Thank you for your interest in possible deployment in the Diocese of Central Florida. In order to proceed further and to include you in the pool of candidates for clerical positions here, I need to ask several things of you.

- Please read with care Bishop Brewer’s Pastoral Letter dated July 18, 2015, his two most recent Convention Addresses (January 2014 and January 2015) and our diocesan vision action plan.

- I will retrieve your Office of Transitional Ministry (OTM) Portfolio. If your Portfolio is not current let me know when you have updated it.

- Please respond to our Deployment Questions which are included in this material. Please be sure to restate the questions in your response and limit all three of your answers (combined) to a single page. This is not meant to be an exhaustive or exhausting enterprise. Your responses will be shared with any search committees where we are able to include your name and ultimately with Bishop Brewer.

- I am also including a copy of our Diocesan Canon XVI and ask that you read this carefully and indicate in an email to me your acknowledgement of the provisions of this canon and your commitment to comply with the provisions contained therein. Should you become a finalist in a search here I will ask you to sign a copy of this canon that we will keep on file.

The OTM Portfolio and Deployment Questions responses are the initial information we provide to search committees. Once they have narrowed their search to a more concise pool we will provide any other material you send (for example a current resume.) Please send your information electronically if at all possible as we use a paperless filing system for Transitional Ministry.

I appreciate your interest in serving here and God bless you in your continuing discernment of God’s will for your life and ministry!

Faithfully,

The Reverend Canon Timothy C. Nunez
Canon to the Ordinary
The Episcopal Church’s Endorsement of Same-Sex Marriage, and the Diocese of Central Florida


The Episcopal Church has never been very good at being “in the world, but not of the world.” Our tendency is to be in the world at the expense of Biblical faithfulness. I believe that The Episcopal Church’s recent decision to change its canons to reflect a gender-neutral understanding of who may be married in our churches and by our clergy is a reflection of that kind of worldliness; and I believe those actions have been taken at the expense of Biblical faithfulness. While our motivation is our desire to care for people, we put ourselves in a spiritually dangerous position when our actions, however well meaning, put us in conflict with the teaching of Scripture. I am not saying that this is an easy or simple issue – it is not. And so, like the writer of Proverbs, I am “crying out for wisdom.”

I feel no need to change my stance regarding my lack of support for the Church approving same-sex marriages, and I plan to uphold the teaching on Holy Matrimony that is reflected both in the Scriptures and in the Book of Common Prayer. That is why I signed the Salt Lake City Statement of the Communion Partner Bishops. [see http://www.livingchurch.org/salt-lake-city-statement] I also want to uphold a call to compassion and care, and for the Church to extend grace, love and mercy to those who are in such relationships.

Both the Holy Scripture and the Book of Common Prayer teach that Holy Matrimony was “established by God in creation,” meaning that our created bodies matter. We are never disengaged from the fact that God made us male and female. Although there are friendships and companionships that we all enjoy, all of those friendships and companionships are distinct from the marital union of husband and wife, which is foundational for continuing the created order of humanity. In other words, Holy Matrimony is God’s idea. God created and established it; and it is a way that God chooses to care for and provide for the continuation of the human family.

But while the union of husband and wife is foundational to the temporal and created order, it does not continue into the realm of eternity. Jesus is clear that in Heaven, there is “no marriage or giving in marriage” (Matthew 22:30). Human marriage is not foundational to the Kingdom of Heaven. Instead, through baptism we as Christians, regardless of our marital status, are all eternally united as the Bride of Christ to the one Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. All human relationships, both now and in heaven, are subservient to that one and eternal marriage between Christians and Christ. This means that all human relationships are to be seen in the light of, and in response to, our primary relationship, which is with Jesus Christ whom we call “Lord.”

It is this distinction between marriage as a part of the temporal and created order, and not part of Heaven – where all Christians (single and married) are united to Christ – that
informs my comments about how Christians respond to the Supreme Court’s decision to legalize same-sex marriage. In that document, I wrote that:

1. Christians, all of whom are eternally bound in the Body of Christ, are called to work together, whether they are for or against same-sex marriage.
2. In the Body of Christ, we are called to make marital status secondary to the call of developing missionary disciples. All Christians, regardless of marital status, are called to serve together for the extension of the Kingdom of God.
3. Children, regardless of who their parents are, should be welcomed, nurtured and, when the appropriate vows are made, baptized into the life of the Church.
4. Holy Matrimony is to be taught and upheld as “the union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind” (BCP, p. 423).

