



The Episcopal Diocese Of Western New York

A Trial Customary for the Deans of WNY Deaneries

The purpose of this Customary is to strengthen the connective tissue among the clergy and congregations of the Diocese of Western New York; to address the feelings of disconnectedness and isolation from the Diocese. Secondly, it is to experiment with the possibility of creating regional pastoral oversight of congregations without resident clergy utilizing clergy positions funded, at least in part, by the Diocese. (The Diocesan Council is currently studying the Deanery structure and Dean's job description.)

The authority for this trial rests with Diocesan Canon 14.1&2 which permits congregations without clergy or receiving diocesan support to be treated as missions. The intent of this trial is pastoral and not governmental, that is, not supporting the organizational structure of the Diocese. It does intend to bring parishes into good standing according to Episcopal Church canons and the Religious Corporation Law of NYS.

1. The Deans are appointed by the Bishop and understand themselves to be extensions of the Bishop's pastoral oversight of the diocese.
2. As pastors, the Deans will be in touch with the clergy of their deaneries for connection, fellowship, and to offer a supportive ear on behalf of the Bishop.
3. The Deans will offer pastoral assistance to the congregations of their deaneries including, but not limited to, worship planning, Vestry decision-making, and compliance with Episcopal Church requirements, i.e., the parochial report, Vestry size and membership, management of endowments, etc.
4. Where there are more congregations needing assistance than a Dean can reasonably provide, the Deans may assist one another and work with congregations on behalf of one another and the Bishop.
5. The Deans will have the authority of the Bishop's office in providing guidance in relation to worship, Vestry decision-making, and other assistance as congregations may require.
6. To facilitate the responsibilities listed above, the Deans will meet with the Bishop every other month to consult with the Bishop and to share experiences and provide support for one another.
7. The Deans will be compensated quarterly at the Bishop's discretion.
8. The Deans are accountable to the Bishop and may consult with the Bishop, by email or in person, on any matter. In the absence of the Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary is authorized to consult with the Deans on the Bishop's behalf.
9. This is a freewill exercise, that is, the Deans are exercising this ministry as their schedules and workloads permit. Any Dean may withdraw from this trial at any time in consultation with the Bishop.
10. This trial will continue until terminated by common consent of the Deans and Bishop or by the Bishop or his successor.