

Reaching Out for What Lies Ahead:

Transition Ministry for Congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan



This one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13b-14

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a priest for this congregation 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

Adapted from The Book of Common Prayer, p.818

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

All congregations are faced from time to time with the task of calling a new Rector or Vicar. As your congregation comes to this next step in its spiritual journey, please remember that you are not alone. This is an opportunity to spend time with God and one another preparing together for an even stronger future for your church community. I and my staff also very much look forward to being part of this journey with you.

Before you rush to engage this process, please step back for a moment and think about how major transitions affect our lives. Consider a significant transition in your own life: getting married, separated or divorced, becoming widowed, becoming a parent, beginning a new job or vocation, moving to a new city, growing older, facing serious illness, or any other significant transition in your life. Reflect upon what you have felt during these significant changes in your life. Were you anxious? Hopeful? Afraid? Where did you find your support? What surprised you about your experience? What did you learn about yourself? What did you come to know about God?

Transition periods often include times of stress, frustration, and perhaps even friction. If you are reading this, you are probably one of the leaders of your community. If so, I ask you at all stages of the transition process to show patience and to be a non-anxious presence, to approach the transition positively as a journey and opportunity, and to share this journey as part of the story of your walk with God. All of the steps from the time a priest leaves until the installation of new ordained leadership can be part of an exciting, grace-filled time of growth and discernment. At the beginning, we need to accept that we are not yet ready for where God is leading us and this is a time of preparation and an important part of our spiritual journey together. The processes outlined in this manual are meant to help you during this journey, and to help make possible the spiritual growth and renewal God desires for you as the opportunities presented by this transition unfold.

Because of some discomfort with change, you might be tempted to rush through this transition process. But I urge you, as your chief pastor, to take full advantage of the rich possibilities for reflection that will be afforded to you because of this time of transition. Is there evidence that the Holy Spirit may be preparing the way for new endeavors? (Equally important, does your congregation have tired ministries that should be laid to rest?) What unique gifts, interests, resources, or even challenges within your church community might inform the direction of your search or the nature of the priest whom you will call to serve among you? Asking these and other questions will surely enrich your long-range mission and lay the groundwork for a wise call.

In some cases this transition period may be the first time that your present congregational leadership has close contact with members of our diocesan staff. During this entire process, you will be working with our Canon for Congregational Life, Jim Gettel. An effective and positive

search process for your congregation will rely on regular, clear communication with Canon Gettel, myself, and others who may be working with you. We are eager to be of service to you, and we hope that this manual will help you all along the way.

Once again, let me remind you that you are not alone. I urge you to stop and pray together often. I will also be praying with and for you, that you will clearly discern God's will in all the ministries that you share.

Yours in Christ's service,

The Rt. Rev. Bishop Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr.
10th Bishop, Diocese of Michigan

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How to Use this Manual

At first glance, this manual may seem long, complex, and perhaps overwhelming. The process of calling a new priest (and all the related steps, relationships and tasks) will bring forth and put to the test all the best prayers, skills, and resources that your congregation has to offer.

Don't lose heart!

The transition in your congregation's ordained leadership is mostly a linear process. In other words, your transition will seem easier and more manageable if you simply focus on one task at a time. In some cases you will need to coordinate several tasks and look ahead just a bit. Even then, you will keep moving forward if you ask God for help and keep your mind on the most important duty at hand.

To make the best use of this manual, read through it once, from cover to cover, noting your questions but not worrying too much about remembering all of it. Then start again at the beginning and simply focus on the few tasks that are most important for where your congregation presently is in its journey.

This manual makes use of the Office of Transition Ministry processes of the Episcopal Church and the best practices and procedures of our Diocese and others. Around the country and within our Diocese, transition processes have been significantly improved just since 2010. *Please especially familiarize yourself with the new systems and processes if you have participated in an earlier search process.*

This material is not copyrighted. You are encouraged to make copies of this entire manual as follows: one copy for each member of the Vestry or Bishop's Committee (both referred to as "Vestry" throughout this manual), one copy for your newsletter editor (who will hopefully use it to help you communicate with members of your congregation), one copy for each member of your Profile Team and Search Team, and at least one copy readily available for parishioner reference and displayed in a public place such as the parish hall or office.

A Brief Overview of Transition Ministry

Calling new clergy is a process of mutual discernment, engaged in by the congregation and the clergy candidates, in partnership with the Bishop and the Bishop's Office. This exciting time of seeking the best clergy match (not the best priest) for a congregation should be carried out prayerfully and with faith. Each step of the discernment requires a commitment of time and resources by God's people deeply rooted in prayer. The transition journey also requires clear and honest communication, hospitality, wisdom, patience, and prayers.

The **Vestry**, working closely with transition clergy and the Bishop's Office, has overall responsibility for the entire transition process. The Vestry approves the Bishop's appointment of an interim priest or priest-in-charge, prepares the budget for the search process and the compensation packages for clergy, appoints and oversees the Profile and Search Teams, and helps lead the processes of visioning and strengthening the church community. The Vestry assists the congregation in actively participating in the transition process and, when the process is complete, may elect the new priest with the Bishop's approval.

The **Bishop** needs to be a part of the transition process from the very beginning. The Bishop has ultimate responsibility for the ministry of all congregations in the Diocese and needs to approve the start and completion of steps in the transition process, interim priest or priest-in-charge appointments, all final candidates, and the election of the new priest.

A. Goals for a Transition Journey

An interim time allows a healthy transition and effective ministry while a congregation seeks new ordained leadership. When the energy present is properly focused, the transition journey offers the congregation time and steps to:

- separate from the leadership of the departing priest,
- prepare to do new things God has planned,
- strengthen and inform lay leadership,
- complete a self-study to clarify mission and direction, and
- find a priest to help lead the congregation in its mission

B. Five Steps of Transition Ministry

Congregations that experience a successful call are those that see "the search" as part of an overall period of transition. An intentional "transition ministry" can briefly be understood in terms of the following five Steps:

1. *Saying Goodbye* to the departing priest (Step 1)

How you say good-bye to your departing priest will help your church community find closure and celebration of the past so that the community may begin to look forward with anticipation to the future.

2. *Strengthening the Community* (Step 2)

How you deal with one another during the transition will significantly affect the morale of your members, the tone of your search, and the ability of your congregation to grow into the future. Development tasks of the transition period include:

- Coming to terms with history
- Understanding the shifting context churches face today
- Revisiting scriptures that address the nature and calling of the church
- Discovering a new and continuing identity
- Strengthening lay leadership
- Strengthening ties with the wider church
- Learning to better love one another

The Vestry also prepares a financial plan for the congregation for the next three years, including transition and search costs and a three year budget to be sure new and continuing ministries will be on solid financial grounds.

3. *Discerning God's Plan* (Step 3)

A process of discernment can be viewed in theological terms as a ministry of listening performed by members of the Vestry and other leaders on behalf of this faith community. The main question is: "Who is God calling us to be now?" Through this process, the congregation may create new foundational identifying statements (core values, mission and vision statements with a strategy and goals) – all discerned by congregational leaders to achieve the vision of the church.

The tangible end products of a process of discernment are a narrative parish profile and an Office of Transition Ministry (OTM) Community Portfolio. The Vestry will appoint a **Profile Team** that has the skills and commitment to create these profiles to reflect the true identity of the congregation.

4. Calling a Priest (Step 4)

A **Search Team** will handle the work of identifying a priest candidate for the Vestry to elect and call with the Bishop's consent. The Vestry appoints the Search Team to exercise this ministry of

discernment on behalf of the Vestry, and the Search Team fulfills the charge of the Vestry by conducting the search for the new priest. The responsibilities of the Search Team include: understanding the identity of the congregation from the parish profiles and their own experiences; working closely with the Bishop's Office to identify candidates and conduct the search; being faithful in discernment and following a system for screening, interviewing, evaluating and notifying candidates; and nominating a candidate to the Vestry for possible election.

5. Welcoming (Step 5)

A healthy start for the new priest will involve an intentional orientation and evaluation throughout the first year.

C. Timing

No one can predict the exact amount of time needed for each step in the transition journey. A short process, when all of the parties and circumstances work together well, can be completed in twelve to eighteen months. The length of time to complete any given stage depends upon many variables, including the frequency of meetings, willingness of members to work independently and collaboratively, issues that need to be addressed (e.g., financial challenges or resolving conflict), and the length of time needed to develop consensus about the future direction of the congregation and develop the parish profiles. It is better to take longer and assure a happy outcome than to force the work into a preconceived idea of the "right" length of time. A realistic timeline is designed to achieve a balance between efficiency and a pace that encourages thoughtful discernment, caution and thoroughness.

A sample timeline might look like this:

Discernment and Profiles	6 - 9 months
Receiving Names	2 months
Narrowing the Field	1 month
Phone Interviews	1 month
Site Visits, In-person Interviews	1 - 2 months
Time between call and arrival of new priest	2 - 3 months
Total Time	12 - 18 months

Each congregation moves at its own pace and according to its own process of discernment; this timetable is suggested only as an aid in gauging progress and not for purposes of holding to a certain schedule.

