

Guidelines for a Sabbatical Leave Program of Union Evangelical Lutheran Church Rt. 873 Schnecksville PA 18078

Program Description

- A sabbatical leave is an extended leave of absence available to a full-time Pastor/Associate Pastor for religious study, renewal of spiritual growth, and personal renewal.
- A sabbatical leave is time away from the regularly defined duties of a Union Evangelical Lutheran Church(UELC) Pastor/Associate Pastor.
- A sabbatical leave program's design should benefit both the called Pastor as well as the Congregation of UELC.
- A sabbatical leave is not a condition of employment. It is a program available to a called Pastor/Associate Pastor based on professional and religious need.

Rationale

A Sabbatical Leave Program should:

- a. Encourage longer relationships between the called Pastor/Associate Pastor and the Congregation
- b. Contribute to the spiritual growth of a Pastor/Associate Pastor. Time for a Pastor/Associate Pastor to grow spiritually is equally important if they are to help congregants do the same.
- c. Reduce compassion fatigue. Self renewal is a good defense for combating the transfer of other's burdens onto one's self.
- d. Help a Pastor/Associate Pastor refocus on ministry approaches. In changing times, a Pastor/Associate Pastor can return with new ideas and new vitality for leadership.

General Structure

A requested sabbatical leave at UELC should be based on:

- a. The approved written design to Council. The sabbatical leave should contain its purpose, plan of implementation, time segments, assessment model to determine its value to the church and any pertinent features which delineate its intent.
- b. Within six weeks of the completion of the sabbatical leave the Pastor/Associate Pastor will submit to the Council a written report of how the plan was implemented and the learning experiences as appropriate to himself/herself as well as benefits to the Congregation.
- c. The length may be eight weeks. Exceptions will be considered based on a special exception because of a program's design.
- d. A sabbatical leave may not be used during a major holiday such as Easter, Lent or Christmas.
- e. The availability of funds in the Congregational Budget.
- f. Adherence to the fiscal criteria set below.

Eligibility requirements:

- a. A UELC Pastor/Associate Pastor must be an ordained minister with no less than five continuous years as a called pastor at UELC.
- b. A UELC Pastor/Associate Pastor is eligible for another sabbatical leave five years after a prior sabbatical leave at UELC.
- c. A sabbatical leave request must be submitted to Council so that its implementation is after the budget year following its initial submission.

Fiscal Criteria:

- a. The Congregation will assume the cost for staff replacement during the defined length of the approved sabbatical leave.
- b. The Congregation will assume the cost for a Pastor's defined compensation during a sabbatical leave.
- c. The Congregation will not be required to pay for any of the Pastor/Associate Pastor's professional expenses during the sabbatical leave.
- d. The health and pension benefits will be paid during the approved sabbatical leave.
- e. No other professional expenses will be supported unless approved as part of the sabbatical leave guidelines.
- f. Any grants from any funding sources outside of the congregational budget applied for by the Pastor/Associate Pastor or Church Council or any gifts to the Congregation that assist in supporting the costs of any approved sabbatical leave will be used to fund said sabbatical leave. The Pastor/Associate Pastor will apply for grants from known sources to assist with compensation issues and other related costs to the individual and Congregation. Any grants received may be considered by the council to help defray costs associated with the planned program in areas such as graduates studies costs, self improvement programs, seminars and other related items.
- g. Any sabbatical leave request will follow the guidelines approved by the Church. Whenever funds are not available to support a request in any year, any request may be resubmitted the following year for reconsideration.
- h. Any approved sabbatical leave will be granted with the Pastor/Associate Pastor expected to return to one year. If a Pastor/Associate Pastor leaves before the end of one year following completion of the sabbatical leave, UELC will receive reimbursement on a prorated portion of the actual costs incurred as agreed to by the Pastor/Associate Pastor and Council.
- i. Only one sabbatical leave will be approved during any church fiscal year.

May 26, 2009 – Draft

June 1, 2009 – Draft

June 2, 2009 – Draft – Sandra's input

June 9, 2009 – Final corrected draft

July 11, 2009 – Council changes

September 28, 2009 - updated