

PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT FAMILY LEAVE POLICY (P-27 adopted 11/21/2015)

I. Theological Grounding

God created us to be in relationship with one another, to care for one another, and to participate in families. It is a joy to welcome a new baby and a privilege to care for ailing relatives. We are required to honor our father and mother, and to care for our children and kin. This provision is made when a minister needs to be absent from work in order to care for both self and family.

II. Purpose

A. To provide Sessions and other employing agencies minimum standards for a pastor's family leave to be included in all call packages. It is anticipated that individual churches and employers will not be limited by this policy, and will respond to the need for family leave responsibly and generously.

B. To ensure that pastors receive fair and equitable leave when required. It is anticipated that pastors will use this policy only when needed, and will not abuse the generosity of the church.

III. Individuals Covered by this Policy

This policy applies to the following members of the Presbytery of Detroit: teaching elders serving in installed and temporary pastoral relationships, validated ministers serving in PCUSA congregational settings, and Commissioned Ruling Elders currently serving churches in the Presbytery.

IV. Policy

A. Notification to Session: When a pastor or a pastor's spouse becomes pregnant, she or he shall inform the session of the request for family leave at least 30 days but a recommended 60 days prior to the start of the leave, recognizing that the more time the session has to prepare for the pastor's absence, the better the session will be able to ensure provision for necessary pastoral services during the leave. When a pastor's family member is in need of transitional care, the pastor will inform the session and request family leave as early as is reasonable.

B. Maternity Leave: The pastor shall be granted family leave for a minimum of 8 weeks. However, sessions are strongly encouraged to grant a 12 week leave if possible. During the time of family leave, the pastor shall receive full effective salary and full Pension dues. A pastor may lengthen the period of maternity leave at her discretion by using accrued vacation and sick days.

C. Paternity Leave: Paternity leave shall be a minimum of two weeks in length, during which time the pastor shall receive full effective salary and full Pension dues. If the pastor is the primary caregiver for the child, the leave shall be extended to 8 weeks. A pastor may lengthen the period of paternity leave at his discretion by using accrued vacation.

D. Adoption/Long-Term Foster Care Leave: Recognizing that the adoption or long term fostering of a child requires as much of a transition as the birth of a child, a pastor who is adopting or fostering shall be granted leave commensurate with maternity or paternity leave. If the pastor is the primary caregiver, the paid family leave shall be a minimum of 8 weeks. If the pastor is the secondary caregiver, the paid leave shall be a minimum of 2 weeks. A pastor may lengthen the period of adoption leave at his or her discretion by using accrued vacation.

E. Family Member Care: The pastor of a church may require leave to help transition a family member into appropriate care, or provide intensive caregiving for another close family member. Often these transitions in caregiving require significant time and energy from family members. Recognizing this, the pastor shall be granted up to 6 weeks of paid leave per year, including full effective salary and full Pension dues, as is determined to be reasonable between the pastor and Session. Examples of direct family members may include, but are not limited to, parents, grandparents, siblings, children, in-laws, or a spouse.

F. Session Responsibilities during the Pastor's Leave: The Session is responsible for the ongoing work of the congregation during the pastor's leave. Session should be ready to arrange and pay for pulpit supply, a Session moderator, coverage for hospital and emergency visitation and whatever teaching and programming for which the pastor was responsible. Should this become a hardship for congregation, they may apply for assistance from the Committee on Ministry as per section G below.

G. Assistance for Churches: The Committee on Ministry will seek to provide assistance to help churches unable to meet the financial obligations outlined above in the event their pastor requires leave. This assistance is to assure that the pastor does not feel pressured to return to work prematurely and the church is able to secure sufficient pastoral care during the pastor's absence. Financial support for the church would be extended for the same time period granted for the leave, up to, but not to exceed, additional time granted by the Session or appropriate calling body for leave. Financial assistance will not be given during a pastor's use of accrued vacation. Individual sessions will apply to the Committee on Ministry when such cases arise, and each case will be judged on its own merits.

H. Other Church Staff: The Presbytery invites churches to extend this or a similar policy to all church staff.