Comments from Exercise at Convention
What we are looking for in a Bishop
October 25, 2019
Compiled by Barbara Brecht,
Bishop of Oregon Search Committee member

Response to the following statement: What we are looking for in a bishop?

Rate “5” for captures very well, to “1” not capturing it at all

“We are looking for a spiritual, adaptive leader who builds strong relationships by taking the time to listen, and who is able to help us find creative solutions to diocesan issues in a culturally responsive manner.”

OVERALL COMMENTS BY RATING CATEGORIES:

Rating of “5” (plus one “6”) Comments 62 Total

- Que el candidato este interesado in escuchar y a poyar el ministerio Latino
- Que es una casa que le gustaria saber del desionimienta de la leusqueder del nueva obispa
- Me gustaia saber si el nuevo Obispa sea abieota a ayudar a tadas las cultures y munaieas
- Ame la iglesice Latino
- El candidato este interesado en el Ministerio Latino
- La persona trage con la iglesi Latina
- Mission of the Church is NOT the Church. The statement summary seems inwardly focused.
- Consideration of some candidate within the diocese who could “hit the ground running” since we are entering a time line of change.
- Thank you for your thoughtful discernment
- Adaptive = collaborative lead from the middle plus no hesitation to lead from the front as well.
- We need someone who can balance being among the people and running the business and a collaborative leader.
- It's a big job- maybe there should be a suffragen bishop. A bishop who believes that Jesus was crucified and rose (literally) from the dead.
- Someone who can help us move into the future with all of the changes that are happening, but also holding onto what is good in our tradition.
- Please pick someone who loves Jesus
• More clarity on the reality churches are facing
• Ability to listen and to creatively problem solve; to have a dynamic approach towards reaching those less fortunate such as homelessness, housing, medical care, mental health assistance, drawing young people into the outreach and church community. Someone who is known well and works well with the diocese. (St Timothy, Brookings)
• Good work! But need to listen to Hispanics on how to communicate and what they need in order to be included and to be empowered.
• You guys are doing a good job in trying to find the right person
• Listener, problem solver, creative. Want our profile to be honest. Want a leader willing to make decisions, lead family with grace and authority as well as someone who is a listener and creative.
• During discernment in the next few months, please pray about diversity in our diocese. We say we want it but in reality we are basically white, middle class and upper middle class church
• We need someone who understands West Coast Culture and is able to enhance the culture.
• All embracing of indigenous, very relatable. Speak to the unchurched, helping Episcopalians to better themselves, broader vision and more progressive
• Values the church in rural areas. The southern part of the diocese is isolated and necessarily thought of or included.
• How do you perceive/define “culturally responsive”? You have our prayers!
• We need a bishop who can set forth a compelling theological grounded vision that brings us together to balance the tension
• Give us a diverse slate with real choice (options)
• Diversity in choices, like people of color
• A bishop who could knit or weave a diocese into one diverse church
• Progressive, relatable, inclusive, confidence in diversity
• Christianity is in decline due to a crisis of relevance and an absence of spiritual depth. We need a bishop who has proven track record reaching “unchurched” and those who hunger for working spiritual practice.
• We need to be looking to the future of where we hope to be, not just where we have been or where we are
• As a priest, I long for a bishop who trusts, supports, equips and sees the ministry that I and my congregation do. A pastor to the pastors. Also, focused on vision rather than “solutions to issues.”
• Someone to inspire and for us to follow, not just someone to solve the problems at hand, but to lead us into the future. Someone who is awed by the mysteries, not someone who has the answers.
• Continues with wrestling with diverse elements in the diocese (e.g. rural-urban; Caucasian-people of color, growing Latino Episcopalians.
• You are doing a great job!
• Good job so far. Please keep up God's work
• Pastoral
• Pastor to all clergy, charismatic and energetic
• Emphasis on practicality and originality
• The statement is excellent, especially with regard to the importance of seeking a bishop can be a spiritual leader. Thrust is built through predictability and transparency
• Able to connect the church to the community
• Leadership in building parish growth, in numbers and finances
• Debate and truth. Telling (the person) these are important to us in Oregon
• Stronger and more frequent (pervasive) lines of communication, established, encourage and supported: Diocese to congregations; congregations to diocese.
• Possible bishop/staff visitations to convocations that extend over a few weeks.
• The bishop should listen deeply to Deacons about assignment to a congregation or social ministry.
• We need a bishop who can train clergy to be leaders.
• A person who is calm, cheerful, hard working, a lover of people, laws of the church, a good preacher, again a lover people willing and able to travel both in and out of our diocese.
• Ensure there is increased communication between the diocese and individual congregations.
• We need a bishop who can find a way to lead us into the future by utilizing strengths that originated in the past, as well as the strengths that are new to us.

