

Pastors' Continuing Education Policy

1. In order to assure the on-going continuing education of its pastors, the Presbytery of Long Island shall not approve a call for pastoral services which does not provide for continuing education leave with pay, cumulative under certain circumstances up to three years.
2. Each call for pastoral service shall include the following:
 - a. A minimum of fourteen days per year for continuing education (including two Sundays) and a minimum monetary expense reimbursement, which shall be designated annually by the presbytery.
 - b. For calls to less than full-time service, the minimum monetary allotment shall be pro-rated; the time allotment remains fourteen days, including two Sundays.
 - c. Funds for continuing education shall be remitted to the pastor upon the submission of vouchers for the expenses incurred.
3. When sessions and pastors agree to make the continuing education time and expense reimbursement cumulative for up to three years:
 - a. There shall be a plan approved by the session and the pastor for using the time and funds.
 - b. Accumulated funds shall be deposited by the church treasurer before the end of each year in a separate account (to alleviate undue financial stress on the congregation when the time arrives to expend the funds).
 - c. The session should be apprised three months in advance of the pastor's intention to take accumulated continuing education leave.
4. Exceptions to the time limitations in 2 and 3 above may be allowed by agreement of the session and pastor, with the submission of a study plan and in consultation with the Committee on Ministry.
5. Congregations shall not be liable for continuing education time and funds which are not used within the designated time period (whether annual or cumulative).
6. Upon the dissolution of a pastoral relationship:
 - a. Annual study leave time and funds terminate on the effective date of the dissolution and may not be applied after that date.
 - b. Normally study leave may not be taken at the end of a pastor's service to a particular church.

7. General Guidelines

- a. Continuing education leave is defined as time away from the parish in order to participate in ongoing professional studies.
 - b. Session shall approve the specific use of continuing education leave after a period of discernment between the pastor and the Personnel Committee as to how it might best be spent, taking into account the needs of both the pastor and the congregation and possible areas of weakness.
 - c. Normally no more than two Sundays should be included in a year's continuing education leave.
 - d. Continuing education may be taken in blocks of less than a full week. However, single-day events that do not require overnight travel shall not normally be considered as a part of continuing education leave, although registration fees may be reimbursed from continuing education funds.
 - e. Pastors are encouraged to take their continuing education leave away from the local church situation
 - f. Pastors are encouraged to take their continuing education leave each year.
 - g. Pastors are encouraged to take their leave in a group setting.
 - h. Pastors shall inform the session of their intention to take continuing education leave at least one month in advance (except in the case of accumulated leave as described in [3.c.] above).
 - i. Approval of self-guided study plans will require documentation to include: concept, plan, time frame, and bibliography.
 - j. If there are questions about the appropriateness of the continuing education leave, the final decision shall be that of the Committee on Ministry.
 - k. After returning from continuing education leave, the pastor shall submit a written report to the session and shall find ways to share the experiences with the congregation.
8. The Committee on Ministry stands ready to assist pastors and sessions in working out their continuing education plans.

Committee On Ministry
October 21, 2008

The Presbytery of Long Island
November 1, 2008