



# A code of conduct for licensed clergy in the Anglican Mission in England

A CODE FOR PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR AND THE PRACTICE OF PASTORAL MINISTRY  
BY CLERGY IN THE ANGLICAN MISSION IN ENGLAND

To replace Faithfulness in Service as adopted by the Synod of the Anglican Mission in England at Synod in June 2022.

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## ABOUT THIS CODE

When Jesus spoke to his disciples, he said they were not to be like the rulers of the day who exercised authority over others. They were to be servants of others, even as Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve.

When Peter wrote to the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, he reminded them of their identity in Christ as God's chosen people, sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ. The call to be holy is reflected in both the Old and New Testaments as the appropriate response to God's grace. Christians live according to the knowledge that they have been created by God and redeemed by Christ.

When Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians he rejoiced in their fellowship and prayed that their love might grow in knowledge and discernment so that they might see what was significant for their Christian vocation and be enabled to live pure and blameless lives for the day of Jesus Christ. In the light of that growing knowledge of God's love they were to live in humility and faithfulness in the power of the Holy Spirit. They were to live out that love in their contact with others, especially those to whom they minister in Christ's name.

The Church is the fellowship that nurtures and sustains Christians as they seek to follow Christ faithfully and participate in God's mission. Its leaders especially are to be examples of Christian faith and obedience as they exercise their vocation, in dependence on the Holy Spirit.

The personal behaviour and practices of pastoral ministry required of clergy (bishops, presbyters, and deacons) of the Anglican Mission in England are specified in the Holy Scriptures as well as in their Constitutions, canons, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal.

This code is for licensed clergy in an AMiE church.

### *Purpose*

This Code is intended to identify the personal behaviour and practices of licensed clergy.

### *Implementation*

It is important that this Code be understood by clergy and how it fits with their obligations under their contract of employment and policies.

### *Definitions*

'**Standards**' state AMiE's expectations for personal behaviour and the practice of pastoral ministry.

'**Guidelines**' explain and illustrate best practice and highlight practical ways to achieve it.

# 1 - PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

## Preamble

- 1.1 All people are created in the image of God and are of equal value. This is the foundation of all pastoral relationships.
- 1.2 Clergy have authority conferred upon them by their ordination, consecration and licensing. The authority and training associated with their roles means that they have power in pastoral relationships which is always to be exercised in the service of others.
- 1.3 Trust is of primary importance in the creation and maintenance of an effective pastoral relationship. Trust grows with the maintenance of physical, sexual, emotional and psychological boundaries suitable to pastoral ministry. A licensed member of clergy will enhance their ability to maintain these boundaries by attending to their own wellbeing.
- 1.4 While a licensed member of clergy often enjoys personal friendships with those to whom they minister, their pastoral ministry responsibilities take precedence.

## Standards for a licensed member of clergy

- 1.5 If you have overall authority in a church body, you are to ensure that those for whom you are responsible are provided with:
  - a safe working environment, including safe housing, where housing is provided;
  - opportunities to maintain and enhance their ministry skills; and
  - personal encouragement, support and regular feedback.
- 1.6 When exercising pastoral ministry you are to act in the best interests of those to whom you are ministering. You must recognise any potential conflict of interest and take steps to resolve it.
- 1.7 When exercising pastoral ministry you are not inappropriately to discriminate between people.
- 1.8 You are not to disclose confidential information received in pastoral ministry to your spouse, family, friends, colleagues or any other person without the consent of the person providing the information, except where:
  - it is absolutely essential that colleagues know for an individual's pastoral support;
  - the information is known publicly;

- it is required or allowed by law; or
- it is in the public interest (such as to avoid the risk of serious injury or harm to any person).

1.9 When you are on leave or unable to fulfil your responsibilities through illness or any other reason, you are to make alternative arrangements for pastoral ministry.

