

1. Please share a vocational and spiritual experience that has influenced your consideration in your call to the office of bishop, and to the Diocese of South Carolina in particular

My desire to enter into discernment of a call to the office of Bishop is specific to the Diocese of South Carolina. I am a native of the United Kingdom and a naturalized American citizen. After being an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I returned to England and to Cambridge University. During interviews at Theological Colleges, I was encouraged to pursue my interest in learning more about large American churches, one of which had been so formative as I moved from teenaged evangelicalism to a more broad understanding of God's grace. Consequently and subsequently, I returned to the United States for "just a few years" to learn about large parishes. I was was ordained in (gasp) North Carolina.

Fast forward to a time when Virginia was seeking a successor to my former Rector and Bishop, Peter Lee. I was encouraged to enter discernment to determine his successor. Toward the end of that process I became clear that I would not enjoy the work of a Bishop as I then understood it. End of story.

Except... Except that I married well and stepped down from a wonderful parish after eighteen years to move to Washington, DC following my wife who had been offered a significant professional opportunity. I did not know what I was going to do. I did know that I wanted some significant and challenging work either within or outside the church to finish my active professional life. And here is where we get to some more specific, vocational, spiritual and *conscious* experience that influences my consideration of entering into discernment with you.

The Bishop of Washington was unfailingly thoughtful and gracious in inviting me to serve among people who had experienced conflict. I was briefly an Interim Rector at the Church of the Epiphany in downtown DC after they had some conflict with their first interim. While I was there, St. Alban's experienced painful conflict which resulted in the

departure of a musician and rector and left significant organizational and financial challenges.

I have, by grace and by working with some talented clergy, been able to meet those challenges. It has been engaging and creative work and I can happily serve the people of St. Alban's through C-19 and to retirement. I have trained as a professional executive coach with clergy in mind and have imagined developing that ministry.

Out of the blue, along came a nomination to consider your needs for a Bishop. This time, rather than dismissing it without a thought, I found myself remembering that while I never expect to finish serving the Gospel, I wanted to finish my pre-retirement years engaged in significant and challenging work. Conversation and research suggest that significant challenge is what confronts your next Bishop. I am an experienced priest who has worked closely with a number of Bishops. I have done hard post-conflict work. I'm attracted by the fundamental missionary 'post church' work of your Diocese. In prayer I find that I am called to offer myself for your consideration as you seek your next Bishop.

2. Bishops are to carry out the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the Church. What talents and strengths do you bring to the shepherding of the Diocese of South Carolina through the challenges that we are facing:

a. during the transition to reconciliation with the returning congregations, and

b. as a result of historical and current issues of inclusion and diversity (age, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality)?

The slightly pedestrian answer to your question is that I have grown in leading parishes and supervising staffs over nearly 40 years. I have taught parish ministry in two seminaries and have remained engaged in theological education in other ways through

board service with the Berkeley Divinity School Board of Trustees (many roles over many years,) the Anglican Studies Advisory Board of the Candler School at Emory University and the Dean's Advisory Council of the Yale Divinity School. I have served five parishes as Associate, Rector, Interim Rector and Priest-in-Charge. In other words, I would bring a variety of experiences from four Dioceses. Additional specific experiences in the answers that follow.

- a) I learned early in parish ministry both that people who want to leave are going to leave and that the intellectual reasons they offer for their choice rarely address the complexity of their decision. More often than not, our rationales for our decisions are formed in hindsight. The reality for most of us, most of the time is more visceral. That said, in conflict, there are people who take sides and regret their choice or who withdraw while they wait to see what happens to the organization perhaps, but more to what happens to the important relationships they have formed. I have spent hours listening to those who feel themselves disenfranchised by a particular person or decision some of whom have 'returned' and some of whom have not. The biggest challenge I have faced in respect to 'returning' is helping those who 'stayed' to avoid condescension, unhelpful narratives and inadvertent alienation of others. The tools we have available include first, listening, then preaching, teaching, and other forms of communication. These include the occasional need to take people aside and suggest that their remarks might have unintended effects.

- b) I have led a parish through addressing issues of human sexuality, even as I worked through the same issues of assumption and prejudice in my own being. I have appreciated the help offered by the team at www.Visions-Inc.org who seek to recognize, understand, appreciate and make use of differences of all kinds between people. I have served on their board and continue on the advisory board.

More recently I have led a parish to include and incorporate fully a small Spanish speaking congregation that was previously quasi-independent. This has meant attempting to address challenges of race, culture, class, economic diversity and language as we seek to become 'one parish worshipping in two languages.' This continues to be a work in progress but we have made substantial strides, largely through finding ways in which we can come to know each other while making explicit our implicit assumptions about the other.

3. Where do you envision the Episcopal Church's ministry during the next decade? What actions have you taken as an active participant in the future of the church and how will that inform your work in the Diocese of South Carolina?

I envision a growing number of models for Christian Community beyond that of a traditional parish with a parish church building. These might include small communities the might exist for three months or thirty-three years. These might include house churches (maybe even with a residential community component) who serve their neighborhoods. Such models will require creative staffing and might well move the church toward some version of 'lay presidency' under some circumstances. The likelihood of a variety of models for Christian Communities is already being reflected in the growing number of options beyond traditional residential seminaries for ministerial training.

I have been involved at the level of theological education ever since serving as a founding teacher in the Deacon's Training Program in the Diocese of North Carolina in the mid 1980s to conversations about alternative models for training surrounding a recent meeting of the Berkeley Divinity School Washington DC Leadership Forum.

In terms of parish work, before leaving All Saints', Atlanta, I had begun a group exploring how we might 'plant' some communities of faith that might be loosely

associated with the parish. The conversation did not go very far as we were all connected with All Saints' because we liked it the way it was, I also called together a small colleague group of leaders of large parish systems who were interested in exploring whether and how we might connect with or otherwise encourage new models for Christian community. We called together a group of church planters to meet with us. That effort folded after the gathering as it turned out the church planters were mostly interested in finding funding sources that would support them as they ministered among very small numbers of people who could not be expected to support a priest financially. I share these two efforts which could be judged as failures because I believe that if we don't experiment and invest in such experimentation, we are not addressing the real challenges facing many traditional parishes and so are not being effective in proclaiming the Gospel.

4. How have you built relationships in your ministry and how might you build relationships among the diverse worshipping communities in our diocese?

I believe that establishing and building relationships is the essence of ministry when we proclaim that 'God is Love.' I preach about 'right relationship' as the effective translation of *diakosoune* or 'righteousness'.

I do not say this as a matter of cheap grace. As implied in all your questions, (and my answers,) many relationships are challenging and take conscious work, confession, forgiveness and an abundance of grace. I imagine that is also true of relationships among the diverse worshipping communities in your Diocese. The Gospel inspired Visions-Inc tag line of 'recognizing, understanding and appreciating difference' is not a bad road map for finding a way forward.

That said, I might focus on two areas of opportunity. One is Diocese-wide gatherings such as Convention or Clergy Conference and how they are designed to make fostering relationships with God and each other the primary purpose of our gathering. The second is by fostering cooperation and collaboration between worshipping communities in the Diocese. Cooperative ministry usually results from experienced need rather than some kind of top-down programmatic approach. What a Bishop can do is help identify such need and encourage cooperation and mutual ministry.

- 5. The larger societal context of health and economic uncertainty, divisiveness and social change leaves many with a sense of pessimism, anxiety and even despair. How have you proclaimed a message of hope during these difficult times? As we struggle with these issues in the world, how have you gotten in the trenches with us and led others to do God's work?**

I have continued to preach that spiritual practice over time is best way to navigate challenges in life. I believe there are three core spiritual practices of Christian Community (fully recognizing that there are plenty of other ways of categorizing spiritual practice such as our PB's "Way of Love.") These are first, **worship**, by which we turn, or are turned toward that which is of ultimate worth ('worth-ship') allowing it to shape our lives. Second is **service** to God and others, by which we become more fully who we are as we learn what it means to enjoy perfect freedom. Third is the practice of **generosity**, both ephemeral and sustained and sustaining, which is an antidote to anxiety. I testify to my own practice of making a gift whenever I find myself growing anxious about anything and how it changes the direction of my own thoughts and responses in life. I have been referring frequently in 2020 to the Sermon on the Mount and especially to Matthew, Chapter 6.

As to 'getting in the trenches,' of course I have been involved in many Bible Studies, zoom Coffee Hours and Enquirers' Class conversations that address the times in which we live. I have encouraged a pilot program using the Sacred Ground curriculum to help us address issues of race. In early 2020, I expect we will be offering additional opportunities and I will be a mentor/leader for one of those groups.