

POLICY REGARDING SABBATICAL LEAVE

Approved by Synod Council ~ 26 April 2005

Sabbatical Leave

The concept of sabbatical leave has its roots in scripture. Sabbatical time and sabbatical day are about periods of rest, refreshment and renewal. Because the sabbatical was an integral part of the process of creation, not an afterthought, periods of sabbatical time which vary in length are necessary in a vocation that seeks to continue the creating work of God.

Eligibility

All clergy in full time parish, specialized or diocesan ministries, who have six years of continuous full time ministry within the diocese, with a minimum of three years in their existing appointment, are entitled to apply to the Bishop for a period of sabbatical leave. People with two or less years from the normal retirement age will not be eligible to apply.

The same terms of eligibility and restriction shall be applicable to lay employees of the Diocese who are considered to be appointed to a management position. For clarity, those lay employees who are considered to be support staff will not be eligible to apply.

Applications should be submitted to the Bishop at least four months before the planned leave. It will be the responsibility of the members of the Bishop's Advisory Committee to arrange for a suitable replacement whilst the applicant is on leave.

There shall be no more than four approvals granted each calendar year.

Where the applicant is in parish ministry the replacement will likely be similar to that of an Interim Priest-in-Charge where the priest is available for Sunday services and up to two days per week for pastoral and administrative responsibilities.

In the case of a priest serving in a parish at the time of application discussions should be held between the priest, the parish wardens and the Bishop relating to the proposed leave but the parish must support the proposed leave if the terms of eligibility have been met and the Bishop approves the leave.

If the applicant is in a specialized ministry position or in diocesan ministry position the coverage during the proposed absence will be arranged by mutual agreement between the applicant and the Bishop.

Duration

The sabbatical leave will be granted for a period of up to three months. Up to one month of vacation time may be added to the sabbatical leave.

Funding

For a parish situation

In the case of the applicant being in parish ministry the funding, covering the replacement priest, will be shared equally between the applicant, the parish and the diocese.

The diocese will allocate in the diocesan budget an amount each year to cover such costs. With reference to the share to be provided by the applicant and the parish, the Bishop or Territorial Archdeacon will discuss the situation with the applicable parties and reach an appropriate agreement for the required funding. In the case of both the parish and the applicant, if required, the financial contribution can be provided on a monthly basis over a period extending no longer than three years from the date of the commencement of the leave.

Should the parish and/or the applicant wish to avail themselves of this deferred payment method a suitable agreement will be prepared for signature of the appropriate parties. If there is such an agreement in place with the applicant and if he/she resigns from a position within the diocese during the time the loan is outstanding the loan will be due and payable on demand.

For those in specialized or diocesan ministries

In these cases the appropriate funding for a replacement person will be arranged by mutual agreement between the applicant and the Bishop with the proviso that the applicant will be expected to contribute one third of the costs relating to the replacement.