

Personnel Policies for Pastors Lehigh Presbytery

These policies have been developed as a means of providing for the Sessions of the Lehigh Presbytery, a uniform set of personnel policies to guide them in their relationships with their pastors.

No policy can project and address all the individual variances and needs. It is the intent of the Presbytery, in the adoption of this policy, to establish minimum standards.

Matters addressed under state and federal family and medical leave will be handled accordingly. These policies are intended to have a direct effect on the care of pastors, both in setting a foundation for expectations and as an educational tool for those bearing formal responsibility for and to the pastor. At the same time, the health of a pastor and their ability to maintain appropriate boundaries in their personal lives has a significant impact on the well-being of a congregation.

In the policies we have used the term "pastor" to include all pastors, associate pastors, co-pastors, interim pastors, stated supplies, and commissioned lay pastors serving congregations. Just as the Terms of Call are reviewed annually, contracts between congregations and interim pastors, stated supply pastors, and commissioned lay pastors shall be reviewed annually and shall apply for a year. Such contracts ordinarily include the option for either the pastor or the congregation to end the relationship with 30 days notice.

Where the terms "shall" or "will" appear, this shall be seen as Presbytery policy.
Where the term "may" appears, this shall be seen as suggestive only.

Throughout this document, a prevailing theme is the partnership among pastor, Session, and Presbytery. It is primarily the pastor's responsibility to utilize vacation, continuing education time and dollars, and other contractual points agreed upon in the annual terms of call. But in accordance with G-14.0403 (5) "Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?" the Session and the Presbytery also have a role in encouraging, and when necessary, mandating such points.

I. Weekly Time Off

1. Pastors are expected to take at least one full, uninterrupted day off each week.
2. When there has been an unusually heavy work week, pastors are encouraged to take an extra day off during the next week to compensate. This is not considered a vacation day.
3. The Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery considers a full-time pastoral week to be forty (40) hours.
4. The Committee on Ministry expects that part-time pastoral relationships will express realistic expectations about the amount of time a pastor needs to perform the ministry to which they are called. The following examples assume a part-time solo pastorate. A part-time associate position is expected to demonstrate a similar division such that the time allotted is adequate for the ministry to which they are called.
 - ¼ time = 10 hours per week and provides a weekly sermon and monthly moderating of Session and Congregational meetings.
 - 1/3 time = 16.5 hours per week and in addition to the above provides a few hours for Christian Education or Visitation
 - ½ time = 20 hours per week and in addition to the above provides a few hours for Christian Education and Visitation
 - ¾ time = 30 hours per week and in addition to the above provides more time for ministry

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II. Vacation

It is primarily the pastor's responsibility to take a vacation. But in accordance with G-14.0403 (5) it is also the responsibility of the Session to hold the pastor(s) accountable where these responsibilities are not being met.

1. A vacation with pay is provided for all pastors. It is a necessary time of rest, refreshment, and relaxation for health and work performance.
2. It is the responsibility of the Personnel Committee and the pastor to see that vacation time is used annually in order to have an effective ministry.
3. Vacation is to be counted differently from study leave, attendance at conferences, or weekly days off.
4. Pastors are encouraged to take vacation in a large enough block of time (at least one week) for the refreshment which is necessary for effective renewal.
5. Full time Pastors in Lehigh Presbytery have as part of their Call one month of vacation. This is to be defined as thirty (30) calendar days, including their normal days off during the vacation period. Pastors who are less than full time shall receive 4 weeks off understanding that these are 4 weeks of less than full time.
6. The church shall be financially responsible for coverage of all pastoral functions as per the job description, including preaching.
7. The pastor should not be called back for parish duties during this vacation period except in extraordinary circumstances which shall be reported to the Committee on Ministry.

III. Continuing Education, Study Leave, and Allowances

The Committee on Ministry of Lehigh Presbytery believes that each installed pastor is responsible to engage in a program of continuing education. It is primarily the pastor's responsibility to request such leave. But in accordance with G-14.0403 (5) it is also the responsibility of the Session to hold the pastor(s) accountable where these responsibilities are not being met.

