

Profile of the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese in New England

“In every age, prophetic movements bear witness to Christ, and Christian fellowship is manifested in new and diverse ways; and in every age the Episcopate represents...that universal family in which all fellowships are made full.... For the bishop does not have a greatness of his own, he is the organ of the one Body who represents to the Christians their dependence within the historic family whose worship is one act.”

from *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*
Michael Ramsey, Archbishop of
Canterbury

The Anglican Diocese in New England seeks a godly man who will lead our people and our congregations as we fulfill our mission of “reaching New England with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.” The candidates we seek may be summarized in terms of four important qualities: Christian character, competency, capacity, and chemistry.

Christian character is first evidenced by a self-knowledge that comes from the Holy Spirit. This self-knowledge is an awareness of one’s strengths, gifts and skills as well as of one’s weaknesses, and areas that need growth. Christian self-knowledge produces a proper humility. A candidate for bishop of good character displays humility in interactions with others, and is not afraid to seek counsel from others such as bishop peers, the Standing Committee, the Council of Canons, a spiritual director or other appropriate leaders. At the same time, he displays strength of leadership, making wise and prayerful decisions and leading in such a way that others want to follow. He is trustworthy. He is a good listener with a teachable heart, displaying openness and accessibility. At the same time, he would know when to use restraint and when to keep counsel.

He would also, of course, lead by example of a godly and virtuous life. I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 as well as Galatians 5:22-24, the ACNA Ordinal for Consecration of a Bishop, and ACNA Constitutions and Canons, Title III, Canon 8, are helpful here. Particularly important for developing Christian character is a deeply prayerful life, grounded in a thorough knowledge of scripture, in which one has learned to habitually seek the Lord in all matters, and to be attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Competency means having developed in previous ministry the skills needed for administrative leadership, having an entrepreneurial spirit that envisions new possibilities and directions, and a demonstrated fruitfulness in ministry. Some of the gifts and skills required are:

- **Development of Leaders:** The bishop’s first priority is the development of spiritually healthy, mature and skilled diocesan clergy who are equipped to lead healthy and growing congregations. This means providing or supporting opportunities for teaching, training, mentoring and coaching in the particular skills needed for ADNE clergy within the New England cultural setting. It also means supplying times for clergy fellowship, mutual support, worship and prayer together. As a good shepherd of his flock, the bishop cares for and supports all of his clergy. In the ADNE, a diocese that ordains women not only to the diaconate

but also to the priesthood, the bishop must be a person who fully supports and pursues the priestly ordination of women as well as men, recognizing that the call to release gifted men and women to the priesthood is a valuable expression of our gospel witness.

- **Development of Mission:** The ADNE understands itself to be a diocese on mission, seeking to expand the Kingdom of Jesus Christ at all times and in all ways. The bishop is expected to grow the diocese through inspiring and equipping leaders, who can develop new discipling communities. This means finding ways to provide opportunities for training in church planting and evangelism. A candidate for bishop must exhibit experience in church planting or in helping others to plant churches.
- **Development of Financial Capacity:** In the ten years of ADNE's existence we have been able to meet all our financial obligations. We have been keeping our expenses in line with our budget. 2016 saw an increase of 23% in individual giving. In 2018 10% of our income from tithes and donations will go to the work of church planting. The role of the bishop is crucial in obtaining funding from larger donors to help fund larger projects as well as to keep the budget in balance. When many of our parishes are small and newly established, their financial contribution to the diocesan budget is small as well. Currently the growth of the diocese depends on a reliable flow of income from larger donors that are cultivated by the bishop. The bishop of the ADNE must accept the weight of developing the financial capacity of the diocese through large donors.
- **Development of Administrative Structures:** The bishop must determine the best administrative structures for the smooth operation of the work and ministries flowing from the diocesan office. The current administrative structures are the Office of the Bishop, the Diocesan Standing Committee, the annual Synod, the Council of Canons, the Holy Orders Task Force and the Church Planting Task Force.
 - The Office of the Bishop is staffed by two crucial people—the Office Administrator, and the Director of Communications and Assistant to the Bishop. These two hard-working committed people keep the Office of Bishop operating smoothly, but as the Diocese continues to grow, the challenges to this small staff will increase as well.
 - The bishop works with the Standing Committee to oversee the mission of the Diocese and attend to its financial condition.
 - The Annual Synod not only accomplishes the work of electing the Standing Committee and setting the budget for the coming year. It is also an opportunity for the bishop to cast a vision for the coming year, to motivate leaders, and to promote accountability for the work of mission.
 - The bishop works with the Holy Orders Task Force, including the Board of Examining Chaplains, to administer the ordination process, from postulancy through candidacy to ordination.
 - The Bishop works with the Canon for Church Planting, offering guidance and mentorship for the Plant New England ministry.
 - The Council of Canons is appointed by the bishop to provide advice and counsel.

- Pastoral Care and Oversight for Congregations and Clergy: Although we have a healthy diocese, there have been many challenges for our small congregations and several clergy have encountered various personal struggles. Most the clergy in our diocese are bivocational. This requires that the bishop be able to assess success and fruitfulness in different and creative ways (see “The New Normal: 9 Realities and Trends in Bivocational Ministry,” *Christianity Today* online magazine, December 12, 2017). The Bishop must be committed to fostering the spiritual and emotional health of our clergy and congregations and to promptly addressing crises when they arise. The bishop offers accessibility to clergy who are experiencing major life struggles, giving the time needed to care for them, and working to find support for them within and without the Diocese. The bishop relies on, among others, the Council of Canons, the Diocesan Chaplains, or members of local Clericus groups.
- Provincial and International Role: The bishop represents our Diocese by working in partnership with bishops and archbishops in the Anglican Provinces connected to our international Archdeacons. Our Diocese is one of the founding Dioceses of our Province and our Bishop has been, and we would expect him to continue to be, involved in the work of the College of Bishops.

Chemistry for a Christian refers to how the person interacts with others as a bearer of the good news, living out the gospel in every circumstance. The right chemistry in a bishop candidate would mean a man who easily grasps what is needed in each interaction with a group or an individual. He is warm and approachable. He enjoys being with people and getting to know them, and others find him enjoyable to be with as well. He should also be an excellent teacher and preacher, proclaiming the gospel message, “persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching” (2 Tim. 2). The right chemistry means a godly warmth of presence.

Capacity refers to the person’s station in life and whether he has the freedom to serve as bishop only, with an undivided focus. Does the person have prior commitments, personal or professional, that would hinder giving a full commitment to the Office of Bishop? Capacity might also include the ability of his family to make a move to a reasonable distance to our Cathedral in Amesbury, Massachusetts. Candidates for bishop of the ADNE must have the capacity to be fully committed to this full-time work.

The explication of these four qualities in describing the kinds of candidates for bishop that we seek are a framework for painting a picture. The picture is of how we envision our diocese and the person needed to lead it. We recognize that we see only partially. The picture we paint is based on our experience as a diocese so far and our current circumstances. We place ourselves in the hands of our Lord Jesus who knows not only the current circumstances but our future as well, trusting that he will guide and enlighten our path forward as we do the work of discerning candidates for bishop and finally in choosing the man that God calls to the work of Bishop of the Anglican Diocese in New England.