Almost invariably some members of the congregation (if not the Vestry itself) will protest that "nothing is happening," especially during the period of saying goodbye and the first month or

so that follows, and again toward the end of the process, as arrangements for interviews seem to drag on for longer than anyone expected. Some who are experienced in the business world may argue that a responsible Vestry should be taking steps to fill the clergy vacancy as soon as possible. They will insist that good business management would not tolerate a prolonged vacancy in a key position. However, there is much in this journey to new relationships that cannot be included in a job description or contract. Developing stronger faith relationships – with God, one another and a new priest – requires time to develop mutual trust. New relationships cannot develop until former relationships are well settled in the past and reasonable plans are made for responding to God’s call for a future together. Then it takes some time to discover the person with whom you will have a new trusting relationship. It is unwise to hasten the call of a new priest just as it is unwise to hastily jump into any close relationship. What may seem to be irresponsible delay now will likely be seen, in hindsight, as a valuable part of your congregation's transition to new leadership.

For those eager for a process that is as efficient as possible, experience suggests that the following commitments by your Vestry and congregation can promote a more effective transition ministry and search:

- Interim priest or priest-in-charge. Congregations with resident interim priests or priests-in-charge generally address development tasks more efficiently.
- Openness to consultation. Willingness to collaborate with and rely on the wisdom of persons seasoned in the process prevents "blind-alley" and "reinventing-the-wheel" activities.
- Size of teams. Too many or too few members prolong the process. Experience suggests a range of seven to eleven is the best size for a Search Team; a Profile Team might be smaller.
- Number of candidates. Often, the fewer the candidates, the shorter the process.
- Seasonal considerations. There are many tasks to be done on a complicated schedule. During certain seasons (Christmastide and Holy Week/Easter come to mind) focus on those tasks is rightly broken. Summer vacations often dilute the intensity of effort.

D. Diocesan Requirements

All searches in the Diocese of Michigan are undertaken on a non-discriminatory basis. Requests for the elimination of certain categories of people, based on matters such as race, color, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by the canons will not be granted.

The Bishop is eager to have qualified clergy from within the Diocese be given serious consideration by congregations in search. Any priest in the Diocese who meets the qualifications of the position should be given the benefit of at least a phone interview.

E. Approach

The transition process is fairly linear, so it's important to just focus on each next step. A goal is to fully follow the recommended processes of the Episcopal Church and this Diocese and possibly add some enhancements. We need to be flexible with each stage of the process to allow time for development tasks to strengthen the church community and for discernment and calling processes. There is often time added to the end of the process for working out the terms of the letter agreement, for a full background check and for the new priest to complete their current ministry and to move into the area.

Step 1: Saying Goodbye

A. Notifying the Bishop's Office

The transition process begins when the **departing priest** meets with the Bishop and they determine together when the announcements to the wardens, Vestry and congregation will be made. Generally at least 60 to 90 days' notice should be given to the Bishop. In the case of a retirement, a greater notice period (6 months to a year) may be appropriate so that a thoughtful transition plan may be developed.

The departing priest should notify the wardens (in person) and, with the wardens, notify the Vestry of his or her decision to leave. The priest and wardens will jointly determine how the congregation will be informed of the priest's departure.

The wardens and Vestry are the formal and canonical leadership of the congregation during the transition period; as such, they hold the responsibility of choosing a course of action best suited to their particular congregation and situation. The **Senior and Junior Wardens** are the chief lay officers of the congregation, responsible for many of the affairs of the congregation in the absence of a rector or vicar. When the knowledge of an opening occurs or is imminent, the Senior Warden notifies the Bishop and maintains communication with the Diocesan Transition Minister throughout the process. With the help of the Bishop's Office, the wardens must make arrangements for the conduct of worship and pastoral care until an interim priest or priest-in-charge is appointed. When there is a gap in official ministries, the wardens can secure names of supply clergy through the Bishop's Office to assist on Sundays and when needed. In addition to arranging for supply clergy, the Senior Warden (or in his/her absence, the Junior Warden) is responsible for presiding at the election of the new priest and communicating that election to the Bishop, negotiating with the newly called priest on behalf of the congregation and assisting the new priest as his or her ministry begins.

As soon as the departing priest announces to the wardens his or her intention to leave a congregation, the wardens will make an appointment with the Bishop or Diocesan Transition Minister to discuss the state of the congregation and their options in the upcoming transition period. At this meeting, the wardens report generally on the congregation and are briefed in turn on what typically lies ahead for a congregation in transition. After the initial meeting of the wardens with the Bishop's Office, the Diocesan Transition Minister will visit the church to meet with the Vestry and/or the full congregation, normally sometime after the departure of the priest. The Diocesan Transition Minister will explain the various search options and share an overview of the search process.

B. Process of Saying Goodbye

The Vestry, congregation, and priest together should plan and carry out the farewell and celebration of the priest's ministry. Whether the priest is leaving because of retirement, a call to another congregation, or even because of differences with the congregation, the elements of

the separation process remain the same. Much of the energy of the congregation during this time should be devoted to saying “goodbye” (from “God be with you”) to the departing priest. Until the priest leaves, the primary tasks are to arrange an exit interview, plan the priest’s departure and provide opportunities for people to say goodbye in a celebratory manner. Generally, a congregation will not begin other steps in the transition process before the departing priest leaves.

The wardens, Vestry and priest should encourage all parishioners to be a part of the farewell and to take time individually to share a few last words with the outgoing priest. The community may give a community gift to the outgoing priest, something formal from “all of you.” It can be an item or money collected (a “purse”). A gift from the church marks the importance of your communal relationship with the outgoing priest.

At the final farewell, the Vestry is responsible to line up appropriate speakers. A letter should be sent to the congregation from the wardens and Vestry assuring the community about services, pastoral coverage, and the next steps in the transition process.

As with all worship, the farewell liturgy is the responsibility of the priest. The wardens should, however, be involved (either directly or through appointment) in the planning of the service. The Vestry is responsible (along with the outgoing priest) to make sure the community understands that after the goodbye liturgy the pastoral relationship with the outgoing priest is ended. This means that all worship services, weddings and funerals in the future will be conducted by interim clergy, supply clergy or the next rector or vicar after that person is called (and not by the priest who has departed). For a sample celebration of ministry in worship, see the Liturgy for the Ending of a Pastoral Relationship in the Book of Occasional Services.

Clergy and wardens should be mindful that parishioners are often expressing grief and anxiety at the loss of their priest. Therefore, particular attention should be paid to openly discussing appropriate boundaries for pastoral relationships with the congregation before the priest departs. See “Responsibilities of Any Priest on Leaving a Congregation” in the next section.

C. Responsibilities of Any Priest on Leaving a Congregation¹

A good beginning depends on a good ending. Your congregation's ability to call your successor depends on how well you leave and on your ability to let go. Your character and integrity are demonstrated in how you leave a position. Please follow the all of the following best practices to the extent possible and recognize that the Bishop particularly requires you to follow the practices for *Leave-taking Essentials* and the rules for *Relating After You Leave*:

¹ With gratitude to the Rev. Thomas Orso, Canon for Deployment for the Episcopal Diocese of New York for sharing this thorough pastoral checklist.

Leave-taking Essentials

Inform the Bishop in writing of your leaving and the date of your last service. The canons also require the wardens to notify the Bishop that the congregation is without a priest.

With the wardens, send a letter to the congregation announcing that you are ending your pastoral relationship and expressing your gratitude for your mutual ministry. Assist the wardens with writing a letter to the congregation that outlines your plan for leaving and assures them that they will have support and guidance from the Bishop's Office through the transition.

With the Vestry, clarify the terms of unused leave or vacation time, plans for continuing contributions into the Church Pension Fund, and arrangements for insurance coverage. Notify the Church Pension Fund, securing the proper forms, if you are retiring. The Bishop's signed approval is required for retirement.

Let people say goodbye, thank you, and give you their blessing.

Encourage and emphasize hospitality for welcoming new clergy and their loved ones. Assist the wardens as needed in making arrangements for temporary emergency pastoral coverage immediately following your leaving.

Plan a ritual ending of your pastoral relationship within the context of worship. Refer to the Book of Occasional Services for suggestions. Plan an ending with congregational committees, organizations and staff.

Communicating Your Decision

Develop an agreement with the Vestry and let the congregation know, in writing, that,

- you value their friendship;
- after you leave, you will no longer be able to function as their pastor or priest;
- it no longer will be your role to officiate at their baptisms, weddings, and funerals;
- you will come back only at the invitation of your successor; and
- then you will only attend as their former pastor.

Notify local ecumenical groups or clergy associations that you are leaving and resign from positions you hold in community organizations.

Preparing to Go

Schedule an exit interview with the Diocesan Transition Minister and a mutual review of ministry with the Vestry and other appropriate congregational leaders.

List all your current responsibilities, assigning a hand off date, and designating a specific person to take up that task.

With the wardens, review all leadership positions, clarify roles and responsibilities.

Update job descriptions for paid staff.

Meet privately with individuals with whom there may have been tension or conflict.

Be clear about any commitments (baptisms, weddings, funerals) you have scheduled for immediately after your leave-taking date.

Organizing For Your Successor

Review with the wardens and Vestry their leadership responsibilities for property, finance, and administration during the transition.

Identify those in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and home bound, noting who expects to be visited and with what regularity.

Note significant pastoral concerns such as premarital counseling, pregnancies, divorces in process, terminally ill, and the bereaved, remembering to maintain confidentiality of matters that are pastorally sensitive.

Note preplanned funeral arrangements and where the information is filed.

