

**BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF NEW JERSEY**

IN RE:	HEARING PANEL
The Ven. Gideon A. Uzomechina, Presbyter,	ORDER
Respondent	Case No. 2016-1

TO: The Rt. Rev. William H. Stokes, Bishop Diocesan

The above case was initiated by a complaint submitted by report of the Rev. Canon Brian A. Jemmott, Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of New Jersey, dated October 13, 2016 and reported to the Reference Panel on October 19, 2016 by the Rev. Joan E. Fleming, Intake Officer. The matter was referred to investigation. By letter dated October 11, 2016, the Right Rev. William H. Stokes, Bishop of New Jersey, placed the Respondent on Administrative Leave. Attempts at reaching an Accord being unsuccessful, the Reference Panel on July 9, 2019 referred the matter to a Hearing Panel, consisting of Mr. Morris Anderson, President, and the Rev. Dr. John P. Mitchell and Ms. Laurie Cimino, Esq., as members, pursuant to Canon IV.11.3(e). On July 22, 2019, Mr. Anderson, as President of the Hearing Panel, sent by certified mail a Notice pursuant to Canon IV.13.2(c) together with the Written Statement of Church Attorney Talbot B. Kramer, Jr., Esq., to the Respondent and his Attorney Michael F. Rehill, Esq., and advisor Ms. Pamela L. Lutz, as well as the Church Attorney and Complainants. No written response pursuant to Canon IV.13.2(d) was made. Accordingly, the Hearing Panel has proceeded pursuant to Canon IV.19.6 to consider the written materials provided to it by the Church Attorney, and, having deliberated fully, made its determination to issue the following Order:

ORDER

1. The Hearing Panel finds that the Respondent, a married presbyter, committed an Offense of Sexual Misconduct, in violation of Title IV.4.1(h)(1), against the person of [REDACTED], by making unwanted sexual advances beginning in or around October 2013 at a [REDACTED] conference in New York City and on numerous occasions thereafter when [REDACTED] was living [REDACTED].
2. The Hearing Panel finds that the Respondent committed an Offense of conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, in violation of Title IV.4.1(h)(6), against [REDACTED] by overcharging him for conference attendance and for immigration and other legal assistance. The Respondent in addition withheld all or part of [REDACTED] compensation from [REDACTED].

3. The Hearing Panel finds that the acts set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 also constitute Offenses of failure to abide by the promises and vows made when ordained, in violation of Canon IV.4.1(c) and Conduct Unbecoming a Member of the Clergy in violation of Canon IV.4.1(h)(9).
4. The Hearing Panel finds that the Respondent committed an Offense of conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation, in violation of Title IV.4.1(h)(6), against [REDACTED], (whom Respondent identifies under the name of [REDACTED]) by luring him to travel to New Jersey from his college at [REDACTED] University in Michigan by false promises of giving him a laptop computer and financial assistance.
5. The Hearing Panel finds that the Respondent committed an Offense of Sexual Misconduct, in violation of Title IV.4.1(h)(1), against the person of [REDACTED], on or about [REDACTED], at the Days Inn hotel in [REDACTED] by making unwanted sexual advances.
6. The Hearing Panel finds that the acts set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5 also constitute Offenses of failure to abide by the promises and vows made when ordained, in violation of Canon IV.4.1(c) and Conduct Unbecoming a Member of the Clergy in violation of Canon IV.4.1(h)(9).
7. The Hearing Panel finds that the Respondent committed an Offense of failing to abide by the requirements of placement on Administrative Leave, in violation of Title IV.4.1(d), in that the October 11, 2016 letter of Bishop Stokes directed: "You are prohibited from serving in a priestly capacity in any Church of The Episcopal Church or Anglican Communion or in any capacity or setting as a Chaplain/Priest including prison, hospital, school, hospice or nursing home." Nevertheless, it was reported to Bishop Stokes in or about January 2017 that Respondent was serving as a chaplain to troubled youth at a New Jersey juvenile detention center. It appears that he was received as a priest into the Diocese of the Northeast & Mid-Atlantic of the Reformed Episcopal Church on September 22, 2018 in Rydal, Pennsylvania. He has held himself out as the Archdeacon/Vicar of The Anglican Church of the Messiah of Plainfield, New Jersey, a church holding itself out as associated with The Anglican Communion, in October 2019.
8. The Hearing Panel finds that the acts set forth in paragraph 7 also constitute Offenses of failure to abide by the promises and vows made when ordained, in violation of Canon IV.4.1(c) and Conduct Unbecoming a Member of the Clergy in violation of Canon IV.4.1(h)(9).
9. The Hearing Panel finds that the acts set forth in the foregoing paragraphs are material and substantial and of clear and weighty importance to the ministry of The Episcopal Church, within the terms of Canons IV.3.1(a) & (b) and IV.3.3.

Having fully considered all information developed by the Church and otherwise offered by the parties, including information offered in mitigation and aggravation, and cognizant of the Church's interests in promoting healing, repentance, forgiveness, restitution, justice, amendment of life and reconciliation among the Complainant, Respondent, affected Community and other persons, the following terms of discipline are ordered:

Pursuant to Canon IV.14.6(c), the hearing Panel recommends to the Bishop Diocesan that the Respondent be deposed from ministry in The Episcopal Church, depriving him of the right to exercise the gifts and spiritual authority of God's word and sacraments conferred at ordination.

Pursuant to Title IV.14.7, the Hearing Panel has afforded the Bishop Diocesan, the Respondent, and the Complainants each with an opportunity to be heard on the proposed terms of this Order. The Hearing Panel received and considered written comments from the Respondent and from the Bishop Diocesan before finalizing this Order. Therefore, the Order is herewith transmitted to the Bishop Diocesan for further handling pursuant to Title IV.14.8 of the Canons of The Episcopal Church.

DATED this 2nd day of March 2020.

Disciplinary Board of the Diocese of New Jersey

Morris Anderson
Hearing Panel President