REHEARSAL FOR THE

INAUGURATION SERVICE

OF A NEW PARISH PRIEST

NOTES FOR THE AREA/ RURAL DEAN

1. In General

1.1 It is your task to arrange for a rehearsal at a date and time convenient to the majority of participants and as close as possible to the event itself.

1.2 It is helpful if you can be seen to take charge of the occasion, without being too 'heavy' but with a firmness which lets them feel that you have control.

1.3 It is best if as many participants as possible can know what they are doing and do it confidently. Please check with churchwardens beforehand that they will all be present at the rehearsal in a benefice of more than one parish.

1.4 The churchwardens have already been sent a set of notes for their guidance and direction in the setting up of the service and their part in it. In benefices of more than one church, the expectation is that they will co-operate as closely as possible. The churchwardens in whose church the service is held take precedence and walk closest to the bishop in procession.

1.5 The Bishop, Registrar (if present), Archdeacon, Rural Dean, Patron (if present) and Bishop's Chaplain normally robe in the clergy vestry. Others robing and walking in procession may be accommodated in a nearby hall, or even in the parsonage or other house. Please depute a priest to say a vestry prayer and to marshal the procession to the church door. It is then up to you to see that the Bishop's procession meets up with it there.

1.6 Please ask the churchwardens to provide clear labels for the seats of the principals (other than the Bishop).

The Parish Priest designate, the Patron and Archdeacon sit at the back of the church until the Presentation. Thereafter the Parish Priest and Patron sit in the front pews next to the aisle, and the Archdeacon is his stall.

Where the Bishop is Patron (a collation), either the Rural Dean or the Lay Chairman presents him/her and they sit together as above.
The Bishop's Chaplain stands/sits behind the Bishop on his left.

The Archdeacon is on the Bishop's right (as he faces the people), often in the curate's stall (if free).

Where there is a ministry team, it is helpful if they can be together and in a prominent place.

1.7 The layout of some church buildings may require that minor changes may be needed to the way in which various parts of the service are ordered. Rural Deans have some discretion in this matter.

2. Beforehand

2.1 A small table should be placed to one side of but close to the chancel step. On it should be placed:
   a Bible, pen, registrar's ink and blotting paper
   adequate space for signing the Instrument of Institution/Licensing

2.2 The Bishop's chair should be positioned at the chancel step with kneelers for the Bishop and priest to kneel on at the institution/licensing.

   A seat for his chaplain should be placed just behind the Bishop, to his left.

2.3 Please ensure that churchwardens have arranged parking for the Bishop, Registrar (if present), Archdeacon, Patron (if present) and appointed someone to direct them to it.

   (N.B. The Registrar does not normally attend licensings. When possible the Bishop and Archdeacon travel together.)

   The churchwardens ought also to have reserved seating for the spouse of the Bishop, the Registrar, the Patron, the Archdeacon, and the Rural Dean, as necessary. The Diocesan Secretary frequently attends these occasions and should be given a reserved seat towards the front.

2.4 The symbols of ministry to be presented to the priest during the Act of commitment (Flagon of Water, Bible, Bread & wine), should be set out at an appropriate point near the back of church. It is important that these are brought up without delay, so that the service proceeds smoothly.

2.5 Please ensure that those participating in the service know what they are doing and that they do it confidently and with the minimum of fuss. Those who have speaking roles should be able to be heard without shouting!
3. The Rehearsal of the Service

3.1 The procession enters and moves up the aisle during the first hymn. All those in the procession take their seats and the Bishop is escorted to his seat by the churchwardens. The Parish Priest designate, Patron and Archdeacon (if he/she is presenting) enter behind the Bishop during the first hymn and take their seats at the back of the church. The churchwardens return to the back of the church and take their positions, ready to lead the new priest (and Archdeacon and Patron) forwards at the presentation.

3.2 Once the hymn has been sung the Bishop pronounces the Greeting. All remain standing until the Bishop has finished reading the Preface.

3.3 All sit or kneel when the Bishop introduces the Confession.

3.4 THE PRESENTATION
The new Parish Priest (waiting by the main entrance) is led to the Bishop, escorted by the patron (where appropriate) the Archdeacon, a representative of his/her previous sphere of ministry and the churchwardens. In a very large building it may be appropriate to arrange music only to cover this procession forwards. Those involved with the presentation return to their seats after they have fulfilled their respective roles.

