

**FAQs**  
**(Frequently Asked Questions)**  
**Heather Cook Case**  
**Updated: 2/3/15**

**Was Cook driving a church car, conducting church business, and/or using a diocesan-supplied phone when the collision occurred?**

Cook was not on church business and was driving her own car. She was using a mobile phone supplied by the diocese.

**Why wasn't detailed information about the collision and DUI immediately shared by the diocese?**

Because this was a police investigation, we were unable to release information as swiftly as we wanted. We learned that in Maryland, forensics are more complex whenever a cyclist is hit by a car.

**Can Cook be fired from her position as bishop suffragan?**

No, the church has its own legal protocols and processes that we must follow (see, FAQs: Title IV Disciplinary Process).

**May Cook resign as bishop suffragan?**

Yes, but until the Title IV Disciplinary Process is completed, she may not resign her holy orders as a clergyperson of the Episcopal Church.

**What is Cook's employment status and is she still being paid?**

Cook was placed on administrative leave immediately after the collision. Church law stipulates that anyone on administrative leave will remain on the payroll and receive benefits until an investigation is completed and action taken.

**Is the diocese paying Cook's legal fees and/or bail?**

No, we are not in any way involved with Cook's legal proceedings and costs.

**In how much detail did the Search Committee and the Standing Committee know about Cook's 2010 DUI (Driving Under the Influence)?**

Due to confidentiality issues, we do not yet know the details shared with either or both committees. Cook was encouraged, as part of the process, to share all personal information. During public "meet and greets," Cook alluded to a difficult time in her life, but was not explicit about the DUI charge.

**When may confidential details about what the committees knew be released?**

We're bound by the Title IV Disciplinary Process and will not know those details until the entire process is completed.

*New!*

**You posted a "Timeline of Events" on February 2, 2015. Why wasn't that posted earlier?**

We needed to make sure we had the correct facts and in the correct sequence. We've also had to consider the confidential disciplinary process of The Episcopal Church.

**New! If Bishop Sutton noticed Cook’s possible inebriation, why wasn’t the consecration ceremony put on hold?**

When Bishop Sutton observed Cook’s possible inebriation on the evening of 9/4/14, he brought it to the Presiding Bishop’s attention on the morning of 9/5/14 before rehearsal. He did exactly what was required and expected of him according to the structure of The Episcopal Church.

When it comes to matters of “suitability” to serve as a bishop, Cook is under the authority of the Presiding Bishop not the diocesan bishop. Bishop Sutton expressed his concerns as a pastoral and personnel matter. The Presiding Bishop would have had to make that decision.

**Will the search process for bishops in the Episcopal Church be changed?**

The Cook case has drawn attention to gaps in the search process. We hope the investigation of this case will be used to improve the search, vetting and election process for bishops in the Episcopal Church.

**How is the diocese moving forward?**

We’re in the process of developing partnerships with local cycling organizations (e.g., [BikeMaryland](#) and [BikeMore](#)). We’re discussing practical ways to support legislative efforts to make Baltimore safer for bicyclists. We’re also in conversation with the addiction recovery community about how to provide better awareness, education and support.

**How can I contact Heather Cook?**

Please forward messages to her attorney’s office  
c/o Mr. David Irwin  
Irwin Green & Dexter, L.L.P.  
301 W. Pennsylvania Avenue  
Towson, MD 21204

**Prayer in Times of Conflict**

*O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 824)*