

## **Presbytery of Boston Pastoral Family Leave Guidelines**

*“So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others...rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.” - Rom. 12:5,15*

The Presbytery of Boston seeks to care for its clergy members with the love of Christ, remembering first and foremost that a pastor is a member of Christ's body who should be loved and nurtured in times of transition in the life of his/her family. In this spirit, we offer the following guidelines to member congregations as a framework within which they may work to serve their clergy when the need for family leave arises. While the determination of the terms of family leave is to be the result of collaborative work between the session and pastor, assistance may be requested from the Committee on Ministry. This is particularly the case when leave is requested that exceeds the minimums mentioned below or in extraordinary times of crisis for a pastoral family.

### **A. Examples of Family Leave:**

General, but not exhaustive, examples of Family Leave are:

1. pregnancy
2. child rearing
3. placement of a child with a minister for adoption or foster care to care for a child, stepchild, spouse, parent, stepparent, parent-in-law or sibling with a serious health condition
4. bereavement.

### **B. Pregnancy Leave:**

1. A minister shall be granted pregnancy leave during the appropriate time of pregnancy and following delivery.
2. A minister requiring a pregnancy leave shall submit a written request to the church's clerk of session as well as the chairperson of the Committee on Ministry, at least 30 days-prior to the start of the leave. In this letter, the minister shall state the anticipated date of the beginning of leave as well as the projected date that the minister will return.
3. Pregnancy leave shall normally allow for eight weeks of paid leave. Any earned vacation time and compensation, for that calendar year, may be added to the eight weeks of pregnancy leave, with the concurrence of the session.
4. Arrangements for when to return to work after pregnancy leave will be negotiated with the session.

### **C. Childrearing, Adoption, and Foster Care Leave:**

1. Childrearing leave (time to care for a newborn, a newly adopted, or recently placed foster child) shall be equally offered to male and female ministers and shall be requested in the manner delineated in Part B, 2.
2. Childrearing leave shall normally allow for 2-6 weeks of paid leave, based upon the needs at the time following the birth or arrival of a child for care and growing family adjustments.
3. Vacation time shall not be used as a substitute for parental leave, but vacation time or any other leave may be used to supplement parental leave.
4. Return to work after childrearing leave will also be negotiated as delineated in the above Part B, 4.

**D. Caregiving/ Bereavement Leave:**

1. Paid bereavement leave of-up to two weeks including Sundays shall be granted by the session in the case of a death in the pastor's immediate family (spouse, child, stepchild, parent, parent-in-law, sibling), keeping in mind that the pastor's ability to care for others is diminished in a time when he/she is grieving.
2. In addition, two weeks of paid leave-may be offered each year to pastors who are caring for the health needs of an immediate family member.
3. Vacation time shall not be used as a substitute for caregiving or bereavement leave, but vacation time or any other leave may be used to supplement caregiving or bereavement leave.
4. Additional unpaid bereavement or caregiving leave may be negotiated by the pastor with the session. If this leave is granted beyond the guidelines mentioned above, the clerk of session shall notify the Committee on Ministry.

October 2013