

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS

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OFFICE OF MINISTRY DEPLOYMENT

AND CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CALLING A NEW RECTOR OR VICAR IN THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO

A Process of Mutual Discernment

excerpted from the

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CELEBRATING AND SHARING OUR FAITH

CALLING A NEW RECTOR OR VICAR IN THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO *A Process of Mutual Discernment*

VI-A: Introduction

The process of calling a new rector/vicar is one of *mutual discernment*, engaged in by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee, Search Committee and candidates in partnership with the Bishop. This exciting time of seeking the best clergy match for a congregation should be carried out *prayerfully and with faith* and will require a major commitment of time and resources.

The length of time to complete the process depends upon many variables, including frequency of Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Search Committee meetings, commitment and willingness of members to work independently in small groups, general health of the parish (e.g., it may be necessary to work on conflict resolution or other healing processes before proceeding full-speed with the search), length of time required to gather data and develop parish profile, delays due to Christmas and Easter seasons, etc. Therefore, *flexibility is essential*. Avoid establishing arbitrary deadlines or expectations. The "average" time from the departure of a rector/vicar to the calling of a new rector/vicar is 12-18 months.

The process works best when the roles and responsibilities of Vestry/Bishop's Committee, Interim/Priest-in-Charge, Bishop and Search Committee are understood and *clearly and consistently communicated* to the congregation. The entire congregation should actively participate in the search process, but the Search Committee and Vestry/Bishop's Committee should maintain *complete confidentiality* regarding specific candidates.

The rector/vicar will be a member of the Diocese, a partner in ministry with the Bishop. Once the new rector/vicar has been called, at the Celebration of New Ministry, gifts will be presented and the Bishop will address the new rector/vicar saying, "Let all these be signs of the ministry that is yours, mine and this congregation's."

On behalf of the Bishop, The Rev. Canon Scott B. Hayashi works with clergy and congregations on all aspects of the process, he is assisted by the Rev. Canon Randall R. Warren. Clarity about the process is essential to assure it works effectively for the Vestry/Bishop's Committee, Search Committee, parish members, candidates, and diocesan staff. The following guidelines outline the process of calling a new rector/vicar in the Diocese of Chicago. Additional resources are available from the Diocesan Deployment Office/Office of Ministry Development.

Canon Hayashi can be reached at (312)751-4210 or by e-mail: shayashi@episcopalchicago.org or fax (312)787-4534; Canon Warren can be reached at (312)751-4209 or rwarren@episcopalchicago.org. The Office of Ministry Development's Assistant, Ms. Elizabeth Erickson can be reached at (312) 751-4212; e-mail, eerickson@episcopalchicago.org.

STEPS IN THE INTERIM PROCESS

VI-B: Separation and Planning

STEP I: *Notify the Bishop*

The interim process begins when the rector/vicar announces his or her intention to leave. The rector/vicar should consult with the Bishop before this announcement is made.

STEP II: *Saying Good-bye*

Whether the rector/vicar is leaving because of retirement, a call to another parish, or even because of differences between clergy and the parish, the elements of the separation process remain the same. Working with the wardens and Vestry/Bishop's Committee, the Deployment Officer is available to help the parish arrange a leave-taking that affirms the past and lays the groundwork for the future.

STEP III: *Deployment Officer Meets with Parish*

On the first Sunday after the departure of the rector/vicar (or sometimes later), the Deployment Officer will be the preacher and celebrant at your Sunday services. This gives an opportunity for the parish to participate in a theological reflection upon the challenges and opportunities of an interim period and to share with the deployment officer questions and concerns. After the service and an opportunity to meet with the parish, the Deployment Officer may also meet with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee to assist in future plans if that has not already happened.

STEP IV: *Wardens & Vestry/Bishop's Committee*

With the Bishop's help, as well as that of the deployment office, the senior warden makes arrangements for the conduct of worship and for pastoral care during the interim period. The senior warden does this by appointment so that Vestry/Bishop's Committee and parish can move on to other matters. (This is also true of the appointment of the Search Committee at a later stage of the process. While the advice of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee may be sought, the responsibility for appointments rests with the senior warden).

