



1 **CONCERNING THE CONSIDERATION OF SABBATICAL/RENEWAL LEAVE FOR CLERGY**
2 **IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) OF MID-AMERICA**
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4 The Regional Commission on the Order of Ministry of the Mid-America Region, (RCOM) as a matter of
5 policy, urges congregations and other institutions where ordained or commissioned ministries occur to
6 provide sabbatical leave as outlined in the Guidelines published by the Disciples Home Missions/Office
7 of Search and Call of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): “Guidelines for Sabbatical/Renewal
8 Leave for Pastors in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)” (2005)

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10 *“Sabbatical/Renewal Leaves have proven to be a blessing to both congregations and pastoral leadership.*
11 *Sabbath is a central biblical concept. The word ‘Sabbath’ means ‘stop.’ As God rested from the work of*
12 *creation, God also commands that very creation to stop working and rest. ...” (Ex 20:8-11)*

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14 *“Congregations expect much of their ministers and ministers expect much of themselves. In healthy*
15 *relationships between congregations and their ministers, there is a sense of mutual care. The minister*
16 *cares for the members of the congregation and [the congregation] cares for the minister. ...”*

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18 *“A Sabbatical/Renewal Leave offers the minister time for reassessment of his/her ministry, which can be*
19 *difficult to do while engaged in the day-to-day tasks for ministry. By changing the scene and the pace as*
20 *well as engaging in different activities, ministers find themselves enriched spiritually, mentally and even*
21 *physically. ...”*

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23 *“When a minister takes a Sabbatical/Renewal Leave, the congregation will benefit from the opportunity*
24 *to reflect on its mission and ministry, experience different gifts of leadership and perhaps discover their*
25 *own unique areas of ministry. ...”*

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27 As a matter of course, RCOM will strongly encourage Ordained and Commissioned Ministers, as well as
28 those in the Ordination or Commissioning process, to pursue sabbatical/renewal leave at the time that their
29 terms of call are negotiated. The Regional Commission on Ministry perceives sabbatical leave to be a
30 vital component of the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of both our clergy and
31 our congregations or institutions, which our clergy serve.

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33 The Commission believes sabbatical leave in its full theological understanding, when consistently put into
34 use, can and will be transforming to these ministries and in turn to the entire body of Christ.

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36 To that end, RCOM strongly encourages both congregations and ministers to draw on the “Guidelines for
37 Sabbatical/Reneal Leave” document which includes resources to consider when writing a
38 sabbatical/renewal leave policy, deciding how to fund a sabbatical, when sabbaticals should occur,
39 considerations for staffing during a sabbatical/renewal leave and other useful resources.

40 https://cdn.disciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/06162723/Sabbatical_Guidelines.pdf