PAROCHIAL FEES - DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS

Parochial fees are the statutory fees payable by an outside party for weddings, funerals, etc., as set by General Synod and Parliament (alias fees for occasional offices or life events). Irrespective of the status of the minister and whether or not the parish is in vacancy, they are in all cases legally payable in set proportions to the DBF and the relevant PCC. All such fees shall be accounted for through the PCC. The PCC should then submit the appropriate amount to the DBF after deducting any payments due to ministers (see below). Note that for any minister to serve as "civil celebrant" at a funeral ceremony would still give rise to Parochial Fees payable to the PCC/DBF. Furthermore to conduct a ceremony not in accordance with Canon law would be a disciplinary offence.

GUIDANCE

Links to relevant Diocesan or Church of England web pages can be found on

https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/parishsupport/managing-your-church/church-finance/parochial-fees/

A Guide to the Church of England Parochial Fees (last updated January 2015) is available at:
https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/guide-church

A summary of the current Frequently Asked Questions is available at:
https://www.churchofengland.org/more/clergy-resources/national-clergy-hr/life-events-parochial-fees-and-guidance/life-events

FEES

The Table of Parochial Fees for 2026 is available at:

Parochial Fees - The Diocese of St Albans

DIVINE WORSHIP
Retired Stipendiary Clergy, SSMs and Readers

A PCC or other appropriate church body should offer retired stipendiary clergy, SSMs (retired or otherwise) and Readers fees for conducting Services of Divine Worship (other than weddings and funerals).

For SSMs who are not retired fees will only be admissible beyond those agreed in their statement of particulars. So it is likely to apply when helping out in parishes other than their own or when more was asked of them or in their own parish when there is an absence of the primary stipendiary person for more than three months.

Readers will be subject to the same constraints as SSMs in their agreed working arrangements.

The fee payable shall be 50% of the current parochial fee payable to the DBF for a funeral in church. For 2026 this is currently £66.00. For each subsequent service on the same day in the same parish or group of parishes the fee shall be 25% of the same parochial fee. The minister should be paid expenses as described above in addition to the fee.

Services on weekdays may be the subject of individual arrangements at reduced rates.

PAROCHIAL FEES

Where an occasional office is taken by a member of clergy, the whole of the DBF fee must be paid to the DBF. In the case of retired clergy SSMs (retired and active) and Readers, two-thirds of the fee paid to the DBF may be paid to anyone in this group (for 2026 this is currently £138), with the DBF receiving the balance. If the person declines the fee in whole or in part, then the whole or part must also be remitted to the DBF.

For SSMs and readers, the same directions apply as for Services of Divine Worship.

In all cases, expenses should be paid in full at diocesan rates which are set in accordance with HMRC limits. Expenses are extra to, and not deducted from, the fee. Details of current mileage rates can be found at: https://www.stalbansdiocese.org/mileage-rates/

A lump sum payment, or rates in excess of HMRC limits, is likely to give rise to a liability tax and is not recommended. Any payment received by an individual in excess of the approved rates for actual mileage involved should be paid to the PCC. Expenses incurred in pastoral visits prior to or following as service should be met by the PCC. A meal or other refreshment should be provided, where appropriate.

FORMS

Fees should be sent to the Diocesan Office using the following forms:

Record of Parochial Fees (pdf)

Record of Parochial Fees (excel)

MINISTERS EXPENSES

It is the policy of the diocese that no minister (clergy or lay) shall be out-of-pocket for expenses incurred in performing ministerial duties. In addition, within the rules specified below, the income of retired ministers may be supplemented by fees for duties performed.

EXPENSES

Expenses incurred in course of ministerial duties, including pastoral visits prior to or following a service, should be reimbursed by the PCC or other responsible body. These include actual travel expenses, mileage at diocesan rates, telephone costs or other administrative items within HMRC guidelines. These expenses should be reimbursed in full irrespective of any fee. A minister is recommended to refuse, or alternatively pass to the PCC, any amounts offered for expenses by an outside party in excess of HMRC guidelines which would otherwise be liable to income tax.

TAX LIABILITY

Any fees received (as opposed to expenses) are liable to tax as income and the minister should declare them to HMRC. Alternatively, a minister may choose to waive their portion of the fees.

QUERIES

Queries about fees may be addressed the Finance Team at the Diocesan Office, telephone: 01727 818111; e-mail: finance@stalbans.anglican.org.