

## **SABBATICAL GUIDELINES FOR ROSTERED CLERGY OF THE BC SYNOD**

### **Preface**

Ezekiel 20:12

*Moreover I gave them my sabbath, as a sign between me and them, so that they might know that I the Lord sanctify them.*

Leviticus 25:1-7

*The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying: Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a sabbath for the Lord. Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the Lord; you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap the after growth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine; it shall be a year of complete rest for the land. You may eat what the land yields during its sabbath-you, your male and female slaves, your hired and your bound labourers who live with you; for your livestock also, and for the wild animals in your land all its yield shall be for food.*

Matthew 14:23

*And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.*

Clergy are subject to many pressures and stresses which are unique to the ministry. The concept of wholeness and wellness in ministry is an important principle in the life of the church. A healthy and effective congregation requires a healthy pastor. To help promote health and wholeness in our Synod, we have developed {extended study leave} sabbatical guidelines which provide the opportunity for our rostered clergy to be refreshed bodily, socially, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually, and professionally.

A sabbatical provides an opportunity for the pastor to reflect on the call to ministry and her/his relationship with God and all of God's creation. The sabbatical is expected to be of benefit to both the pastor and the congregation/institution which she/he serves, as well as to the Synod and the wider Church. While continuing education provides regular short-term opportunities for growth in learning, a sabbatical provides not only opportunities for more in-depth learning and renewal, but also rest from labour. A sabbatical should be holistic, in that it includes time for prayer, reflection, rest, and care of the body, as well as developing gifts for ministry.

## **Sabbatical Guidelines**

- 1) A sabbatical of three to six months is to be granted to rostered clergy, ordinarily after six years of service in a particular ministry setting. Normally, there is no accrued time from previous service to be credited to the person. Vacation time should not be included as sabbatical time, but may be considered negotiable, along with any accrued continuing education time, if a longer sabbatical is desired and/or appropriate. Leave without pay may also be negotiated.
- 2) Congregations/institutions are encouraged to provide the rostered person full pay and benefits during the sabbatical.
- 3) Expenses incurred will be borne by the rostered person (i.e., tuition, books, supplies, travel, living expenses, etc.) A portion of these expenses may be covered by the Continuing Education Fund.
- 4) The rostered person is normally expected to serve the congregation/institution for at least one year following completion of the sabbatical.
- 5) The rostered person will submit a report to the local governing body within a mutually agreed upon period of time following completion of the sabbatical.
- 6) It is understood that the sabbatical and the terms of it are a mutually negotiated agreement (covenant) between the rostered person and the congregation/institution. Planning the sabbatical will be done by the rostered person in consultation with the local governing body (i.e. Church Council, parish Executive, agency board, etc.) and the Synod Office.

It is recommended that planning begin at least one year in advance. To help emphasize this ministry as a partnership, a mutual covenant will be filed with the Synod, outlining plans for the sabbatical.

- 7) The local governing body will have the responsibility of ensuring that the work of the congregation/institution is carried on during the time the rostered person is on sabbatical in order to provide an inviting return to continuing ministry.

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