

The sub-committee for Continuing Education and Sabbaticals would like to affirm the following points regarding sabbatical:

1. The Importance of a Sabbatical: In a recently published document encouraging the use of sabbatical time for clergy renewal, the Lilly Endowment noted that:

Pastors are essential to nurture and sustain the spiritual vitality of Christian congregations. Spiritual guide, scholar, counselor, preacher, administrator, confidant, teacher, pastoral visitor and friend, pastors are called on to play many roles in leading the ministries of congregations.

The job is demanding, and pastors perform their duties among a dizzying array of requests and expectations. It is not a job for the fainthearted, but requires a rare balance of intelligence, love, humility, compassion and endurance. Most importantly, it demands that pastors remain in touch with the source of their life and strength. Like all people of faith, good pastors need moments to renew and refresh their spiritual energies and regain their enthusiasm and creativity for ministry.

Renewal programs are not vacations but times for pastors to engage in new experiences, to reflect on their ministries, to rediscover their passions and to sharpen their leadership skills. Common aspects of these renewal experiences include: strengthening relationships with family and friends, renewing a sense of call, meeting and serving neighbors in a new way, finding joy and purpose in a simplified life, traveling to new lands and unfamiliar territories, and creating opportunities where members of the congregation can exercise their gifts for ministry.[1]

2. Clergy Need Sabbaticals: Given the research, we recommend that all clergy be offered the opportunity for sabbaticals at a span of 5-8 years of ordained ministry.
3. Letters of Agreement: We also recommend that sabbaticals be discussed with search committees (for rectors) and rectors (for associates) and added into letters of agreement. Furthermore, if sabbaticals are not addressed in future letters of agreement, we encourage the Bishop's Staff to bring this to the attention of all parties before approving the letter of agreement.
4. Funding: Finally, we recommend that the diocese begin investing funding sources for clergy sabbaticals, with the intention of assisting congregations for whom affording a clergy sabbatical is untenable.

[1] "Lilly Endowment, Inc. - Indiana and National Clergy Renewal Programs." *Lilly Endowment, Inc. - Indiana and National Clergy Renewal Programs*. Web. 22 Sept. 2015.
<http://www.lillyendowment.org/religion_cts.html>.