

# **St. Thomas' Rector Search: Frequently Asked Questions**

June 1, 2008

Would you like to suggest a question for the Search Committee to address in future updates of this page? E-mail us at [stthomas.search@gmail.com](mailto:stthomas.search@gmail.com)

## **1. When will St. Thomas have a new rector?**

We don't know for certain, but in most parishes the process takes about 15-18 months from the time a rector departs until a new rector is installed.

## **2. Why did the previous rector leave St. Thomas?**

In fall of 2007, The Rev. John McKee Sloan was elected Bishop Suffragan to the Diocese of Alabama. Kee was the rector of St. Thomas for 14 years.

## **3. Who is leading St. Thomas now?**

As is normal during an interim period, the "temporal" matters of the church are being managed by the wardens and vestry. They are continuing the many programs and initiatives that have flourished here, while also ensuring that new opportunities are explored. The spiritual life of the parish is being led by interim rector, The Rev. Corky Carlisle.

## **4. What is an interim rector?**

The interim rector practices a specialized form of ministry focusing on leading a parish through the unique experience of being "in between" permanent rectors. The interim rector has much the same canonical authority and responsibilities as does a permanent rector concerning spiritual and liturgical matters of the church, while bringing his or her own special experience to the parish during this time. Many interims view this as their primary calling and spend all or a portion of their careers serving the Church in this way.

## **5. Can the interim rectors be candidates for the permanent rector position?**

No. They are available, however, as resources and advisors to those involved in the search process.

#### **6. What are the steps involved in finding a new rector?**

It varies somewhat from church to church. The diocese makes guidelines available to help put a basic framework around the process. Every search is different, though, and each parish must approach the task at least in some ways on its own. The process at St. Thomas is led by a search committee, whose members were chosen by the vestry.

#### **7. What is the mission of the Search Committee?**

The purpose of the Search Committee is to fulfill the charge of the Vestry of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, and with faith and guidance from the Holy Spirit, find a strong spiritual leader who will care for God's people and lead us in our ministries.

#### **8. Who is on the Search Committee?**

The St. Thomas vestry named Larry Hill, Gail Perna, Sally Upchurch, Will Avant, Elaine Poplin, John Hanson, Chrissie Bannister, Michelle Box, Jeannie Randall and Polly Robb to the Search Committee. In addition, the junior and senior wardens, Cindy Atkins and Bob Harwell, are *ex officio* members of the committee. The committee's composition was designed to reflect the different age groups, interests and perspectives at St. Thomas.

The chair of the committee is Polly Robb. The committee is assisted by Liz Workman, a search consultant from the diocese.

#### **9. Will the new rector be selected from the within Diocese of Alabama?**

Perhaps, but not necessarily. To locate the right candidates, we are free to conduct a national and even international search.

#### **10. Does the Diocese have a role in recommending or selecting our next rector?**

We work with the diocesan deployment officer, The Rev. Pat Wingo, and have resources available from the diocese and the national Church Deployment Office to help us as needed. The selection process involves screening of all candidates by Bishop Parsley.

**11. What is the Church Deployment Office (CDO) and how is it involved in our search?**

The CDO is an office within the national church that works with congregations, dioceses, clergy, and lay professionals to provide resources for matching church openings and interested candidates. St. Thomas will file a Parish Search Request outlining information about our parish and attributes/ministry skills being sought in prospective candidates. Clergy considering making a change in positions file a similar Personal Profile about themselves. A computer search then provides a list of best possible matches. This process allows us to more easily conduct a national search and identify prospective candidates not otherwise known to parishioners. For more information about the CDO, please visit the Church Deployment Office website. The Search Committee will review the profiles of candidates provided by the CDO matching process to decide those that might be a good fit for St. Thomas. We will invite the selected candidates to complete an application that will provide us further information for narrowing the list of candidates.

**12. What will the Search Committee's budget be used for?**

Expenses associated with conducting the search will be drawn from this budget, which may include advertising, travel to the parishes of finalists, administrative costs (e.g. profile printing), consulting costs, and other expenses.

**13. Why are the Search Committee's proceedings confidential?**

Members of the Search Committee are forbidden to discuss details of the search process with anyone outside the committee -- including spouses and family members. This is out of respect for the privacy of candidates who apply, are nominated or otherwise considered for the rector position. It's likely that many candidates will be working in other parishes and will not want their candidacy known publicly unless and until a final selection is made. Parishioners can expect frequent updates about the committee's general progress in the parish e-mail newsletter, in the bulletin, and on the web.

**14. May I recommend someone to be considered for the position?**

Our application period will open once our parish profile is approved by our vestry and Bishop Parsley. At that time we will announce how one is to proceed if he/she wishes to

submit a name to be considered. A deadline for submission of names will also be announced.

**15. Will rector finalists come to St. Thomas and participate in a service before the final selection is made?**

No. We cannot publicly identify applicants, even finalists. We have a commitment to confidentiality with applicants. Most of them hold clergy positions elsewhere and we don't want to jeopardize their current positions. The one name we can make public will be that of the new rector, and only after he or she is called, has accepted, and the contract is signed. This is the standard approach within our Diocese.