

## Sample Formational/Renewal Leave Policy

The congregation affirms that continuing education involvements and renewal/formational leaves are beneficial to both the ministerial staff and congregation. Such opportunities are intended to enhance skills, increase competence and expand horizons of the minister for his or her ministry with the congregation. This policy is intended to be based on and carried out according to Paragraph 350 of the 2016 United Methodist Book of Discipline (BoD).

Time is granted each year for short-term study opportunities (typically one week). According to ¶350.2 of the BoD, full-time members of the ministerial staff may also take a month-long renewal leave once each quadrennium. Occasions for longer term extended study and/or leave (formational or renewal) will also be considered under the conditions detailed below. Leaves provide prime opportunities for renewal of spirit, extended study, reflections and planning and creative growth that normal routines do not allow.

- 1. Members of the full-time ministerial staff shall be eligible for a three- to six-month formational or renewal leave after completing six years of appointment by in a full time capacity within the United Methodist Church system. After a leave has been completed, the minister shall be eligible for a renewal leave again in six years.*
- 2. Such leaves are intended for the mutual benefit and growth of both the minister and the congregation. The timing for the leave is a concern and must be compatible with the congregation's present needs and programming. Therefore, the time of the leave and its funding must be approved by the Church Council.*
- 3. The minister should begin the request process in the year before the intended leave and complete the process at least six months before the desired leave's beginning. A formal written proposal should be developed and include expectations, focus of the leave, presumed benefits for and impact upon one's work in the ministry, and detailing of the work being left behind. The contents of the proposal should be considered negotiable with the Staff Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) and approved by the Church Council.*
- 4. Leaves shall not be considered a use of the minister's vacation time. Earned vacation time would not be ordinarily used to extend the period of absence beyond three months.*
- 5. Financial support of the minister by the congregation during a leave will continue full salary and housing allowance, retirement benefits, books and journals and insurance.*
- 6. During the leave year, no other continuing education time will be provided. In addition, the minister is entitled to a proportionate share of the budgeted travel allowance for the year.*
- 7. The Chairperson of the Church Council will appoint, and the Church Council approve, a special task force to be known as the Ministerial Leave Committee. This committee's basic responsibilities will be to manage and coordinate congregational work being left behind by the minister and to assure quality care of the congregation during the minister's leave. The committee will meet with the minister prior to the leave to develop an understanding of and*

*plans to accomplish those tasks. Immediately after the leave, the committee will bring the minister up-to-date on the congregation's life and programs. The committee will have at least five members, which will include the Church Council Chairperson and the Chairperson of the PPRC.*

8. *The hiring of any individuals to serve as replacement for staff on a leave leave will be negotiated by the Ministerial Leave Committee and be approved by the Church Council.*
9. *In order for the congregation to benefit from the personal and professional renewal of its ministerial leadership after a paid leave of absence, it is recommended that the minister remain in the service of the congregation for at least one year following the minister's return from the leave, the prerogative of the Bishop to re-appoint notwithstanding.*
10. *No two members of the staff may be on leave within nine months of each other.*
11. *Evaluations of the leave and its impact on the minister and the congregation are helpful means for planning such future opportunities. Evaluative reports should be submitted to the Church Council and shared with the congregation by both the Ministerial Leave Committee and the minister within thirty days after the leave is completed. The reports should include the benefits and disappointments for both the minister and the congregation, as well as any recommendations for the future.*

Policy on Ministerial Formational & Renewal Leaves  
<Charge> United Methodist Church