Rating of “4” (plus any variations above 4, less than 5): 97 Total

• The diocese of Oregon needs to focus on cultural and ethnic diversity, looking forward instead of “how it has always been.” The current search committee reflects many facets of diversity, but not cultural/language/ethnic.
• COMMUNICATION. Diocese to Parish, parish to congregations, parish to parish, What works for others. More time with bishop and other diocesan members.
• Have a sense of humor and smile!! The bishop should make sure the congregations and diocese have more communications between them. She/he will be able to visit more often to smaller congregations.
• Communication between local churches and diocese. Look at the reality of the candidates as to leadership.
• Make sure the candidates understands the vast range of parishes in this diocese. Rural/urban; Large/small. And also a vast range of mindsets of what is is to be church. Having served in many diocese across the country, I see the ranges here in this diocese as very, very wide.
• Do not select an authoritarian!
• Embracing the future of church and changes that have to occur, but include “old” traditions.
• Need someone who can help the diocese embrace/tackle/effectively deal positively with the changes that coming to the diocese and the Church economically, age (aging of boomers, etc) and demographics (race/ethnicity)
• Need an openness to building community by working with and leveraging community resources
• Better connections between diocese and individual parishes
• We need a strong leader who understands the nature of individualism in Oregon. And is wise in the way of people
• Inclusion of all the congregations within the diocese so that even small congregations will feel connected to the diocese and other congregations within their convocations.
• More communication across the diocese
• Congregations must have a chance to meet with and question the candidates. Candidates looking for self-aggrandizement or a stepping stone to a “better” position need not apply (been there, done that)
• Creating atmosphere of unity and inclusion in participation across the diocese
• Fresh ideas = good! Listen and ask for those ideas
• Please add the focus in your search of finding a candidate who has experience with unchurched communities.
• That we are hoping for a bishop who will love and respect the variety of congregations in our diocese. We want someone who is progressive and hospitable to all, vision for the world
• I think it is important that the search committee see the candidate perform liturgy.
• Important to be able to ADAPT to changing times.
• Need a man or woman with NEW IDEAS
• A leader who listens and is kind
• Out of the box thinking
• Strong leader to assist smaller churches to grow by attracting diverse member ethnically, socially and generations.
• I would like to see a bishop who is dynamic and humble and who will help build up the ministry of all members of the Church.
• Supportive of small churches
• What can be learned from prior bishop searches, both positive and negative? Sometimes the committee doesn't get the top candidate – it is a two way street, the candidate is discerning as well.
• Want to be inspired, help us “light fires,” but understand an area less “churched” than in some parts of the country. Sensitive to this issue
• Addressing cultural diversity. Looking at the other cultural issues
• We need a leader with strong Christian faith who can help us find ways to engage with outsiders as well as “us.”
• Recognize the various diversities present in our diocese and be able to straddle/bridge and unify those differences.
• Not conflict avoidant
• Look beyond the normal arc of trajectory; not necessarily a traditional path; curious, humble, galvanize, hopeful, move forward. Statement does not have JESUS in it.
• Be collaborative – share with us your gut feeling about the slate.
• Please add “capable” and “collaborative”. A spiritual, capable, adaptive leader. Needs to be capable as well as collaborative
• There are people who will be praying for you. LISTEN to each candidate in cooperation with the Holy Spirit.
• The unofficial motto of Oregon is “you can't make me.” Relationship and consensus are key!
• Leadership is hard to define but essential to the role of bishop
• How strong the urban/rural divide is. (which I know you know)
• This is a diocese of have-s and have-nots. Church and parishioners and we need leadership to sustain relationships with each other.
