

Deanery Reference Guide

Diocese of Saskatoon
April, 2008

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1 – Introduction

a. Using this Reference Guide

Thank you for your interest in and commitment to our faith community in the Diocese of Saskatoon. This reference guide is intended to aid new and experienced Parish Deanery Representatives, pastors and members of the pastoral leadership team to *understand* and *effectively use* the Diocesan structure.

Because volunteering should be a life-giving and rewarding experience, the Diocesan Pastoral Council (see page eight) suggested that a reference guide be developed to provide foundational information to those serving their parishes at a Deanery level. *This guide is not intended to be a burden or another piece of required reading. You can read this resource like you read a car manual: feel free to flip through what is helpful and refer back if you need to.* The Table of Contents is divided for quick reference so that you can find the information you need or the contact information of someone who can answer any questions you might have.

Just as the Diocesan structure is set up to enable communication and foster relationships in our very large Diocese, this Reference Guide is a tool for you to use in serving your parish community and your deanery. Feel free to take notes in this book if you come across some information that might be helpful to someone taking over for you in the future. Also, please remember to leave your name and contact information on the *Past Local Deanery Representatives Contact List* in part six, so that you can become a part of the resource community for those who will serve after you.

Finally, your input is important. From time to time, this reference guide will be updated. Please copy and send in the update form on page 22. If you have any suggestions or comments for improving this resource, please contact Leah Perrault (Director of Pastoral Services) at the Catholic Pastoral Centre at (306) 242-1500, ext. 223 or directors@saskatoonrcdiocese.com.

2 – Understanding the Diocesan Structure

a. Parish, Deanery, Diocese – How do we fit?

Our church is the People of God – persons of faith like you working hard at being and becoming disciples of Christ. The church is organized into the following:

The ***Parish*** is the local gathering of the Church in our home communities. Our parishes are families of faith, where our children and adults hear the Word of God, where our elderly, ill or suffering members receive care and support and where we build the relationships that bring us closer to our God. The church building is the home of our weddings, funerals and our weekly gatherings to celebrate who we are as members of Christ's Body in the Eucharist. Participation in parish life is vital to making Christ present in the life of in our larger communities.

The ***Deanery*** is a regional community of faith, made up of all of the parishes within its borders. The Diocese of Saskatoon is made up of seven deaneries. Participation in the deanery community will be less frequent but is no less important than our participation in parish life. Deaneries communicate directly with the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

The ***Diocese*** is the larger regional community of faith, made up of all the parishes in all the deaneries within its borders. The People of God in the Diocese are shepherded and served by the local Bishop.

Maps of the Diocese and Deaneries are located in the last section of this guide, beginning on page 22.

2 – Understanding the Diocesan Structure (continued)

b. Understanding the Deanery Structure

1. History

In 1998, the Diocese of Saskatoon was expanded to include Humboldt, Eatonia and parts of Wadena deaneries. Bishop James Weisgerber took this expansion as an opportunity to organize the Diocese into the seven deaneries we have presently. The purpose of the deanery structure, when it was formed, was to allow for regional diversity, to allow local issues to be addressed and to facilitate communication with the Diocese.

2. Commonly Understood Purposes

The deanery structure has become an invaluable part of Diocesan communication. At a local level, deaneries have been used to organize local initiatives among parishes and to enable ministry at a local level. Deaneries are also important for two-way consultation between the people and the Bishop.

3. Deanery-Identified Purposes

Individual deaneries have utilized the deanery structure in different ways. This was intended right from the initial organization of deaneries. Some deaneries have:

- Used the structure to build regional unity in their area.
- Found the deanery very helpful in terms of collaborating for ministry training and resource networking.
- Used the deanery meetings and activities as opportunities for community and personal spiritual growth.

No one of these purposes should exclude the others. The deanery structure should serve the faith communities within it. Where meeting as a deanery is helpful – to discuss local issues, to collaborate on ministry and services, and/or to gather in prayer and celebration – deanery committees should feel free to use the deanery to meet local needs.

