



Diocese of Western New York Sabbatical Policy

This policy will be effective as of January 1, 2015.

All letters of agreement dated after January 1, 2015 will include a sabbatical in accordance with this policy. All congregations will implement sabbatical leave amendments in line with this policy to their existing letters of agreement no later than June 1, 2015.

It is the expectation of the Diocese of Western New York that all congregations provide sabbatical leave to full-time and part-time clergy and that sabbatical leave be provided to full-time and part-time lay employees who have programmatic or pastoral care responsibilities

Periodic sabbatical is a healthy and effective means of preventing burn-out and of renewing and enhancing a church professional's capabilities for dealing effectively with problems facing those who need help.

A sabbatical is defined as a period of between six to twelve weeks of renewal away from normal workplace responsibilities.

Sabbatical leave accrues at the rate of two weeks per year of service in a congregation. Sabbatical leave is available after the third year, and leave accumulates through the sixth year of service. After six years of service no further sabbatical leave accrues until a sabbatical is taken. Once a sabbatical is taken, Sabbatical leave begins to accrue again. Untaken sabbatical leave is not considered unused leave time when a cleric or employee leaves the congregation.

Full compensation and benefits are paid to persons on sabbaticals.

The sabbatical has three parts: 1. Rest and renewal 2. Developing or enhancing a skill needed for the current ministry and setting. 3. Developing or enhancing a skill desired for future ministry.

Planning for the sabbatical is just as important for the clergy or lay professional as it is for the church. The plan for the sabbatical should be developed in conjunction with the vestry.

The planning process can be broken into three phases: the pre-sabbatical or planning phase; the sabbatical itself; and the post-sabbatical phase.

1. During the first phase, the objectives of the sabbatical should be defined in general terms and a flexible plan should be developed to achieve those objectives. The plan might involve group study, travel, writing, or some combination of all three, blended with a good measure of relaxation and family time.
2. The second phase is the sabbatical and the person should follow a flexible approach to pursuing the planned objectives
3. The third phase is a time of adjustment for both the person returning and for those who have coped with that person's absence. A form of feedback should be provided through face-to-face dialogue, or in the form of a written report.

The congregation is responsible for the following costs of sabbatical leave.

- Coverage of duties during the sabbatical time. For example: Coverage for services, pastoral care and administration when a priest is on sabbatical
- Costs associated with the plan for developing or enhancing a skill needed for the current ministry and setting

The cleric or employee is responsible for the following costs of sabbatical leave.

- Costs associated with the plan for developing or enhancing a skill desired for future ministry
- Costs associated with personal travel

All sabbatical plans will be submitted to the Bishop of Western New York for approval.

Sabbatical will not be taken within six months of retirement. Untaken sabbatical leave is not to be considered unused leave time at the time of retirement.

If a clergy person or lay professional leaves a congregation within six months of returning from sabbatical the congregation's contribution towards costs associated with developing or enhancing skills will be returned to the congregation at the following schedule.

1 or 2 months after return = 100%

3 months after return = 80%

4 months after return = 60%

5 months after return = 40%

6 months after return = 20%