

1.01 Sabbatical Policy

Professional ministry has become increasingly demanding and complex. It is possible following seminary training for the constant demands of pastoring to pre-empt the pastor's ability to find the quality time necessary for personal and professional growth. The years can rapidly pass by with little opportunity to "come apart and rest awhile."

In line with the Rocky Mountain Conference's commitment to the ongoing development of quality pastors, we desire to enable pastors to experience quantitative as well as qualitative time away from the site of their ministry assignment; therefore, the following Sabbatical policy guidelines are developed to assist those who apply, qualify, and are approved. This provision is not meant to be a vacation and should not be confused with vacation time. Rather, it is a time for renewal and spiritual regeneration leading to professional and personal growth.

(a) Definition and Length of Sabbaticals

A Sabbatical is understood as a stated period of time away from the normal post of pastoral duty in order to obtain refreshment and revitalization for the pastor's return to duty.

An annual week of spiritual renewal associated with planning and preparation for the duties of district ministry is encouraged but should not be confused with the Sabbatical.

The focal purpose of the Sabbatical is established in the application process and may include writing, research, foreign language development, travel, or other pursuits leading to professional growth not normally possible during the regular routine of pastoral ministry.

The Sabbatical is a continuous eight-week retreat separate from any accrued vacation. Up to four weeks of accrued vacation time may be added to the Sabbatical resulting in a maximum absence from district pastoral responsibilities of three months.

(b) Eligibility

- The pastor must have completed a minimum of seven years of continuous, full-time service as an ordained minister in the Rocky Mountain Conference and have served in his/her present assignment for at least three years.
- A Sabbatical cannot be taken for at least three months following the conclusion of an evangelistic series in the district.
- Two Sabbatical slots will be offered each quarter of each year. Priority will normally be given to church pastors with the most continuous years of service in the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- Arrangements for Sabbath worship hour speakers during the Sabbatical are the responsibility of the applying pastor.
- The pastor shall agree to return to his/her present assignment at the conclusion of the Sabbatical and continue in that position for at least one year except in the case of reassignment to a new district.

- During the period of the Sabbatical, the pastor shall receive all pay and allowances, all accumulated time for retirement purposes, and credentials shall be maintained.
- The conference strongly recommends that this time be used for significant spiritual, emotional, and professional enrichment. Should the pastor elect to continue some formal educational training, any additional accumulated allowances may be used.
- The pastor is expected to keep the conference advised of his whereabouts and contact information in case of an emergency.

(c) Application Procedure

1. Pastors desiring a Sabbatical should consult with the vice president of administration before formally making his/her proposal. The written proposal should include:
 - The specific details of the Sabbatical program including date and duration.
 - How this time might provide renewal and professional growth.
 - What subsequent benefits the congregation might receive.
 - How this Sabbatical might impact the pastor's family.
2. Pastors desiring a Sabbatical shall submit their request in writing to the president who will process it through the conference administrative committee. When a Sabbatical is approved, the vice president of administration shall notify the pastor.
3. Within thirty (30) days of completing the Sabbatical, the pastor shall submit a two to three page evaluation paper to the vice president of administration. This paper should define the professional growth and personal benefits experienced during the Sabbatical.

(d) Interim Provisions

Following approval by conference administration, the vice president of administration will meet with the church board to work out details regarding how pastoral responsibilities will be met during the Sabbatical period.

Rocky Mountain Conference provides the Sabbatical experience in recognition of the pastor's need(s). The pastor shall be relieved of all district pastoral responsibilities during the Sabbatical.