

SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Often on completion of a number of years of ministry and service, clergy and/or senior Presbytery staff members need time to refocus their vision, update professional skills and find renewal of the sense of call. Just as the Sabbath day is a gift from God during a busy week of work, so the greater gift of a Sabbatical Leave can offer valuable refreshment and rejuvenation for those who labor continuously for God's people.

PURPOSE

The purpose of a Sabbatical Leave within the Presbytery of Northern New York is to allow adequate time away from normal job responsibilities for personal and professional growth, spiritual renewal and a revitalization of vision and hope. The Leave should offer a time of refreshment for the benefit of both the participant in the Leave and his or her staff and/or congregation. It would also be appropriate for the Presbytery to consider how the sabbatical time would be an opportunity for its own growth and renewal.

II DEFINITION

A Sabbatical Leave is a break and change from the everyday routine and therefore would include a balance of reflection and prayer, rest, study and travel. A church-related Sabbatical Leave is ordinarily not the same as in a corporate or scholastic setting. Therefore, it is not primarily a time for advanced degree work (Th.M., D. Min, Ph.D., etc.), although some formal study may be one component of a well-balanced Sabbatical. A Sabbatical Leave is not to be considered a vacation nor should it be used for career advancement or career assessment. It is NOT intended to be used as a chance to escape difficulties within the local church, nor is it a substitute for annual study leave.

III ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for a Sabbatical Leave within the Presbytery of Northern New York would require the completion of at least seven (7) consecutive years of employment. There must be at least seven (7) years between Sabbatical Leaves; and within the Presbytery no more than two (2) such leaves will be granted during any one year. Sabbatical Leaves are to be made available to all pastors within the Presbytery as well as to the Presbytery Executive. To facilitate this, scholarships will be offered through the Fun Fund.

IV SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The length of a Sabbatical Leave within the Presbytery of Northern New York will be a maximum of four (4) months in any one year (or two months in each of two consecutive years). However, even a one month leave, appropriately and creatively designed, may accomplish many of the purposes of a Sabbatical. Annual study leave may not be taken contiguous with a sabbatical. Ordinarily vacation would not be taken in conjunction with sabbatical leave.

Adequate opportunities for planning the substance of the Sabbatical Leave and for the sharing of its results are vital to its success and should not be overlooked. Prior to the beginning of the leave, there should ordinarily be at least one-year notice to the session, congregation and/or staff outlining the purpose of the sabbatical. Approximately nine months prior to the leave, a written proposal detailing its purpose and content including plans for pastoral coverage and funding the leave should be submitted to the personnel committee and/or session. At least six months prior to the leave all approvals should be secured (Committee on Ministry, Personnel Committee, and Session). A commissioning ceremony would be most appropriate and meaningful.

During the period of the Sabbatical Leave, full salary and benefits will be provided by the employing organization. Payments under the terms of call for travel expenses and other administrative expense will be suspended during the period of the Sabbatical Leave. It is not expected that congregations will normally bear the entire cost of the Sabbatical Leave. A plan for funding the leave, including all expenses related to pastoral coverage during the leave shall be part of the leave proposal. (See below for some possible sources of funding.)

Upon returning home from Sabbatical Leave, the Pastor and/or Executive Presbyter must remain in his or her position for at least one (1) year or otherwise forfeit the salary attributable to the period of the leave.

There will be detailed reentry plan, which will allow the Presbytery/congregation and EP/minister to share their different journeys. Examples of such plans might include a one day all-church retreat with church congregation leaders, a special debriefing with session members followed by an all-church supper and time for sharing, etc.

In all cases, the clergy/staff member will be restored to his/her former position and status and shall receive a salary at the level he/she would have had had he/she not taken the Sabbatical Leave.

V FUNDING

The following are some potential sources for funding a Sabbatical Leave:

1. Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders –The Louisville Institute awards grants of \$4,000 (four weeks), \$8,000 (eight weeks) and \$12,000 (12 weeks) to provide time apart for pastoral leaders’ study, reflection, and renewal. Grant applications can be requested by writing:
Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders
The Louisville Institute
1044 Alta Vista Road
Louisville, KY 40205-1789
Phone (502) 895-3411
2. The Lily Foundation Clergy Renewal Program provides grants of up to \$45,000 of which \$15,000 may be applied to congregational expenses associated with the leave. For more information contact the program web site:
www.clergyrenewal.org or write to:
Lily Endowment
Religion Division
2801 N. Meridian Street
P.O. Box 88068
Indianapolis, IN 46208
(317) 916-7302
3. The Douglas and Patty Gray Fun Fund – grants of up to \$1,000 will be considered for pastors planning a sabbatical.
4. Local Budget – Congregations are encouraged to plan ahead for Sabbatical Leaves by building a carry-over line into their annual budget for at least 10% of anticipated sabbatical expenses.

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