

TMC Sabbatical Policy

To be affirmed by the Congregation and include in the TMC Employee Handbook

What is a Sabbatical?

A sabbatical- taken from the Biblical word for sabbath- is a permitted time away for an employee to rest and “reset” while focusing on personal, spiritual, and/or educational development in preparation for their next season of employment and ministry. Sabbaticals are customarily taken by those in academic professions (as in college or seminaries) or in ministerial professions at certain predetermined milestones of employment.

What is the Purpose of a Sabbatical?

The benefits of a ministry sabbatical are numerous to both pastor and congregation, but they typically allow a valuable and designated time away to prevent burnout and to allow for spiritual recharging, renewed energy, and a refreshed vision for the next season of ministry.

What are some activities that may be pursued by the Pastor while on Sabbatical?

- *Personal retreats for spiritual growth and theological development*
- *Intentional focus on marriage and family*
- *Writing projects or other academic pursuits*
- *Professional development via courses or conferences or travel for educational purposes*
- *Additional rest/leisure as needed*
- *Counseling or coaching for emotional and spiritual maintenance*
- *Prayer and reflection leading into the next season of ministry at the church*

** TMC shall attempt to provide reasonable funding (as the church's financial situation permits) to pursue the activities/ developmental opportunities listed above.*

TMC Sabbatical Policy for Full-Time Pastoral Staff

Following every sixth (6th) year, all full-time pastoral staff **may** request a sabbatical of up to 6 successive weeks (Ideally in the months of June and July, but there is flexibility available depending on the church’s ministry calendar and personnel needs). The optional Sabbatical will take place every seventh (7th) year, for example, years 7, 14, 21, 28, etc. The Sabbatical is **not** required but is highly recommended. Requests for Sabbaticals should be submitted before the fiscal annual budget is finalized/affirmed (the request should be made no later than November 1st). This allows for potential costs for pulpit supply, worship leadership, and other coverage to be considered. The Sabbatical written request will be

submitted to the Senior Pastor and the Body of Elders (if the Senior Pastor is requesting the Sabbatical he will make the initial written request directly to the Body of Elders) for consideration and if appropriate the request will be presented to the church during a called “Informational and Celebration Gathering” for congregational affirmation.

- **Compensation-** Full salary and benefits will continue during the Sabbatical.
- **Vacation and Personal Day-** No additional compensation is paid simultaneously with the sabbatical. Designated vacation and personal days are to be used at other approved times as outlined in the Employee Handbook.
- **Communication-** The Body of Elders and congregation will honor the Sabbatical by avoiding all unnecessary work/ministry/administrative-related communication during the Sabbatical leave.
- **Conclusion-** After the Sabbatical ends the Body of Elders will assist the returning pastor with reintegration into previously held roles, tasks, and responsibilities, etc.
- **Special Consideration:** The Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Body of Elders and Body of Trustees, may grant and/or require a paid and/or unpaid up to a 4-week Sabbatical to any ministerial staff employee (full or part-time) if deemed necessary for the emotional, spiritual, physical wellbeing of the employee for the health of the ministry/church. This special consideration may work in tandem with the Employee Disciplinary Guides as outlined in the Employee Handbook. This special consideration Sabbatical does not require church affirmation, but the Body of Elders should use wisdom and discernment to make appropriate congregational notification(s).