

The Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba

Guidelines for Sabbatical Study Leave

Introduction

Increasingly congregations are developing their own sabbatical policies for their pastor(s). This policy provides guidelines for sabbatical study leaves recommended for use by local MB congregations with respect to their pastoral staff.

Rationale

While a sabbatical study leave is not common in most professions, there is increasing awareness of the validity for planned sabbatical study leaves for pastors.

The pastoral vocation of individual pastors should be viewed from a larger perspective than individual churches. A sabbatical study leave can encourage longevity of ministry not only in the local church but also in the conference.

Effective pastoring calls for continued renewal of one's mind and spirit, as well as of one's physical body and family relationships. It is difficult to keep renewed for effective and inspiring leadership while continually being on call for ministry.

Sabbatical study leaves can also be a good experience for the local church and for the Conference. They can bring new gifts to the surface not only in the pastor but also in individuals from the local church as they volunteer during a sabbatical leave.

Guidelines for Sabbatical Study Leave

1. Sabbatical study leaves are not granted automatically, but shall be evaluated, approved and administered by the local church.
2. The pastor will be eligible for a sabbatical study leave after five (5) consecutive years of service in the same local church. The length of the sabbatical shall be four (4) months.
3. Proposals for sabbatical study leaves shall be presented by the pastor to the local church and should include the following:
 - a. Personal objectives and program objectives
 - b. A description of the major elements of the study leave
 - 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
4. This proposal should be submitted six (6) months prior to the date of the proposed sabbatical study leave.
5. A pastor shall continue to receive normal compensation and benefits during the period of the sabbatical leave.
6. Upon the pastor's return, the pastor will serve in his/her own church for a minimum period of one year. Pastors failing to complete this minimum requirement are required to pay back half of the salary received during the sabbatical study leave and forfeit any accumulated severance benefits.