Resolution #8: Sabbatical Leave for Priests and Other Ministry Leaders - Amended


RESOLVED, that the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, gathered in its 232nd Convention, affirms God’s call to Sabbath as a foundational practice for all baptized persons; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Convention recognizes that the provision of a sabbatical leave for bishops and priests, which includes a plan for spiritual renewal during that time, has been an important expression of this scriptural mandate and a vital element of self-care throughout the Episcopal Church; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Convention recognizes that most ministry leaders, especially part–time priests, deacons, and lay staff, have not enjoyed the opportunity for such leaves; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Convention directs that the Mission Council and Bishops propose a plan through which all priests, other than supply priests, who serve in Eucharistic communities within the ECCT, whether full–time or part–time, and regardless of the number of years served in a particular cure, will accumulate sabbatical leave time which can be used after five cumulative years of service in the ECCT, pending approval of a Sabbatical Plan by an ECCT Bishop; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Convention directs the Mission Council and Bishops to establish a task force to develop a plan through which deacons and lay staff can also be offered relevant opportunities for sabbatical leaves after five years of service in the ECCT, and report back to the 233rd Convention, in 2017.

Explanation:

Paid clergy sabbatical leaves for study and renewal, after five years of service, are widely accepted as vital to effectiveness and self–care. Unfortunately, only full – time Bishops and Rectors receive such leaves. Full time and part–time Assistant or
Associate Rectors, Priests in Charge, Interim Rectors, Missional Priests, and Chaplains are excluded, even though most presbyteral positions are becoming part time and shorter term. This resolution affirms the life–giving nature of sabbatical leaves, extends this opportunity to all priests, except for supply and retired priests, and begins exploring sabbatical opportunities for deacons and lay staff.

**Furthering God’s Mission:**

This resolution furthers God’s mission by strengthening the ability of church leaders to proclaim the Good News, to respond to human needs, and to seek to transform unjust structures of society, through encouraging self–care, new skills development, and the practice of continuous discernment, all of which characterize the ministry of effective disciples and apostles.

**Requirements to Implement:**

The requirements for implementing this resolution include:

1. The time and effort required for ECCT leaders and staff to aggregate data on clergy time and level of effort in various Eucharistic settings over time, and establish virtual “sabbatical accounts” for all clergy that accumulate sabbatical time;
2. adapting the current system for sabbatical plans to incorporate the provisions of this resolution; and
3. establishing a Task Force to examine the provision of sabbaticals for deacons and lay employees to report back to the next convention.