

SABBATICAL LEAVES

From time to time, a pastor or associate in ministry may desire an extended period. The following are suggested to assist professional leaders and congregations in the consideration of sabbaticals:

- Pastors or associates in ministry and congregations contemplating sabbatical leaves should consult with the Bishop or an Assistant to the Bishop early in the process.
- Sabbatical leaves are intended for in-depth study or personal growth related to the regular call of the pastor or associate in ministry, and should include time for personal and familial reflection.
- Sabbatical leaves will normally be for a period of not less than three months and not more than twelve months.
- Pastors and associates in ministry who have a minimum of seven years of active service, and who have served their current call or appointment for five or more years may present proposals for sabbatical leaves.

A proposal should include:

- a) A rationale for the sabbatical, including personal goals and potential value for the congregation.
- b) A detailed outline of the intended courses of study and use of time.
- c) An outline of financial implications of the sabbatical.
- d) An indication of the use of vacation time during the sabbatical. At least one half of the period normally granted as annual vacation leave shall be so designated in sabbatical leaves of 3-6 months. 7-12 month sabbaticals should include the entire annual vacation.

Realizing that the congregation will be without the services of its regularly called pastor or appointed associate in ministry during the sabbatical, the pastor or associate in ministry should seek the counsel and consent of the Bishop before finalizing the agreement. Proposals for sabbatical leaves should be presented to the congregation council not less than six months prior to the beginning of the leave. Careful consideration should be given to all aspects of the proposal and implications for the congregation and the pastor or associate in ministry.

Normally, the financial considerations for the sabbatical should be negotiated by the pastor or associate in ministry and the congregation. It is suggested, however, that salary/housing and the ELCA Pension and Other Benefits Plan be maintained at the current level, with the pastor or associate in ministry assuming responsibility for all other expenses.

When a sabbatical leave is granted, the pastor or associate in ministry should normally agree to serve the congregation for a minimum of two years following the completion of the leave. Within six weeks of the completion of the sabbatical leave, the pastor or associate in ministry should present to the congregation and the Bishop a detailed reflection on the experiences of the leave.

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