

The Diocese of Virginia Search Process

“Throughout your search, the diocesan staff and I look forward to sharing this experience with you. In addition to providing contacts, materials and advice, we pray, with you, for the discernment of God’s will, which is the ultimate goal of this process. In the meantime, we wish you well and anticipate a fruitful partnership during your time of renewal.”

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee
Bishop of Virginia



A Prayer for the Congregation in Search of Ordained Leadership

Almighty God, giver of every good gift:
Look graciously on your Church, and
so guide the minds of those who shall
choose ordained leadership for this
parish, that we may receive a faithful
pastor, who will care for your people
and equip us for our ministries;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Book of Common Prayer, page 818

Introduction to the Search Process

The interim period between Rectors, Vicars, and Priests-in-charge is a challenging and formative time for your congregation. It is very often a time for renewal. The landscape of mission is diverse, and, therefore, each congregation exercises its mission differently and seeks various qualities in leadership. Each congregation's dynamics and culture is different and each will pursue the search process in its own way. Given the diversity of congregations, this brochure outlines a number of approaches to the search process and it will guide you in designing the most appropriate strategy for your search. The Bishop's office looks forward to assisting you in your discernment as to which approach will be best for your congregation.

From the start, one of the Bishops and a Deployment Officer will work with you to find an appropriate Interim Rector or Vicar and Transition Coach (formerly known as a Search Consultant) as soon as possible following the notification of your Rector's or Vicar's departure.

The Bishops and the Deployment Officer won't abandon you after those first meetings. Though the bulk of the work is yours, the Bishops' Office stands with you and is ready to help you during this time of discernment and change.

While the task which faces you now may seem daunting, the diocesan staff offers much experience in working with congregations as they evaluate themselves, their missions and ministries, and call new ordained leadership.

We are here to help you and are available to you by phone toll free, 1-800-DIOCESE, or through our website, www.thediocese.net

Standard Search

The standard approach to the search process is typical for congregations who have had stability in ordained leadership over a sustained period of time. It is particularly appropriate for congregations who have had long-term Rectors/Vicars.

Initial Notification/Search Process Planning

- Bishop's Office contacts the Senior Warden and arranges a meeting with the Vestry and one of the Bishops and/or Diocesan Deployment Officer
- Vestry selects the Interim Rector and appoints chair(s) and members of the Search Committee with assistance from the Bishop's Office
- Search Committee selects Transition Coach (formerly known as Search Consultant) with assistance from the Bishop's Office
- Search Committee may choose to have a retreat/team building event as part of its organizing process

Self Discovery/Self Definition

- Search Committee conducts a parish self-study, which may include a questionnaire, focus groups and/or Percept study
- Search Committee interprets data gathered in self-study

Profile Development

- Search Committee prepares draft of parish profile
- Search Committee decides on presentation style/format for profile
- Draft of profile is presented to Vestry and the Bishop's Office for comments
- Final editing and formatting of profile is completed
- Search Committee consults Vestry to obtain compensation package elements
- CDO profile is prepared for submission to Deployment Office

Candidate Evaluation/Selection of Finalists

- Search Committee receives names from the Bishop's Office, Church Deployment Office and other sources
- Search Committee begins screening process
- Search Committee prepares initial interview list, questions, correspondence templates
- Initial interviews are conducted
- References are checked by Search Committee.
- Committee selects those candidates to be visited
- Committee notifies Deployment Office of candidates' names before visits are scheduled
- Committee schedules visits after receipt of deployment check results
- Search Committee narrows field to finalists
- Finalists' names are submitted to Deployment Office for formal background checks and the Bishop's approval

Final Candidates/Vestry Involvement

- Names of final candidates are presented to Vestry by Search Committee
- Finalists (and spouses/families) are invited, one by one, to visit parish
- Vestry and Search Committee host social events for final candidates
- Final candidates meet with Bishop
- Search Committee interviews finalists and makes selection
- Final Candidate is presented to the Vestry
- Vestry elects new Rector/Vicar and notifies the Bishop
- Vestry issues letter of call
- Candidate accepts call
- Letter of agreement is prepared by Vestry and signed by new Rector/Vicar and Senior Warden
- Announcement is made to congregation

Evaluation of Process and Celebration of New Ministry

- Search Committee prepares evaluation of search process and submits it to Deployment Office
- Vestry plans party for Search Committee to celebrate completion of search process
- Bishop's office is contacted to schedule "Celebration of New Ministry"

Targeted Search

The targeted search approach may be utilized in a situation where congregational health is stable and the tenure of ordained leadership has been brief. This approach shortens a search process by asking the Bishop's Office to provide a short list of potential candidates. Congregations should carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of this approach, which reduces the potential pool of candidates.

