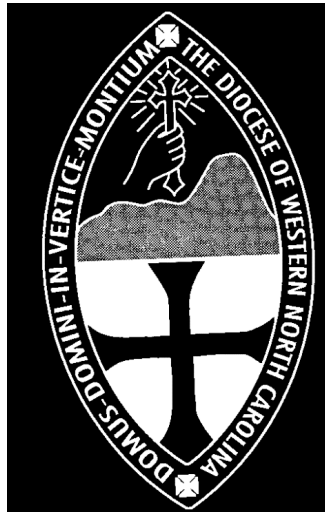


# **THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR CALLING A NEW RECTOR**

**A RESOURCE MANUAL FOR PARISHES IN TRANSITION**

## **PART II: ATTACHMENTS**



**The Episcopal Diocese of  
Western North Carolina**

**Contact: The Rev. Canon James H. Pritchett, Jr.  
Canon to the Ordinary and Canon for Transition Ministries  
(828) 225-6656 or jimpritchett@diocesewnc.org**

**THIS MANUAL IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT [www.diocesewnc.org](http://www.diocesewnc.org).**

**Go to “Policies/Guidelines/Canons”**

*Revised 3/30/09*

## PART II: ATTACHMENTS

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

*Note: if viewing in MS Word, if you click on a page, you will be taken there.*

1. ROLES IN THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR A NEW RECTOR.....	1
2. GOALS FOR A VESTRY DURING THE INTERIM PROCESS.....	4
3. ABOUT THE INTERIM RECTOR LETTER OF AGREEMENT .....	4
4. THE CONSULTANT LETTER OF AGREEMENT .....	5
5. CHARGE TO THE DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE.....	6
6. INFORMATION THE VESTRY NEEDS TO PROVIDE.....	7
7. CHECKLIST FOR SENIOR WARDEN.....	10
8. TIME LINE FOR A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE.....	11
9. TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED .....	12
10. SUGGESTED AGENDA: 1ST MEETING OF A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE ...	13
11. CHECKLIST FOR A DC CHAIRPERSON.....	14
12. COMMUNICATION.....	16
13. OPTIONS FOR PARISH DATA GATHERING .....	17
14. SAMPLE PARISH SURVEY WITH REQUIRED QUESTIONS.....	18
15. HOLY CONVERSATIONS FOR DISCERNMENT .....	20
16. WORKING TOWARD THE PARISH PROFILE .....	24
17. SUGGESTED ESSAY QUESTIONS WITH COMMENTARY .....	28
18. CANON’S LETTER TO THE CANDIDATES .....	29
19. HOW TO READ A CDO PROFILE .....	31
20. GATHERING DATA FROM THE CLERGY .....	32
21. SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR A CANDIDATE.....	32
22. THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE INTERVIEWING: NATIONAL CANONS REGARDING NON-DISCRIMINATION .....	34
23. THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE INTERVIEWING: FORBIDDEN QUESTIONS .....	34
24. TELEPHONE (OR TELECONFRENECE) INTERVIEWS.....	35
25. CANDIDATE REVIEW FORM FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW .....	36
26. QUESTIONS FOR REFERENCES .....	36
27. SITE VISITS.....	37

28. HOME INTERVIEWS .....	38
29. AREAS OF FOCUS IN INTERVIEWING .....	39
30. CANDIDATE SAMPLE REVIEW FORM.....	41
31. TEAM STRUCTURE FOR INTERVIEWING CLERGY CANDIDATES .....	42
32. [RESERVED] .....	42
33. QUESTIONS THE DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE AND VESTRY CAN EXPECT TO BE ASKED BY CANDIDATES .....	42
34. DC SELECTING THE FINAL CANDIDATE .....	43
35. PRESENTATION OF THE NAME OF THE FINAL CANDIDATE TO THE VESTRY .....	44
36. GUIDELINES FOR THE VESTRY DURING THE FINAL PHASE OF THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS .....	45
37. THE VESTRY’S INTERVIEW WITH THE FINAL CANDIDATE .....	46
38. CARING FOR CLERGY: SOME FEATURES OF THE LETTER OF AGREEMENT .....	47
39. DETERMINING CLERGY COMPENSATION .....	48
40. CLOSURE: TIPS FOR MAKING A SMOOTH TRANSITION .....	48
41. LITURGY FOR THE DECOMMISSIONING OF A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE .....	49
42. SAMPLE EXIT INTERVIEW: SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR .....	50
43. CONSULTANT EVALUATION FORM FOR DC CHAIR TO FILL OUT .....	51
44. RESOURCES FOR THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE .....	51
45. <b>SAMPLE LETTERS</b> .....	53
45A. SAMPLE FIRST LETTER TO CANDIDATES .....	53
45B. SAMPLE LETTER INFORMING CANDIDATE THAT THEY WILL NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED .....	54
45C. SAMPLE LETTER CONTINUING THE PROCESS AFTER PAPER CUTS.....	55
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	55

# **1. ROLES IN THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS FOR A NEW RECTOR**

This is an exciting time for a parish, and the Bishop and Canon for Deployment want to help you enjoy this time of transition and change.

## **The Role of the Bishop**

The Bishop serves as the highest authority of any cure in transition and by canon, must grant final approval for the call of any new clergy person into the diocese. That is because an ordained person is canonically resident in a diocese, not in a parish. In conjunction with the Canon for Transition Ministries of the Diocese, the Bishop oversees all steps of the process and fully participates in the interviewing and screening of candidates. Once the DC presents the final candidate to the Vestry and the Vestry interviews that candidate, after getting approval to proceed, they issue a call on behalf of the Bishop and the Parish. Once the new priest is in residence, the Bishop will schedule a celebration of new ministry whereby the entire Parish participates in the beginning of a new phase of congregational life.

## **The Role of the Canon for Transitional Ministries (“Diocesan Deployment Officer,” “DDO,” “Canon for Deployment”)**

The Canon for Transition Ministries (see other names above) works for the Bishop, who has delegated to the Canon responsibility for oversight of the transitional ministry discernment process. The Canon meets initially with the Vestry to assist in the selection of an Interim Rector, the selection of a DC, the selection of a Consultant, and to review the process explaining the search process options. The Senior Warden, the chair of the DC and the Consultant regularly communicate with the Canon to keep the Canon and Bishop informed of the transition status. If needed, the Canon might also stop the process until specific Parish issues are resolved. The Canon conducts initial screening of candidates, conducts the computer search for possible candidates, and orders the Oxford Document Company background checks on the final candidate(s) the DC chooses. Normally, the Canon briefs the Bishop on the status of all transition processes in the Diocese on a weekly basis.

## **The Role of the Consultant**

For each process, the Canon will recommend a Consultant to work with the Vestry and DC. This person is familiar with the search process and will assist the committee with their work and help to keep the committee on course and within their proposed time line. In this Diocese, the Consultant may not interview, evaluate or recommend candidates.

## **The Role of the Interim Rector**

Parish prior to the new Rector’s arrival. The Interim Rector chairs Vestry meetings.

Interim ministry has developed as a professional specialty to help vestries be less anxious and congregations overcome feelings of abandonment and inertia during the time of transition to a new Rector. Interim ministry provides a time when people can “let go” and move ahead, with healthy grief work and readiness to respond to God’s call in new ways. In short, the overall goals of interim period are the healthy transition and effective ministry during the interim period. Other goals include

1. Coming to terms with history
  - Acting on the realization that the former Rector has departed
  - Accepting the idea that the Parish will be different now
  - Looking at the past and the present in order to shape the future
2. Establishing a new identity
  - Claiming a new awareness as a congregation independent of the past Rector
  - Redefining who the Parish is now and what it wants to become
  - Defining what is church? What is our Parish uniquely called to do in order to serve God and neighbor?
3. Managing changes in leadership
  - Adjusting to new patterns of leadership
  - Allowing and encouraging new leadership to come forward
  - Adjusting to new forms of worship, liturgy, music, parish life
4. Strengthening a relationship with the Diocese
  - Seeing the Diocese as a resource and ally
  - Offering parish gifts and talents to strengthen the Diocese
  - Making more use of Diocesan activities, symposia, conferences, materials
5. Commitment to a new future
  - Opening our hearts to new possibilities of ministry
  - Promising to support the newly called Rector
  - Holding ourselves as a congregation accountable for identifying and practicing behavior

The Interim Rector is trained help the congregation accomplish these organizational goals

The Interim Rector does not attend DC meetings or participate in the process unless specifically asked to do so by the Canon for Transition Ministries.

***In this Diocese, the Interim may not interview, evaluate, or recommend candidates. The Interim may not be a candidate for the position of Rector.***

### **The Role of the Vestry**

The Vestry appoints the members of the DC and the chair and then allows them to operate independently as a subcommittee with the stated task of returning to the Vestry

with one name to propose as the new Rector. The Vestry works with the DC to prepare the Parish Search Request Form, the Rector's job description, the compensation package and the Parish Profile.

During the interim period, the Vestry's energies will be focused on working with the Interim Rector to maintain and expand the ministries of the Parish. The Senior Warden will serve as the official legal officer of the Parish but the Interim Rector will chair Vestry meetings. Once a name has been submitted by the Search Committee, the Vestry will interview the finalist and, with the Bishop's approval, extend a call on behalf of the Bishop and the Parish.

In addition, the Vestry helps the Parish deal with wounds, weaknesses and other organizational issues that need attention and healing. The five areas in which the Vestry helps the Interim Rector work with the congregation are:

- Coming to terms with the Parish history
- Establishing a new, clear identity
- Managing changes in leadership and strengthening lay leadership
- Strengthening the relationship with the Diocese if it has been weak in the past
- Committing to a new future; who is God calling this church to be? What is our role in God's kingdom on Earth? How are we to serve God by serving our neighbors?

**This is not a time of stagnation or of "holding on until the new Rector gets here".** This is a time of self-reflection, growth, honesty and integrity. We are here to help you and your Parish make this transition as easily as possible.

#### **Whom do I call for more Information?**

The Rev. Canon Jim Pritchett (whom you may call "Jim")  
Canon to the Ordinary and Canon for Deployment  
Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina  
900-B CentrePark Drive  
Asheville, NC 28805  
Office - 828-225-6656 ext 305  
Fax - 828-225-6657  
Email - [jimpritchett@diocesewnc.org](mailto:jimpritchett@diocesewnc.org)

## **2. GOALS FOR A VESTRY DURING THE INTERIM PROCESS**

<b>GOALS FOR A VESTRY DURING THE INTERIM PROCESS</b>		
<b>GOALS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
<p><i>...for healing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help the congregation deal with any feelings and other unresolved issues arising from the previous Rector's departure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify those for special pastoral care</li> <li>Identify any other issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff &amp; Vestry each note 2-3 known to be upset, then contact them</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deal with internal conflicts and help heal any divisions within the congregation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify any such conflicts</li> <li>Bring together divided members with common goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use as opportunity for discernment and growth</li> <li>Focus more on present and future than past</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist congregation in dealing with its recent history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote open discussion and a learning climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have congregational gatherings, historicize</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work closely together in Vestry and leadership self-assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet quarterly to assess progress and adjust goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage facilitator to assist w/ review process</li> </ul>
<p><i>...for preparation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the congregation for the coming of the next Rector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a learning community climate (vs. blaming)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work on improvement of mtgs. by all groups</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a healthy cong. life and continuity of leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish feedback procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutual Study of Ministry</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist in managing the natural changes in leadership throughout the Parish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affirm Leadership changes; provide rest for the weary and opportunities for the new</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use sermons, newsletters, announcements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan healthy closure for the interim Priest and prepare for coming of new Rector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Say "goodbye" to all interim personnel; design transition committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan parties, events</li> <li>Review, evaluate interim Ministry period</li> </ul>
<p><i>...for future vision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist congregation in clarifying ?'s: who do we want to be; its vision for the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adult classes; survey where do we want to go</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inventories</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help Parish commit itself to a new future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a look at long-range plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up long-range planning committee</li> </ul>
<p><i>...for Episcopal relationship</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen Parish's relationship with the Diocese</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasize Episcopal identity, educate congregation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Print Diocesan names in publications</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help bring about alignment with accepted Diocesan standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check business policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update policies</li> </ul>

## **3. ABOUT THE INTERIM RECTOR LETTER OF AGREEMENT**

Upon request, the Canon for Transition Ministries will email the Senior Warden a copy of the form Interim Rector Letter of Agreement in MS Word and pdf. formats. The Senior Warden should request the Letter of Agreement before beginning interviews with candidates for Interim Rector, and should email it to prospective candidates.

#### **4. THE CONSULTANT LETTER OF AGREEMENT**

Letter of Agreement between St. \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church and \_\_\_\_\_

The Consultant has been chosen by the Vestry to work with the Search Committee in the selection of a new rector. Both the Consultant and the Search Committee are directly accountable to the Vestry. It is the committee's task to submit to the vestry a name for their consideration to call as the next rector of the parish.

