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The Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 15, 2011 - The Rt Rev Pierre W. Whalon, bishop in charge of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe, announced today the appointment of the Rt Rev Peter James Lee as interim dean of the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Paris. Bishop Lee, will arrive in early 2012, replacing the current dean, the Very Rev Zachary Fleetwood. Fleetwood is stepping down in October after eight years of service. He has accepted a call to become rector at the Church of St. Columba's-by-the-Castle, an urban parish in Edinburgh.

Bishop Whalon said of the appointment of the interim dean, "Bishop Lee brings a lifetime of experience to the position, assuming leadership at a critical period in the life of the Cathedral community." In October, the Cathedral will break ground on the largest capital improvement project since the church was constructed in 1886. The two-year long project includes plans to modernize the Cathedral's physical plant, to create new space to accommodate the parish's growing ministry and mission needs, and to provide expanded office space for the Cathedral staff and the offices of the Convocation.

Bishop Lee first "retired" in 2009 after serving for 25 years as the 12th bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, sometimes called "The Diocese" due to its status as one of the oldest and largest dioceses in the Episcopal Church. The diocese stretches from the limits of Washington, D.C. to include in its jurisdiction 80,000 members worshipping in 181 churches throughout northern and central Virginia.

Bishop Lee is a prominent figure in the Episcopal Church, respected for his leadership and contributions to the work of the church in the United States and to the global mission of the Anglican Communion. A hallmark of his ministry is his capacity for fostering constructive dialogue among those holding diverse theological and institutional perspectives. In recent years, his diocese's special-edition General Convention newsletter -- *The Center Aisle* -- was widely embraced by delegates and visitors to the church's triennial General Conventions. The newsletter earned a receptive readership for its embodiment of the spirit of "the Anglican via media," and for its invitation to engage the Episcopalians in a deeper conversation about some of the modern day challenges facing the church.

For more than a quarter century, Bishop Lee has maintained a commitment to the well-being and work of the church. A few highlights of his service include: board chair of board of the Church Pension Fund, trustee of Berkley Divinity School at Yale, 17 years as chair of the board of trustees of the Virginia Theological Seminary, and board member for the National Alliance to End Homelessness. His particular attention to the needs of the global church developed more strongly while serving on the Advisory Committee to the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, and as member of the of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief (forerunner to Episcopal Relief and Development). In 1998, Bishop Lee worked behind the scenes to help shape the seminal Lambeth Conference report calling for the cancellation of the crippling debts owed by the world's poorest countries. In 2000, the G-8 adopted such a framework; nearly \$100 billion of "un-payable" debts owed to creditor countries and multilateral institutions have been cancelled under the program.

Since his "retirement," Bishop Lee has served an Interim Dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, and one year ago, he was named Interim Dean of General Theological Seminary in New York.

Bishop Lee was born in Mississippi and raised in Florida. After a stint in law school, as a newspaper reporter, and as a wartime military intelligence officer, Bishop Lee began his ministry at an urban Cathedral in Jacksonville, Florida. In the Convocation, he previously worked for a short time at the former Episcopal Church in Nice, Church of the Holy Spirit.

Bishop Lee graduated magna cum laude from Washington and Lee University, and studied law at Duke University. He earned a M.Div. from the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1967. He is married to Kristina Lee. They have two children and five grandchildren.

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