

Sabbatical Leave Policy for Parish Ministers in Western New York Presbytery

The Presbytery of Western New York recommends to the sessions of its churches that Ministers of the Word and Sacrament 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 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 to return to the responsibilities of the parish with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

Presbytery Responsibilities

1. Review the sabbatical timetable and plan as submitted by the minister.
2. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session or the minister relative to the sabbatical.
3. Determine who will moderate the session in the minister's absence.
4. Work with the church to find funding

Minister 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 two full years 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.
5. Work with the presbytery Committee on Ministry on funding.

Additional Responsibilities/Information

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

Possible Sources for Sabbatical Grants

Lilly Endowment Inc. - National Clergy Renewal Program

www.lillyendowment.org/religion

Up to \$45,000

Application deadline in May – awards announced in October

Money to be used beginning of January – up to two years to spend

Louisville Institute - Sabbatical Grant for Pastoral Leaders

www.louisville-institute.org

Up to \$10,000 for an eight-week sabbatical

Up to \$15,000 for a twelve-week sabbatical

Application deadline in August for following year beginning in March

The Board of Pensions PCUSA - Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants

www.pensions.org

Up to \$3,000 for pastors of small churches (fewer than 200 members)

Must be at least a four week sabbatical

Can apply through 2010

Must be in current congregation at least 6 years

Very Helpful Reading

“Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning”

By A. Richard Bullock and Richard J. Bruesehoff

2000, An Alban Institute Publication

COVENANT AGREEMENT for a SABBATICAL SUPPLY

In accordance with the Book of Order (G-14.0513d) and in order to set forth clearly an agreement for Sabbatical Supply service, the Session of _____ Church of _____ hereby desires The Reverend _____ to serve as Sabbatical Supply for the period of time and terms of agreement below. Both parties agree that this ministry will be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the historic principles of church order (G-0300).

1. That the above-named pastor will begin service on _____, accountable to the Church Session, and to the Presbytery of Western New York through its Committee on Ministry, during the period of this covenant agreement.
2. The Sabbatical Supply agrees to provide (____ full time) (____ part time) pastoral leadership for 6.5 segments per week. (*A full-time call is 13 segments per week*)
3. This Covenant is for a period of ____ months, commencing on the date recorded above (# 1), after which the time period may be extended on recommendation by the Session, by letter to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery for action by the Committee on Ministry and approval by the Presbytery. This Covenant may be terminated earlier by either party, to take effect no sooner than 30 days of the receipt of a written notice by the other party with a copy to and the consent of the Committee on Ministry.
4. The Total Financial Terms of this Covenant shall be; \$ ____ (see attached Ministers' Compensation, Benefits & Expenses Form (CBE)), within the contracted time period plus \$ ____ reimbursable for mileage.
5. The Sabbatical Supply (____ will) (____ will not) serve as Moderator, of the Session and congregation. If not, he/she will be invited to attend those meetings ex-officio; it is intended that the Sabbatical Supply and the designated Moderator operate in mutual contact.
6. The Sabbatical Supply enters into this Covenant with the Church Session and the Presbytery, agreeing to be responsible for the following duties **as prioritized:**
 - ____ Preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, and leading the worship life of the congregation;
 - ____ Attending appropriate meetings of committees and seeing that accurate reports and records are kept;
 - ____ Visiting the sick and shut-in, and counseling members as needed;
 - ____ Conducting special worship services and teaching classes as needed;
 - ____ Officiating at weddings and funerals, as necessary;

_____ Participating in Church and community activities as able;

_____ Write pastor's newsletter article and assist in newsletter preparation;

_____ Other Duties: Maintain office hours _____

7. The Session, for the congregation, promises to support and cooperate with the Sabbatical Supply in every way, assuming responsibility for:
 - a. Attending worship services and meetings;
 - b. Supporting the pastor in the church's ministry to the community;
 - c. Providing clerical assistance, as needed;
 - d. Supplementing member visitation (by elders and/or deacons);
 - e. Providing occasions for dialogue and member feedback
8. The Session, for the congregation, also promises to encourage and support the Sabbatical Supply's attendance and participation in Presbytery meetings and functions.
9. There shall be an evaluation of the relationship at the end of the relationship, in a meeting of representatives of the local church and the Sabbatical Supply. A report of this evaluation shall be placed in the files of both the local church and the Clergy Recruitment and Retention committee of the Presbytery.
10. The Session is responsible for the honoring of all financial obligations before the termination of the contract.
11. Copies of the Covenant shall be given and held by the following parties:
 - a. The Local Church Session
 - b. The Sabbatical Supply
 - c. The Committee on Ministry

SIGNED THIS DATE: _____ BY

_____, Clerk of Session

_____, Church Treasurer

_____, Sabbatical Supply

_____, Moderator, Committee on
Ministry, Presbytery of Western New York