



**THE PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS  
COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP**

**MANUAL AND RESOURCE GUIDE**

***SECTION 9***  
**SUPPORTING MINISTRY IN THE  
PRESBYTERY'S CONGREGATIONS**

**COMMISSION ON LEADERSHIP MANUAL  
SECTION 9: SUPPORTING MINISTRY IN THE  
PRESBYTERY'S CONGREGATIONS**

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## **DUTIES OF THE MODERATOR OF A CONGREGATION WITHOUT PASTORAL LEADERSHIP**

In the Presbyterian form of government, the presbytery assumes special responsibility for the guidance and leadership of congregations without pastoral leadership. Since a session cannot function without a moderator, the presbytery appoints someone from its own members as moderator of sessions of congregations without pastoral leadership. The Commission on Leadership has the authority to act on behalf of the presbytery and appoint moderators for congregations without pastoral leadership, usually after consultation with the session.

### **The Duties of the Moderator of the Session:**

1. She/he shall be present and preside at regular and called meetings of the session, seeing that the requirements of the Form of Government for such meetings are fulfilled.
2. She/he should confer with the clerk of session prior to each meeting and prepare with her/him a docket for business.
3. She/he shall give leadership to the session to ensure the maintenance of the work and worship of the church, its regular services of worship, its educational program, its organization, stewardship and whatever is usual and needful in the life of the church.
4. She/he shall ensure that the sacraments are not neglected, and that they are properly celebrated under the direction of the session.
5. As moderator and member of the session, she/he will consult with the COL, and with its aid, advice and consent secure temporary supplies (or an interim pastor), for the pulpit during the period of the vacancy.
6. She/he should report regularly to the COL regarding the spiritual and temporal welfare of the congregation so that the resources of the presbytery may be made available as needed.
7. She/he should work with the session to ensure that pastoral care is provided to the members of the congregation.
8. She/he should work with the session to ensure that the assignment of specific responsibilities is carried out by the session members.
9. She/he should see that the presbytery's concern for Christian education, stewardship and interpretation of the mission of the church is maintained.
9. She/he shall moderate the congregational meetings of the church, seeking that constitutional notice and procedures are followed, and the actions of the congregation reported to the presbytery through the COL.

**Relationship with the Pastor Nominating Committee:**

The moderator of the session has NO RELATIONSHIP with the PNC itself, unless specifically outlined by the Commission on Leadership. The moderator does preside over and counsel the session in preparing recommendations for the selection of the PNC, and does preside over the congregational meetings when the committee is chosen and when the committee makes its report.

**Relationship with the Commission on Leadership:**

- A. The moderator of a congregation whose pulpit is vacant should have a relationship of cooperation and understanding with the presbytery's COL. The moderator position, however, has to do with the session of that congregation. She/he represents presbytery's interest in the ongoing life of the congregation, and has no relationship to the PNC of the congregation by virtue of being moderator.
  - 1. The moderator shall not consult with nor dissuade the PNC against any candidate or prospective candidate without the consent of the COL, through the COL's liaison to that congregation.
  - 2. The moderator shall refer all questions of the polity for the PNC to the COL liaison.
  
- B. The COL should obtain regular reports from the moderator of the church concerning:
  - 1. Session meetings.
  - 2. The financial condition of the church.
  - 3. The supply of the pulpit, including the financial arrangements.
  - 4. Public worship.
  - 5. The administration of the sacraments.
  - 6. Christian education, including the nature of the materials being used, and the status of the youth programs.
  - 7. Matters of discipline.
  
- C. The COL may invite the moderator of the congregation to meet with the commission to make reports and to discuss matters concerning the church, and should notify her/him of the time and place of such meetings.

**Expenses of the Moderator**

The church shall pay the moderator an honorarium of \$35.00 per meeting as established by presbytery, and mileage at the IRS rate.

## **MENTOR/COLLEAGUE RELATIONSHIPS AND GUIDELINES**

*Approved by the Committee on Ministry, January 2012*

**DEFINITION:** A mentor is defined as a wise, loyal advisor. Through the mentor relationship, the Commission on Leadership of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys provides support, friendship and counsel to individuals who may be student pastors, newly ordained pastors, clergy new to our presbytery or clergy from other denominations serving our congregations. The mentor/colleague is not an overseer or a supervisor, but a friend and colleague. The goal of the relationship is to assist the individual in interpreting the reality of his/her new situation in relationship to the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys.

