

PASTORAL TEAM SABBATICALS

In order to encourage significant growth in ministry and to provide for a regular rhythm of reflection and renewal, Assembly Mennonite Church will provide for sabbatical leaves for the pastoral team according to the following policy:

1. *Timing of sabbaticals*

- a. To be eligible for sabbatical leave, a pastor will first complete three years of ministry.
- b. During the fourth year of ministry a three-month sabbatical will be granted.
- c. Subsequent sabbaticals will be granted during the eighth and twelfth years, etc.
- d. Accumulation of sabbatical leave is not transferable from prior congregations.
- e. For sabbaticals to be useful for pastors and the congregation, it is important to take them when scheduled. There may be instances when delaying a sabbatical is advisable, but those occasions should be rare. Normally, if the congregation asks a pastor to postpone a sabbatical, there should be an additional month added to the sabbatical. If the pastor wishes to postpone a sabbatical, that may be worked out with the Leadership Group, though an additional month would not be given.

2. *Financial arrangements*

- a. During a sabbatical, a pastor will receive the usual salary and benefits as specified in the current covenant of understandings.
- b. Following a sabbatical, the pastor agrees to a minimum of one year of service to the congregation, with the understanding that repayment of sabbatical salary and benefits will be made for failure to do so.
- c. The congregation will provide an annual amount in the spending plan to compensate for adequate sabbatical coverage.
- d. Pastoral professional development funds may be accumulative for the three years prior and during the year of the sabbatical if the pastor wishes to use these funds to cover resourcing and travel expenses related to the sabbatical.
- e. During the year of a sabbatical, vacation time will be reduced to one week.

3. *Planning for sabbaticals*

- a. Timing for sabbaticals will be worked out between the Leadership Group and the pastor.
- b. Planning the themes, goals and activities of the sabbatical will be the responsibility of the pastor in consultation with the Leadership Group. Guidance on this can be found in Central District Conference documents on sabbaticals and from other congregations.
- c. The Leadership Group will be responsible to arrange for coverage for the pastor's work.

4. *Reporting to the congregation*

- a. The Leadership Group will present a summary of the sabbatical plan to the congregation and may invite the congregation to find ways to parallel some aspect of the sabbatical theme or goals.
- b. Following a sabbatical, the pastor will report to the Leadership Group and to the congregation how the goals of the sabbatical have been met.
- c. The Leadership Group will report to the pastor whether and how the congregation has worked at the sabbatical theme.

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