

NEW JERSEY SYNOD GUIDELINES FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE

The Synod recommends that congregations and agencies consider sabbatical leaves as a privilege to be granted. These guidelines are provided to assist pastors and congregations in the contemplation and negotiation of a sabbatical leave. Additional information is available by contacting the Office of the Bishop.

1. A pastor and congregation considering a sabbatical leave should consult with the Bishop early in the process.
2. A sabbatical leave is intended for in-depth study on one or two topics directly related to the call of the pastor and should include time for reflection, rest, and recreation.
3. A sabbatical leave will normally be for a period of not less than one month and not more than three months.
4. A pastor who has a minimum of seven years in the active ordained ministry and who has served in the current call for five or more years may present a proposal for sabbatical leave. A proposal for sabbatical leave shall include:
 - a. A rationale for sabbatical, including personal goals and potential value to the congregation.
 - b. A detailed outline of the intended course of study and use of time.
 - c. An outline of the financial costs of the sabbatical to the congregation.
 - d. An indication of the use of vacation time during the sabbatical. At least one-half of the period normally granted as annual vacation leave shall be incorporated into a sabbatical leave of more than one month.
5. A proposal for sabbatical leave shall be presented to the congregation council by the Mutual Ministry Committee not less than six months prior to the beginning of the leave.
6. The pastor and the congregation council shall give careful consideration to all aspects of the proposal and its effect on the congregation and the pastor.
7. During the time of the sabbatical, the congregational support of the pastor shall continue at its normal level and include salary, housing, benefits, and professional expense reimbursements.
8. Any additional financial support for the sabbatical shall be negotiated between the pastor and the congregation council.
9. Usually, when a sabbatical leave is granted, a pastor shall be expected to serve the congregation for a minimum of two years following the completion of the sabbatical.
10. The pastor and the congregation council shall seek the counsel and consent of the Bishop before finalizing the agreement.
11. Within three months of the completion of the sabbatical, the pastor shall present to the congregation and the Bishop a detailed report reflecting upon the experiences and insights gained during the sabbatical.