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CHURCHWORK



**Meet the Candidates for the
12th Bishop of Louisiana**



CHURCHWORK

The Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana

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Our Vision

The Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana is one church, faithful to our Lord Jesus, united in mission, reaching out through service and proclamation to all for whom Christ died. We live in joyous expectation of God's transforming power, compassion, and mercy in our lives.

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Search for the 12th Bishop of Louisiana

Dear Clergy and Lay Delegates,

You are being called to gather on May 14 at Christ Church Cathedral for the purpose of electing the next bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana. This is the final step in the diocesan-wide discernment process that has occurred over the last year. Guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit, our work this day will be to choose a leader for this diocese to discern with us the shape of our life together in mission and ministry. We will set aside our usual business of budgets and polity, and instead, engage with each other in a day of prayer and listening to God's call for us.

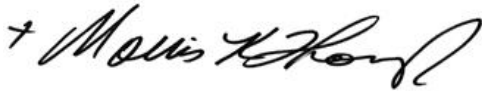
Until we meet in May, please read and study the diocesan profile. This document summarizes the hopes and prayers expressed by the members of our diocese. The slate of candidates was announced on April 1. To prepare for the Electing Convention, please make every effort to read their profiles and participate in a Walkabout. Listen to what the nominees tell about themselves and their hopes for this diocese.

I look forward to seeing you on May 14 at Christ Church Cathedral.

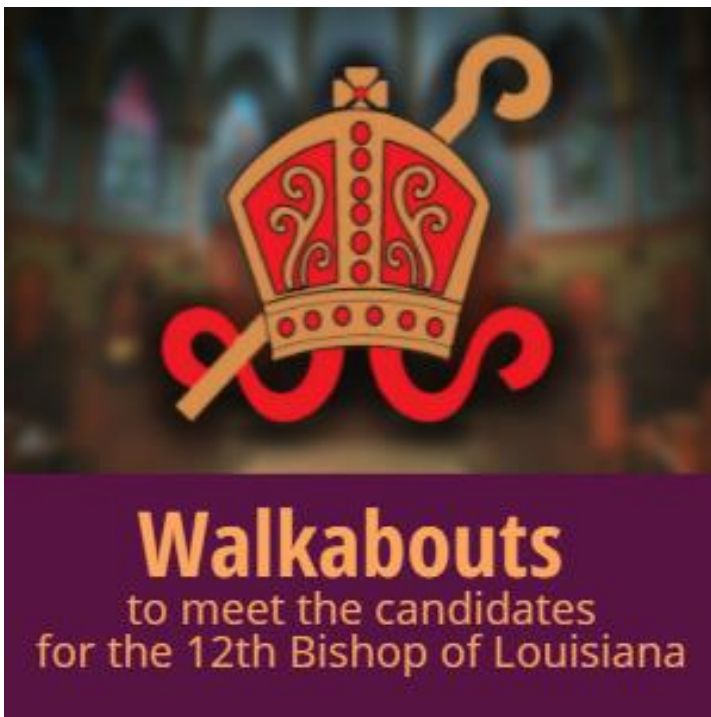
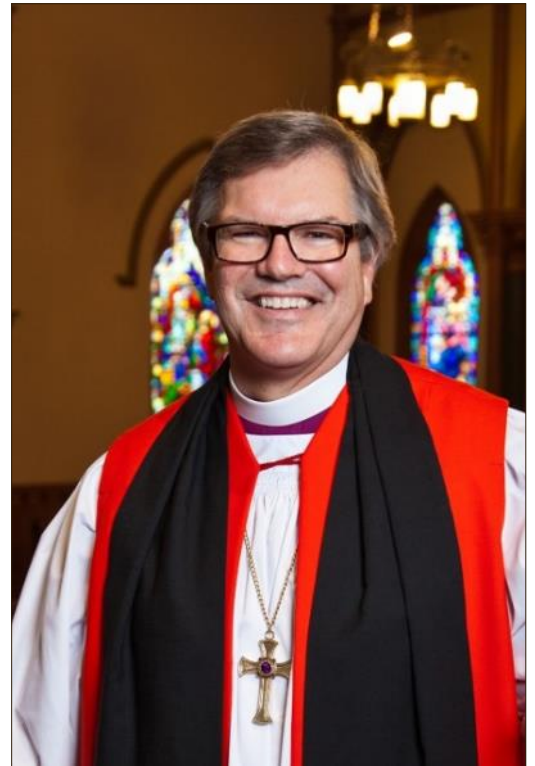
May God continue to bless us and give us the strength to follow God's will.