Therefore, in response to actions of General Convention, I am upholding the teaching on marriage found in the Salt Lake City Statement of the Communion Partner Bishops, which coheres with both the Book of Common Prayer and Holy Scripture.

As a matter of diocesan policy, I offer the following:

1. As chief liturgical officer of the Diocese of Central Florida, I am allowing only the services prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer to be used in the celebration and blessing of a marriage. I do not believe the newly authorized rites for trial use uphold the Scripture’s teaching on marriage and, therefore, are not appropriate for use in this Diocese.
2. No member of the clergy who is canonically resident in the Diocese (whether living in or outside the Diocese) is permitted to use the trial use liturgies on marriage in or outside of the Diocese. Choosing to use one of these liturgies would be an act of disobedience to one’s bishop and against our diocesan canons.
3. No church building within the Diocese, or any building affiliated with the Diocese (such as, but not limited to, Camp Wingmann, Canterbury Retreat and Conference Center, Diocesan schools) may be the location for these trial use liturgies on marriage. This applies to clergy and lay leaders resident both within and outside the Diocese of Central Florida.

While I hope these policies are clear, they do not answer all of the questions that are in front of us. For example, it remains to be seen (and I am in conversation with our diocesan chancellor on this matter) whether our diocesan canons on marriage (though consistent with my policies as bishop) can legally remain intact if they be in conflict with the canonical changes recently passed by General Convention.

There are also pastoral considerations yet unanswered. I give only one example: should legally married same sex parishioners come forward for a blessing at their anniversary when it is the parish’s custom to publicly offer these blessings? My answer would be to welcome them and pray for them – so long as the prayers used do not come from the BCP marriage service.
One prayer for such occasions could be, “O God, we ask that you pour your grace and mercies on N. and N. Guide them with your wisdom, protect them with your love and fill their home with your presence all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.”

There are plenty of other pastoral and canonical questions. These require prayer, ongoing conversation and discernment. To call Jesus “Lord” means that He, who is Wisdom personified, is the One to whom we turn, asking the Holy Spirit guide to us into all truth (John 16:13). As I do not believe in episcopal infallibility, I acknowledge that I could be wrong about what I have just written. I am as sinful and fallible as anyone I know. I admit that this and other matters are sending me to prayer like no other time in my life. I would welcome prayerful conversation with my fellow Christians in the Diocese and beyond, as we seek to discern together the mind of Christ.

As I have written in other places, all of our pastoral and moral dilemmas are to be seen in the context of the ongoing missionary purpose of the Church: “that the world may believe in the One whom you have sent, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (BCP, p. 255). The Christian life does not call us to withdraw from the world, but engage it as a people who are learning to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-38). May God grant us all that we need to be His faithful and missionary people!

Given under my hand on July 18, 2015 in the fourth year of my consecration.

+Gregory O. Brewer

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, 15 and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

– 2 Timothy 3:14–4:5
1. In your ordination as deacon and priest you promised: “I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation.” What does this promise mean to you and how does it inform your preaching and pastoral care?

2. In your baptism you promised to “accept Jesus Christ as your savior”, to “trust in his grace and love” and to “follow and obey him as your Lord.” At your ordination you promised: “I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church.” How do you understand these two promises in relationship to one another?

3. In your ordination as a priest you committed yourself to “proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts”. How does such a commitment inform your leadership?
Canon XVI
Ordained Ministers

Section 1.

The Rector, or Vicar of all congregations, has charge under the Constitution and Canons of all things affecting the spiritual interests of their Congregations, subject only to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, and at all times shall be entitled to the use and control of the church and all Parish buildings with the appurtenances and furniture thereof; at all times shall be entitled to access to the church, to open the same for public worship, for catechetical or other religious instruction, marriages, baptisms, burials, and all other offices authorized by the church and shall have full charge of all services in the church and, except as provided in Canon XXV, spiritual direction and full charge and control of all church schools, Parish schools, and all other associations, including separate corporations, related to or connected with the Parish.

Section 2.

