



Almost Heaven!

*The Search for the Bishop Coadjutor
The Diocese of West Virginia*

[Watch Video](#)



Search for Bishop Coadjutor Announcement

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer, seventh bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia, called for the election of a bishop coadjutor for his diocese. This formally begins a search process to identify and to elect the person who will become the eighth bishop of The Episcopal Church in the Mountain State.

Klusmeyer made the announcement over the weekend during the diocese's 142nd Annual Convention at Oglebay Resort and Conference Center in Wheeling, which was the first home to the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia before it relocated to Charleston. Although Klusmeyer has not set a date for his retirement, the process began after a search committee was formed by the Diocesan Standing Committee. This approach allows for a smooth transition from the bishop to his successor.

Klusmeyer ended the announcement by expressing his appreciation to his diocese, where he became bishop on Oct. 13, 2001. "This diocese has changed my life," he said. "This has been a blessing to me. You have brought joy and grace to my life."

The Episcopal Church in West Virginia is more than 8,000 members strong. The first church in present-day West Virginia was established as a log structure that became known as Morgan Chapel near Bunker Hill in 1740. Today, there are 65 congregations in the state.

The Standing Committee established the Bishop Coadjutor Search and Nominating Committee in March 2020 with the Rev. Deacon Al Prichard as chair.



A Letter from the Chair of the Search Committee

After twenty years as our spiritual leader, Bishop Michie "Mike" Klusmeyer has announced that he is nearing retirement and has called for the election of a bishop coadjutor for the Diocese of West Virginia. The Standing Committee established the Bishop Coadjutor Search and Nominating Committee just as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic became obvious. It took a few months for the committee, advised by the Rev. Gary Butterworth, a veteran of other successful bishop searches, to develop a means of searching without actually meeting face-to-face. It has been an exciting and interesting endeavor for all involved and we eagerly anticipate the open nomination period that will introduce us to those God is calling to apply.

We, who make up the Diocese of West Virginia, live in interesting times even without the presence of the pandemic. We are faced with many challenges and we have enjoyed many successes, always feeling the help and presence of the Holy Spirit guiding and encouraging us as we move forward. We know that we have been blessed with a bishop who continually strives to fill our hearts and souls with joy and inspiration. We grieve with the realization that his presence among us is limited, but we are excited about what the future will bring us. We look forward to new ideas, new callings and ministries, and new challenges.

Indeed, we are faced now with many challenges. The membership continues to decline, and we find there are many small parishes with dwindling resources. Our membership reflects the population of our state which also continues to age and to decline. We realize that it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract new priests. We continue to see enormous problems resulting in pain, suffering and death within our communities brought on by unemployment, hunger, limited healthcare, and the opioid crisis among other reasons.

But we see hope and are encouraged by the presence of the wonderfully dedicated, talented and resourceful folks who make up our parishes and inspire our diocese. Our parishes are dedicated to outreach and social justice issues and we are blessed with Episcopalians willing to stand up and be counted. Throughout the diocese, food insecurity is addressed daily with hot meals, food pantries and school backpack feeding programs. Reading programs have been available to encourage education and to develop a love of what books can give us. There are programs addressing the needs of the impoverished and many parishes are involved with Habitat for Humanity. When disaster strikes in whatever form be it floods or drug related, West Virginia Episcopalians have been among the first to respond and the last to remain. We take seriously God's command for us to love our neighbor.

We believe we are special, not because we are particularly different or more talented or more dedicated, but because we feel God's presence within us and working on us; because we are a community of believers and doers; because we feel blessed and strive to share that blessing; because we recognize the worthiness of all and the presence of Christ within each and every person we meet no matter who they are, whom they love, what they believe or what they look like. We seek a bishop who shares these values and beliefs and will dedicate his or herself to the building of God's Kingdom here in West Virginia. Almost Heaven! But we are not there yet. There is work to be done.

Faithfully in Christ,
The Rev. Deacon Al Prichard, Chair

Prayer for Bishop Coadjutor Search

Almighty God, you have created each person with many and varied gifts and joined our lives together as members of the Diocese of West Virginia. Look graciously upon us as we search for our 8th Bishop, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries. Give us minds to discern your will, courage to follow where you lead, and hearts to love as you command, to the glory of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.



