

APPENDIX I
Presbytery of Eastern Virginia, Inc.
Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave
For Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

1. DEFINITIONS

Sabbatical leave is a planned time of reflection and enrichment for ministry and mission. Sabbatical leave follows precedents in the academic community and among a growing number of private sector groups. This “extended time” is qualitatively differently from “vacation” or “days off.” It is an opportunity to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective as a result of a planned time of focus. The sabbatical leave frees the minister/certified Christian educator (CCE) from the ongoing pressures of deadlines, pastoral duties, and being constantly on call, and replaces that with a plan that encourages activities such as rest, travel, study, and reflection while allowing for the possibility of seizing the moment when opportunities not planned present themselves. A renewed and refreshed minister/CCE is expected to bring new energy and insight to the life of the congregation.

Sabbatical leave is an extension of the Biblical concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year for renewal. The model for sabbatical leave is Jesus Christ, who took time to be in prayer away from his own community. It is both an act of faith that God will sustain us through a period of reflection and changed activity and an occasion for recovery and renewal of vital energies.

Sabbatical Leave is available (unless otherwise negotiated in terms of call), to ministers and CCE's with six continuous years of service (with at least three years of continuous service to their current congregation). Sabbatical leave may be repeated at six-year intervals thereafter. The recommended length of the sabbatical leave is three months. Accrued vacation and study leave may be combined to sabbatical leave but is not forfeited when a minister is approved for sabbatical leave. Sabbatical leave should be built into the call process. Upon completion of the sabbatical leave, the minister would normally continue serving the same congregation/agency for a period of at least four times the length of the sabbatical leave. In multiple staff situations, sabbatical leave should be limited to one staff person per year.

2. FUNDING

The employing church or hiring agency is expected to continue the minister's salary/housing allowance, pension/major medical benefits, and at its discretion, part or all professional expenses at the same level as those in effect at the time of the sabbatical leave. The employing church or hiring agency should provide interim supply services during the period of sabbatical leave.

3. ELIGIBLE PROGRAM ACTIVITY AND JUDICATORY REVIEW

To be eligible for a sabbatical leave, the minister/CCE and session/hiring agency shall present to the Commission on Ministry a Sabbatical Leave Request six (6) months prior to the proposed beginning of the sabbatical leave which provides a detailed description of the sabbatical leave, the goals to be achieved, and a personal statement as to why this sabbatical leave would be valuable for both the minister and the church/hiring agency.

Upon approval by the church/hiring agency, the Sabbatical Leave Request shall be forwarded by the minister to the *Commission on Ministry (COM) for their review and recommendation. Included in this plan there should be arrangements for interim supply services during the period of sabbatical leave. At the completion of the sabbatical leave, the minister shall present at the next regular meeting of the church/hiring agency with a written report on activities and findings. A summary report, no more than two pages, shall be submitted to the COM for inclusion in the next stated presbytery meeting.

* For ministers serving a congregation, the session and the COM are the appropriate bodies involved. For non-parish ministers, the final judicatory review of both the requested program and its written report upon completion lies with the agency or committee that supervises the minister.

Presbytery of Eastern Virginia Sabbatical Leave Request

Name: _____ Date of Submission: _____

Church Name: _____ Church Location: _____

Name of Proposed Sabbatical Leave: _____

Date of Proposed Sabbatical Leave: _____

This proposal shall be submitted to the Commission on Ministry (COM) not less than six (6) months prior to the beginning of the proposed sabbatical. If approved by the COM a signed copy of this request shall be presented to the Session/hiring agency of employment for their approval.

- (1) **What are your goals for Sabbatical?**
- (2) **How will you meet those goals?**
- (3) **Describe the expected benefit to the congregation/hiring agency.**
- (4) **Describe the expected benefit to you as a professional.**
- (5) **What is the location of the Sabbatical?**

(6) Anticipated Sabbatical Expenses:

Travel	\$	_____
Books/Equipment	\$	_____
Room/Board	\$	_____
Tuition	\$	_____
Other Costs	\$	_____
Total Cost	\$	_____

(7) Sabbatical Time accumulated:

(8) Sabbatical Funds (may include Study Leave funds) accumulated:

Study Leave Available	\$	_____
Personal Funds Available	\$	_____ Other Funds
Available	\$	_____
Request for Grant Funds	\$	_____
TOTAL FUNDS	\$	_____

(9) Coverage plan during Sabbatical:

(10) Additional Notes:

Signed: _____

The Session/hiring agency of _____ has reviewed the
Sabbatical Leave Request of _____ and will abide by the
Guidelines for Sabbatical Leave document.

Clerk of Session

Date

The COM supports the Sabbatical Request of _____ as described.

Moderator, COM

Date

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