



Guidelines for
the Sacred Order of Deacons in the
Episcopal Diocese of Kansas



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From the Bishop

Beloved of Kansas,

From the Apostles' time, there have been different ministries within the Church. In the New Testament, the ministry of all the baptized is central, and from the early church, three distinct orders of ordained ministry emerge: bishops, priests, and deacons.

Deacons are servant leaders. The diaconate is particularly the ministry of service, following the example of Christ, "who is the likeness of God." In Luke's gospel Jesus says, "I am among you as one who serves." The deacon is one who shares our Lord's ministry of service. Serving tables, both for the Eucharistic worshipping community and to feed the hungry, has always been prominent among diaconal ministries. St. Stephen is the first deacon and inspiration to servant ministry. Deacons assist bishops and priests, not because they are an inferior, apprenticed office, but as an icon of Christ who serves.

Deacons also exercise a prophetic ministry, often speaking God's word to the established order. The ordination service says, "You are to interpret to the Church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world." We often say that a deacon has one foot in the Church and one in the World, connecting the two by inviting people in and sending people out.

Deacons are appointed and guided by the pastoral direction and leadership of the bishop. Usually newly ordained deacons are placed in their sponsoring parishes, and deacons often remain with that parish. However, on occasion, to meet the needs of the wider Church, the bishop may assign the deacon to serve elsewhere.

I won't usually move them. I want to claim the potential that they will need to be moved or I will need them somewhere else. In my leadership of the diocese, I might rarely place deacons away from their sponsoring parish... to serve the needs of the wider church.

Deacons have a long and venerable tradition in the Diocese of Kansas and our hope in the 21st-century is to have at least one deacon in every minister, if not in every parish church. To be icons of Christ's servant leadership and to use their prophetic voice, it is appropriate for deacons to be fully integrated into every aspect of parish life. Priests, deacons, and laypeople work together in each setting, and it is appropriate for deacons to attend vestry meetings with voice but no vote, though it is always the priest or senior warden who preside. While preaching is central to the office of the priest, many deacons are called and gifted for preaching. Though not required, it is quite appropriate for deacons to bring the prophetic voice and needs of the world before the assembly.

I am grateful to the Archdeacons, the Canon to the Ordinary, and the Director of Communications for their assistance with this revision. We hope that the following guidelines will shape the ministry of deacons across the Diocese of Kansas.

The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom
Tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
April 2022

Guidelines

What is a Deacon?

The understanding of diaconal ministry is grounded in three primary sources: the Holy Scriptures, The Book of Common Prayer, and the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (especially Canons III.6 and III.7). Each of these sources witness to diaconal ministry as a ministry of service, both in the Church and in the world. Deacons (and those who aspire to ordination to the Diaconate) should exemplify a spirit of service to others, including a dedication to helping others practice the ministry of Christian service. Deacons are ministers of the Gospel who are called to model the servant ministry of Christ to all. Deacons are ordained to be icons of prophetic servant ministry and to lead all members of the Church into servant ministry in the world. Deacons also help interpret the needs and concerns of the world to the Church. Deacons are ministers with a visible ministry to the dispossessed, bringing their concerns to the Church and encouraging active response.

Where and How Deacons Serve

Deacons are appointed to their ministries by the bishop (Canon III.7.4) in cooperation with the clergy and lay leadership of the congregation/institution/agency. The bishop may designate a deacon to serve as a parochial deacon, a diocesan deacon, or an institutional deacon. Deacons will strive to exercise the ministries and responsibilities particular to their order (above). All deacons are expected to enter into written agreements that detail the parameters of their specific service and ministry (Appendix A).

Parochial deacons are charged with serving a particular parish or mission; within that context, they work collaboratively with the other clergy and lay leadership serving that parish under the guidance and direction of the Rector, Vicar, or Priest-in-Charge. **Diocesan deacons** are charged with developing and implementing Diocesan ministries and initiatives under the guidance and direction of the bishop or other designated authority. **Institutional deacons** may serve as chaplains in prisons, hospitals, hospices, schools, and other institutions. They must have proper training and credentials, serving under the supervision of the institution. Institutional deacons will report annually to the bishop on their ministry and participation in a faith community.

