

Agenda:

Congregation Annual Meeting January 30, 2022 9:30 am

1. Call to Order: Jay
2. Establish Quorum
3. Prayer: Pastor
4. Secretary's Report: Minutes of the Annual Meeting January 31, 2021 Debby
5. Election of Council Members: Jay
 - a. Nominated: Jay Fisher (2nd Term), Jim Taylor (1st Term), Jeff Petersen (1st Term)
6. Reports:
 - a. Treasurer's report 2021 and Budget for 2022
 - b. Reports
 1. Pastor's Report
 2. President's Report
 3. COMMITTEE REPORTS
 - a. Audit
 - b. Education
 - c. Fellowship
 - d. Property/Work Crew
 - e. Memorial Garden
 - f. Outreach and Publicity
 - g. Stephen Ministry
 - h. Worship and Music
 - i. Altar Guild
7. A Continuing Resolution: Sabbatical Policy and Procedure (Addendum).
8. Report of Election
9. Election of Nominating Committee Member
10. Election of Synod/Conference Assembly Voting Members
 - a. June 3-5, 2022 Caribe Royal Orlando
 - b. 1 Male
 - c. 1 Female
11. Installation of NEW Council Members
12. Adjourn
13. Lord's Prayer

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ROTONDA WEST, INC. A CONTINUING RESOLUTION JANUARY 2022

C9.40.A22 To support the ministry of this congregation and care for its Rostered Minister(s), the following Sabbatical Policy and Procedure is adopted.

A. Sabbatical Policy

1. A sabbatical leave is understood to be a time of release from normal duties in order that a Rostered Minister may devote time to renewal and study.
2. A sabbatical leave is understood as an integral and important part of an overall strategy for enhancing the mission of the congregation through Rostered Minister renewal, development, and growth.
3. Rostered Ministers shall be eligible for a sabbatical leave in accordance with these options;
 - a. A sabbatical leave of 2 months after having continuously served the congregation full-time for 4 years.
 - b. (or) A sabbatical leave of 3 months after having continuously served the congregation full-time for 6 years.Thereafter, a Rostered Minister shall be eligible for further sabbaticals at the appropriate interval.
4. Recipients of sabbatical leave opportunities will be expected to serve the congregation for at least one year following return from a sabbatical leave.
5. Sabbatical leaves are not granted automatically, but shall be evaluated, approved, and administered by the Congregation Council.

B. Sabbatical Procedure

1. Sabbatical leave procedures are to be considered flexible so as to accommodate surprises and unusual opportunities that may develop.
2. Since the congregation and entire church are ultimately enriched by the Rostered Minister's sabbatical leave, it is desirable that there be shared planning with the Rostered Minister's coworkers, interested congregation members, and the Congregation Council.
3. Rostered Ministers seeking sabbatical leave shall submit a written proposal to the Congregation Council providing adequate notice of the requested sabbaticals so as to allow for necessary coordination and budgeting for the proposed leave. Notice of between 3 months and 6 months is encouraged.
4. Proposals to the Congregation Council should include the following:
 - a. Personal objectives and program objectives
 - b. Congregation benefits
 - c. A description of the major elements of the experience
 - d. Proposed beginning date and end date
 - e. Suggestions of how current job responsibilities will be handled during the leave
 - f. A description of any anticipated budgetary implications
5. A sabbatical leave is separate and distinct from continuing education and vacation, which shall be granted as in any other year.
6. A Rostered Minister shall continue to receive normal compensation and benefits during the period of the sabbatical leave.
7. The Rostered Minister on sabbatical leave shall be responsible for the costs of the sabbatical activities, unless the congregation chooses to contribute to such costs. The Rostered Minister may choose to use accumulated continuing education funds for such purpose. The congregation is responsible for Rostered Minister coverage during the sabbatical.
8. Within a month of return from sabbatical leave, the Rostered Minister shall submit a written report and evaluation of the leave to the Congregation Council.

Sabbatical – Facts and Information

What is a Sabbatical?

