

## R-2 Stipendiary Clergy Parental Leave Equity

Resolved, that the Diocese of Virginia recommends as a guideline that vestries provide parental leave of eight weeks with full compensation for full-time parochial clergy (within one year of the birth or adoption of a child). This recommended benefit should be independent of any sick leave policy or vacation time.

### Background

In 1989, the Diocese of Virginia adopted a policy of eight weeks of maternity leave for the birth of a child, and two weeks (exclusive of Sundays) of paternity leave. There was no provision made for the adoption of a child.

Presently, the Church Pension Group short-term disability policy covers 70% of leave for eight weeks for women who give birth. It does not make provision for adoption or surrogacy.

There are many benefits to expanding parental leave:

- All of the church benefits from acting equitably. Treating both parents as equal accords with the Baptismal Covenant, which affirms “the dignity of every human being.”
- Children benefit from increased support from fathers, including improved parent-child bonding for up to five years.<sup>1</sup> Parental leave also increases breastfeeding and vaccination rates, as well as other metrics closely tied to infant child health.<sup>2</sup> When parental leave is in place, intervention is more likely for children with developmental difficulties.<sup>3</sup>
- Both parents benefit from increased connection with their children. They become more adept caregivers.<sup>4</sup> The increased availability of parental leave also decreases any stigma for men in accessing the available time.
- Birth and adoptive mothers benefit from additional support, both immediately after the arrival of a child (which can include complications for physical and mental health) and in returning to the workplace.<sup>5</sup>
- Couples benefit from healthier relationships and a more equal division of labor.<sup>6</sup>
- Women of childbearing age benefit from a more level playing field in the search process, being less likely to experience discrimination when there is no perception of their hiring as more costly.
- Same gender couples benefit from equal access to parental leave.
- Parishes benefit from having healthy clergy who do not return to work while under unusual pressure at home. Clergy given parental leave experience and therefore model

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<sup>1</sup> <https://paidleave.us/resources>

<sup>2</sup> <https://paidleave.us/resources>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.zerotothree.org>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.zerotothree.org>

<sup>5</sup> <https://paidleave.us/resources>

<sup>6</sup> [www.nationalpartnership.org](http://www.nationalpartnership.org)

better work-life balance. Parental leave has been shown to significantly boost employee morale.<sup>7</sup>

- The Diocese benefits from being a desirable place for clergy (especially younger clergy) and decreased clergy turnover. It also stands as a leader in the national church, where which is currently studying a recommendation for church-wide parental leave in response to a resolution of the 2018 General Convention.

This resolution also supports and continues the work of recent resolutions of this convention, including the Resolution on Clergy Pay Equity (2019) and the Resolution on Family Leave (2017).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://paidleave.us/resources>