The Episcopal Diocese of New York

TO: **Applicants for License to Officiate as Priest**

FROM: **Transition Ministry Office (Rev. Canon Lisa Ahuja and Ms. Michelle Chang)**

RE: **Application Guidelines – License to Officiate**

Thank you for your interest in being granted a License to Officiate (LTO) in the Episcopal Diocese of New York. You will find below a statement of the canonical requirement for licensing and an outline of the application review process.

> "No Priest shall preach, minister the Sacraments, or hold any public service, within the limits of any Diocese other than the Diocese in which the Priest is canonically resident for more than two months without a license from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which the Priest desires to so officiate. No Priest shall be denied such a license on account of the Priest's race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities, or age, except as otherwise provided in these Canons. Upon expiration or withdrawal of a license, a priest shall cease immediately to officiate." [*Constitution & Canons, 2022*: Canon III.9.7 (a)]

If you have any questions about these guidelines or the application process, or the status of your application, please contact Michelle Chang, Liaison for the Transition Ministry Office, at 212-316-7484 or mchang@dioceseny.org.

1) **MEETING WITH THE BISHOP**: Bishop Heyd would like to meet with you. To schedule an appointment contact Ms. Arlene Bullard by email at: abullard@dioceseny.org. Provide your mobile number in the email. You should expect to be scheduled Tuesday through Thursday, perhaps as late as 6:00 pm since the bishop's calendar is so full, in person or via Zoom.

2) **LTO APPLICATION FORM**: Complete application form and send with resume. *(PLEASE send ASAP, the form facilitates your being included on diocesan contact lists for notices of diocesan events & news, and messages from the Bishop's Office.)*

3) **STATEMENT ON PARTICIPATION IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM:** Complete Statement on Participation in the Social Security System.

4) **INS EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION**: Provide copies of documents that satisfy both your Identity and Employment Eligibility [photocopy of a valid passport OK for both]. Follow the U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service Guidelines, refer to the list of acceptable documents on page three of accompanying Form I-9.

5) **BACKGROUND CHECK**: No License to Officiate is granted before completion of a background check. Background checks are conducted for the Diocese by Praesidium, Inc. They are processed electronically, take about 5-10 days to complete, and cost around $200 to $300. The Diocese pays cost in anticipation of receiving reimbursement. By initiating the

background check, you're agreeing to reimburse the Diocese. Michelle Chang will send the invoice & billing details when available. To initiate background check, email your request to Michelle Chang to: mchang@dioceseny.org.

6) **STATEMENT OF GOOD STANDING**: Contact your canonical bishop/diocese and request a Letter of Good Standing is sent for you to the Rt. Rev. Matthew F. Heyd, Bishop of New York. Please request letter is sent by email to: bpheyd@dioceseny.org, and that a copy is emailed to Michelle Chang, Liaison for Transition Ministry: mchang@dioceseny.org.

7) **LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION (only required if there will be no Letter of Agreement reviewed by the Canon for Transition Ministry and signed by the Bishop of New York):** Ask the Rector, Pastor, Priest-in-Charge, Employer, or Supervisor of the parish, community, or institution where you are employed and/or where you will be exercising priestly ministry to send a brief email recommending you and outlining your ministry. This email should be addressed to Bishop Heyd and sent to Rev. Canon Lisa Ahuja, to: lahuja@dioceseny.org, and that a copy is emailed to Michelle Chang, Liaison for Transition Ministry: mchang@dioceseny.org.

8) **LETTER OF AGREEMENT**: All letters of agreement, including those of Curates, Assistants, and Associates, must be reviewed by the Canon for Transition Ministry and signed by the Bishop of New York.

9) **SAFE CHURCH TRAINING**: Consistent with the Canons of The Episcopal Church, the Bishop of New York requires that all clergy complete training (Safe Church training) in both Awareness & Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Awareness & Prevention of Adult Sexual Harassment & Exploitation. **Clergy are required to update their training every three years (in-person or online).** If you previously completed the required training, you may provide a copy of your certificate(s) of completion. If you have not completed the training, or need to update your training, for information and training options see the Diocesan Safe Church webpage: https://dioceseny.org/safe-church/

10) **ANTI-RACISM TRAINING**: Consistent with the Canons of The Episcopal Church, the Bishop of New York requires that all clergy complete Anti-Racism training. If you have previously completed this training, you may provide a copy of your certificate of completion. If you have not completed the training, you can do so when it is offered in this or another diocese. For information and upcoming training dates visit the Diocesan Anti-Racism webpage: https://dioceseny.org/mission-and-outreach/social-concerns/anti-racism/

    Additionally, at the 2024 Diocesan Convention Resolution 21 was passed to "Require Antiracism Training or Participation in an approved antiracism activity every four years for all Diocesan Leaders and Appointees." Individuals who are clergy, diocesan officeholders, and diocesan appointees need to engage in one of the activities listed on the RECERTIFICATION OF ANTIRACISM AWARENESS REQUIREMENT every four years to maintain the diocesan antiracism training requirements.

11) **IF YOU ARE A TRANSITIONAL DEACON**: Follow this application process. Then, following your ordination to the priesthood, a new License to Officiate as a Priest will be issued, without the need for a separate application process.

Note regarding issuing of LTO

Following receipt of all required application documents, your application materials will be reviewed, references checked, and, with the Bishop's approval, your LTO will be issued.

Note regarding clergy registration to perform marriages in the City of New York

The City of New York requires ordained clergy to be registered before performing marriages in New York City. You may have to go in person to complete the registration process. In the past The City Clerk has accepted as proof of ordination for registration option one, your name listed in the; Episcopal Clerical Directory, Episcopal Church Annual, or Diocese of New York Directory. The application guidelines are available through The Office of The City Clerk website at this address: http://www.cityclerk.nyc.gov/html/marriage/officiant_reg.shtml.

Note regarding annual renewal of a License to Officiate

Licenses to Officiate expire annually on June 30, early in June currently licensed priests will receive by email a "Report and Renewal Request" to provide a brief report on the past year's ministry settings, including dates and locations of any supply work. Upon receipt and review of the "Report and Renewal Request" a license is provided for the upcoming year.

Note regarding opportunities for participation in the life of the Diocese of New York

The Bishop of New York expects all priests who hold a License to Officiate to participate in the life of this diocese by maintaining an official affiliation with a parish, community or institution for which they conduct worship services on a regular basis, **AND/OR** by serving the diocese as a supply priest, available for **at least 6 services annually.** The Transition Ministry Office maintains supply clergy lists available online through the diocesan website on the supply clergy information webpage at this address: https://dioceseny.org/administration/for-clergy/transition-ministry-office/supply-clergy-information/

The Diocese of New York recommends the following minimum compensation guidelines for supply priests:

- $225 for one Sunday service and sermon.
- $325 for two Sunday services and sermon.
- $120 for a weekday service.
- $360 for a Funeral, including planning the liturgy and follow up.
- $180 for a graveside service.
- $475 for a Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, including 3 preparatory sessions with the couple.
- $225 for Holy Week services of the Eucharist, with sermon.
- $325 for Holy Week services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Eve/Day.
- **Note: Travel reimbursement in accordance with IRS rates applies to all of the above services.**
- Travel reimbursement includes all public transportation fares (with receipts) OR mileage at the standard IRS mileage reimbursement rate (70 cents per mile as of 1/1/2025) and tolls.
- Ministry in addition to the Sunday or week-day services is to be compensated at an additional hourly rate of $35, plus travel, to be agreed upon by the parish and priest. For guidance please contact the Transition Ministry Office.
- Statement of Pension Assessment: If supply clergy who are active (that is, not retired and drawing pension benefits) supply for the same congregation for two or more consecutive months, a mandated assessment of 18% of the cash stipend is to be submitted [by the congregation] to the Church Pension Fund, retroactive to the first month/Sunday of service.