

**Model Congregational  
Sabbatical Policy  
Professional Leadership Support Committee  
Southeast Michigan Synod**

***Introduction***

It is important for both the congregation and the rostered leaders (pastor's, associates in ministry, and diaconal ministers) to realize the importance of the leader's lifelong continuing education through workshops, seminary courses and personal study. We have long been encouraged to provide time and financial assistance to enable pastors and other rostered leaders to maintain and improve their skills. From time to time, however, it is very beneficial to the pastor, associate in ministry or diaconal minister and the congregation for there to be an extended period of time for study, personal growth and renewal without the demands of daily parish responsibilities. That extended time is called a sabbatical. Experience has shown that the congregation's ministry directly benefits from such study, growth, and renewal. Longterm ministry is revitalized and stimulated. The congregation, as well as the rostered leader, benefits from implementing a sabbatical policy.

**Purpose**

A sabbatical leave is granted to provide an opportunity for a rostered leader to take an extended period of time for renewal, enrichment, study, spiritual growth, travel, skill development and research.

***Eligibility***

- ☒ Any full time rostered leader.
- ☒ A sabbatical may be taken after every 5 full years of service in the present call.

***Duration***

- ☒ A sabbatical will normally be for three months (including the two continuing education weeks normally granted).
- ☒ Vacation is not included as sabbatical time.
- ☒ The sabbatical leave may be split into two blocks of time. Both shall be taken within a twelvemonth period.

***Cost to the Congregation***

- ☒ The congregation will continue to pay full salary and benefits (base salary, housing allowance, pension and insurance coverage). Car allowance will not be paid during the sabbatical time.
- ☒ Accrued continuing education dollars can be used for the educational costs of the sabbatical limited to an accrual of three years.
- ☒ The congregation will need to provide additional leadership support and service during

the sabbatical time such as guest preachers for Sunday worship, teaching, leading the liturgy, confirmation camp, new member classes, visitation, funerals, weddings, etc.

☞ The congregation is not responsible to fund the sabbatical in any other way. However, the congregation may consider gifting as a means of providing financial assistance.

### ***Planning***

☞ Planning should begin the calendar year before the sabbatical so the congregation and rostered leaders can plan for financial and ministry adjustments.

☞ The rostered leader is expected to provide an outline of the planned use of the sabbatical time to the Mutual Ministry Committee. Working with this committee the rostered leader will develop and present to the Congregation Council the proposed sabbatical leave.

☞ The Southeast Michigan Synod can be contacted as a resource when planning the sabbatical.

### ***Commitments following the sabbatical***

☞ The rostered leader will submit a report of the sabbatical time and share the learning and experiences with the congregation.

☞ The pastor is expected to remain at least one additional year in the parish following the sabbatical.

☞ The Mutual Ministry Committee along with the Congregation Council shall evaluate the benefits and costs of the sabbatical as a basis for planning future sabbaticals.

*This document should be distributed to the Mutual Ministry Committee  
and the Congregation Council.*