The Consultant, in consultation with the Canon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, will assist the Search Committee in following the procedures set forth in *The Discernment Process for Calling a New Rector: a Resource Manual for Parishes in Transition, Parts I & II* as they organize themselves, carry out interviews, and make their final selection. The consultant will meet with them at critical junctures in the process (and as specified in *The Search Process*), but will not need to attend all their meetings. The Consultant will also assist the Vestry in the call process. .

The fee will be according to the following:

Options 1 and 2:

- Parishes with a budget of less than \$100,000 per year - \$1,500 fee, plus expenses, for 6-8 meetings
- Parishes with a budget of \$100,000 to \$250,000 per year - \$2,100 fee, plus expenses, for 8-12 meetings
- Parishes with a budget of more than \$250, 000 per year - \$2,800 fee, plus expenses, for 8-12 meetings

Option 3:

- Hourly rate of \$75.00, plus expenses
- Telephone consultation @ \$1.00 per minute
- Expenses include air and ground transportation or mileage, meals, lodging, telephone and materials
- Mileage is at current IRS rate

Preparation will be insignificant. Any additional expenses or sessions would be negotiated in advance with the Vestry at the rate of no more than \$75 per hour, plus expenses. The consultant will submit timely invoices.

The Vestry is free to call upon the Consultant for other kinds of consultation if the Consultant and Vestry agree upon such work.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (Parish)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Consultant

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Senior Warden

## **5. CHARGE TO THE DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

\_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church  
VESTRY RESOLUTION

We, the vestry of \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church, thank the members of the Discernment Committee for their willingness to serve. We are aware of the time, talent, and commitment required to do this work, and we commit to keep the Discernment Committee in our prayers as its members go about this important task in the service of our parish and Jesus Christ.

We charge the Discernment Committee with recommending to us a priest who best demonstrates the pastoral and ministerial skills needed by this congregation.

This charge incorporates the following:

1. The Discernment Process will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines established by the Diocese of Western North Carolina and under the guidance of the Transition Ministries Officer of the Diocese, the Rev. Canon James H. Pritchett, Jr.
2. The Discernment Committee will made its decisions without regard to race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, or marital status, and in accordance with the Canons of the Episcopal Church.
3. The Discernment Committee chair or a designated member of the Committee will report monthly to the vestry on the progress of the Discernment Process. Additionally, the chair or a designated member of the Committee will regularly report to the congregation.
4. A total budget of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is established to cover travel, printing, postage, communications, and other expenses.
5. The Committee will produce a parish profile in website format. Printed versions will be produced only on an “as-needed” basis. Printed versions will not be sent to candidates except upon request.
6. The Discernment Committee will recommend to the vestry one candidate acceptable to the Bishop of Western North Carolina. The vestry will determine whether to accept the Committee’s recommendation. If the recommendation is accepted, the vestry will interview the candidate to verify the work of the Committee. Whether or not to call the candidate will be the vestry’s decision.
7. The Discernment Committee should make its recommendation to the vestry as close to \_\_\_\_\_ as possible.

Resolved, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

## **6. INFORMATION THE VESTRY NEEDS TO PROVIDE**

The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina

*You may ask the Canon for this document in Microsoft Word.* Send a copy of this completed form to your Discernment Committee, your Consultant, and the Canon to the Ordinary (jimpritchett@diocesewnc.org)

*Email is best!*

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Parish Name:

Address:

Telephone: Area Code \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address:

Website:

### PARISH LIFE

#### Worship

The following group of questions is intended to give us a feel for your congregation's weekly worship experience.

What is the time of your Sunday service(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

How many people can you comfortably seat in your church? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your most recent attendance for Easter? \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas Eve? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you provide for music in worship? (check all appropriate answers) Organ \_\_\_\_\_; Piano \_\_\_\_\_; Recorded music \_\_\_\_\_; Paid organist (pianist) \_\_\_\_\_; Volunteer organist (pianist) \_\_\_\_\_ Contemporary music provided by \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a choir? (check the appropriate answer): Every Sunday \_\_\_\_\_; Special occasions only \_\_\_\_\_; No choir \_\_\_\_\_; Other music leaders \_\_\_\_\_; No music leaders \_\_\_\_\_

Who usually assists the priest in the service? (check all appropriate answers) A Deacon \_\_\_\_\_; Lay Eucharistic Ministers \_\_\_\_\_; Acolytes \_\_\_\_\_.

Are your acolytes adults? \_\_\_\_\_; young people? \_\_\_\_\_; some of each \_\_\_\_\_

Is your church heated comfortably during the winter months? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. Is it air conditioned in the summer? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do Sunday school children join the congregation for the Eucharist? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_. If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Are services conducted in English? \_\_\_ Spanish? \_\_\_ Another language? Which one? \_\_\_\_\_ (Check all appropriate answers).

Does your church show any structural problems, such as leaky roof, water damage; broken or missing windows, sloping floor, stress fractures in walls; falling plaster? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If you answered "Yes," describe those building problems here:

### Mission

Which of the following outreach programs occur at your church? (Check all appropriate answers) Soup kitchen \_\_\_; Food pantry \_\_\_; Food and clothing to the homeless \_\_\_; Organized visits to hospitals, nursing homes or shut-ins \_\_\_; Fund raising for charities \_\_\_; English as a second language classes \_\_\_; Day care (or after school care) \_\_\_; Other \_\_\_\_\_ (please list.)

Please list any programs you support with volunteers, but occur off your premises:

How many parishioners contribute their time regularly to outreach done through or at your church?

Does the congregation expect to start any new outreach ministries in the upcoming year?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Please describe:

### Nurture

The following group of questions is intended to acquaint us with your Christian education, membership development, stewardship and leadership development programs

Do you have a Sunday school for young people? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

What is the average Sunday attendance of your church school?

Do you regularly have Sundays when church school attendance is less than 10? Yes \_\_\_

No \_\_\_

Are Sunday school pupils grouped by age in separate classes?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

If "Yes," how many classes are there (check the appropriate answer)? \_\_\_ fewer than 3 classes \_\_\_ 3 classes \_\_\_ more than 3 classes.

Does each class have its separate classroom? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_

Do you have a children or youth choir? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_

Do you have a teen program? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_

Do you have an ECW? \_\_\_ a men's group? \_\_\_ an altar guild? \_\_\_ or any other group or guild \_\_\_ (check and note the appropriate answers)

Have you had a confirmation class with each Episcopal Visitation in the past 3 years?

Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_

Do you have an adult education program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.

If "Yes," describe the most recent programs

Do you have a special Lenten program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ . Give a brief description of your program:

In the last year, did anyone from your church (clergy or laity) attend any educational programs, leadership conferences, congregational development programs offered by the diocese? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

If "Yes," how many individuals attended? \_\_\_

If "Yes," which programs did they attend? (Please list them here)

Do you have a stewardship committee? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ . If yes, how many members?

\_\_\_\_\_ In the last year, were any of the following part of the stewardship program?

an all member stewardship canvas: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_;

small group meetings Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_;

letters to the congregation Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_;  
 Pledge cards Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_;  
 Stewardship articles in the newsletter or Sunday bulletin Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_;  
 Personal testimonials about stewardship Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
 Are new members asked to pledge in their first year?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
 In your stewardship program, was the congregation given guidance on “proportionate (percentage) giving”? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_.  
 Is proportionate giving an important part of your steward program? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 Did you begin, conduct, or complete a capital campaign in the last year? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_.  
 If yes, what was the purpose or goal of the campaign? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Did you use a professional firm to assist with the campaign? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_.  
 If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you have a membership committee?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 Are greeters assigned to welcome newcomers at Sunday services? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 Do you have a regular coffee hour after Sunday services?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 Do you have a system for introducing newcomers or visitors?  
 If so, please describe it.  
 Are visitors added to your church mailing list? Yes \_\_\_; No \_\_\_  
 Do you hold dinners or other fellowship events at your church?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
 If yes, where? When? \_\_\_\_\_  
 How many are you able to seat comfortably in that location for dinner?

**Buildings and Property**

Please describe the current state of your physical plant?

What significant repairs or other needs do you anticipate meeting in the next three years?

**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

This is a (please check one):

\_\_\_\_\_ full time position (40 hours plus full benefits)

\_\_\_\_\_ part time position (describe days/week and benefits)

You will need to develop a letter of agreement after the Bishop approves your selection and you have called a priest. Sample documents are available from the Canon to the Ordinary.

**Calculating Compensation Range (for planning purposes)**

Compensation as used on the CDO website is the sum of  
 Salary + Housing + Utilities

Starting minimum cash salary \_\_\_\_\_  
 (FICA reimbursement is not broken out separately.)  
 Housing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Housing (and utilities) allowance (amount budgeted) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (or circle here if Rectory: Housing is provided)  
 Total Compensation to Clergy \_\_\_\_\_

Church Pension Assessment \_\_\_\_\_  
 (18% of total cash/housing and utilities; required, including for supply, after two months)

Health insurance \_\_\_\_\_  
 (must be provided unless clergy has from another sources)  
 Vacation (4 weeks/year) (supply clergy expense) \_\_\_\_\_

Sabbatical Fund (2 weeks compensation/yr.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Operational Expenses \_\_\_\_\_

Travel reimbursement (amount budgeted) \_\_\_\_\_

Continuing education (amount budgeted)       \$1000      

Professional expenses (amount budgeted) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Attachments \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of your most recent parochial report  
 In addition, other samples of information can be helpful when potential candidates request such materials. Please attach samples of any of the following:  
 Current and last year's budgets  
 Newsletters published during the last three months  
 Service bulletins from the last three Sundays  
 List of parish organizations and descriptions  
 List of parish leadership with contact information  
 Parish history (if available)

**7. CHECKLIST FOR SENIOR WARDEN**

- Call Diocese and set up meeting with Canon Pritchett and Vestry
- Get supply priests to cover services after rector is gone
- Request Interim Rector Letter of Agreement (LOA) from Canon.
- Publish parts of Interim LOA to congregation
- Gather data on Interim candidates from Canon. Discuss with Vestry process for hiring Interim.
- Hire Interim

- Vestry hires Consultant
- Vestry recruits chair of Discernment Committee (DC)
- Copy Spiritual Guide Resources. Vestry recruits Spiritual Guide for DC
- Vestry recruits remainder of DC
- Vestry charges DC and requests Interim to commission DC at Sun. services
- Vestry completes, "Information the Vestry is to Provide" and gives to Canon and DC chair
- Vestry Reviews parish web page and makes changes if needed
- Vestry gets monthly reports on process. Does not ask for names!
- As DC gets close to end of it's work, SW requests Rector LOA from Canon
- SW and DC chair schedule meeting for DC to present name of finalist
- Vestry and Consultant discuss process for Vestry to decide on finalist. Consultant trains as needed. Visit scheduled as needed.
- SW double checks to be sure finalist has met the Bishop
- SW emails Canon for Bishop's permission to extend a call to finalist. (If urgent, call as well.)
- Vestry negotiates Rector LOA with Canon's help
- After* LOA is signed, make announcement (w/ rector-elect's permission)
- Ask Interim to decommission DC. Thank!
- Discuss with new rector and Bishop date for Celebration of New Ministry
- Relax!

**8. TIME LINE FOR A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

[Start with the end of the process and work toward the beginning. Some tasks can be planned simultaneously.]

	<b>Approx. Dates</b>
DC Initial organizational meeting with Consultant	_____
Parish time of self-study	_____
DC hold Holy Conversation(s)	_____
DC Prepare and distribute Parish survey	_____
DC Collate data from Survey and present to Vestry and Parish	_____
DC Prepare Parish Profile	_____
Vestry and Canon approve Profile	_____
DC Put Profile on web site	_____

DC Prepare Parish computer profile and send to Canon	_____
DC Advertise for candidates	_____
Canon and Bishop screen candidates	_____
DC Complete paper screening process	_____
DC Complete telephone screening process	_____
DC Complete reference checks	_____
DC Visit and interview final candidates	_____
DC Make recommendation to Vestry	_____
Vestry interview candidate face-to-face	_____
Vestry get Bishop's approval and make call to new Rector	_____
Vestry negotiate Letter of Agmt. for all parties to sign	_____
Vestry make transition arrangements with interim, new Rector,	_____

The total length of time for a search process depends on several factors:

- ❖ the previous Rector's length of service
- ❖ whether or not there is conflict in the Parish
- ❖ the availability of candidates at the time of your search
- ❖ the size of your Parish
- In a Family or Pastoral size Parish allow 7 - 9 months.
  - In a Program size Parish allow 9 - 12 months.
- In a Corporate size Parish allow 15 - 18 months.

Also remember that the optimal time for a new rector to move is in the summer (they want to find a house and get their children registered in school). Most candidates will not have time to pay attention to changing parishes at Advent or Easter, so the second most common time for a rector to move is just after Easter; the third is just after Christmas.

