



The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

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Diocesan Minister Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota: Position Description

Overview:

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota will call a full-time Diocesan Minister to serve as a key part of a Diocesan Team Ministry with a Transitional Bishop Provisional. The diocese is entering a transition period of three to five years that will allow us to get our “house in order” and strengthen the leadership of our congregations while continuing the discernment process for the best way forward.

This call is for a minimum of three years, renewable for additional years depending on how the diocese decides to move forward. It is important that the individual chosen “walk humbly with her/his God,” be an ordained Episcopal priest, enjoy being in relationship with the people of the Diocese of North Dakota, and fully embrace the concept of “team ministry.”

The person chosen also needs to understand and accept the concept of circular leadership (see note at end) and be able to support the structure put in place to achieve that goal.

The key roles we envision for the Diocesan Minister are:

- Discern and implement the diocese’s administrative support to congregations, lay leaders, and clergy
- Structure and support communication and events that help strengthen congregational leadership, lay and ordained
- Work with leadership in the diocese to re-establish/re-vitalize the School for Ministry
- Be available on Sundays to be with and work with congregations
- Have clarity about being a “team member” with the bishop, clergy, and lay leaders of the diocese, being just one of the members of the leadership circle, but also being able to facilitate and make things happen
- Structure and support diocesan efforts at Reconciliation, working with a consultant

The position will be supported by a Diocesan Ministry Team (DMT) approach to ministry. In addition to the Diocesan Minister there will be:

- An Administrative Assistant (full-time, but might be part-time if financial duties are outsourced)
- A Transitional Bishop Provisional (part-time, between one-quarter and half-time)

The Diocesan Minister (DM) - Time

This is the full-time position for the diocese. As with other priests in the diocese, we expect her/him to do the ministry as necessary, while also being available during “off hours.” Thus, the position requires a person with gifts for time-management as well as self-care.

Though we plan for the Bishop Provisional to be in the Diocese every month for approximately seven days, the Diocesan Minister will run the day-to-day operations of the diocesan administration. Obviously, some weeks will be more intense than others and we expect the DM to coordinate the overall work schedule in coordination with the rest of the DMT. The Bishop Provisional will call and oversee the person filling this position, in consultation with others.

The Diocesan Minister - Ministry

Communication and Organizational Cohesion: The DM will call and supervise the Administrative Assistant. Together with the Bishop Provisional they will establish and re-organize the diocesan office to create an administrative structure that supports congregations through:

- Regular communication via weekly website posts, a diocesan newsletter, email “blasts,” etc.
- Good data management of congregational and clergy contacts
- Website maintenance
- Clarity about diocesan policies and procedures, including functions such as Transition Ministry and Sexual Misconduct officer
- If necessary, work with an out-sourced accountant with additional oversight by the treasurer and finance committee to handle financial matters

Local Ministry Development:

The priority will be to support and strengthen leadership at the local level. The key components for this will be to work with others in the diocese to:

- Revitalize the School for Ministry with training and networking opportunities for congregational leadership teams and members
- Move towards Ministry Teams in all congregations, helping them to identify people with gifts for ministries such as preacher, worship leader, sacramentalist, pastoral caregiver, Christian educator/formation, outreach, etc.

- Identify opportunities for local training/formation for ordination
- Create a system to coordinate supply clergy for congregations, so that all congregations have Eucharist at least once a month
- Be available on Sundays to be with congregations: bring the energy of “team ministry” to them, build positive relationships between “the diocese” and the congregations, and, where they are without regular clergy, celebrate the Eucharist.

The following responsibilities reflect diocesan-wide efforts in which the Diocesan Minister will be involved as a team member but not solely responsible. Some of this work is already underway.

Divisions and Rebuilding Relationships:

- Help identify a person, create a structure and support the work of a consultant for reconciliation. We want and need an intentional way to get to know each other, to tell our stories and to express our hurts/hopes across congregational borders.

Youth Ministry and Leadership Pipeline:

- Help the diocese find ways to engage with youth on a diocesan level. This may involve calling and supervising a part-time Youth Minister.
- Help the diocese create a pipeline for new leadership: we need intentional ways to invite and enable new voices and energy into our leadership circles. This will include reviewing our existing committee structure and recommending adjustments.

Options for the Future:

- Help the diocese and the Bishop Provisional ask the difficult question: With fewer than 20 congregations, is having a separate Episcopal diocese and bishop financially viable and the best use of resources?

The Diocesan Minister – Other

- Finances: Help the diocese review and appropriately enact the recommendations of the addendum to Report of the Diocesan Discernment Task Force and the Standing Committee entitled, Summary of 2019 Income, Assets, and Expenses of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota. This may include supporting grant requests, reporting and oversight of such grants and other duties as needed.

Compensation and Benefits: Compensation will be designed to be competitive and to attract excellent candidates. Benefits will follow diocesan guidelines that provide for health benefits, vacation and sabbatical time, business travel reimbursement and professional expenses.

This will be a “spiritual call” with the diocese and the Bishop Provisional, with all parties entering into a covenant relationship which is based upon and informed by the work of the Diocesan Discernment Task Force. If either the diocese or the Diocesan Minister are in

disagreement concerning the interpretation of this Position Description or the final Letter of Agreement, either party may appeal for mediation by a mutually agreed upon third party, Standing Committee remaining the final arbiter.

A word about A Circular Model of Leadership

Unlike the way we normally think of leadership, as one person telling others what to do, circular leadership is about engaging everyone to find the way forward. It is spherical in nature, rather than hierarchical. In this way of seeing things, a great leader is an expression of their collective, or the circle of people working together, not its star. If done well a leader should oversee, guide, and represent the collective vision. But the right person for that role might also change as the group's needs change. At times, we may need a confident and outspoken leader to power us through a tangled passage, but other times we need the leader who quietly sees the network of connections within the whole. Sometimes we need a leader who hangs back so another may practice stepping forward, challenging us to be better than we think possible. Circular leadership ultimately recognizes the circle itself as the teacher; that the true wisdom is in the circle. There is a genius that can only be found in our coming together, and it is our combined abilities that elevate and strengthen us. True humility doesn't mean making yourself smaller but recognizing that we are all the same size: a child of God, necessary and vital, living in a community of children of God. Is this not what Jesus did in his ministry with the disciples and into what the Holy Spirit invites us?

Adapted from: <https://tokopa.com/2018/06/05/circular-leadership/>

Please also see the full report of the Diocesan Discernment Task Force:

<https://ndepiscopal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/A-DDTF-Final-Report-to-Convention-1.pdf>

If interested, please contact:

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