The bishop may also appoint diocesan **Archdeacons** who will provide oversight and pastoral care for deacons, providing support and counsel to the bishop. Archdeacons will support congregations and deacons in their shared ministry. Generally, this will include discernment with all parties when Ministry Covenants are formed or updated and annual one-on-ones with individual deacons. Archdeacons will report annually to the bishop on the state of the diaconate within the diocese. Archdeacons may also represent the diocesan diaconate in the councils of the wider Church (esp. the Association of Episcopal Deacons).

As is the case with all ordained ministers serving in the Episcopal Church, deacons are required to resign from active service upon reaching 72 years of age; annual reappointment by the bishop may occur on a case-by-case basis. (Canon III.7.7) (Appendix C, Model Resignation Letter) In all other cases, the resignation of a deacon requires the approval of the bishop following conversation and mutual, prayerful discernment.

The Ministry of a Parochial Deacon

Parochial deacons serve in a particular parish under the guidance and direction of the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge. All deacons and their assigned parishes shall enter a written Ministry Covenant (see Appendix A). The covenant will articulate the mutual ministry of the deacon, the rector (or vicar or priest-in-charge), and the parish, represented by its vestry. This covenant must be approved by the archdeacons and the bishop and will provide the structure for an annual ministry review by the archdeacons.

Ordinarily, every covenant will include provision for the following:

- annually, four weeks of vacation.
- annually, two weeks for continuing education or diaconal formation.
- as needed, any days needed for sickness or other debilitation.
- as needed, any time necessary to develop and maintain self-support outside the Church, with adequate advance notice.
- expectation of participation in diocesan collegiality.
- sabbatical leave consistent with diocesan policy (Appendix D, Diocesan Sabbatical Policy).

The deacon's primary ministry within the context of a parish should be structured in a manner consistent with the understanding of diaconal ministry set forth above. It is important for lay people to work closely with the Deacon to respond to the mercy and justice concerns of the larger community. It is appropriate (though not necessary) for the Deacon to be the almoner for the parish and to have access to a discretionary fund with which to render assistance to those in need.

The Ministry Covenant sets forth the covenantal relationship among the deacon, the rector (or vicar or priest-in-charge), and the parish, represented by its vestry. As such, it should be signed by all parties including the senior warden. Ministry Covenants shall be reviewed, updated, and signed during times of transition in parish presbyteral leadership (i.e., the resignation or appointment of a rector/vicar/priest-in-charge). Diocesan Transition Ministers should work with the archdeacons to use transitional periods as opportunities to educate vestries and discern the ongoing role of diaconal leaders.

As part of the leadership of the parish, Deacons are included in the process of formal Mutual Ministry Reviews.

When conflict arises, deacons and priests should model direct communication. Archdeacons and the Canon to the Ordinary are available to mediate. Likewise, if problems arise that affect the welfare and unity within the parish, the deacon shall bring them to the clergy charged with oversight of the parish and shall follow their advice and counsel.

The Ministry of Institutional and Diocesan Deacons

Diocesan and Institutional Deacons shall enter a Ministry Covenant similar to that articulated above including approval/signatures of institutional leadership, the bishop, and archdeacons. Institutional and diocesan deacons are a part of the diocesan community of deacons and are expected to follow these guidelines.

The Ordination of Deacons

Diaconal ordinations generally take place at Grace Cathedral as a diocesan service. Deacons are expected to attend all ordinations within the Diocese unless they have communicated with the bishop. All deacons are expected to join fellow clergy in renewing their ordination vows at the annual Chrism Mass during Holy Week. It is appropriate that a service be held to mark the beginning of a new diaconal ministry with a service similar in form to the Celebration of New Ministry in the Book of Common Prayer. This celebration is an important time to lift the ministry of all baptized people and to offer special teaching on the life and ministry of a deacon.

