Guidelines for Clergy Continuing Education and Sabbatical Leave
as of 2013

The provision of benefits for clergy is made by agreement between the clergy and the vestry of each parish. The following guidelines are highly recommended, though not imposed by canon, in the Diocese of Alabama.

I. CONTINUING EDUCATION

Support of the spiritual, intellectual, and professional growth of clergy is in the interest of all parties to the relationship of clergy and parish. The Diocese of Alabama strongly recommends that each parish with full-time priest budget a minimum of $750.00 annually for continuing education for each full-time priest. It is also expected that time away from the parish for this purpose is provided, up to two weeks at full compensation, including two Sundays. This provision is in addition to any vacation time that has been provided.

The vestry of small parishes with limited funds available may petition the diocesan Staff Officer for Administration with proposals for funding for continuing education opportunities for their full-time priest. In consultation with the bishop(s) and others as he/she may appoint, some continuing education opportunities may be funded in whole or in part by the diocese, based on the cost, funds available, and the assessed value of this opportunity to the development of the clergy person, the parish, and the Diocese of Alabama.

II. SABBATICAL LEAVE FOR PRIEST

At a minimum, sabbatical leave for at least three (3) months with full pay should be granted, and funded for full-time priest after five (5) years of service in that parish. Funds should be accrued in each annual budget for each eligible priest for this purpose. The costs of supply priest during this period will be borne by the parish.

Sabbatical leave is provided for rest and for spiritual, intellectual and professional development of the priest, not for recreation. Even so, the kinds of experiences that might be legitimately planned for a sabbatical leave are wide-ranging and
can include travel, service, education, training, research, or combinations of these or other experiences.

Proposals for sabbatical leave, including dates and other special requirements, must be submitted to the vestry and to the bishop for approval.

If funding beyond the ability of the parish is needed, requests should be submitted to the diocesan Staff Officer for Administration, who in consultation with the Bishop(s) and others he may appoint, may be able to provide some financial assistance from diocesan funds. Time away from the parish with pay for other continuing education opportunities will not be provided in the year in which sabbatical leave is taken.

Sabbatical leave scheduled other than three (3) consecutive months at full pay may be considered when the case can be made for a unique development opportunity that calls for another arrangement, for example, six (6) months at half pay or three (3) months separated by a number of weeks or several summer periods of special study such as for a D. Min. degree.