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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CLERGY

DIOCESE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

- **Continuing Education**
- **Sabbatical Leave**
- **Annual Retreats**

The purpose of this document is to assist clergy with information regarding the various options available when planning for professional development. Clergy may engage in a continuing education event each year and plan for a sabbatical leave (not less than) every five years.

1) Theological Perspective

God calls us to participate in the common task of building up the Body of Christ. In order to make the most of our God-given gifts, we need to be attentive to our ongoing discernment and formation.

Our Church provides ways to strengthen our faithful service, including the option for study leave. Study leave provides us with the Sabbath time to become more fully aware of the particular theological themes that intrigue and inspire us, thereby enabling us to become more able pastors for the people whom we serve.

The Anglican Church of Canada and the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island understand that the formation of clergy is a life-long process. Episcopal Guidelines for Healthy Parish Life (guideline 1.1. 23) states: “The clergy and the parish will collaboratively work to maintain the well-being of the priest, and by extension, the parish, by ensuring that the incumbent has two full days off each week, a full vacation, annual retreats and regular continuing education.” The Ordinal also makes clear the expectation for ongoing education: “Will you be diligent in the reading and study of the holy scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ?” The Church gives support for clergy in this endeavor when asked: “Will you uphold *him/her* in this ministry?”

2) Thinking About Study Leave

Discernment Questions:

- *What theological themes intrigued me in theological school?*
- *What has intrigued me in ongoing theological reading?*
- *What challenges have I encountered in the experience of parish ministry?*
- *What academic institutions are of interest to me?*
- *What retreat locations or other Christian communities are of interest to me?*

3) Shared Responsibility: Church & Individual

It is helpful to review study plans and particular areas of interest with the following:

- Family / Friends / Colleagues
- Bishop
- Parish Wardens / Parish Council
- Spiritual Director

4) Programs

Clergy may plan a few days or a week each year for continuing education. Local options include the Atlantic Seminar in Theological Education, the Atlantic Theological Conference, and the AST lecture series, often advertised on the Anglican Net News.

Further afield, there are many options for various conferences through organizations such as the Interim Ministry Network or the Alban Institute. Often this will involve some research, either on the internet or through discussion with colleagues to find the conference or workshop that intrigues each individual. The National Church provides a website for continuing education: <<http://cep.anglican.ca/>>

Planning a sabbatical leave or a longer course of study takes more thought and effort. The bishop's office retains a list of clergy who have taken sabbatical leave. It is beneficial to speak with those who have already done so in order to gain information of a practical nature. It might also be helpful to invite as a guest speaker to the parish an individual who has had a sabbatical.

5) Financial Assistance

There are resources available to support a study leave (either continuing education or a sabbatical).

- *Continuing Education Funds:*

Application must be made in order to access the accumulated continuing education funds. Both the clergy and the diocese contribute to this fund (25% & 75% respectively), which accumulates at an annual amount of \$600; application for benefits can be made at any time and the plan pays a bonus for usage. Clergy may use this fund to either fully cover the cost of the continuing education event or use the accumulated funds to supplement the costs involved. Obtain the application form and current mailing address from the diocesan office.

❑ *Sabbatical Grant:*

A grant of up to \$3000 may be provided for a period of full-time study (not less than eight weeks) after five years of contributing to the continuing education fund. The application for a sabbatical grant is available through the diocesan office or national church office. All accumulated continuing education funds must be used at the same time (before the grant can be allocated).

❑ *Anglican Foundation of Canada:*

This resource not only provides assistance to parishes for various projects but also administers a number of different trusts, including the “Anglican Graduate Award Trust,” specifically for post-graduate studies by qualified clergy. More information is available through the national church office.

❑ *Canon W.S.H. Morris Scholarship:*

This is a scholarship (or scholarships) to a maximum of \$5000 annually, funded by the estate of the late Robert Morris, in memory of his father, the Reverend Canon W.S.H. Morris, M.A., D.D., Kingsman, scholar, and parish priest in the diocese of Nova Scotia for forty years.

The scholarship assists in the ongoing education for clergy within approximately five years after graduation from theological studies. It is awarded to clergy from an Anglican diocese in the Atlantic Provinces to enable study and/or travel outside of the region. Academic merit as well as commitment to pastoral ministry will be considered. Preference will be given to those pursuing a formal qualification.

Recipients of this scholarship will be required to serve in an Anglican diocese in the Atlantic Provinces for at least three years after completion of the study funded by the scholarship. Should the recipient at any time within the three years wish to be released from this undertaking, the recipient will be required to repay the scholarship in proportion to the un-expired part of the three-year period.

Contact the Atlantic School of Theology for application information.

6) Planning

Continuing Education & Sabbatical Leave:

Provide copies to Parish Wardens and Parish Council of the following:

- ✓ “Exercise Your Mind” ACC Continuing Education Plan brochure (attached)
- ✓ Episcopal Guidelines for Healthy Parish Life (guideline 1.1.23)

Note: It is the responsibility of the parish to provide for the cost of Sunday replacement. Remember to request Sunday liturgy fees for replacement clergy in the AGM budget for the future year.

Sabbatical Leave:

When planning a sabbatical leave, notice must be given to the parish **at least one year in advance** in order to allow time for appropriate planning (including budget considerations) for the parish. It is recommended that this conversation take place with the parish wardens, parish council, and at the AGM of the parish.

Arrangements:

- Be sure the wardens know to whom they should appeal for questions of administration.
- Inform the wardens regarding the priest-in-charge.
- Contact the priest-in-charge with the names of parish wardens, parish staff, lay pastoral care visitors (hospital & home communions), names for funeral liturgies, etc.
- Provide a letter to the parish outlining the Study Leave, the role of the priest-in-charge, and the role of the parish wardens.
- Provide a letter to the local hospitals and nursing homes regarding clergy replacement.

7) Upon Return from Study Leave

Questions that could be explored and shared upon return from study leave might include the following:

- ❖ *What have I experienced and learned?*
- ❖ *What resources have I gained that I might be able to share with the broader Christian community?*
- ❖ *Would I recommend this program to others?*

8) **Annual Retreats**

- ❖ Active Clergy in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are encouraged to covenant Retreat time (away from their Parish) on an annual basis. An annual retreat should include a minimum of five (5) days and a maximum of ten (10) days (*if travel to and from an 8-day retreat is required*)."
- ❖ Parishes are highly encouraged to support the Diocesan vision for Healthy Ministry by covenanting with their Clergy person(s) to set time apart for intentional spiritual renewal and retreat on an annual basis."

In addition, all active Diocesan Clergy (Priests and Deacons), are expected to attend "Clergy Quiet Days" and "Renewal of Vows" annually. Also, should our Diocesan call a "Clergy Conference", it is expected that all active Clergy persons will attend.