

## **SABBATICAL FOR PASTORS AND FULL TIME CLERGY.**

### **Basic Policy.**

In accordance with *Manual* paragraph 129.10, full time clergy persons ministering on Canada West District will be granted a sabbatical. Following the second regular review of a pastor, (6 years), in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of ministry at one church, the church board, in consultation with and approval of the District Superintendent, will grant the pastor a sabbatical for at least two continuous months. Thereafter, the pastor will be granted a sabbatical for at least two continuous months after every regular review. That is, sabbaticals will be granted in years 7, 11, 15, and so forth.

The purpose of the sabbatical is to encourage the lifelong learning of the pastor in spiritual, emotional and educational dimensions. This extended period provides the pastor or staff person with time for reflection, to complete study projects related to his or her present ministry assignment, and to have a rest from the heavy schedule of pastoring. This sabbatical will be in addition to the clergy person's regular vacation and will not be granted consecutive to the vacation period or during the regular district functions such as District Assembly, Clergy Conference, and the pastor's prayer retreat. Exceptions may be granted in consultation with the District Superintendent and church board. Since it is intended that normal ministry will continue during the clergy person's sabbatical, sabbatical time will be taken at a time that will least negatively impact the continued ministry of the church. During the sabbatical, the clergy person will be considered to be employed and full salary, health care, RRSP and other essential benefits will continue.

The church will cover all expenses related to supply pastors and speakers during the sabbatical.

The church board in consultation with the District Superintendent following the pastor's review will take initiative for the sabbatical. Or, a clergy person, recognizing his/her own need for professional updating and/or personal and spiritual renewal, who qualifies for a sabbatical, may request a sabbatical. It is the responsibility of the secretary of the church board to ensure appropriate steps for the sabbatical are taken.

Both the pastor and the church board agree that the pastor will remain at the church for at least 12 months after returning from the sabbatical. In the event the pastor chooses to leave prior to this time period, the sabbatical will be considered to fulfill all vacation requirements and no further vacation time or pay will be granted. If the pastor leaves as a result of either a regular or special review, earned vacation will be provided.

Any eligible but unused sabbatical time will not be paid upon the pastor leaving the employ of the church.

### **Sabbatical Project Plan.**

Prior to the sabbatical being granted, clergy persons will be required to present a sabbatical project plan to the church board for approval with a copy to the District Superintendent. This Sabbatical Planning Report should include the following:

- The clergy person's goal for the sabbatical.
- The kind of report to be submitted to the Church board and District Superintendent following the sabbatical. When a staff person takes a sabbatical this report will be submitted to the Senior Pastor who will in turn present the request to the church board.
- Plans the church will make to carry out the clergy person's responsibilities during the sabbatical and how these responsibilities will be reported. Rather than delegating the Senior Pastor's ministerial responsibilities, to staff persons, they should be delegated to key lay leaders.
- A re-entry plan for the clergy person.

A re-entry plan is an outline of the provisions made for the person's adequate return to ministry.

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The request for a sabbatical should be submitted at least six months prior to the proposed sabbatical. The pastor making the request shall make no commitments prior to receiving final approval from the church board and District Superintendent.

### **The Re-entry Plan.**

A major challenge associated with sabbaticals taken by clergy persons, especially Senior Pastors, is the re-entry following the sabbatical. Often, it is difficult to re-enter the ministry of that particular local congregation after a sabbatical and the longer the sabbatical the more difficult it appears to be. The following is a suggested re-entry schedule that provides support for the pastor during the sabbatical and also provides for an adequate return to ministry.

For the first month, the pastor will be absent from all congregational responsibilities including worship services. The second month, the pastor will attend the Church Board meeting and the Sunday morning worship services like a guest of the church. That is, the pastor will not be expected to have a part in any of the service, unless the pastor so requests.

During the first week following the sabbatical, all persons who carried a ministry responsibility during the sabbatical will meet in person with the pastor and provide a written report. At the first board meeting following the sabbatical a written report outlining work done by the Pastor during the Sabbatical will be presented to the Church board. At this meeting, all persons who carried a ministry responsibility during the sabbatical will also report on their assignments. A copy of all reports should be forwarded to the District Superintendent.

### **Sabbatical for Current Pastors.**

For clergy who have been pastoring on CWD and have completed at least six years of full time service at one congregation, the sabbatical schedule will commence in the coming church year (2003-2004). Thereafter the current sabbatical policy will be followed. The sabbatical should not begin without appropriate planning for the pastor's study project.

### **For full time Clergy Staff.**

For Churches that have full time clergy staff, the Senior Pastor and Church Board will implement a sabbatical policy similar to the above.