

Making Appointments where there is an Inter-church Dimension



What follows is a working draft process for making ecumenical appointments in LEPs and other places of ecumenical partnership. It is a shared journey under God's guidance, to discern God's will for the continued development of the church and the sort of ministry that is now needed. It is not to be seen as a dry, administrative process but as the coming together of hearts and minds in a common purpose, in mutual trust and in confidence in God.

Scope

This paper is a **working draft** providing Guidelines for appointments to

- (a) Local Ecumenical Partnerships (congregational, or chaplaincy)
- (b) Congregations which are in covenant with other local congregations
- (c) The Council of Churches Together in Kent

Specifically

- (1) Choosing the person to be appointed
- (2) The service of "induction" (i.e. at which the appointee is collated/ commissioned/ inducted/ installed/ licensed/ and welcomed!

We conclude with a brief (3) After the Induction (two important matters!).

1. Choosing the Person to be Appointed

1.1 Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)

As part of their Constitution, LEPs should have provision for a **Staffing Consultative Group (SCG)**.

The SCG is a 'standing committee', composed of a minimum number of people representing the various denominations within the LEP, together with a representative from Churches Together in Kent. (Typically this latter will be, if available, the church contact on CTKent's Council).

When it is known that a minister is leaving, *or* is changing their role (maybe taking on an extra role, e.g. a chaplaincy), *or* a new minister is to be appointed, the SCG is convened. (Note: the SCG does *not* wait until a new appointment is already being made - the process starts when there is *any* change!)

The role of the SCG is to prepare recommendations for the denominations as to

- (a) The denominational nature of the requested minister;
- (b) Particular issues affecting the LEP which those responsible for the appointment would be advised to take into account;
- (c) Realistic expectations of how much time the minister should devote to the LEP (remembering that in many cases any appointee will also have 'outside' interests), and how the LEP will (help) fund any minister (incl. stipend, house, expenses);
- (d) The draft of a Job Description (or, if not the full draft, some key points for it).

It is the responsibility of the represented denominations to agree

- ◆ which of them will be making the appointment
- ◆ how this appointment will be funded
- ◆ how formally the minister to be appointed should take part in (be recognised) in the decision making bodies of other partner churches. (e.g. *Should a non-Methodist be offered Recognised, Regarded status? Should a non-Anglican be offered honorary (non-voting) membership of the local Anglican Clergy Chapter.*)
- ◆ How 'boundary issues' will be handled (e.g. *the LEP may be only part of a Methodist Circuit; the Anglican parish a Conventional District within a Parish – how does 'outside oversight' (e.g. membership of a school's governing body) impact an appointee's ability to function?*)
- ◆ How an eventually selected candidate will be supported ecumenically. (See 3.2)

The selection and legalities of the appointment is according to the practices of the appointing denomination. But Christian courtesy (if nothing else!) would indicate that there would be at least one representative of a partner denomination on the panel of the group who interview candidates.

The appointing denomination should ensure that the selected candidate either has experience of working in an ecumenical environment, or will at the earliest possible opportunity undergo training. (NB Churches Together in England run such a course at least once a year.)

It is particularly important that the incoming minister understands the niceties of issues such as different forms of church government, different forms of liturgical practice (including lay participation in services), hymnody.

1.2 Appointments where there is a less formal ecumenical dimension:

Examples are where

- ◆ A church has a local covenant with one or more other denominations
- ◆ There is an active ministers' fraternal, or Churches Together Group
- ◆ There is a history of shared services or 'pulpit' (=ministerial!) exchange

Many of the issues are common to those for LEPs (see above.) In particular, common sense would suggest that those responsible for advising the appointing denomination would make sure that

- (a) The parish/church profile clearly states the existence of such relationships.
- (b) Partner churches are kept abreast of, and asked to pray for, the appointing process

1.3 Appointments to the Council of Churches Together in Kent

Appointments of **CTKent's Officers** (Chairman, Secretary/County Ecumenical Officer, and Treasurer) are agreed by CTKent's Standing Committee.

According to CTKent's Constitution, each member denomination is entitled to appoint up to **five representatives** – and the choice of these remains of course with the denomination.

Amongst their representatives, each denomination should have appointed its **denominational ecumenical officer** – someone with responsibility in that denomination to be particularly aware of ecumenical practices, canons, etc.

All representatives should be sponsored by their denomination to have sufficient time/resources to devote to CTKent issues (i.e. Not just attending meetings, but also being prepared to liaise with specific LEPs and local Churches Together groups.)

