

Sabbatical Leave Policy

Lake Murray Presbyterian Church

Approved by the Session October 13, 2019

Rationale

Clergy bear the burdens, the anguish, the pain, and the hurt of church members on a 24 hour a day basis. They are called on to have spiritual reserves around the clock, yet the expectations placed upon them often make it difficult, if not impossible, for them to maintain their own spiritual reserves.

A sabbatical will enable the pastor or full-time member of the clergy (hereafter referred to as pastor) to be renewed through the pursuit of continuing education, extended time spent in spiritual formation, or 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.

Planning and Implementation of the Sabbatical Leave

A. Sabbatical Support Team

The Session will form a Sabbatical Support Team made up of the Clerk of Session, Finance Chair, and Personnel Chair. Other Session members will be included as needed.

1. Responsibilities of the Sabbatical Support Team

- Provide advice and support as the sabbatical plan is developed.
- Consider timing in view of ongoing church activities and initiatives.
- Consider finances.
- Consider the provision of ongoing pastoral leadership. As needed, provide support to that person as part of the planning process and during the time of the sabbatical leave.
- Develop a communication plan to the Session and the congregation.
- Consider the proposed length of the sabbatical including options if additional time is requested or if the Pastor does not continue service to LMPC after the sabbatical.

B. Responsibilities of the Pastor

- Develop and submit to the Session a written sabbatical proposal 9 months to 1 year prior to the beginning of the sabbatical.
- The proposal shall include the purpose of the sabbatical including the requested length, the specific activities to be undertaken, and the anticipated benefit to the Pastor and the congregation.
- Assure the Session and the congregation of the intent to continue service to LMPC following the conclusion of the sabbatical.
- At the conclusion of the sabbatical, submit a written report to the Session and the congregation outlining the insights gained, skills developed or renewed, lessons learned, etc.

C. Responsibilities of the Session

- Receive for review, approval, or modification of the Pastor's proposal for a sabbatical leave. The approval of the proposal lies in the sole discretion of the Session. The Session may approve, reject, or delay the request for sabbatical until a later date.
- Determine if the timing of the leave is in conflict with the best interests of the congregation.
- Continue the terms of call commitments to the pastor during sabbatical leave.
- Consult with and guide other LMPC committees and staff members in providing all church functions during the absence of the minister.

D. Responsibilities of the Congregation

- Become informed about the nature and purpose of the sabbatical leave and how the pastor will benefit from it.
- Engage in prayer for the success of the sabbatical and the well-being of the pastor and the church during the sabbatical time.

Eligibility for Sabbatical Leave

Pastors who have completed seven full-time consecutive years of service at LMPC are eligible for sabbatical leave. After taking sabbatical leave, a pastor must have another seven full consecutive years of service at LMPC to once again be eligible for sabbatical leave.

Length of Sabbatical Leave

The sabbatical leave would be a two-month leave which could be extended to three months if a year's vacation time is included. The sabbatical leave would take the place of the two week study leave in that year.

Cost of Sabbatical Leave

The pastor will continue to receive full salary and benefits during the sabbatical; however, costs associated with the leave will be assumed by the individual pastor.

If the pastor chooses to leave the congregation within a period of eighteen months following the sabbatical, the salary plus benefits attributable to the sabbatical will be refunded by the pastor.

If the pastor chooses to leave the congregation during the sabbatical leave, the salary plus benefits already expended by the church will be refunded by the pastor and pay and benefits for the remainder of the sabbatical will cease as of the last day of employment.

