

SABBATICAL GUIDELINES

The sabbatical is a time for teaching elders to experience emotional, intellectual and spiritual renewal and regeneration of vision and vitality within their ministry. It provides a time for a teaching elder to gain new perspectives on his/her immediate ministry in order to return with new insights and energy.

1. The teaching elder becomes eligible for a sabbatical after six years of service at a particular congregation. COM believes that providing regular sabbaticals according to biblical models after 6 years of service and repeated on similar length cycles for continuing service to a particular congregation is a good tool for extending pastors' effective service to and relationship with their congregations.
2. Plans for the sabbatical need to be approved by the session in consultation with COM.
3. Typically a sabbatical is for 3 months. Additional time may be negotiated using current vacation time, accrued study leave or other reasons as determined between pastor and session."
4. Before beginning the sabbatical the teaching elder and session will establish a plan for pastoral leadership and administrative leadership that will be used during the absence of the minister.
5. It is helpful for a congregation to budget annually an additional amount of 1% to 1 ½ % of salary and housing to accumulate funds for congregational costs during the sabbatical.
6. It is also recommended that the teaching elder accumulate additional funds for his/her use during the sabbatical.
7. The teaching elder continues to receive his/her effective salary during the sabbatical time.
8. It is expected that during the sabbatical the teaching elder is not required to provide pastoral leadership.
9. It is appropriate for the teaching elder to report learnings/experience from the sabbatical to the session and congregation upon his/her return.
10. It is expected that a teaching elder will serve at least one year in the present congregation upon returning from the sabbatical.