## **9. TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED**

**Vestry:** Please ask the Interim Rector to commission the DC at both (all) services so the congregation can see that the search process has begun. It also grounds the Committee's and the congregation's work in prayer and scripture.

Please make communicating with the Vestry easy during the interim process. Make sure you repeatedly tell folks whom to contact if they have a problem or a new idea.

**Discernment Committee:** Please pay attention to the small details when beginning your work together. Make sure that Bible study and prayer time together is sacred and as important a part of each meeting as the discussion topics.

As you work together as a DC consider:

- Physical set-up:
  - The best arrangement is a circle; there are no angles, everyone can be seen.
  - Please rotate who will bring refreshments to the meetings. Do you want a 30 minute supper and chat time prior to the meeting starting?
- Scheduling:
  - Are the meeting times and locations convenient and acceptable to all members?
- Leadership:
  - Who is in charge; how is that determined?
- Procedure:
  - How are you going to get from here to there?
- Participation:
  - Does everyone feel free to speak; how can you encourage that?
- Conflict (defined simply as “differences that matter”):
  - What will you do to manage/resolve these differences?
  - Instead of just reacting, *listen* to others and then compare ideas
  - Listen to both content and the emotion behind the statement. Addressing the content without addressing the emotion will not be fruitful.
- Consensus (modified):
  - Can everyone accept the decision, even if it is not their first choice?
  - Can everyone agree to help implement the decision (in this case, to support the ministry of the new rector?)?
  - Can everyone agree that they will never speak against the decision? (If a member has concerns, that member should raise them at the meeting, not later.)
- What process will the DC use to make its final decisions on candidates?
  - Group evaluation is constant; stop and check if you think one of these elements has undergone a change. The function or dysfunction of your DC is directly proportional to how you deal with all of these elements.

The final candidate must be unanimous or extremely highly agreed upon. No candidate may be recommended to the Vestry with a 50-50 vote.

## **10. SUGGESTED AGENDA: 1ST MEETING OF A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

- 1) Opening Prayer by Spiritual Guide or Chair.
- 2) Welcome and thanks by Chair
- 3) Charge from Vestry; Senior Warden (5-7 minutes) (SW takes questions and leaves after)
- 4) Introductions:
  - Search Committee Members:
    - Name
    - Number of years a member of this Parish
    - Activities since a member
  - Consultant
- 5) Spiritual Guide use *Prayer in the Discernment Process Unit 1* to lead discussion (10 min.)

- 6) Overview of Search Process and Review the Search Manual: Consultant or Canon
- 7) How the Consultant will help, and meetings s/he will attend: Consultant
- 8) Next Steps: Organizing the DC
  - Recording Secretary  
Keeps the minutes, sends meeting reminders via email, keeps up with all the correspondence and paperwork
  - Communications Chair  
Coordinates announcements made at every service, notices in the church bulletins and newsletters, asks for prayers for the DC and makes sure they get into the prayers of the people every Sunday. The Chair does not make all the announcements, just coordinates them
  - Parish Survey Co-chairs  
Takes leadership early on in the process, helping create a survey from boilerplate materials, and gets it printed, distributed, returned and tallied for presentations to the DC, the Vestry and the Congregation.
  - Holy Conversation Co-chairs  
Schedules and organizes parish Holy Conversation(s). Works with Consultant and Interim to schedule, invite, publicize, set up, provide materials, collect data, organize data (which can be delegated to someone not on the DC), and report to DC, Vestry and congregation.
  - Profile Co-chairs  
Take leadership for coordinating, designing and gathering the information and photographs for the Parish profile, the marketing piece on the church. Also helps coordinate getting the church website up to date with the profile information
  - Interview Chair (co-chairs)  
Takes charge of this phase of the process, coordinating the conference telephone calls, making sure candidates are communicated with, helps plan the trips to candidates' parishes and to the campus
- 7) Schedule the rotation of worship for each meeting (if the Spiritual Guide so chooses)
- 8) Determine the meeting dates, times and length; do you want to have supper together?  
If so, set up the rotation for bringing supper.
- 9) Always close with prayer

**11. CHECKLIST FOR A DC CHAIRPERSON**

1. ORGANIZATION

- \_\_\_ Choose Vice-chair
- \_\_\_ Choose regular meeting dates
- \_\_\_ Choose sub-groups: communications, Recording Secretary, Survey, Holy Conversation, Profile, and Interviewing

2. SELF STUDY

- \_\_\_ Give Senior Warden the “Information Needed From A Vestry” handout

- \_\_\_ Plan and implement the Holy Conversation (with your Consultant's help)
- \_\_\_ Create Parish Survey
- \_\_\_ Send out Parish survey/Survey
- \_\_\_ Analyze Survey results and translate to Parish/Institution Search Request form; report results to the Vestry then to the Congregation
- \_\_\_ Send Parish Profile first draft to Vestry, Consultant, and Canon for Transitional Ministries for approvals
- \_\_\_ Work with Wardens, co-chair, and Consultant to fill out Parish/Institution Search Request form (PISR).
- \_\_\_ Get Vestry and DC approval of PISR.
- \_\_\_ Send PISR to Canon for Transitional Ministries
- \_\_\_ Set date for screening training with Consultant

### 3. SEARCH

- \_\_\_ Send names of following candidates to Bishop for approval: names given by parishioners; names sent in by candidates themselves; names submitted by DC members
- \_\_\_ Receive 2 types of names from Canon for Transitional Ministries
  - a. Names from all sources except the computer search. These names will be screened before you get them.
  - b. Names from the computer search. These names will not be screened unless and until the candidate expresses interest.
- \_\_\_ Set up file for each candidate (keep until end of process)
- \_\_\_ Send letter of inquiry to computer generated names telling them that they have been identified by the CDO and asking whether they are interested. Give a deadline. If they respond, "Yes," send the name to the Canon for screening.
- \_\_\_ Send first letter to approved candidates. Discuss with DC and Consultant what information to ask for, *i.e.*, letter of interest, resume, CDO profile, essay questions, sample sermon on CD.
- \_\_\_ DC makes cuts. *Always* keep the Canon informed as to who is currently being considered.
- \_\_\_ Send second letter to approved candidates with packet
- \_\_\_ Telephone interviews of candidates (all or limited number)
- \_\_\_ Perform reference checks on top 10-15 candidates
- \_\_\_ Select candidates for "away" visit by teams
- \_\_\_ Notify rejected candidates
- \_\_\_ Send names to Bishop for further screening
- \_\_\_ Set date for interview training with Consultant
- \_\_\_ Complete "away" visitations, make cuts (if appropriate), and inform candidates
- \_\_\_ Select final candidates for "home" visit with entire search committee
- \_\_\_ Schedule "home" visits and coordinate with Bishop's office so that the Bishop can meet out-of-diocese candidates on that trip
- \_\_\_ Send top names to Canon
- \_\_\_ Ask Canon to order Oxford Document Background checks on specific candidates (or final candidate; the check costs \$250-400/person, and the cost is borne by the parish).
- \_\_\_ Notify rejected candidates

- Select candidate to present to Vestry
- Set date for joint meeting with Vestry to present materials
- Vestry interview finalist face to face; answer all questions
- Vestry notify Bishop of the final candidate they wish to call
- DC Notify rejected candidates (*after* the new Rector has accepted!)
- Vestry enter into negotiations with the final candidate and create covenant for all parties to sign

## **12. COMMUNICATION**

Clear communication is critical throughout the Discernment Process. There are four channels that the Search Committee needs to keep open at all times:

### **...with the Vestry**

The DC is a sub-committee of the Vestry and needs to exercise complete accountability in its ministry. The DC should make a report at every Vestry meeting. This report can be made by the DC Chair, Vestry Liaison or another designated member. Between Vestry meetings, the DC Chair should be in touch with the Senior Warden whenever something new develops.

### **...with the Congregation**

Redundancy is the key: special mailings to the Parish, weekly announcements at worship, regular articles in the worship bulletin and the Parish newsletters are all important. A member of the DC should make a brief announcement at each service every two weeks, giving an update on the process. How the process works and where the DC is in the process should be communicated repeatedly, but names of candidates are *never* given.

### **...with the Bishop**

The Bishop should be kept informed of progress in the Discernment Process. This accountability is normally exercised through the Canon for Transitional Ministries. A list of current candidates should always be sent to the Canon before proceeding to the next level of screening or interviewing. The top 2-3 candidates need to meet with the Bishop when they come to campus.

### **...with the Candidates**

Candidates who have been screened out of the process should be notified as soon as possible. Once a list of final candidates has been identified (those who will be invited to the Parish for an interview), it is critical to keep in regular communication with each of them. Schedules change and adjustments may have to be made.

Open, thorough, and regular communication is essential. Experience suggests the healthiest standard is “full disclosure, regular contact, no surprises.”

The *only exceptions* to this standard are the identity of candidates and the privileged information that the DC receives or develops about each of them (including information given by the Canon). *Any* break in this confidentiality can be seriously damaging not only to a candidate and the candidate’s ministry setting, but also to the Congregation, the DC, the Vestry, and the Diocese!

### **13. OPTIONS FOR PARISH DATA GATHERING**

The key element in any successful Search Process is finding out how parishioners view their Parish and where they want it to go. Here are some options for gathering information from those parishioners.

<b>OPTION</b>	<b>ADVANTAGES</b>	<b>DISADVANTAGES</b>
Interviewing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•usually gives a cross section of the Parish</li> <li>•can press for more information or clarity</li> <li>•can verify interpretations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•no anonymity</li> <li>•possible interpersonal distortion or filtering by the interviewer</li> <li>•people may have trouble saying what they really mean</li> </ul>
Written Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•reaches every member</li> <li>•chance to think before answering</li> <li>•timidity in listing anything negative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•can't press for interpretation</li> <li>•usually a low return</li> <li>•questions or answers may be misinterpreted</li> <li>•time lag</li> </ul>
Parish Gatherings (structured discussion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•involves people</li> <li>•interaction may trigger more responses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•only reaches those who attend</li> <li>•articulate people may overpower quiet people</li> </ul>
Observation & Memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•faster than other methods</li> <li>•Parish leaders usually know what is happening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•involves fewer people</li> <li>•may not involve dissenters</li> <li>•personal bias</li> </ul>
Parish Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•gives clear picture of Parish information</li> <li>•gives clear picture of age &amp; gender ratios</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•does not cover personal</li> <li>•may not tell much about where the Parish wants to go</li> </ul>

**14. SAMPLE PARISH SURVEY WITH REQUIRED QUESTIONS**

The following is a sample survey that you can modify to fit the needs of your Parish. For example, you might want to use a cover letter in place of the “Introduction.” Add or subtract questions in the “demographics” section to fit your needs.

Date: Month, Year

We are asking for information about our Parish as well as for information about what you would like to see in our new Rector. All members of the Parish who are 16 or older should respond on their own form.

Thank you for your time today. All answers will be kept confidential and will be compiled into a report in a summarized format. Please be as candid as possible with your responses.

**Parish Goals**

The following items represent goals that Our Church may choose to pursue in the future. In the first column, please check all the choices that are important to you. In the second column rank your top four choices with 1 being the most important.

√	1-4	[Design these goals to fit your own Parish needs.]
		Attract more young people, especially families with young children.
		Provide more recreational and social activities for our youth.
		Develop and strengthen outreach ministries such as the neighborhood education program.
		Spend more time together as a parish family; retreats, fellowship groups, EFM, social events and other parish-based activities.
		Strengthen our music program.
		Promote individual spiritual growth such as quiet days, prayer groups, study groups.
		Strengthen our welcome ministry.
		Bring inactive members back into Our Church.
		Involve more children in the acolyte program.
		Offer a family/children’s service.
		Expand the music program to include a variety of music styles, hymnals and instruments.
		Renovate/Expand our building facilities. Be specific about what physical plant changes you want to see:
		Interact more with other Episcopal churches in our neighborhood, in the Diocese and in the world.
		Increase pledge income through a revitalized stewardship program.
		Interact with more congregations of other faiths.
		Other:
		Other:
		Other:

### Position Responsibilities

What do you believe are the top four responsibilities of our new rector? Please rank them from 1 – 4 with 1 being the highest responsibility.

Rank

Administration

Christian Education

Church Growth/ Development

Congregation Development

Counseling

Ecumenism

Evangelism

Liturgy

Music Ministry

Outreach Ministry

Parish Ministries

Pastoral Care

Preaching/Public Speaking

Spiritual Guidance

Spiritual/Prayer Life

Stewardship

Teaching

Theology

Visitation

Youth Work

Other:

This information is optional but helpful to many parishes.

Information about You (the respondent)

A. Volunteer Activities (list)

B. Length of association with Our Church

C. How long have you been an Episcopalian?

D. What church or religious group did you previously attend?

E. Age group

F. Gender

G. Zip code

H. Attendance level; rarely miss, 2x/month, 3x/month, occasionally, rarely, holidays

I. Marital status; m/s/w/d

J. Employment: Full Time, Part Time, Student, Retired, Other

Once the Parish has had time to respond to the survey and the surveys have been compiled into one compilation, the results should be shared with the Consultant, Vestry, Consultant and Canon so they can process the responses. At that time, the DC should create a plan for communicating the results to the congregation. The results also should be written into a coherent picture for the Parish Profile.

