

1. *What are the points in your vocation that direct you toward the Episcopate?*

The prayer book describes the ministry of a bishop (BCP, 855), but perhaps the most important quality is servant leadership. As Jesus says, “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).” As a follower of Jesus, I understand that if elected bishop, I come to you as one who serves.

My call to Christian ministry began as a young child. I was part of a family that went to church regularly and established a pattern of prayer; I was baptized at age ten. During high school, I went to a boarding school in South India and was able to deepen my Christian faith and also build bridges of understanding with people of other faiths. In college, I studied psychology and theater and discovered the Episcopal Church. After college, I served as a full-time volunteer with homeless men in Washington, DC, and grew in compassion and courage. As a young adult, I studied drama therapy at New York University and practiced the healing arts with a variety of vulnerable populations.

I was confirmed at Trinity Church, Wall Street, and my wife and I served as co-directors of the Sunday School at Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City. From there I was called to holy orders and attended Virginia Theological Seminary on a Merit Scholarship. I served as Associate Rector of The Church of St. Barnabas in Irvington, New York, and then Rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Sun Valley, Idaho, where I have served joyfully for eleven years. During my time in the Diocese of Idaho, I have served as President of the Standing Committee, Chair of the Commission on Ministry, and Chair of the Idaho Deputation to General Convention. These governance responsibilities have enabled me to collaborate closely with leaders throughout the Church.

What does this vocational pattern show? My whole life has been spent in prayer, service, commitment to Jesus Christ, care for the Church, creative problem solving, openness to the “other,” and increasing levels of leadership and responsibility – qualities that will serve me well as bishop.

There is also a personal experience that impacted my decision to explore the ministry of bishop with you. I am part of a small group of seven priests that was established in seminary and has grown in love and faith these past fifteen years. We talk on the phone every month and we meet for a retreat every year. During the retreat, each of us shares our current spiritual story without interruption, followed by clarifying questions, honest observations, and the laying on of hands and prayer; we know each other very well. At our retreat in the spring of 2017, the group spoke to me with one voice: “We believe you are called to the ministry of bishop.” Since that time, I have prayed deeply, talked with colleagues, consulted with family, and found this call confirmed again and again. I am ready to take the next step, with God’s help and your support.

2. *What attracts you to the idea of being the 10th Bishop of Maine?*

There are many things that attract me to serving as 10th Bishop of Maine.

You are honest. Your profile did a wonderful job of shining light on your strengths, as well as your challenges. An honest foundation will serve us in good times and bad.

You are leaders. You may be in the northeast corner of the nation, but you are at the center of Episcopal Church leadership. I, too, have a passion for good governance and look forward to partnering with you on behalf of this remarkable branch of the Jesus Movement.

You have the New England spirit. My grandparents lived in Connecticut and Rhode Island, and I enjoyed visiting them regularly. They were independent, thrifty, tough, and hard-working. You knew where you stood with them, and you also knew they loved you more than words could express.

Your state is beautiful. I have lived in Idaho for the past eleven years and I have fallen in love with the great outdoors. During my last sabbatical, I purchased a pop-up camper and explored the Sawtooth Wilderness in South Central Idaho. It makes my heart glad to be close to God's good land. I also know what it means to collaborate with the faithful in rural settings and cover vast distances in service of the gospel.

You are exploring new ways of doing ministry. You honor the prayer book and keep the traditions, as do I, but you also want to be responsive to new people and new cultural moments. You are experimenting with clustered congregations and programs like "Living Local, Joining God." You recognize that one size does not fit all. I laughed out loud when someone said in the profile, "We want freedom to break some rules for Jesus." I look forward to meeting that person.

You want a bishop who will care for you. Some clergy and parishes are struggling and they need a pastor who will listen carefully and remind them what is possible in Christ. I have a strong therapeutic background and healing is one of my spiritual gifts. I look forward to cultivating a healing spirit within the Diocese.

The timing is right. I am a seasoned leader and my last child is graduating from high school this spring. I have time and space to devote to the Episcopal Church in Maine. In addition, my wife is a committed Christian who also attended seminary and ended up becoming a clinical social worker and therapist in private practice. She is very supportive of my call to the episcopate and ready to join me on this journey.

