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SUPPLEMENTARY CONVENING CIRCULAR

*Highlights of the Clergy Remuneration Working Group's
Report to the Bishop*

Section H



Diocese of Toronto
Anglican Church of Canada

Highlights of the Proposals for Clergy Remuneration

The Clergy Remuneration Working Group was appointed almost three years ago by Archbishop Colin Johnson. The current Diocesan Bishop, Andrew Asbil, was asked to oversee and ensure linkages between this group, chaired by Suzanne Lawson, and the Compensation Working Group (chaired by Clare Burns) which is responsible for the compensation of those working in the office and the Bishops. The Terms of Reference indicated that the last assessment of clergy remuneration with all its constituent parts was done by KPMG over twenty years ago.

After much consultation and discussion, the Clergy Remuneration Working Group has developed a considerable number of recommendations for the Bishop to consider. These recommendations both “fix” situations that we discovered en route that seemed unfair or inconsistent in their application, and propose ways forward so that the clergy of the present and the future are compensated in ways that reflect fairness and transparency. Undergirding each recommendation is our commitment to think theologically about the role of clergy in the church, helped by three papers, one a general overview of the role of compensation for clergy, one about clergy as disciples, and the third on the servant-leadership role of present and future clergy.

The most significant change being proposed is movement from a “two-component model” of remuneration (stipend and housing) to a “one-component” model (salary). For many, indeed most, clergy, this will not be a change at all. But for others, it will mean reimagining their compensation package so that it is more consistent with the norms for professionals in other fields. In parishes with rectories clergy will, over time, be given the option to either provide for their own accommodation, or rent the rectory. Because this is a significant change, there will be a period of carefully planned and monitored piloting of this new mode. And because of the hot housing market in the Toronto area, a few exceptions may need to be made before implementing this new model fully.

Similar piloting of a strategic parish ministry and management evaluation process will hopefully give clergy better opportunities for engaging in regular feedback on their ministry and the ministry of the parishes they serve. Eventually, such sessions, when fully implemented, will open the door to the possibility of merit pay.

During such a time of change for the church across the world, continuing education is essential. Because of the cost of top-level courses and conferences, we propose that a new Diocesan fund be created to supplement the already available opportunities for clergy. Another new fund is suggested to assist parishes who need especially skilled and experienced clergy to help them but at the moment cannot afford to pay them what they deserve. One recommendation also suggests the hiring of several priests for Diocesan-wide use as trained intentional interim priests where crises have occurred. These are all items that will require budget attention to fully realize.

Particular recommendations came out of the consultations with retired clergy (what would they wish had happened that would have made retirement easier?), associates, interim priests, those in specialized ministries, part-time clergy and others.

Many of the recommendations try to bring fairness and transparency into additional ways of being remunerated that are often not mentioned: stole fees, vacations, time for continuing education and sabbaticals. These are not revolutionary changes, but are stated in a way to make parishes and clergy alike begin to understand the full package of remuneration available to clergy.

We were also asked to look at the remuneration of parish staff. We have not yet addressed that topic. We hope to be able to provide some guidelines to parishes, but there will not be rules and recommendations because these people are employees of the parish and not the Diocese. The best advice is that they take the values of fairness and transparency we have tried to apply to clergy remuneration and apply them to the parish staff.

When the final Report is in the hands of the College of Bishops, they will look at the implementation strategies and begin to put sections of the Report in place. The decisions about what is possible to do and what cannot be done at this time, are theirs.

We are deeply grateful to all who gave their time and wisdom during consultations and in later discussions to open doors on this topic that we might not have seen otherwise. Implementation will take time. Movement in the directions we suggest will help bring some of the strategic initiatives from Growing in Christ, the Diocesan Strategic Plan, to fruition.