

Sabbatical Leave Policy as of October 1, 2024

Episcopal Diocese of New York

Eligibility: We recognize that both priests and parishes can benefit when priests are provided with regular and planned time away for personal and spiritual refreshment and professional growth. To that end, canonically resident priests are eligible, and can apply for, a paid 3 month sabbatical leave after the completion of 5 years of either full or part time service with a single parish within the Diocese of New York.

Note: We also recognize that some parishes already have policies in place providing for sabbatical leaves. This policy recommendation is not intended to supersede any agreement already in place for priests and/or parishes but as a guideline for those who do not have such policies in place.

Purpose/Goals: Sabbaticals are intended for gaining skills and/or education/experience in areas related to the congregational life of the parish as well as for the benefit and renewal of the priest. They are not intended, nor will they be granted, for vacation, personal reasons, illness or injury, to care for a sick family member, or for other purposes otherwise addressed in other leave policies.

Requests/Goals: Vestry wardens should be involved in discussions up to and including the planning and request for sabbatical leave. Priests should reach a written agreement with their wardens at least 6 months before the date of the proposed sabbatical leave.

At the minimum, the priest's written plan should include:

- the stated goals for the sabbatical leave;
- a statement outlining how the sabbatical will help achieve those stated goals including resulting parish enrichment;
- the anticipated dates for the sabbatical (begin and end dates);
- an initial plan for coverage of responsibilities during the priest's sabbatical including a financial plan to fund the priest's compensation, clergy supply and other related parish expenses.

Prior to the sabbatical, the priest will be responsible for working with the wardens to develop a plan to help ensure an orderly transition, prior to, and during the sabbatical, as well as an orderly return from sabbatical. Note: Priests going on sabbatical are not ordinarily permitted to use vacation leave during the 4 to 6 weeks prior to, or following, a return from a sabbatical.

Compensation: The priest's full compensation and benefits will continue to be paid by the parish and any deductions already in place are to be kept during the sabbatical leave (e.g. health insurance, pension contributions, disability insurance, etc.) Returns from a Sabbatical: Sabbaticals are not intended to be used to end employment with a parish. The priest should agree to remain employed with that parish for at least one year following the sabbatical.