

**Standing Commission on Clerical Compensation
Diocese of New Jersey**

Annual Report to the Diocesan Convention for Calendar Year 2023

November 1, 2023

To All Congregations and March 2024 Convention Members

The Standing Commission on Clerical Compensation (SCCC) held seven virtual (ZOOM) meetings in 2023, each meeting being attended by almost all members, and members devoted substantial work between meetings, including a task force examining cost of living implications for benefits and allowances. Sincere appreciation is extended to each member of the commission for diligent and devoted assistance to the Diocese in fulfilling the responsibility of this commission.

As part of its annual review of clerical compensation, the SCCC assessed continuing adequacy of compensation levels in light of competitive compensation in other professional pursuits, as well as inflation. A number of actions were taken by the SCCC, of which four are submitted to the Convention for approval, and shared at this time with congregations for budget and compensation planning. The Commission proposes to this Convention the following increase in Clerical compensation levels.

- The SCCC proposes the Convention approve for calendar year 2024 a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment to be applied to each cleric's 2023 Cash Stipend (as long as the amount is greater than or equal to the Base Cash Stipend based on years of Credited Service as recorded by the Church Pension Fund or other alternative basis approved by the Commission).
- The SCCC proposes that the Convention approve effective January 1, 2024 an increase in the annual housing subsidy from \$18,000 to \$21,000 for eligible clerics not provided housing, and an increase in the annual housing equity from \$2,500 to \$2,800 for eligible clerics provided housing.
- The SCCC proposes for years subsequent to 2024 that the housing subsidy in future years be aggregated with the cleric's Cash Stipend for eligible clerics not provided housing, and that the Cost of Living Allowance for future years apply to the aggregate stipend. Facilitating revisions to Canon 74 are provided elsewhere in the 2024 convention's agenda.
- The SCCC further proposes that Supply Clergy minimum rates effective January 1 be reset at: \$225 for one service on a weekend, increased by \$100 for each additional service on the same day; \$325 for Holy Week Triduum of services; \$120 for a weekday service; negotiable \$430-650 for a wedding including preparation and rehearsal; \$360 for a funeral including planning; and the calculation of such fees result in at least an hourly minimum of \$40. Other current stipulations and mileage rates continue to apply for supply clergy.

Recognizing that all Deacons (including Vocational Deacons) who have not completed the year in which he/she attained age 72 are required to be compensated at least \$25/month, and are eligible for certain CPG benefits, and that Canon 73 requires that compensation of all clergy must be reported to this commission, the SCCC added an annual reporting form due by March 1 of each year for Deacon compensation (found on the Diocese website). Resolutions to accept this and the other recommendations of the SCCC will be contained in the Consent Calendar for the 2024 Annual Convention.

Congregations are reminded that every congregation is required to submit by March 1 each year a report on the compensation on each cleric (including deacons) performing services for the congregation, using the reporting forms provided in the Compensation Guidelines section of the Diocesan website. Congregations without clergy, including those exclusively using supply clergy, must submit an email explanation to the SCCC. Members of the Commission were each apportioned a set of congregations (essentially by convocation) to follow-up on submissions, markedly improving compliance this year by congregations.

The SCCC recognizes the increasing cost of church provided benefits, and in supporting a 2024 health insurance proposal by the Benefits Committee, the SCCC discussed the future need for clerics and other benefits eligible employees to share in the future an increased portion of church provided benefits.

Respectfully submitted by the Standing Commission on Clerical Compensation: *Dr. John S. Sturges, chair; Capt. Louis Cavaliere; The Rev. Angela Cipolla; Dr. Rosina Dixon; Ms. Pat Hawkins; Canon Dr. Tal Kramer, Esq., secretary; The Rev. Canon Dr. John P. Mitchell; Mr. Arthur Peterson; The Rev. Dirk Reinken, vice chair; The Rev. Michael Way. Diocesan staff liaison: Canon Phyllis Jones, COO.*