Who We Are

All Our Memories

State Demographics

- **Population** -- 1.8 million people
- **Largest Cities** -- Charleston (47,000 population); Huntington (46,000); Morgantown (31,000)
- **Median Age** -- 42 years old; 20% population under age 18 years; 20% population over age 65
- **Race / Ethnicity** -- 93% White; 3.6% Black; 1.7% Hispanic
- **Education** -- 86% High School Diploma; 20% Bachelor's Degree or Higher
- **Median Household Income** -- \$44,900 per year
- **Poverty** -- 18% of population lives below federal poverty level
- **Health Care** -- Ranked 48th in the country, 2nd in the country for drug abuse, 1st in nation for obesity and diabetes, 25% smoke (highest in the nation), 12% drink excessively.
- **Religious Affiliations** -- 78% Christian; 3% Non-Christian; 18% Unaffiliated
Major Christian Denominations: United Methodist, 23%; American Baptist, 17%
- **Higher Education Institutions** -- 21 colleges & universities; 7 community & technical colleges; 3 medical schools; 1 law school; 1 dental school
- **Major Universities** -- West Virginia University (Morgantown ~30,000 students); Marshall University (Huntington ~ 10,000 students)
- **Recreation** -- 45 state parks & forests; 3 ski resorts; many whitewater rafting outfitters

Diocesan Data

- **Churches and Missions** -- 65
- **Deaneries** -- 7
- **Clergy** -- 50 active clergy (including 15 holding a LTO); 38 retired clergy
- **Diocesan Retreat Center** -- Sandscrest (Wheeling WV)
- **Number of Baptized Episcopalians in WV** -- 7,510 (down 6% from 8,016 in 2017)
- **Total Operating Income of all 65 Parishes Combined** -- \$7.751 million (2018)
- **Total Calculated Missionary Apportionment of all 65 Parishes** -- \$1.230 million (2018)
- **WV Diocesan Operating Budget 2020** -- \$1.962 million (Balanced budget)
- **WV Diocesan Audit Report 2018** -- \$19.785 million Total Assets; \$545,000 Liabilities; \$19.239 Net Assets (\$13.44 million restricted; \$5.79 million unrestricted)
- **Diocesan Summer Camp** -- Peterkin (Romney WV)
- **Average Sunday Attendance (Diocesan total)** -- 2,398

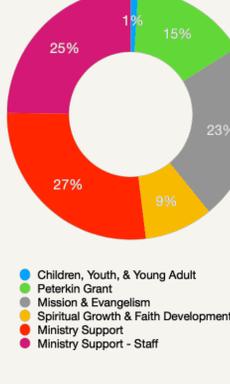
2021 Budget

Revenues	
Special Purpose Fund Contributions	\$15,000
Missionary Apportionments	\$1,240,668
Investment Earnings -- Endowments*	\$951,743
Other Income	\$10,000
Total income	\$2,217,411

Expenses	
Children, Youth, & Young Adult	\$21,400
Peterkin Grant	\$335,800
Mission & Evangelism	\$510,093
Spiritual Growth & Faith Development	\$197,850
Ministry Support	\$601,660
Ministry Support - Staff	\$550,608
Total Expenses	\$2,217,411

* For more detail, go to the Diocese of WV site, click on Financials and Then Budgets.

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia



Ministries & Programs

Peterkin -- Nestled in a valley near historic Romney, West Virginia, Peterkin Camp and Conference Center boasts 1,400 acres of unsurpassed natural beauty, with clean mountain streams and miles of hiking trails. Peterkin offers a refuge of serenity amid the stress and hectic pace of our everyday lives, a place that encourages us to relax and reconnect with nature by enjoying outdoor activities such as trout fishing, hiking, swimming and tennis. The quiet wooded coves are perfect for quiet times of meditation and relaxation. Peterkin offers comfortable accommodations and excellent recreational opportunities for all ages. Summer camps are available for youth, adults and families. Accommodations are available for more than 175 people year round and for more than 200 in warmer months.

www.peterkin.org

Sandscrest -- The Diocese operates the Sandscrest Conference & Retreat Center. A unique spiritual retreat center located in Wheeling WV. Sandscrest is a haven for those seeking to rest their mind, body and soul away from the pressures of everyday life. Sandscrest offers lodging, dining, and conference facilities on a property of 285 acres of rolling hills and lawns. Sandscrest is operated as a non-profit entity by the Sandscrest Foundation, Inc. www.sandscrest.com

