

Preacher

Title III, Canon 4, Sec.5

A Preacher is a lay person authorized to preach. Persons so authorized shall only preach in congregations under the direction of the Member of Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

Discernment

Candidates considering the ministry of Preacher should confer with sponsoring clergy, spiritual directors, or other vocational guides to discuss honestly how to test a call, as well as the practicalities of the preaching ministry.

During the period of discernment, candidates should familiarize themselves with various theologies and theories of preaching, so that their models of preaching are not limited by the examples they have observed in their immediate context. Some resources to aid in discernment are listed at the end of this document. It is not necessary to purchase and read all the resources on this extensive list in order to become licensed. Start with the basics and use the resource list for your continuing education and skill building in this ministry.

Discernment Questions for those discerning a call to this ministry:

- Have I imagined myself preaching? How did that feel?
- Have I found I wanted to investigate the meaning of the scriptures more deeply than I have in the past?
- Am I curious about Christian theology or the history of the Church?
- Have I asked God whether God might be calling me to this ministry?
- Have friends, clergy, or fellow-parishioners suggested I think about a preaching ministry?
- Do I feel relatively comfortable speaking in front of a group?
- Am I open to beliefs and attitudes different from my own, or from those of my community?
- Have I grappled with the question of what preaching is, and what its purposes are?
- Am I open to criticism as a means of growth?
- Am I ready to devote myself to preaching as a central aspect of my spiritual life?
- What gifts do I have that would be an asset for this ministry? What particular gifts do I bring now, and what gifts do I hope to develop/grow?

Qualities of a Preacher

- Devotion and commitment to proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ, as it is expressed in scripture and witnessed in the world around us.

- Commitment to bearing witness to Christ, and to encouraging others to do the same, wherever they may be – working, praying, and giving for the increase of the kingdom of God.
- Commitment to continuing study of Scripture and basic sources of theology and the tradition of the church.
- Commitment to regular discipline of prayer, self-examination, and study of scripture as a devotional practice.
- Ability to interpret Scripture and present this interpretation in a lively and meaningful way to a congregation.
- Commitment to ongoing theological and homiletical study and openness to feedback for continuing growth as a preacher.
- Demonstrated competence in using source materials, methods of attribution, and other standard research processes.
- Ability to use the voice and physical presence with grace and confidence.

Preparation for a Preaching Ministry

Guided by the supervising clergy person, candidates should begin preparation in the following areas, starting with basic resources. Study is ongoing even after licensing.

Basic Theological Study (Completing an Education for Ministry Course is a good way to get a grounding in basic church history and theology)

- Gaining general familiarity with the content of the Holy Scriptures
- Approaches to interpretation of scripture, including history and cultural background
- History of the Church, as it pertains to preaching or issues arising from scriptural study
- Polity, history, and current issues of The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion
- Ethics and moral theology
- Theology and doctrine, as they appear in the Book of Common Prayer, and especially in the Creeds and the Catechism
- Familiarity with the Book of Common Prayer and Hymnals, including the Lectionary and Lectionary resources

Practical Preparation for Preaching

- Study of approaches to exegesis of scripture, and also of congregational context
- Study of the theory and theology of preaching
- Study of rhetorical and editorial aspects to preaching
- Study of the relationship of the homily to the greater liturgical context
- Study of and practice with the use of the voice and other physical

- dimensions of preaching
- Study of the Lectionary, both books and online
 - Study of pastoral, ethical and social dimensions to preaching, with particular emphasis on issues related to diversity in the preaching context

Planning for Continuing Education

- Structures for continuing supervision and feedback
- Means for staying current on issues related to the greater Church
- Plans for attending workshops on preaching and study of scripture
- Creating a preaching “team” for continuing practice and feedback

Expectations

A confirmed adult communicant in good standing, prior to licensing, should be able to:

1. Describe their sense of call to this ministry, both orally and in writing, to the Congregational Commission on Ministry.
2. Describe how God is revealed in the scriptures and how God is revealed to us today.
3. Explain how scripture can be applied to modern problems and issues.
4. Use the Revised Common Lectionary and the church calendar, select hymns in relation to the lectionary and explain the reasons for the choices.
5. Give evidence of some comfort and grace speaking in front of a group, including use of a microphone.
6. Describe how a life of prayer affects sermon preparation.
7. Prepare two sermons and send copies of both to the Bishop with application for licensing, and for each renewal if requested. The Bishop may require a demonstration of competency in any of the areas mentioned by the Canon, and has the prerogative of requiring further education prior to licensing.
8. Upon licensing, preachers will be prepared to discuss the content of sermons with the appropriate ecclesiastical authority.
9. Complete all required Diocesan Safe Church Trainings. These trainings are available both through in-person training events and online training programs. Visit norcalepiscopal.org/safechurch for more details.

License Renewal

Licenses may be renewed by the Bishop for an additional three-year period. The supervising clergy person must send a letter on church letterhead to the Office of the Bishop certifying that:

1. The licensee has faithfully practiced his/her licensed ministry

2. The licensee participated in appropriate continuing education.
 - a. This education may include informal classes with supervising clergy, approved workshops or seminars, or suggested reading.
 - b. Formation and enrichment to strengthen ministers, such as retreats, quiet days, spiritual development activities, prayer workshops etc. at the discretion of supervising clergy.

Diocesan Policy

- Rectors, vicars and priests-in-charge may recommend confirmed members in good standing from their congregation to be licensed as Preachers with the approval of the Bishop.
- The Clergy-in-Charge will have responsibility for oversight of the sermon text, including a review as needed before delivery.

Resources for Initial Training and Continuing Education

General

- Willimon, William H., and Richard Lischer, editors. 1995. *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. A multitude of topics related to preaching, but containing especially helpful essays on the history of preaching and summaries of the thought of major preachers and theorists.

Wilson, Paul Scott ed. 2008. *New Interpreters Bible Handbook of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon. A compendium of a wide variety of topics related to preaching. Available as e-book.

On Discernment

- Childers, Jana. 1998. *Performing the Word: Preaching As Theatre*. Nashville: Abingdon. This book emphasizes the performative aspects of preaching, but begins with a helpful summary of the various purposes of preaching.
- Long, Thomas G. 2005 second edition. *The Witness of Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. This textbook on preaching is particularly good on discussing what preaching *is*, on the question of who the preacher is when he or she preaches, and on doing biblical exegesis.
- Taylor, Barbara Brown. 1993. *The Preaching Life*. Cowley Publications. This autobiographical book not only presents Taylor's ruminations on how she came to preach, but also outlines a holistic approach to preaching as the center point of a life in ministry. Includes sample sermons.
- Wilson, Paul Scott. 2007 revised edition. *The Practice of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon. This textbook begins with a discussion of preaching as "God's event," a way of presenting a theology and theory of preaching.

Exegesis of Scripture

- Bartlett, David L., and Barbara Brown Taylor, editors. 2011. *Feasting on the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. A 12-volume set organized by the Sundays of the three years, with essays for each reading on Theological, Pastoral, Exegetical and Homiletical perspectives. Available as e-books.
- Harrington, Daniel J., SJ, Editor. *Sacra Pagina*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press. Various authors, on individual books of the Bible. Paper & e-books.
- Westminster John Knox. 2012. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. Various authors, on individual books of the Bible. Aimed explicitly at preachers.
- Woodard, Jenee. 2015. *The Text This Week, Lectionary, Scripture Study, Worship Links, and Resources*. Accessed October 20, 2015. www.textweek.com. An invaluable goldmine for all kinds of materials, based on the Revised Common Lectionary.
- Luther Seminary. 2015. *Working Preacher*. Accessed October 20, 2015. www.workingpreacher.org. A lectionary-based resource, including essays on the preaching life as well as materials directly related to the readings.

