

COM GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ELDER OR COMMISSIONED RULING ELDER STUDY LEAVE/CONTINUING EDUCATION

The denomination's commitment to continuing education is rooted in the belief that the challenges of ministry require continual personal and professional growth. This is a commitment made by pastors, congregations and the presbytery at the time of a call. It is understood that each should work toward the continual growth of the pastors and CRE's for the mutual benefit of all. It should also be understood that areas of personal growth are on a lifetime continuum, beneficial both to the individual and the church.

Too often continuing education experiences are like gathering of pebbles at the beach, rather than the formation of a foundation upon which one can faithfully build. The pebbles are attractive, but their benefit limited. It is the recommendation of the Committee on Ministry that each session review annually the pastor's continuing education activities in light of both personal and professional objectives. It is incumbent upon every church professional in order to fulfill his/her commitment to continual growth to establish for themselves such objectives.

It is necessary on the church's part to provide time, counsel and the financial resources to enable their pastoral staff the freedom for continued growth.

To encourage and reward longevity in pastoral positions, sessions should consider sabbatical leaves as part of their long range planning for professional growth. Before any sabbatical is approved, specific details in terms of finances, purpose, duration, etc. must be submitted to the Commission on Ministry not later than six months in advance of such leave.

Recognition should also be given to the unique role a pastor's spouse may play in congregational life and consideration should be given to their part in the pastor's personal growth as objectives are being contemplated.

In order to meet this mutual commitment, the Commission on Ministry has adopted the following guidelines for annual review:

As a Presbytery, we are deeply concerned for the personal, spiritual and educational health and maturity of our Pastors and CRE's. For all Pastors, we require a minimum of two weeks annual study/continuing education leave to help serve this purpose.

The following guidelines are designed as tools for annual review. Use these questions as a means to identify priorities and assure accountability. We trust this instrument will serve your Pastors, CRE's and churches well by assuring greater intentional communication.

1. What are three long term goals of your congregation?

2. What are three long term goals of your Pastor or CRE in respect to serving your Church?

3. What current study/continuing education needs does the Pastor or CRE recognize in his or her own life and ministry?

4. What study/continuing education options are being considered for the coming year, and for what purpose?

5. What recommendations, if any, might the Session have by way of encouragement for future continuing education focus? Why?

6. Record study/continuing education experiences completed this past year, with a brief purpose statement and dates noted. These are to be signed by the Pastor, CRE, and the Chair of the Personnel Committee (if there is not a Personnel Committee, then by the Clerk of Session.) At the conclusion of each calendar year, these forms shall be submitted through the COM liaison to the Commission on Ministry.

_____	_____
Pastor or CRE	Date
_____	_____
Personnel Chair or Clerk of Session	Date
_____	_____
COM Liaison	Date
_____	_____
COM Chairperson	Date Reviewed by COM