

IN MISSION & MINISTRY

United Methodists at Work

Preparing the Way



“Who’s your bishop?”

You can ask any United Methodist in the world, “Who’s your bishop?” and there’s an answer to that question. In Kansas, Bishop Scott Jones serves as the episcopal leader for both the Kansas East and the Kansas West conferences – collectively named the Kansas Area.

The United Methodist church, like many other mainline denominations, is structured in a hierarchy of levels. This helps the church function effectively at not only the local level, but at the district, conference, jurisdictional, and global levels as well.

“Every organization needs a leader. For local churches, that’s the pastor. For the whole conference, I’m the leader,” said Bishop Scott Jones.

One of the initiatives that has come out of Bishop Jones’s episcopal leadership is the Bridges to the Future capital campaign, which has helped fund advancements in camping and campus ministries, as well as church growth and development.

Other responsibilities of the bishop revolve more around the role of symbolic figurehead of the conferences.

“On a Sunday, I might be preaching an anniversary service or visiting a local church. I might be meeting with some representative of some organization here in Kansas that wants to know how they can partner with the United Methodist Church,” said Bishop Scott Jones.



The Role of Episcopal Leadership

“... who’s the best available pastor to send there.”

From the local church’s perspective, however, the bishop’s most important role might be that of appointing the congregation’s next pastor.

“Between January and May, I spend a lot of my time –roughly two days a week – meeting with my cabinet to discern what are the appointments where there needs to be a change, and if there’s going to be a change, who’s the best available pastor to send there,” Jones said.

The bishop said he relies heavily on the district superintendents to know their churches and their pastors well to assist him in the appointment process.

A bishop’s work is not limited to leading the episcopal area where he or she is assigned. Every bishop also serves on the Council of Bishops and other global committees to govern the work of the church on an international level.

“We as bishops are collectively responsible for the leadership of the whole church. So while I have the residential responsibility in Kansas, I’m also a bishop for the worldwide church,” Jones said.



Bishops couldn’t be engaged on the global level without a good support staff behind them. Rev. Gary Beach was recently named assistant to the bishop, and Rev. Linda Louderback was named area director of clergy and congregational excellence. The pair work closely with the bishop and his administrative assistant to guide the work of the annual conferences. ■

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United Methodists at Work ...

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