

PRESBYTERY OF NORTHERN NEW YORK
POLICY ON THE
CONTINUING EDUCATION OF MINISTERS

1. In order to assure the on-going continuing education of its pastors, the Presbytery of Northern New York shall not approve a call for pastoral services which does not provide for two weeks continuing education leave with pay per year, cumulative up to three years.
2. Each call for pastoral service shall include the following:
 - a. A minimum of two weeks per year for continuing education (including two Sundays) and a minimum monetary allowance which shall be designated annually by the presbytery.
 - b. For calls to less than full-time service, the minimum monetary allotment shall be prorated; the time allotment remains two weeks including two Sundays.
 - c. Funds from the continuing education allowance shall be remitted to the pastor upon the submission of vouchers for the expenses incurred.
3. Congregations are expected to make the continuing education time and allowance cumulative for up to three years.
 - a. In such cases 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 Commission 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. If the minister moves to a new call or retires, he/she shall not be eligible to receive any accumulated continuing education allowance not used before the effective date of the dissolution.
7. General Guidelines

- a. Continuing education leave is defined as time away from the parish in order to participate in ongoing professional studies.
 - b. Two weeks means two weeks including two Sundays, but not more than two Sundays.
 - c. 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.
 - d. The Commission on Ministry encourages pastors to take their continuing education leave away from the local church situation.
 - e. Pastors are encouraged to take their continuing education leave each year.
 - f. They are encouraged to take their leave in a group setting.
 - g. Pastors shall inform the session of their intention to take continuing education leave at least one month in advance.
 - h. Approval of self-guided study plans will require documentation to include: concept, plan, time frame, and bibliography.
 - i. If there are questions concerning the appropriateness of the continuing education leave, the final decision shall be that of the Commission on Ministry.
8. The Commission on Ministry stands ready to assist pastors and sessions in working out their continuing education plans.

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