2 – Understanding the Diocesan Structure (continued)

c. Diocesan Deanery Liaisons

Diocesan Deanery Liaisons have been assigned to each deanery to strengthen the ties between the deaneries and programs and people at the Diocesan level.

Diocesan deanery liaisons are staff members at the Catholic Pastoral Centre and have information about Diocesan services, structures and resources. The diocesan deanery liaison, unlike Parish Deanery Representatives, is intended to be a Diocesan resource to the pastoral leadership of the deanery, rather than an area representative.

The responsibilities of Diocesan Deanery Liaisons include attending deanery meetings at the request of the deanery executive and providing information about the services available through the Catholic Centre, answering questions regarding diocesan policies, structures and possibilities and being present to hear the needs and share in the joys of the deanery. Diocesan Deanery Liaisons do not take on responsibilities within the deanery, but can be responsible for communicating with the Bishop or the director of the Catholic Pastoral Centre on behalf of the deanery, as requested by the deanery. Like a Parish Deanery Representative, the diocesan deanery liaisons prepare for and attend meetings to contribute to the conversation, collaborate in finding creative solutions to problems and to share the journey of faith with all who sit on the deanery council.

2 – Understanding the Diocesan Structure (continued)

d. Diocesan Consultation Structure

In order to serve and respond to the needs of the people, the Bishop needs to be in ongoing dialogue with the faithful in the Diocese. The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) and the Council of Priests are the two “lungs” of the Bishop’s consultative body.

Through the deanery structure, parishes participate in this communication structure. Lay people and priests make up the Deanery council. Deanery Chairpersons (and Co-Chairpersons) represent the Deanery on the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

1. Diocesan Pastoral Council

The Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) is made up of deanery representatives, representatives from the priests and women religious, and representatives appointed by the Bishop. This body gathers three times a year to provide discussion and feedback on items brought by the Bishop and to provide a forum discussing issues and concerns arising from the parishes and deaneries.