The interim period will very likely be twelve to eighteen months and sometimes more unless the Vestry/Bishop's Committee chooses a shorter search option. Ideally, the senior warden will secure the services of an interim rector/vicar who will serve the parish regularly during the interim period. The Deployment Officer will assist in these arrangements. At minimum, arrangements must be made for clergy to serve on a supply basis and to respond to urgent pastoral needs. Arrangements must also be made for administration of the parish and for continuation of programs. Finally, working with the deployment office, the Vestry/Bishop's Committee will develop its plans for the search, discussed at greater length below.

STEP V: *Interim & Supply Clergy*

Interim Rector/Vicar: In the Diocese of Chicago, the term “interim rector/vicar”: (or interim vicar in a parish receiving aid) is reserved for those trained and experienced in the ministry of transition. The responsibilities include the conduct of public worship, the continuation of pastoral ministries, support of programs, and whatever else contributes to the maintenance of the normal parish program.

The interim rector/vicar is specially trained to assist a parish evaluate its mission and ministry, to make needed changes in parish administration or program, and to help the parish prepare for the arrival of a new rector/vicar. An interim rector/vicar functions like a rector/vicar with the exception of tenure, including supervision of the parish staff. The interim rector/vicar presides at meetings of the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee. Interim rector/vicars must be paid no less than the diocesan minimum standard of clergy compensation including benefits. The interim rector/vicar may not be a candidate for the permanent position.

Supply Clergy: Clergy serving a parish during the interim period who do not have training and credentials as interim rector/vicars are termed supply clergy. When a supply priest agrees to serve for a prolonged period, he or she is identified as an “interim supply priest.”

The Bishop must approve the appointment of an interim rector/vicar since he or she is an extension of the Bishop’s ministry, just as a rector/vicar is an extension of the Bishop’s ministry. The Bishop must also approve the appointment of an interim supply priest.

STEP VI: *Preparing for the Search*

The Vestry/Bishop’s Committee must establish a search budget that will cover the costs of adequate communication, and visits to and from prospective clergy. The budget should also provide for paying for interim or supply clergy and the fees and expenses of the interim consultant. As the needs of the parish become better defined, the senior warden appoints, and the Vestry/Bishop’s Committee confirms, a Search Committee to whom responsibility for identifying prospective clergy is delegated. The Search Committee is normally not appointed until after the congregational meetings have taken place.

The Vestry/Bishop’s Committee must decide on the compensation package that it will offer the new rector/vicar. The Deployment Officer can be of assistance in suggesting salary levels in comparable parishes, and evaluating other portions of the package such as housing and other allowances. It is diocesan policy, as stated in diocesan canons, that any full time parochial clergy must be paid at least the minimum annual clergy compensation as determined by the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Chicago. Additionally, a parish must be able to demonstrate its ability to pay the minimum clergy compensation for three years in order for a search for a full time rector/vicar to begin. The same is true in a search for an assistant or associate rector/vicar. A document entitled “The Compensation of Clergy: Information and Guidelines” is published annually and is available from the interim consultant or the Deployment Officer.

With the guidance of the interim consultant, a descriptive booklet about the parish and the community needs to be prepared. The booklet is used to introduce prospective candidates to the parish and the local community. Topics addressed in the booklet may include mission/identity

statement, history of the parish, the community where the parish is located, parish programs, distinctive features of the parish, finances and stewardship, facilities, staffing, key statistics (membership, worship attendance, etc.), goals, and desired characteristics of the next rector/vicar. The final form of the booklet is reviewed and approved by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. Such a booklet can have important uses beyond the search process.

STEP VII: *The Interim Consultant*

An interim consultant is appointed by the deployment officer with the concurrence of the wardens to assist the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Search Committee. Interim consultants are experienced in church affairs, trained in helping groups understand and express their objectives and in dealing with conflicts that may arise, and knowledgeable in the mechanics of the search process. The interim consultant will serve as the principal link with the Bishop and the Deployment Officer in providing resources and guidance during the process. In smaller congregations an interim consultant may not be required.