Highland Educational Project (HEP) -- The Highland Educational Project has been an outreach ministry of the Diocese of WV for over 70 years. It is located in Welch, WV -- one of the state's most impoverished counties (McDowell County). HEP began as a mission-based organization that assisted residents with aid such as clothing, food pantry, and utility bills. Following a period of revising and restructuring, HEP now operates as a more vital outreach program that supports addiction recovery, home repairs, and family & youth education programs in McDowell County. www.highlandeducationalproject.org

Reading Camps -- The Diocese of West Virginia launched its Reading Camps in the Summer of 2012. The program was a success its first year and has continued to grow. Reading Camps offers intensive instruction to children in grades 2 through 4 who are identified by their schools as being behind grade level in reading. Reading Camp teachers don't use the teaching methods found in most schools. Instead, they use games, pictures, books and music to engage the interest of children and make learning fun. Campers enjoy the relaxed, stress-free and failure-free atmosphere and leave camp with a new understanding of the joy of reading, as well as other skills that will help them in every area of their lives.

Dayspring -- The Dayspring is the official newspaper publication of the Diocese of West Virginia. It is published three (3) times per year and is mailed to all Episcopal households in the state.

Commission on Racism & Diversity (CORD) -- The purpose of the Commission On Racism and Diversity (CORD) is to work for the eradication of racism, whether in the church, or in the community. With the utilization of education, group interaction, anti-racism dialogues, and prayer, the goal of the commission is to bring about mutual understanding, respect, appreciation, and fair treatment of people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Education for Ministry -- First year students concentrate on the Old Testament; second year students complete the New Testament; third year students learn church history; and fourth year students develop their own theologies based on their studies.

Commission on Ministry -- The Commission on Ministry (COM) has the task of overseeing and developing the ministry of the diocese in conjunction with the Bishop. The COM meets twice annually (Spring and Fall). The Fall meeting includes recommendations from the Ministry Discernment Retreat (MDR) staff concerning postulancy for nominees attending the Fall MDR. The Spring meeting includes candidacy interviews, attestations as to continuing formation, and recommendations concerning postulancy. The Commission on Ministry oversees work on the discernment and formation process for the diaconate and for those who feel called to the priesthood and expect to attend seminary.

Women's Ministries -- The Women's Ministries program consists of six (6) ministries: the Book of Remembrance program; Love-In-Action; the Church Periodical Club; Daughters of the King; United Thank Offering (UTO); Gifts from the Heart; and the annual Diocesan Women's Conference.

Youth Ministries -- Historically, Youth Ministries are all about relationships. Youth Ministries develop programs and host events for students (6th thru 12th grades) to provide them with a safe place to wrestle with the tough questions about life and faith, to play games, and to be part of a supportive and welcoming community. Little has been done in recent years with regards to Youth Ministries and it is a ministry in need of revitalization.

Children's Ministries -- Our Diocesan Children's Ministries develops a variety of programs and provides resources to parishes for use with younger children (pre-school thru 5th grade).

West Virginia Iona School -- The Diocesan program designed to address the need for local formation for those seeking ordination as priests or deacons along with providing top quality formation for the laity. It is offered in cooperation with the Iona Collaborative, a program of Seminary of the Southwest, a cooperative project currently including twenty-nine Episcopal Dioceses throughout the country.

Our Challenges

We live in a beautiful state filled with rivers, valleys, and forests. We think of it as "Almost Heaven." West Virginians are warm-hearted, caring people though they have a significant laissez faire attitude and a strong sense of the importance of we live. West Virginians are very much shaped by their surroundings. Nestled in the heart of Appalachia, West Virginia is the home of a unique people and a unique land. It has some of the most rugged land in the country. This ruggedness creates exquisite beauty, but also difficult conditions. Rivers and mountains make getting from one place to another difficult, and roads are hard to maintain. Isolation becomes an issue for West Virginians.

