

Selection Committee **FINAL REPORT**
Church of the Holy Trinity
September 2008

Process:

The Rev. Sara Boyles announced that she would be resigning after 13 years as Incumbent of the Church of the Holy Trinity, on June 30, 2007. The Holy Trinity Selection Committee was elected by Vestry on 25th February 2007. The Selection Committee was composed of Steven Loweth and Alice Prichard named from the Wardens; Tim Wainwright as lay delegate to Synod; Marilyn Dolmage and Dick Moore elected; and Gail Holland, Christopher Lind, and Jean Robinson elected as joint members of both the Transition and Selection Committees. A budget was established, to be shared with the Transition Committee. The Selection Committee incurred costs for the Parish Profile, advertising, candidate travel, and moving expenses for the new Incumbent.

In March of 2007, within 8 days of election, the combined committees conducted their first meeting, which included a visit from our Diocesan Congregational Development Consultant, David Robinson. The first step was to write a Parish Profile, used to inform prospective candidates about us, and this required that we know ourselves and what direction we envisaged for ourselves over the next five or ten years. Obviously, input from the whole Parish was needed to define these goals. The joint committees elected Cathy Goring, Christopher Lind, Jean Robinson and Roy Suthons to a Working Group to devise a method to gather opinions from the congregation, staff and stakeholders.

In April, the Working Group decided a survey would help start the information gathering and designed thirteen questions. Tim Wainwright set up these questions in the software tool "Survey Monkey" so that the answers could be collected electronically. Although approximately 90% of the congregation have email access, manual copies were sent out simultaneously to those without electronic access. There was a 61.3% response rate which Cathy Goring and Christopher Lind analysed, identifying four key themes for discussion at the Town Hall meeting held 29th April 2007. Concurrently in April, Gail Holland and Christopher Lind, co-managed the collection of the rest of the data, statistics and reports, for the Parish Profile from committees and stakeholders.

In May, after meetings with Area Bishop Patrick Yu, the Bishop made a recommendation for an Interim Priest-in-charge. We met with the candidate, the Rev. Dianne Mesh, prior to her appointment to apprise her of parish issues and concerns and to answer any questions she might have. Dianne agreed to serve from August to December 2007.

In July, after the celebrations to mark Sara's departure in June, the Selection committee elected Christopher Lind as its chair with Dick Moore and Jean Robinson volunteering to act as Recording Secretaries. The Profile was posted on the Holy Trinity web site with accolades from Bishop Yu who described it as the "new gold standard for Parish Profiles". The job advertising strategy was designed and implemented, using the Profile and the Incumbent job description, with a closing date of 30th September 2007. The position was advertised on the Diocesan website, the Anglican Church of Canada's website, the Episcopal Church of the USA's Deployment Office website, as well as in the *Church Times* of the Church of England and the *Lutheran* and the *Canadian Lutheran*, two publications reaching Lutheran pastors across North

America. A meeting with Bishop Yu clarified and defined the search process. The Bishop agreed that all the resumés would be forwarded to the Committee, who would prepare the initial list. The Bishop would then undertake episcopal reference checks.

In September, the Committee requested that the congregation forward to the committee any candidates' names they would like considered, before the closing date of September 30th 2007. Alice Prichard designed a "scoring tool" using the six clusters of Incumbent qualities we had identified so that each application would be treated in exactly the same way.

In October, the committee scored the resumés of over 30 candidates from all over the world, and by consensus arrived at the first cut "short list" to discuss with Bishop Yu on October 22nd 2007. The latter did not want to be involved with the initial scoring process. At that meeting the Committee identified the top scoring candidates for interview, and Bishop Yu undertook to do the episcopal reference checks.

After a prolonged negotiation with Bishop Yu and Bishop Johnson, the Committee proceeded to interviews with some very strong candidates but was unable to make a successful recommendation. As the process was taking longer than expected, a request was made to the Bishop asking that the Interim Priest-in-charge, the Rev. Dianne Mesh, extend her time at Holy Trinity. Dianne agreed to stay, first until Easter, and then until May 31, 2008.

After the Christmas break, the Committee returned to the applications which now numbered 40. A new list of potential applicants was created and episcopal reference checks were undertaken. More interviews occurred and the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to Bishop Yu, and the Bishop agreed, that the Rev. Sherman Hesselgrave be appointed as Incumbent of the Church of the Holy Trinity effective June 1, 2008.

Problems & Recommendations:

In November the Committee signaled to the congregation that we had encountered some road blocks in our negotiations with the Diocese. As we put it in our November Update "The Diocese discriminates in its employment practices and continues to do so." Specifically, we learned that the Diocese was refusing to appoint priestly candidates from outside the Diocese who were in committed same sex relationships. A small delegation representing the Wardens and the Selection Committee met with our area Bishop, Patrick Yu, and our diocesan Bishop, Colin Johnson. We learned that this was not a formal policy but a practice specific to the "anomalous" situation currently found in the Anglican Church of Canada. We also learned that this practice came at Bishop Johnson's initiative. We challenged this practice on theological grounds, legal grounds and on the grounds of common sense and logical inconsistency. We were unsuccessful in changing the practice. After considerable reflection, the Committee decided to proceed with the selection process while continuing to advocate for other candidates.

In order to be clear, we want you to know that the Selection Committee undertook a 'blind review' of the applications prior to both sets of interviews. This meant that the Committee Chair removed all reference to same sex marital or partnership status from the applications before the applications were forwarded to committee members. After this screen was applied, several candidates scored highly enough to warrant interviews but we were denied the opportunity because of their marital status to same sex partners. We consider this an offence to God and our community, not to mention a gross injustice to the candidates involved. Consequently, we make the following recommendations to the Vestry of the Church of the Holy Trinity:

1. We recommend that overtures be made to other sympathetic parishes in order to support one or more motions being placed before the next meeting of Diocesan Synod.
2. We recommend that the Church of the Holy Trinity place before Synod a motion directing Bishop Johnson to end the Diocesan practice of discriminating against the appointment of otherwise qualified, married gay clergy.
3. We recommend that the Parish return to the issues and values identified in the Town Hall meeting and described in the Parish Profile as valuable input to a future strategic planning process.
4. We recommend that this final report of the Selection Committee be accepted and the Selection Committee be dissolved.

Respectfully submitted to the Wardens and Parish Vestry by the members of the Selection Committee: Marilyn Dolmage, Gail Holland, Christopher Lind, Steve Loweth, Dick Moore, Alice Prichard, Jean Robinson, Tim Wainwright.