### **GUIDELINES:**

1. Mentors/Colleagues for Presbyterian clergy with experience new to Minnesota Valleys Presbytery:
  - Period of mentor relationship: three months
  - Frequency of meeting: as desirable
  - Purpose: to welcome, orient and introduce new pastor to the presbytery
2. Mentor for Presbyterian clergy receiving a first call to ministry in a congregation:
  - Period of mentor relationship: one year
  - Frequency of meeting: twice a month for the first three months, once a month thereafter
  - Purpose: to welcome, orient and introduce new pastor to the presbytery and the ministry
3. Mentor/Colleague for clergy with experience coming from a background other than Presbyterian:
  - Period of mentor relationship: one year
  - Frequency of meeting: at least once a month for first six months, as often as necessary thereafter
  - Purpose: to welcome, orient, introduce, and facilitate adjustment to Presbyterian polity and theology as well as to the presbytery
4. Mentor for student pastors serving congregations in the presbytery  
Mentor/Supervisor of Commissioned Pastor (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder):
  - Period of mentor relationship: The duration of service of the student pastor within the presbytery or the duration of Commissioned Pastor (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder)'s commissioning
  - Frequency of meeting: once a week for first month, at least once a month thereafter
  - Purpose:
    - a. To discuss the role of a pastor in relationship to the session, presbytery, the worshipping congregation, and individuals in the congregation
    - b. To assist in developing personal discipline in maintaining his/her own spiritual life
    - c. To assist in balancing the demands of family life and vocation
    - d. To assist in addressing those issues identified by the student's Committee on Preparation for Ministry or the session of the congregation being served

**REGISTRATION OF CREDENTIALS:** If the pastor is new to the State of Minnesota, the mentor/colleague will advise the pastoral leader of the need and procedure to register his/her credentials with the County Recorder in order to officiate at marriage ceremonies.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** The mentor/colleague will be appointed by the Commission on Leadership and shall submit a written report to COM at the conclusion of the mentor relationship, or as situations suggest additional reports would be beneficial to the Minister of the Word and Sacrament/pastoral leader/student/Commissioned Pastor (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder), the session or the presbytery.

**EXPENSES:** The expenses of the mentor shall be the responsibility of the new pastoral leader's church.

**ADVISING THE MENTOR/MENTEE:** At the time of the appointment of a mentor, a copy of these guidelines shall be sent to the new clergy/student/Commissioned Pastor (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elder), the clerk of session of her/his congregation and to the mentor.

**PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS**  
**“GREAT EXPECTATIONS”**

**A Six Month Ministry “Check-In”**

*(Adapted from the Presbytery of Baltimore; Approved and Revised April 13, 2016)*

Church Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Pastoral Leader \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

*The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys is committed to nurturing healthy pastoral leaders and healthy congregations. To that end, the Commission on Leadership sponsoring “Six Month Check-in Conversations” to be used in each new call or commissioned relationship.*

*After a Pastoral Leader (Minister of the Word and Sacrament or Commissioned Pastor) has been in their called or commissioned role for approximately six months, two COL members will be appointed to convene a gathering consisting of the Session, the PNC, the pastoral leader, and the new Pastoral Leader’s mentor (if there is one). The purpose of this gathering is to converse about how things are progressing and to assist the participants in strengthening the relationship, as needed.*

**Part I. Please divide into small groups (mixing Session and PNC members) and consider these questions. (During this time the COL members may work with the pastoral leader to answer the questions him or herself. Once the small groups have done their work, the COL members will assist the groups to their conclusions.**

1. FIRST SIX MONTHS:

*For the Session, PNC, and pastoral leaders:*

- a) How have these first six months gone?
- b) Have there been any surprises?
- c) Have there been any “bumps in the road”?

