

Policy on Calling a Priest



The Right Reverend Scott B. Hayashi Eleventh, Bishop of Utah

Policy Number: P002

Revision Number: 2

Approved by the Bishop and Diocesan Council: August, 2007



The Episcopal Diocese of Utah Policy on Calling a Priest

Policy Number: P002

August, 2017 Rev 2

PURPOSE

This Policy details the procedures to be used when calling a priest to fill a vacancy.

Canonical Provisions Governing The Appointment of Priests

Canon III.9.3 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church prescribes the general process for the appointment of Rectors and Priests in Charge. In this Diocese, Canon 31.2.3 provides that “the Priest-in-Charge of a Mission shall be appointed by the Bishop following consultation with the Bishop’s Committee and the consent of the Standing Committee.”

The process for calling a Rector is further prescribed in Diocesan Canon 34, with provision for a policy and procedures approved by the Bishop and Standing Committee. This policy is intended to provide the guidance appropriate to implement the canons. It is intended to primarily apply to Parishes with Rectors, not to Mission congregations. At the Bishop’s discretion, a process similar to that provided in this policy may be utilized for a larger Mission congregation.

POLICY

NOTIFICATION OF AN OPENING

Within 30 days of a vacancy or the announcement of a pending vacancy in the office of rector or priest-in-charge, the senior warden will notify the bishop in writing. The bishop or person designated by the bishop will meet with the vestry and clergy immediately to explain the process and assist in preparation for this time of creative transition.

INTERIM MINISTRY

The ministry of an interim priest in charge can be especially helpful in the case of a very long pastorate by an incumbent. It is also very important to have the services of a professionally trained interim when a congregation may be in a state of conflict or tension around the incumbent or the incumbent’s departure. Therefore, it is recommended that an interim be obtained by the parish during all or part of the transition period. The bishop and deployment officer will assist with the identification and calling of an interim priest in charge. Any interim priest in charge must be approved by the bishop.

SUPPLY CLERGY

The bishop and/or the deployment office may also assist the parish in the identification and calling of supply clergy for the congregation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is the expectation that the congregation will be financially responsible for the costs of the search process, just as any other congregational expense. The Diocese may assist with



The Episcopal Diocese of Utah Policy on Calling a Priest

Policy Number: P002

August, 2017 Rev 2

these costs, including the cost of supply/interim clergy, and with relocation expenses. If a congregation believes they need financial assistance from the Diocese for this process, they should make arrangements to meet with the Bishop's Office or the Deployment Officer of the Diocese, with participation and assistance of the Finance Office. Parishes requesting such financial assistance from the Diocese are expected to provide a complete budget for their search process, together with funding sources available and anticipated.

FORMATION OF A SEARCH COMMITTEE

The make up of the Search Committee needs to be sensitive about being an honest reflection of the various components of the congregation. It is the Search Committee that is responsible for doing the committed homework necessary to prepare the way for a successful transition to a new ministry, including the preparation of a parish profile. In any event, the search process may not commence until the rector or priest-in-charge has vacated the office.

GUIDELINES FOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Experience suggests that it is best if wardens do not serve on the Search Committee. This will permit more freedom for them to carry out their duties and responsibilities in the absence of a rector.

Seven to fifteen members, none of whom are clergy, staff members or their immediate family, will be the norm for the Diocese.

Members should be representative of the congregation with respect to age, sex, race, ministries and organizations of the parish. One's length of time of affiliation with the congregation should also be considered. Of particular value to the Committee will be persons with skills in writing, computer support, group dynamics, and abilities in chairing meetings. Where possible, a separate non-voting clerk/correspondence secretary should be appointed.

Vestry members play a different role in the Search Process and should not serve on the Committee if at all possible.

All members must be communicants in good standing, regular worshippers, and enthusiastic supporters of the on-going life of the parish.

Each member must keep confidences (even from spouses) and be able to work well in a group. Work must be completed in a timely manner.

THE PARISH PROFILE

With the guidance of the Deployment Office, the Search Committee will initiate a self-study/parish profile. This profile will describe the membership, history, ministries, programs, budget, stewardship, physical facilities, staffing and the general feeling of the parish. Basically, the profile describes the congregation and its setting within the



The Episcopal Diocese of Utah Policy on Calling a Priest

Policy Number: P002

August, 2017 Rev 2

community and the Diocese. A reader will be able to study it and gain a good sense of the place, including the character of the community, as well as the social, cultural, religious, recreational, economic, and educational flavor of the area. The Diocese will provide a page of Diocesan History to be included in the profile.

