DIOCESE OF NEWARK

CLERGY SABBATICAL POLICY

Definition

A sabbatical is understood to be a time utilized by clergy in order to be released from regular ministries for the purpose of spiritual renewal, study, theological reflection, and strengthening of skills and ministries according to a well-defined plan developed by the clergy person taking leave in concert with his/her vestry or executive committee.

Purpose

For the Clergy. As intended by this policy, a clergy sabbatical is not a leave intended for rest, relaxation, or change of routine. Such time is already provided for clergy as annual vacation. Nor is a sabbatical necessarily an extended continuing education program. For the clergy, sabbatical is a time for opening one's self to the working of the Holy Spirit and for renewal of one's sense of vocation. Sabbatical leave offers opportunity for a more extended learning experience than is possible in the typical week of continuing education provided in the clergy letter of agreement. It allows time for reflection, research, writing, internship, and other organized opportunities not possible in a brief educational leave.

For the Congregation. Sabbatical time is an opportunity to focus on the ministry of the laity. It should be seen as a time for the congregation to reflect on its ministries apart from the clergy, to assess where the congregation is presently and where it believes God may be calling them to be. Engagement of a congregational consultant is recommended as a way for the congregation to explore how lay ministries may be empowered, enriched, and enhanced consonant with the vision and mission of the congregation.

Guidelines

- Full time clergy who have completed five years of service in a parish or mission of the Diocese are eligible to apply for a sabbatical.

- It is recommended that the length of the sabbatical be at least 3 months, and that sabbatical be taken every five to seven years. **See, Appendix A.**
- No later than nine months prior to the beginning of the anticipated sabbatical leave, a clergy requesting sabbatical leave shall after conversation with his/her vestry/executive committee prepare a proposal that identifies the time requested and describes a plan of study, action, training, or reflection, together with a financial statement of all anticipated expenses to be incurred for the sabbatical, and the desired results that he/she hopes to realize from this leave. **See Appendix B, Appendix D.**
- A copy of the request will first be forwarded to the Canon to the Ordinary for review and discussion with the clergy by the Bishop's Office. The sabbatical leave proposal must be accompanied by a vestry letter of support.
- Upon review of the sabbatical leave proposal by the Bishop's Office, the clergy will then share his/her approved proposal with the vestry/executive committee, and thereafter execute a Letter of Agreement for Sabbatical Leave, which will include a financial statement of anticipated costs. **See, Appendix C.**
- The letter of agreement is then to be forwarded to the Bishop for his/her approval and signature. Any request for funding of a clergy sabbatical in part by the Diocese must accompany the sabbatical leave proposal submitted to the Bishop.
- It is strongly recommended that the vestry/executive committee begin to set aside funds in the congregation's budget specified for the clergy sabbatical leave no later than the beginning of the third year of the clergy's tenure with the congregation. The creation of a Sabbatical Committee to assist the clergy in the planning and communication of his/her sabbatical leave is also strongly recommended.

Preparing For Clergy Sabbatical

- Once the clergy sabbatical plan is approved by the Bishop, the clergy and vestry/executive (or Sabbatical Leave Committee) should jointly develop a plan for communicating and preparing the congregation for the clergy's leave.
- The clergy should take primary responsibility, in consultation with the vestry/executive committee, for making satisfactory arrangements for worship services, pastoral care, and parish administration during his/her absence, including:
    - Securing a priest for regularly scheduled sacramental worship;
    - Arranging for lay readers for occasional morning prayer
    - Lay committees for pastoral ministry and new member greeting and visitation;
    - Supply clergy for pastoral emergencies
    - Staff assignments, roles and responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the congregation to continue to pay the contractual salary and benefits of the clergy during his/her sabbatical leave. To ensure that there is sufficient monies to fund the clergy's leave when taken, each congregation should establish well in advance of such leave, a line item in its budget as an accrual fund for sabbatical leave. Funds so accrued should be used only for the support of the sabbatical leave and for parochial expenses incurred as a result of the leave.
- The suggested time frame for sabbatical leave is three months. It is not intended that sabbatical leave replace vacation time or leave for continuing education. Clergy should take the vacation time, continuing education time, and any other time away from the congregation as outlined in their letter of agreement. These may be added to the agreed-upon sabbatical leave time in some combination that may result in a lengthened leave time. Such arrangements should be worked out in conversation between clergy and vestry/executive committee and reflected in the terms of the letter of agreement for clergy sabbatical leave.
- During the clergy sabbatical, responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the congregation, the administration of its programs, and the maintenance of its grounds and buildings rests with the wardens and vestry/executive committee of the congregation. The Bishop's Office will work closely with the congregation and its leader4ship to insure that the pastoral and sacramental life of the community is maintained during the sabbatical leave.
- Periodic communication between the clergy and the congregation (largely confined to the clergy's sabbatical experiences) during the sabbatical leave is encouraged. Social media provide an easy and effective way to stay in touch.

