APPENDIX U
INTERVIEWING & SAMPLE QUESTIONS

SAMPLE ONE: Adapted from Christ & Holy Trinity, Westport, CT

Guidance for Recruitment Team
Across the range of topics we cover with each candidate, we are seeking clues, patterns, examples that will help us understand his/her:

- **Theology** — Commitment to Christ, sense of loving God, understanding of the Church in the 21st Century, and capacity to preach and minister on sensitive topics (able to match our commitment to diversity, tolerance, sensibilities, etc.)

- **Emotional intelligence** — Self-awareness, able to manage emotions and recognizes others, sensitivity and perception, maturity, ability to self-differentiate

- **Leadership ability and style** — Rector as leader vs. rector as chaplain, decision-making, conflict resolution, staff and volunteer management

- **Initiative, energy** — physical and emotional

- **Communication/interpersonal style and skills** — from one-on-one to small- and large-group settings, to congregation, interpersonal communication comfort and facility

- **Creative thinking** — capacity for vision and change as we imagine our parish future and the future of the Episcopal Church

- **Social wherewithal** — facility with social settings, able to engage, converse, mingle, “be a part of”

- **Entrepreneurial spirit** — initiating and leading new ventures (in parish, community, prior career settings)

**Format:**
- Three or four members of Recruitment Team will take the lead in asking questions and follow-ups, while the rest of the team takes notes
- This allows for a variety of voices and phrasing and frees us up to “lean in” with follow up questions and capturing specific responses, depending on what each team member hears and perceives
- We’re seeking stories — examples, specifics are key and go much further than describing topics and theological or philosophical ideas
AREAS FOR INQUIRY

Personal & Professional Orientation

1. **Career Path: This part of our inquiry will be specific to each candidate’s chronology, resume, and track record**
   - Career choices, timing/reason for sequential moves?
   - Assimilation into new roles - challenges, surprises, learnings?
   - Accomplishments - what will your parish(s) say?

2. **Spirituality: How does personal spirituality enable him/her to be a faith leader for us?**
   - Can you share a personal statement of your theology?
   - As our spiritual leader, what do you believe is the single most important element in this role? How do you approach this element?
   - Do you have a spiritual director or mentor? How has this relationship shaped your spiritual wellness?
   - What does *God’s Mission* and our participation in it (the *missional* movement) mean. How does this impact your ministry? What could/should it mean to our parish?
   - How would you help us deepen our capacity as Christ’s disciples?
   - What aspect(s) of the Rector’s role most *energizes* you? Which aspects frustrate or stress you?
   - Do you personally engage in evangelism? How have you motivated parishioners to evangelize?
   - How do you approach preaching? How has this evolved over the years? How do you keep your approach fresh, contemporary? What kind of feedback do you get?
   - Where have you felt most effective in your role as teacher?
   - How have you matured as a pastor to those in need? What draws you to comfort those in despair, crisis, the bereaved, the dying? How do you know yourself to be effective in this role?

3. **Leading the Congregation: This line of questions focus on the organizational leadership skills needed for our faith community — management, confidence, boldness, influence, motivation, etc.**
   - How do you see a parish like ours embracing and living into the changing cultural landscape for Christians?
   - What is your theology of stewardship? How would you define a culture of stewardship? Where have you felt successful as well as frustrated in your role to foster financial stewardship within your congregation(s)? Please offer examples of both.
• Describe your comfort level in discussing money with the congregation and with individuals?
• Where have you moved boldly or with innovation within your ministry? What was successful, or not?
• How do you invite, empower, and support lay leadership?
• How do you define Christian mission? Describe the ways in which you inspire, lead, and participate in Christian charitable outreach efforts.
• We seek closer integration of our different ministries. How have you achieved this elsewhere?
• How would you help us as Christians to most faithfully balance ministry priorities and budget allocations?
• Please describe a time when you felt personally embattled as rector. How did you work through this?
• Conflict or tension between parishioners and/or ministries is inevitable. Please give examples of how you have managed and/or worked through these.
• How would you help us balance our Anglican tradition in liturgy and music with the “new” and “the other”? How have you accomplished this balance in other parishes?
• How do you make hiring decisions? Have you had a staff firing experience? If so, describe the experience and the aftermath.
• What new programs, ministries, or practices did you introduce to your current/recent parish? Did you choose to end any programs or practices? If so, why?
• How do you see us resourcefully and creatively using our facilities — as Christians, as town citizens?

4. **Rector as Public Citizen: We get an insight into how s/he interacts within the public arena.**
• What public, non-parish role(s) have you played within the larger community?
• What would you like to pursue within the larger community if called to serve here?
• How do you see your role in the community as one who participates, engages, leads outside of our parish setting?

5. **Rector as Person: Here we receive insight into the human person rather than the professional clergyperson.**
• What are you reading right now? What types of reading do you enjoy most?
• Describe your hobbies/avocation.
• How do you express your creativity? How do you leverage your creativity in a variety of settings?
• How would your parishioners say you like to socialize within the congregation?
• As Rector, how do you balance the work/play aspects of your life?
• How do you make time for your loved ones?
• What has changed in your own self-awareness over the years?
• How do you like to vacation? How have you used sabbatical(s)?
• How do you care for yourself — physically, emotionally, spiritually?

