



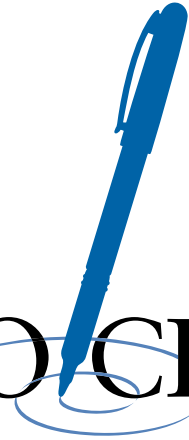
About the Author

Steve has been resident in the Diocese of Oregon since 1991. His last positions were as Priest in Charge of Ascension Parish, and Director of Pastoral Services, William Temple House, both in Portland. He likes travel, hiking, walking, and playing clarinet in a community concert band. Steve is on the team of pension chaplains for The Church Pension Fund. He occasionally posts something on his blog, snorx.wordpress.com. He welcomes correspondence at snorx@hevanet.com.

About Vintage Voice

Vintage Voice is a monthly publication written by beneficiaries of The Church Pension Fund. We hope you enjoy these articles and find them helpful. Articles are published with the authors' permission. If you have a reflection about your life in retirement, consider writing for the Vintage Voice! Send your submissions to vintagevoice@cpg.org.

VINTAGE VOICE



Renewals

By The Rev. Steve Norcross

“By renewing now, you will save 10% off the usual rate, in addition to saving 20% off the cover price.”

This promotional offer was for a magazine that I have subscribed to for years. The mailing label said that my subscription will expire in mid-2018. While I realize the benefits of renewing early by promising a slight savings, the larger issue is: Will I live long enough to benefit from this promotion, and, if I am alive, will I still be able to read and understand the content of the publication?

For elders everywhere, clergy included, the question remains: How long will I have the interest and ability to understand and participate in reading and the other activities that I have enjoyed for most of my adult life?

I have a friend who no longer renews his AARP membership for ten years. He is now renewing it one year at a time. He knows that upon his death or mental disability, his subscription cannot be transferred or the unused portion refunded.

Magazine and membership subscriptions represent one level of this question for elders. Perhaps more significant are renewals that represent our occupations or our lifestyle choices.

At one time, I was a certified public school teacher, with a substitute license. The sub license in my state was good for five years, after which I could renew by checking “yes” to three statements: I am not a felon, I am not guilty of any behavioral misconduct, and I have not been terminated as a teacher by any school principal. By answering yes to all three, and writing a check for \$100, I would continue to be certified for another five years.

When the most recent renewal notice arrived in the mail, I set the application form aside, and after a week or so put the paperwork in the recycle bin. I was honest with myself that I would not be interested in teaching again in the public school environment.

In contrast, my passport expires in 2023. That’s six years from now. I sincerely hope then that I will be able and willing to travel abroad, as my wife, Sandy, and I derive great joy in seeing the world now that

the responsibility of work no longer interferes. Unless I experience a major setback in either financial security or in health, I hope to be able to board a plane, cruise ship, or tour group to see those parts of our world that attract me. Come late 2022, if I am alive and conscious, I will have a passport picture made, write a check, wait in line at the post office for an hour (ugh), and send in the renewal.

Some of my memberships and certifications will never expire unless I will them to. Once a year my bishop asks for a report from the retired clergy as to what our church activities and connections have been and will be in the coming year. He has not asked for a \$100 check to be enclosed with the report, and I trust that he never will. Please don't give him any ideas!

When I was ordained a priest way back in 1969, the Episcopal Church Women of the Good Congregation, to which I was called as a curate, gave me a lifetime subscription to The Living Church as an ordination gift. It was a very generous gift, one that keeps on giving. I see that the magazine no longer offers this option. I'm sure it's my fault. The publisher sees how many months and years I have received the publication and who knows for how many more? At age 30, a lifetime subscription to a periodical that has kept me informed about the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion has been a very good bargain.

I am thankfully very happy in the church I have (or am) affiliated with as a retired priest, and I take comfort in the knowledge that this membership will continue right up until the day of my death, with my requiem mass taking place in that very church. No renewal deadline there.

The best renewal takes place at the altar of my church, where the Body and Blood of Christ frequently refresh me for the next page of my life. I don't have to send in a form with a subscription fee for that one. Thanks be to God.



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