

The Rev. Dr. Robert S. Dannals

**Saint Michael and All Angels
Dallas, Texas**

Prospective Candidate Responses

1. *What makes the consideration of a possible call from Saint Michael and All Angels exciting to you? What makes it difficult?*

Based on a careful reading of the parish profile and viewing the search CD, I have decided that I would welcome the opportunity to participate in your discernment process for a new rector. What excites me to express initial interest in Saint Michael and All Angels is my ongoing enthusiasm for the multidimensional ministries of a large parish. This initial excitement includes a perceived match of gifts and goals. I am continually inspired and challenged by worship, formation and parish care where week by week we gather to preach, teach, sing, learn and pray as a diverse and comprehensive Episcopal Church. I am equally thrilled and engaged by that same community when we, as vessels of grace, embark on mission, ministry and outreach. The gifts that I bring to parish ministry – visionary leadership, caring for a “large-tent” congregation, preaching, teaching, hiring and nurturing a large and talented staff and collaborating with an equally talented lay leadership – correspond with your profile. Let me add that I am particularly engaged by the process of being good stewards of robust resources for extraordinary mission, and for making that which could loom large and complex, feel small, warm and personal.

What makes this discernment difficult is that I was recently a final candidate in the episcopal elections of both the Dioceses of Southwest Florida (I withdrew before the election) and Virginia (I was not elected). While positive and energizing in so many ways, these processes were public and arduous on my family and parish. In the wake of these months, expressions of relief from Christ Church, Greenville that I’m not leaving and overwhelming enthusiasm about our future have been heartwarming. Thus, indicating even confidential interest in your search casts us back into the throws of exploring how best to be stewards of our lives for the next decade or more. I hasten to add that while I am dedicated to my present ministry, I am quietly energized by the possibilities of your parish.

2. *Could you be available to relocate to Dallas in the summer or fall of 2007? If not, when?*

Late summer, 2007 or late spring, 2008.

3. *Comparing your current position to what you know about Saint Michael and All Angels, what similarities do you see? What differences are most apparent?*

The similarities are many – both parishes are: one of the largest Episcopal Churches in the country; the largest in the diocese; eclectic, diverse and multidimensional in theology, worship, ministries and programs; committed to outreach; seeking to be mission-minded, to grow and continue to be a leader and a resource in the larger church; upholding excellence in liturgy, including outstanding music; decidedly moderate, committed to the comprehensive nature of the Episcopal Church and the benefits of worshipping and serving with those of differing opinions on secondary matters; committed to youth, college, young adults and young families; seeking to make the large and complex feel small, warm and caring; eagerly advancing strategic plans which are stretching and challenging in everyway including property/building expansion and outreach; seeking to be humble servants even as we raise the bar of expectations and excellence; seen as a “best practices” church by many.

The differences are few: Christ Church, Greenville resides in a much smaller city; we continue to own (the operation, however, is given to a board of directors) a K-12 school (1,000 students) and we serve in a Diocese that is, at least publicly, decidedly more moderate and accepting of decisions at the national level; Saint Michael and All Angels is nearly double the size of Christ Church in people, budget and staff and is much newer in its history.

4. *How would the members of your staff and your key lay leaders describe your leadership style?*

The staff and lay leadership would describe my leadership as pastoral, hard-working, determined, focused and mission-minded, motivated and executed by a style of collaboration, encouragement and example rather than by regulation or fiat. By nature of my extraverted personality and southern heritage, I would be described as friendly, open and accessible. I have an inquisitive mind and accepting heart, thus, I believe they would say that I welcome the breadth of what it means to be an Episcopalian in today’s church. In the pulpit and in the parish, many will say that I seek to be biblically sound, applicable and personally warm without being pedantic or ideologically bound. Our parish experiences me as engaged more by trusting relationships and bold common vision than by competition and personal agendas.

In summary, many at Christ Church would describe me as a team player who is not afraid to share leadership, responsibilities and decision-making with others. They would say that I am well differentiated as a leader and, therefore, I am able to appoint dedicated and talented staff and volunteers, and to delegate significant work where necessary and desirable. The staff would also say that I set the bar high, expect us to offer our best as servants of Christ and I am aware that there are times of solitary decision-making.

