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**ADGL Guidelines For The Vestry**

**And**

**Search Committee**

1. Pray and Fast! Spend considerable amounts of time praying together. Pray for the Lord’s direction. Pray for the candidates. Pray for the congregation. Use your intercessors, while maintaining confidentiality. Include prayer for the process in the Sunday morning Prayers of the People (BCP Page 648). Any deviation from these guidelines requires the approval of the Diocesan Bishop or his representative.
2. Surrender your own agenda. You are seeking God’s person, not your personal favorite. You are not representing a constituency (young families or seniors or those who go to the early service, etc.). You bring your experience and perspective, but you are seeking to unite on God’s choice.

# For the Vestry:

1. Ensure good communications with the congregation. Update the congregation regarding your work and ensure that the Search Committee updates the congregation regularly throughout the process. Do not share names or identifying information outside the Search Committee accept with the Bishop or his representative. But do share with the Vestry and the congregation about the process, timetable, etc.
2. Form a Search Committee and appoint its chair. In some small churches, the Vestry may choose to serve as the Search Committee, but in most cases a separate Search Committee will be named by the Vestry. In a small church, it should have perhaps six members, two of whom are normally on the Vestry. In a large church, it may have as many as 10-12, two of whom are on the Vestry. This is one of the most important committees your Vestry will ever appoint. Choose trustworthy, spiritually mature and discerning leaders who are committed to prayer and fasting. Do not put someone on the Search Committee just to “get them involved.” Make sure that those you appoint understand they are to seek God’s person, not their own. (See #2, above.) They are serving the whole congregation in seeking the Lord’s will and direction. It is not appropriate for Anglican clergy to serve on the Search Committee.
3. The Vestry should provide appropriate funding for the Search Committee’s work. This may include the cost of copying/printing the Profile, travel costs to visit finalists and travel costs for the finalists to visit the congregation.

# For the Search Committee:

1. Hold the initial Committee meeting, usually without the full Vestry. Review these Diocesan guidelines. Set a regular day, time, and place to meet. Assume that meetings will be held weekly, though there may be weeks when no meeting is needed. Identify members for key committee roles, such as: liaison with Vestry (the chair of the Search Committee or one of the Vestry members); liaison with intercessors: secretary to keep minutes of actions taken (not opinions expressed); corresponding secretary responsible to receive information from candidates and distribute it to committee members; a communications person responsible to ensure updates are published in the church newsletter; etc. Set up a confidential email account for the committee to use in corresponding with candidates (either through your congregation’s server, or a free account such as XYZchurchsearch@gmail.com). Ensure that all committee members have private email accounts not shared by spouses or employers; have committee members open an account if needed.
2. Communicate on a regular basis appropriate information to the Vestry and to the congregation at large. Do not reveal any names under consideration except to the Bishop or his representative. Do share where you are in the process (receiving names, for example, or narrowing the list or selecting a small group of finalists) and your rough timetable (don’t promise an end date; timetables often change as the process unfolds).
3. Recruit a small team of confidential intercessors for the search process. They should not be given names of any candidates but would normally be given more specific information about the process and issues facing the committee than would be told to the congregation at large.
4. At the end of each meeting of the Search Committee, decide what information should be shared with the Vestry, the congregation at large, and the committee’s team of intercessors. Committee members honor confidentiality by sharing only what has been agreed to be shared with the appropriate people. No additional sharing with spouses.
5. Develop a profile of the church and of the priest you are seeking. If the congregation has a vision which you believe still guides them and is embraced by the congregation, express that in the profile. If not, do not seek to “get” a new vision at this time. Instead, say that the congregation is looking to its new rector to guide them in seeking God’s vision in this new season. Since Vestry will need to approve the Profile, some congregations have a joint meeting of the Search Committee and Vestry to brainstorm content for the Profile. Then have one Committee member write an initial draft to be circulated for comment. When it has been perfected, it should be approved by the Vestry before it is posted or distributed.
6. Transparency with candidates is your great ally. Do not feel you have to share everything about your congregation with the candidates up front and in writing, but, by the final interview, be sure you have been completely honest about such things as financial challenges, challenges you are facing in terms of growth and reaching next generations, and any crises or painful situations that you have faced in recent years. The person God is calling will find the problems to be a challenge, not a turn-off; hide the problems and the very person you need will think, “they don’t need me.”
7. Seek names widely. Go to the job listings on The Anglican Diocese of the Great Lakes (ADGL) and The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) websites and fill out the information to list your open position. Write directly to key leaders who know your congregation and invite them to send you names directly. The Diocesan Bishop / ACNA may have one or more names to suggest.
8. Communicate with your candidates. Keep them informed regularly as to where you are in your process and when and what they can expect to hear from your committee. Going through a search can be a very stressful and an unsettling time for a priest and their family. If the priest hears nothing from a Search Committee for an extended time, it can be difficult for them. If a step in the process turns out to take longer than expected, just let the candidates know about the situation. Some committees find it helpful to appoint a liaison with each candidate; others choose to have a corresponding secretary whose role is to stay in regular contact with the all the candidates.
9. Gather information from these candidates in stages. Go step by step; get to know the candidates more and more as you go through the process and let them get to know you better as you go through the process. **Important**: Before your first approach to the candidates, allow the Diocesan Bishop to review the list of potential candidates. He will eliminate any whom he knows to be inappropriate for the position.