2. MID-YEAR COURSE CORRECTIONS NEEDED?

*For the Session, PNC, and pastoral leaders:*

- a) What would you like to see done more of in the coming year?
- b) What would you like to see done less of in the coming year?
- c) What in your mind is essential for the session, congregation, and pastoral leader to remember in the coming year?

3. EXPECTATIONS (3 years)

*For the Session and PNC:*

- a. Looking ahead -- what are your top three expectations of your pastoral leader in the first three years of his or her ministry?

- b. What accomplishments do you expect? Is there a plan in place to help make this happen?
- c. In what activities ought the pastoral leader be engaged?
- d. What should the session and congregation be doing to support the pastor's ministry?
- e. Are the expectations realistic?

*For pastoral leaders:*

- a. What are your top three expectations of your session in the first three years of your ministry together?
- b. What accomplishments do you expect? Is there a plan in place to guide the session and the congregation?
- c. In what activities do you believe you ought to be engaged?
- d. How can you best support the session in its work?
- e. Are these expectations realistic?

#### 4. LEADERSHIP STYLE:

- Commanding – “gives clear direction in critical moments; is in total charge”
  - Pacesetter – “meets challenging and exciting goals”
  - Democratic – “values peoples’ input and gets commitment through participation”
  - Affiliative – “creates harmony by connecting people to each other”
  - Coaching – “connects what a person wants with the organizations goals”
  - Visionary – “moves people toward shared dreams”
- (from Corey Schlosser-Hall, Presbytery of the Northwest Coast)*

*For the Session and PNC:*

What leadership style, do you believe would be best for your pastoral leader to use during the next year with your church? Why?

*For pastoral leaders:*

What leadership style, do you believe would be best for you to use during the next year with your church? Why?

#### 5. CONFLICT:

*For the Session and PNC:*

In the event that your pastoral leader does something or fails to do something that results in your being concerned or disappointed, how would you handle it? If talking to the pastoral leader about your concerns does not resolve the issue, what other options could you consider?

*For pastoral leaders:*

In the event that your session does something or fails to do something that results in your being concerned or disappointed, how would you handle it? If working with your session about your concerns does not resolve the issue, what other options could you consider?

*(This could be used this as a teachable moment in which the role of COL could be explained.)*



**Part II. All present will then turn their attention to strengthening the Pastoral leader - Session - Congregation Relationship. These questions can be used to guide your discussions.**

1. Tell us about an exciting, positive, meaningful and hope-filled experience you have witnessed at your church?
2. Tell us the story of how you came to this church. What keeps you engaged?
3. If we asked church members, what they value most about your pastoral leader-session-congregational relationships what might they tell us?
4. What produces energy and vitality in your partnership among the session, congregation, and pastoral leader?
5. If your church could strengthen or transform the relationship between the session, pastoral leader and congregation, what might it look like? How might you get there?
6. If Jesus came to your church five years from now what would you hope he would see

**PULPIT SUPPLY LIST**  
**The Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys**  
*Revised and approved, November 17, 2016*

A list containing the names of Presbyterian Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Ministers who are members of denominations with whom we are in correspondence, Graduates of Lay Pastor/ CRE training programs or Presbyterian Ruling Elders will be maintained by the Commission on Leadership. The list may be accessed on the Presbytery website. Certification for State of Minnesota Statute 604.20 and Background Checks is on file for all persons named on this listing.

Congregations are strongly encouraged to use this listing when the need for pulpit supply arises with the following guidelines:

- Anyone (Minister of the Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder) supplying a pulpit more than two times in succession must have Commission on Leadership approval.
- Minimum remuneration is \$100 if preaching at one service, \$150 if preaching at two services, plus mileage at current IRS rate (\$.535 per mile).

The names on this listing are placed according to the area in which they live. These areas correspond to Presbytery Cluster Areas as well as "Other" for those outside the Presbytery bounds.

The information will include: designations as to Minister of the Word and Sacrament, other denominations, graduate of Lay Pastor training programs, etc. as well as address, phone numbers, email addresses and travel restrictions (if any).