Prepare a calendar for the upcoming year, including Episcopal visitations, parish picnic, patronal feasts, sunrise services, graduations, every member canvas, stewardship, and annual meeting. Leave clear instructions about your congregation's participation in community or ecumenical services, as well as their expectations about preaching and hosting future events.

Balance the discretionary fund and turn it over to the wardens.

List any special funds, their purpose, use and signatories, including scholarships and other financial commitments.

Create a contact list of congregational leaders, including roles and e-mail addresses. Prepare a file of lay reader certificates, lists of current altar guild members, ushers, acolytes, and servers with contact information (phone numbers and e-mail addresses).

Preserve historic documents. Prepare a file of audits, parochial reports, annual reports, copies of budgets for three years, and bylaws. Make sure congregation lists and service registers are up to date. Prepare a file of service leaflets for the past three years. Describe unique congregation customs for the conduct of worship especially weddings and funerals. Prepare a file of current agreements and contact information for all groups that use the buildings. Note the location of home communion set, chrisms, last year's palms, the nativity set, etc.

Clean out personal files. Keep what you need and carefully dispose of the rest. Take out the trash. Throw away clutter that accumulated for rummage sales in closets, storage areas, or garages.

Leave a notebook. Not a “how to” but a “where to”: Where to get a decent haircut, find a dentist, order Chinese take-out, etc.

Establish a date certain for moving out of church-provided housing and agree on conditions of repair and cleanliness.

Turn in your keys, clearly tagged. Identify the location of the safe and who knows the combination. Identify the location of the bank deposit box and who has keys.

Don't leave anything for the next priest. If it needs to be done, do it. Too many arriving clergy are sunk by things left undone.

Relating After You Leave

In all cases, the responsibility belongs to clergy leaving to make clear that the pastoral relationship has ended.

Remember, you have no official or canonical role in the congregation you leave and your priestly, pastoral, and administrative functions end on the effective date of your retirement or resignation. In the absence of a rector, vicar, interim priest or priest-in-charge, the wardens are canonically responsible for the worship, finance, property, and administration of the congregation.

Arrange for change of address and mail forwarding. After your last day, do not return to the office to check for mail, e-mail, or phone messages.

Never be involved with the search process – including giving names, offering opinions about candidates, or even suggesting how to run the process.

Avoid getting triangulated with members of the congregation and your successor.

Be clear that it is not appropriate for you to discuss any church business after you leave.

Make plans to worship with another congregation.

Step 2: Strengthening the Community

A. Provision for Clergy Leadership during the Transition

Appointment by the Bishop

Pursuant to the canons of the Episcopal Church, the Bishop, in conversation with the wardens, may appoint a priest to provide clerical leadership during the transition period. Depending on the particular needs of the congregation, the Bishop may appoint either an interim priest or a priest-in-charge, described below, to serve the congregation.

The Bishop chooses an appointment (from among qualified local candidates or “external” candidates recruited by the Diocesan Transition Minister for the position) and recommends one candidate to the wardens and Vestry. The candidate meets with the Vestry. Normally, this should take the form of an informal Vestry conversation (greet/meet) and/or a visit by a small group to observe the priest in the congregation (s)he is serving. The candidate is not to be subjected to a prolonged “approval” process. If the Vestry and the candidate agree, a covenant of ministry (letter of agreement) setting forth the mutual obligations and responsibilities of the interim priest or priest-in-charge and the Vestry is negotiated. The appointment is official upon the approval of the covenant by the Bishop. If the proposed appointment of a particular priest is not felt to be a “good fit” by either the Vestry or the clergy person, the Bishop will draw upon that experience in order to identify another candidate for appointment. The presentation of a subsequent candidate is dependent upon the identification and availability of suitable candidates and may require weeks or months. Recognizing that the transition journey is a period of intentional discernment and change and that a priest specifically trained in transition ministry is the best person to accompany a congregation along this journey, it is not customary or desirable that a current assistant or associate priest serve as the interim priest or priest-in-charge.

All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as mutual ministries of the laity of the congregation and the interim priest or priest-in-charge. The Vestry leads the laity to support and cooperate with the interim priest or priest-in-charge in pursuit of congregational goals and in the performance of the development tasks of the transition period. The Vestry is the legal agent for the congregation in all matters concerning its corporate property and in its relationship with the priest. The Vestry will see to it that the priest is properly supported, personally and organizationally, as well as in the congregation's financial obligations to the priest.

Recognizing that the review of a congregation's total ministry should be a continuing process, the interim priest or priest-in-charge, wardens and Vestry are expected to meet monthly to clarify expectations and to evaluate successes and raise concerns from the congregation, staff, or leaders in order to ensure the effectiveness of their joint ministry. A time for mutual ministry review by Vestry and clergy must be set forth in the covenant of ministry. The Bishop also expects monthly reports to the Diocesan Transition Minister by the interim priest or priest-in-

charge, as well as attendance at monthly meetings of the Diocesan Interim Ministry group. Regular review of progress toward interim ministry or development tasks helps in evaluating the strength of the community and planning and approving further steps of the transition journey.

Interim Priests

An interim priest is a priest trained to assist congregations during a time of transition, especially during the period between the leave-taking of one rector or vicar and the calling of another. It is an intentional ministry of sustaining the direction and ministry of a congregation as defined by the Vestry and of reviewing the past, assessing the present, and evaluating the future. It is expected that the ministry during the interim period will be different from that experienced by members of the congregation under the previous priest.

A primary goal of the interim priest's ministry is to prepare the congregation for the coming of the next priest. To this end, the interim priest helps the congregation deal with a sense of loss and any unresolved issues arising from the former priest's departure, deals with internal conflicts and helps heal any divisions within the congregation, and helps the Vestry, lay leaders and staff make such changes as may be needed to align congregational life and administration with generally accepted standards in the Diocese. *The interim priest is not eligible to be a candidate for rector or vicar of the congregation.*

The interim period is also seen as a prime time for renewal, re-energizing the congregation in its life and mission. Beyond maintaining effective ministry during this period, the Vestry and interim priest are expected to work together to prepare for a healthy transition to the next stage of the congregation's journey. The interim priest (a) represents and extends the ministry which is the Bishop's pastoral and canonical responsibility for congregations in leadership transition; (b) leads the congregation as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of the congregation and of the whole church, in communion with our Bishop; (c) works with the Vestry and other lay leaders to maintain the regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices (weddings, funerals, baptisms), calling upon the sick and shut-in, visiting newcomers, and ongoing administration of the congregation; (d) supervises all congregation staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the interim priest; and (e) supports the Vestry in its responsibilities, including the hiring, evaluation and termination of staff.

Specific tasks to be addressed include: 1) Coming to terms with the history of the congregation and its relationships with previous clergy. 2) Discovering the congregation's special identity, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership. 3) Dealing with shifts in leadership roles that naturally evolve in times of transition, allowing new leaders to come to the fore constructively. 4) Renewing and reworking relationships with the Diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to the other. 5) Building commitment to the leadership of the new rector in order to be prepared to move into the future with openness to new possibilities.

Priests-in-Charge

A priest-in-charge generally is appointed for a one to three year time period during which the congregation works on specific, clearly articulated goals. A priest-in-charge appointment occurs when a congregation's wardens or Vestry in conversation with the Bishop believe the congregation is not best served by immediately initiating a search for new clergy. This is a recognition that the congregation would be better served by a time of self-study/discernment and/or consideration of significant issues (e.g., finances, conflict) before it proceeds with a search. Any of the following circumstances might indicate a need to call a priest-in-charge:

- The congregation has been served for many years by the same clergy person;
- A period of instability or conflict has preceded or followed the departure of the clergy person;
- A joint collaborative ministry (e.g. cluster, merger, etc.) appears worth exploring with other congregations;
- The necessary financial support for hiring new clergy is lacking and needs to be addressed; or
- The congregation would benefit from a period of stable and consistent ministry before it turns its attention to a search.

If there is agreement on the benefits of a priest-in-charge appointment, it is often helpful for the Vestry to prepare a brief profile describing the congregation, what it seeks in a priest-in-charge, and what it will offer to the priest-in-charge (e.g., total compensation, administrative support).

A priest-in-charge exercises the duties of Canons III.9.3(b) and III.9.5 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church, subject to the authority of the Bishop. It is expected that within six months of the appointment, the Vestry and priest-in-charge will jointly establish mutually responsible short-term and long-term expectations/goals for the mission and ministry of the congregation. Although each congregational situation is different, recognizable stages during the tenure of a priest-in-charge may include:

- a. **Introductory Stage (Lasts 9-12 months):** Getting to know each other; building relationships; becoming familiar with the rhythm of life together; identifying and beginning to address conflicts/challenges.
- b. **Romance Stage (Lasts 9-12 months):** Trust is built; develop confidence in working together; and begin to do some future planning.
- c. **Discernment Stage (Lasts 6-9 months):** Vestry, clergy and congregation are discerning and visioning in relation to one another. The Vestry will undertake a

period of intentional self-study for the church community, asking: Where are we? What is our mission/ministry? What kind of clergy leadership do we need/want?

- d. Post-Discernment: Is this priest-in-charge the right person to continue as rector or vicar? With the approval of the Bishop, a priest-in-charge may become a candidate for rector or vicar of the congregation following a period of mutual discernment (mutual ministry review) undertaken after two full years. If a priest-in-charge is not called to serve as rector or vicar of the congregation, his or her covenant may be ended or extended.
- e. Closure Stage (Final 6-9 months): If priest-in-charge is appointed rector or vicar, the focus becomes setting short/long-term goals and strategies. If the priest-in-charge is not appointed rector or vicar, a development process continues or a formal search process begins under an interim priest or priest-in-charge.

B. Financial Planning for Transition

A congregation preparing to call a new priest must ascertain that it will have adequate financial resources to make the call. This means that it needs to be able to support an interim priest or a priest-in-charge to serve the congregation during the transition period, an adequate budget for the search process, and at least the first three years of the new priest's ministry. **It is the responsibility of the congregation to demonstrate that it is financially able to sustain itself and provide the requisite compensation and benefits for clergy for at least a three-year period following the calling of the new clergy.**

A congregation, therefore, must meet the following requirements in order to undertake calling a new priest:

- Demonstrated ability to pay the full compensation and benefits cost of the rector for the next three years without substantial invasion of investments/endowments, OR an equivalent ministry plan, reviewed with the Diocesan Transition Minister, that outlines a shared/collaborative ministry or part-time ministry;
- Confirmation either that the congregation has no debt or has a viable debt repayment plan;
- Submission of budgets for past 3 years, current budget, and current monthly and year-to-date financial reports.
- Submission of audits performed for the past two years with evidence of timely response and action on recommendations to the most recent risk assessment;
- Current and regular payment of diocesan apportionment; and

- Compliance with any other canonical requirements, including requirements for parochial reports.

Often the compensation and benefit package for an interim priest or a priest-in-charge will be similar to a former full-time priest’s package.

A Sample Budget for the Search Process might look like this:

Discernment Retreat (honorarium & expenses, non-overnight)	\$ 500
Telephone and Fax costs	\$ 200
Oxford Document Background checks (3 final candidates)	\$ 45-\$175 per candidate
Short List Candidates Visit to Congregation	\$500 -\$2500*
Visits to Candidates’ Congregation	\$ 500 -\$2000*
Final Candidates’ Visits to Congregation	\$ 500 -\$2500*
Printing and Postage	\$ 500 -\$3000**
Moving Expenses of New Rector	\$3,000 –\$12,000 *
Celebration of New Ministry	\$ 300 -\$600

*These figures are estimates only and vary greatly depending on how wide the search is extended geographically in the final stages and the location of the priest-elect.

**Costs are largely determined by costs of printing the parish profile

To determine the overall budget, the Vestry will also need to decide on the range of the compensation and benefit package that it will offer a new priest.

A congregation may request that the Diocese’s Director of Finance or another financial consultant meet with the wardens, treasurer and any other appropriate people to help the congregation understand the state of its current business and financial practices. A review of financial results may also help a congregation ascertain the scope of its future ministry. Financial consultants can help guide a congregation toward a place of vitality in preparation for new ministry.

C. Development Goals

An effective transition journey provides both the time and the focus by which a congregation can strengthen its ministries, rediscover and renew its goals and resources, and prepare positively for a new priest. In a well-led transition, the process of self-study, search, and call can occur in a climate of honesty, healing, dreaming, building, and celebrating as the Body of Christ. The church finds that far from being “on hold” during this period, it is directly and creatively engaged with the most essential issues of its common life. Freed from a sense of panic or crisis, the transition period can be a time of surprising renewal and growth.

Five development tasks of a transition ministry period were first defined by Loren Mead in a monograph entitled *The Developmental Tasks of the Congregation in Search of a Pastor* and then elaborated on in his book *Critical Moment of Ministry: A Change of Pastors*:

1. **Coming to Terms with History/Heritage:** It is important for congregations to know their history so that they can appreciate their heritage and at the same time be aware of the issues and concerns that need to be resolved in order to move freely into the future. Churches sometimes have “old issues” or conflicts which were never fully resolved and which tend to resurface in unsettled times. A congregation needs to be released from any inappropriate or crippling power of the past in order to be fully ready for a future with a new leader.
2. **Discovering a New Identity/Mission:** Identity is the task of understanding "who we are now in our present context and what it is we understand God is calling us to be." It is the task of discerning the mission and the vision to which a congregation is being called. Often congregations have a strong self-image, positive or negative, which may or may not truthfully reflect present realities. Through the transition journey, it is essential that both the Vestry and the congregation develop a clear sense of the church's identity, recognizing both strengths and needs. This calls for a careful self-assessment by the congregation, so that it can envision more clearly what it wishes to become.
3. **Strengthening Patterns of Lay Leadership:** In most congregations, over a period of time the leadership begins to take on much of the style and values of the previous priest. When that priest leaves, some people who have been in leadership rethink their commitment and determine whether or not they want to continue in leadership positions. Other individuals discover an opportunity to take on new leadership roles. This is a great time to consider whether, as a whole, patterns of lay involvement in the church are healthy or unhealthy, empowering or disempowering for most of the congregation, and to empower and to welcome leadership gifts from all parts of the congregation.
4. **Strengthening Ties to the Wider Church/Connections:** During the transition period, congregations find themselves working more closely than usual with the Bishop's Office and Episcopal Church resources. A primary opportunity exists to reinforce and strengthen a congregation's sense of belonging to the wider church.
5. **Commitment to New Leadership and to a New Future:** During the transition process, two significant tasks are going on simultaneously: the congregation is fulfilling the necessary concrete steps in the process of finding a new priest, and the congregation is readying itself structurally, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually to enter into partnership with a new leader. This task is to strengthen the church's capacity to be a growing, changing, forward-looking body. When a congregation develops a shared vision of its future and seeks to call a priest to help lead it in moving into that future, there will probably be a new commitment both to that new leader and to that new future.

More recently, other important development tasks have been identified by Anthony B. Robinson in *Rethinking Interim Ministry*:

6. **Understanding the Shifting Context Churches Face Today:** Robinson writes that, “Most congregations learned to be and do church in a period when the culture at large was more, even highly, supportive of Christian churches. And most formed their patterns when the ethos and values of modernity, including commitments to reason, tolerance and objectivity, were firmly entrenched. All of this has changed now.” So we need “to raise awareness and create conversation about the shifting context.” Church communities can recognize that their present circumstances are contextual and that there are new ways to respond more effectively to this new context.
7. **Revisiting Scriptures that Address the Nature and Calling of the Church:** Robinson writes that, when churches lose touch with what St. Paul calls the “extraordinary power that belongs to God” which we hold in “earthen vessels,” their “tendency is to turn the earthen vessel—the form or organization of church we have known—into an idol.” As congregations re-think and re-discover their mission or purpose, re-focusing on the key texts and themes of Scripture helps to till the soil and broaden the horizon by exploring the questions of what the church is and what the church’s vocation is.

The ability to do any of these development tasks is founded on the most important task:

8. **Learning to Better Love One Another:** Living into loving relationships in Christian community is an initiation into living into God’s kingdom. The Great Commandment, the law of God’s kingdom, is to love God and one’s neighbor as oneself. The new commandment is to love as Jesus has loved us, to love as fully and completely “as I have loved you” (John 13:34-35). Loving relationship is not easy or natural, but it is essential “for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4:25 and I Corinthians 12:25-27). Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” A church community shows forth God’s love to the world when that love is experienced, shared and manifested within the community itself. “See how they love one another!” affirms the reality of Christian community; and “See how poorly they treat each other!” denies it. A church community only shows forth God’s love when members love one another and then reach out to others in love. We can always get better at this! This is the time to directly address any interpersonal or intergroup conflicts and create new boundaries for healthy and growing relationships.

The transition period is, of course, also a time to: continue programs already underway and make them more effective and meaningful; strengthen stewardship and financial condition; enhance communication processes; improve administrative structures, processes, procedures and efficiency; and evaluate and replace staff members if necessary.

The wardens, Vestry and clerical leadership can largely determine their success in strengthening the community and preparing for the future during the transition period by considering five questions:

1. How strong are our community relationships?
2. How are we doing with celebrating our journey and confronting challenges?
3. How are we doing in raising up new leadership?
4. How are we doing in recognizing the abundance of God's kingdom (vs. always dealing with issues of scarcity or shortages of resources)?
5. How are we doing in clarifying our identity and mission?

The process of strengthening community is ongoing throughout the transition period and should take precedence over the search process as necessary.

Step 3: Discerning God's Plan

The wardens, Vestry and clerical leadership during the transition period need to initiate a comprehensive process of listening to the congregation to take stock of the congregation's strengths, needs, concerns, and likely future mission. The main question is: "Who is God calling us to be now and in the future?" The answer to this question often begins to be expressed through discerning and defining the congregation's core values, mission and vision statements.

The Vestry will confirm its understanding of the calling and identity of the congregation and will appoint a **Profile Team** to take this further by gathering additional information about the congregation and creating two profiles: 1) a narrative profile that tells your congregation's story, and 2) a computerized Office of Transition Ministry Community Portfolio (OTM Portfolio) to be placed on the Episcopal Church OTM website.

A. Discernment and Information Gathering

A period of reflection and information gathering, during which every member feels she or he has an opportunity to participate, helps provide both energy and vision for both the subsequent search and ongoing congregational life.