Communication with the parish is essential. Parishioners must be assured that the interim period is being well managed and that progress, however invisible, is being made. This is particularly important as the process moves into the next phase, the search process itself. In this phase, where confidentiality, not secrecy, is the rule, the parish will often complain (predictably) "nothing is happening." It is essential that the Vestry/Bishop's Committee maintain good communication with the parish throughout the interim period.

VI-C: Congregational Assessment

STEP VIII: *Congregational Self Study and Assessment*

The interim consultant will, working with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee, arrange for a series of congregation wide conversations in three stages.

In the first part of the process, the parish is encouraged to consider their history, who they are and whom they serve. The second part of the process asks the parish to consider what God seems to be calling it to do at this time, in this particular place. The third part of the process directs the parish to look forward. The parish is encouraged to develop a vision of its future. Only after this is done is a parish truly able to identify the particular gifts and skills for the clergy leadership it needs.

VI-D: The Search

STEP IX: *The Charge*

It is important that the Vestry/Bishop's Committee give a charge to the Search Committee to make clear what is expected. Is the Search Committee to recommend a single name to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee or several? The former is much to be preferred.

STEP X: *The Search Committee*

The Search Committee is created by and accountable to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. It is important for all members of the parish to recognize this because the Search Committee will not and should not report on its progress to anyone except the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. Even then, the Search Committee must insist upon maintaining strict confidence about the candidates being considered. For them to do otherwise is to risk great damage, both to the candidates and to their parishes.

STEP XI: *Search Options*

The Search Committee is appointed after the conclusion of the congregational meetings. The Vestry/Bishop's Committee decides which search option will be used and communicates this in a charge to the Search Committee. Option #1 is not recommended for Mission Congregations and Parishes with an average Sunday Attendance less than 50.

Option #1—Full Search

The Search Committee collects names from a variety of sources: The Church Deployment Office, the Bishop and Deployment Officers, members of the parish and friends, and from interested clergy who apply for the position. Once names have been collected, screening continues until a potential list of candidates is identified. These people are then contacted by the Search Committee to inquire of their interest and availability. Screening continues until some fifteen to twenty candidates remain. The names comprise what is called the "Short List." The names on the Short List are then referred to the Bishop for initial review in consultation with the Deployment Officer. Names approved for further consideration are then returned to the Search Committee. After further evaluation of the candidates' skills and strengths, the list is reduced to three candidates who comprise what is called the "Finalist List." This list is again referred to the Bishop for an additional reference check, background investigation, and approval by the Bishop.

Option #2—Submission of Candidate List by the Bishop

With this option, the process moves directly from the congregational meetings to selection from a list of no less than three and no more than ten pre-screened candidates supplied by the Bishop. With this option, the Deployment Office in consultation with the Bishop does the screening and evaluating of candidates. The Search Committee must conduct at least a telephone interview with each candidate submitted by the Bishop. The Search Committee then selects its finalists from the names submitted. (The Search Committee can request a new list of names if the first list is not acceptable. Telephone interviews must be completed before a new list is requested.). The Vestry/Bishop's Committee, upon a recommendation from the Search Committee, can also choose to revert to a full search in which the Search Committee reopens the search and receives names from a variety of sources.

Option #3—Nomination of Single Candidate by Bishop

With this option the Bishop is asked to take full responsibility for the search for a new rector/vicar. The Search Committee interviews the candidate and decides if they wish to recommend the candidate to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. With this option, the parish still engages in congregational self-study through congregational meetings.

Option #4—Exploration of Involvement in an Area Ministry

A parish may wish to explore being part of an Area Ministry (also known as a shared ministry, regional ministry, or cluster). Such exploration generally will take place before beginning an actual search but is sometimes done either concurrently with or as a result of congregational meetings. In such cases, the Bishop's Office and consultants from the Congregational Development Commission become involved in the process and have resources to offer.

