

## **Sabbaticals for clergy and salaried lay professionals**

Approved by the Council of Trustees November 18, 2020

### **I. Introduction:**

Clergy and full-time or salaried lay professionals in the Diocese of Kansas are encouraged to plan for and take sabbatical leave. A sabbatical is simply a period of time during which the clergy/laity becomes a student and worshipper for the purpose of refining and updating professional skills and refreshing spiritual life and vocation. Developing a serious plan for sabbatical leave is important for the following reasons:

- a. The myriad skills required in current parish or diocesan ministry can become outdated quickly. Upgrading skills on an ongoing basis becomes very difficult with the work schedule common in parish and diocesan ministry. Scheduling time away for learning is essential if clergy and lay staff members are to keep their knowledge and skills current.
- b. Research indicates that between the fifth and seventh year, fatigue sets in that affects the work performance and attitudes of the clergy and lay staff members. Scheduled sabbatical time allows for relief of stress and refreshment of vocation. It is often a more productive alternative to moving on to a new congregation or position. It allows the clergy or staff member and the congregation to prolong a productive working relationship, maintaining stability, precluding the expense of a search and allowing the congregation to benefit from the work experience of a clergy or staff member.
- c. The congregation needs a sabbatical, too. Working relationships may become stale. Changes in style and program that were instituted by the clergy or lay staff member have become routine, and the congregation is ready for a change.

### **II. Sabbatical planning:**

- a. A sabbatical leave should be planned with prayerful consideration for study, travel and reflection, or some combination thereof. Such study may include theology, ministry, pastoral care, biblical interpretation, homiletics, spirituality, finances, stewardship or administrative matters. Art, music, history and science might also be explored.
- b. Sabbatical leave shall be included in letters of agreement or contractual agreements with clerical and lay professionals. It should be clearly understood that a sabbatical is not meant to be ordinary vacation time, although some vacation time might be included during the sabbatical period.
- c. A rector eligible for sabbatical leave shall notify the Vestry of their intent to take sabbatical leave at least 12 months in advance of the proposed start date. Other staff members shall notify their supervisor (rector, bishop) and then their Vestry or Council of Trustees of their intent to take sabbatical leave at least 12 months in advance of the proposed start date.

- d. The Vestry or the Council of Trustees will then work with the clergy or lay person (along with the supervisor) to prepare a plan. The plan shall include goals and objectives to be accomplished during the sabbatical. Any sabbatical plan shall be approved by the Vestry or Council of Trustees, and then be submitted to the bishop. The Vestry or the Council of Trustees shall inform the parish/diocese regarding any sabbatical plans.
- e. As a general rule, a sabbatical plan will envision that a person returning from a sabbatical will remain in their position for at least one year after their return. However, after consultation with, and the approval of, the bishop and the Council of Trustees or Vestry, exceptions to that general rule can be obtained.
- f. The staff member taking a sabbatical shall complete a written report of how they met the goals and objectives set out in the plan, and what they have learned from the sabbatical. That report shall be submitted to their supervisor, Vestry and/or Council of Trustees within 60 days of their return from the sabbatical.

### III. Financial considerations and time frame of sabbatical:

- a. The diocese or the congregation shall continue the full compensation package for the cleric/lay professional throughout the sabbatical leave. In addition, the diocese or the congregation shall cover the costs of the sabbatical, including travel, books, tuition, etc., as mutually agreed upon prior to the engagement of the sabbatical.
- b. The diocese or the congregation will provide full compensation and travel costs of supply clergy during the time of sabbatical leave. Provisions shall also be made to cover the work performed by a lay professional on sabbatical, including the possibility of hiring someone to perform their duties while they are on sabbatical.
- c. The diocese or the congregation is strongly encouraged to include within their annual budget a line item for a reserve fund to cover the cost of sabbatical expense.
- d. The sabbatical leave shall be included in the letter of agreement with a new minister and lay professionals, and shall be offered between five and seven years of service. It shall be accrued at two weeks for each year served, not to exceed 14 weeks.
- e. During the sabbatical, communication with the priest or professional lay person will be limited to those regarding significant pastoral concerns or emergencies and should only be made through designated channels as agreed upon by the parties.