

# Diocese of New Jersey

## Steps in Transition/Discernment Process

*CFO- Chief Financial Officer COO- Canon to the Ordinary TMO- Transition Ministry Officer OTM-Office for Transition Ministry TC-Transition Consultant TMC-Transition Ministry Conference DC-Discernment Committee*

Departing Rector has Exit Interview with COO (6-8 weeks notice to congregation- Clergy told to line up supply for post departure)

Bishop/TMO visit with vestry: leave deacon, assistant, associate, in place, Letters of Agreements will have to be reissued.

Rector Departs

Readiness Assessment with CFO and COO

Copy of minutes from the last 6 vestry meetings requested

Last 3 years of annual reports including financial reports

Assessment of spiritual and emotional state of congregation

(Questions that will be asked by COO)

### **Bullet points for Emotional / Spiritual Component of Assessment:**

- Reflect on your experience of your Rector's time with you – major accomplishments, unfinished business, and disappointments. What will you miss the most?
- Describe current state of your church – What are your greatest strengths? List your current ministries. Are you ready to lead your church in this time of transition? How does leadership communicate with the larger congregation? What are your vehicles for communicating? What do you need from the Diocese? Do you know what resources are available to you? What are your greatest challenges? Are you able to sustain current ministries in absence of the priest?
- Describe the current physical plant. Is it in good shape? What major repairs are needed? Do you have the resources to accomplish these repairs? When was the last time you had a property assessment and / or safety inspection?
- Describe your church's outreach – Recall a time when you have had a positive effect on the community around you. What do you do best? Are you familiar with the community around you? How do you create ties with that community? What are the community's needs? Describe successful outreach efforts over the past five years.
- How does your Church grow spiritually? How would you assess your regular worship experience on Sundays? Do you engage in regular Bible study? What programs do you have for lifelong Christian formation? Church School? Youth Group? What does the word "discernment" mean to you?
- What is the last big change you remember that your church experienced? Was that change successful? How does your church deal with conflict?

- What are your goals for the interim time? What do you need to accomplish? What would be most helpful as you consider the call of your next Rector or Priest-in-Charge?

(Questions that will be asked by CFO-via assessment table)

**Operational:**

Budget  
Stewardship  
Clergy Compensation  
Lay Compensation  
Health Insurance  
Pension Plan  
Property insurance

**Sustainability:**

Planned Giving  
Endowment Status  
Capital Needs  
Debt

**Governance**

Vestry Reporting  
Diocesan reporting  
Audits

**Property condition**

Church  
Parish Hall  
Rectory

Any unfinished business  
Any level of conflict  
Leadership capabilities  
How well will the current ministries be sustained?

## Interim Rector Begins

An Interim Rector shall proclaim the Gospel, love and serve Christ's people, nourish them, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come. An Interim period is an opportune time for renewal and reenergizing parish life and mission, as well as building and strengthening healthy relationships in the congregation. An Interim Rector shall carry out the following tasks and responsibilities during the designated time in preparation for the calling of a new priest.

Addressing 5 Interim Ministry tasks

- 1) Evaluating our history
- 2) Discovering what God is calling to in this community
- 3) Instituting leadership changes
- 4) Renewing denominational linkages
- 5) Committing to new ministries

Ensuring congregational records are up-to-date, the church is in compliance with *The Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*. A financial audit is completed, adequate bonding and insurances are established, and a property audit is performed.

TC helps Vestry commission Discernment Committee

Members of the DC should be people who can commit to be present for regular meetings to carrying out what's in the best interest of the church as a whole, with no personal agenda. Committee should consist of members who represent the congregation as a whole (male, female, parents, non-parents, from various regular attended church service, new members, long time members, different ages, 1-2 vestry members)

Discernment Committee formed (7-12 members)

**Roles are assigned:** Chair (co-Chair) assigned by vestry.

*Chaplain/Spiritual Guide*

*Correspondence secretary*

*Recording secretary*

*Communications person*

Congregational Meetings-TMO/TC

TMO/TC leads first meeting with members of the congregation (after each service or special date)

See power point presentation.

Follow up meeting lead by TC if insufficient information is not generated.

Questions sent out to home bound and asked to be returned within 2 weeks

OTM portfolio, TMC and form generator questions answered by DC

Forwarded to vestry and wardens for approval

Wardens complete remaining data in OTM Portfolio and TMC Intake form and submit to TMO

Congregational Website Updated: Use of Form generator

OTM Portfolio and TMC forms into TMO

Posting on database/receiving names: (Anti-Racism Training for Vestry and Discernment Committee)

TMO presents list of candidates to committee

Interview Process begins:

- Letters to candidates

- Phone/skype interviews

- Visits to candidates churches

(4-5) names to the Bishop for Bishop to Bishop calls)

- Local interviews

Recommend finalists to Vestry (oxford check initiated)

LOA drafted with position description to be part of conversation

Vestry final round of interviews

Vestry notifies Bishops Office

Bishop Consents to call

Vestry elects new Rector

Rector begins