Option #5—Priest-in-Charge under Special Circumstances

In some circumstances, a parish may be offered the option of the appointment of a priest-in-charge rather than engaging in a search process. These special circumstances include a clergy vacancy after a long pastorate, a clergy vacancy following an unusually short pastorate, a long period of instability in the parish, or a clergy vacancy as a result of serious conflict or misconduct. When such an appointment is made, the following standards are the norm for the relationship between the parish, the priest-in-charge, and the Bishop:

- 1] The Bishop offers names of clergy for the position of priest-in-charge. Names may be suggested by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee but are subject to the approval of the Bishop.
- 2] The Bishop will appoint the priest-in-charge with the approval and consent of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. The priest-in-charge will function like a rector/vicar (as according to diocesan and national canons) of a parish with the exception of tenure.
- 3] The priest-in-charge and the parish enter into an agreement for a period of three years. (This can be shortened by the Bishop if appropriate.)
- 4] An evaluation of the relationship, conducted by the Office of the Bishop, will take place at six-month intervals.
- 5] After twelve to eighteen months, depending upon the agreement, the relationship may be made permanent, with the Bishop's approval, by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee electing the priest-in-charge as rector/vicar, or appointment of the priest-in-charge as rector/vicar by the Bishop.
- 6] If the Vestry/Bishop's Committee, the priest-in-charge, or the Bishop decide after twelve to eighteen months (depending on the agreement) that the priest-in-charge will not become rector/vicar, the relationship shall continue for a mutually agreed upon period of time, normally twelve months. This period shall be used by the parish to initiate a search process and by the priest-in-charge to seek another call while continuing to function as priest-in-charge.
- 7] The Letter of Agreement between the parish, the priest-in-charge, and the Bishop will follow the diocesan guidelines for such letters of agreement including termination provisions should the priest-in-charge not be elected rector/vicar or appointed vicar.

- 8] The Bishop may also elect to appoint a consultant to work with parish, in consultation with the Vestry/Bishop's Committee.

Policies

There are certain policies of the Bishop that must be kept in mind concerning possible candidates for the position of rector/vicar regardless of which option is chosen.

- 1] An interim rector/vicar or an interim supply priest is not eligible to be considered as a candidate for rector/vicar and that is made clear in their letter of agreement. Assistant clergy also will not be approved by the Bishop for consideration. Any clergy serving a parish in transition may only be considered if she or he leaves the position and is absent from the parish for a minimum of six months.
- 2] As mentioned above, a parish must be able to demonstrate its ability to pay the minimum clergy compensation for a period of three years in order for a search for a full time rector, vicar or assistant to commence.
- 3] All searches in the Diocese of Chicago are undertaken on a non-discriminatory basis. Requests for the elimination of certain categories of people, based on such matters as race or gender, cannot be granted.
- 4] All positions must be posted on the Clergy Openings list of the Diocesan Web page for at least six weeks.
- 5] All finalists must have a personal interview with the Bishop. This is normally done during the candidate's visit to the parish for a personal interview with the Search Committee. Appointments may be arranged by calling Ms. Anne Cothran, Administrative Assistant to the Bishop. She maybe reached at (312) 751-4217 or acothran@episcopalchicago.org

Background Investigations

Background Investigations concerning sexual misconduct and criminal offenses are required for clergy at any point of transition (pre-ordination, licensing, and employment) in the Diocese of Chicago. The three finalists must have a background investigation. The usual time needed to complete a background investigation is two to six weeks. Because the Bishop cannot approve the election of a rector/vicar by a Vestry/Bishop's Committee, the appointment of a vicar, or the appointment of an assistant rector/vicar until such investigation is completed, the three finalists are investigated to prevent undue delay at the end of the search process.

