

APPENDIX E



Disclosure Meeting

SAMPLE INVITATIONS FOR MEMBERS

As discussed in chapter 6, invitations to disclosure meetings should contain enough information so members know what the meeting is about, but not disclose information that hasn't already been shared. Below are sample invitations that have been used in a variety of situations.

Invitation issued by lay leaders and the bishop in response to misconduct by an ordained leader:

Your wardens, vestry, and Bishop X invite all adult members of St. B's to attend an important meeting in the life of our congregation on [date and time] at St. B's parish hall. Bishop X has information to share regarding the leadership of our parish and the challenges we are facing.

This will be a time for us to gather together, understand these challenges, and explore ways to minister to each other as we move forward. Please make every effort to attend.

Invitation issued by a bishop in response to misconduct by an ordained leader:

On [date] I will be at your church, along with [name of other facilitator and title], to meet with members of the parish and respond to questions that you may have regarding Rev. A's recent arrest. I urge you to attend this meeting so that I might have the opportunity to hear and respond to your questions directly. Your wardens and vestry will decide and notify you of the time of this meeting.

Please know that your diocesan staff and I are working to provide care and support to all those affected by this situation, including Rev. A.

Invitation issued by ordained leader after arrest of a lay leader:

As you may have learned through the press, a member of our church who has participated in various activities, ministries, and programs of St. B's was arrested by the [town] police at the end of last week and charged with possession of internet child pornography.

This type of news raises many questions and concerns. In light of this, we have asked [judicatory consultant/pastoral response coordinator] to be among us for an open meeting in our church on Thursday evening, [date] at 7:30 p.m. [Name of consultant/judicatory staff] has worked with a number of other parishes in our diocese that have encountered similar situations. This is a meeting for all adult and teenage members of our parish. We will have an opportunity to freely and safely discuss concerns and issues, and to respond to questions.

Though this is very short notice, we want to provide this initial opportunity for conversation as soon as possible.

Please pray for all those impacted by this situation.

Invitation issued by parish clergy and wardens regarding allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by lay leader:

It is our responsibility to advise parish members that allegations of misconduct have been received against a member and leader of St. B's.

We are convening a meeting for members of St. B's on [date and time] so we, together with [name of judicatory staff member], can have an opportunity to talk about the effect of these allegations, and how to live and move forward together as a Christian community.

In the days ahead, please avoid the temptations of speculation and gossip, and do keep all those concerned and our parish in your prayers.

Invitation issued by parish clergy and lay leaders in response to misconduct by a lay leader:

We are writing to invite you to a meeting for members of St. B's parish on Monday, [date] at 7:00 p.m.

An incident at our parish has become the focus of legal proceedings; some members of our parish are aware of this, others are not. The parish is not a party in the legal proceedings.

The purpose of the meeting is to learn how we, as a community of faith, can respond to the numerous individuals affected and the parish community. A diocesan staff member and a consultant will be with us to lead our discussion.

In the meantime, please refrain from gossip and speculation. If you have questions or concerns, please speak with us (the undersigned wardens and clergy). We ask your prayers for all members of our congregation.