



Our Bishop Nominees

FEBRUARY 25, 2018

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**The Rev. Canon
Kevin D. Nichols**

“Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” This verse from Matthew 11:28, one of the sentences we offer up in Rite I after the absolution, speaks to what invigorates me. I awaken with the hope and possibility that our collective living and loving will transform our communities and homes. The Examination of a Bishop concludes “Will you be merciful to all, show compassion to the poor and strangers and defend those who have no helper?” In the Diocese of New Hampshire, I have helped develop and lead a strategic vision around four priorities: build vital congregations; develop lay & ordained leaders; support “all our children,” especially those who may never enter our churches; and act as advocates to uphold the dignity of every human being and care for the Creation. Discovering and living into a shared vision that places communities of trust at the center invigorates me.

When I began my current role as Canon for Mission Resources/CFO, I formed a Mission Advisory Team. Given my business background, I value financial analysis in decision making, but I also have a missional heart open to the power of the Spirit. The Advisory team knew that Congregational vitality and Clergy Compensation were areas of priority focus, but as we spent time listening, learning, praying and evaluating we realized that a great deal of healing was also needed in our diocese. We agreed that the only way forward was together – in partnership. This delicate balance of building trusted partnerships and making difficult decisions is daunting, yet our true viability demands this strategic focus.

In your profile you ask the next bishop “Are you willing to build with us something we cannot yet imagine?” Since the first moment I read your profile this statement has been an active part of my daily prayer. I feel called to be a part of building exactly that—something that we cannot see or know—while trusting that together, the Spirit will guide us to forge anew. This in many ways has been a mantra for my own life. Whether it was early in my 20s when I realized that although I felt fulfilled in the business world, I was also called to be a priest. And in my 30s when I knew I was called to be a priest, but not a Roman priest—finding the Episcopal Church, a home I longed for but never knew. And, early on I hoped someday I would be a parent—in my wildest dreams I never imagined being the adoptive father to 4 children. At each stage of my life I have sensed a call to enter into an unknowing, trusting that it was God who was guiding and leading. I truly believe that this process is a part of a similar unfolding, a gathering together of the many threads of my life in the discovery of a new call to serve. Walking with communities in the “ditches of life,” knowing each other more deeply in relationship, and together discovering God’s mission for our lives is what truly invigorates me.

Walkabouts

7-9 pm Each Night

Please Plan To Attend—All Are Welcome

Please submit your Walkabout questions for the Bishop Nominees



**The Rev. Canon Ruth
Woodliff-Stanley**

Recently, our Comptroller sent our diocesan staff a video of parrots dancing to guitar music. <https://youtu.be/2v6DZYhTQLM> We cannot stop watching it. Aside from the fact that it's hilarious, the video reflects conditions for ministry that invigorate me: whether we're the one dancing with wild enthusiasm or the one holding up a hand to say "enough already" in any given moment, we are responding together to the music we hear—namely, God's song of invitation. I am most invigorated when God invites me to exercise creative and skillful ministry to address real challenges together with other committed and gifted ministry partners who sometimes goad me on enthusiastically and other times help restrain me from my own overly zealous moves, but who always walk alongside me quite closely in the work.

The times that concern me in my ministry occur when I become misaligned with the work of my ministry partners and find myself unable to move together with them. Those times usually happen when one or more of us eclipses God's song with the sound of our own anxieties, insecurities, and fears. Working in a community of leaders on complex challenges gives me joy and increases my energy. I love diocesan level work; it gives me opportunity to serve the clergy and laity across a diocese in ways that help bring together a ministry of compassion and care with a strategic vision for the future. I see this opportunity in a myriad of tasks—from addressing conflict in a parish to preaching at a stewardship event to managing needed organizational change adaptively in order to support future ministry.

I hear in the words I've read and heard about you that you're poised for a season of collaborative, creative work in a community of leaders eager to work from a foundation of trust that is built as an investment over time.

I hear that you have known the pain of broken trust, of having that pain sometimes eclipse the song of God, and that you have done some important healing as well as some thoughtful preparation in the areas of leadership and spiritual growth and are now eager to work closely with a bishop who loves you to do creative work together to build the future of the Church in Bethlehem, a Church with ears attuned to a song that keeps calling you beyond your own life and into your communities, where substantive needs and issues require your leadership. I am drawn to a vision of working collaboratively with you to listen for God's song and respond together, crafting our mission and ministry in response to the call we hear in that song. That work would bring me joy.

Walkabouts

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

St Stephen's Episcopal Church

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

St Alban's Episcopal Church

Thursday, April 19, 2018

**St Paul's Episcopal Church
(Livestreamed)**

Friday, April 20, 2018

St Stephen's Pro-Cathedral