Upon Return From Sabbatical

- As set forth in the clergy's letter of agreement, all clergy who are granted sabbatical leave are expected to complete one year of service to the congregation upon return from sabbatical leave. Should the clergy depart from the congregation during the first twelve months following sabbatical leave, the clergy will be required to reimburse the congregation and/or diocese for any costs incurred in support of the sabbatical.
- Sabbaticals are intended for refreshment, and not as severance. Unused sabbatical time is forfeited upon retirement or termination.
- The clergy upon returning from sabbatical leave shall present, with reasonable promptness, a written report to the vestry/executive committee and congregation with a copy to the Bishop.

- It is recommended that the clergy meet with the wardens and /or the Sabbatical Committee upon his/her return in order to debrief, and to discuss reentry into the congregation and integration of the sabbatical experience into the life of the community.
- The congregation should be prepared to share with returning clergy their experiences of the community's life during clergy's time away.

Resources

- Sabbatical Planning for Clergy & Congregations, A. Richard Bullock, Alban Institute
- Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning. Alban Institute

Financial Resources for Clergy Sabbaticals

- Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program

Appendix

A. Diocesan Convention Resolution (1986); Recommendation of Diocesan Compensation/Benefits Committee (2009); Clergy Sabbatical Provision from Rector's Letter of Agreement
B. Application for Clergy Sabbatical Assistance
C. A Letter of Agreement for Sabbatical Leave
D. Sabbatical Questions for Reflection
E. Countdown to Sabbatical Leave

6/06/2014

COUNTDOWN TO SABBATICAL LEAVE

- **Two Years Before Sabbatical.**
  - Review letter of agreement and Clergy Sabbatical Policy with Vestry/Executive Committee.
  - Read Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning. Alban Institute.
  - Establish sabbatical budget, identifying possible financial support.

- **Eighteen Months Before Sabbatical.**
  - Begin to reflect on scope and purpose of sabbatical.
  - Work on draft of sabbatical proposal and consult with wardens.
  - Establish Sabbatical Committee.

- **One Year to Nine Months Before Sabbatical.**
  - Submit sabbatical proposal to Vestry/Executive Committee for review and endorsement.
  - Submit sabbatical proposal plan application to Bishop's Office for review and approval.
  - Notify Vestry/Executive Committee of Bishop's approval of plan.
  - Execute Letter of Agreement For Sabbatical Leave

- **Sixth Months Before Sabbatical**
  - Announce sabbatical leave-taking and plan to congregation.
  - Prepare for continued congregational ministry and staff administration during sabbatical leave.

- **Three Months Before Sabbatical**
  - Plan for interim ministry welcome and sendoff for clergy taking sabbatical.
  - Prepare joint wardens/clergy letter explaining sabbatical and congregational ministry during sabbatical leave
  - Plan for "Good Bye" Sunday

- **One Month Before Sabbatical**
  - Final meeting with vestry and staff to assure orderly transition
  - Complete plans for transition
  - Celebrate sabbatical leave with sendoff

Sabbatical Policy of the Diocese of Newark

RESOLVED, that the principle of the clergy sabbatical be commended to the congregations of this diocese and to the Department of Missions, and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations and the Department of Missions be urged to provide such leave to the extent that resources and pastoral strategy permit and be it further

RESOLVED, that to the extent possible that such sabbatical leave accrue at the rate of one month sabbatical time for each year served in the present cure up to six months in a seven year period, as outlined in mutually agreed terms by the Clergy and their Vestry or Mission Executive Committee, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Bishop be requested to appoint a committee and/or to delegate to a diocesan staff member the responsibility to investigate possible financial resources to assist those congregations who wish to provide a sabbatical for their rector or vicar and do not have the funds to do so.

(Resolution adopted at 1986 Diocesan Convention)

Sabbatical Recommendation of Diocesan Compensation/Benefits Committee (2009)

Sabbatical Recommended: Cleric eligible for three (3) month sabbatical every five to seven years. Funding to be set-aside annually in preparation [for sabbatical]

Sabbatical Provision From Rector's Letter of Agreement

6. Paid Sabbatical Leave: The Priest is eligible for 3 months of sabbatical leave for every 5 years of parish ministry, for the purpose of renewal, study, travel, and continued spiritual *growth.[Congregations may wish to adapt this time frame to fit their needs, or the needs of their clergy. For example, a Priest may wish to have a longer leave after a longer number of years of service, or may wish to have shorter leaves after fewer years.]* Applications for diocesan support from the bishop's Clergy Sabbatical Program can be obtained from the Bishop's Office.

Planning for the Priest's sabbatical shall begin at least nine months prior to the first day of the leave. The Priest and Vestry shall agree to the form this planning shall take. Both the Priest and Vestry will participate in this planning, which shall include financial and activity information about the sabbatical, provision for congregational life and continuity, and clergy support during the Priest's absence.

DIOCESE OF NEWARK
Clergy Sabbatical Program

Application for Clergy Sabbatical Assistance

Name of Clergy _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

How long have you been in active, ordained ministry? _____

Location of present ministry _____

For how long? _____

Have you ever had a sabbatical? _____ Dates: _____

Please answer every question

Why are you contemplating a sabbatical at this time?

