



DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA PROTOCOL FOR A SEARCH PROCESS IN MISSIONS AND PARISHES

- 1) After consultation with the Bishop, a Rector/Vicar should provide a Letter of Resignation to the Bishop as well as the Vestry/Bishop's Committee, usually three to four months prior to the end of his/her ministry in the congregation.

- 2) A meeting will take place (either on site at the parish/mission or at the Diocesan Offices). Those present at the meeting will be the Bishop or Canon to the Ordinary, and the Canon for Transition Ministry, Wardens of the congregation and members of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. This meeting will:
 - a) Introduce the leaders of the congregation to the process for the call of a Rector or the appointment of a Vicar by the Bishop;
 - b) Suggest the Vestry/Bishop's Committee engage a diocesan recommended Search Consultant. Candidates for Search Consultant will be suggested by the Canon for Transition Ministry.
 - c) Discuss the timing of the appointment of a Search Committee;
 - d) Describe the composition of the Search Committee, which in most cases will include one or two members of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee but usually will not include Wardens.
 - e) Outline the responsibilities of the Search Committee during the search process for a new Rector/Vicar;
 - f) Plan a subsequent presentation to the congregation to ensure that the materials covered for the leadership are conveyed to the congregation; and
 - g) Specify the interim period, which will last a minimum of 9 months and a up to 18 months as needed.

- 3) At the beginning of the interim period, when possible:
 - a) The Bishop will present two or three names of candidates for Interim/Priest-in- Charge to the Vestry/ Bishop's Committee for its consideration. Training in interim ministry will be an important consideration.



- b) The Vestry/Bishop's Committee will interview candidates and will nominate one candidate for Interim or Priest-in-Charge to the Bishop.
 - c) The Bishop will appoint the Interim/PIC.
 - d) Once the Bishop has made the appointment, a Letter of Agreement will be signed by the Bishop, Wardens and Interim/PIC. The Letter of Agreement shall clearly establish the Interim/PIC's tenure, salary package, and the sacramental and pastoral ministry responsibilities in the congregation.
 - e) The church will submit audits and budgets for review by the Office of Transitions
 - f) The Interim/Priest in Charge will not be eligible for consideration for the Rector/Vicar position.
- 4) Approximately 1 to 3 months into the interim period, the congregation should begin work with the selected search consultant. The Vestry/Bishop's Committee will appoint the Search Committee and appoint its convener/chairpersons. The number of committee members should reflect the size of the congregation. Committees of large congregations would number seven to nine, and in small congregations the committee would number five to seven members. The tasks of the Search Committee will be:
- a) Provide a list of names and contact information of the Search Committee members to the Canon for Transition Ministry and decide on the primary contact person.
 - b) Draft the Community Ministry Portfolio for the Office of Transitional Ministry of The Episcopal Church and draft a separate Parish/Mission Profile that describes the parish's history, ministries, finances, challenges and opportunities. A profile for the Transition Ministry Conference can also be created.
 - i. The Parish/Mission Profile and OTM form should communicate the identity of the congregation, the community and its state of being, as well as the qualities sought in a new Rector/Vicar;
 - ii. The Search Committee should draft answers to the OTM discernment questions to provide content for the narrative section of the OTM form;
 - iii. The Search Committee should have the Vestry complete the section of the OTM on salary and benefits for the new Rector/Vicar.
 - iv. The Search Committee should write a description of the position to be applied for not longer than 999 characters for posting with the Episcopal News Service and Transition Ministry Conference Newsletter.
 - v. When completed, the Parish/Mission Profile, OTM Community Ministry Portfolio



and Rector/Vicar Position Description must be approved by the Vestry/Bishop's Committee.

