



POLICY: LOCAL CHURCH INVITATIONS TO PART-TIME CONFERENCE STAFF

Policy Area	Conference Administration / Staff
Applies To	Part-time Conference staff, including the Dean of the Cabinet and Director of Connectional Ministries
Responsible Office	Office of the Conference Superintendent
Review	As needed or when staffing structure, budget, or geographic scope materially changes

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity regarding invitations extended by local churches to part-time Conference staff members for guest preaching, teaching, worship leadership, consultation, or participation in special events. The policy is intended to encourage connectional relationships while maintaining appropriate boundaries around part-time employment expectations and Conference financial resources.

2. Background

The Heartland Annual Conference serves a geographically broad four-state area, along with additional missional relationships and responsibilities. Certain Conference leadership positions are intentionally structured as part-time roles. When these positions were established, Conference leadership determined that accepting invitations to preach or participate in local church events would not be a required or routine duty of those positions.

Local churches may nevertheless benefit from the ministry, leadership, and connectional presence of these staff members. The Conference welcomes such invitations while recognizing that the financial cost of travel across the Conference cannot be absorbed within the Conference operating budget for locally initiated invitations.

3. Policy

Local churches are encouraged to invite part-time Conference staff members to preach, teach, consult, or participate in local church ministry and special events. Acceptance of such invitations is subject to the staff member's availability and is not a required responsibility of the staff member's Conference employment unless specifically assigned or authorized as official Conference business.

An invitation initiated by a local church is considered a local church invitation rather than an official Conference assignment. Accordingly, the Heartland Annual Conference will not ordinarily pay travel, lodging, or related expenses arising from such invitations.



4. Responsibilities of the Inviting Church

When extending an invitation to a part-time Conference staff member outside the staff member's regular Conference duties, the inviting church should:

- communicate the date, location, schedule, and expected responsibilities clearly and sufficiently in advance;
- reimburse reasonable travel expenses associated with the invitation, including mileage or other necessary transportation costs and, when appropriate, lodging and meals;
- consider providing an appropriate honorarium in recognition of the staff member's preparation, time, and ministry; and
- communicate directly with the invited staff member regarding scheduling and logistical arrangements.

5. Staff Member Discretion and Work Expectations

Part-time Conference staff members retain discretion to accept or decline local church invitations based on availability, workload, family commitments, travel demands, and other responsibilities. Acceptance of an invitation does not change the part-time nature of the staff member's Conference position or create an expectation that similar invitations must be accepted in the future.

Time and travel associated with locally initiated invitations are not automatically treated as additional Conference work responsibilities. Questions about whether a particular invitation constitutes official Conference business should be directed to the Conference Superintendent.

6. Exceptions

The Conference Superintendent may designate a preaching, teaching, consultation, or local church visit as official Conference business when the invitation or assignment directly serves a Conference initiative, supervisory responsibility, strategic priority, or other authorized purpose. In those cases, travel and related expenses may be handled through the appropriate Conference budget according to normal reimbursement practices.

7. Guiding Principle

This policy is intended to support—not discourage—the connectional life of the Heartland Annual Conference. Local church invitations provide valuable opportunities for Conference leaders and congregations to build relationships, share ministry, and strengthen our common mission. The policy provides a consistent framework so that these opportunities can continue while respecting the scope of part-time positions and stewarding Conference resources responsibly.