

## **Prospect Hill Presbytery Pastoral Leave Guidelines**

The following guidelines are recommended to the Presbytery of Prospect Hill by the Committee on Ministry to aid in negotiation between sessions and pastors and church professionals when a leave is necessary. These are developed in consideration of the needs and welfare of the pastor and family as they serve the church. It is appropriate to include the guidelines in the policies of the church.

### **Family Leave**

Family leave is suggested in times of death in the immediate family of the pastor, of serious illness of the pastor or of a child, spouse, parent or parent-in-law of the pastor, or in the event of the birth or adoption of a child or foster child.

### **Time and Duration of Family Leave**

1. The duration and time of the family leave should be mutually agreed upon between the pastor and the session.
2. Suggested duration:
  - Death leave to be agreed upon between the pastor and session
  - Parental Leave for birth or adoption of a child – 6-8 weeks for the mother, 2 weeks for the father. Request for leave shall normally be made at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child, specifying the leave time desired. Vacation may be added to the leave time with full pay and benefits. If both parents serve the church, only one parental leave is granted. However, leave time may be shared by the two parents.
  - Serious illness – 8-12 weeks
  - Sick leave – 12-14 days paid sick leave per year, cumulative 2-3 years. It is not included in any severance or termination compensation.  
(If more time is needed, flexibility is encouraged and should be negotiated between the pastor and session.)
  - Family caregiving – a minister may request Family Leave up to the total available vacation days in order to care for a spouse, child, or parent of the minister if such spouse, child, or parent has a serious health condition. The minister may be granted an additional period of unpaid leave.

### **Compensation During Leave**

1. Sessions are urged to grant full salary and benefits for the entire leave. If a leave extends beyond 12 weeks, then other salary options can be negotiated.
2. It's recommended the pastor be relieved of all pastoral duties during the duration of the leave.
3. If a leave extends beyond the recommended time frame due to medical complications, application can be made to the Board of Pensions for disability

income. Churches are encouraged to be supportive in every way when such a situation arises.

4. The Committee on Ministry shall be informed when the family leave option is exercised by a pastor.

### **Sabbatical Leave**

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill recommends to the sessions of its churches that Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Church Educators be granted a compensated sabbatical of at least three (3) months after six (6) years of service to an individual church.

### **Rationale**

A sabbatical will enable the minister/educator to be renewed through the vital pursuit of continuing education, extended time spent in spiritual formation, and fresh mentoring by respected teachers. A sabbatical enables a minister/educator to return to the responsibilities of the parish with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

### **Committee on Ministry Responsibilities**

1. Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the minister.
2. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session, educator or minister relative to the sabbatical.
3. Determine who will moderate the session in the minister's absence.

### **Minister or Educator Responsibilities**

1. Bring the sabbatical proposal before the session – at least in outline form – a minimum of six 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. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the session before departing on a sabbatical.
5. Submit to Committee on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of plans.
6. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the session and the Committee on Ministry.

### **Session Responsibilities**

1. Receive "for approval" the minister's proposal for a sabbatical, at least six (6) months in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Continue terms of call commitments to the minister during sabbatical leave.

3. Communicate to the congregation the importance and values to the church of a sabbatical.
4. Request a written overview of the sabbatical from the minister upon return.

**Additional Responsibilities/Information**

If agreed upon by session and minister, the sabbatical might be combined with study leave for extended graduate study.