

# The Final Year of the Priest in Charge Agreement - Discernment

**Discernment Required by the Letter of Agreement:** The Letter of Agreement between the Priest in Charge, vestry, and Bishop contemplates a period prior to the final year of the agreement during which the vestry and the priest in charge will conduct a mutual discernment of the mission and ministry in the congregation and discern together whether the Priest in Charge should continue in his/her ministry and if so, in what capacity.

## **Ministry Options to be discerned:**

- Congregation requests approval of the Bishop to call the Priest in charge as its Rector
- Congregation and Priest in charge agree with the approval of the Bishop that the term of the Priest in charge will end, but that the clergy will continue to serve in the capacity of Interim Priest until the next rector is called.
- Congregation and Priest in charge with the approval of the Bishop agree to extend the term of the Priest in charge for a specified period of time.
- Congregation and Priest in charge agree with the approval of the Bishop that the Priest in charge's ministry will end at the expiration of the agreement.

## **Components of the Discernment Process:**

**For the Congregation** – A six to eight month discernment process facilitated by a neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party

- Where are we as a congregation now?
- What is God calling us to be and to go?
- What do we need from ourselves and the clergy to move us towards the future into which we believe God is calling us?

**For the Priest in charge** – a separate discernment of his/her calling

- Where am I now?
- What is God calling me to be and to go?
- What do I need from myself, this congregation, or some other source to move me towards the future into which I believe God is calling me?

**Interview:** Priest in charge and vestry or its designated group meet together and explore what their initial discernment has revealed. Is there additional information needed? Are there clarifications needed? Are there areas that need to be explored? This is done one or two months prior to the Discernment Retreat.

**Discernment Retreat:** Through reflective sharing, reverent listening and prayerful discernment the vestry and Priest in charge together discern God's will.