



Clergy Continuing Education Policy

The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect Romans 12:1-2

I. GENERAL In accordance with the Canons of The Episcopal Church (Title III, Canon 7, Section 5 and Title III, Canon 9, Section 1) the Bishop and Commission on Ministry are charged with the responsibility of developing standards and providing opportunities for the continuing education of deacons and priests in their respective dioceses. In an effort to meet these requirements, the following policy was adopted for use in this diocese on January 31, 2018; to continue into the future until notice otherwise.

Vestry Involvement Vestries should be made aware of this commitment to a healthy ministry with a clear expectation of their partnership in the development and nurture of their leadership, and this requirement should be made part of all Letters of Agreement. The vestry shall encourage clergy to partake of this time and money in accordance with the guidelines established herein.

Each congregation shall include in its budget a minimum of \$750 annually for each ordained person on staff. Those congregations that cannot meet this minimum are encouraged to work towards it. Establishing a Continuing Education fund can encourage giving and donations [memorials]. These monies are to be accumulated so that if all is not used in one calendar year, it can be carried over onto the next year's budget, or at the request of the clergy, set aside for the use for a sabbatical.

Time for Continuing Education is not to be counted as vacation and it will be arranged to be taken when the clergy desires and with the consultation with the vestry.

II. REQUIREMENTS

A. Definition of a contact hour: A Contact Hour is defined as each hour the student and instructor are together or the student is actively involved in a learning situation, as distinguished from a Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

B. Number of Contact Hours required

1. All active full-time stipendiary priests: 24 Contact Hours of Continuing Education annually.
2. All active part-time priests: 12 Contact Hours of Continuing Education annually.
3. Vocational deacons: 12 Contact Hours of Continuing Education annually.
4. Clergy who are canonically resident but not living in the diocese are exempt from this requirement.
5. Retired clergy and those not actively engaged in ordained ministry are exempt from this requirement.

6. Retired clergy exercising ministry as a supply priest or assigned as a priest-in-charge are encouraged but not required to meet this requirement.

C. Exemptions There may be times when a clergy person is unable to complete the annual requirement. In such a situation, the clergy person shall request an exemption by letter addressed to the Bishop.

Clergy new to the diocese shall be exempt for the calendar year in which they begin their ministry.

D. Annual Cycle and Reporting

1. The annual cycle for continuing education shall be January 1 – December 31.

2. All qualifying clergy shall submit an annual report to the Bishop's office by January 15 for the previous year. *[As a way to consider the rhythm of this requirement, consider reviewing this report at the same vestry meeting you make or renew your annual IRS Housing Allowance resolution]*

3. Continuing Education reports will be kept on file and will be referenced when clergy seek deployment in the diocese or when references are requested from another diocese. Compliance with the policy will be noted when clergy are under consideration for vacancies.

E. Approved Areas of Study

1. Much of this requirement can be accomplished at minimal cost within the Diocese itself. For example, certain diocesan events can be used to meet this requirement:

Clergy Conferences: Up to eight [8] Contact Hours.

Clergy Study day: Up to four [4] contact hours.

Discipleship Day: Up to four [4] contact hours.

The remainder of Contact Hours will be the responsibility of the Clergy.

2. Continuing Education may include *Theological Studies* such as Scripture, Ethics, Theology, Church History, and Liturgy; *Professional Studies* such as Leadership Development, Congregational Development, Communications, and Finance; and *Personal Studies* such as Wellness Classes and Directed Retreats.

3. Clergy are encouraged to explore different modes of learning, including but not limited to classes, conferences, and we-based learning.

E. Continuing Education Grants The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast does not have a fund to support clergy continuing education. However, in certain situations the Bishop may be petitioned directly by clergy for financial assistance.



Continuing Education Certification The Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast

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The ministry of the Christian Gospel requires growing in skill and sensitivity to the changing environment of the human condition. Hence, in faithfulness to the calling and to ordination vows, we covenant together to grow in grace and wisdom in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Each person ordained and serving in this diocese is asked, **by January 15th of each year**, to submit to the Diocese a record of their Continuing Education activity for the previous twelve months, and a plan for the coming twelve months. This report will be kept in the individual personnel files of clergy and included in any correspondence involving relocation to other positions.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Congregation: _____

Please list education activities for the past year: This may include seminars, workshops, books, and classes. Please also include publications and/or articles you may have generated. A Contact Hour is defined as each hour the student and instructor are together or the student is actively involved in a learning situation, as distinguished from a Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

Education Activities

Contact Hours

What did you find particularly helpful that you might recommend to others?

What is your plan for the coming year?

Are you up-to-date with your Safe Guarding God's Children material? Yes No

Date presented to the vestry: _____ **Signed by the Sr Warden:** _____

Signed by clergy : _____

Received and Reviewed by the Bishop: _____ **Date:** _____