

Standing Commission on Clerical Compensation Report to the 225th Annual Diocesan Convention

Members:

Cass Lavin-Spouse	The Rev. Valerie Balling, Secretary
Martin F. Nelson, Chair	The Rev. Brian Burgess
Arthur Pedersen	The Rev. Douglas C. Halvorsen
Clive Oscar Sang	The Rev. Dr. Gina Walsh-Minor, Vice-Chair
David E. Magee	The Rev. Denise Cavaliere, Dcn
Edith Rohrman	The Rev. Dr. W. Kenneth Gorman

The commission consists of 12 members; 6 clergy and 6 lay members elected by the Diocesan Convention.

Our objective is to assure that all clergy are adequately and correctly compensated.

The commission monitors compliance of salary, social security offset, continuing education, professional expenses allowance, health and life insurance and housing allowance including housing equity contributions. The Commission makes recommendations to the Convention on compensation matters, but the Convention has the ultimate approval.

The Canons of the Diocese direct the Commission to submit a report to the Convention each year on compliance with all compensation guidelines.

The report on clerical compensation is ***due in the Diocese by March 1st*** of each year. We sincerely thank the parishes who send their reports on time, but there are a number of parishes that are consistently late. It is a time consuming and unnecessary process for Commission members to contact delinquent parishes. Any church having trouble completing the forms should contact a Commission member.

The number of churches returning their compensation reports is dropping. We have no way of knowing if this means more and more churches are no longer paying their clergy the canonical minimums or if they think that completing the forms take too much time. In any case, it is a bad sign. I do want to thank St. John's, Little Silver for being the first to return their 2009 report.

At last year's convention, Bishop Cancell asked the Commission to study, develop and make a sabbatical policy recommendation to the Standing Committee for full-time clergy residing in the Diocese. At first the lay members were skeptical since sabbaticals are virtually unknown in the private sector of the economy; they are mostly a benefit in the education sector. The clergy members put forth strong arguments that a sabbatical would renew and refresh the clergy physically, emotionally and spiritually, and when they returned to their congregations, they would bring new energy and ideas back with them. The Commission did vote as to whether or not to develop a sabbatical policy, and though the vote was not unanimous, the majority agreed to follow the Bishop's request.

In our deliberations we looked at sabbatical policies from other Episcopal dioceses and from the Lutheran Church. We feel our draft policy is fair both to the clergy and to congregations (see the attached draft policy). While this is possibly the worst year to present a new clergy benefit, we believe the economy will improve in the next several years so that clergy can avail themselves of a sabbatical leave. We ask that those churches that do not have an agreement with their clergy regarding a sabbatical study our proposed policy and open a dialog with their clergy for a sabbatical sometime in the future.

This is my last year serving on the Commission. I want to thank all of the current members for their hard work this past year. I have had the pleasure of serving with wonderful dedicated people, both lay and clergy during my many years on the Commission. I enjoy coming to this convention to see many old friends from the past. I ask that you keep individuals serving on the Commission in your prayers because their work is vitally important to the well-being of the diocese. I know I will.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin F. Nelson, Chair
Standing Commission on Clerical Compensation.