6. *Candidate’s Discernment of Us*: Here we invite him/her to comment on us, based on our Profile, OTM/TMC portfolios, what they understand about our community, and any other insights or perceptions they’ve made of us.
• What do you find most appealing about our parish?
• What concerns, challenges, questions have arisen during this time of inquiry in regard to our parish, community, buildings and grounds, programming, etc.?
• Would your family enjoy living in our town?
• How will you determine if this is a fit for you?
SAMPLE TWO: Adapted from the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont “Calling New Clergy Partnership in a Congregation”

Background

- Team members should be familiar with the candidate’s written material
- Prior to welcoming the candidate, select one of your team members to facilitate the interview
- The sample questions below are open-ended to invite the candidate to share as much as possible
- Questions need to be tailored to the congregation’s profile and its particular needs, vision, and identified skills for ministry
- The questions should also reflect your familiarity with the candidate’s material

Sample Questions

1. Tell us about the most rewarding or most enjoyable part of your ministry.
2. Describe a time when you had a vision of a ministry and worked to bring others on board so that it might happen.
3. Tell us about a time when you had to make a controversial decision or take a controversial position. How did it affect the community’s life?
4. What is your understanding of how everyone in a congregation has a ministry?
5. Give us an example of how you provide pastoral care.
6. What excites you about our story?
7. What have been some of the major challenges you’ve addressed as a priest?
8. How have you supported people in living into their baptismal promises?
9. What has been your experience attracting and retaining newcomers?
10. What are your strengths and weaknesses, and how did they affect previous congregations?
11. People in Connecticut have a breadth of theological understandings, covering the range from conservative to liberal. In our diocese, male and female, gay and lesbian, single and partnered clergy serve. How do you see yourself working in such a setting?
12. What would you identify as “achievements” in your ministry?
13. How do you take care of yourself spiritually, physically, and emotionally?
14. Each of us has some core belief or beliefs that are non-negotiable. How would you describe that fundamental core in you and how has that surfaced in your ministry?
15. What kind of sense of humor do you have?
16. What other questions do you have about this position, the compensation or the process?
17. Imagine you had $1,000 given you for professional development, how would you spend it?
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS—DEEPENING THE NATURE OF THE CONVERSATION

There should be four sets of questions developed for the entire interview process. Each set of questions, given to every candidate consistently, deepens the level of conversation and prompts growth in getting to know each other.

- **Question Set One** is general in scope and geared for written responses
- **Question Set Two** is to be used during telephone interviews and is designed for oral responses
- **Question Set Three** is used when visiting candidates on-site in their congregation or when candidates come to meet with the Discernment Team
- **Question Set Four** is used when finalists visit onsite

**QUESTION SET ONE: FOR WRITTEN RESPONSES**
1. What has been the most positive and exciting aspect of your parish ministry since September 11th of 2001? (Be very specific)
2. What book of the Bible do you most enjoy teaching and why?
3. How do you take care of yourself (spiritually and physically) on a regular basis?
4. After reading our profile, what first impressions do you have about us/our parish?
5. What do you see as two of the greatest challenges facing any Rector serving the Episcopal Church today? How do you face these challenges?

**QUESTION SET TWO: FOR PHONE INTERVIEW**
1. Please share with us the name of one book (other than the Bible) that you have enjoyed reading during the past six months. What message or value have you drawn from it?
2. What excites you about serving as a rector and how do you view your role as pastor to all parishioners, especially to those who may not always agree with you?
3. What two areas of parish ministry represent your greatest strengths and what have been some experiences you have had in these two areas of ministry?
4. Describe two areas of parish ministry that represent your greatest challenges? Can you tell us a story about one of these and the outcome of meeting or not meeting that challenge?
5. What do you do with your free time (personally, with family, in the community)?
6. Tell us how you have enabled the parish in which you have most recently worked to welcome and retain newcomers?
7. Describe how you balance in-depth pastoral care with the demands of the rest of your ministry?
8. What might you want to ask us after reading our profile and now having answered some initial questions for us?

**QUESTION SET THREE: FOR INITIAL VISIT (EITHER TO CANDIDATE’S PARISH/SETTING OR ONSITE)**

1. Tell us how you relate to your bishop and diocese? Are you actively involved in any committee or office in your diocese?
2. Family life is important for wellness. How do you balance the demands of the parish and your family/personal life?
3. How do you pastorally respond to conflict or a divisive issue confronting the parish?
4. Public worship and prayer life are both important for both the parish and the clergy. What is the structure of your own prayer life? How do you organize public worship?
5. Each of us has certain core values within us that are non-negotiable. What might be such non-negotiable core values for you and how have you made use of them in your ministry?
6. What practical questions might you have about moving to the Connecticut, our diocese, our town?
7. Do you have any questions about our compensation package?
8. Are you still interested in serving as Rector here?

**QUESTION SET FOUR: FOR CANDIDATE’S ONSITE VISIT AND VESTRY INTERVIEW**

- Invite each candidate to celebrate a service of Holy Eucharist just for the VESTRY in the church or chapel with a short homily given.
- Either before or after the interview, invite each candidate to lead a 30-minute Bible study, making use of one of the lections for the upcoming Sunday.

1. Now that you have had conversation with members of our Recruitment Team on several occasions, what is it that most attracts you to the position of ministry as our next rector?
2. Please tell us about the most exciting aspect of your ordained ministry and how you might wish to express that aspect of your ministry with our parish.
3. Please offer us some examples of how you bring people into shared ministry with you?
4. Please define Baptismal Ministry and share with us some examples from your own experience.
5. When we consider God’s mission of restoration and reconciliation, how do you see us participating in this mission here within our congregation? How about within the community where we’re planted? Our diocese? The larger church? The world?
6. We are now going to go around the table and let each member of the committee ask any question of you. Then, we will take a break after
which we would like to ask you to ask any questions you might have for us.
7. Given all that you have heard and seen are you still interested in the position of rector?