First approach to the candidates:

* Ask, “May we consider you? Would you be willing to participate in our process, joining us in praying and fasting to discern the Lord’s will?” Do not ask if they want to apply, etc. They may be very happy where they are and are not looking for a new position.
* Ask for resume, references, spiritual autobiography, links to sermons or to a streaming service.

Review this material and make further cuts to the list of candidates. If you are not in consensus about dropping a candidate from further consideration, leave the priest on for the next round. If any are eliminated, promptly notify them that they are no longer being considered for the position.

Second approach:

* Ask for answers to a few written questions (but just a few; save others for phone and zoom or face-to-face interviews). Do not make assumptions, even about personal faith in Christ and biblical orthodoxy. Somewhere in the process, ask about important topics (“Do you tithe?” “What is your view of, or how have you addressed in your ministry: abortion/ homosexuality/authority of Scripture/women’s ordination/gifts of the Spirit/divorce and remarriage/styles of liturgy and music, etc.?”

Do not ask:

* “Why do you want to be our rector?” The candidate may not want the position at all at this point but is simply open to a possible call from the Lord.
* “What is your vision for our congregation?” It’s not to be the priest’s vision or yours, but God’s.
* “What would you do if/when/about….?” Instead ask, “What have you done in this sort of situation?” Past performance is the best indicator of future behavior.

Review this material and make further cuts to the list of candidates. Whenever candidates are eliminated, promptly notify them that they are no longer being considered.

Third Approach:

* Conduct a Zoom interview (or telephone if Zoom is not feasible).

Inform the Diocesan Bishop of the final 1-5 candidates. He will make a reference call to the candidates’ Bishop and share any concerns with the Search Committee. If there are serious concerns, he may ask the Search Committee to drop a candidate for further consideration.

Optional additional approach:

* Go visit a small number of semi-finalists. If you do this, send a team, ideally of 3, not all men or women, of differing temperaments, etc. However, this is usually only valuable if those being considered are full-time in a parish. Since you can listen to sermons online, visiting a parish that is not the priest’s place of ministry accomplishes little.