The Diocese of Chicago has contracted with an independent agency specializing in these investigations and we have been impressed by their professionalism and objectivity. A background investigation should be done through the Deployment Office by contacting Elizabeth Erickson (312-751-4212 or eerickson@episcopalchicago.org). The parish is responsible for the expense of the search. In the case where this would be a hardship for the parish, the senior warden should contact the Deployment Officer.

STEP XII: *Decision*

When the Search Committee has completed its interviews and reached a decision, it arranges the candidates in order of preference and submits the first name to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee (unless the Vestry/Bishop's Committee has previously instructed the Search Committee to submit more than one name). The second and succeeding names may be furnished to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee if the candidate declines election or if the Vestry/Bishop's Committee declines to elect the suggested candidate.

VI-E: Election or Appointment & Start Up**STEP XIII: *Election or Appointment***

Presumably, the Vestry/Bishop's Committee will accept the recommendation of the Search Committee. In the case of a parish, the Vestry acts to formally elect the nominee. Before doing anything else, the Vestry must notify the Bishop of the Election. The Bishop must be notified so as to give response as required by the diocesan and national canon. Upon receiving the Bishop's approval, a call is then issued. The call should be issued in writing (following a telephone call) and be accompanied by a full statement of any terms and conditions, including housing and other allowances, vacation and continuing education, special expectations, and so on. The Deployment Officer or interim consultant can provide guidelines and sample agreements. The letter of agreement should be sent to the Bishop and the Deployment Officer for review.

Only after, and not before, the nominee has formally accepted the call, should the Vestry/Bishop's Committee announce the election to the parish and the public.

STEP XIV: *Welcome*

When the call has been issued and accepted, it is appropriate for the Search Committee, who has come to know the candidate best, to serve as a committee of welcome, to introduce the new rector/vicar and his or her family to the community, to help in relocation, and to assist in the beginning of the new ministry. Usually, the new rector/vicar is already employed in another parish. He or she must allow time for a responsible departure, for saying "good-byes," perhaps for a bit of vacation, and for packing and moving before the new ministry begins. It is often at least two months after acceptance of the call before the new rector/vicar is in place and not uncommon for a longer period of time to be required.

STEP XV: *Celebration of a New Ministry*

The service of Celebration of a New Ministry may be arranged by contacting the Office of the Bishop. Remember to invite those people who have been helpful to you throughout this process, including especially the interim consultant and any clergy who have served in the parish during the interim period.

STEP XVI: *Fresh Start*

All clergy beginning new positions as rector, vicar, or associate are expected to participate in the Fresh Start program for two years. Fresh Start is a program designed by the Church Deployment

Office to build collegial relationships among the clergy of the Diocese and with the bishops. In our Diocese, it involves three or four workshops co-coordinated by the Deployment Officer.

VI-F: Search Procedures for Associates, Assistants and Curates

Just as with the calling of clergy-in-charge, it is necessary for the Bishop to be involved in the calling of clergy in assisting roles in congregation. Before a congregation begins the process of calling assisting clergy, initial contact should be made with Canon Hayashi, who will assign a member of the Deployment and Congregation Development team to provide support for your search.

As with searches for clergy-in-charge, it is the policy of the Diocese of Chicago that all positions be posted for a minimum of six weeks. In addition, the list of finalists must be initially screened and background checks must be done on finalists. It is recommended that the rector/vicar of a congregation chair or appoint the chair of a search committee for ordained members of the church staff. When a finalist for the position is chosen by the rector/vicar, the candidate is presented to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee for their concurrence in the call and the name is forwarded to the appropriate member of the Deployment and Congregational Development team so that approval by the Bishop may be secured

VI-G: Important Terminology

Interim Consultant: The Interim consultant works with the wardens, Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Search Committee throughout the interim process. He or she assists the parish in evaluating their strengths and resources, in identifying goals, in dealing with conflict, and in negotiating the procedural aspects of the search. The interim consultant consults with interim clergy and with the Deployment Officer and, with their assistance, identifies and responds to the needs and problems that may emerge as the process unfolds. He or she is the principal resource and point of intercommunication for both the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Search Committee and for the Deployment Officer and Bishop.

