

## **Diocese of West Tennessee Policy on Maternity/Paternity Leave**

Maternity/paternity leave is of vital importance to the health and well being of families. It is very important for forming the parent child bond in those vital first days after the arrival of a new child into the family. The following policy is established by the Diocese of West Tennessee to support healthy family practices among our clergy. Our goal is growth toward wholeness for both clergy and congregations. We believe healthy clergy make for healthy congregations, and healthy congregations make for healthy clergy.

- The Clergy, Vestry and Bishop should do as much planning as possible to prepare for this leave time.
- A member of the clergy who is the designated “primary child-care parent” is entitled to leave for the birth or adoption of a child for a minimum of eight weeks with pay. Up to eight additional weeks may be taken without pay.
- A member of the clergy who is the “non-primary care parent” is entitled to leave for the birth or adoption of a child for a minimum of two weeks with pay and up to ten additional weeks without pay. The member of the clergy may elect to use vacation leave or sick leave during this latter period.
- This policy will be more difficult financially for smaller parishes. Lay leaders in the congregation may have to take on ministries that the congregation expects clergy to provide.