

**Presbytery of Scioto Valley  
Committee on Ministry**

**SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY**

Approved by Presbytery – September 16, 2008

**A. RATIONALE**

The purpose of a time of Sabbatical renewal is to enhance and strengthen a minister's effectiveness by giving him/her an uninterrupted time to care for his/her own well being, and to return to his/her work with renewed energy and enthusiasm. A Sabbatical is an extension of the concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. Often, after completion of a number of years of service, a minister needs time to refocus their vision, update professional skills and find renewal of their 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 spiritual rejuvenation, for those who labor continuously for God's people.

**B. PARTICIPANTS**

Although this policy reference is specifically directed toward clergy, everything contained in this policy can also apply to Christian Educators and Commissioned Lay Pastors.

**C. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Sabbatical Leave is qualitatively different from "time off" or "vacation times" for the minister, in that there is a plan for personal and professional restoration. Thus, neither vacation nor study leave should be affected by Sabbatical Leave. However, accrued vacation or study leave may be taken in conjunction with the Sabbatical Leave, adding no more than four additional weeks of time away. A Sabbatical Leave is at least for a period of three months, containing thirteen consecutive Sundays.

In general, ministers with six (6) continuous years of service at a particular church are eligible for a Sabbatical Leave. Sabbatical Leave may be repeated at seven (7) year intervals. Both pastors and Sessions are encouraged to consult with the Executive Presbyter and/or Committee on Ministry when planning a Sabbatical. Pastors and sessions are encouraged to tailor Sabbatical renewal leave based on the needs of pastor, staff, and congregation.

**D. PROCEDURE**

Plans for Sabbatical Leave should be thoroughly discussed and approved by the pastor, Session, and the Committee on Ministry, and have a clearly stated purpose or focus.

**I. Minister's Role**

1. Bring the Sabbatical proposal before the Session – at least in outline form - a minimum of three months before the intended commencement of the Sabbatical.
2. Secure the approval of the Session for the Sabbatical proposal and work out the necessary coverage of pastoral and pulpit responsibilities.

3. Assure the Session of continued service to the church, for at least one full year from the conclusion of the Sabbatical.
4. Submit to Committee on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of plans, upon Session's validation.
5. Pursuant to one's return, present an overview of the Sabbatical experience to the Session, with a copy of the report to the Committee on Ministry, in written form.

## **II. Session's Role**

1. Receive "for approval" the minister's proposal for a Sabbatical, at least three (3) months in advance of the intended commencing of the Sabbatical.
2. Continue the terms of call commitments to the minister during the sabbatical's time frame.
3. Communicate to the congregation the importance and values of the Sabbatical to the church.
4. Request a written overview of the Sabbatical from the minister upon return.
5. Forward a written copy of the approved plan for Sabbatical Leave to the Committee on Ministry.
6. Fully fund any temporary pastoral or professional services necessary in the absence of the minister. Congregations may wish to set aside funds each year, in anticipation of requests for a Sabbatical Leave.

*NOTE:* If agreed upon by Session and the minister, the Sabbatical might be combined with study leave, up to an additional month. If needed, the Committee on Ministry may be called upon to assist with the details of the proposal.

## **III. Committee On Ministry's Role**

1. Review the Sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the minister.
2. Serve as mediator regarding any concerns of the Session or the minister relative to the Sabbatical.
3. Determine who will moderate the Session in the minister's absence.
4. Assist with helping Sessions and ministers to work-out details, upon request.
5. Request a report on the Sabbatical experience upon the minister's return.

## **E. CONGREGATIONAL BENEFITS**

A period of Sabbatical Leave can also have several benefits for the church:

1. The enhancement of undiscovered leadership of laypersons and other staff can be allowed to develop.
2. A new appreciation of both the pastor himself/herself and the role of pastor to the congregation's life.
3. Provided rest and spiritual renewal may enhance the longevity of the pastor's relationship with the church family.



**THE PRESBYTERY OF SCIOTO VALLEY  
APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE**

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

DATE

**CLERK OF SESSION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COM CHAIRPERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER:** \_\_\_\_\_

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APPLICANT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
(LAST) (FIRST) (MIDDLE)

HOME ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
(HOUSE NUMBER) (STREET)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(CITY) (STATE) (ZIP)

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
(HOME) (CELLULAR)

DATE OF INITIAL EMPLOYMENT IN YOUR CURRENT CHURCH: \_\_\_\_\_

YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE PC (USA): \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU BEEN GRANTED A PREVIOUS SABBATICAL? YES  NO

IF "YES" PLEASE INDICATE THE TIME PERIOD: FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ TO: \_\_\_\_\_

**WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR CURRENT APPLICATION:**

*INDICATE THE AMOUNT OF TIME REQUESTED:*

THREE MONTHS  THREE MONTHS, PLUS ADDITIONAL VACATION TIME OF \_\_\_\_\_ WEEKS

**PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR SABBATICAL PLANS**

**IF YOU HAVE APPLIED FOR SUPPLEMENTAL FINANCIAL AID TO AN OUTSIDE AGENCY, FOR THE PERIOD OF THE PROPOSED SABBATICAL LEAVE, PLEASE STATE:**

NAME OF AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_