

National Capital Presbytery Sabbatical Leave Policy

Approved by the Committee on Ministry Coordinating Committee
on behalf of the presbytery
May 14, 2019

Sabbatical leave is a planned time of intensive enhancement for ministry and mission. It is an opportunity for the pastor/educator to strategically disengage from regular and normal tasks so that ministry and mission may be viewed from a new perspective as a result of a planned time of focus. To enable the pastor/educator to devote significant time to their spiritual, technical or professional development, sabbatical leave may be granted within the following guidelines:

1. Ordinarily, the pastor/educator must have completed six (6) years of credited service in the local church, with the sabbatical to be taken in the seventh year of ministry. At the discretion of the Session, sabbatical leave may be granted earlier.
2. At least six (6) years must have elapsed since any previous extended sabbatical leave.
3. A written plan with identified goals must be approved by the Session and the Presbytery Committee of Ministry. Included in these goals is a description of the spiritual component of the sabbatical leave and how it will enhance service to our Lord Jesus Christ as well as how the sabbatical leave will benefit the congregation upon the pastor/educator's return to ministry. This must be done long enough in advance so that budget and staff needs will be met.
4. Ordinarily the length of sabbatical will be three (3) months. Earned vacation within a particular year or accumulated study leave from previous years can be added to the sabbatical time with the approval of the Session.
5. Upon completion of the sabbatical leave, the incumbent pastor/educator would normally continue serving the same congregation for a period of at least four (4) times the length of the sabbatical plus accrued vacation, if any. In addition, congregations may limit sabbatical leave to one staff person per year, in multiple staff situations.
6. The local church may, but is not required to be financially responsible for the pastor/educator's expenses of sabbatical leave to a degree greater than the standard and accrued professional allowances.
7. Upon completion of the sabbatical, it is highly recommended that the pastor/educator share highlights of the experience at Open Space or other suitable gatherings of Presbytery for encouragement and inspiration to the members of National Capital Presbytery.