It is the duty of the Rector or Vicar, who shall have full charge of all services in the church subject only and at all times to the Ecclesiastical Authority, to give directions concerning the worship of the Church, together with all that pertains thereto, and appoint fit persons to perform such duties relative to the service of the church as may properly be done by lay persons.

Section 3.

The Rector, or Vicar, of any Congregation, is ex officio President of the Vestry, or Vestry Committee and of the Congregation, and has the right to vote at all times.

Section 4.

A Parish may call a member of the clergy as Rector only with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority and by meeting the minimum requirements as set forth below, unless waived by the Ecclesiastical Authority:

(a) Contributing to the ministry and mission of the Diocese of Central Florida the equivalent of at least 10% of the Parish's plate and pledge income,

(b) Paying to all full time clergy serving in the Parish, at least the minimum compensation established by the Ecclesiastical Authority and approved by the Board,

(c) Paying in full the premiums due to the Church Pension Fund and health insurance carrier on account of clergy serving in the Parish,

(d) Paying in full the insurance premiums for general liability coverage, including coverage for sexual misconduct, in an amount set by the Diocesan Board, and with an insurance company approved by the Diocesan Board, as per Canon XX Section 5.

Vicars are to be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority and may be removed by the Ecclesiastical Authority.
Section 5.

A Parish may call a member of the clergy as Assistant clergy only with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority and by meeting the minimum requirements as set forth below, unless waived by the Ecclesiastical Authority:

Section 6.

Every member of the clergy temporarily vacating his or her cure shall arrange in advance with the Vestry for the supply of services and the care of the Congregation during any absence. If such member of the clergy be paid wholly or in part by the Diocese, approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority must be obtained in advance of such absence.

Section 7. Deacons

(a) Every Deacon shall be subject to the direction of the Bishop, or, if there be no Bishop, that of the clerical members of the Standing Committee, acting by their President. A Deacon shall officiate only in such places as the Bishop, or the clerical members of the Standing Committee, as the case may be, may designate.

(b) No Deacon, except one in training for the priesthood, may be in charge of a Parish or Mission.

(c) A Deacon ministering in a Parish or Mission under the charge of a Priest, shall act under the direction of such Priest in all such ministrations.

(d) A Deacon ministering in a Parish or Mission not under the charge of a Priest shall, if not under the immediate direction of the Ecclesiastical Authority, be placed under authority of some neighboring Priest. Such Deacon shall be governed by such priest, in subordination to the Ecclesiastical Authority.

(e) A Deacon ministering in circumstances other than a Parish or Mission shall, if not under the immediate direction of the Ecclesiastical Authority, be placed under authority of some member of the Clergy designated by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

(f) Upon attaining the age of seventy-two years, each Deacon occupying any position in this Diocese shall resign that position and retire from active service, and the resignation shall be accepted. Thereafter, the Deacon may accept any position in this Diocese; provided, that (1) the tenure in this position shall be for a period of not more than one year, which period may be renewed from time to time, and (2) service in the position shall have the express approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Section 8.

No Bishop, Priest or Deacon shall be excluded from any Parochial or Diocesan office because of gender, race, color, or ethnic origin.
Section 9.

All clergy canonically resident and/or licensed in the Diocese shall comply with all risk management policies established by the Diocesan Board.

Section 10.

All members of the clergy of this Diocese, having subscribed to the Declaration required by Article VIII of the National Constitution, shall be under the obligation to model in their own lives the received teaching of the church that all its members are to abstain from sexual relations outside of Holy Matrimony.

All members of the clergy of this Diocese may allow to take place in their cures, officiate at, bless or participate in, only those unions prescribed by Holy Scripture: the wedding of one woman and one man. Said clergy are forbidden to allow to take place in their cures, officiate at, bless or participate in any other unions, as proscribed by Holy Scripture.

Section 11.

The staff and employees of a congregation shall serve under the direction and control and at the pleasure of the Rector or Vicar. Nothing in this section, however, shall prevent the Rector or Vicar from delegating to an employee, the Vestry or committee thereof, all or part of the authority to employ, direct, control, evaluate, discharge, or otherwise control the staff or employees.

I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand Canon XVI of the Diocese of Central Florida, that I subscribe to the standards set forth in it, and will endeavor to pattern my life accordingly.

___________________________________   Date_________________
(Signature)

_____________________________________
(Name printed)