## **15. HOLY CONVERSATIONS FOR DISCERNMENT**

In addition to using a survey to gather information, Discernment Committees should use a Holy Conversations model for the entire parish to engage in a discernment conversation. This approach has the advantages of being fun, building up community, allowing parishioners' ideas and enthusiasm to build upon one another, and leaving open the potential for the Holy Spirit to surprise us! (Frankly, surprises are rarely a part of written surveys, the results of which can often be predicted before the survey is taken.) Surveys have their place; some people who will not (or cannot) attend a Holy Conversation will fill out a survey. Surveys are also very useful in harvesting statistics: how many attend each service, who is involved in what ministries, etc. They are sometimes less helpful tools for discernment.

Here is an overview of how a Holy Conversation works: parishioners gather amidst overflowing hospitality (dinner, dessert, a hymn sing, something fun!). They *randomly* divide into groups of no more than five (ask them not to stick with friends, etc.) and discuss carefully pre-selected questions for fifteen minutes. Answers and points of interest are recorded. After twenty minutes, each group briefly reports out to the entire gathering. The facilitator (typically your Consultant) leads a brief discussion "knitting" together common themes, etc. from the small groups by asking, "What did we hear in common? What was different? What did we not hear that we might have expected to hear?" Parishioners then randomly go to new groups for another round. The process repeats until participants have gone to three rounds. All data is recorded and parishioners are assured that it will be used.

Selecting the questions: this is probably the most important task in designing a Holy Conversation. The questions should be *positive* and *affirming*. They should relate to God's dream for the parish, not "what we want in a new rector." The reason for this is that asking what parishioners want in a new rector usually leads to very predictable answers, and they often reflect, as the old saw goes, "Jesus on a good day."

Surveys usually ask, "What qualities do we want in a priest?" The Discernment Committee then goes out looking for a priest with those qualities. Holy Conversations ask, "What is God's dream for this parish?" It is a time of revisioning and renewal of mission. The Discernment Committee then discusses the results with the vestry, takes the data and the leadership's interpretation of it, and looks for a priest with the qualities to lead the parish toward what the parish has discerned is God's will.

The following are some sample questions. Because of the importance of the questions, the Discernment Committee might want to ask the vestry to assist in designing the questions, or the vestry (which makes the final decision to extend a call) might ask to have that input. Either way, the Consultant should be involved in this process.

Round 1:

- a. What was your best and most meaningful moment or incident at the parish in the last year?
- b. Who and/or what made that possible?

Round 2:

- a. What now needs the attention of the rector and vestry? What would you like to strengthen?
- b. How can we use what we do *well* to strengthen these areas?

Round 3:

- a. What do you see as God's dream for the parish in the next five years? Be concrete and specific.
- b. What specific, concrete steps can the parish and you take to help make that a reality?

Below are some additional questions (taken from the "Maine Model" for Mutual Ministry Review) that might be helpful. We suggest changing only Round 2 questions:

- What did you learn this year? How did you grow?
- What task or goal is most important for the coming year?
- How would you describe the quality of our congregational community life this past year?
- Last year, we set \_\_\_\_\_ as a goal. How did we do?
- What attracts newcomers to our congregation?
- What do you value most about \_\_\_\_\_ Church?
- Describe two or three ways to strengthen the ministry and health of \_\_\_\_\_ Church.
- Describe the one most important factor that, for you, gives "life" to \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

Here's a simple formula for a Holy Conversation:

### **Preparation**

1. Invite everyone in the congregation (do not exclude those who are upset or dissatisfied!). The Holy Conversation could be held at someone's home, but more typically will be held at the church in the parish hall. It is vital that as many people as possible participate and all feel invited.
2. Hospitality is important. Make it a potluck dinner or have it a little later and ask people to bring desserts, etc. You might want to begin with a short prayer service or a sing-along. The space should be comfortable, inviting, and feel safe. If you hold the Holy Conversations at the church, try to do something different with the space to mark this as a special occasion.
3. Discussion group areas should be set up in advance. Ideally these are tables with paper "tablecloths" (or a piece of flip chart paper) and crayons so people can draw, doodle, and make comments (for those visual learners), but circumstances may dictate a circle of chairs, etc. Each group area has:
  - a. seating for 4-5 (max.),
  - b. a flip chart (or pages from a flip chart), markers, and
  - c. masking tape.

## The Conversation

4. The Facilitator explains how the Holy Conversation will work, and goes over the ground rules:
  - a. Speak about the questions and issues; never make a comment personal.
  - b. Be considerate of the time and allow everyone to speak.
  - c. Assume that others share your concerns.
  - d. Speak the truth as you understand it, but speak it in love.
  - e. Remember that you are having a conversation with sisters and brothers.
  - f. Be brave, be loving, be creative.
5. In your current group, don't talk about what was said (by you or anyone else) in your last group. Live in the moment!.
6. People go to groups randomly. Don't stick with spouses or close friends. At each round, try not to be with people you've been with in other rounds.
7. Folks very briefly introduce themselves. The group decides (in 1 minute):
  - a. Who will be the recorder?
  - b. Who (it could be more than one person) will report out for the group?
8. The group discusses that round's questions for 20 minutes. (Questions should be written in advance on separate sheets of flip chart paper, or projected where everyone can see them. The Facilitator acts as timekeeper.)
9. Parishioners are welcome to write or draw on the paper tablecloths or the flip chart paper. Everyone should be asked to support the recorder in taking notes, summarizing key ideas, and, if so moved, doodling or making drawings that reflect interesting insights.
10. At the end of the round, the discussion groups report out. The Facilitator leads a very brief discussion ("doing the knitting") of what was said in common, what differed, and (if applicable) what was not said that one might have expected. What common themes arose among groups? Was there an emphasis on one or more areas? Were there shared thoughts and/or emotions? Did the same needs, plans, or dreams come up in more than one place? The knitting should be positive rather than blaming. ("We can put more energy into our after school program and recruit more people to help those who are dedicated to it," rather than, "We've done a bad job with the after school program." The Facilitator writes the knitting on a flip chart.
11. After the knitting is done, everyone goes to a different group (of their choosing) for the next set of questions. Again, people are asked not to stick together but seek out new people.
12. The process repeats itself until there have been three rounds.

13. The Facilitator, of course, saves the flip charts and tablecloths, which become important sources of data.
14. After the third round of knitting, the Facilitator debriefs the meeting with the participants, asking whether the Holy Conversation was helpful, whether guests felt heard, what changes would be helpful, and whether the guests would recommend doing it again. Responses are recorded on a flip chart.
15. The Facilitator then thanks everyone for their participation, assures them that the information collected will be presented to the parish and used by the vestry, and dismisses them with a prayer or blessing.

### **Interpreting, Using, and Presenting the Information Gathered from the Conversations**

When the information is all in (from the parish survey as well as the Holy Conversation), the Discernment Committee should meet with the vestry to look for consistent or repetitive themes, helpful insights, new ideas, and (largely) agreed upon focuses for the parish. The Discernment Committee and vestry should prayerfully ask: “What have we learned? What are God’s dreams for this parish? What kind of leadership do we need in order for that to happen? What kind of experience should that person have? What should be their personal qualities? What skills should that person have?”

After answering those questions, the Discernment Committee and vestry should prayerfully write a description of the person the Holy Conversations and survey have lead them to. Don’t just describe “Jesus on a good day” or someone who can be all things to all people at all times. Be as specific as possible regarding experience, personal qualities, and skills (especially skills!). This description will then be part of the next step, the Parish Profile, and the Canon to the Ordinary will use it to help you in your computer search. Your description will also be a helpful standard to use when evaluating candidates.

It is important that the results of the Holy Conversation and the survey be shared with the parish. For example, the results and plan of action could be presented in a newsletter article, at a parish meeting, special Sunday school class, or a Wednesday dinner. The tone should be celebratory and congratulatory. The congregation should be assured that the Discernment Committee and vestry will use the information to look for a rector who will help the parish move toward God’s Dream.

*When you finish this stage, you will have helped your sisters and brothers ask, “What is God’s dream for us?” Then you will have described the qualities of the person who can help lead you toward that dream. Good Job!*

*The next step will be to create a Parish Profile to let the world know about your parish and the kind of person you are looking for to lead it.*

## **16. WORKING TOWARD THE PARISH PROFILE**

### **YOUR CONGREGATION IS YOUR COMMUNITY**

The data you collect derives from people who are valuable participants in the community of your parish. The people who participate in focus groups or respond to questionnaires are a group of faithful individuals who intentionally participated in this effort. Your task is to synthesize this information to describe this community of believers, to enhance the faithfulness of your efforts to be responsive, through God's enduring grace, to the call of Jesus. Engaging this work is self-reflective. Looking into a mirror is not always pleasant but it is always revealing.

### **DON'T SPEND TOO MUCH TIME WORRYING ABOUT COMPARISON WITH OTHERS**

It is easy to get trapped in questions like "How does our congregation compare to others?" I do not encourage congregations to spend a lot of time focusing on comparative information related to other churches in the area. Oftentimes more is gained by downplaying the urge to know "how we are doing compared to others." Avoiding this temptation forces a congregation to focus on itself, on its unique resources and situation, strengths and weaknesses, on the unique gifts, needs and perceptions of its members, on its unique connectedness (or ways connection is minimized) to the world around it, and on its unique understanding of its call to ministry. What is critical is that you articulate the positive values and goals of your parish community.

A congregation is a unique group of people working together to heed God's call. In honor of that common calling and common task (not to mention effective decision-making) it will be helpful for the parish profile to be widely shared and discussed.

## **REFLECTING ON THE INFORMATION**

Use the questions below to help guide your reflection on the information. These questions may be of assistance to the committee in uncovering patterns within the information you've gathered.

1. What do you make of the data generally? Does it resonate with your perceptions of the congregation? It is a familiar picture? Identify those items that seem to be congruent with your observations and experience. How does the demographic profile of participants compare with your observations? Is there a group missing? Is one particular faction of the church over-represented, such as the leadership, the older members, long-time members, youth, or new members? Sometimes individuals speak to specific interests, rather than the general needs of parish life. Is there an area of parish life or ministry that is underrepresented in the information?
2. What information did you personally react to? What struck you as commonplace and obvious? Which results disturbed or surprised you, and why? Mark those places that seem to challenge your taken-for-granted reality. Why did these items surprise you, anger you, or cause you to be puzzled?
3. How do your results compare to previous congregational profiles or other surveys you have done of the congregation? Is there an earlier parish profile you might examine?
4. Examine the rank order of average responses in certain sections. Which questions (church tasks, organizational characteristics, etc.) were scored highest, which were ranked lowest? Did these highs and lows form a pattern? Were the rankings in different sections of the survey parallel to each other, was it expected?

5. Are there minority opinions around certain questions or are all respondents of like-mind? Are there patterns to the minority opinions? Is there a large group who did not answer a question or section or attend a focus group, and if so, what might that imply? From your experience are these minority opinions expressed openly in the congregation or are they kept hidden and were only expressed anonymously in the questionnaire?

6. One important approach to understanding is to compare information about one area with information gathered in another section. For example, how do the priorities of individual members of the congregation compare to the tasks of the priest, or the mission priorities of the parish?

Committee members should read through all printed summaries of information gathered from focus groups or questionnaire responses. Once committee members have read the information, become familiar with it, and recorded their own insights, find a time for the entire committee to discuss the findings.

## **WRITING THE PROFILE**

Remember who your audience is! The profile is a marketing document that is used to assist a potential candidate in knowing the congregation, its community, its gifts and ministries, and hopes for the future. One author can help to give the writing of the profile a consistent voice. Group members need to participate in the interpretation of the collected information, and address the content pieces of each area of the profile. The profile should not be printed, but placed on the parish web site in a prominent position with a special pointer. The profile should be well known by parish members as well as potential candidates. Each section of the Profile should address these questions (not necessarily explicitly): Where are we now? Where do we want to go?

An important principle is to ***tell the truth!*** Many times, parishes gloss over or fail to mention problems because they think that doing so will turn clergy off. The contrary is true. First, most veteran clergy have stories of being called to a parish only to learn after arriving of undisclosed problems or lingering issues. That is not a good way to begin a relationship based on trust! In addition, when reading a profile about a church that seems perfect, clergy will often be suspicious and can be expected to make comments like, “They don’t need me; they don’t even need Jesus!” Clergy know that parishes are not perfect places, and they will trust the process much more if the profile does not pretend otherwise.

#### SAMPLE PROFILE COMPONENTS

Greeting Letter from Bishop Taylor

How the parish came to be and its life until this moment (don’t make this too long — a common mistake!)

Diocesan Life (upon request, the Canon will email you this section)

The Community

Parish Staff

Parish Fellowship

Parish Ministry Groups

Parish Finances (very important, and tell the unvarnished truth!)