All representatives should be aware of the information contained on CTKent's website (www.ctkent.org.uk) and of the extra resources available to the County Ecumenical Officer

2. The Service of "Induction"

Note 1 The word here "**Induction**" is used to embrace the variety of procedures and practices when a new minister joins a partnership with an ecumenical dimension. The terms *collating*, *commissioning*, *licensing*, *instituting*, *installing*, *authorising*, *welcoming* or *Induction* are briefly explained in 2.1 below.

Note 2 These guidelines on "Induction" draw in part on the material¹ provided by the Group for Local Unity of Churches Together in England.

2.1 Recognise the differences between 'what is happening' for each of the denominations

- ◆ **Anglican ministers** would be *licensed*, but may also be *collated* (when the patron is the diocesan bishop) or *inducted* (when the patron is other than the diocesan bishop);
- ◆ **Baptists** are *inducted* to a charge and *welcomed*;
- ◆ **Methodist ministers** are *stationed* to the Circuit by Conference, and – for appointments solely within the Methodist church - would simply be *welcomed* to the Circuit. (*but see last bullet below*);
- ◆ **Roman Catholic priests** are appointed by a letter from the Bishop, stating the date at which this becomes effective; the Induction service may follow some time later;
- ◆ **Salvation Army officers** are *welcomed and installed* (public recognition);
- ◆ **URC ministers** are *inducted* within the context of a properly constituted meeting of the District Council – at which the inducting or ordaining minister is also the Presiding minister within this District Council; (NB *See also last bullet below*)
- ◆ For **Joint Methodist/URC Churches**: There is a form of induction service for joint Methodist/URC Churches in the Appendix to *Patterns of Sharing*, 1990, published by the Methodist/URC Liaison Committee. The publication points out that when a URC Minister in pastoral charge of a joint congregation is "Recognised and Regarded" or "Authorised to Serve" by Methodist Conference, or when a Methodist minister in pastoral charge of such a congregation is authorised by URC procedures, it is appropriate for both Welcoming and Induction to take place.

¹ Guidelines for Induction of a Minister in a Local Ecumenical Partnership, Ref CTE/GLU/1997/13
Approved by the Group for Local Unity February 1997

2.2 Recognise the major principle about the 'appointing denomination'

The 'legalities/universal practices' of the denomination to which the minister is ordained must be followed – BUT see 2.3 below! In particular the Inducting Minister should represent the authority of the Church making the appointment :

- ◆ for an **Anglican** it will be the Bishop and/or Archdeacon;
- ◆ for a **Baptist** it will be an Officer of the Regional Association;
- ◆ for a **Methodist** it will be the Circuit Superintendent or District Chairman;
- ◆ for a **Roman Catholic** it will be the Bishop or the appropriate person delegated by him;
- ◆ for the **United Reformed Church** it will be the Provincial Moderator or his/her deputy.

2.3 Planning the Service

The **lead person** in planning the practical issues of the overall service (which will include other elements than the formal induction) is *usually*, for appointment of

An Anglican:	The Area/Rural Dean
A Baptist:	The Regional Minister, together with an officer from the LEP
A Methodist:	The Superintendent Minister of the Circuit
A Roman Catholic:	The Area Dean or Bishop
A URC minister:	The Interim Moderator for the congregation,

each of these in partnership with the minister-elect.

The **formal Induction** will be conducted according to the requirements of the appointing Church so that the main authority for appointment is clear.

Christian courtesy (if nothing else) requires, however, that other matters be included (see also 2.6 and 2.8 below), such as

- a) **Sensitivity** to the partner denominations in terms of e.g. language (use of authorised ecumenical texts, recognition by the minister overseeing the service that there are extra ecumenical dimensions to the appointment, and ensuring that there are specific parts of the service covering these.)
- b) **Welcome** by the other partner denominations (this will be helped if they have been involved in the choice of the minister! While it is the appointing denomination who must ultimately make the appointment (see Section 1, above), in the selection of the new minister consultation, or even including one ecumenical observer on the appointing group, would seem very desirable.)
- c) **Commitment to and from** the other partner denominations (see 2.6a below)

2.4 Consider how best to fulfil specific denominational requirements

- a) **Anglicans**: While the legal declarations in an Anglican licensing must be made, they could usually better be made before the service. They are very wordy and by accentuating one denomination's practice, their public use doesn't do much to help build up the sense of commitment across denominations.
- b) **The United Reformed Church** has a confession of faith embodied in the Scheme of Union, which is made as part of the service by a URC minister being inducted. If the URC is part of an ecumenical partnership and a minister from its partner denomination is being inducted, then (we think) they do not have to say all of it, but should be asked formally if they have read and accepted this confession.