I am as always

Your servant in Christ,



The Rt. Rev. Morris K. Thompson, Jr.
Bishop of Louisiana



Walkabout Schedule

Walkabouts are a time for the candidates for bishop to learn about the diocese, and for the people of the diocese to learn more about the candidates. Two listening sessions are scheduled on April 25 and 27. These sessions will be recorded and available for viewing following the Walkabouts.

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2022

Episcopal School of Baton Rouge
3200 Woodland Ridge Blvd, Baton Rouge

- 5:00 pm – Registration
- 5:30 pm – Introduction of Candidates & Welcome
- 6:00 pm – Listening Sessions Begin

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2022

St. Martin's School, Metairie
225 Green Acres Rd, Metairie, LA

- 5:00 pm – Registration
- 5:30 pm – Introduction of Candidates & Welcome
- 6:00 pm – Listening Sessions Begin

The Rev. Frederick DuMontier Devall IV



Rector, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Metairie

Biographical Data

Ordained Deacon: June 5, 1996

Ordained Priest: December 21, 1996

Seminary Education:

M. Div., Virginia Theological Seminary, 1996

Experience Highlights:

- Curate, St. Luke's, Baton Rouge, 1996-1998
- Vicar, Chapel of the Holy Comforter, 1998-2004
- Rector, St. Martin's, Metairie, 2004-Present
- Standing Committee, 2001-2006; 2021-2021
- President of the Standing Committee 2005-2006; 2020-2021
- Executive Board: 2010-2013
- Deputy to General Convention: 2000, 2003, 2009, 2015, and 2022

Essay Questions

Question 1: What has led you to respond to this process for nomination to be the 12th Bishop of Louisiana?

In short, the sense of a call to ministry expressed by the Holy Spirit through prayer and reflection and reinforced by the prodding and encouragement of laity and clergy colleagues in Louisiana and throughout the church. The episcopacy in general has been something I have been in discernment about for more than a decade. In 2010, I was on the slate for the Diocese of East Tennessee, finishing second in the balloting. Not being elected was difficult in the moment, but at the same time it was encouraging to have been a strong candidate.

Over the years colleagues have spoken with me about being nominated in other dioceses. I had a few preliminary conversations with various search and nominating committees, but discussions really did not go very far. I did not sense a call to uproot our family. Now, as empty nesters, when moving somewhere else is a possibility, it is not really something Lisa or I desire. Except for college and seminary, Louisiana has been my home. Lisa and I have shared twenty-five years of married life and ordained ministry here. We raised our children here. That deep connection with people, place, and culture undergirds a particular call to the episcopacy at this time and in this place.

We have incredible challenges ahead of us. It will require new approaches and new ways of thinking and being. Louisianians are known better for cherishing traditions, not ridding ourselves of them. Moving forward together in a fashion that acknowledges but also questions our traditions and history is going to require a trusted leader who knows and loves the people of our diocese and state, one who can speak to people of differing backgrounds, be they urban, suburban, small town, and country. I believe I can be that trusted leader who has a solid relationship with the people of our diocese to engender their trust to step out in faith as we seek to be the church in 21st century Louisiana.

Question 2: Describe your passion for mission and ministry.