**Management of the Pulpit Supply List:**

The Commission on Leadership shall appoint, each year, one or more of its members to bear responsibility for the Presbytery Pulpit Supply List. Their responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Being alert to new persons who might request or be available for inclusion on the list and make sure that the Background Check Statute 604.20 is completed.
2. Once the above noted Background Check has been successfully done, bringing the name to the Commission on Leadership (COL) for approval to be placed on the List.
3. Anyone who wishes to be included on the Presbytery Pulpit Supply List must be approved by COL prior to being available to a congregation.
4. Annually reviewing the Presbytery file to be certain all background checks have been done within the past five years. If any need to be updated, relaying that request to the Presbytery Office and receive the results, making certain a copy is placed in the appropriate file.
5. Be responsible for the annual mailings and updating of the Listing.

NOTE: Ruling Elders in commissioned positions will not be included on the Pulpit Supply List until such time as their commissioning is complete.

**The Process:**

1. Annually, persons currently listed will receive an email or letter with a form (FORM # 1) asking if they wish to continue being available for pulpit supply and if so, a request for current contact information and travel restrictions (if any). Opportunity is also available to request removal of their names.
2. Annually, following receipt of FORM # 1, Sessions will receive an email or letter (FORM #2) calling attention to those from their congregation currently on the Pulpit Supply list and seeking information as to whether continuance is recommended. The contact will also ask Sessions for suggestions as to possible additional persons to add to the list.
3. Annually, the Presbytery file will be reviewed to ensure that a Background Check has been completed in the past five years for each individual wishing to remain available as pulpit supply. If a current Background Check is not in the file, a new check will be done by the Presbytery Office at Presbytery expense (approx. \$12). Receipt of such certification submitted by an individual will also be acceptable if it has been done within the past five years.
4. Annually an updated listing shall be posted on the Presbytery website and a copy made available to each member of the Commission on Leadership.

**FORM # 1**

**PULPIT SUPPLY INFORMATION FORM  
Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys**

The Pulpit Supply list for the presbytery is being reviewed and updated. Your name is currently on the listing and we appreciate that you have been willing to make yourself available for this important ministry of service to our congregations. To assure your information is accurate, we ask that this form be completed and returned via email to: [karen@minnesotavalleys.org](mailto:karen@minnesotavalleys.org) or mailed to: Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, 4055 Abbott Dr., Willmar, MN 56201-9510.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please remove my name from the Presbytery Pulpit Supply list: \_\_\_\_\_

**PRESBYTERY STATUS:** If you wish to continue, please complete the following:

Minnesota Valleys Minister of the Word and Sacrament: \_\_\_\_\_  
Minister of the Word and Sacrament from \_\_\_\_\_ Presbytery

Ruling Elder: \_\_\_\_\_ Educator: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Church of membership (if not Presbyterian Minister of the Word and Sacrament)

\_\_\_\_\_

Church Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor of another denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Denomination and contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferences: How far are you willing to drive (one way)? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there other preferences? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your help.

**FORM # 2**

**PULPIT SUPPLY INFORMATION FORM  
PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS**

Dear Pastor/Session:

The Pulpit Supply list for Presbytery is being reviewed and updated. Where possible, we have noted below the names of those from your congregation that are currently on the Presbytery listing. If there are others you would suggest others to be included on the list, we would appreciate current contact information for them and that this form be completed and returned via email to:

[karen@minnesotavalleys.org](mailto:karen@minnesotavalleys.org), or mailed to Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, 4055 Abbott Dr., Willmar, MN 56201-9510.

Persons from your congregation currently on the Presbytery Pulpit Supply list are: (Please note if you recommend continuance on the listing.)

Others you would recommend as pulpit supply:

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your help.

## SERVICE OF WORSHIP AND RECOGNITION OF HONORABLE RETIREMENT

### Opening

There are different gifts,

**But it is the same Spirit who gives them.**

There are different ways of serving God,

**But it is the same Lord who is served,**

God works through different people in different ways,

**But it is the same God whose purpose is achieved through them all.**

### Litany of Recognition

O God, Creator of all things visible and invisible and Lord of history, You have called us by the voice of the Church to serve Jesus Christ and revealed to us this work for which we have been chosen.

**Thanks be to God.**

Holy Spirit, You have given us the scriptures to be a unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ, and we have accepted them to be God's Word for us.