Conferences and Continuing Education

Deacons are an important part of the annual Gathering of Clergy and are expected to attend. This gathering is scheduled at least one year in advance of the event. This an important time for the community of deacons and priests to gather with the bishop and is crucial to their mutual ministry. Those who are unable to attend this event need to be in communication with the bishop. Parishes with deacons are expected to provide funds for the annual Gathering of Clergy and other mandatory diocesan events (Diocesan Convention, et al.)

Deacons are expected to place a high priority on continuing education and formation. Opportunities for continuing education are available on the diocesan website and deacons should consider how to share their learning with their parish and the community of deacons. Deacons will report continuing education to the diocesan office and archdeacons annually. As partners in ministry, parishes will benefit from well-trained deacons and should financially support the continuing education of their deacons. When a parish is unable to meet these obligations, appeal should be made to the bishop or archdeacons for available funds (such as the Tocher Fund for Clergy Formation). There are also opportunities for continuing education and support from the Association of Episcopal Deacons and the Church Pension Fund.

The Deacon's Role in Church Governance

Because the deacon functions as a symbol of servant ministry and brings the concerns and needs of the world to the attention of the institutional church, deacons should have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making bodies at the diocesan level. Deacons may be appointed by the bishop to diocesan institutions, commissions, committees, and task forces and may be elected to serve on Council of Trustees and General Convention Deputation.

At the parish level, it is appropriate for deacons to attend vestry meetings with voice but no vote, though it is always the priest or senior warden who presides. In areas where deacons provide leadership and administration, it may be appropriate for them to convene and preside on committees and boards. However, these should be understood as ministries of the parish and not exclusively of the deacon.

The Deacon's Role in the Liturgy

Liturgical service is not the primary ministry of the Deacon; they function in liturgy in ways that symbolize servant and prophetic ministry. Deacons will participate in all diocesan liturgies. In parish liturgy, deacons serve under the direction and guidance of the presbyter.

The liturgical role of the Deacon should follow the rubrics of the approved liturgies of the Church and may include the following:

1. In Eucharistic celebrations, the deacon will proclaim the Gospel and will normatively carry the Gospel book in procession.
2. In discernment with the priest of the parish, it is appropriate for deacons to preach regularly, but not frequently, bringing the prophetic voice and needs of the world before the assembly.
3. In acting out their role in bringing the needs of the world to the Church, deacons may lead and invite the Prayers of the People and may issue the invitation to the Confession of Sin.
4. As the deacon is the symbol of servant ministry, it is appropriate for the deacon to prepare the Holy Table and may receive the people's alms and oblations.
5. The deacon may join the celebrant at the altar during the Great Thanksgiving and may assist as needed.
6. The deacon may assist in the distribution of the consecrated elements. As the proclamation of God's blessing is the role of bishops and priests, deacons should refrain from doing so. Deacons may offer a benediction, prayer, or line of scripture.
7. The deacon dismisses the people.
8. The deacon may carry the Paschal candle in procession at the Easter Vigil, as well as during baptisms and burials.
9. The deacon may lead the Prayers for the Candidates at services of Christian initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Reception).
10. The deacon may say (or sing) the *Lumen Christi* and *Exsultet* at the Easter Vigil.
11. It is appropriate (but not necessary) for deacons to be significantly involved in the recruitment, training, and liturgical service of Eucharistic ministers and Eucharistic visitors.

During the celebration of the Eucharist, the deacon should vest in a manner consistent with their order and with the custom of the parish. This vesture is also appropriate when assisting in the celebration of Holy Matrimony or the Burial Office. For other services, the deacon will normally wear cassock, surplice, and tippet; academic hoods may also be worn.

The Deacon as a Minister of the Reserved Sacrament

Although the Holy Eucharist is the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord's Day and other major feasts, the administration of communion by a deacon from the reserved sacrament is not the norm for such services. The deacon may, if a presbyter is unavailable and with the prior written approval of the bishop, partner with the lay leaders of a congregation to offer Communion in the Absence of a Priest. More information about this service can be found on the diocesan website.

