

Conference Dean – Ministry Description
Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Chapter 12 of the Synod Constitution and Bylaws contains constitutional mandates related to the office of conference dean. Specifically, §12.01.08 says: *The Dean shall attend the meetings of the Conference of Deans, and assist the bishop with providing pastoral care and leadership to the congregations and rostered personnel of the synod.* §12.01.09 says: *The Deans shall meet as a conference at least twice a year with the Bishop and Synod Ministers, to coordinate the work and meetings of the conferences and consult on issues to be brought to the attention of the conferences. A representative of the Conference of Deans shall be an advisory member of the Synod Council.*

Conference deans in the Southwestern Minnesota Synod have three major areas of responsibility:

I. Planning/Administrative

- A. Assist the Conference Chairperson in planning for conference assemblies.
- B. Be responsible for maintaining the directory of rostered persons in the conference.
- C. Welcome and include interim pastors serving within the conference.
- D. May serve as convener/planner for monthly rostered persons' gatherings.

II. Serving as a Liaison

- A. Attend meetings of the Conference of Deans (2 annually).
- B. Foster communication and (as requested) share information between synodical leadership and congregations within the conference. Each dean shall devise a "telephone tree" or "email list" for those situations where a rapid exchange of information with the rostered persons of the conference is necessary.
- C. As requested, represent the bishop at meetings and events (e.g. installations) within the conference.

III. Offering Pastoral Care

- A. To supplement the pastoral care provided by the parish pastor, the Dean may visit retired rostered personnel and spouses/widows of same who reside within the conference. Be explicit about stating that such visitation is provided "on behalf of the conference and the synod."
- B. Work with the Bishop and Synod Ministers to provide for visitation of rostered personnel and their families during times of need: illness, death, crisis, etc. Be specific in stating that such visitation is offered "on behalf of the conference and the synod."
- C. As requested, assist in providing crisis intervention and follow-up ministry with rostered personnel and congregations of the conference.
- D. Inform synod staff when rostered personnel and/or their family members are in need of pastoral care and concern.
- E. Provide for appropriate recognition of transitions in the lives of the conference's pastors, AiMs, and their families – especially welcoming new staff persons into the conference and bidding farewell to those leaving the conference.