West Virginia is the only state that is situated completely within the Appalachian Region, and it shares many of the traits common with this region:

- Large income disparity between Appalachia and the rest of the nation as a whole
- Relatively high unemployment compared with the rest of the country
- Outmigration of people
- Over-concentration of employment in extractive industries (timber, coal, natural gas)
- Relatively poor quality of available housing
- Relative isolation due to transportation, broadband Internet, and cell phone access
- Relatively low educational levels

Under such circumstances, these mountain people have become hard working, God fearing, fiercely independent, resourceful and leery of outsiders. Family units are very tight. We are also a generous people. We rate number one in the nation for volunteerism. Even though we are rated 50 in entertainment, we make our own fun! West Virginia has 45 state parks. People hunt, fish, ski, raft and kayak. Any event can be the reason for a festival. There are apple butter, chocolate, antique car, buckwheat, arts and crafts and gun and knife festivals. There are reunions, flea markets and homecomings. We are skilled at creating our own music. Public education has a state-wide structure that ensures financial equity even to the poorest of counties, which has improved the overall level of education. The growth and development of regional hospitals have helped improve the healthcare provided to all within relatively short driving distances.



The Diocese of West Virginia and the people who make up the congregations of our parishes are formed by this environment. We are West Virginians and proud of it. But, we are aging and our numbers are slowly declining. We have a significant number of small churches with a growing problem of financing and attracting clergy. The distances from one end of the diocese to the other is significant and our parishes and clergy often feel somewhat isolated. Many of our young people are leaving home to find their opportunities elsewhere, most often out-of-state. There is somewhat of a disconnect between our more affluent, better educated urban parishes and the small congregations found scattered throughout rural West Virginia. As a diocese, we need to improve ways of bringing all together and creating a vibrant, effective diocesan community. The isolation experienced by not only the small rural churches but the larger urban parishes as well continues to sap the energy and satisfaction levels found in clergy and laity alike.

The challenge is here for our bishop, clergy, and laity to tap into the talent, dedication, and spirituality that remains the strength and glue holding our diocese and parishes together and to offer and develop a shared vision that can unite us and, thereby, strengthening our various ministries and programs. God is with us. We are not alone. But we need to find strength and unity in a common vision and ministry that will bind us and hold us as we strive to understand what God wants of us and what kind of world we are meant to build.

Charleston -- Our Capital City



[O Palsson, CC BY 2.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

While the Diocese of West Virginia does not have a cathedral, the diocesan office is located in the capital city of Charleston. Charleston is a vibrant small city with a variety of attractions in a setting of natural beauty. It is small enough to be easy to learn one's way around yet large enough to meet many cultural, medical, and education needs. The diocesan office is located a short distance from the capitol on a shaded residential street. Housing is available as are good public schools and there are two universities in the greater Charleston area.

The performing and visual arts are well represented by, among others:

- [The West Virginia Symphony Orchestra](#)
- [The Clay Center for the Performing Arts](#)
- [Festival West Virginia](#) (motto: "A city becomes a work of art")
- [West Virginia Public Broadcasting](#)
- [The Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center](#)
- [WV Department of Arts, Culture and History](#)

The City of Charleston provides a wide range of municipal services while also promoting a sense of community. Residents are now being invited to participate in a [city-wide reading program](#), kayaking is encouraged with a new launch ramp on the Elk River; there is other boating on the Kanawha River; and walking trails are numerous (including those at [Kanawha State Forest](#)).

Charleston is currently renovating and expanding its city library, which will reopen in 2022. <https://reimagineyourlibrary.com/>

Three interstate highways pass through Charleston. Yeager Airport offers daily flights to several hub cities, and Amtrak's Cardinal passenger train serves the city with an unusual schedule of westbound service three days per week and eastbound three days.

With this said, there is no question that Charleston, and indeed all of West Virginia, is a less vibrant place than it has been. People continue to move away as businesses decline and good jobs are hard to find. The Kanawha Valley was once the second largest chemical center in the world, and vestiges of that remain, but the title is lost and will not return. The state has long been dependent on coal mining and steel making for its industrial base, and both are in decline and unlikely to rebound.

As a response, there are efforts to move the state toward renewable energy. In recent years, there has been an increase in jobs in energy, construction, manufacturing and other industries. Diversification is the key word most often heard with discussions of the economic future of the state and there are signs the state is turning things around.

The people of West Virginia are resilient and friendly. Much of the state is beautiful. There is a strong religious flavor to the state. And, there is a growing optimism. Leadership must work with the residents to forge a shared vision and help us implement it.

The same is true with the Diocese of West Virginia. We will be more successful in building God's Kingdom here in Almost Heaven West Virginia with leadership working with the parishes to create a shared vision and finding the means to implement it. Is this the place for you to call home?