The need for a deep and deliberate break from the demands of ministry has historically been known by the name 'sabbatical.' First practiced by churches and then adopted within academic circles to allow teachers study and research time, it is also an idea currently gaining acceptance in the realm of business. The word sabbatical is rooted in the Biblical idea of Sabbath which involves ceasing, rest, worship, play and reflection. Sabbatical in its original form was the ancient practice in Israel of letting the land lie fallow for an entire year after seven years of activity (Exodus 23:10-11). This strategy allowed the earth to replenish itself so that it could continue to bear fruit. Throughout church history ministry leaders have retreated for periods of time to connect in deeper and restorative ways with God.

What is the purpose for this Sabbatical?

Sabbatical is a strategic act of self-care for both church and leaders. The gift of an extended sabbatical leave is an investment in the vitality and health of the congregation.

Here are some sobering statistics:

- Roughly 1,600 pastors in U.S. churches quit or resign from their jobs each month.
- Nearly 20% of pastors are suffering from stress or burnout.
- 50% of pastors become divorced.
- Within 5 years of graduating from Seminary, 80% of pastors have left the ministry.
- The average tenure of a pastor in a church today is only 3 years.
- The average tenure of a pastor's ministry career is only 14 years.

The season of disengagement during a sabbatical is not a vacation, but rather a very intentional and deliberate time for rest, repair, restoration and refreshing. It's to us what dry docking is to a ship. The ship is pulled from the water for a short time so that her hull can be cleaned and repaired and then returned to the ocean ready and able.

And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work, which God had created and made. Genesis 2:2-3

Definition of a Sabbatical

The idea of a sabbatical has biblical origins. The very root of the word is the same as that of "Sabbath." Throughout the Old Testament, God instructs people to work six days and rest on the seventh. In Leviticus, God instructs people to allow the land to rest every seventh year – meaning no farming, no planting, and no harvesting.

To help instructors renew their passion for their academic specialties, medieval colleges and universities began to grant professors a leave of absence every seven years. Most colleges and universities continue this practice today – giving teachers the opportunity to rest, expand their knowledge, write, travel to places relevant to their area of study, and teach at other institutions.

Sabbatical Leave for Pastors is a planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission. It is qualitatively different from vacation, days off, or continuing education. Sabbatical Leave provides an opportunity for the Pastor to take an extended period of time for study, spiritual growth, rest, skill development, research, and/or experimentation - all for the purpose of enrichment for continued service in the church. It is an opportunity for the individual to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective. Pastors find sabbaticals to be transformative experiences that strengthen, develop and renew their ability to continue serving in ministry.

Length of Leave

Sabbatical Leave is recommended for all full-time Pastors who have served in their present position for at least six (6) continuous years. The recommended length of the Sabbatical Leave is three (3) to six (6) months. Accrued vacation and continuing education leave may be attached to the Sabbatical Leave. Time and cost of this vacation and continuing education may or may not be included. Upon completion of the Sabbatical Leave, the Pastor agrees to continue serving the congregation for a period of at least one (1) year. (Reference: The synod's *Rostered Leader's Compensation and Benefits Manual*)

Why Grant a Sabbatical?

Encourages Longer Pastorates

Congregations have difficulty realizing long-term goals without having long-term Pastorates. Adopting a sabbatical policy is one way to increase the congregation's chances of keeping its Pastor. Whenever there is a change in Pastorates, more than five years can be lost before development and growth can happen (including a few years of "burnout" before the Pastor resigns, a transitional or interim Pastorate, and a few years for the new Pastor to get to know the congregation and to lead them in developing a strategic direction).

Contributes To Spiritual Growth

Spiritual growth does not happen by accident and it is difficult to accomplish when working 60-70 hours per week. If a Pastor is to provide dynamic leadership and deliver deep and challenging sermons regularly, s/he will need to get away for extended periods of time dedicated to spiritual development, including (but not limited to) reading, prayer, solitude and reflection. A sabbatical leave nurtures and feeds the body and soul for renewed ministry and gives opportunity for new vision and hope.