Interim Rector/vicar: In the Diocese of Chicago the term "interim rector" (or interim vicar in a parish receiving aid) is reserved for those trained and experienced in the ministry of transition. The terms and conditions under which an interim rector/vicar is employed may vary with local circumstances but generally the responsibilities include the conduct of public worship, the continuation of pastoral ministries, support of programs and whatever else contributes to normal parish program. The interim rector/vicar is specially trained to assist a parish evaluate its mission and ministry, to make any needed changes in parish administration or program, and to help the parish prepare for the arrival of a new rector/vicar. This work is done in consultation with the wardens, Vestry/Bishop's Committee and other parish leaders. In the Diocese of Chicago, the interim rector/vicar functions like a rector/vicar with the exception of tenure, including the supervision of the parish staff. The interim rector/vicar presides at meetings of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. The Bishop must approve the appointment of an interim rector/vicar since he or she is an extension of the Bishop's ministry just as a rector/vicar is an extension of the Bishop's ministry.

Supply Clergy: Clergy serving a parish during the interim period who do not have training and credentials as interim rector/vicars and/or have less comprehensive responsibility are termed “supply clergy.” When a supply priest agrees to serve for a prolonged period he or she may be identified as “interim supply.”

Church Deployment Office (CDO): The Church Deployment Office is maintained by the National Church as a registry for all clergy whether or not they are actively seeking positions at this time. Computer files are maintained which show, among other things, the clergy person’s work experience, areas of special interest and training, and developed skills. This data is presented in the form of a Clergy Profile. Profiles for all clergy registered in the system are available through the Deployment Officer. When a parish has identified its particular needs and preferences it may file, through the Deployment Officer, a search request that will initiate a computer search for clergy matching most or many of the stated criteria. Information about the parish, in the form of a parish profile, is also filled with the Church Deployment Office where it is available to interested clergy. The Church Deployment Office publishes a monthly listing of all parishes seeking clergy.

VI-H: Significant Points During the Interim Period

Separation & Planning

- ❖ Rector/Vicar consults with Bishop
- ❖ Bishop formally notified by senior warden of clergy resignation
- ❖ Senior warden may meet with Deployment Officer
- ❖ Senior warden makes interim or supply clergy arrangements
- ❖ Deployment Officer meets with Vestry/Bishop’s Committee to plan process
- ❖ Interim consultant assigned by Deployment Officer
- ❖ The Rector/Vicar departs

Congregational Assessment

- ❖ Deployment Officer visits, preaches, meets with parish
- ❖ Interim consultant conducts meetings with parish
- ❖ Vestry/Bishop’s Committee selects search option
- ❖ Senior warden appoints Search Committee
- ❖ Vestry/Bishop’s Committee approves search budget
- ❖ Vestry/Bishop’s Committee instructs Search Committee
- ❖ Vestry/Bishop’s Committee establishes tentative salary and allowances

The Search

- ❖ Search request and parish profile filed with the Church Deployment Office
- ❖ Cut-off date for applications set
- ❖ Receipt of applications acknowledged
- ❖ Initial screening completed by Search Committee
- ❖ List of approved candidates received from Deployment Officer after preliminary reference checks
- ❖ Candidates notified and screening continues
- ❖ Three to five finalist chosen, personal interviews arranged, background investigation conducted
- ❖ Search Committee reports recommendation to Vestry/Bishop's Committee
- ❖ Vestry/Bishop's Committee elects the Rector and notifies Bishop, or the Bishop's Committee chooses and requests the appointment of a Vicar by the Bishop

Start Up

- ❖ Formal call issued, Letter of Agreement negotiated, approved and signed
- ❖ Announcement made
- ❖ The parish says good-bye and thank you to the Interim Rector/Vicar and Interim Consultant
- ❖ New Rector/Vicar introduced to the parish and community
- ❖ All assist in welcome, beginning of new ministry
- ❖ Celebration of New Ministry scheduled through the Office of the Bishop