

Priest-in-Charge
Letter of Agreement
Holy Trinity Church, Southbridge, MA

The Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, Holy Trinity Church, and the Rev. Richard Signore, who has been called to be the Priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity Church, enter into this letter of agreement.

The term of this appointment shall begin June 1, 2014. Any of the parties may dissolve this agreement upon thirty-day notice to the other two parties.

PREAMBLE

MISSION: The Purpose of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts is to carry on Christ's work of transformation and reconciliation. We work and pray together to develop healthy, mission-focused Christians and congregations who live the fullness of the Baptismal Covenant wherever God places us.

VISION: We are becoming evermore recognizable as the Body of Christ. We are learning and growing together as a community of miraculous expectation, utterly dependent on God, fully gifted by the Holy Spirit, joyously living Christ's Great Commandment and Great Commission in Western Massachusetts and the World.

Attached to this letter of agreement is a covenant among Priest-in-Charge, Vestry, and Diocese that outlines specific commitments for the good of the parish, Priest-in-Charge and diocesan community.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Priest-in-Charge of the Congregation shall work as pastor, priest, and teacher, sharing in the councils of this Congregation, of the Diocese, and the Whole Church. By work and action, informed by the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention and of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, the Priest-in-Charge shall proclaim the Gospel, love and serve Christ's people, nourish them, and strengthen them to live out the Gospel.

The responsibilities of the Priest-in-Charge shall include, but are not limited to, the following list: The Priest-in-Charge will:

Pray for the mission of the Church and the Diocese and for the welfare of the people of Christ's Church and the world;

Order the worship of the Congregation, and preside at baptisms, marriages and funerals of the parish. It is fully agreed by the Vestry and the Priest-in-Charge that it is not appropriate or permitted for any former clergy of the parish to preside at baptisms, marriages and funerals;

Work with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain a regular schedule of worship and preaching, pastoral calling on the sick and shut-ins, the general administration of the Congregation, the teaching of the Congregation, evangelism and outreach. It is expected that the Vestry and

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members of the parish will share in the worship, pastoral calling, visiting and general administration of the Congregation, and in study, teaching, evangelism and outreach;

Supervise all the staff of the Congregation;

Function as the Chair of the Vestry and support the Vestry in the exercise of its responsibilities and ministries;

Communicate with the Bishop and staff of the Diocese as needed;

Participate in the Fresh Start group, as advised by the Bishop;

Educate and ensure that children, youth and adults receive instruction in the Holy Scripture, in the subjects contained in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism, and in the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons;

Instruct all persons in the Congregation concerning Christian stewardship, including:
the reverence for creation and the right use of God's gifts;
the generous and consistent offering of time, talent and treasures for the mission and ministry of the Church at home and abroad;
the biblical standard of tithe for financial stewardship;
the responsibility of all persons to make a will as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, page 445.

The Wardens and Vestry shall:

Regularly participate in Sunday worship and giving to the Church, encouraging other parishioners to do the same;

Assess the needs of the Congregation and with the Priest-in-Charge determine ministries and programs to meet these needs;

Advise the Priest-in-Charge of pastoral situations that may need to be attended, either by the Priest-in-Charge or by members of the Vestry or Congregation;

Assume administrative and programmatic duties required to facilitate the ongoing mission of the Congregation in cooperation with the Priest-in-Charge.

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- **Half -Time Position:** The Priest-in-Charge will work 20 hours a week. The employment year runs January 1 to December 31; compensation will be prorated for 2014.
- **Vacation:** The Priest-in-Charge will have four weeks of vacation in each full year of employment, accrued immediately and available at 1 week for each quarter completed. If the Priest-in-Charge leaves during a year he will be entitled to one week of vacation for each quarter of the year that has been completed. Specific dates of vacations will be arranged with the Wardens and shared with the Vestry.
- **Sick leave:** After one (1) month of employment two (2) sick days will be accrued. For the remainder of the calendar year sick days will be accrued at 1/3 of a day per month. Thereafter the number of sick days will increase from the previous year by 2 days for each additional year of employment. Sick days may not be carried over from year to year.
- **Continuing Education:** The Priest-in-Charge will have one week of continuing education leave each year. Continuing education leave may accumulate, with the consent of the Vestry. Unused education leave will not be reimbursed by the Parish. The Parish will budget \$250 per year for the Priest-in-Charge's continuing education. Specific dates of continuing education will be arranged with the Wardens and shared with the Vestry.
- **Sabbatical:** The Priest-in-Charge shall be entitled to a sabbatical at the end of each five years of service. The sabbatical shall be for six (6) weeks and is taken in addition to vacation and continuing education leave. At the time of the sabbatical the parish and the Diocese shall contribute to the expenses of the sabbatical according to resolutions passed by the Diocesan Council. \$250 a year will be reserved in a sabbatical fund. Specific dates of sabbatical will be arranged with the Wardens and shared with the Vestry.

