

Committee on Ministry Sabbatical Leave

(Recommended; not adopted by presbytery into policy)

Sabbatical Leave

Eastminster Presbytery strongly recommends that pastors be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three (3) months after six (6) years of full-time, continuous service to an individual church. Upon completion of the sabbatical leave, it is required that the minister continue to serve the same congregation for at least one year. Failure to fulfill this requirement will result in the minister reimbursing 50% of any sabbatical expense to the congregation.

Financial Implications

Pastors and churches planning sabbatical leaves are encouraged to save, on a yearly basis, sufficient funds to finance sabbatical leaves. The local church may, but is not required to, be financially responsible for the pastor's expenses of sabbatical leave. Sabbatical expenses may be offset by existing continuing education or pastoral expense funds within the sabbatical year, as agreed upon by the Session and minister.

This agreement will be stated in the terms of call and will be revisited annually.

Responsibilities of the Minister

A minimum of six months prior to the proposed commencement of the sabbatical, bring a proposal to the Session for its approval. The proposal shall include a detailed description of the plan, the goals to be achieved, the expected results, and a personal statement of how the sabbatical will be beneficial to the minister and to the church. In cooperation with the Session, make any necessary arrangements for coverage of pulpit, pastoral, and other responsibilities during sabbatical leave. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience with the Session. Sharing of the experience with the entire congregation is strongly encouraged. Commit to serving the congregation for at least one year after returning from sabbatical.

Responsibilities of the Session

Review the sabbatical proposal with the minister and negotiate any necessary clarifications or changes. Communicate to the congregation the importance and value to the church of the sabbatical leave. Continue terms of call/financial commitments to the minister during sabbatical leave. Consider taking on or delegating responsibilities for pastoral care and routine administrative functions. Commit to employing the minister for at least one year after his/her return from sabbatical. Other responsibilities may be agreed upon between the Session and the minister.

COM Responsibilities

Provide someone to moderate the Session during sabbatical leave and approve any extended pulpit supply/temporary pastoral leadership during the sabbatical. Develop a team of ministers/CRE's willing to provide services for congregations while their minister is on sabbatical. Serve as a resource to the minister and congregation in planning and carrying out the sabbatical.