

Introduction: As congregations of the Manitowoc Cluster of the Green Bay Conference, East Central Synod of Wisconsin, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, we endorse our synod's policy (see attachments) of offering sabbatical leave for our pastors. Through ministry effectiveness and longevity, the church benefits when its pastors are allowed sabbatical time for professional and personal renewal. In order to make possible such times of leave, we enter together into the following partnership and covenant:

1. When our pastor is taking sabbatical leave, our congregation will...
 - a) Appoint an interim person (internal to our congregation) to coordinate coverage of congregational needs during the sabbatical. This person will serve as contact for all areas of request to cluster congregations and clergy.
 - b) For the sake of better planning, notify our sister cluster congregations of the intent for sabbatical 4 to 6 months in advance of the actual leave.
 - c) Train laity to cover specific tasks as needed, including preaching, worship leadership, confirmation ministry, hospital and homebound visitation, and wedding coordination. The congregation may apply to the Bishop to have a lay leader preside at sacraments in absence of an available pastor.
 - d) Make use of free pulpit supply resources from beyond our cluster (the Bishop and/or his/her Associate, LSS representative, campus pastor, church camp director, and other para-church supply).
 - e) Request from our cluster ordained coverage as necessary for preaching, administering the sacraments in public worship, crisis pastoral care situations, funerals and weddings.
 - f) In the event of a wedding provide a wedding coordinator to oversee any wedding rehearsals and service details. (Note: Our pastor before his/her sabbatical leave will complete premarital education.)
 - g) Understand the limitations of cluster clergy schedules and make necessary adjustments within our congregational life (e.g., possibly move our worship schedule to accommodate a pastor's officiating at the sacraments).
 - h) Accept with thanksgiving the ministry support (without compensation) of our sister cluster congregations and pastors.
 - i) Compensate any non-cluster pastor that we have invited to lead worship, etc., as recommended in synod guidelines.*
 - j) Allow and encourage our pastor on his/her return to share his/her sabbatical experience and gains with sister cluster congregations.
2. When the pastor of a sister cluster congregation is on sabbatical leave our congregation will...
 - a) Offer the assistance of our laity training resources during preparation for the sabbatical time (e.g., homebound communion visitors training).
 - b) Free our pastor(s) to lead worship, preach, administer the sacraments, and officiate at weddings in our sister congregation.
 - c) Provide a schedule of pastors to be on call for emergencies, crisis pastoral care situations, and funerals.
 - d) Appoint the cluster pastors, in conversation with the interim coordinator (see 1a above), to coordinate their availability and schedule for the above ministry needs.

May God bless our mutual ministry through this joint venture of support!

* It is our conviction that there would be enough support from cluster congregations (no compensation needed) and other free sources (see 1d) to minimize the number of Sundays (perhaps 2 or 3) for which compensated pulpit supply would be necessary.