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**A New Chapter in All Saints' Story**

**A. All Saints and the Diocese of Washington**

**1. What is our current relationship with Bishop Mariann Budde and the Diocese of Washington?**

All Saints Church remains a parish in good standing within the Diocese of Washington, with the same freedoms of worship, governance, hiring, theology, etc. we have always had. Over the last 15 years, All Saints has had a supplemental bishop, first with Bishop Salmon and then with Bishop Little. The key word is “supplemental.” Bishops Salmon and Little *supplemented* the episcopal oversight (i.e., bishop oversight) we have always had from the Bishop of Washington; the Bishop of Washington never relinquished episcopal responsibility for the Parish. Bishop Chane and then Bishop Budde accommodated the wishes and feelings of the Parish during this time, based on their relationships with Bishops Salmon and Little. The supplemental oversight was originally expected to end in May 2016 upon Bishop Salmon’s passing. Instead, Bishop Budde agreed to extend supplemental oversight for 3 more years, and extended an additional year due to the pandemic. The period to which she previously agreed has now come to an end.

**2. How did the leadership of All Saints Church participate in this decision?**

Father Ed and the Vestry of All Saints Church were very involved in this decision. In recent months, as the period for the supplemental oversight was ending, Bishop Budde reached out to Father Ed and the Vestry to discuss regularizing the Parish’s relationship with the Diocese. We had a constructive and forthright Zoom call with Bishop Budde in which Vestry members freely expressed their concerns and asked questions. The Vestry then separately met to discuss the call with the Bishop and agreed to send a letter to her stating the key considerations from the Vestry’s point of view. Bishop Budde responded positively to this letter. Both letters are available for members of the Parish to read.

**Commented [TD1]:** Teri, please insert link to the letters to/from Bishop Budde

**3. Will All Saints continue to have autonomy in key matters, including theology, liturgy, hiring, and administration of the church?**

Yes. A key point that Bishop Budde made to the Vestry was that it will be the Parish’s right and responsibility to call a new Rector. In addition, she has assured us that “there is no need ... to worry that officially ending the supplemental oversight agreements will signify a dramatic change in your congregational life.” She “wholeheartedly support[s]” our “mission and ministry” as stated in our strategic plan, “celebrates the health and spiritual vitality of All Saints,” and stresses that there is no “expectation that you be in complete theological agreement with me, other diocesan leaders, or sister congregations.” Bishop Budde’s relationship with us has always been graceful, generous, caring, supportive, and loving.

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**4. Is Father Ed's departure connected to the end of supplemental oversight?**

No. Father Ed has served as Rector of All Saints for ten years. His move to North Carolina is based on his family's needs, personal circumstances, and a deep sense of calling from God. However, realizing that the supplemental oversight was coming to an end, Father Ed was committed to help guide All Saints through this particular transition before his departure.

**5. What is our current relationship with Bishop Little?**

Bishop Little remains an important figure within the life of All Saints Church. Bishop Budde has warmly and graciously invited him to continue as "Friend of the Parish" and has extended to him a permanent invitation to visit whenever he is able. His next visit to All Saints Church will be on October 31, 2021, to perform Confirmations, Reaffirmations, and Receptions into the Episcopal Church. All Saints also intends to extend to him several invitations to preach at All Saints Church in 2021, 2022, and beyond.