One recommended process for discerning congregational core values, mission and vision begins with a Holy Conversation. A Holy Conversation involves Vestry members, key leaders and enough other participants (at least 25% of the congregation's average Sunday attendance) and may be based on an Appreciative Inquiry, asking individuals to consider and share:

- Remember a specific time that was a high point for this church community; a time when you felt this church was doing God's work and fulfilling God's mission.
- Name and describe three things you value most about this church community beyond our relationships with each other.
- Think back over your whole lifetime and recall a specific time when the church (maybe this church or maybe another church) made a difference in your life. When and how did it happen? Who was involved? Why was it an important time or event?
- Why have you made this church your faith community? What brought you here and why do you stay?
- What will be the three most exciting and important accomplishments of this church community over the next three to five years? How will you know?

Results from this Holy Conversation are given to the Vestry for review and comment and to the Profile Team for the profiles. The Vestry will use the results to create:

1. **Core Values:** Bring together Vestry members, carefully selected ministry heads, leaders and new members (1 year or less) to meet and identify the congregation's core values. Select ten or fewer from this group to write a core values statement. Obtain Vestry approval of the statement.
2. **Mission Statement:** If a mission statement exists, have the Vestry determine whether the statement reflects the congregation's current mission. If not, the Vestry and other key leaders (no more than 20 total participants) need to create a new mission statement. Our mission or purpose (what a church community is primarily here for) and our vision (what a church community will look like when it is achieving its mission) depend primarily on *whom* the community is to serve and how the community can love and serve the needs of these people. We need to be able to answer the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Remember that in answering this question Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). From this story, we learn that neighbors are people in need who may or may not be members of our community. A question to ask is: what needs would Jesus see in your mission field? Jesus directly identified needs of people on the margins: the sick, poor, widowed, orphaned, disabled, immigrants or prisoners (Matthew 25:35).
3. **Vision Statement:** If the congregation has recently established ministry goals, the Vestry may simply review the goals in light of the Holy Conversation, core values and mission. Otherwise, the Vestry and key leaders need to discern a vision for the immediate future of the congregation's ministry (1-3 years) and identify some of the desired skills, qualities and leadership style needed to lead congregation into fulfillment of its vision and mission.

Please contact the Diocesan Transition Minister for help finding coaches trained to facilitate discernment conversations and to assist your congregation in any or all of the above work. Note that the Vestry may certainly go beyond the results of the Holy Conversation in discerning core values, mission and vision.

Remember to engage as many people in this process as possible. The Vestry and Profile Team may consider it appropriate to add (i) a written survey/questionnaire, (ii) small gatherings, sometimes called "house meetings" or "cottage gatherings," that help get people reacquainted during the transition process and to expose them to one another's thoughts, concerns, and hopes, or (iii) one-on-one interviews, especially of leaders of particular ministries (e.g. music, outreach, children) and staff members. Ministry areas frequently included are summarized in the acronym "SWEEPS": service, worship, evangelism, education, pastoral care and stewardship. Brief surveys are appropriate to generate demographic information about the

congregation, to obtain broader feedback about the ministry goals and leadership skills discerned at the visioning event, and to identify additional hopes and dreams of the congregation. The Profile Team may also gather information from a variety of other sources, including demographic information about the area in which the congregation is located and past history, written and verbal, as supplied by older members or by reviewing archives for historical material.

B. The Profile Team and Parish Profiles

The Profile Team will begin by meeting with the Diocesan Transition Minister to discuss the process and their roles.

The Profile Team writes two parish profiles descriptive of the identity of the church community. Ideally, these profiles serve several purposes:

- *For members of the congregation*, making the profiles allows parishioners to share, sift and sort through a multitude of thoughts, visions, concerns and hopes in a way that ultimately leads to a composite sketch of the particular life of faith shared in your unique community.
- *For deployment officers and bishops*, the profiles present a first impression of the congregation which may help them to identify good candidates (or to eliminate poorly matched candidates).
- *For potential candidates*, the profiles answer basic questions which will help them to decide if they are interested in the congregation, and if so, the profiles provide a basis for asking informed questions to the Search Team during the interview process. The profiles give the Search Team a basis for entering into conversations with candidates about the congregation's strengths, its particular ministries, and its future needs and wants relative to ordained ministry.
- *For discernment of ministry*, good parish profiles enable a congregation to discern what God is calling them to now and in the foreseeable future.

1. The Narrative Profile

The narrative profile is a “story” of the congregation which may range from a one-page summary to a more elaborate and illustrated booklet. This profile briefly describes the personality, mission and ministry of the congregation, and focuses on the uniqueness of the congregation and the passions and gifts for ministry it is seeking in its next priest. This profile can be sent to all inquiring candidates and can be made available via the congregation’s

website. Examples of narrative profiles from past searches are available from the Diocesan Transition Minister.

The description of the congregation contained in the narrative profile is meant to be a representation of the community of faith on which the wardens, Vestry, Profile Team, and congregation agree. Every congregation's story is different and hence every profile will reflect those differences and have its own unique style. Some churches find carrying a theme throughout helps them to focus their story, but this is not necessarily the only approach. It is best to adopt a style of "telling your story" that is open, honest, and hopeful. The more honest and transparent a congregation is in telling its story, including a discussion of current challenges, the greater chance of attracting appropriate candidates and the less opportunity there is for disillusionment following the call.

Whatever format you choose, the essential parts of any narrative profile should include:

- Introduction: Who we are, perhaps including our size (households, average weekly attendance and involvement in ministries and Christian formation), a brief history and predominant characteristics, qualities that make us unique, a description of worship style, and a sense of our ministry priorities.
- Where we are located: A brief geographical and demographic overview of the community in which the church is located. This overview may touch on history, population, income levels, education levels, social, ethnic, and religious diversity, age distribution, growth trends, cultural attractions, quality of schools, distances to various points, housing prices and so on. It is also appropriate to introduce the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan and the Deanery the congregation participates in.
- Our mission and ministry: An overview of the church's core values, mission goals, visions and dreams. More detailed information about the buildings and property, including photographs, can be put on the web site.
- Financial information: A statement of current financial and budget information about the congregation; compensation; housing information.
- Gifts and ministry of the congregation: A description of the skills and abilities of members and how they contribute in partnership with clergy to ministry and mission. This may include descriptions of the purposes, operations and structures of various ministries. It is also important to indicate areas in which the congregation discerns it needs to grow the potential gifts of its people.

- Gifts and ministry of the clergy: A statement about the kind of person the congregation is searching for to be a companion with them in their journey toward fulfilling their mission and vision, including leadership style, clergy gifts for ministry sought by the congregation and other expectations and challenges for the new priest. A position description may expand upon primary responsibilities of the position, identify what other paid staff positions are included in the congregation's budget and whether you have a permanent deacon.

2. The OTM Community Portfolio

In addition to the narrative profile, the Profile Team assists the Vestry in preparing the congregation's OTM Portfolio. OTM stands for The Office for Transition Ministry, a ministry of the Episcopal Church assisting congregations and clergy in transition. The OTM maintains the database of all congregations and clergy in the church discerning a call to new ministry. Think of it as "Match.com" for congregations and clergy. Accordingly, the OTM Portfolio is one of the key and essential tools for calling clergy.

The OTM Portfolio includes information that you would have readily at hand from your parochial report (i.e. basic congregation data, average Sunday attendance etc.), your narrative profile, and perhaps even your congregation's annual report or strategic plan, if there is one. Your OTM Portfolio includes information such as names former rectors and the compensation offered for the new position. A template of the OTM Portfolio is found in Appendix 3.

A search team member may be designated to create and edit the OTM Portfolio on the OTM website. This person can go to the "'Search Chair' Permission for the OTM Portfolio Database" link at www.otmportfolio.org and register as the designated as "Search Chair" for this purpose. The Diocesan Transition Minister will grant permission and the OTM will send an email when permission has been established. When finished, the Diocesan Transition Minister will release the Community Portfolio so that clergy candidates may see it.

Both profiles must be discussed with and approved by the Vestry and the Diocesan Transition Minister. This confirms that, based on the profiles, the Search Team will be looking for the right profile of candidates. Only when all this has been accomplished, and with the Vestry's concurrence, will a Search Team begin the process of identifying and listening to potential candidates and comparing their stories, interests and strengths with those of the congregation.

Step 4: Calling a Priest

A. The Calling Process

The narrative profile and the OTM Portfolio are used to solicit names of potential candidates from the Office of Transition Ministry and from other sources. At this point your congregation is said to be “receiving names” and begins accepting applications from interested priests. Your narrative profile is complete and posted on your congregation’s vibrant and up-to-date website. Your OTM Portfolio is live, indicating to the clergy of the wider church that your congregation is “receiving names.” Our Diocesan website also announces that your congregation is “receiving names.”

Priest applications may be received from the following sources:

- Candidates themselves, who submit their applications directly
- Candidates recommended by parishioners
- Candidates recommended by the Bishop’s Office
- Names received by the Diocesan Transition Minister through other diocesan transition ministers at bi-annual transition ministry conferences (March and September)

The Vestry or Search Team needs to communicate with the congregation about the opportunity to nominate possible candidates and any procedures (i.e., posting a nomination form on the church website).

All clergy candidates from whatever source are asked to send materials directly to the Diocesan Transition Minister. The Diocesan Transition Minister and the Bishop make preliminary reference checks of all suggested candidates and provide a list to the Search Team. The Search Team may only interview candidates for which the Diocesan Transition Minister or the Bishop have completed preliminary reference checks and placed on this list.

