**Clergy Family Wellness: The Questions**

**Brief Introduction to the Video**

The Widows Corporation was founded in 1769 and is celebrating 250 years of existence in 2019. We wanted to not only celebrate, but make it a meaningful celebration of our fundamental mission to provide support for the surviving spouses, children and other eligible beneficiaries of deceased Episcopal clergy in the five dioceses in Pennsylvania. We are making a conscious decision to expand that support to the families of clergy still living, hence this video production of Clergy Family Wellness: The Questions.

Our hope is to raise the awareness of issues facing the family members of clergy and to facilitate an exploration of ways in which the larger church might be of assistance in easing the burden. The video itself presents issues and concerns that are very real, even if not discussed widely. We relied on the extensive work done by FOCUS (Families of Clergy United in Support) begun in July 2000. Their resource guide is available on our website: <https://thewidowscorporation.org/>

The people you will see and hear from in our video are:

Maria Konstantinides, “Amy” – the spouse of a priest

Ryan Redebaugh, “John” – the priest

Bonnie Studdiford, Originator and former Executive Director of FOCUS (Families of

Clergy United in Support) and a clergy spouse

Richard Schori, Retired Mathematics Professor who has had the opportunity to be

the spouse of a priest, of a bishop of Nevada and of a Presiding Bishop

(The Rt. Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori)

The Rev. Sherry Deets, Chaplain at the Widows Corporation and Rector of Episcopal

Church of the Trinity, Coatesville, Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Dorsey McConnell, Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

Dr. Matthew Price, Senior Vice President for Research and Data at the Church

Pension Group (CPG)

You are invited to begin the conversation and to send your suggestions to The Widows Corporation, Attn: The Rev. Sherry Deets, 1819 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 303, Philadelphia, PA 19103 or via email to [chaplain@thewidowscorporation.org](mailto:chaplain@thewidowscorporation.org)

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**Discussion Guide for the Video**

**Part One: Clergy and Family Questions**

1. Did the opening scene between Amy and John ring true for you? What thoughts and/or feelings did it bring up for you?
2. What are some concrete examples of how to set appropriate boundaries? Is it possible to set appropriate boundaries without giving offense?
3. Where can you go, as clergy and families, to process issues that arise in the church setting?
4. What different issues might arise with single clergy?
5. How do you perceive the ministry role of a clergy spouse? Is there a conflict of perceptions? What are some ways to navigate this?
6. Bishop Scanlan gave examples of Clergy Wellness Groups in her Diocese. Would that concept work for spouses/families of clergy? What are some other ways to support the spouses and families of clergy?
7. Healthy clergy, healthy families, healthy congregations. Understanding that we are all connected in community and that our own health makes a difference to the whole, what are some ideas of ways to encourage wellness in each other?

**Part Two: Vestries, Search Committees & Congregational Questions**

1. Did the opening scene between Amy and John surprise you? What thoughts and/or feelings did it bring up for you?
2. What are some examples of ways that congregations might be able to show respect for the family time and space and privacy that all couples/families need?
3. What might be different with single clergy?
4. Bishop Scanlan brought up the changing role of clergy spouses. Many spouses have full time jobs that also require evening meetings. Have churches evolved in the understanding that family members are not able to attend every church function, etc.?
5. How do you perceive the ministry role of a clergy spouse? Is there a conflict of perceptions? What are some ways to navigate this area?
6. What are some examples of appropriate boundaries with clergy and their families?
7. What are some ideas of ways to support the spouses and families of clergy?

The Widows Corporation would greatly appreciate the sharing of your exploration of the ‘Questions’ surrounding Clergy Family Wellness. Please send your thoughts, comments and suggestions to: The Rev. Sherry Deets, Chaplain, The Widows Corporation, 1819 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 303, Philadelphia, PA 19103 or email them to: [chaplain@thewidowscorporation.org](mailto:chaplain@thewidowscorporation.org) Thank you!