- c) The Parish/Mission Profile, OTM Community Ministry Portfolio and the Rector/Vicar Position Description must then be reviewed and approved by the Canon for Transition Ministry and the Bishop. Once approved:
 - i. The Position Description will be posted on the Diocese of Pennsylvania website, and Transition Ministry Conference Newsletter.
 - ii. Search Committees are encouraged to post the job on the Episcopal News Service Website
 - iii. The OTM Community Ministry Portfolio form for the OTM Office of the Episcopal Church will be completed online by the Office of Transition Ministry
 - iv. The Parish/Mission Profile should then be posted on the parish website.
- d) Applications will be accepted through the Diocesan Transition Office and qualified candidates will be forwarded to the search committee.
 - i. Clergy will be encouraged to forward their CV and OTM profile with a cover letter to the Search Committee and Diocesan office. All applicants for consideration must be approved by the Office of Transitions.
 - ii. Arrangements should be made to keep applicants aware of their status in the process as it progresses.
- 5) The task of the Search Committee is to come to agreement on a single candidate to be nominated to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee. The suggested review/interview process follows a sequence:
 - a. Review of applications (cover letter, CV, OTM Portfolio)
 - b. Telephone/Skype interviews.
 - c. Telephone reference checks on all candidates being considered for site visits to their home parishes or being considered for local site visits.
 - d. (Optional) Many search committees conduct site visits to candidate's parishes at this stage to hear them preach and to talk with wardens and lay leaders.
 - e. As many as three candidates may be invited to make a local site visit to the parish/mission. Before a local site visit is arranged for any candidate.
 - i. The Search Committee will request from the Office of the Transitions a "bishop-to-bishop" check on the candidate.



- ii. A recent Oxford Document Check (background check) for the candidate is received by the Canon for Transition Ministry.
 - iii. Clergy not canonically resident in The Diocese of Pennsylvania will be required to have forwarded to the Canon for Transition Ministry a recent Oxford background check.
 - iv. If no recent Oxford Check is available, the Oxford background check is initiated with the assistance of the Canon for Transition Ministry. The cost of the background check will be paid for by the congregation.
- f) Once a candidate is cleared by the Bishop, the local site visit may be arranged. An appointment should be made for the candidate to meet the bishop as part of the site visit. This should be coordinated with the Office of Transitions
- g) The Vestry/Bishop's Committee should be included in a "meet and greet" session with the candidate to maximize the time on site. The Search Committee conducts the interview process, and members of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee may be present. Often an informal Eucharist with Homily conducted by the candidate for Vestry/Bishop's Committee and Search Committee members (only) is a part of the site visit.
- h) This process is followed for subsequent candidates.
- i) The Search Committee nominates one candidate to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee to be called as Rector/Vicar
- i. The Vestry/Bishop's Committee must decide whether to accept or reject the nomination.
 - ii. If the nomination is rejected, the Search Committee resumes the process.
 - iii. If the nomination is accepted, the Canon for Transition Ministry is informed of the selection.
- 6) Following the decision of the Vestry/Bishop's Committee to call a Rector/Vicar
- a) A Letter of Agreement shall be drafted, signed, and approved by the Bishop. The Canon for Transition Ministry will provide a template for the Letter of Agreement.
 - b) When the Letter of Agreement has been approved by the Bishop, only then can the Vestry/Bishop's Committee publicly announce the call of the new Rector/appointment of the new Vicar.
- 7) The Search Committee chair should assemble a report on the search process, including evaluations of all candidates, and provide the report to the Canon for Transition Ministry.



- 8) Following the call of a Rector/appointment of a Vicar, the Bishop will join the congregation for the Celebration of New Ministry (BCP 557). This scheduled through the Office of the Bishop. This is scheduled through the office of the Bishop 90 days after the appointment of a new Rector/Vicar.

Approximate Timetable

Vestry/Bishop's Committee meets with Canon for Transition Ministry once rector/priest in charge announces departure – 1 month
Bishop nominates 2-3 priests, Vestry selects, Bishop appoints Interim/PIC -- 1-3 months
Consultants list provided, Vestry selects, Parish Profile Committee Appointed--3 months
Congregation surveyed or all parish discernment meeting -- 3-4 months
Parish Profile, OTM Portfolio, Position Description written, approved by Bishop, and posted – 5-6 months
Applications received – 7-8 months
Initial "red flag" check with Canon for Transition Ministry - 8 months
Reference checks prior to site visits
Canon for Transition Ministry reference checks with counterparts in other dioceses
(Optional) Site visits may be made to 3-6 candidates' home parishes -- 10 months
Bishop receives names for review of 1-3 finalists to be invited to make local site visits -- 11 months
Bishop to Bishop reference checks on all finalists invited to make local site visits
Oxford document check on all finalists invited to make local site visits
Bishop approves finalists invited to make local site visits 1-3
finalists make local site visits -- 11-12 months
Search Committee nominates one candidate to Vestry/Bishop's Committee
Vestry/Bishop's Committee calls Rector/Vicar – 12 months
Letter of Agreement drafted by Vestry
Letter of Agreement approved by Bishop
Announcement of call of new Rector/Vicar
Celebration of New Ministry, date set through Bishop's office. Approximately 90 days after rector arrives.