1. A study leave of at least two weeks INCLUDING TWO SUNDAYS per year shall be provided for all full-time pastors as part of the terms of Call. Normally the study leave should be taken each year. The study leave may be accrued up to six weeks (three years). Unused study leave funds may be accumulated up to three years.
2. The purpose of the study leave is to enhance the professional abilities of the pastor which shall be mutually beneficial to both the pastor and the church. The goal is for self-development in the work of ministry and not for vacation, recreation, or leisure. Study leave should equip a pastor for the work not only in the local church, but the whole Church. Hence a study leave may have immediate and direct relevance broader than the current pastoral position.
3. Each pastor is encouraged to present the plans and rationale for each study leave to the Session for discussion and the timing of the leave.
4. In the event of termination of service, any accumulated study leave time and allowance shall be forfeited. Pay in lieu of this study leave will not be provided.
5. A report of each study leave shall be given to the Session at the next meeting following the conclusion of the study leave.

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6. Provision must be made in planning the study leave to cover the pastor's work during the absence.
7. The Committee on Ministry requests that a brief description of how continuing education time has been used that year be included in the annual terms of call sent to the Committee on Ministry. Reasons for this include:
 - a. As noted above, "Study leave should equip a pastor for the work not only in the local church, but the whole Church." The provided description will enhance the Presbytery's ability to create and foster networks between persons and churches in need and individuals with knowledge or expertise gained through continuing education.
 - b. In order to fulfill the vow of G-14.0403 (5) it is the responsibility of the Committee on Ministry, on behalf of the Presbytery, to hold the pastor(s) accountable where these responsibilities are not being met.

IV. Sabbatical Leave Guidelines

Sabbatical leave should equip a pastor for work not only in the local church, but the whole church. The following is recommended as a minimum guideline for the extended period of rest and refreshment that is a sabbatical. Sabbatical leave is not to be confused with vacation, annual study leave, or maternity/paternity leave. The four types of leave serve different functions.

1. After the pastor has completed at least seven (7) years of consecutive service in his/her present congregation, the pastor will be eligible for a sabbatical. In addition, there shall be a seven (7) year interval between sabbatical leaves.
2. A detailed written plan of study with identified goals and expectations must be approved by the Session in consultation with the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. This shall be completed at least six (6) months before anticipated departure to meet staff and budget needs, and to permit the Committee on Ministry to be an active participant. The plan of study will normally consist of [the following are suggestive and not exhaustive]:
 - Courses of study
 - Events to be attended
 - List of readings
 - Personal growth and development opportunities
 - Articles to be written
 - Individuals with whom the pastor will study
 - Method of reporting
3. Sabbatical leave with full pay will not exceed three (3) months. However, it may be taken in conjunction with earned vacation within a particular year, and may be combined with annual study leave. Additional time without pay may be approved provided the total time away does not exceed four (4) months.
4. Pastors and churches planning sabbatical leaves are encouraged to save, on a yearly basis, sufficient funds to finance sabbatical leaves. The local church may, but is not required to be financially responsible for the pastor's expenses of sabbatical leave. Study leave monies may be accrued and used for expenses of sabbatical leave.
5. Sabbatical leave shall not be terminal leave. Pastors are expected to return to full-time service for at least one year.
6. If requested, the Committee on Ministry will assist the local church in securing pastoral services for the sabbatical period.
7. The Committee on Ministry requests that a brief description of how a sabbatical has been used be included in the annual terms of call sent to the Committee on Ministry.

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V. Maternity/Paternity Leave

In addition to other benefits, a pastor (assuming at least one year of service in the present setting) is entitled to a leave in the period immediately prior to and following the arrival (birth, adoption, or guardianship) of a child as follows:

1. The pastor(s) shall apply for the leave at least one month in advance of the expected arrival of the child, specifying the amount of time desired. The leave ordinarily should be unbroken, except for any period absence caused by medical problems.
2. If the pastor is the primary care-giver, the leave is a minimum of six (6) weeks up to four (4) months. The leave may include a period of time in advance of the expected arrival and also a period of time following the arrival. The first month of the leave will be at full pay, except automobile and professional expenses. The remaining leave shall be at a minimum, seventy-five (75%) percent of the pastor's salary (cash salary, housing and utilities).
3. If the pastor is the secondary care-giver a leave may be granted upon approval of the Session at a minimum of seven (7) days. The leave may include a period of time in advance of the expected arrival and also a period of time following the arrival. Compensation for the leave will be at 100% of the pastor's salary (cash salary, housing and utilities).
4. Any approved leave beyond the established reimbursement period may be without pay, up to an additional six (6) weeks. Flexible hours and part-time service may be negotiated between the Session and the pastor.
5. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.
6. Any salary increase action for which the pastor(s) may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective upon return to employment.
7. Maternity leave is not to be terminal leave. The expectation is that the pastor will return to full-time service.