Fourth approach

* For 1-3 finalists, invite the priest and spouse to visit for face-to-face interview:
  + 1. perhaps staying for two nights.
    2. formal interview with the Search Committee on one evening; dinner and social time with the Search Committee and then the Vestry on the other evening.
    3. show them around the community (not house hunting) during the day.
    4. stay in hotel or home according to candidate’s preference (a hotel allows for priest and spouse to have privacy to discuss what they are experiencing);
    5. meet with the Diocesan Bishop.
* Do not have the priest preach and celebrate for (or even meet) the congregation at large. Anglican church governance entrusts the decision on the call to the Vestry (and its appointed Search Committee). You can have the finalists preach and celebrate privately for the Search Committee if you wish. But if you expose them to the whole congregation, you may divide the congregation. In addition, the congregation will only have that one experience on which to judge, while the Search Committee will have a full range of information and references and answers to questions upon which to make a judgment.
* Include in the application (1) Full Legal Name (2) Addresses over the past ten years (3) Phone number (preferably cell) and email address (4) Three References with Name, Relationship, and contact number, (5) Educational Background (6) Present Employer with contact Information, (7) Date and Place of Ordination(s) (8) Have you completed an Oxford Background Check with Date (9) All Bishops they have served under with current phone numbers.

*Reminder all candidates must be approved by the Bishop prior to being called. In addition, the candidates “Psych Evaluation” when they were first ordained (If not available a new evaluation will be done by the ADGL Diocese) must be forwarded and reviewed by the Diocese before you can call the Candidate.*  Important a copy of the application should be immediately sent to the Assistant to the Diocsean Bishop.

* Check references thoroughly; have uniform questions you ask all references; ask the reference if there are other people whom you should talk with concerning the candidate.
* Initiate a background check (Canon Andrea Orchard in the ADGL office will help arrange this) as soon as feasible.

1. Search Committee decision. When the Search Committee has reached its decision on whom to recommend, the Chair notifies the Diocesan Bishop. The entire Search Committee then meets with the Vestry and presents one name to the Vestry to be called as their Rector. A detailed oral presentation of the candidate is given, along with written materials, links to sermons, etc. Vestry members are given the opportunity to ask questions of the Search Committee.
2. The Vestry may wish to interview the final candidate (and spouse), even if this requires an additional visit by the candidate. This could be done via Zoom, particularly if the Vestry previously met the candidate.
3. Final selection by the Vestry.

* When the Vestry has made a decision, the Wardens contact the Diocesan Bishop for his approval.
* The priest is then notified and given sufficient time to pray before having to accept the call.
* The Vestry (rather than the Search Committee) has the responsibility to negotiate the letter of agreement with the priest (based on the Diocesan model Letter of Agreement), including a date to start. This negotiation is often done by the Senior Warden and Treasurer but can be handled by others if the Vestry so determines.
* Plan the announcement to congregation (be mindful of the need to notify the priest’s present church simultaneously).
* The Vestry shall appoint a transition committee to help the priest make the move, settle in, be a point of contact for all forms of help.
* If the outgoing Rector or Interim Rector (if there is one) has not yet stepped down, he or she gives up his/her spiritual authority as Rector (or Interim Rector).
* The Bishop will pray with the priest privately to give spiritual authority as Rector before the new Rector’s first Sunday. A formal service at which the Bishop will institute the priest as Rector (sometimes called a “Celebration of New Ministry”) needs to be scheduled, usually held 4-6 weeks after the new rector arrives.

1. Additional Considerations:

Regarding paid staff: It is the expectation of the diocese that the new rector will meet with each paid staff person who will in turn offer his or her resignation.

* The new rector may accept it or decline it.
* He/she may determine a length of time to assess the working relationship between the staff person and the new rector before he/she makes a decision.
* If the resignation is not accepted, a new letter of agreement is written containing mutually acceptable terms and signed by both parties.
* If the resignation is accepted the staff person will have up to but no more than one year to secure a new position and a pastorally sensitive exit plan will be designed and implemented as appropriate.
* The new rector shall be in contact with the Vestry and the Diocesan Bishop regarding his/her decisions especially concerning the retention of other Diocesan clergy.

Regarding non-stipendiary clergy within the congregation

* Should a congregation have non-stipendiary clergy (retired or active) attending regularly and/or serving liturgically or in a ministry, the Bishop asks that they schedule a meeting/call with the Bishop upon the call to and acceptance of the call by a new rector.
* This also applies to the Rector Emeritus if one remains present in the local area.