The deacon may, along with the presbyters and Eucharistic visitors, serve as a minister of the reserved sacrament for those who, for reasonable cause, cannot be present at a public celebration of the Eucharist. The order of worship for "Communion Under Special Circumstances" (BCP, 396) may be used.

The Deacon and the Rite of Christian Initiation

Ordinarily, the bishop or a presbyter will preside at all celebrations of Christian Initiation in this Diocese. For pastoral reasons (and with the express consent of the clergy charged with oversight of the parish), it may in some cases be appropriate for the deacon to administer baptism, but the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer should be followed.

The Deacon and the Rite of Holy Matrimony

Ordinarily, the bishop or a presbyter will officiate weddings in this diocese. The liturgical role and function of the deacon during a Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is outlined in the Book of Common Prayer (422). Deacons may preside over a marriage, but only with the consent and guidance of the bishop and in compliance with local ordinance.

References and Forms of Address

A deacon should be referred to simply as "deacon," rather than "vocational deacon" or "permanent deacon." A deacon in the process of ordination to the presbyterate may be referred to as a "transitional deacon." This should be normal usage in all diocesan and parish documents, including The Harvest, DioLog, and all directories, websites, and other publications. Archdeacons may be referred to as such, but there is no distinction regarding reference between parochial deacons and diocesan deacons.

The proper written style for a deacon is "The Reverend," ("Deacon" may be used, either before or after the Deacon's name, with no qualifying adjectives (e.g., "Senior Deacon," "Vocational Deacon," etc.)). The form of address for a Deacon is "Deacon," either before or after the Deacon's name, with no qualifying adjectives (e.g., "Senior Deacon," "Vocational Deacon," etc.)

Deacons appointed by the bishop as archdeacons may use the form of address "Archdeacon" and the historic honorific written style "The Venerable."

Use of Clerical Clothing by the Deacon

Deacons may wear clericals of any color other than purple.

Conclusion

These guidelines are meant to assist the people and the clergy of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas in the pursuit of the most effective Christian mission possible. They are intended to outline normative practice for the deacons of this diocese and are not intended to address every eventuality. In most instances, common sense, humility, and godly intent will result in the most effective and faithful actions by the deacons of this diocese.

Questions of interpretation or clarification can be first directed to the archdeacons.

May God grant us the courage to pursue Christ's mission in the world, and the grace and the faithfulness to accomplish it.

Editorial History

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Appendix A: Ministry Covenant Template



Ministry Covenant

among
The Reverend _____, Deacon
AND
the Right Reverend Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
AND
and the Reverend _____, rector/vicar/priest-in-charge
AND
the people of *NN Church*

The deacon's ministry is subject to and described by *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*, the service of the Ordination of a Deacon (*Book of Common Prayer* 537), and the *Guidelines for the Sacred Order of Deacons in the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, 2022*. This agreement may be dissolved by mutual consent or at the sole discretion of the bishop.

SECTION A: Appointment

Having prayerfully discerned with all parties, the bishop has appointed the above-named deacon to *NN Church*. This appointment will be reviewed periodically, especially during periods of presbyteral transition.

SECTION B: Time Commitment

1. If the deacon is secularly employed, all parties to this agreement understand that the deacon's secular employment takes precedence over community involvement and church activities.
2. The deacon will generally devote about 10 hours per week to diaconal work in and on behalf of the church.
3. It is the bishop's expectation that the deacon will participate in diocesan events, as well as in diocesan leadership as a regular part of the deacon's work, including but not limited to, the Thresholds in Ministry Group, Annual Gathering of Clergy, Diocesan Convention, Minister and Convocation Meetings. Participation in the diocesan community of deacons is also important, especially the Archdeacon's regular gatherings of deacons (i.e. monthly Zoom). The deacon should be aware of and sometimes attend events of the Association of Episcopal Deacons.

