

Report of the Standing Commission on Clerical Compensation
to
The 224th Annual Convention
of
The Diocese of New Jersey

Members:

David E. Magee	The Rev. Denise Cavaliere, Dcn
Edith Rohrman	The Rev. Thomas B. Conway
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

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.

This year we received compensation reports from only 68 churches with full-time ministries. This represents slightly more than half of parishes with a full-time rector or vicar.

As members of this Commission, members of other diocesan boards or committees, as well as leaders in our individual parishes, we are all painfully aware of the financial problems many churches are experiencing. Even the churches believed to have many resources are dealing with large budget deficits. Generally, vestries will look at the largest component of their budget, which is usually the compensation for the clergy. They hope to keep the parish alive at the expense of their clergy. There are **NO** provisions in the diocesan canons that permit any church to pay their full-time clergy less than the minimums established by Convention.

The Commission has had some exciting discussions this year regarding the total compensation offered a cleric in order to perform his/her ministry. This includes support beyond financial remuneration, such as an administrative assistant, musician/choir director, sexton and/or Christian Formation Director. Having adequate and dependable support goes a long way to help clergy perform the pastoral duties they were hired to do. In mission churches and Level I parishes, many clergy are performing mundane tasks because no one else will do it. Churches hire clergy to be clergy, not to type bulletins or to take out the garbage. Expecting clergy to fulfill all the needs of a church negatively affects the quality of their pastoral leadership and can lead to clergy burnout.

The Commission heard some creative ideas of how nearby churches can work together to share resources. This can be a win/win situation for all concerned. Churches can save money, and attract good employees. With several churches sharing the cost of a parish secretary or sexton, the employee can receive a job with fair pay and benefits. Another concrete example: one of our Commission members orders paper products for two churches together and consequently saves on shipping costs. Vestries must begin to become more creative in the way they use the resources available to them; the old way (we have always done this way) is driving many churches into extinction.

The Commission also implemented the new Congregation Level Classification (CLC) matrix adopted by the 2007 Diocesan Convention. A church's classification affects the level of compensation of its cleric. Due to these calculations, some churches fell in-between two levels. The Commission decided to interpret strictly the numbers and did not recognize a level change for any parish that did not fall within the defined point range. Attached to this report is the CLC matrix with points calculated for 2006. The Commission reminds the Convention that a congregation only changes levels after being at a different level for two consecutive years. Also, even if a congregation decreases its level, the current cleric's compensation must reflect the cost of living increase each year. The Commission will submit a new calculation for the point spread used to assign a classification levels in 2010.

In the coming year, the Commission plans to open discussions with other Commissions and Committees with the Diocese to broaden the concept on clergy compensation beyond the financial element. We will also continue our canonical responsibilities of recommending minimum standards and monitoring the churches' compliance.

The Commission reiterates that compensation standards recommended by the Commission and passed by Convention are only minimums. We encourage churches to exceed the minimums whenever possible. Even in these difficult financial times, it is unfair for the clergy to have to accept less compensation to balance the parish budget.

I offer my sincere gratitude to the members of the Commission for their dedicated service to the clergy of the diocese. They handle the difficult issues with open, inquiring minds, not to mention a sense of humor at times.

Respectfully submitted,

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