**Thanks be to God.**

Master and Teacher, You have enlisted us in Your service and instructed us so that we might lead others, be a friend, love our neighbors, and work for reconciliation in the world.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Prayer

Eternal God, through the ages men and women have been called to witness to Your love and to give evidence of Your kindness to Your people. We honor your servant \_\_\_\_\_ today. Your Church has been enriched by his/her wisdom, energy, sensitivity, love of Your Word, and obedience to Your Spirit. For Your manifestation in his/her life and ministry, we give You thanks, O Lord.

We are grateful that, in the years ahead, he/she may enjoy a new measure of Your peace. Bless him/her with good health. Teach him/her new uses of his/her time. Continue to use him/her for the constructive purposes of Your Kingdom. Surround him/her with the continued comradeship of friends and colleagues. As he/she has served You with joy and faithfulness, may he/she continue to know the happiness of Your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Declaration

In the name of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, we recognized the honorable retirement of \_\_\_\_\_ in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the action of this Presbytery.

We, the members of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys express our appreciation for your faithful service and acknowledge the privilege we enjoyed in serving with you.

Beloved in Christ, in as much as God's goodness has brought you to years of Christian maturity in the gospel ministry, the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, in granting your request of retirement, desires to make public acknowledgment of your service to the Kingdom of God.

**Presentation of Retirement Certificate**

**Benediction**

## UNDERSTANDING SABBATICALS

*Adapted from the Presbytery of Tropical Florida*

1. What is a sabbatical?

A sabbatical is an extended time off for the Minister of Word and Sacrament in addition to the minister's usual vacation time. The purpose of a sabbatical is to provide rest and reinvigoration for ministers so that they can be even more equipped to shepherd the flock of God with vigor, creativity, and longevity. The sabbatical is both a reward to the minister and a great benefit to the church itself.

2. Why should a church provide a sabbatical to its pastor?

A sabbatical is a great benefit to a church since it helps to provide the pastor with energy, ability, and stamina needed to shepherd the flock of God with excellence over a long period of time. It may lead to far more effective pastoral leadership and prevent the pastor from burnout or tendencies in this direction.

This could possibly also lead to a much longer church-pastor relationship. While some may see a sabbatical as a loss to the church for the period of time the pastor is gone, they are failing to see the long-term benefits to the church. Instead, a church should consider the sabbatical a strong, worthwhile investment - not a sacrifice.

3. What is the Biblical precedent for a sabbatical?

The Sabbath day given to the Israelites established the precedent of the sabbatical from the very conception of the Old Covenant (Ex. 20: 8-10). Rest was considered highly valued and essential. As such, God commanded rest. In the Old Testament, even the ground for farming had to be given a one-year sabbatical after every six years of planting (Lv. 25: 2-4). Failing to do so would deplete the soil of its ability to produce bountiful crops. The results are similar with people.

4. Are there sabbaticals in other professions?

Yes. One correlation is in the teaching profession. Most educational organizations offer sabbaticals of sorts to their teachers. For the most part, this is built into the yearlong schedule. So, a teacher who is paid on a twelve-month basis has a two or three-month sabbatical each summer. A college professor's summer is closer to four months every year. (College professors are often given addition semester-long or yearlong sabbaticals, but these are often for publishing purposes.) Sabbaticals are particularly needed in the teaching profession. Teaching requires creativity and fresh vigor for optimal effect. While pastors are not schoolteachers, they are certainly teachers needing such rest and reinvigoration as well.

5. What does the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys recommend regarding sabbaticals?

While the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys does not require sabbaticals per se, it strongly recommends that churches provide them.

The presbytery sees the great benefits for both the church and pastor. Namely, the pastor is able to remain fresh, creative and thoughtful. This also leads to greater longevity for a pastor at any given church. Because we have seen increasing incidents of pastoral burnout, the presbytery urges churches to provide sabbaticals for their pastoral leaders.



This presbytery asks that a sabbatical be at least discussed with the pastor every year as part of the review of the terms of call. Each church should consider reporting to presbytery the fact that the Sabbatical was discussed when it yearly reports on all its terms. If a sabbatical is granted, the church should inform Presbytery and the Commission on Leadership in the terms of call and as the sabbatical approaches.

