

**Report to the 239th Diocesan Convention
and to Diocesan Council
of the Clergy Sabbatical Fund Committee**

2022 saw the beginning of the revival of interest in our diocese's Clergy Sabbatical Fund as the pandemic began to subside to a lower level. We did not hold any workshops or fund-raising/celebration events, but we did receive two applications for grants, approved one and fielded two additional inquiries which may turn into future applications.

The Committee met on Zoom on October 18. Four of the five members were able to be virtually present: Ms. Wendy Hallstrom, the Rev. Joanna Hollis, the Rev. Juan Monge-Santiago and the Rev. Canon Dr. Francis A. Hubbard, Chair. Member the Rev. Ophelia Laughlin was unable to be present. The Committee considered two applications. One, from the Rev. Emily Mellot of Trinity Church, Moorestown, was endorsed for a grant to the church for the priest's and congregation's sabbatical activities in 2023 of \$6,515 after subsequent discussion about details with the applicant. The final approval was by a 4-0 email vote. The other application was considered to be more of a "work in progress," and the applicant was encouraged to reapply in 2023 for a grant towards a 2024 sabbatical, with recommendations from the Committee to strengthen the application.

After the discussion of both applications, the Committee decided by consensus to clarify that, for the purposes of consideration for a grant, a "sabbatical" application needs to include a plan for *at least two consecutive months of designated sabbatical leave time* from work responsibilities. The Committee's application form for grants for 2024 sabbaticals (**due September 30, 2023**) will be updated to reflect that, as will the application forms for subsequent years.

Going forward, the Committee welcomes inquiries (preferably well in advance of the application deadline) and applications from diocesan priests *who have never been on sabbatical before and who are eligible for sabbaticals* in accordance with the Diocese of New Jersey's Sabbatical Policy. This includes those who are serving with contracts as Priest-in-Charge of congregations. Grants for 2024 will be awarded by the end of October, 2023. Prospective applicants should assume that the cap of \$8,000 for any individual grant will remain for this grant cycle, and be aware that, as in 2022, not all grants may be at that level.

All applicants should plan to fund part of the priest's and congregation's sabbatical expenses from sources other than this Fund. All of the members of this Committee are available to consult with any priest who is considering a sabbatical and any lay members of a congregation who want to learn what a sabbatical can mean for both priest and congregation. *Thoughtful reflection and planning are vital.*

The Lily Foundation offers much larger grants for clergy sabbaticals. Applicants to them embrace a very detailed application process and compete with clergy ecumenically and nation-wide. We can share successful experiences of the application process.

The Clergy Sabbatical Fund exists solely because of specifically designated gifts to the Fund from individuals (including some from our bishop's Discretionary Fund and from some offerings at clergy gatherings) and congregations. The Fund does not receive anything from the diocesan budget, nor are there any endowments earmarked for it. The balance in the fund as of 1/1/2022 was \$38,231.59. Expenses consisted

of one grant for \$6,515. There were no contributions (nor were any solicited or any events held). Reinvested dividends from its Diocesan Investment Trust shares provided additions to capital of \$1,033.01. In an unusually difficult year for both the stock and bond markets at the same time, the Fund lost \$6,132.81 in market value. The ending balance of the Fund as of 12/31/2022 was \$26,616.79.

We hope to have a celebratory fund-raising dinner in the late fall of 2023, as we did in 2019. Watch for an announcement.

Finally, I thank the members of this Committee, who are all founding members, and who continue to give joyfully of their varied talents and perspectives to our mission: Ms. Wendy Hallstrom (Church of the Holy Spirit, Lebanon), the Rev. Joanna Hollis (Christ Church, New Brunswick), the Rev. Ophelia Laughlin (St. Matthew's, Pennington). The Rev. Juan Monge-Santiago, who played a crucial role in coaching Fr. Pedro Guzman and the congregation of San Andres, Camden for their first sabbatical, which took place in 2021, is retiring as of the March Diocesan Convention. I myself have asked to be reappointed as a member of this Committee, but I am retiring as the Chair after serving in that capacity since the Committee's inception.

Faithfully yours,
The Rev. Canon Dr. Francis A. Hubbard, Chair
therevfah50@hotmail.com