



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF OHIO

### **Profile for the Election of a Bishop**

As our diocese embarks on the search for our 12th Bishop, we are looking for someone to lead us in our third century of engaging the mission of God, who calls us always into what is yet to be. Since its formation in 1817 as the first diocese established beyond the 13 colonies, the Diocese of Ohio has provided servant leadership in the ministry of Jesus Christ to local, provincial, and church-wide settings. Comprising the entire state until 1875, the Diocese today consists of 82 congregations stretching across the 48 counties in the northern half of Ohio. Trinity Cathedral in downtown Cleveland has served as the Bishop's see church since 1907. Trinity Commons, built in 2000, houses the administrative offices for both the Diocese and Cathedral. In 2017, the Diocese dedicated [Bellwether Farm](#) in Wakeman Township, near the demographic center of the diocese. Bellwether is a camp, conference, and retreat center situated on an organic, regenerative farm designed to foster innovative community and educational partnerships.

We hope the following description of who we are will inspire you to help us search for our 12th Bishop, either by considering whether you might be a candidate for our mutual discernment or know someone we ought to invite into our episcopal election process. Thank you for being a companion in this important endeavor through your participation and prayers.

### **Who We Are**

The Diocese of Ohio embraces two trademarked taglines that help define our core values succinctly:

- Love God. Love your neighbor. Change the world.®
- God loves you. No exceptions.®

We seek to exemplify our vocation to be Christian—to be part of what Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry calls [the Jesus Movement](#)—in myriad ways, including:

- Food insecurity relief through food pantries and meal programs;
- Sustainability leadership and training through urban farming, community gardens, and Bellwether Farm;
- Formation ministries such as EfM, Daughters of the King, Winter Convocation, lay preaching workshops, and diocesan youth retreats;
- Outreach and inclusion ministries to BIPOC, LGBTQIA, and other marginalized communities;
- Anti-racism training required for anyone serving on a diocesan committee;
- Refugee support and immigration rights advocacy;
- Supporting underserved congregations financially and liturgically through mission area councils (formerly regional deaneries) and our communion-by-extension program;
- Promoting collegiality and pastoral care for parish clergy at the diocesan level, acknowledging the consistent sacrificial engagement of clergy in parish life;
- Supporting younger generations through our Young Adult Task Force and a Canon for Christian Formation dedicated to serving children, youth, and young adults;
- Companion relationships with Belize and Tanga, Tanzania;
- Service to the national church by both clergy and laypeople;
- Innovative evangelism through our regional innovation hub for [TryTank](#).

Our congregations are resilient, imaginative, and innovative, as evidenced recently by their creative and effective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many parishes embraced alternative arrangements for worship and outreach. Our diocesan leadership has worked to support these efforts by offering a variety of online resources and providing grants to help fund technology for online and outdoor worship.

Economic conditions in Ohio are good, with low unemployment, strong manufacturing and healthcare sectors, and rising home values. Yet the benefits of economic revitalization have not been shared equally. Demographic shifts and decreasing church attendance have resulted in twenty-two of our eighty-two parishes having a Sunday ASA too low to support a full-time priest. This challenge requires continued experimentation with and implementation of creative leadership models, employing the gifts of lay and clergy leaders alike. The Diocese provides financial support to under-resourced parishes.

Finances are strong at the diocesan level. While assessment income is projected to decline somewhat due to the pandemic, our invested funds are healthy and well shepherded:

- The 12/31/2021 Joint Investment Fund (JIF) balance was just over \$73,000,000. 62% of this constitutes diocesan investments. 38% (representing 48 of our 82 congregations) are parochial investments.
- Non-JIF investments and perpetual trusts at the same time totaled another \$5,300,000.
- In 2020 Assessments generated \$2,300,000 in revenue toward diocesan budget income.

The Bishop's Annual Appeal, established in 2005, has generated on average more than \$250,000 annually since its inception, supporting projects beyond the diocesan operating budget. These include clergy formation, post-ordination support, Episcopal Community Service projects, young adult internship positions, and youth mission work.