Ministry Areas

Service

Worship

Education

Evangelism

Pastoral Care

What is the motivating Vision of the Parish?

How the parish sustains relationship w/Priest in ministry

Your discernment of God’s dreams for the parish and the skills you’re looking for in a rector to help you realize those dreams.  
Names of members of the Discernment Committee and the Vestry, with short biographical sketches. Optional: pictures!

## **17. SUGGESTED ESSAY QUESTIONS WITH COMMENTARY**

By the Rev. Canon James H. Pritchett, Jr.

### **Introduction**

Below are suggested essay questions written by the Canon for Transitional Ministries. Feel free to work with your consultant to change wording as seems appropriate to your situation. My comments are in italics. ***Please do not inadvertently send my comments!***

The DC should not only pay attention to the candidates’ answers, but how they are delivered. The ability to write well is an important part of the job. Does the priest’s writing methodically convey information, or does it sparkle? Is grammar an issue? Does the priest seem friendly, or just methodical? Did the priest answer the question? Too long? Too short? Let the essay tell you not only about the subject addressed, but also the priest addressing it.

---

### **Essay Questions**

Please answer the following essay questions in no more than 500 words each. (Please do not feel obligated to use all 500 words if you can answer the question more briefly!) Email your answers to [Chair of DC with email address]. Thank you!

1. Please briefly describe the role you feel the rector should play in a parish like ours.

*This should get at whether the candidate is a more autocratic “father (or mother) knows best” priest (beware!) or appropriately shares decisions and ministry with the vestry, etc. I would also expect to see be a discussion of the rector’s role as leader, inspirer, and vision-maker. The tone of that discussion can also be illuminating: does it sound as if the candidate says, “I tell them the vision and their job is to follow, “ or “I inspire them to discover God’s purpose for the parish and together we move in that direction.” Have your antennae up: clergy have been taught to say the right things even if practicing them is not in their basic nature.*

*The answer might also be crafted to your size (family, pastoral, program, pastoral/program transitional, or resource). If you’re unfamiliar with these terms, your consultant or I can probably give you some resources.*

2. Please describe in as much detail as possible what the liturgy would be like if you were designing it for our parish. Include a description of who would be involved

in the design and implementation of the service.

*This should provide helpful information about the priest's worship style and inclusiveness of the laity in that style. Note whether the priest wants to work with a Worship Committee (which is advisory only: the canons say the priest alone is in charge of liturgy). Whether they do or not is not good or bad, just info. Note also whether the priest's answers indicate a sensitivity to current liturgical practice at your parish.*

3. Please describe what a vestry meeting would be like at our parish if you were the Rector? What do you see as the role of the Vestry? How do you handle it when Vestry members question or disagree with the rector?

*Watch out for "to be a rubber stamp" responses. Is there a spiritual component? Would dissent be seen as part of a constructive process, or will it be seen as evoking a defensive response?*

4. One of our most significant challenges as a parish is [name an honest issue in the parish that needs attention, resolution, or healing]. How would you approach this issue?

*You might get your issue from your survey or the results of your Holy Conversation. Don't soft-pedal this! Name your most important, hardest issue. You want to know how the priest would deal with that!*

5. What is your favorite part of being a priest? Why?

*This is an especially good place to listen for passion and excitement. The practice of priesthood has many hard and bad days, but if someone does not love what they are doing, you probably want them to endure it elsewhere!*

## **18. CANON'S LETTER TO THE CANDIDATES**

The Canon will email a pdf. version of this letter for the DC to send to candidates. This letter should be shared with the DC so the members can see what the Diocese expects of our clergy.



*The Episcopal Church in the  
Diocese of Western North Carolina*

THE REV. CANON JAMES H. PRITCHETT, JR.  
Canon to the Ordinary

Dear candidate for a clergy position in Western North Carolina,

Thank you for participating in the discernment process with one of our parishes. As you discern whether God is calling you to a parish in the Diocese of Western North Carolina, the purpose of this letter is to introduce you to our diocese and let you know what some of our joys and responsibilities are as presbyters here. It is my hope that by addressing these issues at this stage, should you be called to this diocese we will avoid misunderstanding later and you will look forward to working with Bishop Taylor and your fellow presbyters for the good of the kingdom.

**Collegiality:** The clergy in this diocese are a wonderfully collegial bunch. We promote that collegiality by encouraging clergy to be in support groups and assigning mentors to new clergy. We also hold a clergy conference in the fall, a clergy retreat in the spring, and Ember Day gatherings as they arise throughout the year. Attendance at the spring retreat and the Ember Day gatherings is strongly encouraged. Attendance at the clergy conference is mandatory. We have wonderful speakers, meaningful time together, and fun social gatherings. You will not regret joining us.

**Fresh Start:** Part of our effort to encourage collegiality, promote ties with the Diocese, and provide for continuing clergy education is reflected in our Fresh Start program. Many clergy are familiar with Fresh Start (a program administered by CREDO), but if you are not, suffice it to say that the program consists of both very good continuing education and ongoing group support. Fresh Start meetings are held roughly monthly from August until May. Meetings usually last from 9:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. and are typically held in the diocesan offices in Asheville. Clergy who are new to a position in the diocese are required to attend eight meetings a year for two years.

**Sound Financial Practices and Complete Transparency:** Bishop Taylor is committed to helping parishes exercise sound financial practices in the diocese. We require parishes to use the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*. While we do not expect all our clergy to be experts in accounting (I certainly am not!), we do expect that rectors will be responsible for seeing that the *Manual* is being followed. We also enforce the canonical requirement that every parish be audited every year. That audit includes every account, including the rector's discretionary fund. Discretionary accounts must be administered by the treasurer of the parish and not by the clergy.

With very rare exceptions (such as confidential legal matters and negotiations regarding the sale of land), all financial matters and other decisions of the vestry are to be public and completely transparent. Parish finances should be comprehensible to non-

accountants and available for everyone to see. Vestry minutes should be posted. There should be no secrets in the parish about money.

**Compliance with the Book of Common Prayer:** Bishop Taylor’s expectation is that, in accordance with priests’ ordination vows, rectors in this Diocese will strictly adhere to the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* unless they have received specific dispensation from the Bishop in advance. While the Bishop has been flexible in this regard, he does not expect to learn from parishioners or during a visitation that the rector is using an unauthorized liturgy or has deviated in any material way from the Prayer Book.

**Service to the Diocese:** In accordance with a presbyter’s obligation to “share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church,” (BCP 856) we expect every clergy person, after a period of getting to know their parish, to offer his or her services to the Diocese.

**Formation and Education:** The Diocese of Western North Carolina highly values Christian education and lifelong formation. We expect our clergy to encourage children’s education and formation where practical, and to always ensure that the parish offers some form of adult education and formation. It is important to remember that formation is a lifelong process for everyone. Clergy are required by canon to attend a continuing education event each year and to report this to the Bishop.

**Stewardship:** We anticipate that every parish will have a carefully organized stewardship committee, and that the rector will provide practical as well as theological support, drawing on the resources offered by the Stewardship Commission of the Diocese and The Episcopal Church.

**Diocesan and Episcopal Community and Identity:** We expect that clergy in the Diocese will take a leadership role in instilling in the parish a sense of community and identity with the Diocese and The Episcopal Church. This does not, of course, mean that clergy must pretend to always agree with every decision of the Diocese or the Church. It does mean that clergy will strive to instill in their parishes a sense of community and loyalty to both. In this regard, clergy should strongly support parish giving to the Diocese within the asking range of ten to sixteen percent.

Ours is a wonderful Diocese full of very talented clergy and lay people. Should we have the opportunity to welcome you into our ranks, it will be a day of rejoicing! If that day comes, we will look forward to sharing with you the joys and responsibilities of serving Christ in the Diocese of Western North Carolina.

May God bless you during this period of discernment.

God’s peace,

The Rev. Canon James H. Pritchett, Jr.

## **19. HOW TO READ A CDO PROFILE**

Your consultant or the Canon will provide you (by email) with a pdf. document entitled, “How to Read a CDO Profile,” or you can download it at [www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/CDO\\_How\\_to\\_Read\\_CDO\\_Profile.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/CDO_How_to_Read_CDO_Profile.pdf). Once you

become familiar with the format of the CDO profile, you will find that it contains a wealth of information about the clergy.

Note that in the line above “Personal Ministry Statement” on the top of the first page, “Status Year” is the year of ordination to the priesthood, and “File Date” is the date the profile was most recently updated.

## **20. GATHERING DATA FROM THE CLERGY**

When requesting information from clergy candidates in the Discernment Process, consider asking for church bulletins, newsletters, written material (books, articles, etc.), or any other evidence of past work that the candidate wishes to submit. Ask for what you need, but don’t make it too burdensome!

## **21. SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR A CANDIDATE**

The following is a series of questions that might be asked *by* a Search Committee *of* a prospective candidate. They are in no particular order and may be arranged or modified to suit the needs of your Parish. This list might be helpful to you if you decide to change the suggested essay questions, or during telephone, site, and home interviews. A word of caution: you should ask only a fraction of these questions!

### **PROFESSIONAL:**

- What are the major accomplishments of your congregation over the past three years?
- What are the main problems confronting your congregation right now? What are you and the members of the congregation doing about them?
- What are your goals as a Priest?
- Do you believe that your goals are attainable at our parish? How?
- What within the materials we have sent you, gives you a sense that your goals and our stated challenges match? Where do they *not* match?
- Tell us of anything special you feel you can bring to this Parish.
- How do you see your relationship to the Vestry?
- What is your view of the delegation of responsibility, especially in a parish this size?
- How would you describe your leadership, pastoral, and preaching styles?
- Describe your views about Christian Education—include all age levels.
- Give us a sense of your understanding of stewardship.
- What are your experiences with outreach programs?
- Describe how you design and lead the Liturgy.
- What would be your vision for Our Church?
- How do you see your relationship to the Diocese? The Bishop?
- What would you try to do at Our Church in the first six months?
- Describe a visitation program as you would see it at Our Church.
- Describe the style of worship in your congregation. What changes have you made and how have you made them?
- Describe the present Christian Education program in your Parish. Are you satisfied with it? Why or why not?
- Describe your leadership style.

- What is your current continuing education program?
- State your personal vocational goals.
- Tell me about the start-up of your ministry at Past Church, in particular, how did they welcome you? What was it like when you first arrived?
- What was it like during the years of your ministry there? [overview]
- What were some of the “critical” issues?
- Tell me about some of your most satisfying moments at Past Church.
- What were some of your frustrations over the years?
- What have you had to let go of in the past few months?
- What dreams do you have for Our Church?
- How would you describe...
  - the mission of the church?
  - the role of the local parish?
  - the ministry of the laity?
  - the role of youth?
  - the ministry of the clergy?
  - the role of the clergy spouse?
  - the importance of ecumenical cooperation?
  - the importance of cooperation with other Episcopal congregations?
  - the role of the Diocese as it relates to your congregation?
- Describe your journey of faith.
- Discuss your approach to preaching and liturgy.
- Describe the key elements of your theology.
- In our Parish Profile, we identify several challenges facing our Parish. Please address one of these issues and suggest how you would help us with it
- Describe a particularly difficult counseling problem and share how you handled it.
- Describe a situation where you brought a diverse group of people together to work successfully on a common cause.
- Describe a typical week in your present life (professional and personal).

**PERSONAL:**

- What do you consider your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness?
- Describe your call to the ministry.
- How do you balance your church and private life?
- How do you relax?
- Tell us of any critical events in your life and how they have changed you.
- Describe the most exciting thing that has happened in your ministry.
- Describe the most difficult challenge you ever faced and how you handled it.
- Describe your personal prayer discipline.
- What role does your spouse play in your ministry?
- What are your continuing education needs?
- What is your personal ministry statement? Please explain to someone who doesn't know you well.

**22. THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE INTERVIEWING:  
NATIONAL CANONS REGARDING NON-DISCRIMINATION**

**CANON I.17.5**

**Sec. 5.** No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons.

**III.9.3**

(3) Written notice of the election of a Rector, signed by the Wardens, shall be forwarded to the Ecclesiastical Authority. If the Ecclesiastical Authority is satisfied that the person so elected is a duly qualified Priest and that such Priest has accepted the office to which elected, the notice shall be sent to the Secretary of the Convention, who shall record it. Race, color, ethnic origin, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these Canons, shall not be a factor in the determination of the Ecclesiastical Authority as to whether such person is a duly qualified Priest. The recorded notice shall be sufficient evidence of the relationship between the Priest and the Parish.

**23. THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE INTERVIEWING:  
FORBIDDEN QUESTIONS**

There is some dispute in legal circles as to how much secular law relating to employment discrimination relates to Church practice (which is exempted in some areas by the First Amendment). In the Diocese of Western North Carolina, our practice is that questions that are prohibited by secular law are prohibited in the Diocese unless they relate to a bona fide occupational qualification for the job of priest or rector. Below is a list prepared for secular employers but adapted to the Church. Remember: just because you can ask a question does not mean that you should!

