

**GUIDELINES  
SABBATICAL PLANNING  
Pacifica Synod - ELCA**

The Bishop and staff of the Pacifica Synod strongly encourage congregations to adopt policies allowing for sabbaticals for clergy and full time rostered lay staff. The following guidelines will help you as you do that planning. Feel free to contact the synod office with any questions you might have. Rostered persons contemplating sabbaticals should consult with the synod office early in the planning process. A good planning resource is Bullock, *Sabbatical Planning*, (The Alban Institute, #AL98)

"A sabbatical offers opportunity to get off the treadmill and provides an opportunity for renewal of vision and hope. It's more than just a chance to recharge your batteries for another year. It can be a life and soul-changing time, a time when perspective and the Holy Spirit can come together." (Alban Institute)

*ELIGIBLE STAFF:* Full time clergy and rostered lay staff.

*WHEN A SABBATICAL IS APPROPRIATE:*

The sabbatical may be taken in the seventh year of service in a particular parish. Years cannot accumulate between calls. (i.e. five years at Trinity and two years at St. Paul does not qualify), unless agreed upon at time of call. Sabbatical time may not be accumulated in one call and used in another ("use it or lose it.")

Planning should begin well in advance -- no later than the calendar year before the sabbatical -- so that the congregational budget will allow for additional expenses.

*LENGTH OF SABBATICAL:*

A sabbatical will normally be for three months. Vacation time should not be included as sabbatical time.

*COST TO THE CONGREGATION:*

The congregation will continue to pay full salary and benefits for the staff person who is on sabbatical. Car allowance/mileage is not included but may be negotiated.

Accrued continuing education dollars can be used for the educational costs of the sabbatical. Continuing education dollars can only be accrued for three years.

The congregation will need to establish a reserve account to be ready to provide resources for staff replacement during the time of sabbatical.

The congregation will usually need to contract with another clergy or layperson to cover the duties of the staff. This can range from full time ministry to some level of part-time pastoral care and worship leadership. Costs for the interim should be figured at the current rate for interims recommended by the synod.

The congregation is under no obligation to fund the sabbatical in any other way, but may assist as desired.

#### *PLANNING THE SABBATICAL:*

The responsibility for planning how the sabbatical will be used is up to the staff person in consultation with synod office and the local congregation council. This "three-way" partnership is very important. Neither the staff person nor the congregational council should make plans independent of the above-mentioned partnership. The synod encourages one month of total rest and relaxation, one month of learning for the sake of learning, and one month of learning that will directly benefit the congregation.

The pastor or rostered leader is encouraged to enlist an advocate who will speak and act on his or her behalf to educate the council and congregation about the rationale and need for sabbaticals, and encourage the congregation to enter into a sabbatical agreement.

The advocate will encourage the appropriate committees (Mutual Ministry, Personnel, Finance, etc.) to do the necessary budgetary planning and adjustment for additional congregational expense.

#### *COMMITMENTS FOLLOWING SABBATICAL:*

The staff member taking the sabbatical normally commits to at least one year in the parish following a sabbatical leave.

#### *CHECKLIST:*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mutual Ministry Committee encourages staff to consider a sabbatical.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pastor or rostered leader determines interest and how she or he might use the three months.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Council or committee adjusts budget to allow for additional staff coverage. (How much time will the interim need to work? Will it be full time? Part time? Will regular office hours need to be kept? What are the expectations of the interim?)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staff or council contacts the synod office for partnership in the sabbatical plans and for aid in finding an available interim.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrangements are made with interim three months in advance of the sabbatical. Compensation is agreed on, number of hours to be worked, etc.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The staff member taking the sabbatical makes all necessary arrangements for his or her course of study, travel, etc.