Over the course of my life, I have had several intense encounters with God, all of which I believe to have been markers guiding me towards the Christian life as an ordained person. When I was five years old my grandfather, the son of an Episcopal priest and active lay person, would talk about "the call". From Camp Hardtner to college life, ordained ministry was always somewhere in my mind, but

it seemed a distant possibility. That changed one day while driving on I-85 between Atlanta and Montgomery, AL.

Although alone in my car, I began to sense that someone else was with me. The feeling was so strong I even looked over my shoulder in the backseat to make sure no one else was in the vehicle. Out of nowhere a question welled up within me, and I asked, "Am I to be a priest in your church?" With that came an overwhelming sense of affirmation. After a period of time, I "came to" and found myself driving south on I-85.

Less than a year later, as I was taking active steps to enter the ordination process, my father took his own life. As devastating as that event was to our family, I also was a firsthand recipient of and witness to the ministry of the church, largely through the pastoral care of the late Rev. William Barnwell. That love confirmed that this was the life I was called to lead.

Being with people at their lowest and worst moments is a privilege. It is difficult, no question, but it is a role I accept because I know what a difference it makes. Being there produces a strange joy. That may seem odd, but that joy is a product of love and sense that God is there with us every step of the way.

On the happier side of pastoral ministry is preparation for baptisms, confirmations, and marriages, to say nothing of the magnificence of marking someone "as Christ's own forever" or tying the marriage knot with my stole and pronouncing a couple to be married, followed by bestowing the church's blessing upon their new life.

My own experiences lead me to want to share what I treasure about the church- language to speak about God, being in community with other folks I might not otherwise know but for the church, and seeking the common good through outreach and service.

Over the years I have befriended numerous community members in stores, coffee shops, and restaurants as a means of building bridges to the wider community. It helps to be able to say, "We're the church with the Pumpkin Patch". They all know the patch! Although we are in a neighborhood dominated by two very large Roman Catholic parishes, folks know who and where we are through consistent presence and ministry with our neighbors. I would like to bring that passion to bear in the work of our diocese as we know and love our neighbors throughout Louisiana.

Question 3: One of the challenges that our denomination faces is an aging population. What are your ideas for

motivating the next generation of clergy leaders?

The next generation of clergy leaders want to engage real-world problems in tangible ways. Forming a new committee and talking about (and around) an issue is not going to inspire them to be part of the church in Louisiana. If, however, they see a diocese in the church where the bishop is leading on some issues and being a cheerleader for others who are leading in different areas, that would be noteworthy. Actively living out the baptismal covenant in word and deed reflects an authenticity that is motivating.

Because of my passion for stewardship of Creation, I can speak directly to the toll that climate change has already taken on our state. We know we have already lost hundreds of square miles of land to subsidence, erosion, and destructive practices, to say nothing of the on-going threat of sea-level rise and likelihood of increased hurricane frequency and intensity. Living through these challenges has led me to the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching program at the School of Theology at The University of the South in Sewanee, TN. I have completed my four years of classes (two each summer for four summers) and am now writing my thesis, "Preaching through the Prolonged Climate Crisis" with an emphasis on the imminent danger facing Louisiana.

Young clergy and laity understand that climate change is real and accelerating. They understand the necessity of holding the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. They also understand that this crisis impacts everyone but is disproportionately borne by the poor and marginalized people of our state. Expressing the link between climate change and ecological justice as an expression of our Baptismal Covenant is language that gives us credibility.

While I feel a call to speak out on this particular issue, there are other obvious social justice issues that deserve the church's attention and leadership. The tone of such action is clear- the church needs to be present in the world, not shrink back from it.

One of the ways we can get clergy and laity working together in the world is to leverage our diocesan conventions. What if a convention theme of "Prison Ministry" or "Hunger" or "Homelessness", all of which are addressed in Matthew 25, was presented in such a way as to invite each congregation of the diocese to wrestle with and discern a response to that issue in their own setting? I suspect we would hear from some that are already engaged in this work, we would see the "aha" of others as they waded into these complex matters, and we would also begin to see collaboration among the various entities of our diocese. Then imagine the reports back to convention the following year. We would have something to celebrate. Such a shared venture would awaken in us something that has been lacking, a sense of

true collegiality in ministry with fellow clergy and laity.

