Continuing Education Guidelines for Clergy

Details

- Clergy have a vocation to serve God through the Church, rather than to pursue a profession in order to develop a career.
- Continuing education time for clergy is intended to support the priest's vocation and ministry within the church.
- Clergy have an obligation by their letter of call to take regular annual continuing education leave.
- Continuing education time is not a sabbatical (see Diocesan Guidelines on Clergy Sabbaticals), nor is it additional vacation time or leave for personal reasons.
- Continuing education time is two weeks per year (including Sundays), during which Clergy should strive for 25 contact hours.
- Clergy will account for their continuing education by submitting a letter to the Archdeacon annually.

Purpose

Continuing education is intended to provide opportunities for vocational, spiritual, and academic growth. Continuing education may take many forms, but should have pre-defined and reportable goals identified prior to taking the continuing education time. Clergy continuing education should enable the deepening and enhancing of existing vocational skills and the acquiring of new skills. Spiritual retreats, opportunities for renewal, and academic course work may all be considered continuing education.

Eligibility

1. All Clergy are eligible for annual continuing education leave, whether in full or part-time employment by the church (i.e. Assisting/Associate clergy, Vicars, Priest-in-Charge).
2. Clergy serving in full-time parochial work within the Diocese of West Texas will be provided an annual paid leave of two (2) weeks for continuing education (see Clergy Compensation and Benefits Policy).
3. Part-time and Bi-Vocational Clergy can arrange for time off with the Rector/Vicar or Warden of the church.

Communication

Plans and the purpose of a continuing education leave should be communicated to the Vestry/Bishop's Committee and the congregation well in advance of the time away. When appropriate, the priest should share his/her experience and learning with the church upon returning.

Diocesan Participation

- The Continuing Education Committee of the Commission on Ministry can provide grants to assist Clergy with costs for continuing education up to $1,500. (see Continuing Education Grant Application for Clergy)
- The Committee will actively look for resources and educational opportunities, publishing information through diocesan communications.