Theory and Practice of Preaching

- Allen, O. Wesley Jr. 2005. *The Homiletic of All Believers: A Conversational Approach*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. Takes seriously the call to make preaching a conversational event, while recognizing that during a liturgy only one voice is usually heard. Identifies his approach as post-modern.
- Childers, Jana. 1998. *Performing the Word: Preaching As Theatre*. Nashville: Abingdon. Practical suggestions about the physical dimensions of preaching, including suggested exercises.
- Clader, Linda L. 2001. Pages:51-66. "Homily for the Feast of the Visitation," in Jana Childers, ed., *Birthing the Sermon: Women Preachers on the Creative Process*. St. Louis: Chalice. The book is a collection of homilies by women preachers, with reflections on how they go about preparation.
- Clader, Linda L. 2006. Pages:194-225. "The Formation of a Eucharistic Preacher," in Michael Monshau, O.P., ed., *Preaching at the Double Feast: Homiletics for Eucharistic Worship*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press. This book is a collection of essays by preachers from various denominations that emphasize the Holy Eucharist. This essay is based on the context of The Episcopal Church and the Book of Common Prayer.
- Clader, Linda L. 2003. *Voicing the Vision: Imagination and Prophetic Preaching*. Harrisburg: Morehouse. On preaching as a way to open the doors and windows for God's surprises to work on us.

- Lischer, Richard ed. 2002. *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. Paperback or e-book. A collection of essays on the purposes of preaching, the role of the preacher, biblical interpretation, and church context. Selections from major preachers and theorists from Chrysostom through Luther and Calvin to the present.
- Long, Thomas G. 2005, second edition. *The Witness of Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. This textbook builds on the author's preference for "witness" as the best stance for a preacher, and covers all the practical dimensions of preparing to preach.
- Wilson, Paul Scott. 1999. *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon. Offers a practical guide to the process of study and developing a sermon.
- Wilson, Paul Scott. 2007 revised edition. *The Practice of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon. This comprehensive textbook covers the many elements of preaching, with helpful emphases on theology, hermeneutics, and rhetoric.

Congregational Context

Jeter, Joseph R. Jr., and Ronald J. Allen. 2002. *One Gospel, Many Ears: Preaching for Different Listeners in the Congregation*. St. Louis: Chalice. Beginning with an overall consideration of diversity in the preaching situation, the book devotes separate chapters to particular kinds of diversity, such as learning styles, generational differences, political leanings, and cultural identities.

- Rose, Lucy Atkinson. 1997. *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox. Emphasizes finding ways to include voices less-often heard in preaching.

Note: The Preacher should comply with the general canons regarding licensed lay ministries found in Title III, Canon 4, Sections 1 and 2.

Constitution & Canons. Together with the Rules of Order for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church. Adopted and Revised in General Convention, 1789-2012., 2012, New York, New York, Church Publishing Incorporated.

CANON 4: Of Licensed Ministries

Sec. 1 (a) A confirmed communicant in good standing or, in extraordinary circumstances, subject to guidelines established by the Bishop, a communicant in good standing, may be licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to serve as Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, Evangelist, or Catechist. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons, and the duration of licenses shall be established by the Bishop in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

(b) The Presiding Bishop or the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces may authorize a member of the Armed Forces to exercise one or more of these ministries in the Armed Forces in accordance with the provisions of this Canon. Requirements and guidelines for the selection, training, continuing education, and deployment of such persons shall be established by the Bishop granting the license.

Sec. 2 (a) The Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith may request the Ecclesiastical Authority with jurisdiction to license persons within that congregation or other community of faith to exercise such ministries. The license shall be issued for a period of time to be determined under Canon III.4.1(a) and may be renewed.

MINISTRY CANON III.4.3-8

The license may be revoked by the Ecclesiastical Authority upon request of or upon notice to the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith.

(b) In renewing the license, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall consider the performance of the ministry by the person licensed, continuing education in the licensed area, and the endorsement of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight of the congregation or other community of faith in which the person is serving.

(c) A person licensed in any Diocese under the provisions of this Canon may serve in another congregation or other community of faith in the same or another Diocese only at the invitation of the Member of the Clergy or other leader exercising oversight, and with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority in whose jurisdiction the service will occur.