Initial Notification/Search Process Planning

- Bishop's Office contacts the Senior Warden and arranges a meeting with the Vestry and one of the Bishops and/or Diocesan Deployment Officer
- Vestry selects the Interim Rector and appoints chair(s) and members of the Search Committee with assistance from the Bishop's Office
- Search Committee selects Transition Coach (formerly known as Search Consultant) with assistance from the Bishop's Office
- Search Committee may choose to have a retreat/team building event as part of its organizing process

Self-Discovery/Self-Definition

- Search Committee conducts a parish self-study, which may include a questionnaire, focus groups and/or Percept study
- Search Committee interprets data gathered in self-study

Profile Development

- Search Committee prepares draft of parish profile
- Search Committee decides on presentation style/format for profile
- Draft of profile is presented to Vestry and the Bishop's Office for comments
- Final editing and formatting of profile is completed
- Search Committee consults Vestry to obtain compensation package elements
- CDO profile is prepared for submission to Deployment Office

Candidate Evaluation/Selection of Finalists

- Search Committee receives a short list of names from the Bishop's Office
- Search Committee begins screening process
- Search Committee prepares initial interview list, questions, correspondence templates
- Initial interviews are conducted
- Committee selects those candidates to be visited
Note: If any candidates' names were not provided by Bishop's Office, then Deployment Officer should be notified and visit scheduled after satisfactory deployment check is completed.
- References are checked by Search Committee.
- Search Committee narrows field to finalists
- Finalists' names are submitted to Deployment Office for formal background checks (and Bishop's approval if necessary)

Final Candidates/Vestry Involvement

- Names of final candidates are presented to Vestry by Search Committee
- Finalists (and spouses/families) are invited, one by one, to visit parish
- Vestry and Search Committee host social events for final candidates
- Final candidates meet with Bishop
- Search Committee interviews finalists and makes selection
- Final Candidate is presented to the Vestry
- Vestry elects new Rector/Vicar and notifies the Bishop
- Vestry issues letter of call
- Candidate accepts call
- Letter of agreement is prepared by Vestry and signed by new Rector/Vicar and Senior Warden
- Announcement is made to congregation

Evaluation of Process and Celebration of New Ministry

- Search Committee prepares evaluation of search process and submits it to Deployment Office
- Vestry plans party for Search Committee to celebrate completion of search process
- Bishop's Office is contacted to schedule "Celebration of New Ministry"

Priest-In-Charge

The Priest-in-Charge approach is utilized in special circumstances. A Vestry may ask the Bishop to appoint a Priest-in-Charge only when situations clearly call for a pastoral response to a congregation in search. This option is particularly useful when the Bishop and Vestry believe that a time of consolidation is useful or there is a sense that this arrangement is advantageous to the momentum of the mission of the church. When a Vestry asks the Bishop to appoint a Priest-in-Charge, the Bishop will offer one or more candidates to the Vestry.

The Bishop Appoints the Priest-in-Charge with These Conditions:

- The Priest-in-Charge functions in every way as Rector, except the Priest-in-Charge does not have the tenure of a Rector.
- The tenure of the Priest-in-Charge is for a negotiated period (normally three years).
- Towards the end of the tenure and after a careful review of mutual ministry between the Vestry and the Priest-in-Charge, the Vestry makes a determination as to whether or not it wishes to elect the Priest-in-Charge as Rector.
- If election of Priest-in-Charge as Rector is not desired by the Vestry or if the Priest-in-Charge does not accept the call, the Vestry then enters into the search process.
- The Priest-in-Charge serves at the pleasure of the Bishop. The relationship between the congregation and the Priest-in-Charge may be ended by a majority vote of the Vestry, with ninety days notice; by resignation of the Priest-in-Charge, with sixty days notice; or by decision of the Bishop.