2.5 Consider how best to fulfil the usual, but non-essential, practices of other Appointing Denominations

Because these are non-essential, they can be reduced in scope from normal practice, which for the record is that

- a) **Baptists** would *normally* include a "history of the call" in an induction service, so that would be included in some form in the service when a Baptist comes to an LEP. It could include the chance for the representative of the congregation to say something very briefly about the LEP.
- b) **Methodists** probably need to note that their service of welcome, if they are in an LEP, needs to take on board some of the formalities that their partners might expect. (If two new ministers are coming to a circuit and only one of them is coming to an LEP then this needs sensitive handling by the Superintendent.)
- c) **Roman Catholics** in a shared church can include a welcome from representatives of other churches in the Mass of welcome or induction that they might have for a new priest.

2.6 Consider parties other than the Appointing Denomination:

(a) Other Churches involved in the Partnership

What is essential is for representatives of the other denominations to take part in some way, which is usually worked out between the LEP and the ecumenical officer and the local churches involved.

Consider who the representatives of such other churches should be:

It seems to depend very much on them and on what the church feels they require. Very often it is a bishop or similar 'church leader' from the other denomination(s). If it is not that person, then they would normally appoint someone to be their representative. If it is a comparatively new LEP it is probably more important to have the actual church leader than in an established one.

(b) Parties not formally involved in the partnership

Invitations should of course be sent to representatives of
(1) *all* local churches not involved in the partnership, and
(2) civic and voluntary bodies.

2.7 Remember how busy such representatives can be

In a multi-partner LEP, getting a common date for all representatives and local church folk could mean an interminable delay – but this is good reason for

- (a) the appointing denomination to seek some compromise with a slightly delayed date, and
- (b) for the representatives of the partner denominations to seek other members of their tradition who could effectively represent them.

2.8 Other Aspects of the Service of Induction

(a) Re-affirming the Partnership

At the beginning of the induction service it may be helpful if the partnership's Declaration of Intent or Covenant is read aloud and re-affirmed by members of the partnership and the sponsoring churches. (This may be especially important

for those who have been in some kind of partnership for a long time, and have almost forgotten the original commitment.)

(b) Declarations by Partner Churches

Following the Act of Induction, Declarations should be made and Welcomes given:-

- ◆ The **Anglican** Bishop or his representative should declare the authorisations and provisions made under Canons B43 and B44.
- ◆ A recognised representative of the **Baptist Regional Association** should declare the recognition of ministry agreed in the constitution of the LEP.
- ◆ If the new minister is *Recognised and Regarded* or *Authorised to Serve* by the Conference as a **Methodist** minister, he or she should be welcomed in this capacity by the Chairman of the District or the Circuit Superintendent.
- ◆ Recognition by the **United Reformed Church** should be declared by a recognised representative of the District Council.

These leaders would also each welcome the new minister on behalf of their denomination and give the 'right hand of fellowship'. (If the LEP is a new one created by two existing congregations coming together, then this would include a representative of each congregation following 'their' church leader in the formal welcome.) It would come straight after the act of induction/licensing and be more formal than the way in which representatives of the community, other local churches etc, extend a welcome, which might be near the end of the service. If it is a team ministry so that other ministers are involved with the incoming minister, then there would also be promises made about commitment to one another. The congregation would also promise to support the team as a whole, not just their 'own' minister.

(c) Other Greetings and Welcome to the new minister

An opportunity should be provided within the service for representatives of other Churches and other bodies to offer brief greetings and welcome.

3. After the Induction (two important matters)

3.1 If things start to go wrong (we cover the negative first!)

The ultimate responsibility for handling matters of discipline lies with the Appointing Denomination, which will draw on its specific procedures. But as in the original appointment, it is vital that, within boundaries of confidentiality and contract law, the pastoral issues for both minister and partnership are shared between the relevant church leaders (typically those cited in 2.2 above).

3.2 Ecumenical Support of the Minister (we end on the positive!)

Because the minister is serving more than their own denomination, she/he should be supported by prayer and in tangible ways by *all* partner denominations, e.g.

Is the minister listed in *other* denominations' prayer lists, directories, etc?

How will review of their ministry take place? Ecumenically? By whom?

Will the minister receive invitations to social functions from such *partner* churches? And their spouse on spouse-support groups?

Etc etc!