

Pastoral Care of Your Church Staff Members During the Pandemic

HIGHLIGHTS

1. It's important for the Rector/Dean, together with the Vestry, to acknowledge and affirm that, in tandem with the congregation, the staff is the church's or cathedral's number one resource.
2. Stay in touch with staff members on a regular basis — as a group and one-on-one, offering support, a listening ear, humor, assurance, and encouragement.
3. Be clear, timely and caring in communication. Staff members need clarity, consistency, and transparency in planning, meetings, and overall communications.
4. Encourage staff to extend to parishioners a “non-anxious presence.” Designate one of the staff — likely one of the clergy or the chief administrator — to be the voice of calm and reason with anxious parishioners.
5. You may choose to re-purpose some employees, asking them to take on different functions and duties during this unusual period — giving support to those who have “full plates.”
6. It might be possible and important to give (quiet) bonuses to select employees who have gone beyond the call of duty.
7. Build in some fun among the hard work and unusual circumstances. It may be that the Dean/Rector can send care packages to staff members, with food or fun items.
8. If there is a flare-up among the staff, take the extra step of meeting by Zoom with those staff members to sort out the difficulty, seeking good communication, addressing that issue, and reaching for reconciliation.
9. Encourage each staff member to have at least two or three “best-practice” colleagues with whom they can stay in touch.
10. Practice devotional life with the staff on a regular basis, and encourage staff members to share good news, moments of thanksgiving, and encounters when they've witnessed God's love being shared.