Subject	You Cannot Ask	You Can Ask
Age		You will probably know from the CDO profile. Otherwise, you can ask since length of tenure has important pastoral and financial implications. Do not assume that older = “out of gas.”
Birthplace	X	If hired, provide employment eligibility verification (I-9 Form)
Residence	Do you rent or own?	Will know address from CDO Profile
Race/Color	X	There are no acceptable questions.
Sex (gender)	X	There are no acceptable questions. You may <i>not</i> ask a priest whether s/he intends to have a family, etc.

Sexual Orientation		The Canon makes it clear to candidates that they must inform the DC if they are going to be “out” in the parish. Otherwise, don’t ask.
Photographs	X	After hire, ID
Education		You will know from the CDO profile
Citizenship	X	Are you eligible to work in the United States?
National Origin/Ancestry	X	Fluency in language, only if a BFOQ ( <i>i.e.</i> , you may ask whether the applicant speaks Spanish if that is relevant)
Height/Weight	X	
Arrests/Convictions	X	We will run a criminal background check. Will we find anything we should know about? (We will run a criminal background check, but usually only on the finalist.)
Marital/Family Status		You will know from the CDO Profile.
Military Record	X	
Drugs/Alcohol	Past problems/Rehab.	Do you drink alcohol? Are you currently using illegal drugs? (That question, however, is probably a waste of good air!)

## **24. TELEPHONE (OR TELECONFERENCE) INTERVIEWS**

You have now completed a paper screening process and have identified a group of top candidates. It is time to telephone (or teleconference) them and ask each one the same questions (to compare apples to apples), but you might also ask a few questions tailored to the candidate based on information or concerns you have. (For example, if the Canon says, “This candidate is fine, but you might want to explore with her how she delegates.”)

There should be a “Master of Ceremonies” who introduces him/herself, welcomes the candidate to the conversation and asks each person to introduce themselves (in order around the table). The MC should tell the candidate how long the whole call will take (about 45 minutes), how much time the DC anticipates each answer will take (“We’re looking for answers that are in the five minute range”), and tell the candidate that time has been reserved for his or her questions. Each person who speaks to ask or answer a question should identify themselves first. (The MC should remind them to do this.) Because it is very difficult to speak to an audience that you can neither see nor hear, the MC (and the rest of the committee) should be careful to give the candidate verbal cues (“Right,” “Uh-huh,” “Yeah.”)

To teleconference, you will need a service like [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). (It is free!) Both you and the candidate will need to download software and have webcams. If some but not all of the candidates can pull this off, it is preferable not to do it at all so that everyone is on a level playing field. The advantages of seeing the person, however, make

teleconferencing an attractive alternative, and you can ask someone in the congregation to help set this up (as long as they are not present during the conference and do not learn the names of the candidates). Webcams are not expensive, and it might be worth it to buy a couple and send them to candidates who don't have them (with a self addressed return package!). If you have access to a digital projector, it is very effective to project the candidate's image. Practice this before you do it! It will require more set-up than a conference call, but you will gain a great deal by getting to see the candidate. If you don't have a "techie" on the DC, you might locate one in the parish to assist with set up (but, of course, they can't be present for the interview.)

The interview should last only 45 minutes and include time for the candidate to ask you questions, so please be specific in your questions and plan to ask 5-7. You should practice by role-playing before making the first call.

Well prepared candidates usually ask questions. If you cannot answer the candidate's questions, don't fake it! Tell him or her that you will find out and get back to them (and be sure to do it).

After you have made cuts based on the phone interviews, **send notice to everyone and inform the Canon!**

**25. CANDIDATE REVIEW FORM FOR TELEPHONE INTERVIEW**

Attributes exemplified in the telephone interview

Rate them 1-5; 5 is the highest and 1 shows none of the quality. 0 is unacceptable or not applicable.

Sense of humor	Flexibility	Passion about Outreach	Liturgical skills
Patience	Compassion	Sense of Self Esteem	
Fill in the boxes with your needs	Honesty	Trust	Presentable

**26. QUESTIONS FOR REFERENCES**

The DC will need to check the references of all candidates under consideration. In addition, the information about schools and employment need to be confirmed. Choose the questions that match your concerns or design others. They are general in nature, in no particular order, and may be arranged or modified to suit your needs. These questions might be asked during a telephone interview or by letter.

1. How would you describe the candidate's preaching style? Can you give an example of a sermon that you have heard?
2. Tell me about the candidate's teaching skills? Can you give me an example of a great teaching experience?....
3. How does the candidate handle conflict?
4. Is the candidate well-grounded theologically?
5. Share an example of a pastoral situation you witnessed between the candidate and a Parishioner.
6. Large church: Do you think the candidate can handle a Parish of \_\_\_\_\_ members and a staff of \_\_\_\_? Why?
7. Small church: Tell me an example of how the candidate worked well with small groups and individuals?
8. Is the candidate a capable administrator; can s/he delegate administrative and/or pastoral tasks?
9. What is your perception of the spiritual depth of the candidate?
10. Is the candidate Biblically oriented?
11. Share some examples of how well the candidate communicates with people.
12. What do you think is this candidate's biggest challenge? How does he/she need to grow?
13. If you were on a search committee, would you recommend the candidate to become your Rector?
14. Is there anything you would like to add about the candidate?
15. Describe your church congregation and ask if the candidate has the skills to handle your specific Parish.

## **27. SITE VISITS**

As information is returned, the DC meets to evaluate, prioritize and further narrow the field. Decide how many of these remaining candidates you wish to visit on their "home territory." *The Consultant will help you with special training before these visits begin.* It is suggested that teams of no more than three be formed; make prior arrangements with each candidate. Be clear about the role of the clergy spouse and take care not to disrupt the ongoing ministry in the candidate's parish. Again, assign roles to team members.

Often the "Away Team" will go out to dinner or Sunday brunch with the clergy (and spouse). You may ask to interview with the wardens, usually on Saturday. Do not interview anyone without the candidate's permission, but be wary when it is lacking.

It is a matter of etiquette that, unless the candidate tells you that his/her parish knows you are coming, you do all you can to be "stealthy." Do not arrive or sit together (except, perhaps as a couple, but not as a trio). Sit in different parts of the nave (which also gives

you different vantage points). If you are asked why you are there, say, “I’m on Business,” or “I’m visiting a friend.” If asked what business you are in, tell them. Go to all services and adult Sunday school. Ignore one another!

Observe how the congregation interacts with the candidate. Note how the liturgy was put together. Did the music relate to the readings or (at least) the season? (Caution! If the candidate is an assistant or associate, be aware that he/she did not plan the liturgy. Extra questions about how the liturgy would look if she/he planned it are in order.) Trust your instincts: does this seem to be a place where the priest is doing a good job (remaining open to the possibility that doing a good job might be getting him/her in trouble!), or does this seem to be a place where the priest has been co-opted, is unnecessarily conflicted, or is just “skating.” Pay attention to the environment in which the priest works, and remember that parishes are very different, so don’t assume that the one you are visiting is like the one back home. Sometimes parishes really are full of alligators; sometimes the clergy see alligators that aren’t there; and sometimes the clergyperson is the alligator!

When all teams have returned, the DC will meet to compare information gathered by the teams and narrow the list to 3-5. Send letters to everyone and inform the Canon! Again, these names are submitted to the Bishop for final approval. Now is the time to let the Canon know what background checks should be ordered. (If you plan to ask any or all of these five for an additional name of someone to speak with, you must let the candidate know you will be doing this.)

When returned, you are ready to begin final interviewing! Move quickly from here on in or you will lose candidates!

## **28. HOME INTERVIEWS**

Your consultant will work with you to prepare for “Home” interviews. Here are some suggestions that will facilitate final interviews with candidates before making a recommendation to the Vestry.

- Maintain confidentiality; do not meet at the church and give a tour of the church when no one is likely to be around. Do not introduce the candidate to spouses or vestry members
- Practice the interview. As was the case for the phone interviews, there should be an MC who starts the ball rolling, gives time parameters, and calls on members.
- Leave time for the candidate to ask questions. Respect candidates who ask hard or “nosy” questions!
- Show hospitality: take the candidate (& spouse) to dinner, etc. Do not plan an exhausting day for them.
- If appropriate, give real estate information and, perhaps, a tour of some neighborhoods.
- Remember that this is *mutual* discernment. The candidate is determining whether God is calling them to your parish as you are determining whether to extend the call.

- Be sure to coordinate your candidates' visits with the Bishop's assistant (Jessica Guzman) (828) 225-6656 so the Bishop can schedule an interview with your candidates. **It is imperative that you find out when the Bishop is available before you make travel plans!**
- All DC members should *thoroughly* digest all information about each candidate. This will help you avoid unnecessary questions. Design new questions if there are gaps in your information about the candidate.
- Remember that you have followed a long and complicated process to find the best candidate to recommend. Your task, at this point, is to "double-check" your work and to look only for something you might have missed.
- Schedule one candidate at a time. Allow your candidate to choose a convenient time for the interview process. Remember, most clergy are busy on Sundays. Include an overnight event. Take the candidate to lunch; allow the candidate private time for touring the area, with or without a guide.
- Provide dinner or allow candidates to eat on own; a wine and cheese party might be hosted before or after dinner. (*Discernment Committee members only; no spouses. Even at this late date, it is important to preserve confidentiality.*) When you meet during a meal, make it a social event. It's hard to talk about your career when your mouth is full!
- If the candidate plans to bring the family, a non-church family member should be the babysitter (we don't want a parishioner to be the babysitter please)
- Provide motel accommodations at the parish's expense. This permits greater privacy and rest for the candidate; they may make their own arrangements for breakfast. Determine in advance how the room is to be paid for or how the candidate will be reimbursed.
- Schedule a morning interview with the full DC in comfortable surroundings (not at the church!). It is permissible for the candidate's spouse to be present for the interview session if they wish. Just remember that you are interviewing the candidate *and not* the spouse.
- You should have discussed financial issues (with information given by the Vestry) long before this, but this would be a good time to confirm that there are no financial obstacles.
- Conclude with lunch, or allow the candidate to be on his/her way in case they must be home for other duties. Provide transportation or travel expenses as needed.
- If the candidate lives nearby, you may want to schedule a day meeting, with or without a meal. Apply the above suggestions accordingly.

## **29. AREAS OF FOCUS IN INTERVIEWING**

<b>NATURAL ENDOWMENTS</b>	<b>PREPERATION, TRAINING, &amp; EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>MOTIVATION &amp; ATTITUDES</b>
Personality traits such as openness, trust, friendliness	Formal Education: degrees, etc.	Enthusiasm for life in general
Is this person likable, warm, caring? Non-judgmental	Personal study habits	Sense of humor
Flexible	Non-credit courses (areas)	Freedom from anxiety

Physical gifts such as: neat, non-distracting appearance; clarity of speech	Motivated interest in learning	Enthusiasm about current ministry
Mental gifts such as quickness, alertness, native intelligence	Varieties of work experiences: work w/ & w/o supervision	Evidence of positive underlying assumptions, e.g., joyfulness, hopefulness
Health and energy level	Areas of accomplishment	Need to be needed? (Beware!)
Do they take care of self?	Demonstrated capacity for handling failure	Are they needy?

Is this person likable, warm, caring? Non-judgmental? anxiety Flexible?	Non-formal Education: •personal study habits •non-credit courses (areas)  •motivated interest in learning	Sense of humor  Freedom from  Enthusiasm about current ministry
Physical gifts such as: appearance; clarity of speech	Experience in working under supervision; ...without supervision. Varieties of work experience....	Evidence of positive underlying assumptions: e.g. optimism and hopefulness.
Mental gifts such as quickness, alertness, native intelligence	Areas of accomplishment	
Health, including: medical history; health maintenance habits; energy level	Demonstrated capacity for handling failure	Recreation

### Natural Endowments

- As a priest, what is appealing to you about parish life and the parish ministry?
- Why are you interested in *this* Parish?
- What kind of people do you enjoy being with?
- How do you react to people who disagree with you?
- Who are some people you trust and why?

### Preparation, Training & Experience

- What do you do within your current diocese?
- What are your goals as a priest?
- Discuss how you see your ministry or goals fulfilling the pastoral specialties ranked highest in our Parish survey.
- What are your plans and expectations for professional development?
- What are your views on parish organization and administration?
- Tell us about your experience with church school or educational programs.
- How do you see your relation to the Vestry and financial matters?

- What has been your experience in the development of lay leadership?
- How do you handle the different rites and forms of worship in the BCP?

**Motivation & Attitudes**

- What is the most exciting thing that has happened in your life? your ministry?
- Would you share one of your most embarrassing moments?
- What is the most exciting thing going on in your Parish right now?
- Discuss your concept of stewardship. What about tithing?
- What does the “good news” of Jesus Christ mean to you?
- What is the role of prayer in your life?
- How do you take care of yourself; how do you relax?

**30. CANDIDATE SAMPLE REVIEW FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Scoring:</b>	<b>0 = Unacceptable</b>	<b>3 = Average</b>
	<b>1 = No Opinion</b>	<b>4 = Above Average</b>
	<b>2 = Less than Average</b>	<b>5 = Excellent</b>

•This candidate has the specialties our Church needs. Score \_\_\_\_\_  
 Comments:

•This candidate demonstrates the appropriate education, experience and training necessary for our Church. Score \_\_\_\_\_  
 Comments:

•This candidate will be able to lead our Church toward the achievement of its goals. Score \_\_\_\_\_  
 Comments:

•Considering all information in the file, how good a “fit” is this candidate? Score \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

**Total Score** \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

### **31. TEAM STRUCTURE FOR INTERVIEWING CLERGY CANDIDATES**

We suggest that the DC form teams of three to play special roles at each candidate's interview. Each member of the team should be responsible for a specific area of information, but should also keep notes during the whole interview. After the interview, the team can then gather to compare notes on all three areas.

Person #1: Be responsible for gathering information specifically about the interviewee's *natural endowments*. Observe the person very carefully. Watch for responses and reactions that reveal what kind of person s/he is. Note your observations as well as the information you hear.

Person #2: Focus on *preparation and training for the job and work experience*. Seek anecdotal material. Invite the interviewee to select achievements that have been meaningful to her/him and then ask for more and more details.

Person #3: Keep tuned in at all times on interviewee's *motivation and attitude*. No matter what s/he is telling you about, keep asking yourself what s/he is communicating to you about his/her life view, self-image, and level of commitment to ministry. Try especially to understand his/her view of the future. For example, does s/he communicate hope? Look for congruence in non-verbal behavior.

### **32. [RESERVED]**

### **33. QUESTIONS THE DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE AND VESTRY CAN EXPECT TO BE ASKED BY CANDIDATES**

The following is a series of questions that might be asked *of* a DC or a Vestry *by* a prospective candidate during an interview session.

1. What are the strengths of your Parish? How do you promote them?
2. What are the weaknesses of your Parish? How do you expect your new Rector to address them?
3. Describe your staff: strengths, weaknesses; how do they work together?

4. Tell me about your Christian Education programs: children, adults, curriculum, attendance, recruitment and training.
5. What kind of emphasis is put on outreach? How are you involved in your community and beyond?
6. Describe your annual stewardship program; what part has the Rector played?
7. Tell me about your EYC and other programs for young people.
8. What needs the Rector's immediate attention? What about the first six months?
9. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the previous Rector? Why have your previous rectors left?
10. What is the Parish policy on the use of alcohol?
11. Describe your (city, town, community); include the good and the bad!
12. How does your Parish have fun together?
13. Tell me about your Parish music program.
14. What are the expectations of the Rector's spouse? How was the previous spouse involved in the programs of the church?
15. Are there any skeletons or hidden agendas that I need to know about?
16. What is the relationship of your Parish to the Diocese? What is the record of financial support?
17. What are your long-range plans and goals? Does your Parish have a strategic plan?
18. What would be an example of an important program or activity that fulfills your Parish's unique mission?
19. Is the staff aware that eventually the new Rector may want to build a new team?
20. How does your Parish care pastorally for the clergy and their families?
21. Give me an example of a major issue in the life of your Parish; how did you and your Rector handle it?

### **34. DC SELECTING THE FINAL CANDIDATE**

So the DC has interviewed all of the finalists. They have visited the parish and met with the Bishop. The Diocese has screened several times and all of the candidates are cleared for the final round. Here are some suggestions to help make the right choice!

- Schedule a meeting when all members of the Discernment Committee can be present. It is essential that no one be left out!
- It might be a good idea to meet somewhere away from the Church so you will have privacy. If you must meet at the Church, make sure that there are no other events scheduled, or at least find a room where you will have privacy.
- Make sure that everyone has all the documentation for each candidate.
- Allow plenty of time because this could be a long session! Make arrangements for food and refreshment.
- Begin with prayer! There are several Services in the Prayer Book that you can use: Morning or Evening Prayer, A Noonday Office, or Compline. You might even want to ask your Interim Rector to celebrate the Holy Eucharist at the beginning of your meeting. Be sure that s/he does not stay for the meeting.
- Some Discernment Committees begin with what we call a “straw vote”, just to see if there is a single top candidate.
- Allow everyone to share their favorite candidate (and why), and their thoughts and feelings about all the other candidates.
- Review the three elements of a consensus decision:
  - I can support the decision, even if it is not my first choice
  - I will help implement the decision by supporting the new Rector
  - I will never criticize the decision
- In many cases, a clear favorite will emerge. If so, make sure all members can support (or live with) this candidate even if they harbor some doubts.\*
- If a clear favorite does not emerge, move toward consensus by rating the candidates based on the information you have accumulated.
- If you reach an impasse, offer some prayers and then take a break to clear the air. If you cannot resolve the impasse, suspend the meeting or reschedule another one.
- When you have made your decision, be sure to offer an appropriate thanksgiving for the work of the Holy Spirit!

\* One Search Committee met around the Altar. Each member lighted a candle and placed the name of his/her favorite candidate under the candle on a piece of paper. The prayer for a new Rector was then read together (BCP p. 816). Each member then placed the paper on a pile in the center of the Altar. When all the names had been read from all the papers, there was only one name!!

### **35. PRESENTATION OF THE NAME OF THE FINAL CANDIDATE TO THE VESTRY**

Here are some suggestions about how the DC can present the final candidate to the Vestry.

- Notify the candidate and make sure s/he is ready to go forward with this final step. Ask the candidate, “If you are offered the call, would you accept it?” Do not notify any other candidates at this time!
- Schedule a joint meeting for the full DC and the Vestry
- Since this is an important event in the life of your Parish, and since a significant amount of time may be needed, it is best that the presentation of the final candidate be the only item on the agenda. If that is not possible, request that the DC be the first item of business at a regular Vestry Meeting
- Prepare a packet of information about the candidate for each member of the Vestry. You might want to include a front-page reminder that this is still confidential information! The DC might want to create a PowerPoint presentation.
- The DC Chair should introduce the presentation with a quick review of the search process
- In many cases, the team that first visited the candidate is asked to make the presentation since they probably know him/her best
- Be sure to point out the profile match along with all the other reason why this is the best candidate
- Allow other members of the DC to share their thinking and feelings about this candidate
- Allow plenty of time for questions from the Vestry
- Retain all information about the other candidates until a final decision is made and the new Rector has been announced

The Consultant will train the Vestry for their interview with the finalist.

### **36. GUIDELINES FOR THE VESTRY DURING THE FINAL PHASE OF THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS**

- Schedule a joint meeting with the DC for the presentation of the recommended candidate. The Vestry may ask questions and have discussion with the DC, but then deliberates alone.
- Vestry decides whether or not to accept the DC’s recommendation. If the Vestry does, they will (usually) invite the candidate for a final interview. Normally, the Bishop will have already met with the candidate. If that has not happened, this interview must be held at a time the Bishop can also interview the finalist.
- The Senior Warden issues the invitation to the Candidate, schedules the final interview, notifies the Bishop, and schedules a training session with the Consultant for the Vestry.
- The Vestry interviews the candidate and decides whether or not to issue a call. The Vestry is to assume that the Discernment Committee has done its job well and faithfully,

and that the candidate comes with a strong presumption that he or she is well suited for the position. The Vestry's standard is one of "due diligence."

- If the Vestry decides in favor of the finalist, the Senior Warden notifies the Bishop (or the Canon) by phone, then in writing (an email to the Canon will suffice). When the Bishop's approval has been received (which the Canon is authorized to convey), a letter of call can be issued. Once the Bishop has given his approval for the call, the Senior Warden may telephone the candidate to issue the call.
- The Letter of Call is issued and the Letter of Agreement is finalized. (The Canon will email the Senior Warden and Rector-elect a form Letter of Agreement.) When the Candidate replies in writing the Senior Warden and the Candidate schedule a mutual time for announcement in both Parishes. *Although it is very tempting to discuss the call, it must remain confidential (even, especially, to spouses) until the announcement is made.*
- The DC Chair is notified of the Vestry's decision and informs the other candidates that the decision has been made. The DC chair should call the other top 2-3 candidates to thank them for their participation and a letter should follow the telephone call.
- The Senior Warden schedules the first Sunday. The Bishop is consulted for the setting of the Celebration of New Ministry.

### **37. THE VESTRY'S INTERVIEW WITH THE FINAL CANDIDATE**

Here are some suggestions for the Vestry which will facilitate the final interview with the candidate recommended by the DC.

- Be sure to coordinate your candidate's visit with the Bishop so the Bishop can schedule an interview during the time your candidate is in town if this has not already occurred. If the interview is needed (it will probably have happened when the DC conducted interviews), determine the Bishop's availability before making plans with the candidate!
- All Vestry members should *thoroughly* digest all information about the candidate recommended by the Search Committee. This will help you avoid unnecessary questions or design new questions if there are gaps in your information about the candidate.
- Remember that the Discernment Committee has followed a long and complicated process to find the best candidate to recommend. Your task is to verify their work.
- Allow your candidate to choose a convenient time for the interview process. Remember, most clergy are busy on Sundays. Include an overnight event. Take the candidate to lunch, and allow time for touring the area, with or without a guide.
- Provide dinner or allow the candidate to eat on his/her own; a wine and cheese party might be hosted before or after dinner. (*Vestry members only; no spouses! Even at this late date, it is important to preserve confidentiality.*) Whenever you meet with a candidate during a meal, make it a social event. It's hard to talk about your career when your mouth is full!

- The parish should provide motel accommodations, which will permit greater privacy and rest for the Candidate; they may make their own arrangements for breakfast.
- Schedule a morning interview with the full Vestry in comfortable surroundings. (Your consultant will provide additional guidance and ideas for conducting this meeting.) If the candidate's spouse is present, allow her/him the freedom to choose their own level of participation. It is permissible for a spouse to be present for the interview session if they wish. Just remember that you are interviewing the candidate and not the spouse!
- The Senior Warden should confirm with the candidate that he or she is willing to accept compensation within the parish's range. If the Vestry intends to offer less than the top of the range, the Senior Warden should discuss that with the candidate.
- Conclude with lunch, or allow the candidate to be on his/her way in case they must be home for other duties. Provide transportation or travel expenses as needed.
- If the Candidate lives nearby, you may want to just schedule a day meeting, with or without a meal. Apply the above suggestions accordingly.

### **38. CARING FOR CLERGY: SOME FEATURES OF THE LETTER OF AGREEMENT**

The Senior Warden should request a copy of the form Letter of Agreement from the Canon. The Canon will help distinguish between terms that may be negotiated and those that (usually for canonical or policy purposes) must remain as is. The Senior Warden should send the Letter of Agreement to the final candidate as soon as possible. The worst thing that can happen is surprise!

It is important for the Parish to consider what support it will offer the Rector and his or her family in order for that family to maintain its own physical, emotional and spiritual health. Some of this comes in the form of clear statements;

- Four weeks of annual vacation time
- Regular time off each week
- The possibility for compensatory time when time off is excessively interrupted or lost due to Parish emergencies
- Medical insurance for the clergy and his/her family (as needed). This coverage must be from the Church Medical Trust or an equivalent policy from another provider.
- At least 2 weeks continuing education time/year
- \$1,000 MINIMUM for continuing education.
- 10 weeks of paid sabbatical time after 5 years (for which the parish needs to be saving funds)

The Parish should make it clear that it assumes and expects that the Rector and spouse will take full advantage of these offerings and that the Parish stands ready to respond and support the Rector and family in the event of special personal needs or crises.

## **39. DETERMINING CLERGY COMPENSATION**

Before determining how much it will offer to pay a Rector, the parish must be able to “count the cost” and determine what it can afford (and, in some cases, whether it can afford a full time Rector). The Canon and/or Consultant will help. The Canon will, upon request, supply the Senior Warden with several important numbers that change annually, minimum compensation and health insurance costs.

**Minimum Compensation:** Each year, the Annual Convention of the Diocese of Western North Carolina adopts a minimum compensation package for full and part time clergy. Upon request, the Canon will provide the latest figures to the Senior Warden. The canons of the Diocese state that a parish may not pay less than these minimums without permission from the Bishop and Standing Committee. Parishes should remember that these are *minimums*, and are not as likely to attract qualified candidates.

**Health Insurance Costs:** This number changes annually. The Canon or Dianne Adams can supply you with these costs. (And, yes, we know it is expensive and we too hope for relief!) *The parish must be prepared to offer full family coverage!*

**Worksheets:** The Canon, upon request, will provide the Senior Warden with worksheets for calculating the cost to the parish of having a rector. One worksheet is for parishes with rectories, the other is for those without.

## **40. CLOSURE: TIPS FOR MAKING A SMOOTH TRANSITION**

Your Parish has just called a new Rector! This is an exciting time in the life of your church family. Here are some ideas that may help you get started.

### **For the Discernment Committee:**

- Make sure that you have notified all the other candidates that the Parish has a new rector. The Chair should make a personal phone call to each of the finalists. Simply tell them that they were not a perfect match and be sure to thank them for their participation. Do not tell them how excited you are about your new Rector-elect!
- Once the paperwork has been signed and the new Rector’s arrival date has been announced, be sure to destroy all data about the other candidates. Save only materials that had to do with the “process.” For example you will want to save for future use the Parish Survey and its results as well as materials generated by the Holy Conversation.
- Have a party! Celebrate your time together and be sure to share the exciting moments of your discernment process.
- Some
- Celebrate if you may be asked to serve on a “transition committee” (below) to help the new Rector get started. After all, no one knows her/him better than you do. the transition at the Altar with the decommissioning of the DC.

### **For the Vestry:**

- Contact the Bishop to schedule a “Celebration of New Ministry.”

- Celebrate the ministry of your Interim Rector. Have a Party! Share the exciting moments of this transition period in the life of your church family.
- In some parishes, the Vestry hosts a party for the DC as a statement of gratitude. They have worked hard and well!
- Consider appointing a “Transition Committee” for the purpose of helping the new Rector get settled and off to a good start. The members can be drawn from the DC and/or from the Parish at large.

## **41. LITURGY FOR THE DECOMMISSIONING OF A DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

*The suggested position for this Liturgy is during/after the Prayers of the People, but before the Peace, in the Eucharist.*

*At the appropriate point, the Senior Warden speaks to the congregation as follows:*

Dear friends in Christ, during the past (insert period of time), we have sought the will of God in the selection of a new Rector. During this process, the Discernment Committee has played a vital role. It is now our joy to be able to celebrate the arrival of that new Rector. In order that we might give thanks today for the work done by our Discernment Committee, I invite all its members to come before us at this time.

*The members of the Discernment Committee come to the center, or crossing, of the church, bringing with them papers symbolizing their work. The Senior Warden then says:*

Members of the Discernment Committee, on behalf of the Vestry and Congregation of (name) Church, I thank you for your work and for the efforts which have now reached this joyful conclusion. Are you now ready to lay aside this responsibility you have so faithfully exercised for this church?

*The members of the committee respond:*

We have been glad to serve the church in this way.

We share your joy at this outcome.

We now offer our work to God.

We pray, with you, for the new chapter which has begun in the life of this congregation.

*The members of the committee then lay their papers on the Altar. Remaining standing there, the Senior Warden, or the new Rector if present, offers this prayer:*

Eternal God, we thank you that you call us to serve you in the building up of your church. We give thanks for those through whose devoted service our new Rector has been found. We now pray for our whole community a spirit of joyful anticipation as we look forward to the years ahead. We ask this in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

*The Peace is exchanged.*

Notes:

The papers laid on the Altar by the committee may be a copy of the new Rector's resume and/or a copy of the committee's final report to the Vestry.

If appropriate, or desired, a member of the committee may wish to make suitable remarks recognizing members of the committee. It is also fitting to express gratitude and appreciation to the chair of the committee.

## **42. SAMPLE EXIT INTERVIEW: SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR**

FOR:

DATE:

EXPLANATION: This "Exit Interview" is often done by the Consultant or the Canon for Transition Ministries after a Parish search process for at least three reasons: first, it gives the person who has recently chaired the Discernment Committee an opportunity to share information about the process within an objective structure; second, it gives the Diocese and Consultant some valuable feedback that can be used to improve the process; third, it often gives the Vestry some good ideas about how to begin ministry with their new Rector. With permission, information from this interview *may be included* in a report to the Vestry and the Bishop. *This interview is not intended for general distribution to the Parish!*

(The following general questions may be used during this interview; they may also be modified according to each situation.)

Tell me about the selection of the search committee at \_\_\_\_\_ Church, in particular, did you think it was inclusive and representative of the Parish?

Were you satisfied with the results of the Parish Profile? How would you improve it next time?

Did you find the Holy Conversation helpful? How would you improve it?

Evaluate the search process in general: what worked well and what didn't?

Please share an exciting, unforgettable moment during the search process.

What was the biggest frustration you experienced?

Now that it's over, what will you have to let go of in the next few months?

As a result of this process, what dreams do you have for \_\_\_\_\_ Church? What could they become?

What advice would you give to another parish just starting the process?

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

**43. CONSULTANT EVALUATION FORM FOR DC CHAIR TO FILL OUT**

FOR:  
DATE:  
PARISH:  
SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON:

The Consultant was:

1	3	5	7	9
the wrong choice!		helpful		did exactly what we ask him/her to do!!

- How was your Consultant *most* helpful during this Search Process? (Please be specific.)
- How could your Consultant have been *more* helpful? (Again, please be specific.)
- Any other comments you would like to make?

After completing this form, please send it to the Canon

**44. RESOURCES FOR THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE**

**1. WRITING A COLLECT FOR THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS**

*Below is a suggested handout and group activity for the Discernment Committee. The Spiritual Guide, Consultant, or other person should lead a discussion that results in a Collect for the Discernment Process. The DC should request that the Collect be printed in every bulletin until a new rector is called.*



Just as there are many different types of poetry, there are a great many literary forms of prayer. One of these is the Collect. A Collect is a prayer in which the words are arranged in a specific pattern. It is called a “collect” (pronounced “col’ lect, with the emphasis on the first syllable) because it collects our prayers into one. Most Collects are short, only a single sentence. Not every short prayer is a Collect, however, for the main thing that makes a prayer a Collect is its pattern.

The Collect has a five-part pattern. The *Salutation* calls upon God. An *Ascription* follows, mentioning some particular quality or gift of God. Next comes the *Petition*, then our *Response*, and finally the *Doxology*, or song of praise.

Here is an example of Collect form, using the contemporary Collect for Proper 28:

SALUTATION: *Blessed Lord,*

ASCRPTION: *who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:*

PETITION: *Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them,*

RESPONSE: *that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;*

DOXOLOGY: *who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. AMEN.*

## **CRITICAL QUESTIONS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE COLLECT FOR THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS**

ADDRESS: How will you address God in this context?

ASCRPTION: What gift has God given this parish that is of importance here? What guidance has God given in the past? For what part of the nature of God are you grateful?

PETITION: What are you asking?

RESPONSE: What are your hopes from this asking? How will you respond?

DOXOLOGY: How do you praise God in this prayer?

## **2. RESOURCES FOR THE SPIRITUAL GUIDE TO DOWNLOAD**

The Spiritual Guide should download the following documents, or, if they do not have that capability, ask the chair, consultant, or Canon to do so for them.

- a. Verna Dozier, a wonderful Episcopal laywoman (now deceased), wrote a helpful guide called *Prayer in the Calling Process*, available at [www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Prayer\\_in\\_Calling\\_Process.pdf](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Prayer_in_Calling_Process.pdf).
- b. Another wonderful resource for the Spiritual Guide can be found at [www.churchpublishing.org/media/9543/CC1\\_SpiritualGuide.pdf](http://www.churchpublishing.org/media/9543/CC1_SpiritualGuide.pdf). It is from *Calling Clergy: A Spiritual and Practical Guide Through the Search Process* by Elizabeth Rankin Geitz. Church Publishing has given permission to download the document.

## **3. A SUGGESTED BIBLE STUDY FOR DISCERNMENT COMMITTEES**

(Adapted from “An African Model for Bible Study”)

**READ:** One person reads the passage slowly aloud.

**REFLECT:** Each person reflects in silence for 1 minute on Question #1: “What word, image or phrase captures your attention?”

**SHARE:** Each person shares the word, image or phrase with the group – without explanation or elaboration - going around the circle.

**READ:** Another person (preferably opposite gender) reads the passage aloud.

**REFLECT:** Each person reflects in silence for 1 -2 minutes on Question #2: “Where does this passage touch my own life experience at this time?”

**SHARE:** Each person shares as before - going around the circle.

**READ:** A third person (preferably opposite gender) reads the passage aloud.  
**REFLECT:** Each person reflects in silence for 2-3 minutes on Question #3: “What implications does this reading have for this Search Committee?”  
**SHARE:** This time members of the group may share if or when they feel moved.  
Open discussion.

ISAIAH 42:5-12

Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to  
the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it:  
I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand  
and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the  
nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring prisoners from the  
dungeon, from prison those who sit in darkness.  
I am the Lord, that is my name. My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to  
idols.  
See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before  
they spring forth, I tell you of them.  
Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth! Let the sea  
roar and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.  
Let the desert and its towns lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits;  
let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy, let them shout from the tops of  
mountains.  
Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare his praise in the coastlands

## **45. SAMPLE LETTERS**

### **45A. SAMPLE FIRST LETTER TO CANDIDATES**

The alternative opening paragraphs represent the varying sources of names.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

*[For CDO generated names:]*

Our Parish is seeking a new Rector. The Church Deployment Office provided us with your name as a possible candidate. If you would like to be considered for this position, please read our Parish Profile at [www.\[address\]](http://www.[address]). We have also enclosed a hardcopy of the Position Description available on the CDO Positions Open Bulletin. If after reviewing these materials you believe that God might be calling you to our parish, please let us know by [DATE] and we will inform you of the next steps.

*[For names provided by parishioners, etc. and screened by the Canon]*

Our Parish is seeking a new Rector. Your name was suggested as a possible candidate. If you would like to be considered for this position, please read our Parish Profile at [www.\[address\]](http://www.[address]). We have also enclosed a hardcopy of the Position Description available

on the CDO Positions Open Bulletin. If after reviewing these materials you believe that God might be calling you to our parish, we would be delighted to enter into a mutual discernment process with you. Please send us a current resume, CDO profile and one recent sermon. [Here the DC should specify the format: written or audible on CD.] [The DC should also decide whether to ask for essay questions, and, if so, whether to ask for them now or later. If now, attach them and give a deadline of at least 3 weeks.]

*[For self-nominated candidates (which is not, by the way, inappropriate or immodest)]:*

We have received your materials and your request to be considered in the search for a new Rector. Please read our Parish Profile at [www.\[address\]](http://www.[address]). We have also enclosed a hardcopy of the Position Description available on the CDO Positions Open Bulletin. If after reviewing these materials you believe that God might be calling you to our parish, we would be delighted to enter into a mutual discernment process with you.

[Ask for any materials you want that the candidate did not send.]

The next steps are..... If you have any questions.....)

We look forward to hearing from you by (a reasonable specific date). If we do not hear back by then we will assume that you are not interested in this position opening.

Yours in Christ,

Joan Workerbee, *Chair, Discernment Committee for a New Rector*

#### **45B. SAMPLE LETTER INFORMING CANDIDATE THAT THEY WILL NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for participating with us in our search for a new Rector and for your willingness to share information about yourself and your ministry. We are appreciative of the many gifts that you have to offer, but we have concluded that these do not suit our special needs at this time in the life of our Parish.

We wish you well in your continuing ministry and appreciate your interest in ours.

No other reason for elimination needs to be given. If any candidate later requests a specific reason, check with your Consultant for an appropriate reply. If a candidate *withdraws* from the process at any time, a simple acknowledgment is all that is necessary.

Once you have screened your list down, send a mailing to those still in the pool. It might contain a packet of information from your local Chamber of Commerce, a Service Bulletin and a Parish Newsletter.

**Inform the Canon!**

## **45C. SAMPLE LETTER CONTINUING THE PROCESS AFTER PAPER CUTS**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

We enjoyed comparing your information to the needs of our Parish. We would like to continue considering you for this position. Therefore, we are sending you a “second package” which includes more information about our area, a second position description to refresh your memory, a copy of our weekly bulletin, and a Parish newsletter.

Would you please send us a list of (be exact 3, 5, or 7) references? We would like to have their names, addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, and relation to you by XXXX date. We intend to confirm your dates of (employment/school) and to learn more about your strengths as a preacher, pastor and teacher (or whatever you are screening for). Should your name be removed from consideration at any point, we will destroy any information we gather about you in the process. We will also not seek information about you from a source not on this list without first discussing the matter with you.

If you need to withdraw from the search, please contact the DC chair at (XXXXXXX) and let him/her know as soon as possible. Questions about the process may be addressed to Canon Pritchett at (828) 225-6656 or [jimpritchett@diocesewnc.org](mailto:jimpritchett@diocesewnc.org).

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The “Charge to the Vestry” is Adapted from: Copyright © 2007 by Elizabeth Rankin Geitz. From “Resources for the Discernment Process,” supplementary materials to *Calling Clergy: A Spiritual and Practical Guide Through the Search Process* by Elizabeth Rankin Geitz. Permission to download and adapt these materials for congregational use only has been given by Church Publishing, Inc.

This manual is a revision of a previous manual compiled by the Rev. Dn. Ann Fritschner, the Rev. Barry Kramer, and Ms. Candy Grooms. The Diocese wishes to acknowledge their good work and thank them for their contribution.