Salary: The salary for the Priest-in-Charge will be \$ 22,286 per year, including housing. The Priest-in-Charge will designate how much of the salary will be used as a housing allowance and the Vestry will adopt all necessary resolutions to comply with IRS regulations providing a tax deduction for this allowance.

Social Security Add-on: The Congregation agrees to pay one-half (1/2) of the cost of Social Security (self-employment tax) to the Priest-in-Charge as a salary supplement.

Health and Dental Insurance: The Congregation will pay not less than 85% of the cost of the diocesan health and dental insurance plan that best meets the needs of the Priest-in-Charge, prorated 50%. If the Priest-in-Charge carries health insurance outside of the diocesan plan, he may "opt out" and receive cash compensation; written request will be kept on file. When and if health insurance is requested through the Diocese, the cash "opt out" and associated Social Security will revert to a benefit for purchase of health insurance through a diocesan plan.

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Automobile and Other Clergy Reimbursable Expenses: The Priest-in-Charge will be reimbursed by the Congregation for automobile expenses at the IRS rate per mile, tolls, parking and other reimbursable expenses, up to an agreed on and budgeted amount. *A Full Expense Reimbursement Policy* will be adopted by the Vestry.

Mutual Ministry Review: Not less than once in each calendar year there will be a Mutual Ministry Review of the Congregation's work together. The Diocese will provide a consultant to assist in the evaluation, if requested.

TRANSITION FROM PRIEST-IN-CHARGE TO RECTOR

After one year, if all parties are in agreement (Father Richard Signore, the Wardens and Vestry of Holy Trinity Church and the Bishop of the Diocese of Western Massachusetts), discussion of the possible transition to Rector should begin with a mutual review of the fruitfulness of their ministry together. If a decision is made to move forward, further discussion about new efforts and goals will occur closer to the actual transition.

The Wardens and Priest-in-Charge understand that conflict is a normal occurrence in the life of any human organization and they understand that using conflict transformation strategies early in a conflict dramatically increase the likelihood that the conflict will lead to healthy growth. The Wardens and Priest-in-Charge agree that when conflicts arise in the Congregation they will keep the Bishop and his staff informed and will cooperate with conflict transformation assistance that the Bishop believes is necessary.

Signed:

_____ Date _____
Priest-in-Charge

_____ Date _____
Senior Warden

_____ Date _____
Transition Ministry Officer

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Covenant among Parishes, Clergy in Charge of Parishes and the Diocese of Western Massachusetts

The Church is facing new challenges, yet it does so with the foundations our faith calls us to strengthen—prayer, fellowship, compassionate service and advocacy for those who have no voice. We do not do this alone; we do it together in our community in Christ. We do it together as the Diocese. We expect that Vestry members will live by some kind of covenant of behavior rooted in the presence of Jesus—even if it is as simple as the agreement to pray with and for one another.

Clergy are also called to a covenant with their colleagues in leadership. Unless otherwise prevented, it is expected that clergy called to any parish in this diocese will:

- Participate in Fresh Start in their first two years;
- Attend Clergy Days, Clergy Conference and the annual Renewal of Vows;
- Be intentional about being part of a learning/colleague cohort such as a Bible Study or other study group;
- Be intentional about taking their continuing education/retreat time to further their knowledge and deepen their relationship with God.

These commitments strengthen individuals, parishes and dioceses. They are to be considered an important part of their work in a parish.

Signed

_____ Vestry on behalf of _____

Clergy _____

Bishop _____

Specific Tasks envisioned in the next 2-3 years

Specific Tasks;

Music:

Work with the Organist/Music Director Search Committee toward attaining an employee (non parishioner)-led music program for worship services.

Liturgical Ministries, Family Worship, Mission and Outreach:

Work with the lay leadership to mentor, support, nurture, maintain and grow, as led by the spirit.

Adult Christian Formation:

Vestry Approved 5/12/14

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Work with the lay leadership to identify the needs of the parish, and to provide and establish a format for a variety of Adult Christian Formation opportunities.

Be the face of Jesus at Holy Trinity Church on Hamilton St.:

As the Congregation strives to be the Hands and Feet of Jesus on Hamilton Street, the clergy should strive to represent Holy Trinity Church in the community, become a known and trusted face in the community at large and with the local clergy, and work with the lay leadership to develop connections with Community Organizations such as, but not limited to, Southbridge Community Connections, the Ecumenical Fellowship Council and Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Relevant Worship:

Work with the lay leadership to bring a meaningful worship experience to all services, involving as many interested adults and children as is feasible, including taking it to the streets.