Initial Notification/Search Process Planning

- Bishop's Office contacts the Senior Warden and arranges a meeting with the Vestry and one of the Bishops and/or Diocesan Deployment Officer
- Vestry selects the Interim Rector, with assistance from the Bishop's Office
- Vestry determines whether or not to utilize Search Committee, and chooses Transition Coach (formerly known as Search Consultant) to work with Vestry if not using a Search Committee. If using a Search Committee, they will choose Transition Coach.

Self-Discovery/Self-Definition

- Search Committee/Vestry creates criteria and expectations for ministry of Priest-in-Charge (mutual ministry description)
- Search Committee/Vestry creates a short document which profiles parish life, challenges, and vision for mission and sends it to the Deployment Office and Bishop for comment

Candidate Evaluation

- Search Committee/Vestry receives names from the Bishop's Office
- Search Committee/Vestry prepares initial interview questions
- Initial interviews and reference checks are conducted
- Committee schedules visits to candidates
- Finalists' names are submitted to Deployment Office for formal background check and Bishop's approval

Vestry Involvement

- Names of final candidates are presented to Vestry (by Search Committee if applicable)
- Finalists (and spouses/families) are invited, one by one, to visit parish
- Vestry and Search Committee host social events for final candidates
- Search Committee interviews finalists and makes selection
- Final candidate is presented to the Vestry
- Vestry nominates new candidate and notifies Bishop for appointment
- Vestry issues letter of call
- Candidate accepts call
- Letter of agreement is prepared by Vestry and signed by new Priest-in-Charge, Senior Warden, and Bishop.
- Announcement is made to congregation

Evaluation of Process

- Search Committee/Vestry prepares evaluation of search process and submits it to Deployment Office
- Vestry plans party for Search Committee/Vestry to celebrate completion of search process
- Normally, a Celebration of new Ministry for a Priest-in-Charge does not occur until the Priest is elected Rector

re**vision**

ReVision is a strategic mission planning process designed for local congregations who desire to “vision again” who they are, why they exist and what they ought to be doing.

The ReVision process utilizes extensive demographic and ethnographic information as well as an intensive parish survey and focus groups using bible study to discern anew the mission of a congregation in its ministry environment. This tool is made available through the Diocesan contract with Percept, Inc., a consulting company providing tools and resources for congregational mission enhancement. Research has shown that there is a “ripe” opportunity for congregations in transition of ordained leadership to engage in a process to ReVision their mission and become newly engaged with the community around them. Financial and personnel resources are available through the Bishop’s Office to guide a congregation through this process and link it to the call of new ordained leadership.

Initial Notification/Search Process or ReVision Planning

- Bishop’s Office contacts the Senior Warden and arranges a meeting with the Vestry and one of the Bishops and/or Diocesan Deployment Officer
- Vestry selects Interim Rector, ReVision Task Force and/or Search Committee, with assistance from the Bishop’s Office
- ReVision task force selects Transition Coach (formerly known as Search Consultant) with assistance from the Bishop’s Office
- ReVision task force may choose to have a retreat/team building event as part of its organizing process

Self Discovery/Self Definition

- ReVision task force creates enthusiasm for process, prepares survey materials and sends completed surveys to Percept, Inc.
- ReVision Task Force reviews reports and feedback from Percept, Inc.
- ReVision Task Force facilitates eight sessions of reflection for congregational input
- ReVision Task Force identifies key themes for mission and discerns qualities of leadership necessary for missional themes and presents them to Vestry

Profile Development

- ReVision Task Force or other appointed group drafts a parish profile, which will include key missional themes from ReVision process
- ReVision Task Force decides on presentation style/format for profile
- Draft of profile is presented to Vestry and the Bishop’s Office for comments
- Final editing and formatting of profile is completed

- Search Committee consults Vestry to obtain compensation package elements
- CDO profile is prepared for submission to Deployment Office

Candidate Evaluation/Selection of Finalists

(ReVision Task Force now becomes a Search Committee or an independent group is appointed to be a Search Committee)

