



## ASSOCIATION FOR EPISCOPAL DEACONS

ENGAGING THE DIAKONIA OF ALL BELIEVERS

### **2017 Archdeacon & Deacon Directors Conference Open Space Report: Deacon Sabbatical**

Scribe: Kate Harrigan

Individuals shared stories of their personal sabbaticals:

- Retreats
- Self-care
- Travel
- Study

Texas

- Doesn't really have policies for deacons
- After seven years
- 3 months
- Financing is found
- Document is written and sent to suffragan bishop

Olympia

- Written into letter of agreement
- Time is based on length of time one has been in congregation
- Needs to be a focus

Alabama

- Bishop understand that part of it is for rest, personal time
- 2 different kinds
  - After 7 years of service, regardless of where you are assigned
    - Education fund in diocese provides funding support
  - After a transition, new rector comes in, deacon stays a week then takes a 3 month sabbatical, giving people chance to attach to new rector

Michigan

- After new rector arrives, 3 month's sabbatical

Los Angeles

- After 5 years, for 3 months
- Depends on individual
  - Deacon shared that she went to bishop and worked it out



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### Chicago

- Clergy sabbaticals after 7 years
- No policy
  - Deacon shared that bishop told her what she would do but she didn't feel that was best for her

### Kansas

- All clergy are encouraged to take sabbatical
- No set time, eligible after 5 years
- Usually self-initiated

### Montana

- Bishop distinguishes between sabbatical and leave time
  - Sabbatical: you are “doing” something e.g. writing a book, studying
  - Leave time: you are not doing anything formal

### Barriers

- Many believe if they are not in CPG, they can't take sabbatical
- Difficulty in taking time from non-church job
- Question of whether or not deacon is “on staff”
- Cost and funding

### Thoughts and perspectives

- Commitment is not part-time, so sabbatical should not be “part time”
- Deacons can set the bar for all clergy, including part-time and bi-vocational priests

### Question: How can archdeacons be sure deacons are taking care of themselves?

- Advise them to take time
- Because of the nature of the deacon, self-care can become an issue
- Suggestion: Put it into a report on an annual basis (accountability)
- Suggestion: Include in deacon's retreat
- Suggestion: Invite CPG for a wellness weekend
- Shared: Los Angeles bishop requires spiritual director and therapist in place before ordination
- We need to formally teach self-care
  - Physically
  - Mentally
  - Socially
  - Spiritually
  - Family