Refocuses Ministry Approaches

A Pastor needs an astounding array of skills to be effective. In addition, parish ministry today is changing rapidly, and fresh ways must be developed to be on the cutting edge of these changes and to reach new and younger persons with the message of the Gospel. A sabbatical offers an opportunity for a Pastor to learn from others, to sharpen his/her skills, and to return to the congregation with new ideas and a new vitality for leadership.

Prevents "Burnout"

People in helping professions tend to "burn out" the fastest, in part because the constant, intimate involvement with the emotional burdens of others is very draining. Many have come to refer to this as compassion fatigue. A common result is that, over time, a Pastor will demonstrate key characteristics of "burnout": exhaustion, cynicism, disillusionment, and self-depreciation, and they are likely either to seek another call or to leave parish ministry altogether. A regular schedule of sabbatical time every seven years or so will go a long way to preventing such results - for the well-being of both the Pastor and the congregation.

Strengthens Congregational Leadership

While some ministry tasks require ordination and others call for specific training, many tasks of congregational ministry can be assumed by lay leaders. Granting a sabbatical leave to a Pastor provides an excellent way for members of the congregation to develop roles within the congregation that correspond with the gifts they have been given by God. The mission of the congregation is thus strengthened during the sabbatical time through sharing of responsibilities, teaching, visitation, and teams of worship leadership.

Recommended by the Wider Church

Both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Lower Susquehanna Synod have sabbatical policies for their staff members. The Lower Susquehanna Synod encourages congregations to have a sabbatical policy for rostered leaders, and to grant a sabbatical leave to a rostered leader every seven years of service in that parish. (Reference: The synod's *Rostered Leader's Compensation and Benefits Manual*)

The ideal result would be for the congregation to see this period of time not just as the pastor's sabbatical but as a time of renewal and rededication to the congregation's mission and ministry.

Vacation is normally to be taken during the fiscal year in which that vacation is budgeted. With the prior approval of the congregation, or congregation council, up to two weeks' vacation time may be carried over into the following year thus allowing for an extended vacation time in that year. Absent prior approval by the congregation or congregation council, unused vacation time of a previous year is lost.

Because vacation time is accrued (earned) based on the calendar/worked year, upon the ending of the call or employment, vacation that was not used should be paid in the last paycheck. Vacation time that has been used above the accrued amount should be deducted from the final paycheck. Accrued vacation time will be 1/12 of the yearly vacation amount on the 1st of each month. (IE: January 1 – earned, .33 weeks / December 1 – earned 4 weeks.) Approved carry over vacation will also be paid.

Sabbatical/Extended Study Leave

It is expected that congregations and agencies offer a paid sabbatical/extended study leave for their rostered minister(s). The Bishop and our Florida-Bahamas Synod expects that each full time rostered minister receive two months of paid sabbatical leave after each four years of service in the same ministry setting. Florida-Bahamas Synod policy is that sabbatical time should be devoted to rest, personal study and reflection, and (and/or) study that will directly benefit the ministry setting. It is recommended the rostered minister and congregation collaborate in the planning and development of the sabbatical leave in order to maximize the value for both rostered minister and congregation. The sabbatical leave in any fiscal or calendar year is to be considered a separate leave for specific sabbatical purposes and that all current benefits, including vacation, for the calendar/fiscal year in which the sabbatical is taken, remain for that calendar/fiscal year.

It is recommended that the congregation establish a separate fund or account to draw from during the minister's sabbatical to cover additional costs of providing pastoral care and worship leadership.

Absences – Short Term, Illness/Accident

A policy should be established for short term absences due to illness or accidents which prevent an individual from performing their normal work requirements. A suggested standard is one (1) day of paid sick leave earned for each full calendar month worked. Upon being called, rostered ministers will be provided 6 earned days for short term absences. Earned sick time may be accumulated and a maximum of twenty-four (24) days may be carried over yearly.

For an illness/accident that exceeds earned short-term coverage, the Congregational Council may approve exceptions for pay and as appropriate, apply the provisions for disability coverage.

Parental Leave

A specific Parental Leave Plan should be developed by each congregation and discussed with rostered leader(s) prior to call.