

Sabbatical Policy

I. Introduction

- II.** The term Sabbatical is derived from the Hebrew word “Sabbath,” which means to “cease or rest.” The Bible notes that God rested from the work of creation after six days (Genesis 2:1-3). Two citing of the Ten Commandments describe the Sabbath as a day of reflection on the blessing of God for creation (Exodus 20:8-11), and for release from the bondage of slavery (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). Deuteronomy 15:1-6 describes the release from several kinds of debt and labour at the end of every seventh year. Finally, Leviticus 25:1-7 describes the Jubilee principle that there shall be a restful Sabbath for the land, a rest toward the Lord, at the seventh year.
- III.** The principle of sabbatical is biblical, and it represents a time for rest, renewal and recovery.
1. SCCEFC encourages eligible pastoral staff to take sabbatical leave as outlined in this policy.

II. Definition and Conditions

1. Sabbatical is a carefully planned period of time in which a pastoral staff is granted leave away from his or her normal responsibilities and routines in order to spend an extended period of time in spiritual renewal, educational training, professional enrichment, theological reflection as well as reflection and renewal of the vision and mission of the individual’s ministry. It is not to be viewed as an extended vacation.
2. A Sabbatical is an opportunity for a pastoral staff to refill his or her own hearts and resources in order that he or she might continue to lead the church and serve the Lord in this calling. It is not just a reward for longevity of service.
3. Sabbatical is a spiritual discipline focused on personal renewal for the benefit of both pastoral staff and the church overall. It is not to be considered either as part of the remuneration package negotiated at the time a pastoral staff is engaged or as a condition of remuneration revision during the term of his or her service.
4. The length of a Sabbatical shall not be more than six (6) consecutive months. Extended leave beyond six (6) months can be granted subjected to JMM approval.

III. Eligibility and Responsibility

1. To be eligible to request a Sabbatical, the individual must have completed a minimum of six (6) years of continuous, full-time service as a pastoral staff with the SCCEFC.
2. For the purpose of this policy, pastoral staff would include Senior Pastor, Congregational Pastor, Congregational Associated Pastor, Congregational Assistant Pastor, Parish Nurse and full-time Ministry staff.
3. The pastoral staff shall agree to return to his or her present ministry at the conclusion of the Sabbatical and continue to serve in his previous capacity or other similar capacity as agreed with the Church for at least one year. Otherwise, the individual shall repay the Church for the salary he or she received during the Sabbatical.

4. If wages are provided from other sources as part of the Sabbatical, the church will pay to the individual the difference between the staff member's church salary and the wages provided by the other source.
5. Within thirty (30) days of completing the Sabbatical, the pastoral staff shall submit a two-to-three-page report or evaluation paper to the Joint Church Board ("JCB"). This paper should discuss the Sabbatical experience with respect to spiritual or ministry insight, personal reflection or renewal etc. during the leave.

IV. Application Procedure

1. Application for a Sabbatical shall submit a written proposal to the JCB at least six (6) months prior to the beginning of the desired Sabbatical.
2. The written proposal should include:
 - The specific details of the Sabbatical program including date, duration, activities and cost.
 - How this time might provide renewal and professional growth.
3. The pastoral staff will discuss his or her application with JCB and work out details regarding how ministerial responsibilities will be met during the Sabbatical period.
4. Following the review of the application, the JCB may make recommendation to the Joint Membership Meeting ("JMM") for approval.
5. If there are multiple individuals eligible for Sabbatical, those with the longest tenure would normally be eligible first.

V. Financial Arrangements

1. During the period of the Sabbatical, the pastoral staff will continue to receive the full salary and benefits.
2. The pastoral staff will be reimbursed for not more than \$3,000* with respect to the expenses incurred for training, studying, retreating or academic activities. The expenses shall require pre-approval by the JMM prior to the beginning of the Sabbatical. The eligible amount of expenses shall be pro-rated on a four-month basis.
3. SCCEFC shall set up a separate Sabbatical Accrual Fund for the purpose of paying all expenses to be incurred as a result of Sabbatical.
4. To ascertain the availability of the Fund, an accrual Sabbatical expense will be charged to the General Fund monthly. It is suggested the amount to be calculated at 1.5% of the total pastoral staff budgeted salary.
5. Every year before the adoption of the Church annual budget, the JCB shall review the balance of the Fund and determine whether the accrual process should be continued for the coming years or temporarily suspended if adequate funding has been reached.

* \$ 3,000 limit is based on 2004 money. Amount shall be adjusted subject to inflation index when deemed required by the administrator (i.e. the JCB).