

**APPENDIX**  
**Parental, Family, Medical, and Traumatic Leave Policy**  
**September 30, 2023**

**RATIONALE**

- A. The celebration, nurture, and encouragement of the family take place in many ways and on many levels in the life of a church. During times of joy and times of sadness the congregation has the opportunity and the responsibility of extending care for the pastor and their family.
1. This policy shall meet or exceed all recommendations and/or laws of the PC (USA) church and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
  2. This policy applies to PC(USA) Pastors serving in calls to PC(USA) churches within the bounds of the Presbytery of Huntingdon. Sessions are strongly encouraged to make the same benefits available to contractual pastors, including CRE's, and to Certified Christian Educators.
  3. To qualify for the benefits of this policy, pastors must meet the following conditions:
    - a. The pastor must have worked for Employer for twelve (12) months or fifty-two (52) weeks. The twelve (12) months or fifty-two (52) weeks need not have been consecutive.
    - b. The pastor must have worked at least 1,250 hours if full-time or 625 hours if half time, during the 12-month period immediately before the date when the leave is requested to commence.

**PARENTAL LEAVE**

- B. Parental Leave is extended to all pastors who are welcoming a new child into their family, whether by birth, or adoption or foster placement. The policy applies to the terms of call of all installed pastors serving congregations in the presbytery, including those serving in part-time or full-time positions in instances of maternal or paternal leave.
1. Pregnancy: When a pastor becomes pregnant, or a pastor's spouse becomes pregnant, the session/council should ordinarily be consulted within 12 weeks of a physician's confirmation of the pregnancy. Parental leave may begin at a time agreed upon by the pastor and their session/council.
    - a. Congregations are required to provide, as a minimum, the pastor's full salary and benefits for twelve (12) weeks. This leave does not require the pastor to exhaust other types of paid leave including vacation and study leave time.
    - b. Other arrangements may be negotiated by the pastor and session/council to extend the leave beyond the initial period of three months (12 weeks). A pastor may extend the period of parental leave at his/her discretion by using accrued vacation.
    - c. Should a pastor experience a stillbirth or the death of a child following birth, they shall receive twelve (12) weeks parental leave at full salary and benefits.
    - d. Upon completion of the parental leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his or her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

2. Adoption or Foster Placement: When a pastor begins the adoption or foster placement process, the session/council should ordinarily be consulted. Parental leave may then be used toward the pre-adoption process as well as when the child arrives.
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### **FAMILY LEAVE**

- C. Family Leave is appropriate in life-altering circumstances when the pastor is called upon by reason of major life trauma or serious illness to be the primary caregiver for a spouse, child, parent, sibling, or other family member for whom the pastor bears primary responsibility.
  1. Congregations are required to provide, at a minimum, the pastor's full salary and benefits for up to twelve (12) weeks. This leave does not require the pastor to exhaust other types of paid leave, including vacation and study leave time.
  2. Other arrangements may be negotiated by the pastor and session/council to extend the leave beyond the initial period.
  3. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his or her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

### **MEDICAL LEAVE**

- D. Medical Leave is appropriate in instances when the pastor is unable to work due to accident or personal illness. In cases of foreseeable medical leave need, the pastor will request leave at least thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of the requested leave. Pastors eligible for temporary leave for a medical disability shall provide certification by a licensed physician. The pastor shall receive full salary and benefits for the period of temporary disability up to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks, at which time the pastor, enrolled in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly) shall apply for disability benefits under the Benefits Plan.

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### **TRAUMATIC LEAVE**

- E. Traumatic Leave is appropriate to allow the pastor to heal following a tragic loss or traumatic event, including the death of an immediate family member (spouse, child, or another person for whom the pastor was the primary caregiver), a catastrophic event in the life of the pastor or his/her immediate family, or other circumstance that would ordinarily disrupt a person's life and ability to function in their professional duties. Pastors and/or session councils may consult with the General Presbyter and/or the Presbytery of Huntingdon's Committee on Ministry for guidance on traumatic leave requests.
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  2. Other arrangements may be negotiated by the pastor and session/council to extend the leave beyond the initial period.
  3. Upon completion of the leave, the pastor will be entitled to return to his or her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

### **GENERAL**

- F. Churches are encouraged to be supportive in every way when such a situation arises that necessitates a pastor to step away from the daily life of a congregation and tend to the needs of his or her family or her/himself. Family and parental leave is in addition to vacation and other periods of extended time away already set forth in the pastor's call or contract.
- G. Providing these forms of leave creates an additional financial strain on congregations. The session and pastor are encouraged to explore the availability of resources from the Board of Pensions and other insurance providers to help ease these strains.
- H. It is recommended that the session/council, along with the help of a liaison from COM, form a special Parental or Family Leave committee/ministry team. It is recommended that the team be made up of at least one ruling elder currently serving on session (typically from the worship and music committee), one COM liaison, and three (3) at-large members from the church prior to the pastor's leave for the purpose securing appropriate pulpit supply, pastoral care, moderators for session meetings, and administrative assistance during the pastor's absence. Additionally, the COM liaison may

be helpful, if needed, in advising the session/council on how they may continue the mission of the congregation while the pastor is absent.

- I. A pastor is expected to return to his or her position for at least one (1) year following leave. If a pastor initiates dissolution within one year following family, maternity, paternity, adoption, foster placement leave, or traumatic leave, any unused vacation and study leave time shall be credited against the leave.
- J. Congregations are encouraged to respect the boundaries and privacy of the pastor while he or she is away on Parental, Family, Medical, or Traumatic Leave.
- K. Congregations are encouraged to write their own Parental, Family, Medical or Traumatic Leave policies so long as the policy shall meet or exceed all requirements and/or laws of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Congregations choosing not to adopt their own policy will be covered by the presbytery's policy.