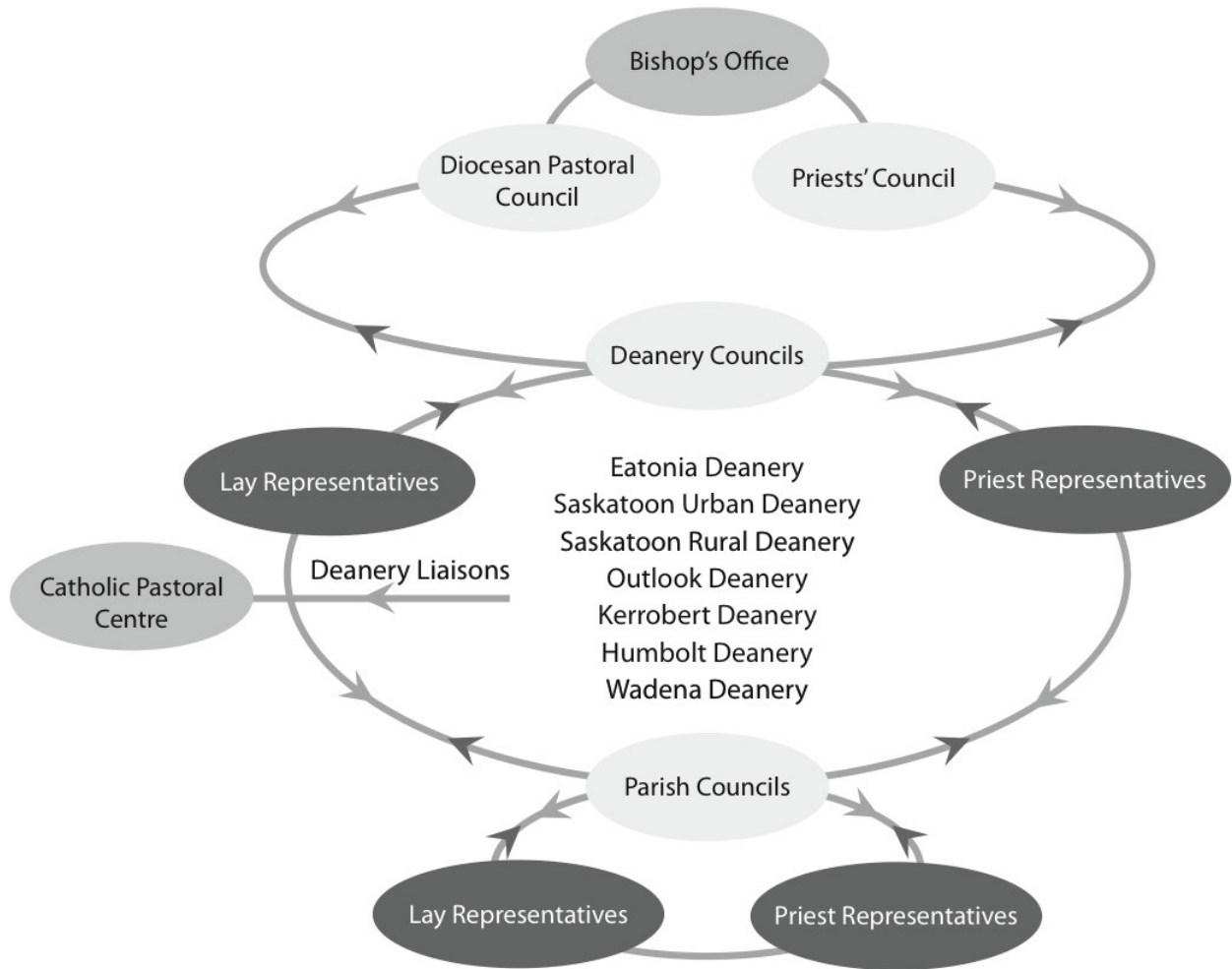
2. Council of Priests

The Council of Priests is made up of representatives of the priests of the Diocese. In addition to meeting with the DPC, the Bishop also relies on consultation with the priests of the diocese. The Council of Priests includes deans assigned to the seven deaneries in the diocese. A priest is a member of the Council of Priests because he has either been appointed by the Bishop or has been chosen/elected as dean for his deanery.

The Council of Priests meets approximately 5 times per year. The Chairperson of the Council of Priests is the contact person with the DPC in order to ensure that agendas and topics of study are communicated.

Together, the DPC and the Council of Priests provide a consultative structure for the Bishop. This communication structure is also a useful tool for parishes to collaborate with other parishes in the deanery and the diocese and to ensure ongoing communication with the Diocese.

3. *Communication Diagram*



3 – Parish Deanery Representatives – Responsibilities

a. Important Gifts and Skills for Parish Deanery Representatives

God can call anyone to be a Parish Deanery Representative. Parish pastoral councils select this person either from within the existing parish pastoral council or from within the broader parish community. The Parish Deanery Representative attends parish pastoral council and deanery meetings. *Parish Deanery Representatives do not have to serve on the parish pastoral council in an additional role. Parish pastoral council Chairpersons do not have to (but may) serve as deanery representatives.*

When looking for a Parish Deanery Representative, parish councils should be looking for something more than a person who has Wednesday evenings free! Parish Deanery Representatives might have one or more of the following gifts or talents:

- Good people skills,
- Organizational abilities,
- Healthy communication skills,
- Listening skills,
- Openness to new ideas/different ways of doing things,
- Collaborative approach to team work,
- Leadership ability and/or initiative,
- Some commitment to their faith community and/or
- A willingness to learn more about their faith, community and Diocese.

b. Responsibilities within the Parish and Parish Pastoral Council

Parish Deanery Representatives should be members of or attend the meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council. As a representative of your parish to the deanery, it is important that you are able to speak on behalf of your parish community.

Responsibilities to the parish community will include:

- Staying up to date on parish events and issues, by attending parish pastoral council meetings, reading the minutes and/or maintaining relationships with the people and priest at parish and community events. Past deanery representatives from your parish might offer insight into how this has been done in the past.
- Reporting back any relevant information from deanery meetings to ensure that deanery information and activities are available to the members of your home parish.
- Taking any questions and concerns of the parish to the deanery meetings.
- Facilitating the collection and/or dissemination of information from the Diocesan Pastoral Council to the deanery/parishes.

