

Bishop Search Committee

Position Description

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of West Missouri is accepting applications from lay people, priests, and deacons of West Missouri to serve on the Bishop Search Committee. This body will play a pivotal role in helping the diocese discern whom to call as the next in a line of apostolic leaders going back to the 12 apostles originally called and sent by Jesus himself. Our next bishop will bear great responsibility to proclaim a shared vision for our congregations, inspire and minister to diocesan clergy, lead our diocesan liturgical life, raise up leaders for the future, and help lead The Episcopal Church. Searching for and discerning candidates for bishop will require a significant commitment of time and energy, deep listening to the Holy Spirit, and a willingness to set aside personal agendas for the good of the whole diocese.

The Bishop Search Committee will include 12 to 15 members embodying the diversity and spiritual giftedness present in West Missouri. With the help of consultants provided by The Episcopal Church's Office of Pastoral Development, the Bishop Search Committee will review our diocese's life and ministry, prepare a profile of the diocese and the characteristics being sought in a bishop, educate the people of the diocese about a bishop's ministry and the election process, recruit and receive nominations, and present a slate of three to five candidates for bishop to the Standing Committee for election by the Diocesan Convention.

Specific responsibilities of Bishop Search Committee members include:

- Building a budget in consultation with the Standing Committee.
- Understanding the committee's work to be discernment centered in reliance on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.
- Seeking and listening to input from diocesan lay people and clergy in order to create an online profile of our diocese and of the person we hear the Spirit asking us to call as our next bishop.
- Developing an online application aligned with our profile that will elicit candidates who have the gifts we seek.
- Receiving applications from across The Episcopal Church.
- Prayerfully reviewing all applications and selecting those applicants most in alignment with the profile.
- Interviewing those selected.
- Discerning a short list of applicants to invite to a discernment retreat to be held in the diocese.
- Organizing, running, and participating in the discernment retreat.
- Presenting the Standing Committee with a final slate of three to five candidates for bishop.
- Writing a report outlining the search process and lessons learned in it.

Lay applicants for the Bishop Search Committee must be communicants in good standing in a West Missouri congregation, being faithful in corporate worship as well as in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. Ordained applicants for the Bishop Search Committee must be in good standing and canonically resident in West Missouri. In addition, all applicants must possess these gifts, skills, and characteristics:

- Knowledge of The Episcopal Church's worship, ethos, organization, and governance.

- Availability to devote significant time and energy from November 2023 through July 2024, including a **required overnight retreat** from mid-afternoon Friday, Nov. 17, to late afternoon Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023, as well as an overnight discernment retreat with applicants in early July 2024. Expenses for both retreats will be paid by the diocese. Other personal expenses related to committee service will be reimbursed.
- Commitment to absolute confidentiality about the committee's work, now and always.
- Strong oral and written communication skills, as well as willingness to engage via e-mail, manage shared documents online, and participate in videoconferences.
- Respect for the viewpoints of others, especially those that differ from one's own.
- Openness to receiving feedback.
- The courage of conviction but also open-minded respect for others' convictions.
- Willingness to face uncomfortable and perhaps unpleasant truths about the diocese's past, present, and future; willingness to acknowledge diocesan realities while also focusing on its gifts and strengths.
- Willingness to prioritize the needs of the diocese as a whole and set aside regional, congregational, and personal agendas.
- Willingness to compromise, build bridges, and make hard decisions.
- Second-nature ability to engage others with dignity, respect, and love – both in relating with committee members and with applicants.

If you hear the Holy Spirit asking you to be part of the Bishop Search Committee, please complete the application and email it to bishopsearch@diowestmo.org by **midnight Oct. 1, 2023**. If you feel called to serve as chair or co-chair of the Bishop Search Committee, please complete that portion of the application as well. If you need an accommodation in completing this application, please contact us at bishopsearch@diowestmo.org.

We are also seeking a secretary for the Bishop Search Committee – scheduling meetings, recording and distributing meeting minutes, arranging housing and transportation as needed, communicating with diocesan staff, etc. The secretary will be expected to attend each meeting but will not be a voting member of the committee. The secretary will be compensated for hours worked. If you would like to be considered for this position, please complete the full application, as well as the portion relating to the committee secretary.

The Standing Committee will select the Bishop Search Committee members, name its chair, and hire the secretary. In naming the Bishop Search Committee, the Standing Committee will seek diversity that represents our diocese. This includes geography, congregational size, age, urban/rural context, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity/language, and ministry order.