What is your preliminary idea of focus for your sabbatical?

Outline your funding needs, including best estimates of all costs (travel, tuition, room and board, books, fees, etc., as well as costs to be incurred by your congregation (e.g., cost for clergy supply).

Outline present funding resources and funding resources that you are seeking from non-diocesan sources

How much is your congregation contributing towards the cost of your sabbatical?

How much assistance are you seeking from the Diocese of Newark?

DIOCESE OF NEWARK
Clergy Sabbatical Program

Vestry Letter of Support

In the space below, we ask that the vestry write a paragraph of support for the application for sabbatical.

We would like to hear about the vestry's understanding of the sabbatical time, its commitment to this idea, including any financial resources committed, and questions, thoughts or concerns about this sabbatical.

Signed:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

A LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

between

The Wardens and Vestry of

_____ Episcopal Church, _____, New Jersey,

and

The Reverend _____, Rector

This letter serves as an amendment to the Letter of Agreement between _____ Church and the Rev, _____ that outlines the conditions of his/her sabbatical leave.

SECTION A - PURPOSE AND DURATION OF LEAVE

The Rector will take a three-month sabbatical for the purposes of professional and personal development beginning [date]. It is expected that some of the work will involve specific ministry and skill needs related to _____Church.

(1) [During the time of his/her sabbatical the Rector will also take his/her annual vacation of four weeks.]

(2) Therefore, the Rector will return to work [date]

(3) During his/her leave, the Rector will be free to engage in education and recreation as well as other personal commitments. S/he will not conduct services or engage in pastoral work. Worship services and pastoral care will be provided by supply priests retained by the Wardens

SECTION B - COMPENSATION

(1) The Rector will continue to receive salary and benefits, including rectory expenses, according to current agreements with the Vestry.

(2) The Rector will continue to have access to his/her office during non-business hours to use his/her library and for study. The office will [not] be available to others during the sabbatical.

SECTION C - EXPENSES

(1) The Rector may use professional expense accounts and Continuing Education monies to help support the expense of his/her sabbatical. This includes accrued Continuing Education monies from previous years.

(2) Since the Rector will not be working during his/her leave, it is expected that normal office expense monies will be reserved for the work of the parish and support of supply priests.

SECTION D - REVIEW OF EMPOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

(1) It is anticipated that, upon the Rector's return, the Rector will continue to serve _ Church for a minimum of one year and offer the congregation the benefits of his/her sabbatical experience.

(2) It may be useful during that year to review/renegotiate the Rector's job description to fully appropriate the learnings from his/her sabbatical. The Canon to the Ordinary may serve as a consultant for that process.

SECTION E - PASTORAL SUPPORT OF CHURCH

(1) During the Rector's sabbatical, Sunday services will be administered by priests retained by the Wardens for this purpose. The Wardens will also seek pastoral support for pastoral emergencies, i.e., hospital calling, funerals, etc.

(2) Supply priests will be compensated according to current diocesan standards.

(3) The parish office and staff will be available to assist the supply priests in preparation for services and in offering pastoral care.

(4) During the sabbatical, the Wardens will convene the Vestry for the purpose of overseeing the ongoing life of the congregation. No long range or strategic decisions or decisions affecting the Rector will be discussed or made.

SECTION F - REVISION

This agreement shall be considered final in all respects and shall not be revised without the consent of all parties, including the Bishop of Newark.

CLERGY SIGNATURE

Date: _____ Rector: _____

PARISH SIGNATURES

Approved by the Vestry on (date) _____

Warden: _____

Warden: _____

Clerk: _____

BISHOP'S SIGNATURE

Reviewed by the Bishop:

Date: _____Bishop: _____

SABBATICAL QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

CLERGY

- What particular aspects of ministry have been life-giving for you in the past few years?
- What aspect of your ministry has drained or depleted you?
- When you think about the possibility of significant time away from the congregation, what excites you? What do you fear?
- As you look forward to the next five to seven years in your ministry, what do you see? What do you long for?
- How will the sabbatical affect your family?
- What themes, questions or areas of study relating to your ministry are beginning to emerge for you?
- How do you see these themes, questions, or areas of study relating to your ministry in your current congregation at this particular moment?
- What is your sense of how open the wardens and vestry are likely to be to your sabbatical proposal?
- In what ways do you think the congregation will benefit from your sabbatical?

VESTRY OR SABBATICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

- What aspect of this congregation's life has been particularly fruitful in the past few years?
- What aspect of this congregation's life has been unexplored, flat or in need of revitalization?
- What about the prospect of the clergy going on sabbatical excites you? Scares you?
- What themes, questions, or areas of ministry/mission might the congregation reflect upon during sabbatical?
- If you could recommend areas of rest, renewal, revitalization and reflection for your clergy during sabbatical, what might they be? Why would you recommend these areas?
- In what ways do you hope the congregation will benefit from the clergy sabbatical?
- What do you need from your clergy, the Diocese, or neighboring congregations and clergy to lower anxieties and concerns from leaders and the congregation?