

September 5, 2022

Dear Members of the XV Bishop of Maryland Search Committee,

Grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ. My name is The Rev. Gregg Morris, and I currently serve as Rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Downers Grove, Illinois. It is with much excitement and enthusiasm that I submit to you my application to be considered in the search for the XV Bishop of Maryland. In addition to this letter, please find uploaded my Application and Consent Form request, résumé, OTM Profile (including additional references and links to sermons and writings), list of three references, answers to the essay questions, and recovery statement.

My former bishop, Jeff Lee, often says, "The Church isn't dying, it's molting. And what it's shedding is casual membership." I believe this is true. As we move out of cultural and institutional Christianity in a post-Christendom, post-pandemic era, we are only getting glimmers of what is emerging. The Church of the future will be more flexible, agile, nimble and responsive to the needs of the world and its members – and I believe more gritty and committed, as well.

It is this Church to which I feel called into Episcopal leadership. It is an exciting and challenging time, and also a time filled with uncertainty and ambiguity, with grief and loss. I have been given certain gifts, abilities and skills by God that I believe make me an effective leader in this current context. I have demonstrated the ability to discern and articulate vision, set tone and trajectory for staff, lay volunteers and parishioners, and inspire joyful joining in the vision that gets things done.

I am comfortable on the edges, always scanning the horizon for new ways to do the things we value most. I am a permission-giver, saying, "Go, do!" not "We've never done that." I am an enthusiastic and authentic preacher, teacher and communicator, able to unpack the Scriptures, connect them to current reality and inspire action at the same time. I have a deep pastor's heart that grieves the brokenness and division in our culture, and am building my capacity to engage in social justice to bring healing and inclusion to all.

Two of my passions (and you will see that I have several!) are around congregational development and clergy leadership development. I believe that congregations of all sizes, locations and conditions can become more healthy, faithful and effective communities of faith. My experience over the last six years as a trainer in the College for Congregational Development has given me the knowledge, skills and practice to lead my current congregation effectively through the COVID-19 pandemic and back to pre-pandemic levels of attendance, participation, program and finances. Effective clergy and lay leadership is critical in this time of uncertainty, ambiguity and upheaval.

I have become intrigued by the hopes and dreams of the Diocese of Maryland. It is my hope that, through this brief introduction, you have become intrigued enough by me to invite me more deeply into a conversation about what it might look like for us to journey together as Bishop and Diocese. May God continue to bless you as you do this important work of calling your next Bishop.

Faithfully, in Christ,
Gregg+