

Church of Our Redeemer, Lexington MA

SEARCH PROCESS BASICS IN 10 STEPS

1. INTRODUCTIONS–CONNECTIONS–INFORMATION

- ✓ Meeting with Regional Canon - to include Wardens and Vestry
- ✓ Business Consultant meets with Wardens, Treasurer and Search Consultant.
- ✓ Wardens and often Vestry meet with Search Consultant.

2. SEARCH COMMITTEE

- ✓ The Wardens choose a Search Committee of from 8 to 12 people, as well as the Chair or Co-chairs, and the Corresponding Secretary of the committee. Alternatively, the Search Committee itself can choose its own leadership. It is important to have at least one Vestry member on the committee. Beyond that, it is about finding people who can work well together, who have time to commit, and who represent all the demographics of the church.
- ✓ Vestry approves the committee.
- ✓ The Search Committee is commissioned.
- ✓ If possible / desirable, a retreat is held with the Vestry, the Search Committee, the interim priest, and the search consultant. The purpose of this retreat is to build trust between all the participants and to create a process in which the Vestry will fully authorize the Search Committee to begin the search.

3. DISCERNMENT

- ✓ Discernment activities – phase 1 of the search process – begin, often using an Appreciative Inquiry process and/or a parish retreat. Data that is collected will be used to write the Parish Profile, Community Portfolio, and the Open Ministry Form for OTM (Office of Transitional Ministry).

4. PROFILE, COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO, and OPEN MINISTRY FORM

- ✓ Search Committee writes the parish profile.
- ✓ Once written, the profile is reviewed by the search consultant, shared with the parish, and finally approved by the Vestry.
- ✓ Profile is approved by Regional Canon.
- ✓ Profile is posted on the diocese website and included in FYI, showing that the church is in search and/or receiving names. It should also be posted prominently on the church's own website.
- ✓ At the same time, the Search Committee fills out the Community Portfolio for the National church. Once completed, it is approved by the Regional Canon, and can be uploaded onto the National church website. The Open Ministry Form is also submitted to the Regional Canon.

5. RECEIVE AND REVIEW APPLICATIONS

We are here.

- Search consultant can suggest processes for receiving and reviewing applications. Applications begin to come in, are acknowledged, and are reviewed by the Search Committee on a regular basis, usually once a week for 4 – 6 weeks, or up to the deadline for submissions.

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6. PHONE / SKYPE INTERVIEWS

- After discussions and decisions by the Committee, a first cut is made, and about 8 - 12 applicants are chosen for Skype / FaceTime or phone interviews. The list of applicants is sent to the Regional Canon.
- After the interviews, another cut is made. Again, the Regional Canon is notified re semi-final candidates.

7. VISITS TO SEMI-FINALIST CANDIDATES – “Visits-out”

- Search consultant can suggest a process for the “visits-out.” Semi-finalist candidates, usually 4 – 6, are visited in their home parishes by small teams from the Search Committee. **These visits provide an opportunity for the search committee to get to know the semi-finalist candidates.** The team meets with the candidate, with several members of the parish (in confidence), and with other clergy and sometimes with staff. They also attend church at a time when the candidate is preaching and presiding.

8. VISITS FROM FINALIST CANDIDATES – “Visits in”

- Again, search consultant can suggest a process for the “visits-in.” Another cut is made, and 3 (or so) finalist candidates are invited to visit the parish. **These visits provide an opportunity for the finalist to get to know the church.** As before, the Regional Canon must be notified for background checks. **Oxford Docs are initiated as soon as the finalists are selected.** While visiting, the finalists meet with the whole Search Committee (often over a meal), meet with the bishop, and also with church staff. If they are from out of the area, they are shown around the neighborhood. They often have a “meet and greet” event with the vestry, in which they are given the opportunity to meet the lay leadership of the parish, though they are not interviewed by the Vestry. They do not meet with parishioners, attend church, preach, or preside. **(Confidentiality is essential.)**

9. DECISION AND RECOMMENDATION

- Search Consultant is available to offer ideas for this part of the process. After all three finalists have visited, the Search Committee makes its decision re the desired rector, as well as choosing a # 2 (back-up) candidate who would be acceptable if the # 1 person is unable or unwilling to accept the call.
- Recommendation is presented to Vestry with details about the candidate who has been selected.
- Vestry considers the recommendation.

10. NOTIFICATION

- If Vestry approves, the Regional Canon and Bishop are notified. If the Bishop approves, the Warden(s) can then make the call to the finalist. **Rector is chosen!**
- Letter of Agreement (LOA) is worked out with candidate and wardens, and then needs to be approved by the Vestry.
- Details of welcoming the new rector are planned by the wardens and a Transition Committee.

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It likely goes without saying, but remember that this is sacred and holy work. Start and end every meeting with prayer; invite the Holy Spirit into the process, pray between meetings, pray in church. You can't pray too much!

NOTE: Each church is unique, so each search process is also unique. The notes and numbers below are deliberately generic. Some of the To-Do's can certainly be adjusted to best fit the needs of the church in search.