

Episcopal Church in Minnesota Bishop Search Theological Statement

As we enter a season of prayer and discernment leading to the selection of the 10th Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, we find ourselves in a time of great challenge and opportunity. The challenges are the same ones faced by churches across the denominational spectrum: a decline in attendance and participation, the greying of our membership, and a struggle to reflect the diversity of our neighborhoods.

And yet this is also a time of great opportunity. Within our neighborhoods and communities we see and hear a deep desire for God, for healing, for meaningful relationships and conversations, for justice and reconciliation, and for spiritual practices that free us to live more fully. Political and racial divides, divisive rhetoric, the precarious future of our planet, and the hopelessness and isolation highlighted by the opioid crisis have fostered among many a desire to live and serve differently.

Bishops are called to be a sign of unity for the church, locally and globally, and to empower the people of God to serve as Christ's ambassadors in the world. Bishops also ordain and oversee priests and deacons to love and lead's God's people, and to connect the world and the church. The bishop is called to be the one who listens deeply to the people of God and those outside the church, and after much prayer and reflection, casts a vision inviting the church into God's dream for human flourishing. The bishop is a bridge builder, connecting the past and present, tradition and innovation, treasures from the past with practices and ways of being church that speak to new generations. Through Spirit-filled sermons, communications, worship, and conversations s/he will help us understand how we might participate more fully in the communal life of the Triune God, the one who embodies difference without division, unity without uniformity.

The days when the Episcopal Church could attract people by hanging out a welcome sign are long gone. We must go to where our neighbors are and learn how to be in deeper relationship with them. Our future lies in plumbing the rich depths of our theological and spiritual tradition and making these treasures accessible to our own members, our children, and our neighbors. We desire a Bishop who is committed to seeking God's leading in all things, especially in difficult situations and decisions. We seek a spiritual leader who will proclaim amidst today's divisions and despair the Good News we have in Christ. We seek a bishop who will model unity and grace, helping us deepen our participation in God's life and the way of Jesus through intentional practice. And we seek a bishop who will embody the missionary spirit of our founding Bishop Henry Benjamin Whipple, who shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with neighbors near and far, reaching out across cultural and geographic boundaries with the conviction that no one and no place is beyond the bounds of God's love.

Faithfully,

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota

The Rev. Debbie Brown, President
Ms. Laura Bathke, Vice President

The Rev. Devon Anderson
The Rev. Justin Chapman
Mr. Chris Commers
Ms. Sue Grove
The Rev. Siri Hustad
Ms. Julia New Landrum
The Rev. Blair Pogue
Ms. Alexis Roy
The Rev. Ramona Scarpace
Mr. Rich Simons