

1. A Class IV Resolution
2. TITLE:
3. EXCELLENCE in MINISTRY: A Resolution of support for Sabbatical Leave for Clergy.
4. DATE SUBMITTED: February 26, 2000
5. SUBMITTED BY: The Professional Development of Clergy Committee of the
6. Conference Council.
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13. SUMMARY OF INTENT OF THE RESOLUTION
14. A resolution to encourage the support of sabbaticals for full-time clergy.
15. BACKGROUND and SUPPORTING STATEMENT
16. The Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ is committed to promoting and
17. maintaining excellence in ministry. As surely as professional ministry is joyful and rewarding,
18. it is also exhausting, physically, mentally, and spiritually.
19. The term "sabbatical" has its roots in the Hebrew cultural religious concept of "sabbath,"
20. or rest, after seven days or years. Genesis 2:1-3 notes that God rested from the work of
21. creation on the seventh day.
22. Sabbatical leave, an extended time spent physically apart from the congregation and
23. church building, is a time for spiritual growth and renewal. It can provide clergy with a time
24. for needed rest and relaxation. Sabbatical leave also provides an opportunity for extended
25. study, independent or institutional.
26. Sabbatical time is beneficial to the local church, as well. During the minister's sabbatical,
27. lay people may claim their own gifts for ministry in pastoral care, programming, and worship
28. leadership. Sabbatical leave can infuse ministers and their congregations with freshness,
29. bringing new ideas, energy and meaning to their mutual ministry.
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31. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION
32. The 2000 Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ,
33. resolves to encourage our churches and clergy to realize the importance and value of
34. sabbatical leave for full-time clergy in the following ways:
- 35.
36. A. We encourage **clergy in local church settings** to:
37. 1. Negotiate terms of call to include provision for paid sabbatical leave.
38. 2. Work with church councils (or other appropriate bodies with the congregation) to
39. plan for appropriate time for sabbatical leave to be taken, and coverage for pastoral
40. duties during the sabbatical.
41. 3. Plan, in consultation with appropriate church bodies, the sabbatical to include
42. opportunity for personal and spiritual growth and enrichment, time for rest and
43. relaxation, as well as time for study.
44. 4. Present an oral or written report to the congregation (or appropriate bodies within the
45. congregation) of the sabbatical experience.
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47. B. We encourage **clergy in specialized ministry settings** to negotiate with their employer
48. to include paid time for sabbatical leave in their contract terms, and to call on the Minister
49. for their Association for support in these negotiations.
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51. C. We encourage all **churches** to:
52. 1. Include in their terms of call a provision for three months of paid sabbatical leave for
53. clergy after four to seven years of full-time service with the understanding that the

54. clergy will commit to serving for at least one year following the sabbatical.
55. 2. Include in their budget funds for pulpit supply and pastoral services as needed
56. during the sabbatical leave of their ministers.
57. 3. Consult with the pastor about options for sabbatical projects and areas of study.
58. 4. Provide assistance to the pastor in planning pulpit supply and pastoral coverage for
59. the sabbatical time.
60. 5. Monitor, through pastoral relations or personnel committees, church council or other
61. appropriate bodies, use of sabbatical time, and expect a report, oral or written, of the
62. sabbatical experience.
63. 6. Plan for the sabbatical time to be a time of growth, exploration of gifts, and renewal
64. for the congregation.
65. 7. Report to the pastor, through appropriate bodies, the experience of the congregation
66. during the sabbatical time.
- 67.

68. D. We encourage the **staff of the Minnesota Conference** to:

69. 1. Have information available on educational opportunities, and post an up-to-date list
70. on the conference website.
71. 2. Identify and publicize existing Conference funds available for sabbatical scholarships.
72. 3. Develop and maintain a file of non-Conference funding sources.
- 73.

74. E. We encourage the **Ministers for the Associations of the Minnesota Conference** to:

75. 1. Emphasize the importance and value of sabbatical leaves to association clergy and
76. ministry settings.
77. 2. Provide support and assistance to churches and clergy in negotiating inclusion of
78. provision for sabbatical leave in terms of call.
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80. Working in covenant to nurture and support each other, we as a Conference can support our

81. clergy to grow in excellence, to the glory of God!

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### 83. FUNDING IMPLICATIONS

84. The impact upon the Conference budget will be minimal and limited to advertising in

85. existing publications of the Conference including the website. No special mailings are

86. anticipated.

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### 92. SUGGESTED REFERENCES FOR CONGREGATIONS AND MINISTERS:

93.

94. "SABBATICAL LEAVE: SUGGESTIONS FOR LOCAL CHURCHES AND THEIR

95. PASTORS"

96. Prepared by the Office for Church Life and Leadership, United Church of

97. Christ. Order from United Church of Christ Resources by calling

98. 800-325-7061 or 800-537-3394.

99.

100. BULLOCK, A. RICHARD, "SABBATICAL PLANNING FOR CLERGY AND

101. CONGREGATIONS"

102. (Washington, DC: The Albin Institute, 1987)

103.

104. (Both of these books also have extensive bibliographies.)

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