Where We've Been

Life is Old There

Diocesan History

The first *Episcopal Church* in what is now *West Virginia* was built about 1740 at Bunker Hill in Berkeley County in the Eastern Panhandle. Other early churches in the state were naturally located in population centers that sprung up along the Ohio and Kanawha Rivers, major transportation routes through what was then still basically a wilderness. Inroads to more remote areas of the state were slow incoming and this isolation caused a social and economic rift between the mountaineers and the inhabitants of the eastern portion of "The Old Dominion."

Sectional differences came to a head when Virginia seceded from the Union in 1861. In response to this action, the Wheeling-based Restored Government of Virginia (loyal to the Union) was formed in mid-1861 and was the governing body for western Virginia until 20 June 1863 when the state of West Virginia was admitted to the Union. With a sparse, widely separated population, the new state was regarded as a missionary area consisting of small groups of Episcopalians with little money to pay rectors, to erect church buildings or rectories, or to support a bishop. It took fourteen years to establish a new diocese out of the old Diocese of Virginia, but in 1877 the broader Episcopal Church Council, together with the parishioners of the state under the leadership of Francis M. Whittle, Bishop of Virginia, agreed to create the Diocese of West Virginia.

The diocese lost little time in electing a bishop, but the man chosen declined to serve. A second Council elected the **Rt. Rev. George W. Peterkin** to serve as first Bishop of the Diocese. He was not the first choice, but he was obviously God's choice. Peterkin was by necessity a missionary bishop: in the first seven months, he crisscrossed the diocese, making 111 visitations, and confirming 211 persons! The State of West Virginia in those days had slightly over 442,000 in population and of these only 1162 Episcopal communicants in 26 parishes and missions. During his tenure as bishop, the church grew to 45 clergy, 96 churches, 6,810 communicants, and over 11,000 baptized members. He established a home for disabled clergy, and a private boarding house for Episcopal male students attending West Virginia University in Morgantown. Still the Bishop of West Virginia, Peterkin "died with his boots on" in September 1916.

His successor, the **Rt. Rev. William L. Gravatt**, had been Bishop Coadjutor for 17 years! During this period, Gravatt also served as a missionary bishop, but shortly after he became the Diocesan, the United States entered World War I, changing his focus. The war was a big manpower drain, followed by railroad strikes and coal wars. Financial woes plagued Gravatt and the diocese throughout the 1920s. Matters became much worse at the end of the decade with the advent of the Great Depression. Missions and churches had to be closed due to population shifts. Whole towns disappeared. Although the Gravatt episcopacy covered many years of deeply troubled times, a bright spot included the founding of the Episcopal Youth Movement. Gravatt retired in January 1939, leaving the diocese with 13,204 baptized members and 40 clergy.

The third bishop, the **Rt. Rev. Robert E. L. Strider**, was the first native-born West Virginian elected to the office of Bishop. Strider had served as coadjutor for the diocese for almost 15 years when he was elected Dean of the Virginia Seminary, and there was much apprehension across the diocese about his potential departure. After much prayer and thought, Bishop Strider decided in favor of remaining in *West Virginia*, and succeeded Bishop Gravatt in 1939.

Bishop Strider was ready with new plans for the reorganization of the diocese at his first Council meeting in December of 1939. His new policies included expanding the number of Conventions (presently called Deaneries), creating an Executive Board to direct the day-to-day operations of the diocese, and bringing the Women's Auxiliary more into leadership roles. Most of these innovations corresponded with those of the broader Episcopal Church.

Evangelization in the diocese during these years centered on revitalization of the Layman's League and working within the National Church's ten-year Forward Movement program. World War II affected the diocese in several ways. Coal, steel, and chemical production had to increase to meet war needs, but young men frequently volunteered for, or were conscripted into, the armed forces. Several Episcopal clergy in the diocese volunteered for the chaplaincy. Bishop Strider moved quickly on raising funds for the "mother" church, the Church of England, specifically for overseas missions.

The immediate postwar years found the diocese engaged in helping returning soldiers and sailors take advantage of their new GI Bill of Rights, find their life partners, attend college, or find good jobs. Although financial woes were chronic, the Peterkin Conference Center was acquired in rural Hampshire County. The preacher at the first conference at the Peterkin Center in 1945 was the Rev. Wilburn Campbell, at that time the Executive Secretary of the Presiding Bishop's Committee on Layman's Work. The Rev. Mr. Campbell made a very strong impression on the conferees.

