

Policy for Health and Parental Needs

Heartland Presbytery presents the following policy for the compassionate care of church personnel in sickness or when children are added to the family. Sessions shall apply this policy to all Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and may adapt these guidelines to fit the needs of other church staff. The following policy is considered a minimum requirement; sessions may choose to be more generous with leave time and compensation when possible.

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament are hereafter referred to as “ministers.”

A. SICK LEAVE

1. Definition: When a minister is incapable of performing the functions of ministry, and is normally under the care of a physician, and has every expectation of returning to work.
2. Terms: A minimum of 14 days within a calendar year with full salary, housing and pension benefits, which can be accumulated up to 42 days within a three-year period. Business and travel allowances as well as other reimbursable ministry expenses would not be payable during sick leave. Additional needs may be negotiable with the session.
3. Applications: Notice shall be given by the minister (or a responsible family member) to the clerk of session or personnel committee as soon as sick leave is needed, at which time the terms would become applicable.

B. LONG TERM SICK LEAVE

1. Definition: When the medical prognosis is that the minister may not be able to return to work for an extended period of time. (More than three months.)
2. Terms: Sick leave days will be deemed to be accumulated at the rate of 30 Days (1 month) a year for three years. Full salary, housing and pension benefits will continue for 90 days (3 months) or until the disability benefits of the Major Medical Plan of the Board of Pensions takes effect.
3. Applications: Notice shall be given by the minister (or responsible family member) to the clerk of session or personnel committee as soon as it is determined that disability benefits will be necessary. Notice will also be given to the Board of Pensions.

C. FAMILY LEAVE

1. Definition: When a minister or their spouse is to give birth or adopt a child under the age of 18. This policy applies equally to male and female ministers.
2. Terms:
 - a. 84 days leave at full salary and housing allowance
 - b. travel allowance would be discontinued during the leave to help provide for pulpit supply.
 - c. vacation and sick leave may be used to supplement the leave at the minister’s discretion.
 - d. major medical and teaching elder’s pension will be continued by the congregation at the full salary and allowance level for the family leave period.

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- e. Parental leave will ordinarily occur within the first year of the child's arrival.
- f. In the case of interstate or international adoptions, additional leave up to 14 days with full pay may be granted. Travel allowance funds may not be applied in these cases.

3. Application: Parental leave shall be negotiated with the session at least four months before the anticipated birth or home placement. Unforeseen complications in the pregnancy, delivery, and/or adoption process may make adjustments in these plans necessary.

D. FAMILY EMERGENCY LEAVE

1. Definition: When a sudden emergency arises with the minister's immediate family which requires his/her presence, rendering the minister unable to perform the functions of ministry for an indefinite period of time.

2. Terms:

- a. Sick leave conditions will apply while the minister is unable to perform the functions of ministry.
- b. Long term family illness needs (parent, one in loco parentis ¹, spouse, or child) may be negotiated with the session with the following suggested guidelines:
 - (1) 45 days at 100% of annual salary and housing allowance OR
 - (2) 60 days at 75% of annual salary and housing allowance OR
 - (3) 90 days at 60 % of annual salary and housing allowance.

1 In loco parentis: "in place of a parent." For instance, a grandparent or family friend who raised you.

3. Applications: Application for the family emergency leave of less than seven days will be through the clerk of session or personnel committee. Longer family emergency leave requires negotiation with the session.

E. FAMILY DEATH

In the case of a family member of the minister or their spouse, a period of up to four days should be granted to be with other family members. That means, if the death occurs locally, up to four days is appropriate; if the death/funeral/burial is "out of state" or some distance from home, time for travel should be added to the four days.

F. SUMMARY

These guidelines are offered in the judgment of the Commission on Ministry as fair, reasonable and compassionate suggestions that minister and sessions may consider in negotiating family needs when a new child becomes a part of the family. It is not the intent of the Commission on Ministry that these guidelines should be limiting.

Sessions are free to exercise their compassion in more generous ways if they deem it appropriate. The presbytery urges congregations to follow these guidelines. If needed, Commission on Ministry may be called upon to assist with the negotiations in unusual circumstances.

The minister may elect, with the approval of the session, to use vacation time in conjunction with sick leave. The Commission on Ministry does not encourage the combining of vacation time with sick leave because they are designed for two distinctly different purposes. The Commission on Ministry stands ready to assist ministers and sessions in the process of negotiation around an illness or when children are added to the family of a minister