I also believe clergy would appreciate more time getting to know their bishop. The Clergy Conference is a good start, but we can expand the ways we build collegiality. As bishop I could see myself having lunch two or three times a week with clergy in groups of twos or threes or individual coffee visits. I also have strong interest in exploring "residency" in a congregation during the seasons of Advent and Lent. From a previous response, you know my love of connecting with people in pastoral settings. As a bishop, that changes due to transiency in locations from week to week, but I think a mutually beneficial approach could be for the bishop to spend Advent and/or Lent in one congregation. Residency can provide a way to know one another that is different from the way most people experience their bishop- for one hour per year at a confirmation.

A bishop should be the chief listener. Part of the vocation of a bishop is to ensure all voices are heard and to be a voice for those who have none. Young clergy are motivated when their voices are heard and matter. After listening and praying, the bishop's task is to connect their passions and gifts so they intersect with the needs of the community and the world.

Question 4: Almost two years have been spent in struggles with the COVID pandemic and the many social, political, and economic challenges it brought to the forefront. How have you fostered unity among individuals of differing values and diverse opinions? Where do you see hope springing forward in the Episcopal Church?

St. Martin's Church in Metairie is a congregation that is equally divided between conservatives and progressives with most falling somewhere in the center. When I came to St. Martin's in 2004, it was on the heels of the consecration of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire. As a clergy deputy of the 2003 General Convention, I had voted in favor of approving his election. The Vestry was nervous that calling me would cause division in the parish, but that did not happen. Conformity around difficult issues did not keep us engaged; it was our shared life in Christ as a Eucharistic Community.

I learned a deep truth in my time as curate at St. Luke's Church in Baton Rouge- the Eucharist is the symbol of unity in the Episcopal Church. Of course, I had learned this statement of doctrine at a much earlier time in life, but it was at St. Luke's that this truth became manifest in a deep

and abiding manner. I was not theologically conservative and was vocal of my support for women and the LGBTQ community in ordained ministry, both verboten at that time in that parish. Yet, those people, many of whom disagreed with me, loved me, and formed me and shaped me into being a priest. It was through the language of Eucharistic unity that we were able to be in relationship. Bishop Charles Jenkins, who was my rector at that time, remained a close friend right up until his death. Had that relationship been dependent upon anything other than the Eucharist, I doubt it would have flowered, but it did. I have carried that lesson with me since.

I still believe that this possibility exists in the Episcopal Church. People of different opinions can not only tolerate one another; we can love each other! No longer are we debating the role of women or LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of the church, but the tension between progressives and conservatives continues to this day as we wrestle with other important topics like race, history, and public health. Yet, the vehicle for community building is not conformity around cultural issues; it is Holy Communion. I have and will continue to preach that our unity in Christ allows us to have the difficult conversations around topics that COVID has uncovered and/or magnified. The disparities we see were there all along, but we were blind to them. Louisiana Episcopalians learned this lesson firsthand in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. We see that same thing happening again now with COVID. COVID seem to accelerate time and trends that were already happening.

Most of our difficult conversations at St. Martin's have taken place in our adult education program known as "Pray/Learn". We begin with the Eucharist followed by a time for discussion of whatever book we are reading together. During COVID we have read *Love Is the Way* by Michael Curry, *Life of a Klansman* by Edward Ball and *Year of Wonders* by Geraldine Brooks. These books have raised many parallels to the situations we find ourselves in today. As a Eucharistic community, we have been able to walk together through some tough times.

