Search Process of Congregations in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

NOTE: NO CALL CAN BE ANNOUNCED UNTIL THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET:

1. Unless specifically waived by the Bishop, any priest not already known to the Bishop must have a personal interview with him.
2. The Sr. Warden must inform the Bishop of their choice of a priest BEFORE contacting the priest.
3. The completion of a formal background check. The Sr. Warden should notify Mary Poss in the Bishop’s office of the call and ask that this check be undertaken. The successful negations of a Letter of Agreement that is signed all parties including the Bishop.

There is no such thing as a set procedure that all searches follow to the letter. Every situation has a variety of configurations and possibilities that must be respected. What follows below, therefore, is a "broad brush" overview and is not intended to be exhaustive. For purposes of this document only, presume that "priest" is used interchangeably for rector, priest in charge, vicar, or any other such designation for the principal clergy serving a congregation.

Once a priest leaves the congregation, unless the Bishop specifies otherwise, the Sr. Warden becomes the canonical authority for all issues except those pertaining directly to the conduct of the liturgy.

The Sr, Warden contacts the Bishop and the Bishop assigns a consultant to assist the congregation in finding a new priest.

At his discretion, and depending upon the time frame involved, the Bishop may freeze the extant Vestry for the duration of the search.

In consultation with the Vestry, a decision is made for priestly coverage during the search.

A search committee is appointed. The search committee is charged with:

—- Developing a process for input from the congregation about the qualities of a new

 priest.

—- Developing a parish profile.

—- Receiving and screening names of prospective priests.

—- Recommending ONE name to the Vestry.

—- A formal background check, usually on the called candidate is ordered. There is a charge (@$100 per) to the parish for this service.

—- To be clear, the search committee recommends; the Vestry calls.At some point in the

 process as might be most convenient for all, it is customary for the Vestry to meet the

 candidate in an informal or social setting. It is not appropriate for the Vestry to

 “reinterview' the candidate.

The Vestry votes to accept the recommendation, the Bishop is informed, and a Letter of

Agreement is negotiated and signed by the priest, the Sr, Warden, and the Bishop.

The names of prospective priests come from the following sources.

The Bishop might insist that only the names coming from his office be considered, OR, he might insist such names be given first refusal.

Names may be submitted by members of the congregation. In such cases, priests must have given permission to have their name brought forward and full contact information, including address, phone, and email, must be provided.

Priests may self nominate.

The consultant can initiate a search through the auspices of the Office of Transition Ministries.

Unless otherwise agreed upon in advance, ALL names come to the consultant. There MAY be a small fee for the consultant.

As per above, at the discretion of the Bishop, a priest not already in this Diocese, or otherwise

personally known to him, must have a personal interview. Any and all clergy called

to a congregation in this Diocese must have up to date professional conduct training.

No name can come to the search committee or otherwise be considered if that person

has not been previously vetted by the transition officer for the diocese,If the transition minister chooses to not allow a name to go forward, the reasons for that will be considered confidential.NOTE: When a name is “ok’d” by the transition minister, that means the candidate is ACCEPTABLE TO THE BISHOP. It does not mean that particular priest “perfect.” Decisions about acceptability to the parish are left to the search committee and vestry.

Unless otherwise determined, all clergy submitting to the process of a call must provide the following materials:

 A. A CD of a sermon

 B. A picture

 C. An article of any sort as an example of the priest's writing

 D. A bulletin copy of a liturgy the priest has designed

 E. Their OTM profile

 F. Their resume

Note that the priest candidate must provide these items ( or such others requested)

as a condition of being considered. It is NOT the responsibility of the requesting congregation to search for these items. Note, as well, that all items must be submitted in precisely the manner, substance, and time frame set by the search committee.

Any questions or clarifications should be directed to the diocesan transition minister (the Rev. Canon Massey Gentry: mgfairhope@gmail.com. 251 459 4169).