Commented [PF1]: Template is for parochial deacons, adjust as needed for institutional and diocesan deacons.

Commented [PF2]: Covenant Agreement and Guidelines should be distributed together; Covenant Template is "Appendix A" of Guidelines

- Participation in ecumenical and interfaith associations and activities is encouraged, especially in matters of Advocacy and Justice.

SECTION C: Mutual Roles and Responsibilities

- The deacon's ministry is generally described in the *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*, the service of the Ordination of a Deacon (*Book of Common Prayer 537*), and the *Guidelines for the Sacred Order of Deacons in the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, 2022*. Beyond those general guidelines, the deacon's role at *NN Church* and its neighborhood will include:
 -
- In partnership with and support of the deacon, the parish/vestry will:
 -
- In partnership with the deacon and in oversight of congregational matters of the deacon's ministry, the rector/vicar/priest-in-charge will:
 -

Commented [PF3]: How is this deacon's ministry in this place distinct from what all/most deacons do?

Commented [PF4]: Parish/vestry commitments to ministry partnership, financial commitments, vestry attendance, etc.

Commented [PF5]: Canon III.7.4

Commented [PF6]: Regular meetings, invitations to staff meetings, pulpit invitations, etc.

SECTION D: Periods of Leave and Absence

- The deacon is entitled to at least four Sundays each year away from the parish
 - When the annual Gathering of Clergy takes place over a weekend, the deacon will attend and be away from the parish for an additional Sunday
- Continuing education is important and necessary. Reasonable accommodations will be made to support this formation in consultation and discernment with archdeacons and parish leadership.
- Sickness and personal days, as required.
- Sabbaticals in line with diocesan policy, which necessitates the approval of the bishop.

SECTION E: Compensation and Expenses

- Reimbursement: The deacon will be eligible for reimbursement from the parish for all registration and travel costs (IRS mileage rate when using a personal vehicle) associated with attending required diocesan, minster and convocation events. (above)
- Continuing Education: If the parish is unable to budget the costs of continuing education, the deacon should pursue other options in conversation with the archdeacons. Deacons may apply to the diocesan Tocher Fund for support.
- Discretionary Funds: The rector/vicar/priest-in-charge may grant permission to the deacon to expend monies from the rector's discretionary fund, or the vestry may establish, and others may contribute to separate funds for the deacon's use. Should such funds be established, their use and accountability must follow the *Canons* and the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*. It should be well-understood by all parties how the deacon may access the funds.

Commented [PF7]: Parishes unable to pay for these expenses should speak with the archdeacons and bishop.

SECTION F: Annual Report

- Deacons shall report annually to the Bishop or the Bishop's designee on their life and work. (*Canon III.7.4(b)*). The diocese will administer the form for such report in line with the annual parochial report (beginning of each calendar year) and the report will include invitations to reflect on the year of ministry and state of the agreements in this Covenant.
- Deacons are also encouraged to share any reports they have submitted to their parish's annual meeting.

Commented [PF8]: Report should reflect on year of ministry and state of agreements in Ministry Covenant.

SECTION G: Other Agreements

- If the deacon is newly ordained, the bishop has appointed the Rev. _____ as the deacon's mentor. (*Canon III.7.4(g)*)

Commented [PF9]: Required for Newly Ordained Deacons for at least a year.

2. The deacon's ministry at *NN Church* begins *MM DD, YYYY*.
3. Background Checks, Safe Church and Anti-Racism training are to be kept up to date per diocesan policy.
4. Copies of this agreement will be given to all signatories and one copy kept in the deacon's permanent file.
5. Any disagreement or dispute about the contents of this agreement should first be referred to an archdeacon and thereafter referred to the bishop. Other matters of conflict should follow the procedures laid out in the Guidelines.

