

Revised 6/20/16

Pittsburgh Presbytery Parental and Family Leave Policy

The celebration, nurture, and encouragement of the family take 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 teaching elder and the teaching elder's family.

Parental Leave is extended to all teaching elders who are welcoming a new child into their family, whether by birth or adoption. The policy applies to the terms of call of all teaching elders serving congregations in the presbytery, including those serving in temporary/transitional or part-time positions, as well as in installed positions.

- When a teaching elder becomes pregnant, or a teaching elder's spouse becomes pregnant, the Session/Council and the Branch Minister should ordinarily be consulted within 12 weeks of a physician's confirmation of the pregnancy. Maternal leave would ordinarily begin with the physician's certification that the female teaching elder can no longer perform her duties. Paternal leave may begin at a time agreed upon by the teaching elder and his Session/Council. The time of leave for teaching elder(s) who are adopting a child begins when the child arrives for permanent placement in the teaching elder's home.
- Congregations are required to provide, as a minimum, the teaching elder's full salary and benefits for six (6) weeks. This leave does not require the teaching elder to exhaust other types of paid leave including vacation and continuing education time.
- At the teaching elder's request, an additional six (6) weeks of leave may be taken at 60% salary with full benefits.

Other arrangements may be negotiated by the teaching elder and Session/Council to extend the leave beyond the initial period of three months (12 weeks). A teaching elder may extend the period of parental leave at his/her discretion by using accrued vacation time. Upon completion of the parental leave, the teaching elder will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

Family Leave is appropriate in life-altering circumstances when the teaching elder is called upon by reason of major life trauma or serious illness to be the primary caregiver for a spouse, child, parent, sibling, or other family member for whom the teaching elder bears primary responsibility.

- Congregations are required to provide, as a minimum, the teaching elder's full salary and benefits for up to six (6) weeks. This leave does not require the teaching elder to exhaust other types of paid leave, including vacation and continuing education time.

Other arrangements may be negotiated by the teaching elder and Session/Council to extend the leave beyond the initial period. Upon completion of the leave, the teaching elder will be entitled to return to his/her position. The position will not be filled during the leave except on a temporary basis.

In General

1. Churches are encouraged to be supportive in every way when such a situation arises that necessitates a teaching elder to step away from the daily life of a congregation and tend to the needs of his or her family. Family and parental leave *is in addition* to vacation and other periods of extended time away already set forth in the teaching elder's call.
2. The Commission on Ministry (COM) and Branch Minister should be informed when a Parental or Family Leave option is exercised by a teaching elder so that the COM and Branch Minister may be of assistance in securing appropriate pulpit supply, pastoral care, and administrative assistance during the teaching elder's absence. Additionally, the COM and Branch Minister may be helpful, if needed, in advising the Session/Council in how they may continue the mission of the congregation while the teaching elder is absent.
3. The expectation is that the teaching elder will return to service and remain in his or her current position for at least 12 months after the leave has ended.
4. A Session/Council ought not to feel over-burdened by financial considerations that may be present in the teaching elder's Parental or Family Leave. The COM, working together with the branch ministers will seek to assist the congregation as necessary to provide appropriate pulpit supply and pastoral services.
5. Congregations are encouraged to respect the boundaries and privacy of the teaching elder while he or she is away on Parental or Family Leave.