## Guidelines

### *Boundaries*

- 1.10 Make sure you are clear about the requirements of your role, including the hours to be worked and the nature of your responsibilities, as well as your leave and other entitlements. You need to be sure that your legitimate personal needs can be met.
- 1.11 Recognise the limits of your skills and experience. Do not undertake any ministry (such as relationship counselling, counselling for abuse or addictions, or an exorcism) that is beyond your competence or the role for which you have been employed or trained. If in doubt, seek advice. A person who requires specialised help should be referred to an appropriately qualified person or agency.
- 1.12 Where ministry responsibilities overlap, be aware of the activities, function and style of other clergy. Consult with these colleagues and co-operate wherever possible.
- 1.13 Where your ministry responsibility to one person may conflict with your responsibility to another person to whom you are ministering, or with your own needs, you should seek advice from a colleague or supervisor. Consider the possibility of transferring ministry responsibility for one or both of these to another minister.
- 1.14 If you are unable to act in the best interest of the person to whom you are ministering because of your own interests you should seek advice from a colleague or supervisor and transfer ministry responsibility for the person to another minister.
- 1.15 Avoid behaviour that could give the impression of favouritism and inappropriate special relationships, particularly with individual children.
- 1.16 Think carefully before providing pastoral ministry to a person with whom you already have a close personal relationship, such as a friend or member of your family. Care is needed because confusion between close personal relationships and pastoral relationships can lead to a loss of objectivity, failure to act in the other's best interest and harm to both parties.
- 1.17 Pastoral relationships can legitimately develop into romantic relationships. If this begins to happen:

- acknowledge to yourself that your personal interest and the pastoral relationship are at risk of becoming confused;
- tell the other person that your relationship is changing and becoming romantic;
- disclose the nature of the relationship to a supervisor or colleague to ensure accountability and prevent misunderstanding;

and where practicable:

- disclose to a supervisor or colleague any proposed alternative arrangements for ongoing individual pastoral ministry;
- make alternative arrangements for ongoing individual pastoral ministry; and
- cease providing individual pastoral ministry to the person.

1.18 If you are providing ongoing individual pastoral ministry or counselling, engage someone to provide regular professional supervision. This will help protect you and those to whom you minister.

1.19 When you resign or retire, you should generally terminate existing pastoral relationships. You should do this in a sensitive and timely manner to allow these responsibilities to be undertaken by your successors. Consult with your successor where the other person wishes to maintain an ongoing pastoral relationship with you.

#### *Personal and professional development*

1.20 Maintain a healthy lifestyle and do not overcommit yourself. Make sure you have adequate leisure time, through regularly taking time off, including your full holiday entitlement annually.

1.21 Try to develop interests outside your main area of ministry and continue to care for yourself and your personal and family relationships.

1.22 Look for, and take advantage of, opportunities to maintain and enhance ministry skills appropriate to the responsibilities of your role, through:

- regular ministry development;
- professional supervision / consultation;
- peer support;
- having a mentor; and
- regular feedback including a (at least biennial) ministry review.

#### *Confidentiality and confessions*

1.23 When you are seeking or providing professional supervision / consultation you should not identify any person and only disclose what is necessary to obtain the supervision or advice.

1.24 In most cases you should tell someone who is to give you confidential information of the limits to confidentiality and the arrangements for supervision or obtaining

advice. This should be done before the disclosure of the confidential information, such as at the beginning of an interview.

- 1.25 You may have a legal obligation to report criminal offences to the applicable civil authorities.
- 1.26 You should be aware of and, when appropriate, seek advice in regard to:
- your legal obligations with regard to confidential information received during an interview or a confession, particularly in relation to criminal offences and child abuse;
  - the pastoral consequences of breaching confidentiality; and
  - the risk of physical, financial or emotional harm or hardship to another person by disclosing or not disclosing such information, particularly in writings, sermons or other public media.
- 1.27 Exercise special care that any illustrative material you use from personal experience does not involve a breach of confidentiality.

#### *Communication in a ministry context*

- 1.28 Any communication in a ministry context, whether formal or informal, is a pastoral encounter. Communication may be face-to-face, in writing or involve some form of technology. Consider the appropriateness and impact of your words and actions.
- 1.29 Innuendoes or compliments of a sexual nature are always inappropriate. When a person asks questions or seeks advice around topics of a sexual nature, be aware that they may have motives or needs that you do not understand. Be realistic about your own ability to assist them.
- 1.30 To minimise the risk of being accused of or engaging in misconduct, particularly when conducting meetings, think carefully in advance about:
- the place of the meeting, the arrangement of furniture and lighting, and your dress;
  - whether the physical location allows for privacy of conversation while maintaining the opportunity for supervision (for example, doors to meeting rooms, if closed, should not be locked);
  - the physical distance between you and the other person to maintain both hospitality and respect;
  - whether the circumstances would suggest a social interaction;
  - the propriety and circumstances of the interview when you are visiting or being visited alone, especially at night;
  - the personal safety and comfort of all participants;
  - establishing at the outset the meeting's purpose and the boundaries with respect to the subject matter, confidentiality and its duration; and
  - the appropriateness of initiating or receiving any physical contact, such as gestures of comfort, that may be unwanted or misinterpreted.

