Sabbatical Planning Questions and Answers

When should I/We begin to plan for Sabbatical?

Ideally, the planning should begin a minimum of one (1) year from the date the sabbatical leave will begin. This allows time for the pastor to formulate their plan for sabbatical, and for the congregation to make plans for coverage.

Who plans for the congregation's needs?

Especially in a church with no other staff, the Pastor should have a small committee made up of a representative group of the church's leadership to plan for coverage.

What coverage does the church need?

Your pastor will be away for three months. Think of all the things that happen across the span of their day/week/month. Who will preach on what schedule? Who will serve communion? Who will moderate Session? Who will respond to emergency pastoral care needs? Who will officiate at funerals? Who do I call if…?

How do we plan compensation?

The expenses for coverage during the pastor's sabbatical will be borne by the church. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you begin to include an annual line item in your budget to meet this anticipated expense. Please note that the pastor will still receive their full salary and benefits during the sabbatical leave.

What are the levels of compensation?

It is not necessary to "hire" someone to fill in for your pastor. A sabbatical is a good time for church officers and members to renew their commitment to the church by stepping up and stepping in. Do you have Deacons that can take on routine pastoral care needs? Can Elders share preaching responsibilities? Has the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry been contacted about appointing a Session Moderator?

However, consider the following guidelines should you choose to contract with an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament while your pastor is away -

- If you wish to "hire" someone to fully step into your pastor's shoes, you should expect to compensate that person at the same level as your pastor's effective salary. In no case should the compensation fall below the Presbytery's stated minimum terms of call.
- If you wish to contract with someone for all pastoral needs on a less than full-time basis, please use the appropriate percentage of your pastor's effective

salary. For instance, if you want someone half time, you would cut that effective salary in half.

- If you wish to contract with someone for pulpit supply only, or to only moderate your Session, please refer to the Presbytery's Remuneration for Temporary Tasks.

Who do I call with questions?

If you have questions, please contact the Presbytery's Commission on Ministry Task Force on Care and Oversight, via the Presbytery's Administrative Assistant, Christine Ratledge – cratledge@salempresbytery.org.