

# Guidelines for Parental Leave | Savannah Presbytery

*(Policy adapted from Mid-Kentucky Presbytery)*

## I. Theological Introduction

God created us to be in relationship with one another. Human beings are nurtured in families where we care and are cared for at the most basic level, which equips us for life in the larger community. The Church recognizes the significance of family in the lives of its church personnel and seeks to be fair, reasonable and compassionate in all its dealings related to family. Scriptures instructs us to honor those we call “father” or “mother” (Exodus 20:12), and to care for children, for such is “the Kingdom of God” (Mark 10:13-16). Therefore it is the policy of the Savannah Presbytery and its member congregations to meet or exceed the following compensation terms regarding calls and covenants of Teaching Elders, Certified Christian Educators, and Commissioned Ruling Elders (hereafter referred to as “church professionals”) serving within the bounds when a child(ren) are added to their family through birth or adoption.

## II. Parental Leave

To provide Sessions and/or congregations minimum standards for a church professional’s parental leave, parental leave of thirteen weeks (91 consecutive days) is to be included in all terms of call packages.

## III. Parental Leave Guidelines

A. When a church professional or professional’s spouse or partner becomes pregnant, s/he/they shall customarily inform the Session and/or congregation by the 24th week of the pregnancy. In the event of adoption, the church professional desiring to adopt shall customarily notify the Session and/or congregation at least three months prior to the placement of the child.

B. Parental leave of thirteen weeks (91 consecutive days) shall be granted to a church professional for a birth or adoption. The church professional shall receive full compensation and benefits during the parental leave. It is anticipated that individual churches will not feel limited by these requirements, but will respond to the need for parental leave responsibly and generously.

C. A church professional may use accrued vacation and/or sick leave to lengthen the parental leave, providing this information as soon as possible to the Session and/or congregation.

## IV. Additional considerations:

A. Study leave shall not be used for parental leave.

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B. Re-entry after parental leave may be negotiated on a full-time or part-time basis, with commensurate adjustments of compensation as agreed upon by the church professional, Session, congregation and in consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

C. If a church professional initiates dissolution of a call, or non-renewal of a contract within one year following parental leave any unused vacation time shall be credited against the leave.

D. In the event of a late term miscarriage or stillbirth, a church professional should be granted at least half the parental leave s/he/they would have received.

E. Church professionals who are serving the same congregation are both entitled to parental leave, which may be taken either simultaneously or sequentially.

F. If the financial considerations surrounding parental leave of a church professional prove to be a hardship for the Session and/or congregation, they should be in touch with the moderator of the Commission on Ministry, who will seek ways to assist the Session and/or congregation to make the parental leave possible.