

Celebrations of New Partnerships in Ministry

We propose that “inductions” be framed as “Celebrations of New Partnerships in Ministry”. [These celebrations would be distinct from a form of Institution held separately and with the Bishop presiding.] Their purpose is to observe and celebrate the covenant between bishop, cleric and people. Each party exercises their distinctive roles in a new ministry partnership furthering God’s mission.

Three kinds of elements inform the planning and conduct of such celebrations.

1. **Normative elements** – which arise out of the norms of Christian baptismal covenants and Anglican ordinals, including but not limited to: bible, font, chalice & paten, and prayer.
2. **Vision-related elements** – which arise out of the Anglican Communion’s Marks of Mission and the Diocese of Niagara’s Vision for Ministry, including explicit references to at least some aspects of those vocational guides.
3. **Parochial/local elements** – which arise out of the particular missional opportunities discerned in the particular time and place of this new ministry partnership.

Relationship to Ministry Covenants

Our shared baptism forms a foundational covenant between bishop, cleric and people. That covenant undergirds our practice of ordered ministry. It also continually evolves in light of the missional opportunities found in a particular time and place. When that covenant can be expressed in a comprehensive ministry covenant at the time of this liturgical new beginning, it should have a significant impact on the shape of the liturgy. Ministry covenants are intended as living documents. They are founded on all three kinds of elements listed above. The Bishop’s and lay leaders’ active discernment of the parish’s ministry goals during the interim period will benefit any initial ministry covenant. It is also true that the work of discerning and developing goals and strategies for a ministry covenant must fully include the Rector. It may be desirable to develop an initial ministry covenant by the time the liturgical celebration of a new partnership is held. The time available may not be enough to develop a “complete” ministry covenant and many important insights and understandings emerge during the first stages of a new ministry partnership. Let us remember that ministry covenants will be reviewed and revised periodically. In any case, these goals and strategies probably ought never to be thought of as finalized. The period between the covenant’s formation and first review (after a year or so) may be used to identify further or different specific strategies for pursuing ministry goals.

Planning the Celebration

Involve the Bishop or, more likely, Regional Archdeacon (or other bishop’s delegate), Rector and lay leaders in planning the celebration of a new partnership in ministry from the beginning. The responses to the following will serve as guides to answering the question – What are we (three partners) going to do with this service of celebration?

- What does God’s mission look like in this place at this moment in time?
- How will concern for promoting the well-being of our part in God’s mission shape this liturgy?
- How will normative, vision-related and parochial/local elements shape our liturgy?
- How will we recognize that we share in this ministry with partners in the wider and neighbouring Anglican, ecumenical, inter-faith and municipal communities?
- How will the liturgical space affect the celebration?

Expectations, suggestions and resources

Find ways to affirm the principal sacraments of baptism and eucharist in the celebration. Consider reciting baptismal vows in a manner that promotes consciousness of living those vows out in the here and now. While a different liturgical form may be decided upon, there are compelling reasons to include a celebration of the eucharist in this liturgy.

Find a way to recall the language of the Service of Institution, in which the Bishop instructs the candidate “Accept this charge and this ministry, which are mine and yours...” emphasizing that the ministry exercised by Rectors is a responsibility of the Bishop shared by the Bishop with the Rector.

Holding this celebration on a Sunday morning tends to exclude the participation of clericus members, other Anglican diocesan clergy and ecumenical partners. It also makes the attendance of the Regional Archdeacon and Regional Dean more difficult.

The rubrics and framework provided by *The Book of Occasional Services* are valuable resources for planning this liturgy. The use of symbols of ministry is fitting and can be quite powerful. However, these symbols ought not, necessarily, to be presented to the new minister. A one-sided presentation might undercut celebration of the mutuality of the threefold partnership.

Create or customize elements of the service for the specific celebration. These may include:

- Reciting baptismal vows;
- Choosing eucharistic prefaces and/or canons with this celebration in mind;
- Giving a liturgical expression of welcome to the clericus;
- Selecting Scripture readings which fit the season or festival and/or the partnership;
- Preaching or using other features which celebrate the partnership with God and with one another in God’s mission;
- Offering thanksgivings for that which is “already” – the past ministries upon which the new partnership will build, and, for our new partners;
- Praying our vision for ministry, probably including intercessions which mention specific goals from the initial ministry covenant and with keen awareness of the world in which God’s mission is being lived;
- Holding up symbols of our shared ministry as reminders of our calling;
- Using music, hymns and psalms including familiar tunes, but with words which echo the missional and partnership themes of the liturgy; and,
- Recruiting a wide range of worship leaders who represent the diversity of the whole people of God.

We are key resources for one another in worship planning. This is especially true when we bring faithfulness to local and ancient traditions into conversation with creative, inspiring and discerning wisdom about worship which serves God’s glory and promotes God’s mission.