Deacon _____ *Date* *Rector/Vicar/Priest-in-Charge* _____ *Date*

Archdeacon _____ *Date* *Senior Warden* _____ *Date*

Bishop _____ *Date*

Appendix B: Reflection on Orders for the Clergy of the Diocese of Kansas, 2021

by Bishop Cathleen Bascom

- **Origins.** The ministry of the Christian Church traces its beginning to the Lord's commissioning of the Twelve and the Seventy. The earliest known rites of ordination are that in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus (c.215 CE) and several 4th c. rites.
- **Called by God.** We are all called by God who created each person and knows our gifts, times, and contexts. All people are unique members of the Body of Christ called and empowered to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world.
- **Chosen and received by the Church.** The "call" is from God and the role of the faith community is choosing, recognizing and admitting. There is a two-fold dynamic which we recognize: ministry of charism and ministry of office.
- **Equality and interdependence of the orders.** The lay, deacon, priest, and bishop orders are each unique but are equal. The four distinct orders are understood as bearing central, consistent characteristics of Christ's on-going work.
- **Sacramental nature of ordination.** According to Anglican theology order is a sacrament. The laying on of the hands of a bishop is the outward and visible sign of the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit for the gifts needed for the appropriate order.
- **Principal of indelibility.** Like baptism, order is held to impart an indelible character. In the early centuries of persecution, even if someone refuted their faith publicly, they were not re-baptized nor re-ordained. The theological argument was and is that sacramental acts "stick" because of the transformative work of God. While the specific orders may be different than ours, in most mainline denominations if a person is ordained a "pastor" they remain a "pastor" even when they retire from active leadership.
- **How does all of this relate to the notion and necessity of retirement?** In U.S. society retirement from a job or career is normal and pivotal. Also, the Church Pension Fund was established so that priests (and now other church employees) have an income in later years. These factors mixed with the theology above can make for some confusion.
- **Bishop's suggestions for best practices later in ministry and in special circumstances.**
 - Whatever level of service, all clergy, as all Christians, are urged to find a faith home. The bishop asks that the clergy person, and current parish/agency inform the bishop in writing of the association and list any ministries which will be carried out. A one-time letter suffices until age 72, when the cleric must write each year.
 - As, theologically, order is indelible, I like the idea of emeritus being added to the title of clergy who are on the later side of ministry: deacon emeritus, bishop emeritus. For priests, emeritus is often applied to a position such as "rector emeritus" or "vicar emeritus." Order remains and is honored, activity is variable.
 - Wisdom dictates that priests who "retire"/emeritus find a different parish.

Appendix C: Sample Resignation Letters for clergy at or over 72 years of age

If desiring to continue in parish leadership with an updated Ministry Covenant:

Bishop Cathleen Bascom
835 SW Polk Street
Topeka, KS 66612

[Date]

Dear Bishop Bascom,

Currently, I consider (church, town) _____ parish to be my faith home.

As required by canon for those 72-years or older, I hereby offer my resignation.

However, in consultation with current parish leaders, **it is my desire to continue in active parish leadership. I have a current Ministry Covenant with the parish** and provide the following ministries:

[Describe ministries you are active in at your parish or in larger society.]

Sincerely,

[Name]

Send to:
Bishop Cathleen Bascom
835 SW Polk Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Email to:
cbascom@episcopal-ks.org
cc: mfunston@episcopal-ks.org

If desiring to discontinue parish leadership.

Bishop Cathleen Bascom
835 SW Polk Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Date

Dear Bishop Bascom,

Currently, I consider (church, town) _____ parish to be my faith home.

As required by canon for those 72-years or older, **I resign from active parish leadership**. Any roles I take in worship or other ministries will be at the invitation of the current priest and totally voluntary.

In consultation with current parish leaders, I would like to continue to serve as a deacon/priest through the following ministries:

[Describe ministries you are active in at your parish or in larger society.]

Sincerely,

[Name]

Send to:
Bishop Cathleen Bascom
835 SW Polk Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Email to:
cbascom@episcopal-ks.org
cc: mfunston@episcopal-ks.org

Appendix D: Diocesan Sabbatical Policy, 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.