In May 1949, Strider made the surprise announcement of his intention to retire in six years and called for the election of a bishop coadjutor. A special council was called for December 1949 and from a field of eight, the **Rt. Rev. Wilburn C. Campbell** was elected on the third ballot.

Bishop Campbell was a powerful, dominating figure, and much respected in the diocese. During his episcopacy, he became known for his work in promoting racial equality. The Peterkin Conference Center was fully integrated in 1951 having been previously been a "whites only" institution. As a missionary bishop, he was instrumental in founding or reviving the congregations in thirteen parishes. In 1972 Campbell called for the election of a bishop coadjutor and announced his impending retirement at the end of 1975. The following year the **Rt. Rev. Robert P. Atkinson** was chosen.

While not born in the state, Bishop Atkinson had grown up in Martinsburg, WV. He came to know Bishop Strider while in college and developed a correspondence with him that eventually brought him to Holy Orders. After attending Virginia Theological Seminary, he served various parishes in West Virginia until called to Calvary Church, Memphis, where, following the death of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968, he guided that parish into important new work in attempts to ease racial tensions.

By 1976 the diocese had grown to 90 parishes with 13,336 communicants and 19,037 baptized persons and the number of priests had grown to 100. In the summers, Peterkin Conference Center was full to overflowing with campers of all ages and was supported by The Friends of Peterkin, an informal lay group assisting by donating time and money. The Episcopal Advance Fund was active with grants and loans. The West Virginia School of Religion promoted increased lay activity including the Order of Jerusalem who functioned as lay eucharist visitors, lay readers, and occasional preachers.

Breaking a tradition that had been in effect since the founding of the Diocese of West Virginia, Atkinson called for the election of a bishop suffragan in 1985. Bishop Atkinson's assistant, the Rt. Rev. William F. Carr, was elected, thereby setting in motion an unintended consequence. When Bishop Atkinson retired in 1989 there was no coadjutor to succeed him, necessitating an election for a new bishop. The special convention called for that purpose was badly divided. The result of several ballots produced a deadlock between Bishop Carr and a rector in the diocese. The convention compromised by electing a third candidate, the Rev. John Smith of Vermont.

The **Rt. Rev. John H. Smith**, the sixth Bishop Diocesan, was active in promoting what is called Cluster Ministries, having written *Cluster Ministry: A Faithful Response* in 1996. While his episcopacy began with high hopes, it cooled significantly before his rather sudden retirement in 1999. During the interim, the retired Bishop of Southern Virginia, the Rt. Rev. Charles Vaché, was the episcopal presence in the state. During this period the number of parishes decreased from 78 to 62.

A special convention was held in 2000 to elect a new diocesan bishop, and **The Rt. Rev. William Michie ("Mike") Klusmeyer** was chosen. The diocese can be proud of many accomplishments achieved during the twenty-year episcopacy of Bishop Klusmeyer. Under his guidance, four struggling parishes in Charleston have successfully merged into one strong congregation, St. Christopher's. Financial worries have much improved. The election of the Rev. V. Gene Robinson as bishop diocesan of New Hampshire, the first openly gay bishop, opened a great divide within the diocese, but Bishop Klusmeyer, who reportedly knows the laity of the diocese better than most recent bishops, held the opposing factions together and now permits same-sex blessings and marriages.

A major accomplishment during this time has been the reconnection to the broader Episcopal Church. The diocese has gone from paying only one-half of the National Church Asking, to paying our apportionment in full. And although the State of West Virginia has been in a population decline for over seventy years (2 million in 1950 down to 1.8 million in 2010), the rate of decline of the diocese has been half that of the state.

With the retirement of The Revs. Donald Vinson and Faith Perrizo, Bishop Klusmeyer sought a new direction for the Diocese with the hiring of an Assistant Bishop, The Rt. Rev. Mark van Koevering, former Diocesan of Mozambique (East Africa). But, after a very short tenure, December, 2015 to March, 2018, Bishop van Koevering was elected Bishop of Lexington (KY), and took up his duties there as again a Diocesan.

Thus, the diocese has moved into the 21st century to the point that during the current pandemic most churches have been able to conduct services electronically, although hampered by the lack of broadband availability. Some of the old problems remain however: bad roads, especially in the southern part of the state; difficult terrain, especially in the winter; absentee landlords and owners of major businesses and industries; and a significant number of very poor people. Bishop Peterkin would have been familiar with these conditions. It is safe to say that most of these problems—or opportunities for improvement—will also confront the Eighth Bishop.



