

Church of Our Redeemer
Description of Interim vs. Priest-in-Charge Process for Rector Transition
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Cynthia Hubbard, Canon for Transition Ministry and Clergy Deployment, heads the diocesan office that is responsible for supporting parishes in a time of transition between rectors. The Bishop and Transition Ministry office makes the recommendation with regard to a Priest-in-Charge or Interim, based on their assessment of the parish's situation. They also recommend a candidate they think is the best match for the parish. The candidate is first presented to the wardens. If the wardens agree the candidate is a good match, then the candidate may be invited to meet with the vestry.

An Interim is appointed when a parish is ready to embark on a search, and stays until a new rector is called. The Interim may not be a candidate for the search. The search process can take anywhere from 12 to 18 months (or longer) and involves completing a self-study, receiving names, reading applications to develop a long list of candidates, conducting phone interviews to develop a short list of candidates, visiting candidates and interviewing in person, and making the final selection.

A Priest-in-Charge (PIC) is recommended when, for whatever reason, the Bishop and Transition Ministry office believe that a parish is not at a point where it can start a search process. A parish may not have the energy or inclination to do a search immediately upon the departure of its former rector, for instance. A PIC does not imply that the parish is "troubled", as there are many reasons a parish may not be ready to start a search.

Unlike a search, the parish does not make a selection from an array of candidates - the Bishop and Transition Ministry office recommends a single candidate whom it believes is the best fit for the parish and its circumstances and needs. If the first candidate does not feel like a good fit, then the Bishop and Transition Ministry office draw upon that experience to identify another candidate. The diocesan process makes it very clear that a candidate is not to be subjected to a prolonged "approval" process by vestry or the parish. Once a candidate has been rejected, there is no going back to that candidate.

A PIC is normally a three-year placement. If, sometime during first year or so, the vestry feels that the relationship isn't working, a parish can go back to the Transition Ministry Office to request another PIC. After two full years and with approval of the Bishop, the PIC may become a candidate for rector. Alternatively, the parish may decide to start a search process at that time.

- *Connie Parrish & George Murnaghan*