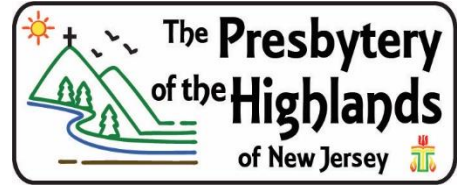


## Presbytery of The Highlands of NJ Family Leave Policy - 2021



The celebration, nurture and encouragement of the family takes 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 the pastor's family. This **policy** was developed by the Presbytery of The Highlands to guide sessions and pastors as the terms of a family leave are incorporated into the terms of call.

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of these policy guidelines is to provide sessions and other employing agencies **minimum** standards for a pastor's family leave to be included in all call packages that are fair and equitable. It is anticipated that individual churches and employers will not feel limited by these guidelines and will respond to the need for family leave responsibly and generously.

### II. DEFINITION

In addition to other benefits, full and part-time minister members/teaching elders are entitled to job-protected leave for qualified medical and family reasons. *Maternity and Paternity Leaves* take place prior and after the birth, adoption or guardianship of a child. *Family Care and Bereavement Leave* takes place when the employee's spouse, child, parent or other dependent has a serious health condition, is being placed in long term care facility, or has died.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for all Family Leave within the Presbytery of The Highlands shall be extended to all clergy, regardless of whether employed on a full or part-time basis.

### IV. GUIDELINES

#### **Medically Certified Disability**

Pastors who are, according to certification of a licensed physician, temporarily disabled shall refer to the Committee on Ministry (COM) and the Board of Pensions (BoP) for direction.

#### **Family Leave (Maternity, Paternity or Parental Leave)**

- The length of leave for parent(s) welcoming a new child shall be 12 weeks. If a pastor desires more or less time, the session is encouraged to be flexible. The timing of the leave is up to the pastor.
- Sessions shall grant full salary and benefits for the entire leave. If the session and pastor(s) negotiate a leave that extends beyond 12 weeks, then other salary options may be negotiated

as well, including a percentage decrease in pay, unpaid leave and/or the use of accrued vacation time.

- Annual study and vacation leaves, or sabbatical/clergy renewal leaves should not be taken immediately before or after a family leave without consultation with the session and COM.

#### **Family Leave (Family Care and Bereavement Leave)**

- There is no minimum length of time for Family Care or Bereavement Leave – but the maximum allowed per year is suggested at 12 weeks (See above for compensation guidelines). Family Leave does not need to be consecutive and can be spread out over a 12-month period.

#### **V. Additional Considerations**

These guidelines should be considered when family leave is deemed necessary:

- Study leave shall not be used for family, maternity, paternity or adoptive leave.
- Should a pastor experience a miscarriage or still birth, she/he shall be given the maternity/paternity leave she/he would have received had the pregnancy been carried to term with no complications.
- The time periods listed are intended to occur annually. They do not accrue.
- The COM shall be informed when the family leave option is exercised by a pastor.

#### **VI. Session Responsibilities during the Pastor's Leave**

The session is responsible for the ongoing work of the congregation during the pastor's leave. Session should be ready to arrange and pay for pulpit supply, coverage for hospital and emergency visitation and whatever teaching and programming for which the pastor was responsible. Should this become a hardship for a congregation, they may seek assistance and support from the Presbytery, through its COM, to help in whatever ways are necessary to make a full leave available. COM shall appoint a session moderator pro tem.

If both **Family Leave (Maternity, Paternity or Parental Leave)** and **Family Leave (Family Care and Bereavement Leave)** occur in the same calendar year, please contact the COM and the Presbytery Leader.