

Sabbatical Leave Policy

Resolution passed at the Seventy-third Annual Diocesan Convention (1996)

Resolution offered by The Reverend Mike Flanagan
Total Ministry Committee

A continuing resolution of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina

Whereas: the 1991 General Convention of The Episcopal Church asked all dioceses to “adopt norms for the continuing education, clergy family support, sabbatical leave, annual retreat and professional standards of clergy,”

Whereas: a resolution passed by the 71st annual convention of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina adopted norms for continuing education and retreats, and charged the Total Ministry Committee with the task of continuing to “work toward a sabbatical policy,”

Whereas: numerous sabbaticals have been undertaken by members of the clergy of this diocese in the ensuing years,

Whereas: great variations exist within the diocese with regard to sabbatical leave allowances,

Be it resolved by the Convention of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina that the following norms for sabbatical leave be recommended for all full-time ordained clergy, Christian educators, and musicians who are employees of the diocese and its parishes, missions, and other institutions

Be it further resolved that the Bishop and his/her office work toward encouraging parishes and missions to adhere to these norms, and

All parishes, missions, and diocesan institutions are encouraged to provide for full time clergy, Christian educators, and musicians a sabbatical leave policy with the following provisions:

1. Sabbatical leave will accumulate at the rate of two weeks per year of service, and not more than four months leave may be accrued or taken at any one time. (Three months is the suggested length of sabbatical leave from parish ministry.) Tenure in previous church positions may be credited toward this time at the rate of one week per year up to one month.
2. Accumulated sabbatical leave may not be taken before the completion of the third concurrent year of service in the parish, mission or institution granting leave.
3. Sabbatical leave is not to replace regularly scheduled vacation or continuing education, and it shall not be used in conjunction with either to extend the suggested maximum leave.

4. While on sabbatical leave, the member of the clergy should receive full stipend plus allowances.
5. Parishes, missions, or institutions are encouraged to plan for the expense of sabbatical leave by setting aside an amount equal to two weeks salary and allowances for each members of the clergy employed, each year. In the year of the sabbatical leave, the normal budgeted salary can be used to provide for supply clergy. In addition, a percentage of the amount set aside for sabbatical stipend and allowances ought to be reserved to assist with other sabbatical expenses (conference fees, travel, lodging, etc.)
6. In parishes, missions or institutions where the provision of sabbatical leave would impose a severe financial hardship, requests may be made to the diocese of financial assistance.
7. Baring extraordinary circumstances, clergy are expected to remain in their parish for at least one year following sabbatical leave.
8. Prior to embarking on sabbatical, the clergy or employee shall submit a proposal for the sabbatical. This proposal shall include goals and objectives and an evaluation of how the leave time will contribute to his/her continuing theological education, professional or personal growth and how the leave will contribute to the parish, mission or institution. This proposal shall be prepared in consultation with the bishop in order to avoid misunderstandings as to the purpose and nature of sabbatical time.