The list of candidates may be abbreviated by agreement of the Vestry and the Bishop. In this case, after the Vestry approves the congregation’s profiles, the Bishop’s Office submits the names of a pre-determined number of candidates for the Search Team to consider, thus eliminating the steps of sorting through the papers of many prospective candidates. The Bishop’s Office carries out the extensive groundwork of narrowing the field to a “short list” of candidates, and that process, done carefully and sensitively, takes time. Upon reception of the list, the Search Team conducts its work as it would normally, in reviewing and interviewing the candidates. If a priest is not called as a result of this discernment process, the congregation may ask for more names.

The Search Team narrows the list of candidates and invites them to phone and/or local in-person interviews. The Diocesan Transition Minister will provide guidance about preparing questions and methods for phone and in person interviews. Smaller teams from the Search Team will also visit selected candidates to experience and observe their ministry, including attendance at Sunday services.

The Search Team handles this additional work while the Vestry continues to lead the congregation. Ultimately, the Search Team recommends a candidate to the Vestry and the Vestry makes the decision whether to call. It must be emphasized that the Vestry, not the Search Team, is ultimately responsible for issuing the call for the new priest. For this reason, maintaining good communication and trust with the wardens and Vestry will also be a primary job of the Search Team.

B. Choosing the Search Team

The Search Team is a creation of the Vestry and works for and on behalf of the Vestry. When the profiles are nearing completion, the Vestry calls members to the Search Team. It is important to keep in mind that in accordance with the canons of the church, only the Vestry can issue a call and then only with the approval of the Bishop.

The process of selecting and appointing a Search Team is:

- The Vestry announces its intent to form the Search Team
- The Vestry may invite congregation members to submit their names and other parishioners' names for consideration in the formation of a Search Team by the Vestry. The Vestry should make clear to the congregation that, although volunteers for the Search Team are given careful consideration, because the balance of the team is so crucial to the search process, volunteers may or may not be appointed.
- The wardens and Vestry draw up proposed Search Team membership
- The wardens and Vestry confirm the willingness of proposed members to serve
- The Vestry reviews list of proposed Search Team members and appoints the Search Team
- The Vestry appoints the Chair of the Search Team. The chairperson needs good organizational and team building skills and facilitates meetings, sets agendas, keeps the team on task and connected during the process, and serves as the main point of contact with the Diocesan Transition Minister
- The wardens inform chosen Search Team members
- The wardens announce Search Team membership and arrange for the commissioning service

A Search Team is normally somewhere between 7-12 persons. One or two Vestry members should be appointed to serve on the Search Team in order to act as liaison and information link between the two bodies. One or two members of the Profile Team may also serve on the

Search Team, thereby providing continuity and overlap. The main work of the Search Team is active listening, so having a diverse and representative group of people is very important. The composition of the Search Team should reflect the congregation's diversity, including people of different ages, race, gender, length of membership, liturgical or musical preferences, and from various committees and areas of parish life. This group needs to be equipped for the responsibility of assessing the knowledge, ability and skills of the candidates in light of the identity of the congregation, of which they are representative.

Each member of the Search Team must be able to represent the broad interests of the congregation at large. Thus, individuals who are heavily identified with specific groups, or who may be specifically focused on a single issue, activity, or otherwise are usually not good choices. Openly disaffected persons are generally not helpful to a Search Team. It is not appropriate for staff or other clergy to serve on the Search Team. Generally, the Senior Warden should not serve on the Search Team because all of his or her energies should be devoted to keeping the church going during the transition period. No two people from the same household or immediate family should be on the Search Team. Please note, this is not the time to recruit all those in the congregation with corporate human resource experience to become members of the Search Team. Search Team members will receive candidate names and learn appropriate interview skills. They are primarily asked to be part of a discernment and calling process which is a shared spiritual journey, not a secular hiring process.

The Vestry should attempt to select people with open hearts and minds who will be sensitive to the culture and dreams of the congregation as a whole. Desirable characteristics for all Search Team members are:

- They must be reasonably **disciplined in their faith life**. This means that they are conscious of, and intentional about, their own life of prayer.
- They must be **involved in the church** as a community of faith, regular in their attendance at worship, givers of record, who are actively involved in the programmatic life of the congregation.
- They must be **good listeners**. Regardless of whether they agree or not, the members of the Search Team must be able to listen accurately and respectfully to a broad range of opinions expressed by all sorts and conditions of people.
- They must be able to **maintain confidentiality**. This is absolutely essential to the success of the search effort, and to the reputation of both the congregation and the candidates. Those who cannot resist the temptation to share a secret, or prove that they are "in the know" should simply not be on the Search Team.
- They must be team players, have significant **emotional maturity**, and be able and willing to work productively with, and in the presence of, significant anxiety, tension, and

potentially overt conflict. Search work requires a willingness to “speak the truth in love,” to ask “difficult” questions, and to confront deeply held assumptions.

Regular and faithful attendance at Search Team meetings and an ability to travel are also essential. A good rule of thumb is to plan for one evening meeting each week for approximately six months. Some teams will work faster than this, some will need more time; there will be periods where the team may not meet for several weeks, there will be times when the team will meet several times in the course of a week. Thus “seasonal members” or those whose employment requires extensive travel or uncertain time commitments would not generally be considered effective members. Travel for candidate visits is an important part of search work.

In selecting Search Team members, please do keep in mind the specific roles and skills that most Search Teams require, discussed below. In the body of Christ, no one member possesses all the gifts, rather we need one another. Likewise, no one Search Team member will have all the desired characteristics, but together we can discern the will of God for the community.

C. Coming Together as a Team

The Vestry commissions the members of the Search Team with the responsibility of identifying the new priest and with the ultimate presentation of his or her name to the Vestry for consideration and approval. The “commissioning” appropriately may take place during Sunday worship and signals liturgically the significant responsibility and role that the Search Team members are assuming in the life of the congregation.

As soon as the Search Team is formed, they will meet with the Diocesan Transition Minister to discuss their roles in the search process. They will have six to eight weeks to form as a team and prepare for interviews and discernment conversations during the period the Diocesan Transition Minister is receiving candidate names and doing preliminary reference checks.

A first step is to select members to fill important roles of the Search Team:

- **Chaplain:** Opens and closes every meeting with prayer or a short devotion. May be called upon during the process to help center, focus or discern next steps for the team’s well-being.
- **Recording Secretary:** Keeps the minutes, sends meeting reminders via email, keeps up with all the correspondence and paperwork within the team.
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Takes responsibility for all correspondence in the search process beyond the internal communications including letters to candidates at various stages in the process.
- **Communications Chair:** Coordinates announcements made at every service, notices in the church bulletins and newsletters, asks for prayers for the process and makes sure

they get into the prayers of the people every Sunday. (This Chair does not make all the announcements, just coordinates them.)

- Interview Chair: Takes charge of this step of the process, coordinating the conference telephone calls, making sure candidates are communicated with, helps plan the trips to candidates' congregations.

The Search Team will also determine its meeting schedule and discuss its operating principles (norms), practices for prayer, decision making (generally consensus rather than majority or unanimous agreement), and regularly communicating with the congregation. Some good operating principles to follow include:

- Emphasizing that you are seeking God's will
- Looking for the best match, not the best priest
- Asking for prayers
- Beginning and ending meetings with prayer
- Reading scripture and/or reflection material at each meeting
- Sharing responsibility for prayer and scripture
- Treating each other with mutual respect and trust
- Being open and honest with each other and with the candidates
- Having all Search Team members meet all candidates
- Being sensitive to the candidates and to each other
- Being careful about communications with candidates
- Maintaining confidentiality

D. Communication and Confidentiality

During active search, the Search Team informs the congregation regularly about the general progress of the search process. Keeping the congregation informed helps build trust in the Search Team's work and progress.

Throughout the search process, the Search Team must remain aware of the perceptions and interests of those who think of themselves as being "outside" of the process. While Search Team members may feel that they are drowning in information, some parishioners may feel that they are being kept "out of the loop." A simple communication strategy (emails, tweets, announcements, newsletters, etc.) will help alleviate some potential frustrations. In addition to regular items in the congregation newsletter and Sunday bulletins, you may want to dedicate a section of a prominent bulletin board where minutes of the search committee meetings can be posted. Frequent live announcements from members of the Search Committee (even if the message is, "We have no news this week") convey the message that the Search Committee wants to keep the congregation informed.

No information about candidates, especially names, may be publically shared or discussed at any point during the search process. Similarly, all details about the Search Team's deliberations

are always kept confidential. However, you can still provide interesting information. For instance, you may want to use material from this manual to explain to members the various responsibilities of individuals and "where we are" in the process.

Members of the Search Team must understand how important it is to **maintain confidentiality**. Often, prospective candidates have not yet informed their own congregations that they may be in search. Failing to maintain confidentiality risks great damage both to a candidate and to his or her congregation. The integrity of the process is harmed if a Search Team member "leaks" information to anyone in the congregation, including a spouse or other family member during the course of the search process. Equally important is to provide for the security of search committee files throughout the process. Please carefully consider how to keep all candidate information completely confidential. Whether these applications are printed or maintained in electronic format, it is very important that team members protect their confidentiality and do not allow anyone who is not on the team to see the names or any of the application materials. Usually these materials are shared electronically but members will need to consider whether that is appropriate if they share their computers or email accounts with anyone. Some Search Team Chairs will share files with Team members on USB drives so that they are not saved in shared computers or email boxes.

