

**CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY  
FOR  
THE DIOCESE OF EAST TENNESSEE**

The purpose of continuing education for the clergy of the Diocese of East Tennessee is to keep the clergy informed of new developments, enhance skills, deepen faith and make them aware of new research and theology related to the many aspects of clergy and parish life. In most professions continuing education is required. Lawyers, doctors and teachers are required to have so much continuing education annually in order to keep their professional status.

**Guidelines for Parish Vestries**

1. Each parish/mission include in its budget a minimum of \$1000 annually for each ordained person on staff. Those parishes or missions that cannot meet this minimum are encouraged to work towards at least the minimum. Special appeals and donations (memorials) could be attempted in places where the minimum standard is not in the budget. These monies are to be accumulated so that if all is not used in one year, it can be carried over into the next year's budget. This is particularly important for amounts of less than \$1000 annually. The Diocese encourages parishes/missions to establish Continuing Education Funds in order to encourage special giving.
2. Each parish/mission include in its letter of agreement (or add to existing letter of agreement) that each ordained person be given a minimum of one week per year for continuing education. The vestry or mission council should encourage clergy to partake of this gift of time and money in accordance with the guidelines established by this diocese. There should be mutual agreement between vestry/mission councils and the program of continuing education. The bishop may appoint an arbitrator from the Commission on Ministry if mutual agreement is not reached. Each person using funds from his/her parish or mission should be accountable to the vestry or mission council.
3. Time for continuing education is not to be counted as vacation and it will be arranged to be taken when the clergy desires with the approval of the vestry or mission
4. Parishes with more than one ordained person are asked to help supply at no charge in those smaller parishes or missions which are unable to afford supply clergy. This will provide time away for continuing education for clergy in smaller congregations.

**Suggested guidelines for Clergy of the Diocese of East Tennessee**

1. Each ordained person in this diocese will take at least one week per year of continuing education.
2. Any course offered by a seminary, or an institution of this church or any other church is appropriate. Continuing education credits are encouraged but not required. Some may wish to take guided retreats from time to time as continuing education. Others may wish to take periods of guided study at some institution of this church or another church. Research or writing is also appropriate for continuing education as is working on advanced degrees in the fields offered by any seminary or university.
3. Clergy may design their own continuing education period. To qualify, it must have the approval of the Bishop of this diocese. Such self-directed education experiences must have a stated goal and accountability both to the parish and bishop.
4. From time to time this diocese will offer continuing education events. They will count towards fulfilling each person's suggested annual continuing education.