

REGARDING SABBATICAL LEAVE IN THE DIOCESE OF EAST TENNESSEE

Approved by the Bishop and Council on Dec. 10, 1999

INTRODUCTION

Genesis 2:2. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done.

The purpose of a Sabbatical leave is to provide an opportunity for those on Sabbatical to rest. If God thought it was good for God, surely God thinks it is good for God's people. In this regard (as in others) Clergy are to be models of God to God's people. It is, therefore, incumbent on them to be deliberate in taking regular times for the rest which allows for the replenishment of the body and the spirit. Sabbaticals are in addition to regularly scheduled vacation times and are not to be confused with sick leave or any other kind of leave.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES

1. This Diocese strongly recommends that each vestry or mission council employing a clergy person arrange with its clergy person to take a Sabbatical of no less than 3 months every 5 to 7 years. (If a clergy person serves in this Diocese in two or more cures during the 5 to 7 year period, we recommend that the time between Sabbaticals be cumulative. If this be the case, the clergy person is responsible for informing the vestry or mission council of this recommendation before the call is issued and by including the appropriate information in the letter of agreement.)

We also recommend that vestries or mission councils calling Clergy from another Diocese negotiate proper time for a Sabbatical Leave as a part of the letter of agreement (keeping in mind the time lapsed since the last Sabbatical).

The Bishop and Deployment Officer will notify each vestry or mission council of these recommendations as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs.

The Bishop expects that all Clergy newly entering the Diocese will have Sabbatical Leave plans included in their letters of agreement.

It is Diocesan Policy that these recommendations and expectations be communicated to all vestries, mission councils and clergy.

2. While on Sabbatical, the Clergy will receive full compensation from the Parish or Mission or Diocese; they are considered "actively employed" for purposes of insurance coverage. Grants from the Diocese may be available; and Parishes or Missions are strongly encouraged to include in each year's budget a reasonable amount of money to be used by the Clergy Person on her/his Sabbatical Leave. Clergy, likewise, are strongly encouraged to budget a reasonable amount each year in preparation for the Sabbatical Leave. (It is the hope of the Diocese that in

future years, money may be regularly budgeted each year in the Diocesan budget so that the Diocese may be expected to provide 1/3, the Parish or Mission 1/3, and the Clergy Person 1/3, of the cost of the Sabbatical Leave.)

3. Time away on Sabbatical is in addition to Vacation time, but it may count toward continuing education time and thus may qualify for money budgeted for continuing education. (Those considering pursuing continuing education during their Sabbatical Leave time are encouraged to be mindful that the primary intent of the Sabbatical is to provide time for rest and replenishment.)

4. When a Clergy person is making plans for Sabbatical Leave, s/he is required to consult with the Bishop or a Clergy colleague (who is to be chosen by the Clergy person in consultation with the Bishop). The Diocesan Office must be informed that the Clergy person is on Sabbatical leave and of the dates of that leave. The Clergy Person returning from Sabbatical Leave may wish to 'debrief' with the same consultant.

5. Each person planning a Sabbatical leave must make, together with the vestry or mission council, arrangements for obtaining supply clergy during his/her absence. The Parish (or Mission or Diocese) is responsible for paying the supply Clergy in accordance with the standard Diocesan policy.

Parishes with more than one Clergy Person on staff and Missions and smaller Parishes (served by only one Clergy Person) are urged to develop partnerships with one another regarding supply Clergy during Sabbatical leave. The larger Parishes may help Missions and smaller Parishes whose Clergy are on Sabbatical leave by offering to supply Priests or Deacons at no cost to the smaller Congregations. Limited use of Morning Prayer with lay leadership is also encouraged in the smaller congregations whose Clergy person is on Sabbatical Leave.

Institutions (other than Parishes) which employ clergy are urged to consider implementing the sabbatical policy as is practicable and appropriate.

6. Each Parish in this Diocese is strongly encouraged to adopt a Sabbatical Leave Policy based on the principles and recommendations contained herein.

7. It is not the intent of these recommendations and policies that the Sabbatical time should be used as terminal leave or as an occasion for the person on Sabbatical leave to search for another position. Therefore, it is Diocesan Policy that any person taking Sabbatical leave will continue in his/her current position for at least one year after completion of the Sabbatical leave. Any deviation from this policy must be clearly and openly negotiated by and amongst the Bishop, the Vestry/Mission Council and the Priest.

(Approved by Bishop and Council, Diocese of East Tennessee, Dec. 10, 1999)