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THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

April 30, 2025

Biblically, clergy and the laity are the highest gifts that churches have. Just as Jesus models by laying his life down for the sheep, it is our intent to continue to expand the ways in which we care for our diocesan clergy.

From the Old Testament, where the Levites are supported by a portion of the offerings brought by other tribes, to the New Testament, where the apostle Paul asserts the right of the elders to be compensated fairly and cared for by the people they serve, the Scriptures are replete with injunctions for the care of our church leaders.

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

The Diocese of Pittsburgh, with the support of our Standing Committee and the Diocesan Council, has established the Clergy Support Fund to offer financial assistance to the canonically resident clergy in times of hardship. These funds are generated by a combination of Lilly Grant funding through the ACNA and matching funds set aside annually within the diocesan budget.

As ever, we are grateful for you, your family, and your service to the Lord and the church.

Grace and peace to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex W. Cameron", followed by a horizontal line.

The Right Reverend Alex W. Cameron
Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh

Clergy Support Fund Handbook

Rationale for Clergy Support Funds

The health and stability of our clergy and their families are vital to the work we do in our congregations. We understand that clergy often experience the very same financial struggles as those they shepherd, while under the added pressure of visibility in the church community. This burden often leads to shame, guilt, and a reluctance to communicate financial needs or request help.

Our goal in providing a Clergy Support Fund is to reduce the economic challenges of our clergy, while maintaining your privacy and dignity. As you have been bearing the burdens of your church, let us help to bear yours.

The Purposes of the Clergy Support Fund

The Clergy Support Fund provides limited, temporary relief from economic challenges.

1. Necessary medical care for the clergyperson and/or immediate family members
2. Personal financial shortfalls needed for household expenses (mortgage, rent, utilities, food)
3. Bereavement and funeral expenses (including travel) for immediate and extended family (parents of the clergy or spouse)
4. Participation in an [ACNA Clergy Financial Wellness Cohort](#) (up to \$250)
5. Mental healthcare for clergy and immediate family members (up to \$750 per year, provided through Clergy Wellness Initiative Vouchers)

If the needs of any clergyperson exceed \$1,500 in one year, additional assistance will require a consultation with the Bishop to address the full scope of the economic challenge(s).

Tax Implications of Receiving Support

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has regulations regarding the taxation of gifts and compensation that could result in penalties for both clergy and the Diocese if not properly administered or reported. To avoid any unexpected tax burden or penalties, we have sought the counsel of a Certified Public Accountant and established the following best practices.

1. Requests must include documentation of expenses the Clergy Support Fund is asked to cover.
2. Whenever possible, Clergy Support Fund payments will be made directly to third-party entities on behalf of the clergyperson (e.g. the Diocese will make direct payment to your doctor for medical expenses).
3. All payments made to clergy or their providers are “benevolent gifts.” They are not considered as remuneration for services. As such, there is no expectation of repayment for these gifts and they will not be reported as taxable income.
4. We will NOT make Clergy Support Fund payments through cash or gift cards.

Confidentiality and Documentation

To ensure your privacy, trust, and dignity, personal information will be handled with the utmost discretion. The Bishop, the Canon to the Ordinary, and the Director of Administration/Diocesan Treasurer will be the only persons with knowledge of the specific disbursements.

The Diocese has established a system for proper documentation which will maintain your privacy and effectively distribute benevolent funds. The Diocese utilizes Salesforce, Formsite, and Microsoft Office 365, products with excellent reputations for maintaining security. Detailed records of all transactions, including applications, approvals, and disbursements, will be maintained to ensure accountability, track the allocation of funds, and serve as a reference for future requests and evaluations.

How to Apply for Funding

Our goal is to ensure that we are providing aid to those who genuinely need it and to allocate our resources responsibly. Documentation helps us verify the circumstances and needs of the applicants, ensuring fairness and transparency in our support process. We also strive to balance this need for verification with a compassionate approach, recognizing that excessive bureaucracy can be discouraging and burdensome for those seeking help. By keeping our documentation requirements straightforward and respectful, we aim to maintain the dignity of clergy applicants while ensuring that our Clergy Support Fund efforts are effective and efficient.

Mental health expenses for clergy member, spouse, and any dependent children (up to \$750 annually per family) are covered through Clergy Wellness Initiative Vouchers, which are emailed to all clergy in January of each year. If you have joined the Diocese mid-year, please email skwolek@adpgh.org to request a voucher for the current calendar year.

The following steps highlight the process of applying for funding for any purposes other than mental healthcare.

1. Submit the Clergy Support Fund Request Form at <https://www.adpgh.org/clergy-resources/>.
2. The Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary will evaluate the request and notify you of its status.
3. If your request is approved, we request an acknowledgement of receipt of funds, as well as appropriate updates on your and/or your family members' progress.

Again, please be assured of our appreciation for you and your calling to the church.