E. Developing Interview Questions and Process

The Search Team should promptly schedule STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) Interview Training with the Diocesan Transition Minister or a diocesan approved search consultant. From this training, the Search Team will develop appropriate and specific interview questions for candidate phone interviews, visits and in person interviews. (An example of STAR Training, developed by the Diocese of Texas, is available at: http://aa86e41e7d951355383b-cb342165bfeaa4f2927aec8e5d7de41f.r23.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/c/0e473709_cd-star-notebook.pdf.)

The interview questions provided with the STAR Training are all just useful samples. The Search Team will create the questions they feel are appropriate. The most important aspect of the interview process is to be clear about what one hopes to learn in asking a question. In the first stage, when written questions help to reduce the initial list down to something more manageable, the aim is to get an accurate and comprehensive snapshot of the person. During a phone interview, the aim is greater depth into who the person is and the suitability of that person as a match for the congregation. Finally, when interviewing the finalists face to face, the questions need to be evidence-based. In other words, what has the person done in the various areas that are important to this congregation. The best indicator of what a person will do is what that person has done.

After asking a question, take the time to listen. The longer one listens, the more evidence one is able to gather. Let the candidates talk first. Taking time to share concerns and issues in the congregation comes only after the candidate has had his/her opportunity to talk about himself, her ministry, his hopes and dreams. Then remember in every interview setting to provide time

(usually at the end) to answer any questions the candidate may have about the congregation. The nature and quality of these questions (or lack thereof) can also tell you a lot about the candidate.

By reviewing the narrative profile, candidates will be generally acquainted with the financial terms the congregation may offer, but during the final interview stages discussion of the financial package and the general financial status of the congregation must take place. Candidates coming from outside the Diocese should particularly be made aware of the lower cost of living (especially housing) in some parts of Michigan.

F. Screening and Notification of Candidates

The Diocesan Transition Minister will email to the Search Team Chair the names of candidates along with candidates' OTM Portfolios, resumes, cover letters and any additional information requested by the Search Team. This additional information may include written one page answers to up to three thoughtful questions (posed by the Search Team and different from those asked in candidate OTM Portfolios) and a sample sermon.

It is a natural process for the Search Team to eliminate candidates from the list. However, eliminating candidates on the basis of the application materials alone is not a recommended practice unless it is clear from a close reading that the candidate is unsuitable. There may be candidates who have significant gifts that are not apparent "on paper." Similarly, phone or video conference interviews are generally an hour and a half or less in duration and may not provide an ideal setting or a full appreciation for a particular candidate. The usual practice during searches is for Search Teams to weed out candidates they feel do not meet their specifications (i.e. do not qualify to be their priest). Saying they do not qualify implies that they have nothing to give. Consider the idea of weeding in. Weeding in is based on the idea that every clergy person is qualified both academically and spiritually. Therefore, Search Teams should find those whose qualifications, gifts, and talents meet or are very close to the specifications the church is seeking (as depicted in their parish profiles). This way no one is disqualified for lack of qualifications, but rather because their gifts do not match the specifications of the church they have applied to.

Once the Search Team actually begins prayerfully discussing candidate applications and making interviews, visits and reference checks, reducing the number of candidates in the process (according to their gifts and qualifications) happens naturally and easily. Throughout the process, as soon as the Search Team decides not to further consider a candidate, a member of the Search Committee makes a personal phone call to notify the candidate. It is important to remember that clergy in search often put their lives "on hold" or have to make important decisions with respect to their lives and/or their families as their own search processes unfold. Not informing them in a timely manner about the progress of the search not only shows a lack of consideration for the candidates, but also reflects poorly on both the congregation and the Diocese. In the call, thank them for engaging in the process. Tell them the Search Team has chosen to move forward in a different direction. Assure them of God's blessings as they seek

calls to new ministries. The only names to keep at the end are the top two or three. Only after the new priest accepts the call are the one or two who are not chosen notified.

G. Visits to Candidates

Visits to candidates' congregations by smaller groups of Search Team members are extremely important in getting to know the candidates. A group of three or four team members goes for a weekend visit and may need to stay in a hotel if distance is a factor. On Saturday, divide the time into formal and informal sessions. Make certain to include the candidate's spouse in an informal session, perhaps a meal at a nice, quiet restaurant. Offer to pay for babysitting if the candidate has children, and do not include them in the process. The candidate's spouse is not to attend the formal interview sessions. Use STAR questions for the interviews. On Sunday, divide the team's presence in order to attend all Sunday services. When attending Sunday services, don't sit together because teams can be conspicuous to the congregation.

Upon completion of the visit, the team should debrief the interviews as soon as possible, share thoughts and record responses for future reference. At the same time, the group and the Search Team need to be aware of potential limitations of visits to congregations. First, only a representative few from a Search Team are able to attend, thus placing reliance on the insights of a few rather than the whole. Second, these representatives may become distracted by the dynamics of the congregation that they are visiting, losing focus on the candidate. Third, the context of each congregation will differ (some will be in large vibrant congregations, others small and some between calls) and may also be less reflective of actual candidate skills.

If the Search Team discerns that they would like to visit a candidate a second time, send a different group of Search Team members. The first group should review observations with the second group in order to clarify information for the second interview. It's also a good idea to complete reference checks before a second visit.

H. Reference Checks

Please be aware that the purpose of both preliminary reference checks by the Bishop's Office and formal background checks, discussed below, are to screen out candidates who are not priests in good standing or who have engaged in inappropriate or criminal behavior. They are not provided to the Search Team and do not indicate whether a candidate is a good match for the congregation. Be sure that Search Team members complete full reference checks before any candidate is considered a finalist.

References may be checked at any time in the process. The challenge is that only one or a few members of the Search Team can generally conduct reference checks for a candidate. An advantage of checking references earlier in the process is that answers by references may be compared to answers to interview questions. For this reason, it is best to check references before in-person interviews with the whole Search Team.

It is appropriate to ask candidates for names and telephone numbers for references. The candidates' OTM Portfolio should list several references as well as the context in which the candidate has shared ministry with the listed reference. The candidate's resume may list additional references. If the references do not include leaders in recent congregations where the candidate has served, ask for these.

The Search Team should agree on questions to ask references and these may parallel the most important STAR questions asked in interviews. To begin, always ask "How long have you known the candidate and through what circumstances?" Other questions that you may feel are important are:

- How has he/she involved others in the ministry and mission of the congregation?
- What has happened because he/she was there?
- How does he/she handle opposition?
- How does he/she handle conflict?
- What is his/her leadership style?
- What are his/her greatest strengths? Greatest weaknesses?
- We all have ego needs and need to be stroked from time to time. How quickly do ego needs begin to dominate his/her relationship with other people and/or leadership?
- What is the source of his/her spiritual strength?
- Would you like to work with this person again? Why or why not?
- Is there any other information you think we should know?

I. Visits by Candidates

Visits by different candidates to meet with the Search Team for in-person interviews should follow a similar schedule and model to "level the playing field" among candidates. Plan ahead:

- Decide in advance with whom the candidate should meet (i.e., Search Team only, Search Team and Vestry) and be consistent. Candidates may be invited to meet with the interim priest or priest-in-charge as well.
- Visits by candidates to the Search Team's city for in-person interviews should be "stealth" visits. It is extremely important that the candidate not attend Sunday worship nor meet with anyone other than designated people.
- Contact the Bishop's Office as early as possible to set up face to face meetings with the Bishop (see below). Scheduling these meetings can require up six weeks in lead time. Please remember to call before you make travel arrangements for out of town finalists.
- Plan to show the candidate the surrounding area and some of the local high spots and also allow for some "down time" for the candidate to reflect on his/her experiences with the visit.

- Take care of all logistics prior to the candidate's arrival. Arrange for his/her pick-up at the airport, book (and pre-pay) a hotel room, make arrangements for the family to visit the local school (if appropriate) etc.

J. Requirements for Meeting the Bishop and Background Checks

All candidates from outside the Diocese of Michigan must meet with and be approved by the Bishop before their names may be submitted to the Vestry for consideration. This should occur when candidates visit the Diocese for an in-person interview with the whole Search Team. The Search Team chair must contact the Bishop's Office to schedule a meeting between each of the final candidates and the Bishop. The purpose of this meeting is to acquaint the candidate with the Diocese of Michigan and to establish a relationship with the Bishop of the Diocese. Please be mindful that the Bishop's schedule is often heavily booked. Therefore, requests for appointments should be made at least six weeks in advance of the candidates' visits.

Formal background checks for clergy from outside the Diocese of Michigan are conducted as soon as the list is narrowed to two or three candidates. Be sure to notify the Diocesan Transition Minister! It takes approximately one month for the outside service to conduct a background check. A background check cannot be initiated until the company has received signed forms from both the candidate and the Bishops' Office. The names of the finalists should be forwarded to the Bishop's Office as soon as possible so that the background check can be initiated at the earliest possible time.

Background checks concerning sexual misconduct and criminal offenses are required for all clergy at any point of transition (pre-ordination, licensing, and employment) in the Diocese of Michigan. All finalists must have a complete background check. This differs from the preliminary background screening performed by the Diocesan Transition Minister and the Bishop, which simply insures that candidates are priests in good standing.

