**SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Often on completion of a number of years of ministry and service, clergy need time to refocus their vision, update professional skills and find renewal of the sense of call. Just as the Sabbath day is a gift from God during a busy week of work, so the greater gift of a Sabbatical Leave can offer valuable refreshment and rejuvenation for those who labor continuously for God's people.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of a Sabbatical Leave within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_is to allow adequate time away from normal job responsibilities for personal and professional growth, spiritual renewal and a revitalization of vision and hope. The Leave should offer a time of refreshment for the benefit of both the participant in the Leave and his or her staff and/or congregation. It would also be appropriate for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to consider how the sabbatical time would be an opportunity for its own growth and renewal.

**II DEFINITION**

A Sabbatical Leave is a break and change from the everyday routine and therefore would include a balance of reflection and prayer, rest, study and travel. A church-related Sabbatical Leave is ordinarily not the same as in a corporate or scholastic setting. Therefore, it is not primarily a time for advanced degree work (Th.M., D. Min, Ph.D., etc.), although some formal study may be one component of a well-balanced Sabbatical. A Sabbatical Leave is not to be considered a vacation nor should it be used for career advancement or career assessment.

**III ELIGIBILITY**

Eligibility for a Sabbatical Leave within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_would require the completion of at least seven (7) consecutive years of employment. There must be at least seven (7) years between Sabbatical Leaves.

**IV SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS**

The length of a Sabbatical Leave within \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_will be a maximum of three (3) months in any one year. Annual study leave may not be taken contiguous with a sabbatical. Vacation would not be taken in conjunction with sabbatical leave, but pastor is eligible for their 4 weeks of vacation in the same year as the Sabbatical.

Adequate opportunities for planning the substance of the Sabbatical Leave and for the sharing of its results are vital to its success and should not be overlooked. Prior to the beginning of the leave, there should ordinarily be at least one- year notice to the session, congregation and/or

staff outlining the purpose of the sabbatical. Approximately nine months prior to the leave, a written proposal detailing its purpose and content including plans for pastoral coverage and funding the leave should be submitted to the personnel committee and/or session. At least

six months prior to the leave all approvals should be secured (Committee on Ministry, Personnel Committee, and Session). A commissioning ceremony would be most appropriate and meaningful. During the period of the Sabbatical Leave, full salary and benefits will be provided by the employing organization. Payments under the terms of call for travel expenses and other administrative expense will be suspended during the period of the Sabbatical Leave. It is not expected that congregations will normally bear the entire cost of the Sabbatical Leave. A plan for funding the leave, including all expenses related to pastoral coverage during the leave shall be part of the leave proposal. (See below for some possible sources of funding.) Upon returning home from Sabbatical Leave, the Pastor must remain in his or her position for at least one (1) year. There will be reentry plan, which will allow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_and the pastor to share their different journeys. Examples of such plans might include a one-day all-church retreat with church congregation leaders, a special debriefing with session members followed by an all-church supper and time for sharing, etc. In all cases, the clergy will be restored to his/her former position and status and shall receive a salary at the level he/she would

**V FUNDING**

The following are some potential sources for funding a Sabbatical Leave:

Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders - The Louisville Institute awards grants of $4,000 (four weeks), $8,000 (eight weeks) and $12,000 (12 weeks) to provide time apart for pastoral leaders' study, reflection, and renewal. Grant applications can be requested by writing:

Sabbatical Grants for Pastoral Leaders

The Louisville Institute

1044 Alta Vista Road

Louisville, KY 40205-1789

Phone (502) 895-3411

The Lily Foundation Clergy Renewal Program provides grants of up to $45,000 of which $15,000 may be applied to congregational expenses associated with the leave. For more information contact the program web site: www.clergyrenewal.org or write to:

Lily Endowment

Religion Division

2801 N. Meridian Street

P.O. Box 88068

Indianapolis, IN 46208

(317) 916-7302

The Douglas and Patty Gray Fun Fund grants of up to $1,000 will be considered for pastors planning a sabbatical. Local Budget and Congregations are encouraged to plan ahead for Sabbatical Leaves by building a carry-over line into their annual budget for at least 10% of

anticipated sabbatical expenses.

Adopted by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_