



Discernment Presentation

by The Rev. Kristin Krantz, Canon for Transitions for the Diocese of Maryland
September 29, 2024, 10:10-10:50 a.m., Auditorium

KEY TERMS

- **Discernment Committee:** An elected committee appointed by the Vestry and charged with the specific mission to recommend to the Vestry a candidate or candidates for Rector.
- **Office of Transitional Ministry Profile (OTM):**
- **Canon:** A canon may be a member of the clergy on the staff of a cathedral or diocese.
- **"ex officio":** a person who serves, often in a non-voting capacity, as a member of the committee by nature of the office held.

OVERVIEW

The discernment process in the Diocese of Maryland involves several different parties working closely together in a prayerful and diligent manner.

- The first step in the process is the hiring of the Interim Rector, who works closely with the Vestry to create a timeline for the discernment process.
- This is followed by the Vestry appointing a "Discernment Committee" (formerly known as "the Search Committee") made up of 7-9 members of the parish in good standing, of which two may be from the Vestry.
- Once the Discernment Committee is selected by the Vestry, they are then commissioned at a public worship service and officially begin their work. Their work consists of praying to discern God's call, listening to the hopes and needs of the congregation, gathering data for the Office of Transitional Ministry (OTM) Profile, creating materials for the website for potential Rector candidates to review, and working closely with both the Vestry and the Canon of Transitions.
- Once the OTM Profile and the materials for the website are made public, the position is considered "open."
- The process for receiving applications from candidates is usually left open for 4-6 weeks.
- All applicants are initially reviewed by the Canon for Transitions in close consultation with the bishop.
- The approved applications are sent from the Canon for Transitions directly to the Discernment Committee.
- Each approved candidate's OTM Profile and accompanying materials are forwarded from the Canon of Transitions directly to the Discernment Committee.
- The Discernment Committee then begins the process of reviewing candidates and choosing who will be invited for initial Zoom interviews, which are then followed by in-person interviews.
- The Discernment Committee's work is to recommend 2-3 final applicants to the Vestry for them to review and interview.

- After the Vestry has reviewed and interviewed the finalists, and prayed and discerned which candidate to extend the call, the Vestry then votes for a final candidate and his/her/their name is forwarded to the Bishop's Office for her approval.
- A Letter of Agreement (LOA) is then negotiated between the Vestry and the final candidate.
- The LOA is signed by the new Rector, the Senior Warden, the Canon for Transitions, and the Bishop, after which, the new Rector is announced.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS from THE DISCERNMENT PRESENTATION

Q: How many candidates can you expect?

A: St. John's can expect to receive 8-12 applications for the Rector position.

Q: Which Vestry will make the final decision and call?

A: The Vestry that is seated at the time will make the call in full consultation with the former Vestry members (if there has been any Vestry turnover) and in response to the recommendations of the Discernment Committee.

Q: How were the Discernment Committee chosen?

A: An open application process was published for 4 weeks and all parishioners in good standing were invited to apply. Out of the 14 applications received, the Vestry prayerfully elected 7 members, as well as an ex officio, non-voting member from the Board of the St. John's Parish Day School.

Q: What is the average timeline for the discernment process?

A: The initial gathering of parish information, including listening sessions with parish members, occurs during the fall; the OTM Profile is created after this during the fall/early winter; the position is opened the first part of the new year; and the prayerful review of the candidates begins in the Spring.

Q: Are the candidates ever invited to come in-person and meet and/or preach for members of the congregation (other than the Vestry and Discernment Committee) prior to an official call?

A: The short answer is "no." This discernment process is confidential both for the church offering the call, as well as for any clergy discerning the call. Given that the call is offered to only one candidate, if the process was made public for other candidates this may impact their current call and ministerial duties, as well as the person called to be the Rector.

Q: How are the joint mission interests of the parish and St. John's Parish Day School (SJPDS) kept in alignment given that the Head of School is also being hired at the same time as a call of the new Rector?

A: A member of the Vestry and the Interim Rector are currently serving on the Search Committee for the next Head of School, and the current SJPDS Board President will serve as an *ex officio* (non-voting) member of the Discernment Committee.