

PARISH SELECTION UPDATE

SEARCHING FOR A
NEW RECTOR

At a recent meeting, Holy Trinity's Advisory Board suggested that it would be worthwhile to give you, the congregation, a refresher on the PSC, what it can and cannot do and what it has done in the last almost two years. This is that refresher and an update on where we are and where we go from here.

With the announcement of planned departure of Canon Stephen on August 31, 2021, Bishop Andrew asked the Churchwardens to form a PSC. It should have a maximum of 8 members and should reflect the various communities within the Parish. A selection committee was named and on November 14, a Special Vestry approved the proposed slate of Enid Corbett, Cassandra Culpepper, Ed Carter, Eric Preston (Chair), Malcolm Shiner, Dirk Driberg, Leandra Kirwan, and Nancy Cutler. Before the end of the year, they were meetings with their Diocesan coaches Elizabeth McCaffrey and Brian Hatch and then with Bishop Andrew.

The attached flow chart, with dates superimposed, gives you a sense of the activities and timelines involved. The Parish Profile was finalized on April 13, 2022, and circulated on the Diocesan and National Church websites. It was further up-dated earlier this year with the addition of virtual testimonials - most recently one from Canon Barb is being added (see our website). We have reached out digitally with ads in the US and the UK. We have met regularly with our coaches as well as with Bishop Andrew. But, as noted last November, things did not go according to plan. The situation we find ourselves in is not unusual. A large number of clergy are retiring, and fewer new priests are coming up. Churches were emerging from COVID and were in a fragile condition. As a result, some priests who might otherwise be interested in the opportunity at Holy Trinity Church were reluctant to leave their parishes.

We also reminded you that this is a staffing process and, as such, is subject to the standard confidentiality rules - the "cone of silence" - particularly during the latter part of the process. We simply cannot tell you who has applied, who has been found ineligible and who has been interviewed other than to say these actions have happened.

On Tuesday October 3, we held a special Evensong Service. The intent of the service was to recognize that many parishioners have lately experienced some fear or concern about the future of our Parish in the short or longer term, and to provide an opportunity

for our community to come together for prayer and reflection. About 30 parishioners attended the service, enjoying a quiet and prayerful time together. Some offered prayers for the parish and for each other. Overall, the service appeared to meet its objectives.

The service was followed by a time of fellowship and discussion in the auditorium. The question period started with a review of the search process and an explanation of some of the reasons why things were taking so long. A lot of the questions and comments were about what we do when Canon Barb leaves and how we might run things ourselves. A number of parishioners noted that 'doing church ourselves' was not a new concept for Anglicans or Holy Trinity, and several volunteered to take on roles in preaching, leading morning prayer and pastoral care. It was also suggested that, in the absence of an interim or new priest, we could invite guest preachers such as Dan Graves, Don Downer or Steven Crowther. It was noted that these are really contingency plans in the absence of an interim or new priest. We are still hopeful that the Bishop will be able to appoint an interim priest-in-charge very soon.

Elizabeth McCaffrey, the Volunteer Resources Consultant with the Diocese and one of our PSC coaches, spoke to several of the issues as well as the process and the PSC. Several speakers recognized the challenges of finding a new priest and supported the PSC and the work done to date. There were also expressions of concern about the PSC process and frustration that the process doesn't seem to be working. We ended up with four action items:

1. Parishioners should confidentially bring the names of any priests that they consider to be potential candidates to the PSC, and we'll forward them to the Bishop for consideration.
2. Come up with a plan for how parishioners can help run things if we don't get an interim priest appointed shortly.
3. Come up with names of priests that we could invite as guest preachers in the absence of an interim priest and forward the list to our territorial Archdeacon, Theodore Hunt and to Elizabeth for further direction from the Bishop if necessary.
4. Continue to pray for the parish and the PSC process