Where We're Going

Take Us Home

Survey Results

Envisioning the Future -- The Diocese of West Virginia is committed to providing competent and strong leadership for our congregations through all seasons of congregational life, establishing trust through-out with an open and transparent decision-making process. We will ensure that we have a shared vision that unites us spiritually and that provides clear paths for people to engage meaningfully in that vision.

To assist us with determining our needs and our vision, we enlisted the aid of Holy Cow! Consulting. In addition, we conducted many Zoom listening session with clergy and with the parishes throughout the diocese. Here is a summary of the results.

Priorities for Our Diocese

- Congregational leadership within our regional culture especially with smaller parishes who maybe struggling.
- A focus on growth, equipping clergy and other leaders with strategies which enable growth and health in our parishes.
- Promote congregational vitality, help us to rethink what it means to be the Episcopal Church in our specific region.
- A spiritual renewal from the Bishop, to our clergy and to the parishes, building networks which connect us to one another and our communities.
- Being led by a person connected to the larger church and who brings those connections home to us in practical and useful ways.

Goals & Aspirations

The Major Priorities as Articulated by the People of Our Diocese

- A compassionate priest to our clergy and our parishioners. One who hears different viewpoints before acting.
- Ready to do some hard work, and make hard decisions with issues we currently are facing, with strength of purpose and love.
- We desire a person who listens, then articulates a clear vision we can embrace and then allow us to work with them to reach that vision.
- A person who will spend some time with us and get to know us.
- A person who does not see small churches as obstacles to overcome but as opportunities for vital ministry in our diocese.
- A person who meets us where we live and work.

Our Next Bishop

What the People want in the next Bishop

Critical Abilities

- Strategic Leadership and Ability to Organize
- The Ability to Preach Well
- The Ability to Work Effectively within our Regional Culture

Personal Qualities

- Commitment to traditional Creeds of the Christian Church
- A Sense of Humor
- A Strong Theological Background



What the Clergy want in the next Bishop

Critical Abilities

- The Ability to Develop and Implement a Common Vision
- Skills in Small Church Ministry
- To Nurture a Clergy Community and to Meet Clergy where they Live

Personal Qualities

- Guided by Love
- Strong Pastoral Skills
- The Ability to Listen



The Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia consists of people representing and holding various positions and beliefs. We truly are a mixed bag: all ages; urban and rural; various levels of education and income; sexual orientation; ethnic and racial identification; as well as differing religious and spiritual understandings, beliefs, and practices. There are those who hold fast to tradition and long held customs. There are others who embrace an ever-changing world and look to the Episcopal Church to not only adapt but to lead in these changes. Our next bishop will need to listen to these many views and help forge a common vision that will enable the diocese to meet that which we will be facing in the coming years.



Timeline

Driving Down That Road

- **January 2021** – Tell Our Story
Profile posted
- **February 1 to March 15 2021** – Applications Accepted
Open period for nominations and applications
- **March to April 2021** – Review Applications
- **May 2021** – Talk with Candidates
Online interviews conducted
- **Early Summer 2021** – Meet Candidates
Discernment retreat with invited candidates
- **Mid Summer 2021** – Announce Slate
Announcement of slated by Standing Committee
- **Late Summer 2021** – Introduce Slate to Diocese
Diocesan Tour with nominees
- **September - October 2021** – Election
Special Diocesan Convention for the election of Bishop Coadjutor
- **February - April 2022** – Consecration



Apply

Her Voice is Calling

Thank you for your interest in our search for a Bishop Coadjutor.

If you are nominating someone, please fill out the Nomination Form below and email it to WVBishopSearch@gmail.com

If you are making application for the position of Bishop Coadjutor, please fill out the Application Form below along with Consent Form. Please submit your package as one document (PDF) in the following order: Cover letter, your resume with references, your current OTM profile, your application form, answers to the questions, and consent form. You may sign the consent form electronically.

Email the application materials to WVBishopSearch@gmail.com

If you have any questions, contact the Rev. AlPrichard at WVBishopSearch@gmail.com

Application Forms

- [Nomination Process](#)
- [Nominating Form](#)
- [Application Form](#)
- [Consent Form](#)