6. How much time should be given for a sabbatical?

Please refer to the presbytery's guidelines in Section 3 of this Manual, pages 21-22.

7. How does a church go about providing a sabbatical to a pastor?

If a church has a personnel committee, that committee could bring a recommendation of a sabbatical and its terms to the Session. An individual Session member can also bring up a sabbatical for discussion and make a motion for one. The Session would then discuss the recommendation or motion and make decisions regarding it. This could be done in a regularly scheduled stated Session meeting. In most cases, it would be best if the pastor were not present during the discussion so that open discussion can be made and a decision rendered. However, input from the pastor should be sought at some point and details of a sabbatical should be worked out in conjunction with the pastor.

8. How should the pastoral duties be accomplished while the Pastor is absent?

Often specifically appointed members of the congregation may be assigned to help with the pastoral duties such as visitation. A sabbatical may be a great way for elders of a church to step up in ministry. This in turn may make the church much stronger in the end. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders in the Presbytery who regularly fill pulpits can fill the preaching role. It is also possible that a Seminary student or recent graduate would be an excellent possibility. Either way, these costs will be somewhat low and manageable for congregations who prepare in advance. Communion must be administered by ordained ministers. All those who will be helping during the sabbatical should be secured well before the sabbatical begins. The presbytery can help churches to meet these needs and so both presbytery and the Commission on Leadership should be informed of an upcoming Sabbatical as noted.

9. How should the Session operate in the pastor's absence?

If the sabbatical is say, a one-month sabbatical, the Session might consider not meeting for that one month. Session is required to meet only four times per year. If the sabbatical is longer, say three months, the Session will most likely want to meet. To do so, the church must secure a moderator with the assistance of the Commission on Leadership. The church should be certain that major decisions regarding the direction of the church are not made in the pastor's absence.

10. How should the session prepare the congregation for the sabbatical?

The leadership of the church should make certain the sabbatical and its duration is announced to the congregation often. Every effort should be made to inform every member of the congregation of the upcoming sabbatical. The purpose of the sabbatical and all its benefits to the church and pastor should be clearly stated as well. The congregation should also be given the clear understanding that this sabbatical was proposed by and has the full backing of the Session. The congregation should also be made aware of who will be filling the duties of the pastorate during the sabbatical. All of this information should be repeated often and placed in the church newsletter and bulletins.

11. What should the church avoid in preparing the congregation for the sabbatical?

The leadership should not present the pastor as being given the sabbatical since they are 'burned out' or stressed out or in special need of a rest. This could give the impression that something is wrong. Even if this is the case, you may not want to inform the congregation of this in this manner. Instead, the congregation should be told that the sabbatical is a reward for the pastor's hard work and to make them even better over the long haul in service to this church.

12. What else should the leadership do for the congregation during the sabbatical?

The church leadership should continue to announce the sabbatical and its purpose and benefits during the sabbatical so that newcomers and others who have not been informed are kept abreast. The congregation should be reminded of those who have been given the pastoral duties during the pastor's absence so they know whom they should contact. The congregation should also be clear of the return date of the pastor.

13. What should Pastors do on their sabbaticals?

The pastor should do that which is restful and reinvigorating to them during the sabbatical. Many will pursue areas of personal interest engaging in projects that rejuvenate them and use their creativity. A pastor should not be using the sabbatical to prepare future sermons or lessons. Likewise, the pastor should not be making or receiving pastoral calls during the sabbatical. Even if these things might be enjoyed, it is not rest and would be counter-productive to the sabbatical and unfair to the church that granted the sabbatical.

Likewise, the pastor should not be visiting their church during the sabbatical unless there is some pressing emergency that cannot be handled by those left in charge. This would be very rare. Finally, the pastor should also not be using the sabbatical to engage in a search process for another church.

