

## **Presbytery of East Iowa Commission on Ministry and Vitality (COMV) Family Leave Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

This policy ensures that all installed pastors, commissioned ruling elders (CREs), and other pastoral leaders serving in validated ministry within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of East Iowa receive a minimum of 12 weeks of paid family leave in accordance with the PC(USA) Book of Order (G-2.0804). The goal is to support pastoral well-being while ensuring continuity of congregational ministry.

### **2. Statement of Commitment**

The Presbytery of East Iowa is committed to holistic pastoral well-being and ensuring that family leave policies reflect both compassion and good governance. This policy ensures that no pastor must choose between ministry and urgent family responsibilities.

### **3. Definitions**

- Family Leave – A paid leave of absence for a qualifying event as outlined below.
- Eligible Personnel – Installed pastors, temporary pastors, CREs, and validated ministry leaders serving congregations or presbytery-approved ministry positions within the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of East Iowa.
- Qualifying Events – Family leave may be granted for:
  - Birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child.
  - Recovery from miscarriage or stillbirth.
  - Care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition.
  - The pastor's own recovery from a serious health condition.
  - Bereavement following the loss of a spouse, child, or other immediate family member.
- Immediate Family Member – Spouse, children, parents, legal guardians, or other dependents as recognized by the Board of Pensions guidelines.

### **4. Leave Entitlement & Benefits**

- Eligible personnel are entitled to 12 consecutive weeks of paid family leave per year.
- Salary, housing, and full Board of Pensions benefits continue uninterrupted during the leave period.
- Leave may be approved for up to 12 consecutive weeks at a time. A shorter time period for leave may be granted by request of the eligible personnel. If the person granted

leave wants to return to work before the expiration of the granted leave period, this should be communicated to a COMV moderator or co-moderator.

- Leave must commence within 3 months of a qualifying event.
- If multiple qualifying events occur in one year, additional leave may be granted at the discretion of COMV.

## **5. Application & Determination Process**

### **A. Requesting Leave**

- Written requests should be submitted to COMV at least 30 days in advance when possible.
- In emergencies, requests should be made as soon as reasonably possible with an initial notification via phone or email.
- The request should include:
  - The expected start and end dates.
  - The nature of the leave (general category, without medical specifics).
  - Any relevant transitional needs.

### **B. Approval & Congregational Coordination**

1. Approval by COMV: The COMV will approve, ask for more information (including the possibility of meeting with relevant parties), modify the proposal for leave, or deny the proposal without undue delay. The COMV will reconsider a leave that has been denied if additional information or rationale is submitted.
2. Session Coordination: COMV will coordinate with the session to ensure a ministry continuity plan is in place. This may include pulpit supply, pastoral coverage, and other support mechanisms.
3. Financial Responsibility: The congregation remains responsible for the pastor's salary and benefits during the leave. If financial hardship arises, the Presbytery may provide short-term assistance through designated funds upon application.
4. Flexibility Considerations: Pastors may choose to take consecutive, intermittent, or reduced-schedule leave as appropriate for their circumstances and in consultation with COMV.

## **6. Congregational Support & Transition Planning**

- Advance Planning: Sessions should discuss contingency plans before leave is needed, including securing short-term pastoral supply.

- Pulpit & Pastoral Support: COMV will assist in identifying supply preachers and pastoral care providers.
- Reintegration: COMV will support pastors in reintegrating into their roles upon return, ensuring a smooth transition back into ministry.

#### **7. Policy Oversight & Review**

- COMV will review this policy every two years to ensure it remains effective and responsive.
- Questions or concerns should be directed to the COMV Chairperson for resolution.

Policy Adopted April 9, 2025