

2009 Sabbatical Leave Application

Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA

Time frame for the application process:

1. Obtain policy and application materials from synod office by **April 1, 2008**, (also available online).
2. Develop a “sabbatical committee” in the congregation or institution for guidance, encouragement, and disseminating information while rostered staff person is on sabbatical.
3. Develop sabbatical plan.
4. Send completed sabbatical application and description of sabbatical plans to the synod office (not e-mail please) by **July 1, 2008**.
5. The Sabbatical Committee will review applications in August of 2008.
6. Interview with Sabbatical Committee in September of 2008. The chairperson of the Committee will contact you to arrange a meeting.

I. Background Information:

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____

Name of Congregation: _____

Address of Congregation: _____

II. Previous Leaves (if any) Please list dates and sources of support:

III. Education History: Institutions attended, dates, and degrees received:

IV. Professional History: Positions held and dates:

V. Conditions of the Sabbatical Leave:

Please complete this section after you have discussed your plans with your congregational sabbatical committee. (See description in Sabbatical Leave Policy)

1. Date of sabbatical and time requested (Suggested 3 months):

2. Location(s) of sabbatical time:

3. What are your anticipated sabbatical expenses?

Tuition: _____ Books: _____ Housing: _____

Travel: _____ Other: _____

4. What amount of funding are you requesting for your sabbatical plans?

For self? _____ For congregation? _____

VI. In addition to this application, please include a summary of your proposal for the sabbatical. Please give attention to the following:

1. Briefly describe what you plan to do. Attach any additional information which will clarify or support your proposed activity.
2. Please list specific arrangements you have made to facilitate your Sabbatical leave.
3. Explain how this leave will benefit you personally and professionally.
4. Explain how this leave will benefit your family, current setting for ministry and congregation.

VII. Sabbatical Committee Approval:

1. The chairperson of the Sabbatical Committee will contact you in September of the year for your application for a 20 minute interview with the committee to verbally share your Sabbatical plans.
2. Using the Sabbatical Leave Policy as a guideline, all applications will be considered equally.
3. The final awarding will be the decision of the Sabbatical Committee. Letters of acceptance or denial will be sent out by the committee from the synod office within one week of the interview.

VIII. Reviewing the Sabbatical Leave:

The chairperson of the Sabbatical Committee will contact you in September of your leave year. The purpose being to arrange a brief meeting for you to share with the entire committee your sabbatical experiences. Please write a short reflection paper (1-2 pages) about your sabbatical leave and turn in it into the synod upon completion of your sabbatical.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

For questions or comments contact the synod office: 507-280-9457, or 800-426-6376.

Send your completed sabbatical leave application to:

Sabbatical Leave Application
Attn: Rev.Linda Gunderson, Synod Minister
Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA
1001 14th St. NW, Suite 300
Rochester, MN 55901-2551

Sabbatical Leave Policy

Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA

*I have been made free
by the tide's pendulum truth
that the heart that is low now
will be at the full tomorrow.
~R. S. Thomas*

I. A Brief Theology of Sabbatical

Beginning with the Bible's story of creation, and quietly echoing down through all the generations and communities of the people of God, is the concept of Sabbath: the rhythm of work and rest, and how the wholeness of life is to be found in that harmony. Genesis reports that God rested after the labor of creation, and the writer of Hebrews invites us (with some urgency) to enter into the "rest of God."

Likewise, our word "inspiration" is literally connected to the need to "breathe in" after a period of "breathing out." Those who study parish ministry have found that healthy pastorates (especially those of longer duration) require that attention be paid to this "sabbatical" rhythm if that health – for both pastor and parish – is to be maintained. Far from simply being a "favor" to the pastor, the synod's sabbatical program (outlined below) is designed to offer refreshment and renewal for the whole ministry of the congregation by taking seriously the need for our called leaders to be renewed and, yes, "inspired" by all of the dimensions – rest, reflection, study, prayer, and more – that are included in a period called "sabbatical."

II. General Themes for Sabbatical Leaves

- A. Rest
- B. Time for family and friends
- C. Spiritual growth and renewal.
- D. Intellectual stimulation
- E. Time to explore or pursue a "dream" or "interest".

III. Criteria of eligibility for Sabbatical Leave

- A. Rostered leaders in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod who have served a congregation or institution in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod full time for at least five years (or the equivalent, i.e. 13 years part-time) may apply.
- B. Non-rostered program staff who have served full time in a Southeastern Minnesota Synod congregation for five years (or the equivalent) may apply. (see "IV. Priority for Funding Allocation")
- C. "Second" sabbaticals will be considered after seven years (or the equivalent).
- D. Exceptions to the above criteria will be considered on the basis of urgent need.

IV. Priority for Funding Allocation

Sabbatical funding monies may vary from year to year depending on the synod budget. If funds are available for the calendar year the grant applicant may receive up to \$2,000 from the sabbatical fund, (salary and benefits to continue) and the congregation or institution may receive up to \$2,000 from the sabbatical funds for interim ministry during the applicant sabbatical time.

- A. Rostered leaders will receive priority in funding for sabbatical leaves.
- B. When sufficient funds are available, other applications from the following list will be considered in the following order:
 - a. Rostered staff who have already received funds from the synod for a previous sabbatical leave will be considered if previous leave was seven years or earlier.
 - b. Non-rostered program staff who meet the above criteria.

V. Other Considerations

- A. The general practice is that a sabbatical leave is normally to be considered a period of 3 months.
- B. It is encouraged that following a sabbatical leave, rostered personnel continue to serve the congregation or institution for at least one to two years following the leave.
- C. Rostered personnel and lay staff are encouraged to take all vacation and study leave time allowed in their call/contract.
- D. If it would be helpful to have a Sabbatical Committee member visit a congregation's council to support the rostered staff's sabbatical request, please contact the synod office.

VI. Staffing Issues

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod office will assist congregations in staffing. Multi-staffed congregations may be enlisted to assist smaller congregations.

VII. Other Concerns

- A. The encouragement, interpretation, and promotion of the sabbatical program shall be carried out by the bishop of the synod and by the Lay and Clergy Leadership Development Team.
- B. Resources need to be distributed in such a way that pastors serving small and large congregations may be provided opportunities for sabbatical leaves.
- C. Applications shall be submitted to the Southeastern Minnesota Synod office by July 1 of the year preceding the sabbatical.
- D. Each sabbatical leave applicant should have a "sabbatical committee" in the congregation or institution for guidance, encouragement, and disseminating information following the leave.
- E. A personal interview with the Sabbatical Committee will be required before action is taken on the grant application. Further, the Sabbatical Committee will contact the grant recipient for a sabbatical debriefing in September of the leave year.
- F. The Congregation will continue to provide the rostered/lay staff with the same, previous level of salary and benefits during the sabbatical.
- G. In addition to the synod, the congregation is encouraged to contribute to the rostered/lay staff support for sabbatical.