

# Office of Conference Dean

## Duties and Responsibilities:

### ▪ **Representative of the Office of the Bishop**

- The dean is frequently called upon to represent the Office of the Bishop within the conference. In such capacity, the dean is an extension of the Office of the Bishop with those to whom he/she is ministering. The dean may be asked to represent the bishop or bring greetings on behalf of the bishop at such occasions as anniversary celebrations, installations, colleague gatherings, congregational meetings, community events, funerals, or the like.
- The dean is a leader in the conference's vision for mission. The Dean is a steward of the vision for partnership among conference congregations and lay/rostered leaders. The dean working with the deployed Assistant to the Bishop/DEM will be an integral part of decision making related to mission planning and outreach on a conference or area level. This partnership is of critical importance in discernment related to strategic planning, mission outreach, addressing congregational issues, providing pastoral care, and oversight of the general ministries within the conference.

### ▪ **Care and Support for Rostered Leaders**

- The dean assists others within the Office of the Bishop in providing pastoral care to rostered leaders and their families. The dean will attempt to be in regular contact with both active and retired rostered persons within the conference, being sensitive to their pastoral needs and concerns.

The dean will notify the Office of the Bishop when there is illness, special concerns, or a death within the family of a rostered leader. To the extent possible, the dean will offer pastoral support and care to the rostered leaders and their families providing the bishop with regular updates.

The dean will help build a sense of community among the rostered leaders within the conference. This could include support of regular colleague gatherings, periscope study groups, and social occasions that might include families. Retired rostered leaders and their spouse should generally be invited and included in such gatherings. A colleague group for retired rostered leaders themselves may also be formed. As possible, the dean will attempt to identify all retired rostered leaders within the conference including those whose roster-status is with another synod.

During each two-year term of service, the dean will attempt to visit each parish setting within the conference. This may simply be a visit with the pastor or staff. However, it might also include participation in a congregational event, or attendance at a Congregation Council meeting to bring greetings, share announcements or in response to special request.

- **Guidance during the Transition Process**

- The dean serves as a primary contact throughout the transition time between called pastors to a congregation, working closely with the Assistant to the Bishop for Leadership. In the initial stages the contact is with the departing pastor, the Congregation Council and the Interim Pastor. The dean often assists the Office of the Bishop in the selection and appointment of an interim pastor. Assessments are made at this time regarding the congregation's readiness to enter the Call Process.

When the bishop and Congregation Council agree to enter the Call Process, the Call Committee is formed. On behalf of the Office of the Bishop, the dean serves as the primary contact, support person and guide for a Call Committee. The dean will assist in the development and review of the Congregational Mission Profile encouraging regular communications with the entire congregation. The dean usually delivers the confidential Call List of potential rostered leaders to the Call Committee and assists as needed with the interview process.

The dean or other representative of the Office of the Bishop will attend the Congregation Meeting to call a rostered leader. When a person has been called to serve the congregation, the dean will normally be involved in the installation service, usually serving as the installing pastor.

If supply pastors are needed to help cover the Sundays when the Interim Pastor is unavailable, the dean provides suggestions. The dean will maintain a list of pastors who are available to serve as supply pastors during vacancies, illnesses, vacations or other special times. This list may include retired pastors who are not rostered with this synod.

- **Consultation in times of Congregational Conflict or Disaster**

- The dean will often be called upon to assist the Office of the Bishop in times of severe conflict or difficulty within a congregation. This responsibility might be in helping to secure the services of a trained conflict resolution specialist or other needed consultant. The dean will provide regular updates to the Office of the Bishop regarding developments in the consultation process.

In times of disaster or other critical incidents, the dean serves as primary point person within the conference unless the dean is also a victim of the disaster, in which case another pastor will be appointed contact person. The Office of the Bishop encourages rostered persons to immediately contact the dean in times of disaster to provide information about personal safety and well-being. As recovery moves forward, rostered leaders are asked to continue providing regular updates to the dean who will share the information with the Office of the Bishop.

For this purpose, it is well that the dean maintains current contact information for rostered leaders including cell phone numbers.