

Diocese of Western Michigan  
Policy regarding  
Continuing Tenure of Assistant Clergy/Associate Rector  
at resignation of Rector

According to the Canons of the Episcopal Church, Title 111.9.3(c), “any assistant shall serve at the pleasure of the Rector and may not serve beyond the period of service of the Rector, except that pending the call of a new Rector, an assistant may continue in the service of the Parish if requested to do so by the Vestry under such conditions as the Bishop and Vestry shall determine.”

The policies of the Diocese of Western Michigan to fulfill the above canon are as follows:

- I. At the resignation of the Rector, any assistant shall submit his/her resignation.
- II. The Bishop will meet with the Vestry to determine the appropriateness of having the assistant continue serving the church during the transition between rectors.
- III. If the assistant wishes to be considered for the position of Rector, he/she must leave the parish and end all pastoral relationships in the congregation within one month of the departure of the Rector. This will provide time for the congregation to engage in an honest conversation about the hopes, dreams, goals for the parish and skills needed in the next Rector.
- IV. If the assistant is asked and chooses to continue to serve the congregation through the transition, he/she *may not* submit his/her name for the position of Rector. The assistant cannot be considered an Interim Rector.
- V. Upon the arrival of the new Rector, the assistant will resign, and negotiate with the new rector the terms of departure or continuing tenure as an assistant.

**Title III.9.3.(c) Assistants.** A Priest serving as an assistant in a Parish, by whatever title designated, shall be selected by the Rector, and when required by the canons of the Diocese, subject to the approval of the Vestry, and shall serve under the authority and direction of the Rector. Before the selection of an assistant the name of the Priest proposed for selection shall be made known to the Bishop and a time, not exceeding sixty days, given for the Bishop to communicate with the Rector and Vestry on the proposed selection. Any assistant shall serve at the pleasure of the Rector and may not serve beyond the period of service of the Rector, except that pending the call of a new Rector, an assistant may continue in the service of the Parish if requested to do so by the Vestry under such conditions as the Bishop and Vestry shall determine. An assistant may continue to serve at the request of a new Rector. Assistants may have a letter of agreement with the Rector and the Vestry setting forth mutual responsibilities subject to the Bishop’s approval.