

Parish Policy on Canonical Letters of Transfer

Canon Law requires that the Rector of every parish of this Church must grant a Canonical Letter of Transfer for any Member – Confirmed or Baptised – in Good Standing as defined by Canon Law to any other legally constituted congregation of any Church in Full Communion with the Episcopal Church upon the request of the parishioner and the canonically designed official of that other congregation. (By Canon Law Members of this Church may not be transferred to ecclesial bodies with which the Episcopal Church is not in Full Communion.)

However Canon Law does not require the Rector of any parish to accept a Letter of Transfer for any person from another parish of this Church or a Church in Full Communion with this Church.

Because it is a non-residential Benedictine community rather than a conventional suburban parish church, it is, and has been for over three decades, the policy of St Paul's Parish that Canonical Letters of Transfer will be accepted by the Rector (who must request it) only for persons:

- who meet the full requirements of a Confirmed or Baptised Member in Good Standing as defined by the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Chicago (and St Paul's takes these quite seriously and literally)
- who accept and live out the full three levels of St Paul's Parish Rule of Life
- who have completed a three-year period of discernment and novitiate

Any Letters of Transfer sent without being requested by the Rector of St Paul's Parish and/or for persons who have not met these requirements will be returned unaccepted to the originating congregation.

Since the early 1980's St Paul's has been a signatory to the long-standing agreement originally among the Rectors of Grace Parish, Oak Park, St Christopher's Parish, Oak Park, and Christ Church Parish, River Forest (to deal with the decades-long problem of disgruntled, angry OP/RF parishioners' attempts to play off the three priests against one another) that once a parishioner has received a Canonical Letter of Transfer to another parish, the originating Rector will not accept a Letter of Transfer back to the parish unless the parishioner has physically moved from his/her community and then moved back (e.g. has had a business transfer and then returned).

While any person is always free to attend the Liturgy of this Church in any parish – as long as his/her behavior does not interfere with the rights of others – in accordance with this long-standing commitment, the Rector of St Paul's cannot accept a Canonical Letter of Transfer back to this parish unless the parishioner has physically moved away and then returned.
