CLERGY WORKING AFTER 72 YEARS OF AGE

The Canons of The Episcopal Church specify 72 years of age as the mandatory retirement age. (III.7.7., III.9.8) However, the Church does permit priests and deacons to work past the age of 72 if they have permission from their bishop.

1. Presbyters may continue to work full time after their 72nd birthday with the bishop’s permission and agreement to have an annual review with the bishop and with their wardens. This interview will take place on or about the priest’s birthday. The bishop will carefully weigh the opinions of the lay leadership as well as attendance and financial statistics from the previous year. If these reports are favorable, then the priest may continue to work full time for another year. If not, then he or she will need to resign and conclude their time with the church within the next 90 days.

2. Deacons may continue to work after their 72nd birthday, on a year to year basis. Like priests over the age of 72, they will be interviewed by the bishop and the archdeacon on or near their birthday. The effectiveness of each deacon’s ministry will be evaluated. If this interview results in a favorable report, the deacon may continue for another year which may include a modification of their letter of agreement. If the outcome is not favorable, the deacon will need to resign and conclude their time with the church within the next 90 days.

3. Any clergy over the age of 72 who are working at least one quarter time in a parish are expected to attend diocesan clergy gatherings, specifically:

- Clergy Conferences
- Diocesan Convention
- Clericus meetings
- Holy Tuesday Renewal of Vows

If you are unable to attend one of these events due to travel, illness, family obligations or other reasons, please contact the bishop to be excused.

The bishop desires to preserve the ability of retired clergy to function at the altar and pulpit as long as possible.

Retirement from active ministry does not mean retirement from the vows and responsibilities of ordination. But, it can mean a lessening of some of the responsibilities. Clergy over the age of 72 who are not working more than one-quarter time at a parish, school or other institution, are welcome to attend any and all diocesan clergy gatherings, but are not required to do so.

Updated 8/20/2019