To attract more full- and part-time clergy, the Diocese has successfully recruited and formed many young ordinands. In response to the difficulties some candidates face in trying to relocate to a residential seminary, we have developed a hybrid M. Div. track (online and immersion) with Bexley Seabury or the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, which includes paid internships. Additionally, the training and support of a diocesan diaconate ministry has evolved in creative ways to attract qualified candidates.

As reflected in the recently published racial justice audit of The Episcopal Church, we have yet to come to a full understanding of the impact of racism and our complicity in it both on our history and our ministry moving forward. For the last two years, the Diocesan Council, in collaboration with the Commission for Racial Justice, has made racial justice its primary focus, engaging in an intensive program of anti-racism training and deliberate self-examination to provide proactive anti-racism leadership and effective resources to every congregation. An extensive survey at the Annual Diocesan Convention in November 2021 confirmed our ongoing commitment to live into this work at every level of diocesan and parochial life.

### **Our Prayer**

For our next season of shared ministry, we pray for a bishop who will:

Share a lively faith rooted in the Gospel, inspiring us to continue to live into our taglines: Love God. Love your neighbor. Change the world.® and God loves you. No exceptions.®;

- Exemplify innovative and unapologetic evangelism as a follower of Jesus;
- Address conflict and drive collaboration, supporting and inspiring both clergy and lay leadership;
- Embody and promote diocesan leadership that is relational, approachable, pastoral, collaborative, transparent, and visible;
- Support clergy as the pastor to all who are ordained, developing generative and supportive relationships with our clergy;
- Value diversity, equity, and inclusion as a commitment to continuous improvement, welcoming as many voices as possible in diocesan conversations and being willing to speak unpopular truths in response to Jesus'

call to serve those who have been devalued by society;

- Inspire and challenge us to acknowledge and redress the effects of systemic racism;
- Continue to develop outreach and support for children, youth, and young adults;
- Support and help expand the wide variety of ways our congregations engage spiritually with the needs of our different communities;
- Convey as much attention to smaller parishes and those outside the Cleveland metropolitan area as to larger parishes and those in the Cleveland area;
- Work honestly and creatively to help the many smaller parishes that cannot afford a full-time priest, seeking out and celebrating their unique gifts and ministry;
- Engage productively with Ohio's economic revitalization while also addressing the needs of those who continue to be left out of it;
- Shepherd the extraordinary resource that is Bellwether Farm, which will require consistent attention, sound leadership, and creative program development because the start-up of initial programs and ministry were interrupted by the pandemic;
- Encourage creativity in the church-wide discussion about new forms of Episcopal liturgies while also supporting and upholding tradition;
- Inspire exemplary leadership not only within but also beyond the congregations and institutions of our diocese, fulfilling responsibilities as a trustee of Kenyon College and the Bexley Seabury Seminary Federation, a bishop in Province V, and a leader in the wider church and communion.

### **Our Invitation**

The first Bishop of Ohio, Philander Chase, was a pioneering bishop. He embraced sacrificial service, inspiring many others who worked to establish and sustain the church in Ohio. At this moment in the church and in our diocese, we are experiencing a new frontier. If your understanding of the Christian vocation is grounded in a vision of bold, collaborative, and sacrificial service; if you believe you have the gifts and skills to share episcopal leadership with us as we venture forward; if you are compelled to answer Jesus' mandate to be a companion in the Way of Love; then we invite you to be part of our search for the 12th Bishop of Ohio.

### **Application Instructions**

The diocese invites applications or inquiries about this position. Applications should include a letter of interest, resume, OTM profile, and a list of names and contact information of three people who will recommend the nominee for this role. For the list of recommenders, at least one should be a deacon or priest and one a lay member of The Episcopal Church. If a nominee is recovering from an addiction, that nominee must have at least ten years of continuous sobriety and must be actively working a program of recovery. Nominees must have been ordained for a minimum of seven years and, in accordance with the canons, must be at least thirty years of age. Please submit applications or inquiries to the search committee via email: [bishopsearch@dohio.org](mailto:bishopsearch@dohio.org).

### **Information about Relocating**

The Diocese of Ohio includes far more than just the Cleveland area where our cathedral is located, but for those for whom this position would entail relocating to the Cleveland Area, [This is Cleveland](#) provides relevant resources, as does the [Global Cleveland website](#).