3 – Parish Deanery Representatives – Responsibilities (continued)

c. Responsibilities within the Deanery

Different deaneries have different meeting schedules and reasons for meetings. Some find it easier to meet during the day in varying locations, while others find it more advantageous to meet in a central location over meal times or in the evening. Over time, any deanery might change their meeting habits to better accommodate current members. The guiding principle is that meeting times and practices should give life to the members of the deanery committee and allow all to best serve the regional faith community.

Responsibilities within the deanery will include:

- Attending and actively participating in deanery committee meetings.
- Preparing for meetings by ensuring appropriate communication with your home parish and bringing any relevant information or materials to the meeting.
- Discerning whether or not you might be called to take on a position of leadership on the deanery committee such as the Chairperson or Co-Chairperson or a deanery representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- Following up on any tasks taken on personally through the deanery meetings.
- Raising any parish questions or concerns.
- Collecting and/or distributing information to and from the parish at the request of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
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- _____
- _____

d. Materials for Parish Deanery Representatives

Deanery representatives should be provided with materials upon coming into the role. In turn, when your term is up, it will be your responsibility to ensure that these materials are passed on to the representative taking your place on the committee.

Important materials for deanery representatives:

- This *Reference Guide for Deanery Representatives*, including current copies of the resource lists in the last section of the guide.
- Current contact list for the local Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Deanery Representatives throughout the deanery, and the Deanery Liaisons.
- List of any upcoming deanery meetings, events and/or commitments.
- _____
- _____
- _____

4 – Pastors/Parish Life Directors

a. Importance of Participation at the Deanery Level

Within each deanery, the Priests and Parish Life Directors should have a representative on the deanery committee. All priests and parish life directors might be invited to attend all meetings, but the participation of at least one representative is vital for keeping the communication lines open between the laity and pastoral leadership teams.

Each summer, the priests of the diocese elect Deans for their respective deaneries. By virtue of being a Dean, a priest is then made a member of the Council of Priests. Each fall, the Director of the Catholic Pastoral Center will contact the Deanery Co-Chairpersons with the name and contact information of the priest elected as Dean. (Note: To this point, parish life directors have not been elected as deans. The Dean, as a priest, is therefore made a member of the Council of Priests.)

Deans and Parish Deanery Representatives are expected to participate regularly in the Deanery meetings. This regular communication between priests and lay people is vital to our health as a community of faith!

b. Responsibilities within Deanery Structure

Just as Parish Deanery Representatives have responsibilities to the deanery committee and to the parish, the representative of the priests and parish life directors has responsibilities to that community and to the deanery committee.

The responsibilities of the representative of the priests and parish life directors include:

- Communicating with the other clergy and pastoral leadership in the deanery to ensure an ability to speak on behalf of the whole group.
- Attending and actively participating in deanery meetings.
- Preparing for meetings by bringing any relevant information or materials to the meetings.
- Following up on any tasks taken on personally through the deanery meetings and reporting back any relevant information to the priests and parish leadership teams.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

5 – Deanery Meetings and Activities

a. Allowing the Structure to Serve Your Needs

The deanery structure of the Diocese was set up to allow communication between the parishes, deaneries, and Diocese and the distribution of information and resources to and from the Bishop's office and the Catholic Pastoral Centre. The structure was also set up to increase the sense of community in the regional Church and to encourage neighbouring parishes to work, celebrate and pray together.

The Deanery structure is not rigid or static. The organization and particular practices of any given Deanery will be fluid and open to change. The following guidelines are suggestions and ideas for operating the deanery committee.

b. Guidelines for a Healthy Deanery

1. Preparing for Meetings & Activities

Consider the purpose of the meeting and meet when there is sufficient need. When meetings are held with clear objectives and can accomplish tasks, people feel that attendance is important. Ensure that there is a clear agenda and that it is distributed ahead of time.

Consider the timing and location of your meetings. Are meal times, evenings, afternoons or mornings preferable to the majority of the committee members? Is a constant central location preferable to rotating locations throughout the deanery? When planning meeting and activity dates, are you taking into account seeding, harvest, major community and/or Diocesan events?

Consider the goals and hopes for your deanery. Does your deanery have a sense of shared identity? What is the guiding vision for the work your committee is doing? Do the members of the committee share a common understanding of the situation in the deanery? Does meeting time need to be taken to identify goals/vision that guide the work of the committee?

Consider that meetings should serve the larger goal of giving life to the faith community. Though the Bishop might request deanery meetings and provide items for the agenda, deanery committees should meet a minimum of twice a year. Consider organizing at least one deanery event or gathering per year. Such an event might be a deanery mass and picnic, a baseball tournament, or a family day at a local lake. Or, the deanery committee might host a deanery-wide retreat or formation day.

5 – Deanery Meetings and Activities (continued)

2. *Running Meetings & Activities*

Remember that the deanery committee is still a gathering of the members of the Body of Christ. Consider the timing and leadership of prayer. Prayer resources are available through the Catholic Pastoral Center and on the diocesan webpage at http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/scc/small_christian_communities.cfm. The deanery committee might consider: Who is leading the prayer in your meetings? What style of prayer is being used

Consider how collaborative leadership and decision-making might be life-giving for the members of the deanery committee. Are the responsibilities and initiatives of the deanery committee evenly spread between the members? Are any representatives feeling burned out? Are all parishes and all voices in the deanery feeling welcome to contribute, speak up and/or take initiative?

Consider the time and other commitments of committee members. Are stated meeting lengths being respected? Are deanery activities being planned to encourage all communities and persons to attend?

Be inclusive. Especially in planning deanery events, be mindful of all those who make up the Body of Christ. Consider how an event might be an outreach to the poor, the elderly, the young, the ill and/or those who may not be practicing their Catholic faith. How might deanery events be an opportunity to invite those who have not felt welcome or able to be a part of the community?

3. *Positions and Terms of Service*

Deaneries have functioned differently in the past. Much of this diversity is good, allowing for the specific needs of the deanery to be met. With the publication of this guide, however, deaneries are being asked to implement (if not already the practice) co-chairpersons and minimum two year terms of service for all Parish Deanery Representatives.

Chairperson – Responsibilities include setting the agenda, chairing the meetings, and acting as a representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The Chairperson should also be preparing the Co-Chairperson to take over as Chair, if succession anticipated.

Co-Chairperson – Responsibilities of the Chair are often shared between the Chair and Co-Chair. The Co-Chair will be the immediate successor of the Chairperson, in years where the Chair is stepping down. Both the Chair and the Co-Chair represent the deanery at the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

5 – Deanery Meetings and Activities (continued)

Administrator/Secretary – Responsibilities might include keeping minutes at meetings, distributing correspondence and getting minutes out to members, parishes, priests and parish councils.

Treasurer – Responsibilities include maintaining a bank account, collecting income and paying bills. Most deaneries have some small amount of money (either collected from parishes or distributed for an occasion from the diocese) that needs to be accounted for.

Parish Deanery Representatives – All members of the deanery council are Parish Deanery Representatives. Those in executive positions continue to carry out the responsibilities of representatives.

Appointed Deanery Representatives to the Diocesan Pastoral Council – These persons are appointed by the Bishop (see page 15) and are expected to attend deanery council meetings so as to be participating in the life and discussion of the local deanery.

Terms of Service:

Though not all deaneries are currently operating with two-year terms, this is the recommended structure, with the following three guiding principles in mind:

- Continuity of vision and work,
- Facilitation of growth into new roles, and
- Providing opportunities for new people to have the opportunity to serve.