Hope springs forth for me in that many people are beginning to awaken to the understanding that we must stop moving away from others and start walking towards each other again. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has spoken to this in speeches, sermons, and writings. I agree with him that the church can either be another divisive institution in a country full of partisan institutions or we can be a force for bringing people together. Jesus tells us and shows us there is a different way to live. The church knows this intellectually, and I believe it is beginning to make that long journey from the head to the heart to live out this truth. That gives me hope.

The Rev. Canon Shannon Rogers Duckworth



Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Louisiana

Biographical Data

Ordained Deacon: June 16, 2001

Ordained Priest: December 16, 2001

Seminary Education:

M. Div., The General Theological Seminary, 2001

Experience Highlights:

- Curate, St. John's, Ocean Springs, MS, 2001-2002
- Vicar, St. Mary's, Lexington, MS, 2002-2005
- Chaplain, St. Andrew's School, Jackson, MS 2005-2007
- Associate Rector, St. James, Jackson, MS 2007-2013
- Canon to the Ordinary, Diocese of Louisiana, 2013-Present
- Province IV Transition Officers, 2013-Present
- Client Council, Church Pension Group, 2018-present
- St. Martin's Episcopal School, Metairie, Board member, 2020-present
- 80th General Convention Deputation Chair

Essay Questions

Question 1: What has led you to respond to this process for nomination to be the 12th Bishop of Louisiana?

From the first moment that I held a torch in my hand as 12-year-old acolyte, I knew the church would become my lifelong home. Then, in 1991, I served as the thurifer at the ordination of the Rev. Beth Foose. Chills ran down my spine as I stood at the altar alongside the bishop and watched the clergy gather to lay hands on her. In that moment, the seeds of ministry took root and grew in my heart. Prayerful discernment sought out that still, small voice which has led me to this point in my ministry.

At the age of 27, a few months after my ordination to the diaconate, I met with an Episcopal priest mentor who had been ordained for many years. As I sat down in his office, I had only one question: "What is the secret to a long and successful ministry?" Without hesitation he said, "You must be their pastor. Be a part of their daily lives. Show up when they are sick. Hold their hand as they die. People will not always agree with your decisions, but as their pastor, they will trust you. And that trust will lead you through all of the highs and lows of ministry."

Be their pastor. I believe that the heart of a beloved pastor does not seek to lead, but rather listens carefully for the call to lead and then responds in love to that call. A courageous pastor will say yes and lead others to deeper relationship with Jesus. Here, now, at this place in my life is where my pastor's heart and my deep passion for ministry meet. As the first female Canon in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, this role has brought me to the table of so many of the decisions that form the heart of our ministry. I have been humbled by the support of family, friends and mentors who encourage me to be my best self. The work has been diverse and challenging. It has demanded things of me that I never anticipated. With God's help, I have met those challenges and there has never

Question 2: Describe your passion for mission and ministry.

Serving the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana has been the greatest joy of my vocation and ministry. I once read that one lives differently in a place when one knows that they are going to be buried there. I am not sure who penned these words, but they resonate deeply with me and speak to the connection that I feel with the people and parishes of south Louisiana. I also strongly believe that it is important

to listen to the community in which one serves. Since Bishop Thompson announced his retirement, many in this diocese have spoken to me about discerning this call. I have taken all of this to prayer, spiritual direction, and deep conversation with my family, and feel led to the process of discernment to elect the next bishop of Louisiana.

I love this diocese. Eight and a half years ago, I was called as Canon to the Ordinary and my family and I moved to Louisiana. Very quickly, Louisiana became our home. I have traveled thousands of miles, from one end of the diocese to the other, providing leadership on a daily basis to our 16,000 faithful congregants in 48 parishes and schools, as well as to over 100 dedicated clergy. In April of 2021, I married Jimmy Duckworth, a native New Orleanian, retired United States Coast Guard Commander, and current resident of New Roads, Louisiana. One day, I will be buried beneath an ancient oak tree, alongside a levee which holds back the mighty waters of the Mississippi River at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Pointe Coupee Parish.

