

## SEARCH COMMITTEE CHARGE

On behalf of the Vestry, I welcome you to this first meeting of the 2019 Good Shepherd Search Committee and sincerely thank you for your willingness to serve in this important role to shape the future of our church. The Vestry asked Larry and me to, together, select the members of this committee. I told Larry I would defer to his decisions on the number and makeup of members. He then tested my resolve by starting at 7...then going to 9...and then to 10...and finally to 12! Several people had told me about the difficult and fractious search that happened 6 years ago. I understand that several people left the church as a result. We don't want a repetition! But Larry convinced me that it is important to have a broad representation across the entire congregation and that he has put his faith in God and the people in this room...and I and the Vestry wholeheartedly support him and you.

You will have two principal objectives. First, you will work with the Diocese to identify a workable number of qualified candidates for the Vestry to consider; and finally, you will prayerfully vote your individual recommendation to the Vestry. It will then be the Vestry's responsibility to review your collective recommendations and select our next rector from your candidates, subject, of course, to the approval of our Bishop.

In agreeing to serve on this Search Committee, you are taking upon yourselves a solemn responsibility. In searching for a new rector, you will collectively seek to determine the will of God. Now that statement can sound quite daunting, but it really isn't. Because the pathway before you is paved in love -- love for God and love for this church community. And love is what should drive this committee. Our Presiding Bishop recently wrote:

*This Lenten season, our thoughts turn to the story at the heart of our faith — Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus was crucified because he taught a radical message: Love God. Love your neighbor. It's a message that lives and sustains us 2,000 years later. Love was on Jesus' mind the night before he died. At the Last Supper, he said to his disciples, "A new commandment I give you" — not a new option, mind you, but a new commandment — "that you love one another." I am convinced that love is the key to life. I'm also convinced that the opposite of love is not hate but selfishness, and that hatred is merely a derivative of selfishness. Love, on the other hand, is the cure.*

On behalf of your brothers and sisters at Good Shepherd, I beseech you to walk in love.

So, how will love be manifested in your work?

**By how you deal with candidates** — I know you will treat the candidates with dignity and respect. It goes without saying that you must strive not to prejudge a candidate because of age, gender, race or sexual orientation. Understand that they are looking to us for approval. If you are called to explain why a candidate is not the person we are seeking, do so in a way that seeks to affirm their ministry.

**By how you deal with the congregation** – everyone will be curious and want to know what’s happening with the search. Gossiping about it is unhealthy, as it can lead to rumor, innuendo and division. Respectfully deflect inquiries with general, positive responses. If issues should develop regarding your mission, we must deal with them in the Vestry, not in the congregation at large.

**By how you deal with each other** - Resist any temptation toward selfishness, division and conflict. Understand that no-one is going to get everything they want in a new rector. Your personal and collective objective is to prayerfully seek God’s guidance and wisdom in your quest to find a priest whose skills, qualities and characteristics come closest to matching what our entire congregation is looking for, as reflected in our survey and Town Hall meeting.

Early in our marriage, Theresa and I discovered a little book called *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. I’d like to share these four agreements with you:

First Be impeccable with your word. The word “impeccable” means to be without sin. The Gospel of John opens, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*” To be impeccable, you must seek to be righteous, without sin, in what you say.

2<sup>nd</sup> Don’t take things personally. Disagreements can happen, but they are not personal attacks! This process is never about YOU! It is always about God and what God wants for us.

3<sup>rd</sup> Don’t make assumptions. First, do not presume to conclude you know what anyone else is thinking. You don’t. Second, do not assume that you, alone, know what is right for our parish. Be quiet in your heart and listen to what God is saying to you.

4<sup>th</sup> Always do your best. This does not mean you must strive to overachieve. It means you must always act with integrity. Keep your commitments. Be conscientious in your deliberations. Respect the confidentiality of the committee’s work. Only through your collective integrity of words and deeds will you establish the trust you will need in order to work together to discern God’s will for our parish.

These four agreements can be a sure foundation of your service together. I hope you will pray on them and commit yourself to honoring them. I know you will.

I will now turn the podium over to Larry and will leave you to your good works. Larry will ensure that the Vestry stays regularly informed about your progress. We will be praying for you. Thank you, again, for your commitment and leadership.