



The Anglican Diocese of Central Newfoundland
The Anglican Church of Canada

<http://www.centraldiocese.ca>

The Rt. Rev. John Watton
34 Fraser Road Gander, NL A1V2E8
(709) 256-2372 (T) (709) 256-2396 (F)
Cell: 709 424 1194
bishopcentral@icloud.com

To the Clergy

Sisters and Brothers,

A common question from our regional deans, diocesan clergy and lay people concerns diocesan policy around parish leave, days off and vacation time. Please note what follows here is to clarify our policy, but is not about educational or sabbatical policy. That policy is presently being revised, so if you have any questions about either of these please call me.

We have always encouraged our clergy to take what is colloquially referred to in our diocese as “down time “ after a busy time in a parish. The most common times would be after Easter and Christmas. Another case might be after several consecutive funerals, or any other series of events that have severely tasked a ministry. “Down time “should be taken, but must be done in such a way that the community we serve as leaders, understands the need for rest, and participates in the facilitation of clergy wellness. In every case, this “down time” (officially called time off), is understood to mean quiet time within the parish geographical and spiritual boundaries.

Here is a direct quote from the Diocesan Handbook

It should be noted, that because of the nature of ministry, many days off and statutory holidays cannot be taken as a “regular” day off or on the day the holiday falls and must be taken at other times. However, they are not to be taken on a Sunday, nor, normally, to be banked and added to the annual one month or five weeks’ holiday.

One of the benefits of the clergy lifestyle is a fair level of flexibility in the actual days and hours worked, as long as the work is done and ministry offered in an effective and timely manner. Our ministry is a calling and a vocation before it is an occupation. Therefore, we hesitate to set rigid regulations regarding days off; how many days off or statutory holidays can be put together and taken as a group or when they can be taken, etc. We simply trust one another to be good stewards of self-care and communication. Often many demands and expectations are placed on us, and sometimes people will not understand the weight a parish priest may be carrying. That too is part of our vocation, and why it is very important in our parishes to communicate well in regard to the times we are away from a parish. In essence, both Clergy and parishes must be sensitive and use good judgement in how these arrangements are made, so that parish needs are met and clergy and families are supported.

Here are some more specific guidelines

1. All vacation dates and pastoral arrangements when rectors or clergy in charge are to be shared with the Regional Deans. Regional Deans become immediately responsible for coordinating worship and pastoral services for parishes that are vacant. It is the responsibility of rectors or clergy in charge to ensure clear communication in the deanery and to synod office.
2. If clergy plan to leave the geographical area of the deanery for time off, and are physically unable to address pastoral emergencies it is considered vacation time, and must be scheduled according to diocesan guidelines.
3. It is also very important that when clergy are away from the parish for a day(s) off or for vacation to leave a short and clear message of who to contact in an emergency, and how to reach them. Don't assume that everyone knows who to call. Someone from outside the parish may have an urgent need. Make sure that your contact person is available and clear on their responsibilities and who in turn, they should contact.
4. If you are unable to check your email, an auto response message should be enabled.

Our call to personal wellness is to be taken seriously and I commend our clergy who are proactive in this regard and include a reminder that you call synod office at any time for support.

I sincerely hope this helps you in all of your personal needs as well as your leadership and pastoral responsibilities.

In the Love of Christ

+John