1.31 When considering using technology for communication, you should apply the same principles as you would in any other form of communication. Minimise the risk of harming others or yourself by asking:

- is this an appropriate way to communicate about this matter?
- should this communication be confidential? If so, do not use unprotected electronic media;
- how will the language and images used impact upon the person receiving the communication and any other person who may access it?
- could the circumstances of the communication, including the language and images used, suggest your relationship with the other person(s) is inappropriate?

## 2 - PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

### Preamble

- 2.1 The personal behaviour and relationships of clergy have a significant impact on the Church and the community because they are a model to others. In a context where their responsibility is to care for others, people will especially observe the way in which clergy exercise power.
- 2.2 Abuse of power is at the heart of many relationship problems in the Church and the community. In essence, abuse is one person's misuse of power over another. Sometimes abuse will be a one off event and at other times it will be a pattern of behaviour.
- 2.3 Abuse can take any of several overlapping forms: bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, physical abuse or sexual abuse. Abuse in a family or domestic context is commonly known as "family and domestic violence".
- 2.4 It is important for clergy to be good citizens and obey the laws of the community, except where those laws conflict with Christian convictions.

### Standards for a licensed member of clergy

#### *Safeguarding and lifestyle*

- 2.5 As required [by Canon 2.5] your church needs to be committed to AMiE's safeguarding requirements for AMiE churches. It is the personal responsibility of the licensed Minister to abide by their church's safeguarding policy.
- 2.6 You are not to engage in:
  - bullying;
  - emotional abuse;
  - harassment;
  - physical abuse; or
  - sexual abuse.
- 2.7 You are not to abuse your spouse, children or other members of your family.
- 2.8 You are to be responsible in your use of alcohol and other mind-altering or addictive substances or services.
- 2.9 You are not to undertake any pastoral ministry when you are impaired by alcohol or any other mind-altering or addictive substances.



- 2.10 You are not to use any prohibited substance.
- 2.11 You are not to take property belonging to others, including intellectual property.
- 2.12 You are not knowingly to make statements that are false, misleading or deceptive.
- 2.13 You are not knowingly to use offensive language.
- 2.14 Without a lawful purpose you are not to view, possess, produce or distribute personal or sensitive material.
- 2.15 You are to observe the law, other than any law that:
- is contrary to the Holy Scriptures;
  - unjustly prohibits the practice of religion; or
  - prohibits civil disobedience.

## Guidelines

- 2.16 Love and care for your family and pay particular attention to the effect of your ministry on your family relationships. Ensure that your behaviour in family relationships is consistent with this Code.
- 2.17 Take steps to prevent your spouse or children or other members of your family becoming victims of your stress. If you find yourself acting violently or abusively to any member of your family, seek professional help immediately.
- 2.18 Monitor your consumption or use of alcohol and other mind-altering or addictive substances or product (e.g. gambling) to ensure your wellbeing and that of others. Seek professional help if the use of these substances or products adversely affects your ministry, personal wellbeing or relationships.
- 2.19 You should be sensitive to the effect of your language on others. Avoid using language that may be misunderstood or that bullies, threatens, belittles, humiliates or causes unnecessary offence or embarrassment. Take care when using:
- any swear word;
  - language which has sexual connotations; and
  - racial, religious or other group descriptions.
- 2.20 Exercise discretion when viewing or using personal or sensitive material. You should:
- consider the lawful purpose of viewing or using the personal or sensitive material;
  - consider whether your conduct will damage your reputation and impair your ministry; and
  - disclose the purpose and circumstances of your conduct to a supervisor or colleague to avoid any misunderstanding.

- 2.21 When engaged in civil disobedience, do not act violently or intentionally provoke violence.
- 2.22 Be sensitive to the effect of your dress on others. Dress appropriately to the context.
- 2.23 You should comply with copyright legislation. Ensure that any licences for the use of copyright material are current and complied with and that copyright is duly acknowledged.

## 3 - SEXUAL CONDUCT

### Preamble

- 3.1 The sexual conduct of clergy has a significant impact on the Church and the community.
- 3.2 Sexuality is a gift from God and is integral to human nature. It is appropriate for clergy to value this gift, taking responsibility for their sexual conduct by maintaining chastity in singleness and faithfulness in marriage.
- 3.3 It is part of the role of clergy to care for, protect and respect all with whom they have a pastoral relationship. It is never appropriate for clergy to take advantage of their role to engage in sexual activity with a person with whom they have a pastoral relationship. Consent to such activity will not be regarded by the Church as valid, except within marriage.

### Standards for a licensed member of clergy

- 3.4 You are to be chaste and not engage in sex outside of marriage.
- 3.5 You are not to:
  - engage in prostitution;
  - visit brothels and other places associated with the sex industry without a legitimate purpose;
  - view, possess, produce or distribute restricted material containing sex or nudity without a legitimate purpose.

### Guidelines

- 3.6 If you intend to make physical contact with another adult or speak to them about a sexual matter you should:
  - take responsibility for your own actions;
  - seek permission;
  - respect the person's wishes;
  - notice and respond to the person's non-verbal communication; and
  - refrain from such conduct if in doubt about the person's wishes.
- 3.7 You should avoid situations where you are vulnerable to temptation or where your conduct may be construed as a breach of the standards of sexual conduct in this Code.

- 3.8 Any involvement in pastoral ministry to persons in the sex industry requires safeguards and a high level of accountability and collegial support. If in pastoral ministry you intend to visit people or places associated with the sex industry, you should:
- consider the legitimate purpose of visiting the person or place;
  - consider whether your conduct will damage your reputation and impair your ministry; and
  - to avoid any misunderstanding, disclose the purpose and circumstances of what you are doing to a supervisor or colleague.

## 4 - FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

### Preamble

- 4.1 In both their personal capacity and their pastoral ministry clergy are involved in matters of a financial nature. The ministry of clergy may include financial management. The financial dealings of clergy have a significant impact on the Church and the community.
- 4.2 Financial integrity is essential to all financial processes and transactions.
- 4.3 Clergy with overall authority for financial management in a church body are responsible for the implementation and maintenance of proper systems for financial integrity and accountability. They cannot delegate this responsibility to anyone else.

### Standards for a licensed member of clergy

- 4.4 You are not to avoid payment of your just debts and family support obligations.
- 4.5 You are not to engage in tax evasion.
- 4.6 You are not to seek personal advantage or financial gain for yourself or your family from your position or from a pastoral relationship, beyond your stipend or wage and recognised allowances and deductions.
- 4.7 You are not to allow yourself to be influenced by offers of money or financial reward.
- 4.8 You are to avoid situations of conflict between your personal financial interest and your pastoral ministry responsibilities.
- 4.9 You are to arrange your personal and church finances to ensure that clear account and transaction boundaries are maintained.
- 4.10 You are to fully disclose and be publicly accountable for all church monies which you handle.
- 4.11 If you have overall authority for financial management in a church body, you are to ensure that:
  - proper systems for financial integrity and accountability are implemented and maintained;

- all clergy for whom you have responsibility and who have authority for financial management in a church body are informed of their roles and responsibilities; and
- all stipends, wages and allowances payable are adequate, and paid promptly and in full.

## Guidelines

### *Financial management practices*

- 4.12 You should ensure that your salary package and the accounts of any church body for which you have responsibility are in accordance with Church and civil taxation and accounting requirements.
- 4.13 If you have overall authority for financial management in a church body, you should minimise the risk of you and other clergy being accused of or engaging in financial impropriety by:
- having two persons unrelated by family to handle church money received;
  - not involving paid clergy or paid church workers in the counting of church offertories;
  - ensuring that church money on church premises is kept safely and securely;
  - avoiding church money being taken home wherever possible;
  - ensuring that all church money received is banked promptly;
  - ensuring that proper accounting records are kept for church transactions, in the form of receipts, diary entries, tax invoices, accounts and account statements;
  - ensuring that all church accounts have more than one signatory;
  - ensuring that any accounts paid by cash are duly receipted; and
  - ensuring that those with the responsibility for handling money have suitable training in financial matters.

### *Gifts*

- 4.14 If you are offered or receive a gift, whether monetary or otherwise, from a person with whom you have a pastoral relationship, you should:
- establish for whom the gift is intended and exercise discretion as to whether the gift should be personally accepted;
  - consider:
    - the size of the gift;
    - the intentions and circumstances of the giver;
    - the risk of your integrity being compromised; and
    - whether acceptance of the gift would cause scandal and embarrassment if known publicly;
    - if it is substantial, disclose the offer or receipt to a supervisor or colleague; and
    - if there is any uncertainty as to the gift's appropriateness, seek advice from a supervisor or colleague.

*Personal financial obligations*

- 4.15 You should manage your finances so that personal debts, including those to any church body, are paid when due and in full.
- 4.16 You should avoid borrowing money from, or lending money to, a person with whom you have a pastoral relationship as this may place you in a position where your personal interest conflicts with your pastoral responsibilities. If you do, then disclose the circumstances to a supervisor or colleague. In some cultures where there are communal ownership and kinship obligations, this guideline may be applied differently.