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**B. The Call Process**

- 1. When is Father Ed's last day? What are we doing to celebrate him and Patty?** Our last Sunday with Father Ed and Patty will be September 12. We will have a number of opportunities to celebrate their glorious ministry and thank them for the many blessings they have bestowed on our parish. Father Ed has been generous to host a dinner series on Monday evenings in July and August, and a three-week adult education forum in August. There will be a staff farewell gathering on September 7, and a farewell lunch for the entire parish on September 12. In addition, many individual parish members are hosting their own gatherings.
- 2. What happens next? What is the process for calling a new rector?** There is no 'one size fits all' process or approach. Throughout the history of All Saints, we have taken different approaches to call a new rector. That said, there are at least two main priorities:
  - a. Transitional Leadership.** On September 13, we will enter into a transitional leadership period. We are blessed to have two Associate Rectors, Father BJ and Father Matthew, who will lead the parish in partnership with the Vestry. It is anticipated that a third Associate Priest will join us in October. We will continue our worship services, resume adult and children's education programs, accelerate our beautiful ministries, and host in-person fellowship (following the appropriate health and safety protocols). We may also choose to call an Interim Rector later in the year (see Question 5 below).
  - b. Discernment and Search.** The Vestry will have an off-site retreat this Fall to reflect and begin planning for the search. There will be a formal search process, in which we develop and share a job posting, discern and interview candidates, visit with candidates in their home parishes, host a few candidates at All Saints, perform background checks, and (God willing) make a final discernment and call to a new Rector.
- 3. When can we expect to have a new rector?** We hope to conclude the search in 12-18 months, but we will see what plans God has in store for us! Past searches have taken as little as 6 months or, in some cases, more than 3 years. The Vestry feels it is important not to move too hastily, but also to proceed expediently while allowing room for true reflection and discernment as we hear from God whom He is calling.
- 4. Who will lead the search process? What is the role of the Diocese of Washington?** The Vestry of All Saints Church will choose the next rector. We have the authority to conduct a search, seek and interview candidates, identify finalists, and make a final discernment and call. The Vestry may form a small search committee to assist in this process. Bishop Budde has stated that she and the Diocese are available to serve as a resource in the search process for as much or as little as we wish. Bishop Little has offered his counsel as well. Toward the end of the process, the Vestry will seek input from the Diocese of Washington on the final candidates. Bishop Budde's approval and

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consent to calling a Rector is required under the church canons. She has assured us that, if the final candidate is in good order, she will support our choice.

**5. Will All Saints appoint an Interim Rector?**

We are blessed with two faithful and phenomenal Associate Rectors who are both willing to step in and share the responsibility of shepherding and teaching the congregation. We are anticipating the arrival of a third priest in October, as mentioned above. That said, in the absence of Father Ed, we are conscious of the considerable load this will place on Father BJ, Father Matthew, our new third priest, and their families. We will continue to seek God's will during the transitional period, and we will continue to update the parish as the process evolves.

**6. Can we call one of our Associate Rectors to become our new Rector?**

Though technically allowed, this practice is strongly discouraged. Based on many examples from the distant and recent past, the Vestry believes that this would not be a wise decision. Furthermore, neither Associate Rector has expressed a desire to become the new Rector. However, both Associate Rectors will be instrumental in helping the Vestry lead the parish through the Interim period, and beyond.

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C. The Vestry Resolution and Kingdom Conversations

1. **What exactly is a “Kingdom Church?”** All Saints Church’s mission is to share Christ’s love, transform lives, and build God’s Kingdom. We aspire to be a church seeking first God’s eternal Kingdom, rather than placing any earthly, cultural, or political movements before God. As a Kingdom church, we submit to Jesus as our one true King and seek to bring His authority over every aspect of our individual and corporate lives. We seek to obey Christ’s call to love one another just as He loved us, and to speak the truth in love.
2. **How do the Kingdom Conversations taking place this summer fit into the concept of a Kingdom Church?**

The Kingdom Conversations are a small part of our bigger work to heal divisions across our families, our church, and our nation. We recognize the love and harmony of All Saints and we do not mean to imply that our parish is divided – it is not. To date, Father Ed has hosted several dinner conversations, consisting of about a dozen parishioners each. The groups have engaged in thoughtful discussion about a number of topics, including Father Ed’s departure, political and racial divisions, the parish’s relationship with the Diocese, and the stained glass window of George Washington and Robert E. Lee. It is our hope that these discussions will serve as a model for the parish and the world on how to work through potentially contentious issues with a Christ-like spirit of grace, humility, and love.