VI. Sick Leave

1. Pastors will receive twelve (12) working days of sick leave each calendar year cumulative up to 90 days to be used in case of illness. Sick leave is cumulative by the month from the first day of service.
2. At the time of termination of employment a pastor shall have no claims for pay in lieu of unused sick leave.
3. The certification of a medical doctor may be required for the payment of sick leave benefits.

VII. Disability Benefits

If a pastor remains disabled by illness or injury after exhausting all accumulated paid sick leave benefits, the pastor will also be entitled to the following:

1. A pastor is eligible for disability benefits as a participating member of the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Disability benefits commence after 90 days of disability. Disability benefits equal 60% of the pastor's effective salary on the date disability began.
2. Churches are responsible for the pastor's compensation for the first 90 days of disability. This should include pay for unused sick leave.
3. Benefit coverage (except vacation and sick leave accrual) and service credit will continue during the entire leave, with the cost of benefits paid by the church.

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4. Upon completion of the pastor's disability leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to the position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.
5. Any salary increase action for which the pastor may become eligible in the course of the leave will be effective upon return to employment.
6. These disability benefits are designed to meet the requirements of state governments which have legislated such benefits. For current information on disability benefits, contact the Board of Pensions area representative.

VIII. Worker's Compensation

Everyone eligible in all churches shall be covered by worker's compensation insurance, in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to provide for benefits in case of an on-the-job accident.

IX. Unemployment

Pastors are not eligible for unemployment compensation. Please, refer to the Presbytery Severance policy for more information regarding the conclusion of a pastorate.

X. Holidays

1. The Presbytery recognizes the following annual holidays, and as such, suggests that the following be observed:
 - New Year's Day
 - Martin Luther King Jr.' birthday
 - Easter Monday
 - Memorial Day
 - Independence Day
 - Labor Day
 - Veterans' Day
 - Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday
 - Christmas Day
 - New Year's Eve Day
2. If a pastor works on a designated holiday, another day shall be recognized as a day off, to be scheduled within two weeks of the holiday.
3. When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it will be observed as a holiday on the nearest Friday or Monday respectively.
4. When a holiday occurs on a pastor's day off, it will be observed either the day before or the day following.
5. In addition, each pastor shall have one personal day at his/her discretion.

XI. Family Leave

The following guidelines are recommended to the Lehigh Presbytery by the Committee on Ministry to aid in negotiation between sessions and pastors when a leave is necessary.

1. Family leave is suggested in times of death in the immediate family of the pastor, of serious illness of the pastor or of a child, spouse, parent or parent-in-law of the pastor. In the event of the birth or adoption of a child or foster child the guidelines of this section are applicable to the secondary caregiver.
2. The duration and time of the family leave should be mutually agreed upon between the pastor and the Session.

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3. The first month of the leave will be at full pay, except automobile and professional expenses. The remaining leave shall be at a minimum, seventy-five (75%) percent of the pastor's salary (cash salary, housing and utilities). Sessions are urged to grant full salary and benefits for the entire leave. If a leave extends beyond 12 weeks, then other salary options can be negotiated as well (e.g. 50%, 60% or 75% for 90-180 days, dissolution of the pastoral relationship if pastoral illness or disability goes beyond 180 days).
4. The pastor should be relieved of all pastoral duties during the duration of the leave.
5. If a leave extends beyond the recommended time frame because of medical complications, application can be made to the Board of Pensions for disability income. Churches are encouraged to be supportive in every way when such a situation arises.
6. The Committee on Ministry shall be informed when the family leave option is exercised by a pastor.