• Bridging perceived dichotomies is hard
• Hospitality for diversity
• Seems cumbersome
• Look for someone who is super excited about the Episcopal Church's potential.
• Understand West coast culture or brings something to enhance the culture
• Can help understand changes happening and help lead us through tumultuous times.
• Consider a candidate from within the diocese. Understands its people. Very short learning curve, ready to hit the ground running. Understand rural Oregon as well as I-5 corridor/tri-met area
• Remember there is more to the diocese than urban centers. Rural areas need help too.
• Collaborative and capable
• Collaborative. Inclusion
• TOO MANY WORDS. Can be edited to be more succinct. We seek . . . who listens, is creative, collaborative
• Inspirational to all. Supportive to all parishes
• Realist
• Make a strong concerted effort to pick a good listener within the diocese as well as outside of the diocese.
• It is important for the bishop to have significant parish experience and hopefully some in rural settings.
• Seeing Christ in all persons, “culturally responsive” is a weak statement. Need a leader.
• Listen, build relationships, culturally responsive, need vision.
• We want visionary leadership, clear guidance and direction for new ways of being the church in today's world.
• Strong leader. Find common ground. Focus on youth programs
• Awareness of international issues of which church might have ways to take a stand., for example Kurds losing homeland.
• Is able to think about things in radically new, fun, energizing, holy ways. Bringing us into Oregon's present.
• Find a candidate with direct conflict resolution skills. We will be praying for you and we trust the committee and the process.
• Look for someone with a servant's heart and also with charisma. Gifts for networking with our unchurched Oregon leaders, for the good of all.
• Examine candidate for their openness to support fresh expressions, ministries, experiences within the local contexts.
• Need to do due diligence in talking to as many people as possible outside their references. To make sure the way candidates present is how others see them.
• Don’t like “culturally responsive” Buzz phrase
• Pastoral
• A new bishop who values deacons, Latino ministries, LGBTQ community
• Kind
• Needs to be flexible
• Where and when appropriate to clearly and widely communicate the process and status of discernment
• We want a new bishop who will VALUE those vulnerable groups that WE value – particularly those susceptible in a bishop change (LGBTQ, deacons, Latinx, etc.)
• Just want you to know we are praying for you
• Ensure that your choice is committed to staying for the long haul, as well as the family.
• Process: learn from past mistakes and consider what we might do differently, eg, learning from bishop Itty. Content: Interested in support for non-parochial ministry as well as congregations.
• Ensure conversation from all convocation is included in the process
• A spiritually grounded bishop. Work with everyone with equity and diversity toward people of all races and gender identity.
• Next bishop needs a strong background in parish ministry
• Someone who has a knowledge of small parishes and what we are all going through. Not just I-5 corridor!
• Acceptance of all peoples. Someone who has had experience working in a parish.
• Describe a little bit more about what is meant by the open ended concepts. Spiritual? Culturally responsible?
• Keep in mind the needs of those less fortunate
• That there has been a history of clergy abuse and abuse of clergy. We are in a new place – there is a new spirit but past is always important to recognize.
• The bishop as chief pastor, is not in charge but (perhaps) chief steward
• Someone who can discern a powerful vision, hold it, and guide the diocese fearlessly
• Embrace and find/highlight unity within our great diversities!
• As the representatives of the faith tradition which invented the term “sodomite,” it is necessary for TEC to maintain a prophetic witness of full inclusion and affirmation of LGBT people in the full life of the church
• Creates inclusion and participation among all the parts of the diocese
• How much of the position need to be someone who is also a good ADMINISTRATOR? Missing piece: someone who also has a focus on how the church connects to and reaches out to the community they are in.

Rating of “3” (plus any variations above 3, less than 4): 60 Total

• Sounds business like and legalistic
• We need a bishop who can lovingly lead change
• Somewhat general – would like more specifics regarding skills in Administration
- The new bishop must value the groups and protection and inclusion of those vulnerable within the bounds of the diocese.
- Someone who understands West Coast culture yet is willing to bring new.
- The bishop should be able and willing to engage with and support the clergy in non-parochial and bi-vocational ministries, especially chaplaincy.
- To engage the “Southern” diocese churches in conversation and just the “Northern diocese churches.
- Would hope that you know we are hoping for a leader who is also willing to partner and encourage community from outside as well as within.
- Move the focus out of ourselves
- This is a start but it needs to bore down on specifics and depth. Needs to have a grasp of the changing environment of the Episcopal church as a whole nationwide as well as within our own diocese.
- Visionary leader who understands Oregon culture. The statement is too generic.
- Want a pastor to the pastor – treating our congregations and ministries (out house) equal regardless of size or finances, leadership style. Vision bring us together regardless of theological perspective.
- Need leadership to bring people together with vision.
- Our fastest growing group of people is the homeless.
- A person who understands the church of the WEST and more importantly the Diocese of OREGON and its culture. With the ability inspire us to work together to solve our challenges which will always be with us.
- What does “adaptive” mean? SIMPLIFY SIMPLIFY
- It’s God's work – in all its variety, labors, worries, and answers.
- Bishop needs to be aware that Oregon is very unchurched.
- A leader to address the unchurched.
- Remember the “great commission” as well as what we need to help us grow.
- Christ centered, listen also to the Spirit.
- Our cultural diversity, ecumenical leaning, ideas and how to serve our communities and also reach the unchurched.
- A new bishop should highly value: intentional inclusion in planning, budgeting and programming of groups that are particularly vulnerable (minority, races, parishes in marginalized areas, LGBTQ, deacons) and those areas requiring education that needs the bishop’s strong support – racism, diversity, preaching, safe church. How to include the south?
- The problem of the different rural/urban localities and feeling of being left out that those located far from the Close feel.
- Candidate with a vision, a visionary leader. Speak Spanish (to celebrate at least). Pastoral and help network clergy together. Everyone held more accountable.
- Pay attention to the smaller mission churches. Provide constructive feedback.
- Pastoral. Hands-on.
- Someone who leads by example and inspires action with her/his energy and example.
- Final candidates should have open attitude.
• I would like a leader who does not insist that his or her political view is correct. I would like a leader with exceptions social skills -must be able to communicate and “connect” with a wide variety of people
• The bishop will have greater moral authority if she/he creates intentional relationships with the clergy.
• Leadership/experience in leading a diverse group of people in holy and civil conversations. So that this is a SAFE SPACE
• Someone who can lead by training others to be leaders. Must have a dose of charisma in their personality. Need a certain amount of gravitas. Not too loaded with political correctness.
• Need to all be together! Grounded together. Transparency. Truthful
• A dynamic leader who knows the whole state, not just the north
• Increase inclusion in participation at the diocese level from the various areas of the diocese perhaps as deeper investment in the convocation. If he/she were to spend an in depth relationship to each convocation and parishes in that same level. Zoom centers that could be used for committees.
• Where is Jesus in this statement? I hope that the Search Committee will consider candidates who do not fit the standard profile and career trajectory of a candidate for bishop.
• Very generic, Just spiritual, Christ centered
• "Dynamic Embracing!" How do we attract younger generation to our church?
• “Compelling vision” in place of “Creative Solutions” to much energy into fixing what was
• Description leaves out : compelling, theologically grounded vision that brings us together. I don't think issues can be “solved”, especially by listening. Need seeing patterns, not just individuals.
• Prophetic voice, not afraid to lead, accepting of difference while not conflict adverse
• Don't be afraid to look with an open heart. The easy answer is not always the best
• A bishop believing that our diocese needs to be proactive to humanitarian and social active responses. Like Michael Curry.
• A good leader looks for the gifts in people and calls them out and puts those gifts to work. This leads to multiplication of gifts, effective outreach and ministry and growth of church communities.
• Friendly, personable
• Critical to discern gifts for cultural diversity. Needs to be Brave with activism and human rights. Needs to be approachable to everyone. Equity, lay and clergy gender and transgender
• Needs to know that we have many strong conservative and liberal political stances in our diocese and the bishop needs to work toward unity and common values rather divisive political issues.
• Culturally sensitive, having a compelling theological vision, collaborative processes should be working model addressing issues.
• The Episcopal church is traditions (liturgy) and also needs to revitalize itself, attract new people (evangelize) and be more visible
• Need an inspiring leader, who can identify and support our strengths and has a clear understanding of the religious and spiritual culture of Western Oregon
• A true disciple of Jesus. No cheap grace
• There is no ideal person, compromise is important
• Proven leader and able to build consensus Hoping some discernment includes a creative open spiritual grounded person excited about enhancing Latino partnerships and “church outside building” which are our future. You are so appreciated!
• I would like a leader who is a problem solver, one who could create stronger ties with individual parishes to problem solve common issues that many churches experience
• I would like to see deacons with more say where they will serve
• Inspirational person lead by example, knows how to encourage congregations and clergy
• I would not link “creative solutions” with “culturally responsive”. The first part is good
• A very average statement that does not say WHO we are looking for. And individual with a clear vision that can be articulate to others. A follower of Rabbi Jesus.
• S specific description of the nominees as Christian believers. Specifically, a faith in Christ, risen and active within the Holy Trinity
• Bilingual, visionary about demographics, pilot's license or another way to reach people, ecumenically minded
• Someone that brings the Jesus movement to Oregon
• Strong in faith, primacy of the Church and its congregations in the greater world.
• Statement is generic. Need leader who is spiritually grounded and open to all people in Diocese. Represent diocese in the state.
• Help train clergy to be leaders. Add in gospel, centric message. This could be a job application for a yoga teacher. Bring up the bar!
• The mission statement sounds jargony and lacks expression that we need a bishop who is spiritually grounded.
• Look for someone who will be honest and truthful about how they could carry out the plan they present
• Needs to be able to see divine in all people regardless of education, income, nurture leadership from all
• My fear is that many people will claim they can do the things thought they are far from being able to do so. (My concern here reflects current values favored in lots of HR presentations). At the same time, I would hope we could find just such a person. Rather than thing to know, I would ask how will the committee on the one hand acknowledge the very real role that individual identify (race, ethnicity, gender sexual/gender identify, class, native language) shapes a person while working against bias, implicit or less so? So call “blind” readings erase such issues and raise questions of who does the editing/censoring of applications. A big challenge is figuring our how to speak openly about what may be or is bias.

Rating of “2” (plus any variations above 2, less than 3)” 17 Total
We will be praying for you.
Discernment Committee should remain aware of the opposing dynamics in Oregon and the Episcopal church in America: urban vs rural, wealth vs poverty; liberal vs conservative; local focus vs national focus, etc.
Dynamic
The importance of church administration and leading
Dull
Bland, vanilla pudding. Just choose anyone not Itty! Be truthful. Someone who will not be conflict avoidance. If there are problems in any parish, help not hinder.
Needs to be a leader approachable, able to communication with all, spiritual
This fails to give a vision of the future. We would like an inspiring and energetic and inspired leader who loves people and feels motivated to lead us into a diverse future
Please keep in the conversation of discernment of our candidates passion for the Gospel. Christ I snot in you search statement. Be bold. Inspiration? Service?
Too vague- adaptive, could highlight collaboration. Highlight and respond to local social actions opportunities – mirroring President Michael Curry. Not only diocesan concerns but congregation and community concerns.
I would like a bishop who can embrace our diversity and weave us together into one tapestry
I would like the committee to get to know more individual in each of the congregations in order to ask specific question. Would like the new bishop to let the individual congregations be more involved with the diocesan processes.
Make the statement more specific and less general. There is no “there” there at the moment.
Let's find someone who can inspire and leads spiritually – not just administering a nonprofit organization. But inspiring people in the Message, the reason for our church to exist.
Spiritual, kind, make it less jargony. Must be a spiritual leader, kind, open to diversity

Rating of “1” (plus any variations above 1, less than 2): 3 Total

- It seemed too long in what it is actually saying You have my support in following your gut.
- Too long. Reads like a committee wrote it. No Christian language at all!

Rating of “0” (no variations): 2 Total

- Not at all. Adapting? Us to them or them to us?
- Generic statements will attract generic candidates devoid of courage and a prophetic voice.

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