

GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATIONS CONSIDERING SABBATICAL LEAVE FOR PASTORS SERVING UNDER CALL

These guidelines are intended to provide assistance for those congregations considering a sabbatical leave program for its pastor(s). It should be seen as a resource for developing a thorough support system for the spiritual leader(s) of their congregation. It is understood that not all congregations are adequately resourced to be able to provide such a support. Where the provision of a sabbatical leave is a viable option, the synod offers the following suggestions to assist the congregation.

Definition: A sabbatical leave is a paid leave granted in recognition of the need for, or the beneficial effects of, time away from the regular duties of a call following a time of continuous service in that call.

Eligibility:

1. A minimum of six continuous years in a full time call service at the same call.
2. Consultation with the Bishop of the Synod and the approval of the salary paying source.
3. Availability of suitable replacement service to the call.

Purpose:

1. Rest and renewal.
2. Travel
3. Study

Duration:

1. From three months up to one year.
2. The duration may be extended by an annual holiday taken at the normal time for that holiday.
3. In any calendar year, any annual holiday entitlement shall be reduced in proportion to that part of the year which may be spent on sabbatical leave.

Funding:

1. At least 50% of the regular salary shall be paid by the usual salary paying source for the duration of the sabbatical leave (where possible payment of full salary and benefits is encouraged).
2. In addition to the salary paid, the pastor's ELCIC study fund may be accessed if appropriate.

Return:

1. The pastor and the salary-paying source shall agree to a return to the regular duties of the call for at least one year following a sabbatical.
2. The return condition may be waived or modified by mutual consent of the pastor and the salary-paying source.

Benefits:

1. All the benefits other than travel allowance shall continue in full during a sabbatical leave.
2. All contributions to ELCIC plans will be deducted and paid by the salary-paying source based on the salary they receive during the sabbatical.
3. Income Tax, CPP, and EI deductions and payments will be made according to the Federal regulations governing those payments.

Applications:

1. Written application to the salary paying source, with a copy to the Bishop's office, shall be made at least six months prior to the start of the requested leave.
2. The Synod shall provide an application form which will require the pastor to outline a "sabbatical program".
3. The Bishop may appoint a consultant to help the pastor and salary paying source in the planning of a successful implementation of the sabbatical leave, and in the planning of supply to the call.

Note: It is important that a sabbatical leave is viewed by both the pastor and the salary paying source as part of the pastor's call. The pastor should consequently play a central role in the planning for supply to the call during the leave.