



*The Episcopal Church  
in Wyoming*

## **SABBATICALS**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

It is the policy of The Episcopal Church in Wyoming to encourage clergy and congregations to plan cooperatively for periodic sabbaticals or Sabbath leaves. Such times, if carefully designed and executed, can enhance the mission and ministry of the Church.

Both clergy and congregations can benefit from times apart when those tasks and routines which have become the customary responsibility of one person or group are re-evaluated and temporarily re-assigned. New priorities and directions may develop.

The concept of a sabbatical leave as a time of change and refreshment is specifically derived from scriptural and religious traditions. It is designed to serve human spiritual needs. It should be tailored to fit the social and cultural context of the parish for which it is planned. It may include structured learning, travel, service in a new setting, dialogue with able colleagues, or some retreat time. It should always include opportunity for a period of complete rest and relaxation.

The Episcopal Church in Wyoming pledges support to clergy and lay professionals and congregations planning sabbatical leaves by providing guidelines and resources and by granting partial financial support through the Sabbatical Fund adopted by the 1985 Diocesan Convention.

### **PURPOSE:**

A sabbatical leave is a specified time of up to three consecutive months in which full-time, employed professional personnel (clergy or lay) are expected to follow a well-planned order of travel, study and rest away from home, and ideally in another culture.

The sabbatical leave is intended to facilitate growth and a re-definition of values and direction for both the applicant and the parish. The intent of the sabbatical leave is to have the applicant return to the parish renewed and empowered for ministry. It is also intended for the congregation to experience renewal and empowerment of their ministry.

The ultimate goal of a sabbatical study leave is to provide strong leadership for the Church. This can only be done through staff who are intellectually and spiritually alive, and who are refreshed and empowered to lead their congregations in the ministry of reconciliation.

It should also be understood that a sabbatical leave plan is to include consideration of the applicant's spouse and children. Their refreshment and well-being, as well as that of the applicant, is vital to the life of any congregation.

Growth opportunities for the parish should be considered throughout the sabbatical planning process. This sabbatical plan should be considered well in advance. A mechanism for exit and re-entry should be included as part of this planning.

#### **ELIGIBILITY:**

Any member of the clergy serving in a congregation, or any full-time salaried person serving as professional staff, is eligible for sabbatical leave time upon completing five consecutive years of full-time employment within the Episcopal Church in Wyoming.

#### **COMPENSATION:**

Compensation is continued to the eligible person during the period of the sabbatical leave. Such compensation shall be paid as established by the current practice and rate. Each Vestry, Bishop's Committee or employing agency should work closely with the Diocese in financial planning for the period of time the applicant will be gone. Tight finances should not be a reason for overlooking the sabbatical leave.

#### **CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS AND SERVICES:**

Sabbatical leave is considered as a continuation of full-time service for the purposes of computing length of service in relation to pension, sick leave accumulation, salary advancement, housing allowance, health insurance, life insurance, and any other regular payments made as part of the applicant's salary package.

#### **REPORT TO DIOCESE AND CONGREGATION:**

A written report of the sabbatical experience is to be filed with the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop within ninety days of the sabbatical's completion. This report should include an accounting of the time and diocesan funds expended, together with a summary of the achievements and experiences of the sabbatical venture. Both oral and written reports should also be made to the employing congregation. The report to the Commission on Ministry must also include an evaluation of the program and a recommendation as to whether others should participate in the same sabbatical experience. It is recommended that this report be prepared as an article suitable for publication in a diocese-wide publication or for posting on the diocesan website.

#### **GRANT REQUEST:**

An application form is available from the diocesan office or on the diocesan website. Included in the application will be a detailed plan of activities and an outline of the proposed program. Details must be given as to how this sabbatical will make the clergy person's ministry more effective, and how the sabbatical will be of benefit to the Church and parish. The application should be presented to the Commission on Ministry at least six months prior to the desired beginning date of the sabbatical leave. A one-year pre-planning time is advised.

The application shall also include a detailed budget for the sabbatical leave and a list of resources to be used to meet those expenditures. Anticipated income should include the clergy person's own funds, parish support, and the amount needed from the Diocese's Sabbatical Fund, not to exceed \$5000.00.

Approval for sabbatical leave must be obtained from the Vestry (or governing board) of the congregation or organization involved, the Commission on Ministry, and from the Bishop.

### **SABBATICCAL PLANNING:**

A sabbatical plan should begin one year prior to embarking on the sabbatical. Planning should be done in conjunction with the applicant's family and congregation, the Bishop, and the COM. And should include using *Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning* by Richard Bullock and Richard Bruesehoff as a resource. (available from Amazon)

### **OTHER:**

If the employee or clergy person leaves their job within one year of receiving a sabbatical grant, they will be expected to repay the grant to the Diocese. In the event the removal of employment is because of a medical reason or retirement, the applicant will not be required to repay the grant. If the money is not returned to the Diocese, it could affect the Bishop's recommendation for employment.

The number of sabbatical requests will be determined by the Commission on Ministry and will be approved on a first come first serve basis.

Sabbatical Grant funds may not be used to pay for supply clergy. Supply clergy (when required) is the responsibility of the congregation.

### **NOTE:**

If sabbatical involves foreign travel, applicant will receive an IRS Form 1099 for the amount of funds received, in order to comply with IRS regulations.

### **EXCEPTIONS:**

This policy allows for the Vestry of the applicant's congregation or employing agency, the applicant, or the Commission on Ministry, together with the Bishop, to make exceptions. Should all parties agree, each being fully informed of the reason for the exception, such exception may be granted while not being considered a precedent for other applicants.

*“FAITH ON THE NEW FRONTIER”*

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