3. **In January of 2020, All Saints adopted a 5 year strategic plan. How does the Vestry resolution fit into this plan?**

The strategic plan re-affirmed All Saints’ mission to share Christ’s love, transform lives, and build God’s Kingdom. The first of six strategic priorities addressed in the strategic plan is “Strengthen our Spiritual and Biblical Foundation.” [\(Click here for the entire plan\)](#) This priority has five key areas of focus:

1. **Increase Biblical engagement.** *Increase knowledge and engagement on both a personal and collective level.*
2. **Make All Saints a praying church.** *Transform lives by connecting all ministries, initiatives, and individuals through a vibrant network of prayer.*
3. **Increase spiritual formation and development.** *Develop a church-wide culture that sparks individual spiritual development in all seasons of life, helping congregants to integrate faith in all aspects of life, including work, school and family.*
4. **Grow and demonstrate a united body of Christ.** *Reflect the heart of God for one heart, one mind and one spirit, while embracing the unique and creative contributions of many different congregants and different worship styles.*
5. **Become a beacon of light to Washington D.C.** *Become salt and light in our communities, inspiring other Christian communities to seek their place in transforming this world and ushering in the Kingdom of God today.*

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The vestry incorporated all 5 of these areas into the resolution. For instance, scripture, not individual opinions, informs each point of the resolution. The Kingdom Conversations start and end with prayer, and the entire congregation was invited to join in a prayer vigil seeking God's wisdom and guidance before conversations even began. Each Vestry member came to the initial discussion with a different point of view, but we prayed that this be an opportunity to grow and demonstrate a united body of Christ. Finally, it has been our prayer that we demonstrate a different approach than the world in addressing potentially divisive issues. In so doing we hope to become a beacon of light to Washington DC.

**4. Did the Diocese ask us to take down the stained-glass window that includes a depiction of Robert E. Lee?**

No. The idea was first broached in 2016 by some All Saints members, who raised their concerns with Father Ed. Over time, more parishioners expressed similar concerns, while others have voiced their deep support for Lee and the window. Father Ed has been praying about the window for years, and asked the Vestry to help resolve the matter before his departure. After a full discussion, the Vestry decided to use the window as an opportunity to engage the congregation in a meaningful dialogue about broken relationships, including political and racial divisions.

**5. Why are we having these conversations now? Why don't we postpone the window discussion until later?**

Father Ed and the Vestry believe that it is better to launch these discussions while he is still Rector. The Vestry also sees the conversations as an opportunity to demonstrate Father Ed's teachings about what being a Kingdom Church means, and to establish a model for our parish to address potentially divisive issues through the lens of the Gospel. Finally, our brothers and sisters in Christ have expressed to the Vestry a range of emotions concerning the window – including pain, hurt, concern, admiration, honor, and respect. Out of our love and respect for all our parishioners, we did not want to postpone a discussion of their concerns.

**6. What comes next? What decisions will the Vestry make based upon these Kingdom Conversations?**

The Vestry and clergy have already learned a great deal from parishioners, both in the scheduled Kingdom Conversations, and in numerous individual and small group discussions. We have been grateful for the opportunity to listen, engage and reconnect with so many brothers and sisters. In the Fall, the Vestry will reflect and discuss what follow-up is needed, based on the Kingdom Conversations and the needs of the church. The Vestry commits to listening, praying, and following the Spirit's leading before making any decisions. Therefore, we have not imposed an arbitrary timeline for these important discussions.

The Kingdom Conversations are also not simply a 'means to an end' for the Vestry to 'crowd source' input from the parish. The discussions are an 'end' in themselves, to

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deepen relationships with one another, heal and mend divisions, and help each of us draw closer to God. We expect Kingdom Conversations to continue well beyond Father Ed's departure. Just as Jesus sent out his disciples 'two by two,' we hope those who have attended one of the dinners will host their own Kingdom Conversations, as a model for the parish and the world.

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