The Diocese of Louisiana is a majestic place, filled with cypress trees, pecan groves, and ancient bayous that whisper tales of long ago. I relish in the beauty and diversity of Louisiana. In just a few hours, one can move from the crowded streets of our large, metropolitan cities into the peaceful tree-lined bayous and sun-soaked fields of our rural parishes. We are a diocese of both small and large parishes who together form the backbone of our Episcopal life here.

As beautiful as our diocese is, we are faced with a unique set of challenges. During my tenure as canon and under the supervision of the bishop, I have provided steady leadership through 8 major hurricanes, 4 tropical storms, and 1 historically catastrophic flood. Additionally, through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I, along with a team of clergy, diocesan staff, and medical professionals, have overseen the implementation of the diocesan COVID-19 protocols, U.S. Small Business Administration PPP Loans, as well as safety and crisis response in an unprecedented and ever-changing time in our nation's history. We also watch as our coastline erodes, and our homes, churches and livelihoods are threatened. We face the realities of declining church membership and aging congregations. We confront the inevitable economic hardships that result from an ongoing pandemic, natural disasters, as well as social and political unrest. Yet, I am also deeply aware of the strength of this community and our ability to lean into the challenges that we face.

The next 10 years will be crucial in the history of the Diocese of Louisiana. My leadership uniquely qualifies me to lead us as we face this future together. You know me. You know my heart and the depth of my love for you. And, during these uncertain times, I believe that this truth, along with the gifts and joy that I would bring to this position, can lead us through this holy journey. I ask for your prayers as I pray daily for you.

Question 3: One of the challenges that our denomination faces is an aging population. What are your ideas for motivating the next generation of clergy leaders?

The Episcopal Church, like many mainline denominations, faces aging populations, both with clergy and laity. I recently read an article from Ministry Architects entitled, "They're Not Coming Back." [1] It speaks to a time when we hoped young adults would return to church after college, once they got married, or after children were born. We look around the church on Sunday and our pews are not filled with the younger generations that we hoped would come. In addition, clergy are retiring at a rate almost four times that of those being ordained. Given these statistics, the way before us seems daunting. However, in this challenge also resides great opportunity. Emergent models of ministry are gaining a foothold in the church and have been an ongoing focus of my ministry as Canon. Through mutual support, formation and discernment, I feel that these models will inspire clergy as well as the laity and motivate them to become the next generation of church leaders.

At a recent event I attended, hosted by the Diocese of Louisiana, clergy and lay leadership from across the province gathered to discuss this topic. Emergent rather than traditional models of ministry comprise over 50% of new clergy positions in the national church. What this means is that far fewer clergy are attending residential seminary and accepting full time positions upon graduation. We have experienced this trend in the Diocese of Louisiana as well. Our diocese relies upon part time, retired and bi-vocational priests, as well as the diaconate, to support our congregations. Churches who have embraced new models of ministry have experienced growth, but we must do more. For example, bi-vocational ministry is an avenue that individuals may not have thought possible, given career and family constraints. In my tenure as Canon, I have actively sought out and mentored those who seek ministry through these emergent models. For example, the Rev. Lynn Hooks, an educator, wife and mother, who heard the call to the priesthood later in life, was recently ordained a bi-vocational priest. She serves as a chaplain at a parish school while also providing stable leadership for two additional congregations. This priest's formation is crucial and great care has to be taken that she, and the others who follow her, are equipped for the challenges that they will face during their careers. I have encouraged our Commission on Ministry, to continue to develop a formation process that is robust and fits our changing needs. These bi-vocational clergy will provide invaluable pastoral presence, enhanced connection to the

community, and increased focus on mission in our diocese. They also bring invaluable, secular experience to their congregations. This model is an example of what I feel can help energize the next generation of leadership.