Two-year (minimum) terms are recommended to allow for new members to learn about the deanery before taking on leadership roles. While extended terms of service are rarely an issue, occasionally persons may need to consider stepping back to allow for new people to get involved and encourage new ideas to come through. Six to eight years is recommended as a maximum term of service, though this recommendation ought to be applied with due discernment and sensitivity to the great gift of lasting presence and/or leadership.

It is recommended that people are elected/appointed to terms of service at spring meetings. This means that Parish Pastoral Councils and Deanery Councils will be making decisions about Parish Deanery Representatives and Deanery executive positions each spring. Consistency across the Diocese in this area will allow the Bishop's appointments and the parish/deanery transitions to happen at the same time.

6 – Deanery Representatives to the Diocesan Pastoral Council

a. Responsibilities within the Deanery

Responsibilities within the deanery include:

- Staying up-to-date on the issues and concerns from across the deanery you represent, by attending deanery meetings.
- Reporting back any relevant information from DPC meetings to ensure that diocesan information and activities are available to the Parish Deanery Representatives on your deanery council.
- Taking any questions and concerns of the deanery to the DPC meetings.
- Facilitating the collection and/or dissemination of information from the Diocesan Pastoral Council to the Parish Deanery Representatives in your deanery.

b. Responsibilities to the Diocesan Pastoral Council

Responsibilities to the Diocesan Pastoral Council include:

- Attending Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings and actively participating in the discussions there.
- Bring relevant issues and concerns to the attention of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- Following up on Diocesan Pastoral Council discussions by taking information to or furthering the discussion at the deanery level.
- Facilitating the collection and/or dissemination of information from the Diocesan Pastoral Council to the Parish Deanery Representatives in your deanery.

c. Appointed Representatives to the Diocesan Pastoral Council

In order to ensure that the Diocesan Pastoral Council is an appropriate representative sample of the people in the diocese, the Bishop, in consultation with the Director of Pastoral Services, appoints additional persons to the DPC. These people are chosen to ensure a variety of people in terms of age, pastoral experience, personal background and service, and deanery needs.

When appointed members are selected, they are contacted by the Bishop and asked to sit on the Council. The Director will ensure that these people are provided with the *Deanery Reference Guide*. The Director will also communicate these appointments and contact information to the deanery chairperson(s).

Responsibilities

All appointed Diocesan Pastoral Council Representatives are expected to attend their respective deanery meetings to work with the deanery council as a whole. Their responsibilities are the same as the deanery representatives to the Diocesan Pastoral Council, as listed immediately above.

7 – Resources

The following resources are attached in the pages that follow. As a parish deanery representative, it will be your job when you leave the deanery council to ensure that the new parish deanery representative has a current copy of the reference guide and the following resources:

- *Past Parish Deanery Representative Contact List*
- *Current Deanery Contact List*
- *Current Deanery Chairpersons for All Deaneries*
- *Diocesan Liaison Contact List*
- *Catholic Pastoral Centre Resource Guide*
- *Reference Guide Update Form*
- *Diocesan and Deanery Maps*

7 – References – Past Parish Deanery Representative Contact List

Please add your information to this list when you become Parish Deanery Representative. When your term is finished, you will pass your guide and materials on and your name and information will be recorded here in case of questions.

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Years Served: 2 _____ to 2 _____

Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Years Served: 2 _____ to 2 _____

Name: _____
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7 – References – Current Deanery Contact List

7 – References – Diocesan Deanery Liaison List

Eatonia Deanery – Mary Wrishko

Humboldt Deanery – Mary Comeault

Kerrobert Deanery – Blake Sittler

Outlook Deanery – Agnes Rolheiser

Saskatoon Deanery – Marci Deustcher (East Side), Donna Donaldson (West Side)

Saskatoon Rural Deanery – Kathy Hitchings

Wadena Deanery – Lynda Statchuk

7 – References – Catholic Pastoral Centre Resource Guide

See attached brochure.

7 – Referencess – Diocesan and Deanery Maps

The maps on the following pages are available in electronic form for website or projection use. Please contact Leah Perrault at directors@saskatoonrcdiocese.com to obtain electronic copies of the maps.