

Archbishop: a bishop who presides over several dioceses in a large region. This position includes some supervisory responsibilities over both dioceses and bishops in that region.

Archdeacon: a member of the clergy who is appointed to assist the bishop in certain administrative and pastoral duties in a diocese. For example, an archdeacon may have responsibility for a district comprising a group of parishes, and the archdeacon may represent the bishop at church meetings in that district (the district is usually called an ‘Archdeaconry’). Despite the name, there is now no direct connection with the order of deacon, and an archdeacon is generally one of the priests of a diocese. The position and title normally expires upon resignation or retirement, although certain retired archdeacons with long and faithful service might continue to be called "Archdeacon" out of affection and respect.

Aspirant: a person who has indicated to the bishop that he or she *hopes* to be ordained, and is in the preliminary interview process. Once the bishop has formally accepted their candidacy, the person is called a “postulant.”

Bishop-elect: a person who has been chosen to become a bishop, but who has not yet been consecrated.¹ The word “elect” does not *necessarily* mean “democratically elected.” It simply means “chosen.” Anglican bishops are selected by a variety of means: *some* are elected by the clergy and laity of the diocese where they will serve, but some are selected by a specially-constituted committee (often called an “Electoral College”). In England, historically, bishops were simply appointed, by the Monarch.

Bishop Ordinary: see “Ordinary”

Canon: “Canon” is an honorary title conferred upon a member of the clergy (and some lay persons) for faithful and valuable service to the church. For a more complete article and photo, click here. See also “prebendary.”

Chaplain: a member of the clergy whose employment is *not* in a parish or congregation, but does pastoral care and organizes worship services within a non-religious organization: *eg.* a hospital chaplain, a school chaplain, or a military chaplain. Less commonly, a “chaplain” may be a spiritual advisor and personal assistant to a bishop, or to a monarch.

Coadjutor: a bishop who has been appointed to assist a diocesan bishop. Generally, a Coadjutor automatically becomes Diocesan in his or her own right, upon the retirement or resignation of the person currently in that office. See also Suffragan.

Commissary: a person appointed to exercise the administrative functions of a bishop, when the actual bishop is either away from the diocese or is ill. A commissary may *not* perform any of the spiritual functions of a bishop, such as ordinations. The position of commissary is usually not a permanent one, and expires immediately upon the return of the bishop.

Curate: a deacon or a priest who functions as an assistant or subordinate to the Incumbent of a parish. The word “curate” refers to the “cure of souls” or “care” of souls, and suggests a primary and senior responsibility (indeed, in a French-speaking Roman Catholic church the senior priest of a parish is called a *curé*); however, in the Anglican Church, a curate is always an assistant.

Dean: the most common meaning of this word in Anglicanism is, ‘a priest who is the Incumbent of a cathedral, and the most senior priest of a diocese (under the

bishop). This title is not to be confused with academic deans. But please note that there are other Anglican officials with “dean” in their titles; see Regional Dean.

Diocesan: a bishop who is in charge of a Diocese. It is correct to say either “the Diocesan” or “the diocesan bishop” when referring to this office. The Diocesan may also be referred to as “the Ordinary.”

District Dean: see “Regional Dean”

Honorary _____: An “Honorary Assistant,” or “Honorary Curate” (and a few other variants) indicates an ordained person who functions as one of the clergy in a parish, but does so on a voluntary basis. He or she may have other employment, or be retired from full-time paid ministry, but will preach, preside, or do pastoral care in the parish without receiving a living wage for it.² The position is usually quite official, formally designated as such by licence from the Bishop.

Father: “Father” is not actually a title; it is simply a form of address. See the article on addressing clergy, here.

Incumbent: this is a technical term for a member of the clergy who has primary administrative, pastoral, and liturgical responsibilities in a parish or congregation. Despite its official nature, this term is seldom used in conversation, and is often unknown among ordinary Anglican church members, who will usually refer to their Incumbent as “the Rector.” For more about *Incumbent* click here.

Lay Canon: a non-ordained person who is given the honorary title of “Canon,” usually as a form of recognition for their leadership in some aspect of the church’s life. See the entry for “Canon,” above.

Metropolitan: an archbishop who presides over a region of the church which may include several dioceses, bishops, and even archbishops. Second only to a Primate in authority and responsibility. Some Metropolitanans are also Primates, and are officially described as “Primate and Metropolitan.”

Ministry Developer: in congregations and districts where the traditional clergy tasks (preaching, pastoral care, presiding, etc.) are divided up and done on a voluntary basis by different individuals – some of whom are ordained and some of whom are laypersons – the team leader is often given the title “Ministry Developer.” This person is most often ordained and seminary trained, but need not be so, provided only that he or she is good at enabling teamwork and communicating a rich sense of the church’s mission.

Ordinand: a person who is in the process of being ordained. Preparation is done, and the day of ordination has arrived. Before, during, and after the liturgy, the brand new, freshly robed deacon or priest is correctly called an “ordinand.”

Ordinary: In a diocese or jurisdiction where there are a number of bishops, one of them always holds primary authority, and is called “the Diocesan,” or in some jurisdictions, “the Ordinary” (always with an uppercase “O”). The etymology of the word “Ordinary” as a title may have to do with this person’s responsibility for deciding who gets ordained, but that is just a guess..

Parson: This is now an almost colloquial term applied to a member of the Anglican clergy. Historically in England, however, it was an official designation for a salaried priest in charge of a parish. The word derives from the Latin, *persona*, from which we also get the very generic term, “person.” Perhaps there was a time when the Parson was *the* person to go to in the parish, the one who personified the entire community.

Pastor: although this is not a formal title in the Anglican Communion, some clergy find it quite acceptable, because it is much more widely understood than “Rector” or “Incumbent.” The word “pastor” means “shepherd,” and is quite suitable to use for any priest who has *pastoral* responsibilities in an Anglican congregation.

Postulant: a person who has been accepted by the bishop as a candidate for ordination, and is in the process of being trained.

Prebendary: (*mostly British*) An honorary canon. Historically in England, a prebendary was a member of the clerical staff of a cathedral or collegiate church; a paid position whose income derived from specially allocated rents of land administered by that church. A property that generated such rent was called a “prebend.” Although such prebend-based income is now rare – if it exists at all – the honorary title of prebendary is still conferred on some clergy in England.³

Precentor: a person, usually a member of the clergy, who is responsible for organizing the liturgy and music of a large church (such as a great cathedral).

Presbyter: another word for priest. Both “priest” and “presbyter” come from the same Greek word: πρεσβυτερος (presbuteros), which means “church elder.” There are complex theological arguments surrounding these words, and while all official Anglican documents and ordination liturgies use “priest,” there are some places in the church which use “presbyter” to refer to this order, the second of the three basic Anglican orders.

Priest-in-Charge: a person who has the responsibilities and duties of an Incumbent, but on a temporary basis, at the discretion of the bishop. For more about *Priest-in-Charge* click here.

Presiding Bishop: See “Primate”

Primate: a bishop who presides over the Anglican Church in a large region, or even in an entire nation. There will be many dioceses, bishops, and occasionally some archbishops under this person’s supervision.

The person who holds a comparable position in Scotland is called “Primus.” In the U.S.A., the equivalent position is called “Presiding Bishop.”

Primus: See “Primate”

Provost: the word “Provost” has many meanings in the English language. It can refer to military police, or to the principal of a university college. When applied to a member of the Anglican clergy, the word refers to a priest who is the Incumbent of a cathedral church. The more common word for this position is “Dean,” but in Scotland, and in Kenya, and in a few other parts of the Anglican Communion, the correct title is “Provost.” See “Dean.”

Rector: a priest who has primary administrative, pastoral, and liturgical responsibilities in a parish or congregation. Similar to, and sometimes identical to “Incumbent.” Some heads of academic schools are also called “Rector,” but such officials need not be ordained, or connected with the church.

Regional bishop: a bishop in a large diocese who is one of several bishops, each having oversight over a specific geographic area of parishes and clergy within that diocese. This person may be a coadjutor or a suffragan, or even the Diocesan. Technically, regional bishops can function anywhere within the diocese, but they have a closer relationship with and more detailed knowledge of their particular district.

Regional Dean: a priest who has some pastoral and administrative oversight of a small group of parishes or congregations. This position has less weight than that

of an archdeacon, so there can be several regional deans in an archdeacon’s area of responsibility. A regional dean is generally an Incumbent of one of the parishes in his or her “Deanery.” The titles “Rural Dean” and “District Dean” refer to exactly the same function. Of the three adjectives (“Rural,” “District” and “Regional”), “Rural Dean” is probably the oldest and the original version of this title, but it is falling out of use. The title of Regional Dean is not to be confused with Dean of a diocese.

Rural Dean: see “Regional Dean”

Suffragan: a bishop who has been appointed to assist a diocesan bishop (the “Ordinary”). In contrast to the position of Coadjutor, a Suffragan is not automatically the Diocesan’s successor. (*see also: “Regional bishop”*)

Transitional Diaconate: a category of clergy who are ordained deacon in preparation for being ordained priest. Clergy in the transitional diaconate tend to spend up to a year serving as deacons, after which ordination to the priesthood takes place following further review and inquiry.

Vicar: this word has slightly different meanings in various parts of the Anglican world. In England, a vicar is a salaried parish priest. In the U.S.A., a vicar is a priest who is responsible either for a “mission” or for an institutional chapel (a “mission” is a congregation that is either recently founded, or is not capable of being financially self-sustaining; a “chapel” is a place of worship in a hospital, or an airport, or a government building). In many places the word “vicar” can be used for a priest who is acting *in behalf of* a senior official who is not present (similar to the English word, “vicarious”).

Vocational Diaconate: a category of clergy who are ordained as deacons and intend to remain as deacons for the rest of their lives, without being further ordained to the priesthood (see “Transitional Diaconate,” above). Such people recognize their vocation to be that of ministry and service, rather than presiding.

What Do Wardens Do?

1. Wardens, together with the Incumbent and Vestry members, are responsible for all aspects of parish life. They must work with and support the Incumbent, be loyal to him/her, and respect his/her confidence.
2. Wardens must be available to the members of the congregation for information, complaints, or suggestions.
3. Wardens are responsible for the holding of regular services, and for the provision of all things requisite for Divine Service. If there is neglect or inability on the part of the Incumbent to perform his/her responsibilities, the Church Wardens must notify the Bishop as to the situation.
4. Wardens should be in attendance for the visitation of the Bishop or an Archdeacon.