



**The United Church  
of Canada  
General Council**

# **GC45 ECO01 Making Sabbaticals Easier for Summer 2025**

True Document Date: June 28, 2025

**Origin: East Central Ontario**

## **1. What is the issue? Why is it important?**

Sabbaticals are a key way to help our ministry personnel to be re-energized and strengthened for their ministries into the future. Healthy ministry personnel and healthy congregations make the wider church healthier too.

## **2. What is happening now?**

When ministry personnel move from one pastoral charge to another, the clock restarts on the five years of service they must work before qualifying for the 3-month sabbatical. This means that a minister who does four years in one pastoral charge and moves to a new one is required to wait for another five years before taking a sabbatical.

There were good reasons for the five-year delay, primarily to ensure that communities of faith have the chance to put money aside to pay for the three months of coverage by another minister or to cover costs for lay worship leadership. Five years allow to squirrel a little money away over an extended period of time. While some congregations have offered their ministry personnel sabbatical leave despite not having met the five years of service to that community, not all have put aside resources that can be used in this way.

## **3. What is the recommendation?**

That the sabbatical policy be amended to allow ministry personnel who have worked for five years to be entitled to sabbatical regardless of any changes in their pastoral relationships during that five year period. That the General Council consider and promote the formation of a sabbatical support fund that pastoral charges contribute to and can access to cover expenses while a minister is on sabbatical.

That such policy restricts sabbatical from occurring in the first 18 months of a new pastoral relationship and that no pastoral charge shall be financially responsible for more than one sabbatical in a five-year period.

## 4. Background information:

Sabbatical Leave provisions in the Manual: I.2.3.5

## 5. How does this proposal help us to live into our church's commitments on equity?

A change in pastoral relations does not reduce the need for a sabbatical and would provide equity to those who undergo such changes.

### **For the body transmitting this proposal to the General Council:**

Please select the appropriate option and provide the key discussion points for items being forwarded to the General Council:

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree without forwarding to the General Council
- ☐ Disagree and forwarding to the General Council

### **Comments:**

- The original proposal was amended by the regional council to include the second sentence under section *Recommendation*

If you have questions regarding this proposal, please send them to: [GCinfo@united-church.ca](mailto:GCinfo@united-church.ca)

General Council: [GC45](#)

Originating Body: [East Central Ontario Regional Council](#)