

# Melissa Holland Named Ecumenical Officer for Catholic Diocese of Lexington

LEXINGTON — Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., has named Melissa Holland, as ecumenical officer of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington. She will continue her role as pastoral associate at Pax Christi parish in Lexington. In her role as ecumenical officer, Holland will be the Catholic Church's lead point of contact and collaboration with Christians of other denominations in central and eastern Kentucky. She succeeds Father Nick Pagano in the role.

"I believe that all Christians must learn to speak the truth in love. As the first layperson and woman to hold this position in our diocese, I am truly honored to accept the position as ecumenical officer, representing Bishop John and the diocese in conversations with other Christians on how we can be faithful to the teachings of our own tradition yet stand together as Christian witnesses to issues that we hold in common," Holland said.

A lifelong Lexingtonian, Holland holds a bachelor's in organizational management



from Midway College and later attended Lexington Theological Seminary in the Catholic Pastoral Studies Program. She has served on the board of the Kentucky Council of Church and currently serves the Council as treasurer. She has participated in the national Ecumenical Advocacy Days held in Washington, D.C., learning how to work with other Christian traditions in advocating for justice. She served as chair of the Ecumenical Committee at the Cathedral of Christ the King, coordinating Vacation Bible

School with the Baptist church in that neighborhood and working with area Christian and Jewish congregations to plan an annual Thanksgiving service.

As a founding member of Pax Christi parish in 1994, one of the tasks she was given was to gather Christian congregations together for an ecumenical Vacation Bible School. This association, of 10 Christian traditions, has grown into sponsoring an annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.