

Sabbatical Leave Policy

Appendix A: Sabbatical Leave Policy (Diocesan Employee Personal Policies)

Every stipendiary Presbyterian canonically resident in the Diocese shall, following each five year period of service in the Diocese, be eligible for a Leave of Absence of up to three months for spiritual and intellectual refreshment, and shall be entitled to full compensation during each period of leave, provided however, that no Presbyterian shall be eligible for such leave of absence unless he/she has served in the position from which he/she would take leave for at least three years. No Sabbatical leave shall be granted to a person planning to resign the position from which the leave has been granted, within a period of one year. If questions arise concerning the proper interpretation of this section, the parties shall consult with the Bishop and his/her decision shall be final and binding upon all concerned.

PREPARATION

Preparation must begin prior to the budgetary year in which the sabbatical time is to be taken; at least a full year of planning is advisable. Applications must be submitted to the applicant's Vestry as well as to the Bishop. Included in the application will be a detailed plan of activities and an outline of the proposed program(s). Reasons should be given for how this sabbatical will make the person's ministry more effective and how the sabbatical will be of benefit to the church.

The application should also include plans for sacramental and pastoral services (Eucharists, weddings, hospital calls, funerals, etc.) during the sabbatical.

The parish shall be responsible for any costs incurred for supply clergy during the sabbatical.

The application should be presented to the Vestry and Bishop at least six months prior to the desired beginning date of the sabbatical leave.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Expenses incurred for travel and study during the sabbatical time are the responsibility of the applicant but may be shared by the parish and/or diocese. Expenses for substitute clergy are the responsibility of the parish. Should the applicant or parish find it necessary to apply for additional funds, they may do so. Therefore, those needing assistance should apply to: The Masuda Program, c/o The Diocese of North Dakota, 3600 25th Street South, Fargo, ND 58104

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Compensation is continued to the eligible person during the period of the sabbatical leave. Such compensation shall be paid as established by the then current practice and rate. Congregations are encouraged to budget sufficient amounts, annually, to cover anticipated sabbatical leave costs. Compensation for sabbatical time not taken does not accrue.

In addition, sabbatical leave is considered as a continuation of full-time service for the purposes of computing length of service in relation to pension, sick leave accumulation, salary advancement, housing

allowance, health and life insurance, and any other regular payments made as part of the salary package. Budget constraints should not be a reason for disregarding the entitlement to the sabbatical leave.

Annual vacation leave and continuing education leave are not considered sabbatical leave, but may be used in conjunction with sabbatical leave, the combined time away from the congregation not to exceed four months.

APPROVAL

Approval for sabbatical leave must be obtained from the Vestry (or governing board) of the congregation involved and from the Bishop.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The person returning from a sabbatical leave shall present, within three months, a written report to the Vestry (or governing board) and the Bishop. This report and the application for financial assistance (if any) will be kept on file in the Diocesan Office.

A report, in some appropriate form, shall also be made to the congregation and to the people of the Diocese through The Sheaf or other diocesan-wide publication.

NOTES

The Reserve Fund for Sabbatical Leave is called the George T. Masuda Fund. It was established in the amount of \$20,000 from excess proceeds from the sale of real estate as required by action of Coalition 14 in February of 1984, with the interest income only to be expended for the Sabbatical Leave Program.

Additional gifts may be received from time to time to increase the corpus of the fund; unexpended interest each year shall remain in the fund.

The Sabbatical Leave program in the Diocese of North Dakota shall be referred to as the “Masuda Program,” in grateful response to his faithful and effective ministry as Bishop of this Diocese from 1964 to 1980.

--Adopted at Diocesan Convention, October 1996

--Amended by Diocesan Council, June 2007

--Amended by Diocesan Council, August 2008

--Amended by Diocesan Council, April 2025