



August 31, 2020

Dear St. Luke's Parishioner,

As Rev. Gayle Fisher-Stewart mentioned in her last correspondence, a search committee (SC) has been formed to propose candidates for the next rector of St. Luke's. The SC is a solid representation of the parish with the following members:

Deborah A. Jackson – Convener  
Lilian Bernard – Spiritual Leader  
Melanie Cooke  
Joyce Howland  
Luke McCoy

Darlene Simmons – Co-Convener  
Aungelic Nelson – Secretary  
Craig Robles  
Connie Stokes  
Arlene Taylor

The SC is working with a consultant, Dr. Kay Collier McLaughlin, who is shepherding us through the search process. Dr. McLaughlin, a layperson, has specialized training and has worked with many Episcopal churches in their search process.

The SC will communicate regularly with the parish on the status of our work via some combination of the church's social media accounts, email, written correspondence, and telephone calls. While most of our tasks will be transparent, we cannot be transparent with information about the candidates. Any and all information about the candidates must be held in strictest confidence in accordance with the rules of the Episcopal Church. As members of the SC, we may not even share with our families, friends, etc., any information about the candidates. So we ask for your patience and understanding in that regard.

During the month of August, the SC attended a retreat with Dr. McLaughlin and has been meeting weekly to fully understand our near and long-term tasks. To accomplish this mission, the Vestry has provided us with a charge and a budget. While COVID-19 has presented challenges, the SC is reviewing all available options and technologies to ensure that all tasks will be conducted decently and in order.

Our goal is to complete tasks at a *pre-COVID19 level of competency* while adhering 100% to Center of Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to maintain the health and safety of all involved.

A major, near term, task is for the SC to hold Holy Conversations (HC) with our St. Luke's members. As Ecclesiastes 4:9 states: *Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor.*" Based on the work of Bishop Tutu, HC is an interactive, story-telling process that provides each member of the parish an opportunity to tell personal stories about their relationship with and to St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The conversations will allow the SC to develop a profile of the parish, which is an important part of the process for candidate selection. Invitations to participate in the online HC will be sent out in September. The more parishioners who participate, the more accurate the information will be that we collect to develop a parish profile. The HC will consists of three questions that each member is encouraged to answer honestly:

- When have I been most engaged and excited about St. Luke's?
- When have I been most hurt, angry, or disappointed in St. Luke's?
- Where [in what direction] do I hear God calling St. Luke's and what am I willing to do to answer that call?

Each question will be asked in a separate conversation. We anticipate several online (Zoom) meetings to accommodate everyone who wants to participate. Do not doubt that if you participate, your voice will be heard! Additionally, we will make every effort to accommodate those who do not have access to a computer or tablet. Rest assured that you will receive complete information and instructions for each HC so that you may participate fully.

We are so looking forward to your stories as the first step in our search process for a new rector who will be the best fit for St. Luke's!

God bless you.

Yours in Christ,

St. Luke's 2020 Search Committee