

**Good morning.** I am *Tony Pompa*, *Dean and Rector* of the Cathedral, and I am *Rebecca McLaughlin*. We serve as co-chairs of the Search committee for the candidates who will be presented to the Standing committee to stand for election as the Ninth Bishop of our diocese. We are fortunate to work with a dedicated and faithful group of lay and ordained leaders in this important task. We would like to introduce you to them: Ginny Day, David Zwifka, Linda Rodgers, Kate Fanning, Chris Sutton, Scott Allen, Maria Tjeltveit, Ty Welles, Rich Evans, Cynthia Nortey, who could not be with us today, ourselves as co-chairs, and we would like to recognize John Francis who needed to take leave of the committee as he recovered from back surgery. In addition, we are served by The Rev. Blair Couch, Bishop in the Moravian Church.

*Rebecca:* For the next 20 minutes or so we would like to report to the convention about the work we are doing, where we are in our process, what we have learned in conversations with members of our diocese and what qualities we believe we are seeking in candidates who will be considered to be our next Bishop. We also hope to talk a bit about the ministry of the Episcopacy and what that ministry looks like in our church today.

*Rebecca:* To remind you of our process so far.

- \*March 2017 our committee was appointed by the Standing Committee

- \*In the months of April and June we conducted a diocesan survey, held regional gatherings and spent a day with the clergy listening. We also conducted interviews with the Bishop and diocesan staff.

*Tony:* \*Then began the hard work of creating a profile that would tell our story, portray who we are, our challenges, our opportunities, our hopes for our diocese as well as what qualities we believe we seek in candidates, one of whom to be our next Bishop.

- \*The profile went online in Late July and a period to receive nominations and applications was opened. That period ended on September 18' 2017

*Rebecca:* Our task going forward now is to begin screening applicants who have responded to a series of written questions.

- Some from the first round of application will be invited to the next phase which will be video interviews.

- A smaller group will be invited to attend a discernment retreat to be held in January 2018.

- From that group, the committee will present 3-5 candidates for their approval.

The Standing Committee will announce the slate (once they approve it) and will open a short period for petition process candidates.

*Tony:* It is here that the transition committee takes over! Yay. They will be responsible then for organizing and executing candidates' visits to the diocese where we will engage in conversation in regional gatherings typically called "walkabouts".

April 28<sup>th</sup> at the Cathedral, your delegates will vote for the next Bishop of our diocese.  
September 15<sup>th</sup> in the Lehigh Valley the IXth Bishop of Bethlehem will be consecrated.

*Linda:* Here is what we believe we have learned as we have listened to one another and highlights of how we have described our diocese in the profile.

\*We are 58 congregations, a few larger, many small, in many different contexts. Wherever we are, however we are resourced, we love God, and all of us set our minds and hearts on mission!

\*Of our 58 congregations:

9 have an average Sunday attendance of more than 100 persons

15 have an average Sunday attendance of 50-100

34 parishes have an average Sunday attendance of less than 50

16 of our parishes are served by full time clergy and yet, there is an increasing participation of laity in parish leadership apart from the usual vestry and committee positions.

\*We, like the rest of the Episcopal Church (and other churches), face shifting cultural norms about church, shrinking membership, changing demographics, and stressed economics, Yet we also believe in every turn there is opportunity for the spread of the Gospel.

\*though our challenges are real in terms of shrinking resources and membership, parishes are actively engaged in ministry to refugees, homeless, hungry, young children, aged, prisoners, people in recovery, and issues related to life in Appalachia.

The heart of this diocese is found in the faithfulness and witness of our congregations in the communities in which they live, and move, and have their being.

*Kate:*

\*We hope our next Bishop will view their ministry with us as a rich opportunity to build with us something we cannot yet imagine. We believe we offer our next Bishop gifted clergy and competent, dedicated, spirit-filled lay leaders devoted to our Lord, and are eager to get to work!

\*Some highlights of qualities we seek in a candidate for our next Bishop:

-is prepared to take action to begin to develop mission strategies and help us wisely align financial resources.

-is able to take the long view: We know our challenges will not be resolved by quick fixes; and our opportunities require strategy

-Has a proven record of collaboration and working well with

A diverse group of people to make things happen.

-is a reconciler who seeks to resolve conflict in a spirit of compassion

-is a leader with passion for social and international justice

-exhibits emotional intelligence, transparency, and maturity

-will get in the "sandbox and play. We like to have fun!

We believe there is an exciting opportunity in our diocese to be a witness to the larger church; to try new things, take risks, and be a model for connection, communication, and collaborative ministry.

*Maria Tjeltveit and Scott Allen:* What does a Bishop Look Like? What does a Bishop do?

\*You should know that the Bishops currently serving our church represent a gift of diversity that is reflective of the world we are called to serve. There is a diversity of color, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation that we believe reflects the richness of God's creation. The committee is committed to engage strong candidates who reflect the diversity of our church, and we invite you in this diocese to engage the same.

Finally, part of our task as a committee is also to educate ourselves and you who make up the diocese about the broad responsibilities and tasks that come with the hard work of being a bishop in our church.

\*A bishop of course serves as our Chief Pastor: inspiring, caring, and nurturing clergy and lay alike; conducting ordinations and confirmations, making parish visitations, ensuring that the faith proclaimed in the diocese is consistent with the teachings of the Episcopal Church.

\*In addition, the Bishop also provides administrative leadership as the chief executive officer of the diocesan corporation. Leading and supervising diocesan staff and through their ministry diocesan programs.

\*The Bishop also takes their place in the councils of the Church not only in our own diocese, but in the national church, and Anglican Communion. The Bishop's ministry and time goes far beyond the confines of the diocese as they participate in national and international ministry.

*Rebecca:* It is our privilege to serve the diocese in this way. What we ask of you is that you pray for the Search committee, the Transition committee when it begins its work, all of the applicants who will be nameless to you, and the final candidates who you will come to know. Encourage your parish to be particularly discerning in who you might elect as convention delegates at your annual parish meetings in January. These will be the delegates who will elect the IX Bishop of Bethlehem in April.

Finally, we leave you with some words of wisdom shared by Bishop Mary Glasspool of New York.

[Bishop Mary Glasspool Video](#)