PREPARING THE PROFILE

The task of preparing this profile could be assigned to an ad hoc group of the Committee who might be given 30-60 days in which to accomplish the task. The draft they prepare would then be reviewed and adopted by the vestry prior to being sent to the bishop for final approval.

Experience has shown that open style 'town hall' type meetings or focus groups with a consultant facilitating, work better than written questionnaires in obtaining input for the Parish Profile.

Once the copy has been finally approved by the bishop, the copy may go to print. It is also imperative that the profile be available on the parish website and linked to the Diocesan website as soon as possible.

REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS

After the completion and approval of the profile, the Search Committee may request from the deployment officer a list of potential candidates from within and without of the Diocese of Utah. If any of these candidates seems to the Search Committee and the vestry to be appropriate and desirable, after conference with the bishop, an offer of employment may be made by the vestry to the candidate. Upon acceptance of such a call, the search is ended and the vestry notifies the bishop of their decision. Should the vestry determine candidates on this list not to be sufficient, and decide to proceed to a national search, and then a search request is prepared in concert with the Deployment Office and forwarded to the Church Deployment Office (CDO) in New York.

The Search Committee will obtain the appropriate form (Parish Search Request) from the Deployment Office and after completing it, return it to the bishop and deployment officer for final review and submission to the CDO. The CDO in New York will then prepare a list of names that best match the parish's profile and forward these to the bishop and deployment officer. The opening will also be posted on the Church Deployment Office's *Positions Open Bulletin*.

During the period when the request has been sent to the CDO in New York, the Search Committee should inform the congregation and other clergy in the Diocese that nominations will be received from individuals wishing to suggest possible candidates. The nominee must give permission for their name to be put forward and will submit their resume and CDO Personal Profile to the Diocesan deployment officer.

ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION



The Episcopal Diocese of Utah Policy on Calling a Priest

Policy Number: P002

August, 2017 Rev 2

Stipendiary associate or assistant clergy of the congregation may submit their names for consideration in the search process.

Clergy serving in an interim capacity in a congregation may not have their names put forward for nomination.

If there is a priest-in-charge in place who the bishop, vestry and priest mutually agree would be appropriate for the position as rector, the priest-in-charge would be considered first, prior to the formation of a Search Committee or the reception of other nominations.

TRANSMISSION OF NAMES TO THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

After culling the list of nominees from the CDO's computer matches, self-nominated persons, and any persons nominated by members of the congregation, the bishop or deployment officer will forward to the Search Committee a list of 3-7 names of the most qualified people.

Should the vestry and Search Committee wish to expand the search beyond a maximum of 7 names, they may petition the bishop to do so. The Search Committee may want to elicit from these nominees written answers to specific questions.

NARROWING THE FIELD

When the Committee has selected 2-4 candidates who they wish to interview, they will contact the Deployment Office to initiate background checks. The Search Committee may select some of its members to make visitations to the candidates in their home parishes. They may also wish to hold telephone interviews with the entire Committee present.

Once the final nominees are chosen and the Bishop has completed her review of each nominee, the names may be presented to the vestry. The Search Committee will then coordinate visits for the candidates to come to the parish to meet with the vestry, and also schedule interviews with the bishop during the same visit.

The Search Committee must take care to write, as soon as possible, to those who are not being considered in order to thank them, and to let them know that they are no longer part of the parish's search process.

FINAL SELECTION

The vestry then makes its final selection and notifies the bishop of their choice. Once approved by the bishop, the vestry will issue the call and the task of the Search Committee is completed. The Search Committee is encouraged to evaluate their work and celebrate their life together and the completion of their task.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT



The Episcopal Diocese of Utah Policy on Calling a Priest

Policy Number: P002

August, 2017 Rev 2

With the help of the deployment officer and chancellor, the vestry and wardens will draft a Letter of Agreement to be presented to the candidates when they come for their interviews. In a parish, the wardens will meet with the candidate to present the job description and the compensation package being offered. In a mission congregation, the deployment officer will join the wardens for this portion of the visitation.

ANNOUNCEMENT AND CELEBRATION

Once the call has been issued and accepted, and Letters Dimissory have been received, the public announcement is made and a Celebration of New Ministry is planned in coordination with the bishop's office.

CONTINGENCY PLAN

In the event that the process does not result in an election or if the call is not accepted, then the bishop and deployment officer will meet with the vestry and wardens to determine how best to proceed.