

Subject & Index No.	Sabbatical	POL-SESS-2016-3
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St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, through God's grace, is a loving, accepting, inclusive congregation serving others and fostering spiritual and personal growth for all ages. We rejoice in God's presence and in the abundant gifts we are given. We strive to be ambitious disciples of Christ and to provide a safe, supportive haven for all.

Category: Session Policy
 Owner: Personnel Committee
 Approval: Session

Effective Date: April 12, 2010
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Policy

The Pastor(s) of the St. Andrew Presbyterian Church are eligible for a Sabbatical Leave after six years of continuous service. The Sabbatical shall be for no more than three months. The leave shall be for professional development and be related to the life of St. Andrew.

Key Elements

1. **Eligibility:** A pastor is eligible for a sabbatical leave after serving at St. Andrew continuously for six (6) years.
2. **Length:** The maximum length of a sabbatical leave is three (3) months [plus accrued vacation].
3. **Salary:** The pastor will receive full effective salary, pension and medical benefits, automobile and transportation expense allowance, professional expense allowance, and continuing education allowance while on the sabbatical leave.
4. **Pastor Post-Sabbatical Service Commitment:** After the sabbatical, the pastor is committed to continue serving St. Andrew as pastor for one (1) year for each month of sabbatical leave taken.
 - o The pastor and Session may mutually agree to release the pastor from the "Post-Sabbatical Service Commitment" at any time after the Sabbatical.
5. **Pastor Post-Sabbatical Report:** At the completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the pastor will present at the next regular meeting of the Session, a written report of activities and findings.

Responsibilities

Pastor Responsibilities

1. Present the sabbatical proposal to the Session at least one year 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 one full year from the conclusion of the sabbatical for each month of sabbatical taken.
4. Bring up to date all pending responsibilities as determined in consultation with the Session before departing on a sabbatical.
5. Submit to the Presbytery Committee on Ministry in writing the sabbatical timetable and outline of plans at least six (6) months before the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
6. Upon return, present an overview of the sabbatical experience to the Session and to the Seattle Presbytery Committee on Ministry.

Session Responsibilities

1. Receive “for approval” the pastor’s proposal for a sabbatical at least one year in advance of the intended commencement of the sabbatical.
2. Continue terms of call commitments to the pastor 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 pastor upon return.

Presbytery Committee on Ministry Support

1. Review the sabbatical timetable and usage plan as submitted by the pastor.
2. Serve as mediator in any concerns of session, educator or pastor relative to the sabbatical.
3. Determine who will moderate the session in the pastor’s absence.

Rationale

A sabbatical will enable the pastor 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 pastor to return to the responsibilities of the church with new energy, spiritual vision and effectiveness.

Sabbatical Leave for pastors is a planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission. Sabbatical Leave follows precedents in the academic community and among a growing number of private sector groups. This “extended time” is qualitatively different from “vacation” or “days off.” It is an opportunity for the individual to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective because of a planned time of focus.

Sabbatical Leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and changed activity and an occasion for recovery and renewal of vital energies.

Application

The pastor shall present, in writing, to the Session for their approval, a program (“The Plan”) of activity for the Sabbatical Leave at least one year prior to the proposed beginning of the Sabbatical Leave. This program of activity and meditation shall include a detailed description of the plan, the goals to be achieved and the expected end-product(s), together with a personal statement as to why this Sabbatical Leave would be valuable for both the pastor and the church.

Upon approval by the Session in the year prior to the Sabbatical Leave, the Plan shall be forwarded to the Seattle Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry for their review and recommendation at least six (6) months prior to the proposed beginning of the Sabbatical. Included in this Plan will be the church’s plan for pastoral services during the period of the Sabbatical Leave.

Pastor’s Term-of-Call

St. Andrew will continue the pastor’s salary (base salary plus housing allowance), employer-paid job benefits (employer’s portion of Social Security, major medical insurance, pension, disability and survivor benefits, dental insurance, flexible spending plan) and business and professional job-related expenses (automobile and transportation expense allowance, professional expense allowance, and continuing education allowance) at the same level as those in effect at the time of the Sabbatical Leave. Vacation and study leave will also continue to accrue at the rate defined in the Terms-of-Call.

Funding

St. Andrew’s objective is to set aside funds each year so that resources will be available during the time of Sabbatical Leave. Presbytery recommends that they be consulted if St. Andrew is unable to provide funding for the Sabbatical Leave. St. Andrew shall also consider applying for grants.

NOTE: The Louisville Institute, a Lilly Endowment Program housed at Louisville Seminary, provides study grants for pastoral leaders. Contact Dr. Sheldon W. Sorge at 1044 Alta Vista Rd., Louisville, KY 40205-1798. Their email address is info@louisville-institute.org

Church Pastoral & Session Moderator Requirements During the Pastor's Absence

The Session will ensure that substitute pastor services are provided during the period of the Sabbatical Leave. The Session will consider all available options including the following:

- Elders trained as Lay Pastors or Associate Pastors
- Retired ministers who may provide pastoral services as part of their community service in retirement at reduced fees

Pastor Post-Sabbatical Report

At the completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the pastor shall present to the next regular meeting of the church Session, a written report of activities and findings. This report also will be sent to the Presbytery Committee on Ministry immediately following the Session meeting when it is presented.

The pastor shall also share with the entire congregation the details of the leave as well as reflections on its value and benefit. The re-entry process provides a great opportunity to reflect upon the benefits that resulted from the Sabbath Leave. Such expected benefits as:

- ❖ Discovering the strength of lay leadership heretofore under-utilized
- ❖ New understandings of the concepts of mission between pastor and congregation
- ❖ Reaffirmation of calling to ministry on part of pastor and congregation with both being reinvigorated and rededicated to the work of God's people.

The ideal result would be for the congregation to see this period of time not just as the pastor's Sabbath Leave but as the congregation's Sabbath Leave.

Revision Log				
Effective Date	Revision Date	File Date	Expiration Date	Revision Comments
Apr 12, 2010	- - -	2010 04 12	Apr 30, 2013	Original Release
√	Mar 11, 2013	2013 03 02	Apr 30, 2016	Extend Expiration Date