

Policy #21 – Sabbatical Leave
Committee on Ministry – Presbytery of Tampa Bay

Education has traditionally been stressed by Presbyterians. An educated clergy is the hallmark of our church. Education does not stop with graduation exercises and the conferring of a degree. Rather it is a continuing process in the life of the minister (see COM Policy #12 “Continuing Education”). In addition, it is the custom of some churches to provide a sabbatical leave for their ministers after several years service (generally 6) which would allow an extended time of study and travel.

Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave

1. The congregation shall approve every sabbatical leave of its pastor and associate pastor, including the length of the leave, dates, locations and the subject of study. Since such leave is a change in the terms of call, it requires the approval of the presbytery through the COM.
2. Full compensation shall be paid to the minister for the period of the Sabbatical Leave.
3. Upon return from the sabbatical, the pastor shall report to the session about the leave, including material studied, books read, travel taken, etc.
4. The COM will work with the pastor in obtaining a moderator of the session in his/her absence.
5. Provision shall be made by the session for Sunday pulpit supply, coverage of pastoral duties, and response to emergency needs during the pastor’s absence. This can be done by the staff (if there is an associate pastor or parish associate, etc.) or short term interim pastor.
6. Compensation for services provided by an interim during the pastor’s absence will be determined by the work load expected.
7. The Committee on Ministry will be of assistance to any pastor or session in working out details of a sabbatical.

Financial Assistance for Sabbaticals

8. There are many sabbatical grants available for pastors. The presbytery staff is available to help ministers and sessions seek sabbatical grants.