

PASTORAL CLERGY RENEWAL GUIDELINES

WHAT IS CLERGY RENEWAL:

The clergy renewal is a time when the pastor is released from the normal responsibilities to focus on his / her own relationship with the Lord. It is also a time of seeking the Lord's will in his / her own life and in the guiding of our body of believers. It is expected to include some times of rest and relaxation along with research, study and prayer in accordance with a well thought out plan. The clergy renewal is not a period of extended vacation nor sick leave.

WHY IS CLERGY RENEWAL NECESSARY:

The goal of this policy is to provide a framework and guidelines to provide for the physical and spiritual health of our pastors with residual benefit to the congregation. This congregation affirms that clergy renewals are beneficial to both the pastoral staff and congregation. Such opportunities are intended to enhance skills, increase competence and expand horizons of the pastor for their ministry to the congregation. Clergy renewals provide prime opportunities for renewal of spirit, extended study, reflections and planning, and creative growth that normal routines do not allow. A goal of the clergy renewal is for the pastor to return to the congregation renewed, refreshed and refocused.

Assumptions considered in the creation of this policy include:

1. Giving support to pastoral staff in maintaining good health benefits the worker, the congregation and the church at large.
2. Healthy pastoral staff build healthy congregations
3. When there is a good match between the pastoral staff and congregation, a long-term ministry is desirable. Times of clergy renewal can spare the church body from the turmoil that goes with frequent turn-over, is cost effective and provides a stable, healthy church family.
4. Good self-care, which includes a regularly scheduled clergy renewal, keeps pastoral staff workers healthy. It can enable them to achieve a new sense of vision, renew their calling, evaluate their gifts and skills and the needs of the ministry.
5. Pastoral staff workers who practice good self-care remain healthier and may extend their life and ministry.
6. The clergy renewal time can open up new opportunities for members to grow in service and be a blessing for the congregation and church at large.
7. Clergy renewal leave should be an ongoing intentional part of a congregation's ministry, not a reaction to a crisis (i.e. burnout, forced removal, etc.).
8. Clergy renewals are a way that congregations can minister to their pastoral staff.
9. This policy is to be reevaluated bi-annually.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:

1. Renewal time is available for full time pastors and could include full time Christian education leaders.
2. The need for clergy renewal is to be addressed on an annual basis. A committee consisting of at least one Adult Servant Leader and at least one Council member will meet with each pastor during the August / September timeframe each year. The focus of this committee will be to evaluate the pastors' goals and need for renewal in the following fiscal year. If married, the pastor's spouse should be involved in the evaluation.
3. Planning should begin as quickly after the evaluation as possible to allow for inclusion in the annual budget.
4. A written plan may be submitted by the Senior Pastor on behalf of the staff member for which the clergy renewal is requested. The plan submitted on behalf of the Senior Pastor may be submitted by the Adult Servant Leaders with possible input from the District Supervisor. The plan should be addressed to the Council and the church

body. The plan is to include the length of service since the last time a clergy renewal was taken, the length of time requested, the activities planned and specific goals these activities will achieve. If necessary, the Council will propose changes required to meet financial constraints or approve an amendment to the budget to cover any cost exceeding what is in the budget. The pastor will be responsible to provide an accounting to the church for the expenses up to the amount advanced / reimbursed.

5. No more than one staff member may take clergy renewal at a time.
6. The clergy renewal planned is subject to cancellation in the event of significant staff illness or change.

DURATION GUIDELINE:

The duration of clergy renewal for the Senior Pastor will be determined by the Adult Servant Leaders, with possible input from the District Supervisor. The duration of renewal for other staff members is to be determined by the Senior Pastor and Adult Servant Leaders. As a guideline, the length of the renewal may range from four to twelve weeks based upon need and objectives of the plan. No more than seven years should pass prior to a renewal being mandated.

The duration provided above is only a guideline. The plan submitted may deviate from these guidelines where circumstances dictate the need to do so.

Reiterating that renewal time is not vacation nor sick leave, it is important to also recognize the needs of the church body to have their shepard near. Vacation should not be included as part of the clergy renewal time. Where the pastor is eligible for more than three weeks of vacation in the year that renewal is taken, vacation in excess of three weeks will be deferred and added to future years at the rate of one additional week per year in addition to what the pastor is eligible to take in that given year until the deferred vacation is fully utilized. In the year that clergy renewal is taken, conventions and missions trips should be foregone unless it is determined that these events would be appropriately built into the renewal plan (ICFG Bylaws state that pastors should “Endeavor to attend conventions and district pastoral events.”).

COST TO THE CONGREGATION:

1. The congregation will continue to pay full salary and benefits (base salary, housing allowance, pension and insurance coverage). Car allowance, a ministry expense, is normally not paid during clergy renewal time.
2. Accrued continuing education dollars can be used for the educational costs of the clergy renewal. (*Continuing education dollars can only be accrued for three years*)
3. The congregation will need to provide for ministry needs to be covered during the clergy renewal time. Considerations involve:
 - a) Filling the pulpit for Sunday and Wednesday worship/preaching
 - b) Teaching, visitation, occasional services (funerals, weddings, etc). The remaining pastoral staff, congregational leadership, and district office can work together to provide for coverage of these needs during the clergy renewal time. Due to the financial considerations, outside coverage requiring payment of honorariums should be kept to a minimum.
4. Funds will be set aside in a special account annually, to be taken from the church’s general fund, to provide the required resources during times when a clergy renewal is granted.

PLANNING:

1. A clergy renewal policy should be in place before any other planning begins.
2. Planning should begin as quickly as possible after evaluation and determination of need.

3. Pastoral staff provides an outline of the planned use of time to Church Council.
4. Develop specific schedule of who is providing coverage for preaching, teaching, visitation, etc...

COMMITMENTS FOLLOWING THE CLERGY RENEWAL:

1. Pastor should submit a report of the clergy renewal time, and find occasion to share with the church body reactions, learnings, insights, etc resulting from the renewal.
2. The pastor is expected to remain at least one year following the clergy renewal.

CHECKLIST/TIMELINE

- _____ Elders encourage staff to do a clergy renewal
- _____ Staff determines interest and goals for the renewal leave.
- _____ Council receives request/proposal, approves clergy renewal leave.
- _____ Council adjusts budget to allow for additional staff coverage
- _____ All arrangements with persons involved should be in place three months in advance of renewal.
- _____ Notify the ICFG regional director regarding the renewal
- _____ Staff makes all necessary arrangements for his/her course of study, travel, etc.