3.5 Following the presentation the new priest stands before the bishop to make the Declaration of Assent and swear the oaths. The priest then signs the Declarations on the table which should have been placed in an appropriate position prior to the service. The parish priest and patron (if present) then take up their seats in the front row of the nave.

3.6 THE LITURGY OF THE WORD
THE COLLECT, READING, HYMN and SERMON follow. An anthem may replace the hymn.

3.7 THE LICENSING
The Holy Spirit is invoked by the singing of the hymn *Veni Creator* either kneeling or sitting.

The optional anointing of the new Priest may follow.

3.8 THE BLESSING OF THE PRIEST / MINISTRY TEAM
The inclusion of ministerial colleagues is an important feature and may include ecumenical colleagues as well. In the case of a LEP, a declaration of
commitment to this by the new priest may be inserted. The Bishop will be aware of this and will ensure its inclusion.

3.9 THE INSTALLATION (at a Licensing)
The Archdeacon immediately installs the new priest. There is no door locking or bell ceremony.

(3.10 THE INDUCTION/COLLATION (where appropriate)

If the service is an Induction/Collation the Archdeacon may either take the new incumbent to the main door of the church and place the incumbent’s hand on the key, or simply place the Priest’s hand on the keys of the church. If this latter custom is observed the church key is presented at the appropriate moment by a member of the congregation.

[The old practice of the Priest going outside, locking and unlocking the door and re entering is optional.]

The Priest may then go to the church bell and toll it to make public the start of his/her ministry in the parish.

The Priest is then installed by the Archdeacon.

3.11 THE WELCOME

It is hoped that a married priest will stand with his/her spouse. Where appropriate, they may be accompanied by their children.

Welcomers should be encouraged to sit towards the front of the church, preferably at the end of a row, to avoid unnecessary delay. If there is room, it may be advisable for them to come forward together to stand at the side, and to await their turn to speak. It may be helpful for a churchwarden (or Rural Dean) to oversee this.

The form of welcome should be brief and use the words given in the order of service or similar words to these. (Speeches are not appropriate). No more than six welcomers should be involved and all should follow the instructions given in the rubric. All should turn to face (or half face) the congregation so that they may be both seen and heard clearly. Where a microphone is available, it is essential that his be placed centrally for their use.

It may helpful to produce a short instruction sheet for welcomers making it clear (a) the order in which they are to come up and (b) to keep things short.
3.12 THE PEACE

3.13 THE NOTICES should be kept short and clear and should include an invitation of generous support through the collection for ordinands in training.

3.14 HYMN

During this hymn the collection is taken. It is important that appropriate arrangements are made for the collection to be presented to the bishop so that he can ask God’s blessing upon it before it is removed to a safe place by a verger or minister.

3.15 THE ACT OF COMMITMENT

After the Peace, and during the hymn before the Act of Commitment, all the people involved in the presentations of symbols should assemble at the front of the church so that this part of the service can begin promptly.

The presentation of the symbols of ministry should be well rehearsed and follow one another smoothly and without pause in one fluid movement. Indeed, it works well if those carrying the symbols from the new priest do so while the priest and congregation are speaking the appropriate words. Organ or other music should not be played during the movement of the symbols. During this part of the service much will depend upon the geography of the church. The Rural Dean has discretion to see that all is done as meaningfully as possible.

It is recommended that the Rural Dean acts as a ‘Master of Ceremonies’ at this point, by holding the book for the new priest, thus freeing his hands to receive and return the symbols. From this position the Rural Dean may be able to prompt and direct all those involved in the action.

3.16 PRAYERS OF DEDICATION AND INTERCESSION

These are led according to the rubric in the order of service.

3.17 THE BLESSING by the Bishop.
During the final hymn the procession is led out in the same order as it entered the church. The exception to this is that the Archdeacon and the new Priest walk together, immediately in front of the Bishop.

3.18 THE BLESSING OF THE PARISH

The Bishop may bless the parish whilst standing at the church door.

3.19 In the vestry, the Bishop usually invites the new priest to say a final prayer and to dismiss the clergy and choir, etc.

Please check that the churchwardens have written up the service register as they have been directed to, starting a new ministry on a clean page, and using registrar's ink. The wording is contained in the notes they are sent.

Please ask a minister to take the register around the ensuing reception for the signature of as many attending ministers and clergy as possible, but only after the Bishop and others taking part have signed it.

Revised June 2015