your Parish By-Laws should be more specific

St. Andrew's Cheney Memorial Parish By-Laws

- Chief Executive Officer of the Parish for temporal affairs
- Regularly consults with the Rector regarding the state of the Church (people & property)
- Represents the Rector before the Vestry and keeps them apprised concerning his welfare
- When authorized, executes contracts and other legal obligations on behalf of the Parish
- Shall provide the elements for the Lord 's Supper
- Shall provide suitable vestments for the minister or ministers
- If the pastorate be vacant, shall have charge of the Parish Register
- If the pastorate be vacant, shall consult the Bishop for the maintenance of Divine services
- Ex-officio member of any committee of which he is not the chairman or a voting member



The Rector's Warden vs The Senior Warden?

Ministry Duties

- Regularly consults with the Rector regarding the state of the Church (people)
- Represents the interests of the Rector before the Vestry
- Keeps the Vestry apprised concerning the Rector's welfare and needs
- Presents an annual review of the Rector's salary and ministry financial needs
- Shall provide the elements for the Lord 's Supper
- Shall provide suitable vestments for the minister or ministers
- Liaison between the clergy and laity

The Rector's Warden

Administrative Duties

- Regularly consults with the Rector regarding the state of the Church (property)
- Chief Executive Officer of the Parish for purposes of its temporal affairs
- When authorized shall execute contracts and other legal obligations on behalf of the Parish
- If the pastorate be vacant shall have charge of the Parish Register
- If the pastorate be vacant shall consult with the Bishop Ordinary for the maintenance of Divine services
- Ex-officio member of any committee of which he is not appointed the chairman or a voting member

The Senior Warden



Know Your Rector's Ministry

- Get to know your rector by getting involved in his ministries
- The Rector is solely in charge of the Worship, including but not limited to:
 - The music (Hymns, Chants, Organist, & Choir)
 - Teaching ministries (Preaching & Sunday School)
 - The administration of the sacraments
 - Lay ministries (ACM/ACW, Lay Readers, Alter Guild, & etc.)
 - Church discipline
- All the above belong to the Rector and are not up for vote by the Vestry or PC
- The Rector is responsible for Vestry education in the church by-Laws and customs
- Vestrymen and individuals are often utilized to lead ministry committees and Parish organizations, but do so only under the authority of the Rector



Get Involved In Your Rector's Ministry

- Recruiting and training Acolytes, Chalice Bearers, Lay Readers, Lectors, and Ushers
- Writing Lay Minister Guides
- Providing a uniform Reader's Lectionary
- Creating and maintaining a Lay Minister's Duty Schedule
- Providing Lay Minister Vestments
 - Cassock, Surplice and Lay Reader's Tippet
 - To carry this a step further, the Bishops need vestments
- Establishing the Anglican Church Men (ACM) and writing the by-laws (adapted from St. James Brotherhood)
- Supplying Vestry Education



Communicate with Your Rector and Vestry

- Hold regular meetings with the Rector – put it on your calendar
 - Meet outside the church for a breakfast or lunch
 - Bring “to do” list or agenda
 - Document points for future discussion
- Never go into meetings without a set written agenda
 - Help prepare agendas with your Rector for Vestry, Parish Council and Annual Meetings
 - Discuss who will take the lead on certain topics
- Know your Rector’s plan for the Parish and what he wants to accomplish
- Know the Parish By-Laws, history and traditions and use them in support of the Rector’s mission for the Parish
- Never act on own authority, but get prior approval from your Rector
- Get consensus among Vestry members before a Vestry Meeting
- During meetings, help the Rector by keeping the Vestry on task



Keep the Vestry focused on Vestry Duties

- The Vestry represents the people of the parish
- They are responsible for the corporate affairs of the Parish
- They must be able to discriminate between their duties and the Rector's ministry
- Their focus is on property, security, safety, and the ministry financial support
- They must take time to educate themselves:
 - The Parish By-Laws
 - The Customary of the DMA
 - The Constitution and Canons of the DMA the General Council
 - DMA Basic Financial Guide



Give Honor to Whom Honor is Due

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” 1 Timothy 5:17

- Get to know your Rector’s welfare and needs early into your term
- If the Rector’s Warden is going to support the financial needs of both the Rector and ministry, then he must build a positive relationship with the People’s Warden and Treasurer
- They can be your greatest ally or biggest obstacle
 - They are the most powerful laymen in the Parish, since they control the property and purse
 - Meet early in the year with them, so the Rector’s needs are on top of the budgetary list
 - Spend time with them outside the context of the Vestry
- It’s not just about money



Summary

- Rector holds “The Keys of Leadership” in the parish and not the Wardens
- Rector’s Warden title is preferred over Senior Warden, due to his primary focus is supporting the Rector’s ministries
- Administrative focused duties do exist, but most likely to a lesser extent
- Know your Rector’s ministry, so you can support and get involved in it
- Communication and documentation are critical
- Assist the Rector keeping the Vestry on their tasks
- Build strong Vestry relationships
- Give Honor to Whom Honor is Due



The Prayer for Wardens and Vestrymen

“O ETERNAL God, the fountain of all wisdom: Enlighten with thy grace the Wardens and Vestrymen of thy Church, and so rule their minds, and guide their counsels, that in all things they may seek thy glory and the welfare of thy holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord”

Amen

THE BOOK OF OCCASIONAL SERVICES
The Admission of Lay Ministers and Officers