The development of lay leadership plays an equally significant role. Our laity are the backbone of our congregations. They provide stability in the midst of uncertainty and must shoulder a myriad of roles in the absence of consistent clergy leadership. I have the highest respect for all of our wardens, and I stay in close contact with them and the parish vestries. I am always inspired by their faithfulness to the church. We have congregants who have expressed their desire to step further into their ministries as lay preachers and teachers. This is an innovative and new initiative, and I have already begun conversations with Episcopal seminaries as well as our diocesan leadership on the design and implementation of a training program for our laity.

The 48 parishes of the Diocese of Louisiana, and the clergy and lay people who comprise them, inspire me. The pandemic has taught us that we are flexible and innovative. The office of the bishop plays an important role in recruiting, encouraging and supporting these emergent models for clergy as well as enhanced formation opportunities for our laity. Even in these challenging times, the Holy Spirit is at work in our midst. My goal for this diocese is that we all become re-energized in our current roles in the church with an eye towards new, collaborative models that will bring vitality and growth to our congregations and clergy.

[1] Ministry Architects. www.ministryarchitects.com. September 8, 2021.

Question 4: Almost two years have been spent in struggles with the COVID pandemic and the many social, political, and economic challenges it brought to the forefront. How have you fostered unity among individuals of differing values and diverse opinions? Where do you see hope springing forward in the Episcopal Church?

"Isn't it amazing that we are all made in God's image, and yet there is so much diversity among his people?" -Archbishop Desmond Tutu

This quote speaks to the heart of how I strive to build unity in our congregations. As Episcopalians, one of our greatest strengths is that on Sunday morning, our pews fill with congregants who hail from a variety of social, political and economic backgrounds. We gather at a common table, and we are at our best when we celebrate our unity. We are

stronger people when we listen patiently and hear one another, despite our differences. Doing so always builds a stronger, and more unified church. As Canon to the Ordinary, I have worked tirelessly to foster unity within parish vestries for over 8 ½ years. I have assisted them with difficult and contentious issues. I have walked hand in hand with congregations to overcome fire, floods, storms, and disappointment. My daily work with a myriad of individuals and organizations across the church have given me tremendous experience and skill in addressing the needs of the diocese. I am accessible, I listen, I advocate, and I lead. As Canon, I participate in conversations that address social and political differences. I sit at the table with senior wardens and national church leaders and support new models of ministry. I encourage church leadership to discern their strengths and to use them as they seek new ways to minister on behalf of Christ in this ever-changing world.

In my role as search consultant for the Diocese of Louisiana, I have successfully led over 24 clergy searches. Each search process is entirely unique. Conflict, grief, distrust, excitement and hope are all a part of these conversations. I have helped to build bridges between vestries, search committees and communicants. I teach those engaged in the process that unity does not always mean that we will agree.

Disagreement is a natural occurrence, but it can lead to creativity and new ideas if skillfully mediated. My role as a search consultant is both as a mentor and a pathfinder as congregations develop a vision for their leadership. If a search process is successful, not only does a congregation call their next priest, but they also learn invaluable lessons about themselves through reflection, prayer and self-study.

I have hope that in the midst of a great deal of transition in our own diocese, while wrestling with the effects of the ongoing pandemic, climate change, as well as our nation's civil and political upheaval, the Episcopal Church has an important voice. The church's long history has proven that we will find our way through these challenging times. We have endured numerous hardships and storms, and there will be more to come. Yet, our abiding resiliency, rooted in the strength of a loving God, gives us not only a unique perspective, but also the determination to move forward. The prospect of this journey with you both excites and inspires me. My past leadership and performance have proven that I have the skills to lead this diocese into a bold and exciting future.

Prayer for the Selection of Our Next Bishop

Heavenly Father, you oversee all that we say and do. Guide the people of the Diocese of Louisiana in the selection of our next bishop, that we may be led by your Holy Spirit. Direct us toward the person you desire to fill this role. Lead us to a person of integrity, a person of prayer, and a person of faith, who is capable of carrying out your wishes for our future. Above all, may our new leader be one who is willing to receive your unconditional love, and pass it on to those near and far. We pray this in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN.