



# EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

## LETTER OF AGREEMENT AMONG

Trinity Church, Torrington  
and  
the Reverend Carrie A. Combs  
and

the Episcopate of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut

The Reverend Combs has been appointed **priest in charge**, part time, of Trinity Church, Torrington effective May 2, 2022. It is understood that this tenure is for three years from the effective date or until such prior date as it is dissolved by the bishop.

The Reverend Combs, having submitted to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church, exercises ministry in obedience to the Bishop and canons of the Episcopal Church, and under the terms outlined in this letter of agreement. The priest in charge fulfills the regular duties of a rector as set forth in the canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Connecticut (See Appendix A, attached). Priests in charge are appointed by the bishop to serve parishes beginning a clergy leadership transition to enable them to engage in an extended period of reflection and discernment. The priest in charge and parish work with diocesan leadership (including a bishop and the Canon for Mission Advancement & Coaching), a group of peers, and consultants as needed, to help the parish articulate and live into a new sense of identity, community, and ministry appropriate for the new missional age unfolding around us. This work of adaptive change will utilize ECCT's "Definition of a Parish in a New Missional Age", and will engage the work outlined in *Transition is the New Normal*, a document available at [episcopalct.org](http://episcopalct.org). The bishop and/or the parish may also identify other work specific to the parish to be done during this time. The work of the priest in charge who serves part-time includes the intentional raising up, training and support of lay leadership in the parish. At least two people in the parish must be trained and licensed to serve as Worship Leaders, able to officiate at Morning Prayer. The wardens should list their names on the last page of this Letter of Agreement.

Assuming the parish can continue to afford at least a half-time clergy position, once the parish has fully engaged and completed the necessary work (normally around three years), the bishop may give permission for the parish to enter into a tenured relationship with a priest (i.e., call a rector). The vestry may call the priest in charge to be the new rector, with the consent of the bishop. If, instead, the parish enters into a search process, the priest in charge together with the diocesan leadership will discern whether the priest in charge should remain in place until the next rector is called or whether a short-term "bridge priest" should be appointed. Once the search process commences, the priest in charge is no longer eligible to be a candidate for rector. All parishes with less than half-time clergy are served by priests in charge with year-to-year renewable Letters of Agreement.

## TIMES OF WORK AND LEAVE

1. This agreement anticipates that the priest in charge will serve **25** hours per week on average. Because this is a part-time position, the priest in charge will be present to lead worship a maximum of three Sundays per month.
2. The priest in charge will have the following periods of leave. Given the fluidity of this part-time priest in charge position, the following items are listed as a reminder that it is the responsibility of the priest in charge to set aside time to participate in continuing education and spiritual renewal. It is the responsibility of the congregation to be of support and encouragement to them



in doing so, for the sake of the health, holiness and spiritual formation of themselves and the congregation at which they serve.

- Five part-time weeks of annual vacation which may include up to five Sundays (at the discretion of the priest in charge). A week is commensurate to the hours per week listed above. Vacation is not cumulative and may not be carried forward except for extenuating circumstances pre-arranged with the wardens.
- Twelve paid leave days including national holidays, to be taken so as not to interfere with worship on major occasions.
- At least 3 days of continuing education leave each year, which does not include Sundays.
- In the event of illness, injury or disability, salary will be continued up to six months. A physician's certificate may be required.
- Parental Leave as described in ECCT's *Employee Policies and Practices Handbook*, available at [episcopalct.org](http://episcopalct.org).
- In addition to mandated clergy conferences and clergy days, up to three days of spiritual retreat is provided, not to include a Sunday.

## COMPENSATION \*

*The priest in charge's compensation package will be reviewed by the vestry and adjusted annually to reflect the minimum salary schedule voted by Diocesan Convention. Please note this schedule will always include an increase for each year of ordination up to twenty years, and usually includes a cost of living adjustment as well.*

The priest in charge's annual cash stipend will be **\$25,856** per year.

If the priest in charge receives a payment in lieu of Group Life, Medical & Dental (GLMD) insurance, said payment **must be added to cash salary** when computing SSA and the Pension contribution.

\* See ECCT's *The Commons Companion*, found at [episcopalct.org](http://episcopalct.org) for amplification or details.

## Housing:

**If not living in church housing:** When the priest in charge does not live in parish-provided housing, a housing allowance of **\$15,000** will be provided. The allowance includes compensation for mortgage/rent, utilities, basic telephone, cable, and internet, taxes, insurance, and modest maintenance.

*(Upon the priest in charge's request, the vestry will designate annually a portion of the total compensation as a "parsonage allowance" under the Sec. 107 of the federal Internal Revenue Code. This designation must be in accordance with Sec. 107, and need not match the "housing allowance" component of compensation.)*



### **Social Security Allowance (SSA):**

Although the priest in charge is considered an employee for federal income tax purposes, they are considered an independent contractor for Social Security Tax purposes and are thus obligated to pay a self-employment tax. The parish shall pay the priest a Social Security Allowance to partially offset this obligation. The Social Security Allowance is computed as follows:

If paying housing allowance: (Cash + Housing + Utilities) x .1011 = **\$4,804**

### **BENEFITS**

#### **Pension**

**If not living in church housing:** The parish shall pay into the Church Pension Fund an assessment on behalf of the priest in charge computed as follows:

(Cash + Housing + Utilities + SSA + HEA [if applicable]) x 18% = **\$9,419**

*The Church Pension Fund must be notified of any new employment or change in compensation. Be sure to download an "Employment Change Form" from [CPG.org](http://CPG.org), complete it, and send in to CPG.*

#### **Group Life, Medical, Dental Insurance (GLMD)**

The parish shall offer group life, medical, dental insurance (GLMD) through the group plan provided by the diocese, unless waived by the bishop. A waiver will be not be considered unless the priest is already covered under a plan that is comparable to the one offered by the diocese. If a waiver is granted, the parish may provide additional compensation to the priest as an offset to the premium costs under the non-diocesan plan. This payment must be added to cash salary when computing SSA and the Pension contribution

The choice of plan and whether coverage under the diocesan plan is for a single person, two persons, or a family is left to the sole discretion of the priest. The parish's minimum contribution rate to the GLMD plan shall be set periodically by the Mission Council in accordance with the plan. The priest in charge shall bear responsibility for enrolling in the diocesan plan, and for maintaining any existing coverage until the plan's effective date.

The parish contribution for GLMD will be 100% of the life insurance premium.

If coverage under the diocesan plan has been waived, compensation in lieu of coverage: A medical insurance waiver has been granted. The priest in charge will receive one half of their annual premium as compensation in lieu of coverage. For 2022 this amount is \$6,666.

### **EXPENSES**

The parish shall pay the following documented expenses incurred by the priest in charge in fulfilling the duties of office:

- The normal expenses of the church office operations such as telephone, postage, office equipment, supplies, administrative support, etc.
- A professional expense allowance of up to \$1,500 annually for reimbursement of documented expenses according to a vestry approved accountable plan. Expenses incurred in the course of professional activities on behalf of the parish include travel/car expense allowance at the mileage rate noted in ECCT's *The Commons Companion*. Professional expenses include books, professional journals, conferences, meetings, professional meals and professional memberships.



- Reasonable cell phone and computer expenses will be negotiated and documented according to priest in charge and parish need.
- A non-accumulative continuing education allowance of \$1,850 per year as established by diocesan convention shall be paid on behalf of the priest in charge for continuing education expenses. This allowance is disbursed as receipts or bills are submitted for continuing education expenses.

## **DISCRETIONARY FUND**

In accordance with the Canons of the General Convention a parish account, known as the Discretionary Fund, is to be established under the priest in charge's control. The fund must be audited annually by a professional auditor.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY COMPENSATION**

The priest in charge shall not charge fees for performing any rites of the church (for example, baptisms, marriages, funerals) for members of the parish. The priest in charge may, however, receive income from other sources, such as:

- Sacramental services on behalf of persons not in any way related to the parish.
- Fees and honoraria for professional services performed on personal time for groups unrelated to the parish or for sermons, books or articles published outside the parish.

## **USE OF BUILDINGS**

- It is understood that the general pattern of building use followed during the last priest's tenure shall be maintained, unless there has been a vestry resolution to the contrary. The priest in charge shall have the right to grant use of buildings to individuals or groups from outside the parish pursuant to the guidelines approved by the vestry.

## **ANNUAL MUTUAL MINISTRY REFLECTION AND PLANNING**

The vestry and the priest in charge will engage annually in a process of reflection on their mutual ministry of leadership and planning for the coming year. The focus will be on how the parish is engaging the work of adaptive change and progress on any specifically identified goals. The characteristics outlined in ECCT's "Definition of a Parish in a New Missional Age" provide categories for reflection on ministry.

## **REVISION**

Except for upward revisions in compensation (including adjustments occasioned by changes in the minimum salary scale and revisions in benefits to reflect changes in GLMD premiums or contribution rates), any modifications to the terms and conditions of employment set forth herein must be incorporated in a new agreement approved by the Diocesan Transition Minister and signed by the bishop.



## OTHER AGREEMENTS

- **This letter of agreement shall be made part of the minutes of the vestry**, and copies shall be given to each current and new vestry member.
- The priest in charge shall participate (or have participated) in CT Basic Safe Church Training. All clergy must be recertified at Mandatory Clergy Professional Development every three years.
- The priest in charge shall participate in all monthly gatherings of the priest in charge peer group and attend all required trainings.
- All terms of the Letter of Agreement are contingent upon the priest-in-charge successfully completing the required background checks.
- The priest-in-charge and parish will follow ECCT's "Leaving Well Policy" upon the priest in charge's departure from this call.
- The following individuals have been or will be trained to serve as licensed Worship Leaders in ECCT (at least two must be identified by name):
  1. Mary Hart
  2. Conrad Sienkiewicz
  3. Lydia Sienkiewicz
  4. Alicia Kirsch

## STAFF POLICY

The parish staff works at the discretion and under the supervision of the priest in charge.

----- SIGNATURE PAGE FOLLOWS -----



*Carrie Combs*  
[Carrie Combs \(Apr 28, 2022 14:44 EDT\)](#)

Priest in Charge

Apr 28, 2022

Date

June 10, 2017  
Year of Ordination to the Diaconate

*Jessica Magda*  
[Jessica Magda \(Apr 28, 2022 16:30 EDT\)](#)

Warden

Apr 28, 2022

Date

*Alicia Kirsch*  
[Alicia Kirsch \(Apr 29, 2022 18:44 EDT\)](#)

Warden

Apr 29, 2022

Date

*Ian T. Douglas*

Bishop

Apr 29, 2022

Date

*Amber Page Gehr*  
Approved-Diocesan Transition Minister

April 28, 2022  
Date



## Appendix A

### Canonical Duties of a Rector

(also apply to all Priests in Charge)

According to TEC Canon III.9.6, the duties of a rector are:

- Authority and responsibility for the conduct of worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the parish
- Use and control of the parish buildings and access to all parish records
- Ensure all persons in the congregation receive instruction in the Scriptures, the subjects contained in the Catechism, in the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Episcopal Church, and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons
- Ensure all persons are instructed concerning Christian stewardship
- Ensure that all persons be prepared for baptism, and that sponsors be prepared as well
- Ensure preparation for confirmation, reception and reaffirmation of baptismal vows and be ready to present them to the bishop
- Announce the intention of the bishop to visit the congregation and show the parish register to the bishop at the visitation
- Oversee the designated offerings for the poor to be applied to pious and charitable uses (i.e., oversee the Discretionary Fund)
- Read or make available copies of any pastoral letter from the House of Bishops
- Accurately maintain all parish registers, including recording all baptisms, confirmations (and their canonical equivalents), marriages, and burials, as well as all communicants and active members

These articulated duties correlate with ECCT's definition of a parish, touching on worship, Scripture, instruction and preparation for discipleship and apostleship, and connection to the wider Church. The canons also state that the rector is an officer of the vestry.<sup>i</sup> The rector or any such member of the vestry designated by the rector, is to preside at all vestry meetings<sup>ii</sup> as well as at all parish meetings.<sup>iii</sup>

The rector is also responsible for safeguarding the property and funds of the Church.<sup>iv</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> ECCT Canon I.6.A

<sup>ii</sup> TEC Canon I.14.3

<sup>iii</sup> ECCT Canon I.9.B

<sup>iv</sup> TEC Canon IV.4.1e

# CombsC\_Trinity, Torrington LOA PIC 3 Yr PT 2022

Final Audit Report

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