3. *What does being the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement mean to you and your ministry?*

The Most Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, is fond of saying that we are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement. As well as being a catchy slogan, it's also a profound statement of faith. Here's why:

First, it's centered in Jesus Christ. That may seem obvious for a Church that claims to follow Jesus, but for too long, Episcopalians were shy about placing Christ at the center of our common life. We were more comfortable focusing on psychology or politics or

social justice – all of which are good – but if Jesus isn't at the center, we're not being Church. Saying that we are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement is evangelistic in the best sense of the word.

I attended Virginia Theological Seminary and our professors did a good job of placing the gospel at the center – at the center of our preaching...at the center of our ethics...at the center of our liturgy. This Christ-centered formation has found expression in my ministry at St. Thomas Church in Sun Valley, where programs like Stephen Ministry and Godly Play stand at the center of our common life and Bible study and prayer lie at the heart of our vestry and staff meetings.

Second, this phrase makes it clear that we are part of a movement. Movements are organic, dynamic, and filled with life. Movements welcome everyone and make an impact on their surroundings. Sometimes, as Church, it's easy to get preoccupied with buildings or land or budgets – all of which are important – but in the process, we can forget that we are part of a movement that is healing and transforming creation. This emphasis on being a movement is a perfect fit for a generation that distrusts organizational sclerosis, but is ready to change the world one act of faithfulness at a time.

This sense of movement is well expressed in my current church, which hosts a dynamic outreach ministry called “St. Thomas Playhouse.” The Playhouse is open to people of all ages and all faith backgrounds (or no faith background at all). We have a family main stage production which strengthens intergenerational collaboration...we have a touring theater company that brings meaningful stories to children in schools throughout the Wood River Valley...we have summer camps where children get a chance to play and explore together and teenagers get to practice leadership...and we have a summer theater project, which brings teens and young adults together to explore art that pushes the boundaries and asks hard questions. St. Thomas Playhouse is a creative movement that is transforming the larger community. While not every church is called to begin a theater ministry, every church is called to express its own unique charism, which flows out of the ongoing movement of the Holy Spirit.

Third, this phrase affirms the Episcopal tradition. We are not Methodists, Mennonites, or Muslims; we are Episcopalians. Episcopalians have something unique to offer the world. We are Christ-centered, but we don't use the name of Jesus as a weapon. We are faith-filled, but we're not afraid to have fun and celebrate the goods of creation. We are hierarchical, but we understand that our authority comes from being trustworthy. We work for justice and peace and are happy to join with anyone of good will on this journey.

I am proud to be an Episcopalian. I began my Christian journey in a non-denominational Bible church in the south, and while I am grateful for this upbringing, I rejoice in what the Episcopal Church offers: a sense of mystery...a sense of history...a spirit of inquiry...and a sense of belonging. As we often say, “All are welcome.” At St. Thomas Church, we embrace our Episcopal identity and make it clear that there is room at God's table for everyone.

Finally, this phrase points out that we are but one branch of a much larger tree. It's time we stop imagining that we are the center of the universe and celebrate the branches all around us. What might other branches of the Jesus movement teach us about faithfulness? What might other branches of the Jesus movement teach us about stewardship and racial reconciliation? How might our relationships with other branches of the Jesus movement stretch us in new ways and make us stronger than when we stand alone? We live in an age of instant connection; why not learn from others?

My friends and colleagues often describe me as a bridge builder. I enjoy collaboration and continually try to strengthen the bonds of affection between people, even when there is disagreement. St. Thomas Church is politically diverse, so I'm always looking for ways to preach the gospel with integrity, without sounding like a partisan hack. I'm a convener of the local interfaith clergy group and frequently get invited to address community and media forums. When you're but one branch of the Jesus movement, it makes you humble and curious to know others.

These are some of the ways that I have understood and lived out the phrase, "We are the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement." I look forward to meeting the Episcopal Church in Maine and seeing what this phrase means for you.