- Search Committee receives names from the Bishop's Office, Church Deployment office and other sources
- Search Committee begins screening process
- Search Committee prepares initial interview list, questions, correspondence templates
- Initial interviews are conducted
- Committee selects those candidates to be visited
- Committee notifies Deployment Office of candidates' names before visits are scheduled
- Committee schedules visits after receipt of deployment check results
- Search Committee narrows field to finalists
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- Names of final candidates are presented to the Vestry by Search Committee
- Finalists (and spouses/families) are invited, one by one, to visit parish
- Vestry and Search Committee host social events for final candidates
- Final candidates meet with Bishop
- Search committee interviews finalists and makes selection
- Final Candidate is presented to the Vestry
- Vestry elects new Rector/Vicar and notifies Bishop
- Vestry issues letter of call
- Candidate accepts call
- Letter of agreement is prepared by Vestry and signed by new Rector/Vicar and Senior Warden.
- Announcement is made to congregation

Continued...

Evaluation of Process and Celebration of New Ministry

- Search Committee prepares evaluation of search process and submits it to Deployment Office
- Vestry plans party for Search Committee/ReVision Task Force to celebrate completion of search process
- Bishop's Office is contacted to schedule "Celebration of New Ministry"

ReVision Retreat

- After new priest is settled, a key part of the forward movement of the congregation is the ReVision retreat.
- Draft document identifying key missional themes and a three-year strategy for implementation is created by ReVision Task Force
- Retreat with consultant, Rector/Vicar, ReVision Task Force and Vestry is planned to identify and strategize for the implementation of ministries to pursue missional themes
- Report made to congregation



Part-Time Clergy

Churches in search of part-time clergy to lead their congregations may face special challenges. The pool of viable candidates is a different one from that of a parish who is seeking full-time clergy. Exploring some creative options may allow your parish to recruit a well-qualified clergyperson. Consideration should be given to clergypersons who are in the following categories: bi-vocational clergy (those who are ordained and hold a secular job as well), retired priests, retired military chaplains, ordained graduate students, deacons, ordained spouses of clergy in other parishes, shared ministry with another similar parish in the area, sharing an assistant at a nearby larger parish or school chaplains. Consultation with the Deployment Office will be helpful in discerning the appropriate steps of the standard search process approach that may be helpful to you.

Definitions

Rector: The chief sacramental officer and professional ordained person in a parish, who is called by the Vestry with approval of the Bishop.

Vicar: The chief sacramental officer of a mission, a congregation who is dependent upon the diocese for financial support and who is approved by the Bishop.

Priest-in-Charge: The chief sacramental officer of a parish, appointed by the Bishop for a specific term (usually three to five years).

Assistant or Associate Rector: An ordained member of the staff of a parish, assists the Rector with the canonical duties of the parish. Exact title is based on tenure and/or duties in the parish.

DDO: Diocesan Deployment Officer, a member of the bishop's staff who assists parishes and priests in the search process.

CDO: Church Deployment Office in New York City, a department of the Episcopal Church, U.S.A. Clearinghouse for clergy and churches in search. Maintains national database of clergy.

CDO Profile (Clergy): A snapshot of the Priest's credentials, work history and theological beliefs. Produced by the Church Deployment Office and accessible to Diocesan Deployment Officers. Is maintained by the individual clergyperson.

CDO Profile (Parish): For the church in search, a summary of its statistical information—size, membership, financial, etc.; a summary of its goals and programs, and an advertisement for what it is looking for in its next clergyperson. Information

provided by the Search Committee to the DDO for input to the Church Deployment Office and available on the CDO website.

Deployment Ministry Newsletter: Published monthly by a coalition of 40 dioceses to advertise openings in the member dioceses.

Transition Coach (formerly known as Search Consultant): A clergy or layperson who has been trained by the diocese to guide search committees through the process of the search. Contracts are negotiated individually by the consultant, the Search Committee and Vestry.

Letter of Agreement: A document defining agreement between Rector/Vicar and Vestry to share ministry. The letter typically outlines mutual responsibilities for ministry as well as personnel issues such as vacation, compensation, holidays, continuing education, etc. In a Priest-in-Charge situation, the letter of agreement is also signed by the Bishop.

ReVision: A strategic mission planning process designed for local congregations desiring to "vision again" who they are, why they exist and what they ought to do. This process utilizes demographic and ethnographic tools for congregational discernment made available by Percept, Inc.

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