14. Should pastors stay in the area during their sabbaticals?

It is not recommended that pastors stay in the area a great deal of time during their sabbaticals. As a rule of thumb, pastors should plan to be away about half the time or more of their complete sabbaticals. When at home, a pastor is still likely to see parishioners in and about the community. As such, they are still 'pastoring' to some degree. As a rule, pastors should not take 'stay-at-home' vacations. They should likewise not take fully 'stay-at-home' sabbaticals. Obviously, getting away physically helps a person to get away mentally and emotionally. For this reason alone, pastors should get away during their sabbaticals.

15. What should the pastor do to prepare for the sabbatical?

The pastor can help the church to have the personnel in place to take on pastoral duties. The pastor can also help prepare these personnel for their task. Pastors should also plan what they will do on their sabbaticals in advance. Last-minute planning during the sabbatical itself may take away from the rest that is needed on the sabbatical. It may also take away travel opportunities for the pastor due to failure to plan ahead. The pastor may need to prepare well in advance financially and begin saving on a regular basis. Failure to do so may cause them to have fewer options when it comes to travel. As stated, a fully stay-at-home sabbatical is not recommended.

16. Should the Pastor be contacted when away on a Sabbatical?

This should be avoided. While there may be some rare occasion when the pastor would need to be contacted, this would not be normally the case. Instead, the person or people designated

as in charge during the pastor's absence should handle any emergencies that arise. If the pastor needs to be contacted, it would be at the discretion of those left in charge. For this possible rare emergency, pastors should be sure to leave their cell-phone numbers.

17. Is the pastor paid during a sabbatical?

Pastors are indeed paid their full salary during a sabbatical. A sabbatical is not a leave of absence, which is unpaid. Unpaid leave would not be desirable to most pastors.

18. Should the church offer the pastor monetary help for the sabbatical?

A church is not expected to provide monetary help to its pastor for a sabbatical. However, a church should understand that a sabbatical will mean many expenses for the pastor. As such, any financial help would be greatly appreciated and may help make the sabbatical even more restful and reinvigorating as the pastor is able to travel more freely. Therefore, a church may choose to present the pastor with a monetary gift as, perhaps, a bonus would be presented. A church should consider this monetary gift a part of the wise investment of the sabbatical itself and the reward of the sabbatical to the pastor.

19. Does the pastor still receive full vacation and study leave during the year in which there is a sabbatical?

Absolutely. The entire one-month of vacation and two weeks of study leave are given to every pastor during every year - even those years with sabbaticals. So, if there is a month-long sabbatical on a given year, the pastor receives that sabbatical and one month vacation and two weeks study leave. Sabbatical is additional time off. There is one exception. According to the Manual of Operations, study leave is not granted at all to Presbytery staff members in the year of a sabbatical.

20. Can a sabbatical be combined with vacation time and study leave so that a longer leave is made possible?

A sabbatical can have vacation time and study leave added to it in any measure. That is, you can add the one-month vacation time to a one-month sabbatical. (This would make for a two-month leave in total.) You can add on just one week or any other combination that is desired. However, a longer sabbatical may not be the best thing for the minister or church. Therefore, vacation time should only be added to a sabbatical if the pastor and Session discuss it and decide together that this is what is desired.

21. What should the church do upon the return of the Pastor?

Those with the pastoral responsibilities during the sabbatical should be in contact with the pastor upon his or her return. The pastor should be briefed with all needed information at this time. A church might consider having a welcome back reception after a service as yet another show of appreciation for the pastor. This might be particularly appropriate if the sabbatical was a long one. Again, the congregation should be clear as to the date of the pastor's return. The pastor should thank both his congregation and Session for their support and commend them for their wise action on behalf of the church itself.

22. Should a church provide sabbaticals to other staff members?

For the same reason a head pastor is given a sabbatical, the church would be well-served to provide sabbaticals to other staff members. Once again, this would be at the discretion and approval of the Session. For obvious reasons, a church would be advised not to place sabbaticals of staff members in a way that they overlap to any degree. Rather, sabbaticals should be well spaced out.

23. When in the year is it best to take a sabbatical?

Many pastors take sabbaticals during the summer. This is a down time in most churches both in attendance and activity. It is not necessary, however, for a sabbatical to be taken at that time. There may be reasons that a pastor will need to take the sabbatical at another time of year or that another time would be better for the church. So, there should be flexibility regarding this.