



Cabinet Policy for Housing, Benefits, Vacation, Continuing Education, and Renewal Leave

Benefits including housing, health insurance, retirement, time for vacation, continuing education, and formational renewal are extremely important in the life of every person involved in professional ministry. Health insurance and retirement benefits are necessary to have good medical care and to plan for the future. Further, there must be times for recreation, study, and re-centering in each clergyperson's life. The Cabinet of the Florida Conference adopts this policy for clergy and churches as a way of encouraging clergy to live a balanced life in ministry.

Except for policies related to health insurance, life insurance, disability insurance, and retirement benefits, the policies listed below are for all full-time clergy. The policy may also be useful to churches in establishing policies for part-time clergy and lay professional workers.

Housing

Churches that have a full-time appointed pastor are required to provide housing for their pastoral family. They may provide either a parsonage or a housing allowance. Regardless of which choice the church chooses, it must comply with the Cabinet's policy for clergy housing that is available on the Conference's website.

Churches that have a part-time appointed pastor may choose to offer a parsonage or housing allowance but are not required to do so.

Health Insurance

Churches that have a full-time appointed pastor must provide health insurance coverage appropriate to the clergyperson's family. This is required by the denomination to achieve better health insurance rates by creating a broad pool of covered individuals. The only exemptions from this policy are set by the denomination: a pastor covered under his/her spouse's employer's policy, a pastor who is bi-vocational and is covered under their other employer's policy, a pastor who is on Medicare or Medicaid, or a pastor who is covered under military benefits (VA, Tri-Care, etc.).

Churches must provide the tier of coverage required for each pastor and their spouse or children. Please check current federal law to determine if a pastor's adult children are eligible for coverage. If a pastor is married or has a family eligible for health insurance, the church cannot cover only the pastor and pay a stipend to cover the spouse or dependents. This creates inequality of coverage between churches, makes the appointment process difficult, and causes different standards of care between pastors.

Life and Disability Insurance

Churches that have a $\frac{3}{4}$ time-appointed pastor (or more) must provide GMC denominational life and disability insurance through the denomination's current provider.

Retirement Benefits

Churches that have a $\frac{1}{2}$ time-appointed pastor (or more) must provide GMC denominational retirement benefits. The retirement plan for the Global Methodist Church is set by the General Conference and is provided by a third-party administrator chosen by the denomination. If a church has an appointed pastor who is in senior status (retired), it is up to the church to decide if it will provide retirement benefits.

Vacation

All full-time clergy shall have four weeks of vacation time in each annual conference year (July 1 – June 30). Unused vacation time does not accrue from year to year.

Continuing Education

Each full-time and part-time clergy person shall have at least one week in each annual conference year for a program of continuing education and spiritual growth. This time is not considered as vacation time.

Renewal Leave

In accordance with paragraph 417.3 of the *Book of Doctrines and Discipline* a clergy person who has served at least six years in a full-time relationship with a church may request a sabbatical leave of up to 12 months (only three months are paid) while continuing to hold an appointment. Such requests must be approved by the Staff Parish Relations Committee (or its equivalent), the Church Council (or its equivalent), and the Presiding Elder.

Days Off

It is important for clergy to have a regular time away each week. Each clergy person is encouraged to establish a schedule that includes at least one day a week in which the clergy person is not involved in the duties of pastoring. Such days off should be scheduled such that the congregation and the staff will know when said days are to occur.

Consultation with the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Presiding Elder

All leave times, including the establishment of regular days off, should be done in consultation with the Staff Parish Relations Committee (or its equivalent). For extended times away, the Presiding Elder should also be consulted.

Other Time Commitments

Clergypersons are often asked to serve on various committees and task forces for the Conference and/or denomination. Involvement in such activities is part of the understanding of being in connection together. Such involvements are not to be construed as vacation or continuing education.

Clergypersons are also often asked to be involved in various community groups. Such involvement provides an opportunity to build a bridge between the community and the church. These involvements should not be considered as vacation or continuing education.

Clergypersons are encouraged to use good judgment in the amount of commitment beyond their primary appointment. Consultation with the Staff Parish Relations Committee (or its equivalent) should take place before accepting such responsibilities.

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