

Proposed Sabbatical Policy and Procedure

**St. John's Lutheran Church – ELCA
Eau Claire, Wisconsin**

A. Policy

1. A sabbatical leave is understood to be a time of release from normal duties in order that a pastor 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 pastoral renewal, development, and growth.
3. Pastors shall be eligible for a sabbatical leave of 3 months after having continuously served the congregation full-time for 6 years. Thereafter, a pastor shall be eligible for further sabbaticals every seventh year.
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 Congregational Council.

B. 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 pastor's sabbatical leave, it is desirable that there be shared planning with the pastor's coworkers, interested congregational members, and the Congregational Council.
3. Pastors seeking sabbatical leave shall submit a written proposal to the Congregational 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 Congregational Council should include the following:
 - a. Personal objectives and program objectives
 - b. a description of the major elements of the experience
 - c. Proposed beginning date and end date
 - d. Suggestions of how current job responsibilities will be handled during the leave
 - e. 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 pastor shall continue to receive normal compensation and benefits during the period of the sabbatical leave.
7. The pastor on sabbatical leave shall be responsible for the costs of the sabbatical, unless the congregation chooses to contribute to such costs. The pastor may choose to use accumulated continuing education funds for such purpose.
8. Within a month of return from sabbatical leave, the pastor shall submit a written report and evaluation of the leave to the Congregational Council.