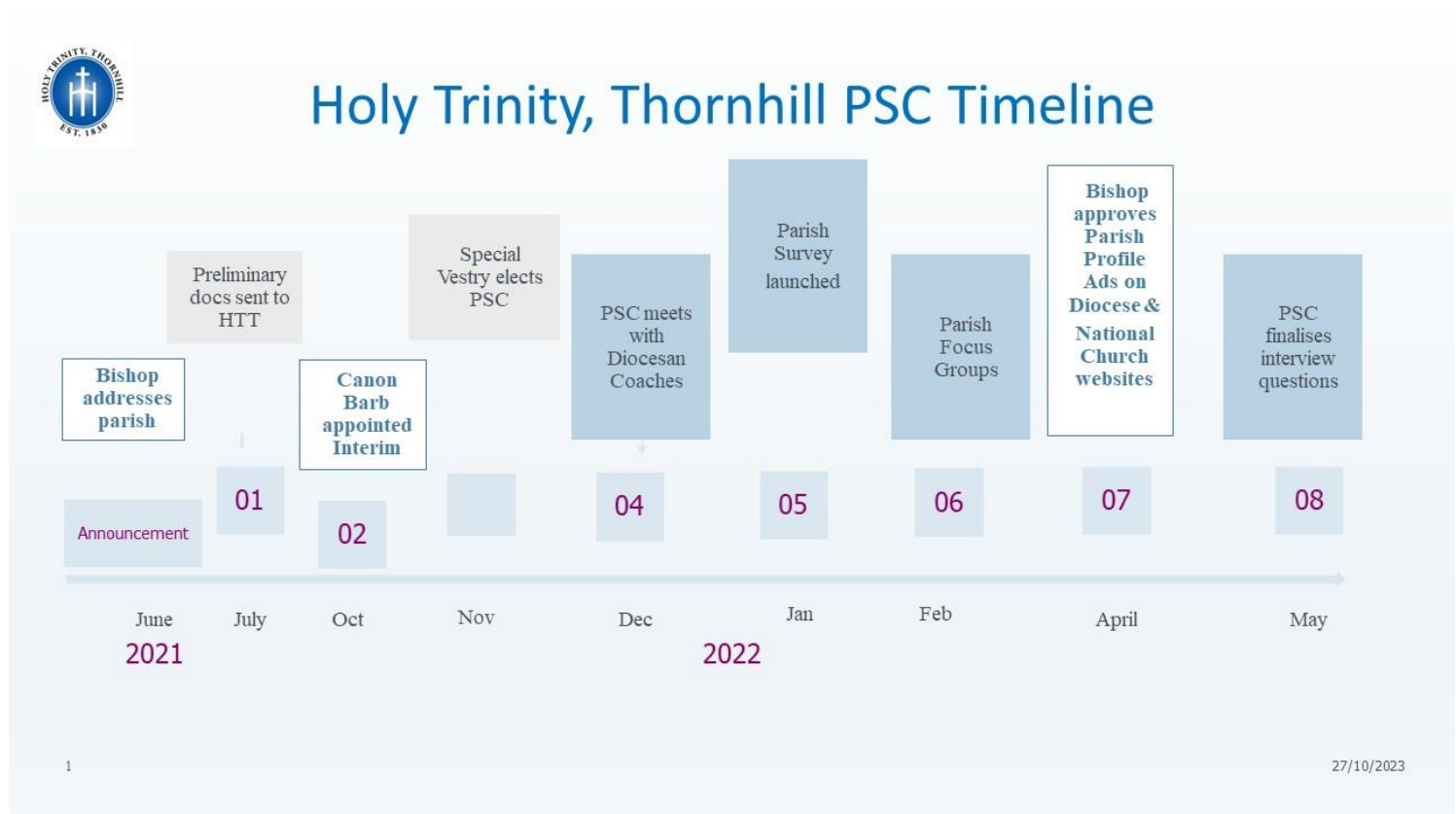
Note that items 2 and 3 are within the purview of the Churchwardens and they are actively considering them.

Remember that at the end of the day the PSC can only make a recommendation to the Bishop. The final decision is his. He has encouraged us to use prayer to guide us and help with our discernment in this process. We know that the Diocese has been and

continues to be focused on our need for a new priest. However, the challenge of filling vacant incumbencies is facing many churches throughout the Diocese, and we can't force people to take any new positions.

In closing, we are fortunate that Holy Trinity has a tradition of strong lay and volunteer leadership, and we have been able to successfully manage lengthy interims in the past. Hopefully - and prayerfully - we won't have to do this for too much longer.

Sent on behalf of Eric Preston, PSC Chair





Holy Trinity, Thornhill PSC Timeline



PRAYER FOR HOLY TRINITY THORNHILL'S PARISH SELECTION

Almighty God, giver of all good gifts, look on your Church of Holy Trinity with grace; guide those choosing a new incumbent, and guide the minds of those who hear a call to serve you in our parish, so that we may receive a faithful servant who will care for us, your people, and support us in our ministries, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen