DIOCESE of CHRIST our HOPE

Response to the 2026 Proposed Canonical Amendment on Transfer and Permission to Serve
Diocese of Christ Our Hope College of Deacons
June 12, 2026

DCOH College of Deacons
Response in opposition of Amendment
2026.4.I Clarify Transfer and Permission
June 9, 2026

Some members of the college of deacons see the added language as unnecessary. The current language acknowledges the bishop's sole authority (both the bishop of DCOH and the originating bishop), shows submission to the bishop ordinary's judgment, and holds onto unity with the province and diocese, while also protecting DCOH clergy who may be licensed in other ACNA dioceses. Current language also allows flexibility to rectors and does not infringe on their authority to request clergy from other jurisdictions to be licensed to serve in their church, or, to hold and express a more conservative view (i.e. not permitting female deacons to serve in their congregation, or requesting the creation of a lay order of "deaconesses").

The canons empower the bishop ordinary to license for ministry clergy members who remain domiciled in other ACNA dioceses. This authority of the bishop to grant licensure both supports adaptivity to local ministry contexts as interpreted by rectors and allows for healthy interaction and exchanges with other ACNA bishops and clergy. This amendment would limit this authority of the bishop to act in the best interest of a congregation and rector who may desire such a clergy to serve for a time while remaining under the authority of another ACNA bishop.

A. **Preserve Unity Within the ACNA**

Within the ACNA there are several Dioceses that ordain women to the priesthood, so it must be agreed that there are hundreds of orthodox ACNA members (in alignment with the Anglican Formularies and the Jerusalem Declaration) who hold this position. We are still able to serve Christ together as a denomination, despite differences on this point. This denominational cooperation should be an example to us in DCOH. It should be noted that substantial numbers of laity and clergy within our diocese hold to a personal conviction that women may be ordained to the priesthood, and yet remain submitted to our diocesan position on holy orders. It is a very important issue, but we recognize that this is a secondary issue in terms of the essentials of the faith.
If the ACNA is going to have a future in light of the divisiveness of this issue, DCOH will need to take steps toward cooperation and mutual respect across differing convictions. The Province and College of Bishops have determined that the ordination of female presbyters is an issue over which

faithful Anglicans may disagree. Thus, years from now a healthy ACNA will need to respect the practice of each diocese/bishop in ordaining or refraining from ordaining female deacons and presbyters, while also honoring the conscience and ministry context of those who disagree. For those churches for whom it would make strategic and missional sense to license a female priest from another jurisdiction, continuing to permit such licensures is a way DCOH might be an example of generosity and cooperation for the Province, especially if we desire to be a "diocese-planting diocese."

B. **Preserve Unity Within Christ Our Hope**

Passing this amendment would alienate in the following ways:

- Churches within DCOH for whom it could make missional sense to have a female priest
- Dioceses within our own province that ordain female presbyters
- Provinces in the Global Anglican Communion with whom DCOH aligns (including Rwanda, with whom we share a special relationship, who ordains women as presbyters)

This could sow deep and lasting division, in pursuit of a "uniformity" which, given our polity, cannot be achieved in a quick and easy way, particularly in our first year of the new amendment-review processes.

C. **Respect Ordinations and Episcopal Authority**

The bishop's authority to transfer and license clergy should not be encumbered. Keeping the current language in our canons protects our clergy from hindrances when transferring or being licensed elsewhere. Having a hard line that does not show generosity and hospitality to the ordination of another bishop may lead to more division and less cooperation, especially as DCOH is planting churches in overlapping jurisdictions.

D. **The Rector Has Authority Over His Parish**

As the DCOH canons articulate, (Title I, Canon 7, Section 1 and Section 2.2i) the rector has authority to determine which clergy serve in his church and how (e.g. who teaches, preaches, catechizes, serves at the table, the order of service, dress of clergy, etc.). Therefore, there is no need to change the canons. No rector would welcome a licensed clergy person to serve in any capacity that infringed on his conscience or what the parish desires (without the possibility of rebuke and possible discipline from the bishop).

E. **Allow Parish-Level Flexibility**

Currently the diocese grants Rectors, based on their conviction, the option to limit deacons serving in their parish to only men. This generous posture should therefore extend also to those Rectors who, based on their conviction, have opportunity to permit licensed female priest from other jurisdictions to serve in their parish. Conversely, if the diocese were to restrict the authority of Rectors regarding the licensure of female priests, it would follow that is should also restrict the authority of Rectors to limit female deacons from serving in their parish. In either scenario, a double-standard should not exist.

F. **Concerns About Process**

Given the time constraints of Synod and of delegates leading up to Synod, it seems deeply unwise to pair this proposed amendment with a complete (time-sensitive) overhaul of Title IV.
The college system in our diocese is still new and in need of refining. The college system currently is not mature enough to provide presbyters, deacons, and laypeople the opportunity to be thoroughly heard. The issue of women's ordination (as well as responses to potential Title IV offenses) was discussed at length by the (all-male) college of presbyters and not at all in the college of deacons or the lay college. Response to this amendment is an excellent start, but increased transparency and communication between colleges, as well as clear and established systems for discussion within the colleges are necessary before it will be possible to address an issue this divisive in a responsible manner.