Please also beware that there are additional and complicated requirements for immigration, licensing and calling of clergy from outside the United States that may add significant steps and costs to the calling process. *Meeting all requirements (including the associated application expenses) is the sole responsibility of the clergy person making application in this Diocese, and there is no guarantee that an applicant will be granted licenses to officiate or canonical residence. The final decision is made by the Bishop of Michigan after reviewing various required documents.* Of course, there may also be added costs to the congregation for members of the Search Team to visit these candidates in their home congregations, bring them for interviews, and move the priest if elected and qualified.

K. Vestry Decision and Call

Once the Search Team comes to consensus about whom it will nominate to become the next priest, a special Vestry meeting is called for the Search Team to present the name to the Vestry for consideration. Both groups attend and the Vestry meets in closed executive session because it is considering a confidential personnel matter. The Search Team presents the candidate's name and helpful information, such as the candidate's OTM Portfolio, resume and written answers to questions. The Search Team shares its reasons for nominating the candidate and answers the Vestry's questions.

The Vestry makes the decision about whether to call the candidate. We recommend allowing a week to pass for prayer and answering any additional questions. Then it is nice to call the Vestry together in worship (Eucharist if interim clergy is available). The Vestry breaks during worship, excuses the priest temporarily, and the Senior Warden determines whether all questions have been answered and conducts the election. Then the priest is invited back into worship.

Upon election, the Senior Warden calls the candidate to extend the call and invites the candidate and his or her family to visit the congregation and negotiate the letter of agreement and compensation package. The Senior Warden immediately notifies the Diocesan Transition Minister of the offer, and the Diocesan Transition Minister can help with the letter of agreement and provide the basic template.

The Senior Warden and the Chair of the Search Team will coordinate details of the visit. This visit is not a public event. It is to take place during the week and will include a meeting with the Vestry. A meeting is arranged for the candidate, Senior Warden and treasurer to negotiate the compensation package prepared earlier by the Vestry. Other meetings will be at the request of the candidate. It is usual for the candidate to meet with the interim priest or priest-in-charge, staff members, and key ministry leaders. Housing arrangements should be explored, including time with a realtor if the priest should wish to determine availability of houses in the community. The candidate may request information about other items of interest (schools, employment opportunities for spouse, etc.) and may want to schedule time to learn about these.

There cannot be public introductions or occasions during the visit. Groups of two or three Vestry or Search Team members may share meals with the candidate and spouse during this time, but there should also be time set apart in the schedule for the candidate and spouse to have private discussion and reflection. Ideally, there will also be time for a social event for the candidate, Vestry, Search Team and spouses.

All letters of agreement and compensation arrangements must be finalized before the call is accepted. The letter of agreement must be approved and signed by the new priest, wardens, Canon for Congregational Life, and Bishop. Details regarding the terms of employment (amount of cash stipend, housing arrangements or allowance, moving expenses, benefits, and

description of responsibilities) are spelled out. So long as there is general agreement about the terms, there is no requirement that the letter be signed by the Bishop prior to the announcement of the new call. Its signing completes the process and concludes it formally.

Before the visit concludes, the Senior Warden and the candidate will agree on when the Vestry may expect to hear the candidate's decision. Remaining candidates still on the Search Team's list should not be informed until after the candidate formally accepts call. Then they must be notified as soon as possible.

Do not make an announcement to the congregation until the candidate formally accepts the call extended by the Vestry. The timing of the announcement should also be discussed with the new Rector in order to coordinate with the announcement to the new priest's current parish. To announce the call of the new priest, a letter is promptly sent by email from the Senior Warden to the congregation and an announcement may be posted on the congregation's website. (The initial announcement is not made at Sunday worship services.) The Senior Warden also sends a letter to the Bishop about the election of and acceptance by the new priest, including the "effective date" when the new priest will be placed on payroll, even though duties may begin at a later time.

Successful completion of the work of the Search Team is also cause for celebration, either in the context of the congregation or simply by the team itself. Team members should destroy written materials from the search as these are confidential in nature and inappropriate for parish or personal archives.

Step 5: Welcoming

At the time the call has been issued and accepted, the new priest is generally employed in another congregation. He or she must allow time for responsible departure, which includes setting a date in conjunction with the Bishop and Vestry, for saying “goodbyes,” perhaps for a bit of vacation, and for packing and moving before the new ministry begins. It is often at least two months after acceptance of the call before the new priest is in place and not uncommon for a longer period of time to be required.

During this period between the calling of the new priest and his or her arrival, the congregation can recognize the ministry of the interim priest or priest-in-charge and bid him or her goodbye. The Bishop’s Office also encourages an exit interview with the departing interim priest or priest-in-charge. For a time, it may be necessary to return to calling supply priests for the congregation.

It is appropriate for the Vestry to create a Welcome Team, possibly including some members of the Search team who were among the first to get to know the new priest. The Welcome Team will assist in the beginning of the new ministry. This team might plan coffee and dessert for small groups to assist the new priest in meeting people, provide groceries for the first week, see to it that the priest’s office is ready to be occupied, and provide maps, contact information and personal touches of hospitality. It is also important to notify the local dean so that he or she may welcome the new priest as well.

It is customary after the arrival and settling in of the new priest for the congregation to schedule a Celebration of a New Ministry using the rite found in *Enriching our Worship*. The Bishop will preside at this service. The new priest may invite a friend or mentor to preach. Please remember to invite the clergy of the deanery and people who have been helpful throughout this process, including the interim priest. This liturgy marks the official end of the transition period.

The new priest is in place. This is, in itself, a significant accomplishment but we hope that this is not the only benefit the church community has received from its involvement in the transition process. Much of the benefit depends upon the extent and enthusiasm of participation, and that, in turn depends upon the leadership of wardens and Vestry. Many congregations report discovering exciting new dimensions in their ministry, an increased sense of identity and purpose, newly identified resources in lay leadership, or a new recognition of the relationship with the Bishop and the wider church. May all these blessings and many more be yours as you come to the close of this important time.

Appendix 1: Visual Representation of the Transition Process



Text adapted from "Calling a Priest to Your Parish" by the Diocese of Connecticut; visual created by Kimberly Reeves, Monarch Communications, for Vestry Papers (<http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/the-journey-for-calling-a-priest/>).

Appendix 2: Additional Resources

Books

Geitz, Elizabeth Rankin. Calling clergy: A spiritual & practical guide through the search process. New York: Church Pub., 2007.

Gripe, Alan G. The interim pastor's manual. Philadelphia: Geneva P, 1987.

Lindberg, Mary C. The graceful exit: A pastor's journey from goodbye to hello. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2013.

Mead, Loren B. A change of pastors: And how it affects change in the congregation. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2005.

Mead, Loren B. Critical moment of ministry: A change of pastors. Washington, DC (4125 Nebraska Ave., NW, Washington 20016): Alban Institute, 1986.

Oswald, Roy M., James M. Heath, and Ann W. Heath. Beginning ministry together: The Alban handbook for clergy transitions. [Bethesda, Md.]: Alban Institute, 2003.

Oswald, Roy M. Running through the thistles: Terminating a ministerial relationship with a parish. Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1993.

Smith, Molly Dale. Transitional ministry: A time of opportunity. New York: Church Pub., 2009.

Vonhof, John. The pastoral search journey: A guide to finding your next pastor. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2010.

Weese, Carolyn, and J. Russell Crabtree. The elephant in the boardroom: Speaking the unspoken about pastoral transitions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

White, Edward A. Saying goodbye: A time of growth for congregations and pastors. Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1990.

Web resources

Church Pension Group website at <http://www.cpg.org/>.

Search: A manual for those called to guide the parish through a process leading to the election of a rector:

http://library.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/CDO_Search-Updated_Version.pdf

STAR Interview Guide: http://aa86e41e7d951355383b-cb342165bfeaa4f2927aec8e5d7de41f.r23.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/c/0e473709_cd-star-notebook.pdf

Interviewing in the Calling Process (Fourth Edition): Suggested Guidelines for Parish Calling/Search Committees:
[http://library.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/CDO Interviewing in the Calling Processes_May2009.pdf](http://library.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/CDO%20Interviewing%20in%20the%20Calling%20Process_May2009.pdf)

Episcopal Church Foundation Resources:

The Journey for Calling a Priest (graphic representation of the process)
<http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/the-journey-for-calling-a-priest/>

Healthy Transitions, Part I
<http://www.ecfvp.org/Vestrypapers/healthy-practices/healthy-transitions-part-1/>

Healthy Transitions, Part II: The Role of Leaders
<http://www.ecfvp.org/Vestrypapers/healthy-practices/healthy-transitions-part-2-the-role-of-leaders/>

Reaching for that trapeze bar:
<http://www.ecfvp.org/Vestrypapers/transition/reaching-for-that-trapeze-bar/>

Interim rectorship: Shalts and shalt nots:
<http://www.ecfvp.org/Vestrypapers/transition/interim-rectorship-shalts-and-shalt-nots/>

“I Could Fill This Job in About a Week”:
<http://www.ecfvp.org/Vestrypapers/transition/i-could-fill-this-job-in-about-a-week/>

A warden’s guide: Surviving the process:
<http://www.ecfvp.org/Vestrypapers/transition/a-wardens-guide-surviving-the-process/>

Fresh Start in the Search Process
<http://www.ecfvp.org/posts/fresh-start-in-the-search-process/>

Appendix 3: Office of Transition Ministry Community Portfolio Form