

## ***Proposed COM Family Leave Policy***

### **Section 1.13: Family Leave (G.2.0804)**

#### A. Theological Grounding:

The celebration, nurture, and encouragement of the family takes place in many ways and on many levels in the life of a church. Through Jesus' earthly life, teaching, and love, we see God in our lives, in the everyday circumstances of human interaction, relationship, challenge, heartbreak, conflict, and joy. God created us to be in relationship with one another, to care for one another, and to participate in families. We care for parents, children, and kin. Therefore, the congregation must make a provision when a covered individual must be absent from work to care for their family.

Family leave, at the time of birth, adoption, or sickness, allows congregations to extend care for the covered individual and their family by offering appropriate time for them to step away from their professional occupation to minister to the needs of loved ones without loss of income or security.

#### B. Individuals Covered by this Policy:

This policy applies to the following members of the Presbytery Miami Valley (PMV): Teaching Elders or Commissioned Ruling Elders in a contractual relationship serving as installed, or temporary pastors and Certified Christian Educators within churches of the Presbytery. Those covered will be identified throughout this policy as "covered individuals."

#### C. Purpose:

- a. To provide sessions and other employing agencies minimum guidelines for a covered individual's family leave to be included in all call packages.
- b. To ensure that covered individuals receive fair and equitable leave when required. It is anticipated that covered individuals will only use this policy when needed and not abuse the church's generosity.

#### D. Provisions and Requirements

- a. The terms of call, contract, or employment for each covered individual serving in a congregation shall include the following language from the Book of Order. The covered individual shall be granted Family Leave for 12 weeks. All covered individuals' compensation shall include 12 weeks of paid "Family Leave" as defined in section E below. The 12 weeks *do not have to be taken consecutively*. During family leave, the covered individual shall receive full effective salary and full Pension dues, including medical benefits.

- b. Covered individuals may not request more than twelve (12) weeks paid Family Leave within a span of twelve (12) months and no more than thirty-six (36) weeks within a five-year period.
- c. A 12-month period begins on the first day of leave. If the covered individual requires an extension, Session is encouraged to negotiate additional paid, unpaid, or partially paid leave as necessary. Congregations and Sessions are encouraged to deal with their covered individuals with the greatest compassion, befitting followers of Christ.
- d. When a Family Leave situation arises, a covered individual shall initiate a written request for leave from their supervisor, Session, and COM a minimum of 30 days prior to the leave or as soon as practical given the urgency of the situation to give all parties time to plan for the covered individual's absence.
- e. During the covered individual's leave, Session is responsible for the ongoing work of the congregation. Session should be ready to arrange and pay for pulpit supply, provide for hospital and other visitation, and whatever teaching and programming the covered individual was responsible for. The COM will appoint a Session moderator. The church will pay the compensation for the moderator.

E. Definitions of Family Leave:

“Family leave” includes but is not limited to leave following the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child, and leave taken in order to care for a family member.

The term “family member” includes but is not limited to the covered individual's spouse, children, siblings, parents, grandparents, and in-laws.

*Note: This policy does not cover medical disability, bereavement leave, or military leave for covered individuals.*

a. Parental Leave:

Parental leave typically begins when the child is born or placed in the household; however, it may start sooner if there is a need to ensure a compassionate and caring transition for the child.

b. Family Member Care:

The covered individual may require leave to help transition a family member into appropriate care or provide intensive caregiving to a family member who may be undergoing surgery, treatment, or other illness.

c. Additional Leave:

At times, it may be necessary for the covered individual to require time beyond the 12 weeks due to medical complications or other unforeseen circumstances. If this occurs, the covered individual will work with their Session to request additional leave and notify the COM.