

**Report to the 240th Diocesan Convention
and to Diocesan Council of the
Clergy Sabbatical Fund Committee**

In 2023, the Sabbatical Fund Committee met via Zoom on July 18, October 10, October 26 and December 13. In 2023, two members – the Rev. Juan Monge-Santiago and the Rev. Ophelia Laughlin – rotated off the committee. I would like to thank them both for their faithful service since 2019. New members added to the committee in 2023 were Canon Morris Anderson (Christ the King, Willingboro), Mrs. Becky Foster (St. Thomas', Glassboro), and the Rev. Paul Shoaf Kozak (Cristo Rey Church, Trenton). Continuing members were the Rev. Francis Hubbard (retired; former Committee Chair), Ms. Wendy Hallstrom (Church of the Holy Spirit, Lebanon), and the Rev. Joanna Hollis (Christ Church, New Brunswick), who accepted the appointment of Committee Chair in the spring of 2023.

While 2023 was not a busy year for the Sabbatical Fund Committee in terms of receiving and approving sabbatical applications, the Committee, with the advice of Bishop French, made changes to its application schedule in order to allow clergy to apply when it is more convenient and needed for them. Instead of a once-a-year application cycle, the Committee now processes applications during the following dates for 2024: January 2-February 11, April 7-June 30 and September 1-November 24. Decisions on grants are made within eight weeks of receiving a grant application. In accordance with the Diocesan Sabbatical Policy, the Committee welcomes applications from diocesan priests who have never yet been on sabbatical – this includes those who are serving as Priest-in-Charge of congregations. The Committee welcomes inquiries about sabbaticals and about the grant process and can help coach congregations around these topics. Prospective applicants should assume that the cap of \$8,000 for any individual grant will remain for 2024 and that not all grants will be at that level. Other sources of funding (such as the accumulation of unused Continuing Education or Professional Expenses funds) should also be considered as clergy and congregations plan for a sabbatical.

In 2024, the Committee will be working with Bishop French on communication to congregations in the Diocese regarding the importance of clergy sabbaticals, the Sabbatical Fund grant application process, and the opportunities for congregations and clergy to support the Sabbatical Fund. Since the Committee's inception, it has only given out two grants. We encourage all those who are eligible to apply for funding!

The Clergy Sabbatical Fund exists solely because of specifically designated gifts to the Fund from individuals, congregations, our bishop's Discretionary Fund and from some offerings at clergy gatherings. 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 1/1/2023 was \$26,616.79. No expenses for 2023 were accrued. There were no reported contributions. While reinvested dividends from its Diocesan Investment Trust shares provided additions to capital of \$667.05, the Fund lost \$908.91 in market value. The ending balance of the Fund as of 12/31/2023 was \$28,192.75.

I thank the members of this Committee (named above) for their faithful service this past year in this important work.

Faithfully yours,
The Rev. Joanna P. Hollis, Chair
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