

## 4.0 WARDENS

Together with the Rector, the Wardens are instrumental in managing the affairs and activities of the congregation, subject to the oversight of the Vestry and Bishop. The partnership between the Wardens and between Wardens and Rector is a close one requiring selfless service, mutual accountability and no small commitment of time and talent, as the Wardens work together to support the Rector in leading the congregation. One should not agree lightly or inadvisably to become a Warden, for much that is quite unexpected may be required.

When there is no Rector in office (for example, when a Rector has resigned and a candidate search is underway) the Senior Warden is in charge of the congregation, subject to supervision of the Bishop. The bishop provides spiritual oversight and directions to the church until a Rector is elected. The bishop may also appoint an interim Rector to serve and facilitate the transition with oversight of the day-to-day needs of the congregation. This can be a time of great stress within a congregation requiring a hands-on commitment of time by both Wardens and close cooperation between them and between them and the Vestry and the Bishop.

There even is a sense in which “*once a Warden, always available*” holds true. Former Wardens are a rich resource of knowledge and Godly wisdom to be drawn upon down through the years.

An important purpose of the *Rectors and Wardens Manual* is the training of People’s and Senior Wardens as a means of strengthening the corporate life and ministries within Member Congregations.

Title IV, Canon 1 Section 1.02 of the Diocesan Constitution and Canons provides guidelines for the responsibilities of the vestry. Title IV Canon 1 Section 1.03 outlines the election of the wardens. Rectors, Vestry members and Wardens should read and be familiar with these Canons.

### **The Senior Warden**

The Senior Warden (“the Rector’s Warden”) is appointed by the Rector. The Senior Warden has interrelated roles:

1. *The Rector’s Wingman*: A Senior Warden and Rector have a unique relationship that defies easy analogies. Perhaps a sense of it may be gotten from the concept of *wingman*. (A wingman is a plane flying beside, off the right wing but slightly behind the leader.) The wingman supports the leader in the flying environment, watching up ahead but also protecting the leader’s ‘six-o’clock’, thus enhancing mutual support and situational awareness. A wingman is expected to forego independent action by remaining with the leader at all times. The Senior Warden may act for the



Rector from time to time but only at the Rector's request; the Senior Warden is never a usurper of authority.

The Senior Warden assists the Rector in the Rector's visioning for the church, acting as a sounding board and helping to sharpen the vision the Rector discusses with the Vestry. The Senior Warden helps the Rector implement the Vision of the church, for example, in establishing a new ministry or reinvigorating an old one. In the daily routine of congregation life, the Senior Warden is the Rector's ally and to an extent the Rector's eyes and ears . . . but the Senior Warden is never a yes-man, for to become such would deprive the Rector and the congregation of the *wingman*. (Yes, the Senior Warden is responsible for congregational situational awareness and protecting the interests of the congregation, too.) In sum the Senior Warden assists the Rector closely but is never a rubber stamp for the Rector nor should the Senior Warden be blind to a Rector's limitations.

2. *Wise Counselor*: The Senior Warden gives the Rector wise counsel in matters both large and small, sometimes volunteering and other times waiting for the Rector to seek advice before interjecting. The Senior Warden is someone who will always protect information that is disclosed in confidence, being a trusted confidant. The Senior Warden is a safe-place for the Rector to vent true feelings, frustrations and worries about what's going on among the church members, a place where acceptance, comfort, and Godly perspective flow freely.
3. *Prayer Partner*: The Rector and the Senior Warden should get together to pray on a regular basis, in addition to the prayer needs that arise in the course of The Senior Warden is aware of the Rector's physical health, manifest stress factors, and rest requirements, and insists on the Rector taking appropriate time-off on a regular basis, with some special periods of drawing away for reflection and spiritual refreshment. The Senior Warden sees to it that the Rector has at least one period each week that is a "no-work zone," at least 24 hours of personal and family time where there is no contact with the church other than in case of true emergency. The Senior Warden also insists that the Rector has a support group of other clergy (whether or not Anglican) who meet regularly for mutual support and prayer. (In very remote areas, this can be a weekly phone conference.)
4. *First Vice President of the Corporation*: The Senior Warden functions as the "First Vice President" of the corporation. As such, the Senior Warden assists the Rector in leading the Vestry and in leading the congregation itself by Godly example. The Senior Warden assists the Rector in setting the agenda for Vestry meetings, and chairs Vestry meetings in the Rector's absence. The Senior Warden is always available to staffers or members who may have a complaint, concern or suggestion.

The Senior Warden carefully interprets the Rector's position to them and guides them as appropriate into a conversation with the Rector. In the Rector's absence



from the congregation, when there is no Rector in office or when the Bishop has not appointed an interim Rector, the Senior Warden is in charge of the congregation.

## The People's Warden

The Junior Warden (called "the People's Warden") is elected by the Vestry from among its members. The Junior Warden has three main roles:

1. *Ombudsman*: An ombudsman is someone who represents the interests of another by hearing and investigating concerns or complaints. That is why the Junior Warden is called "the People's Warden." He or she is someone they can go to in the expectation of respect, a fair hearing, and an amicable solution to heartfelt concerns. The Junior Warden is a person with a ready ear with whom to share concerns or complaints or just use as a sounding board. The Junior Warden in the role of ombudsman is a listener and a conciliator, perhaps particularly but not exclusively for newer members of the congregation. However, the People's Warden isn't a dumping ground for trivial matters or petty complaints. Nor is the Junior Warden the "designated listener" in some sort of a congregation hierarchy wherein one must "go through proper channels." The Rector, Wardens, and Vestry Members, all share in the leadership responsibility to be accessible to any member of the congregation.
2. *Buildings and Grounds*:
  - a. When a congregation owns property, one role of the Junior Warden in terms of time commitment is oversight of the buildings and grounds. The Junior Warden is the person to whom the Rector or Church Administer would go for repairs, maintenance, and grounds upkeep or to whom anyone may point out a maintenance problem. The Junior Warden doesn't necessarily do the repairs or maintenance but oversees things being done properly. If there is a Sexton working on site the Junior Warden works closely with that person to see that items are addressed; and if the Sexton does not have the skills, the Junior Warden finds or hires someone who does. The Junior Warden may gather and organize volunteers for building and grounds beautification; for example, clean-up, planting flowers, or painting, etc.
  - b. When a congregation occupies rented space, as is typical of church plants and congregations that have lost their buildings in litigation, the role of the Junior Warden changes somewhat because maintenance and repairs are usually taken care of by the owner of the building (which is often another church). Nonetheless, the Junior Warden will be in charge of resolving the minor issues and concerns about the facility (burned out light bulbs, clean-up days, trash collection, etc.) and if the facility is one that is shared with others the Junior Warden may be responsible for the necessary cycles of set-up and take-down. Other space-related needs a Junior Warden may attend to in such a congregation could include arranging other facilities for various functions such as large funerals, weddings, meetings or social events. In all these cases



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the Junior Warden is usually coordinating with and among the Rector, the Church Administrator and volunteers.

### 3. *Second Vice President of the Corporation:*

The Junior Warden functions as the Second Vice President of the corporation. As such the Junior Warden assists the Rector and the Senior Warden in leading the Vestry and in leading the congregation itself by Godly example. In the absence of both the Rector and the Senior Warden and when no interim Rector has been appointed, the Junior Warden is responsible for the congregation, acting in the place of the Senior Warden as President of the Corporation.

