



Frequently Asked Questions about the Rector Search

Question: Who may submit a nomination?

Answer: Nominations are open; all members and friends of St. George's are encouraged to submit nominations. In addition to nominations received by St. George's and passed to the Bishop's office, other nominations will come from a variety of different sources including, for example, lay and clergy leaders of the Diocese of Tennessee who are familiar with St. George's, as well as clergy and lay people from other dioceses who believe they know of a suitable candidate.

Question: What is the Bishop's role in the search process?

Answer: The bylaws of the Diocese charge all vestries to "seek and consider the guidance of the Bishop in seeking a Rector." Yet, while Bishop John Bauerschmidt and Canon Jody Howard provide invaluable help to the Search Committee and vestry during the search, the Bishop does not choose our next rector—the vestry does. Canon Howard, who is the Bishop's point person for rector searches, advises and assists the Search Committee during the process and plays an important role with nominations. First, he uses the Diocese's extensive resources to get word out of our search for a new rector. Our diocese has a wide base of contacts throughout the Episcopal Church, as well as centralized lists and links to eligible and top-flight clergy that most of us as laity do not. Canon Howard will tap into this rich source of information to find and encourage highly desirable clergy from further afield to apply. He also will collect nominations from our parish. Second, for each nominee and applicant, Canon Howard will perform a necessary background check and contact the individual to ensure the candidate wishes to be considered for rector. At the conclusion of the nomination process, Canon Howard will present the Search Committee with an alphabetized list of all the candidates who have cleared the background check and confirmed their desire to proceed as a candidate. The Search Committee will then go through the discernment process. The Search Committee is charged with presenting no more than three finalists to vestry and ultimately recommending just one of those candidates to the vestry for approval as rector.

Question: May I nominate a member of our current St. George's clergy?

Answer: Traditionally, assisting clergy and interim priests are not eligible for nomination. An exception may be made for a Priest-in-Charge, as has been in our case. This means that our current Priest-in-Charge, Colin Ambrose, is eligible for nomination.

Question: May I nominate someone who is not an Episcopalian priest—Lutheran, Catholic, other?

Answer: Clergy from any tradition with whom the Episcopal Church is in full communion are eligible. This would include all provinces of the Anglican Communion (such as the Anglican Church of Canada, Church of England, etc.), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Moravian Church.

Question: May I nominate someone from outside the United States?

Answer: Yes, all clergy serving in churches in full communion with the Episcopal Church are eligible, including clergy from other provinces of the Anglican Communion around the world.

Question: Do I have to be a confirmed member of St. George's to submit a nomination?

Answer: No, nominations are open and all nominees will go through the same vetting process regardless of the origin of the nomination.

Question: May I submit my nomination anonymously?

Answer: Nominations are open to anyone, and all nominations are confidential. Because the nomination form asks how the nominator knows the nominee, anyone submitting a nomination form will need to include their name.

Question: Will my nomination definitely be considered by the Search Committee?

Answer: The Search Committee will receive a list of all suitable nominees who agree to have their name go forward in the process.

Question: How will we know if someone has been nominated?

Answer: Nominations are confidential and only the nominator and nominee will know prior to names being received by the search committee. Nominees may remove themselves from consideration or there may be other confidential reasons that a nomination does not move forward. Aside from the Search Committee, no member of the congregation should know whose name is on the list, and nominators are discouraged from sharing information about who they nominated with others.

Question: I want to nominate someone, but I believe they've already been nominated. Should I nominate them anyway?

Answer: Because nominations are confidential, the person you believe to have been nominated may or may not have been. Please submit your own nomination.

Question: How will confidentiality work in regard to the nominations process?

Answer: Nominations will be collected confidentially, and Canon Howard will collect written nominations in sealed envelopes at set times. After preliminary conversations and considerations, the Search Committee will receive the slate of suitable candidates, as detailed above.

After the Search Committee has done its work, the vestry will receive the names of no more than three finalists passed. The Search Committee and the vestry keep the identity of these finalists confidential. The Search Committee will then ultimately recommend one of these finalists for approval by the vestry. Upon approval by the vestry, the identity of the priest called as rector will be announced to the congregation and community at large.

The confidentiality and privacy of the process is of the utmost importance for the parish and for the clergy who participate, for the welfare of their current ministries. Speculation about who is or is not a candidate, or who may continue in the process at any stage is unfair to the candidates who put themselves forward for the process and to the future rector.

Question: How can I help ensure the strongest possible slate of candidates for Rector?

Answer: You can prayerfully consider clergy to nominate and use your own connections and relationships beyond the parish and diocese to share St. George's profile as widely as possible to ensure that suitable candidates are aware of the search.