



Upstate New York Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

## Sabbatical or Extended Study Leave

**Policy Statement** - This Synod affirms that sabbaticals/extended study leaves are of value to both rostered individuals and congregations/agencies/ministries/synods. This particular policy is written for the Synod's pastoral staff (Program and Ministry Consultants would be governed by their congregation's policies and practice). This policy is also in line with the general policy of the Synod for sabbaticals adopted by the Synod Council in 2015.

**Definition** - Sabbaticals may be for study, personal growth, spiritual life, and/or renewal in life. They are not vacations.

**Continuing Education** - The Upstate New York Synod encourages planning for continuing education on an annual or semi-annual basis, including discussion with the congregation's leadership (i.e. Mutual Ministry Committee, Congregation Council, Personnel or Executive Committee, etc.). A Continuing Education Covenant or similar model can assist in this planning. Such planning need not necessarily define which workshops or seminars are to be attended, but what areas should be targeted for study or growth.

This Synod affirms the ELCA guidelines for continuing education for all active rostered persons: "All ordained ministers, associates in ministry, diaconal ministers, and deaconesses are expected to participate regularly in continuing education. The ELCA expects a minimum of 25 hours (contact hours) annually in focused continuing education.

**Study Leave and Continuing Education Funds for Full Time Calls** - This Synod affirms that the minimum compensation package should include at least the ELCA recommended minimum of \$1,000 in annual contribution by congregations and agencies for continuing education. Rostered persons are expected to contribute additional funds as well.

It is possible to accumulate continuing education funds from year to year. Procedures for the deposit and withdrawal of funds held for this purpose must be agreed upon by the Congregation Council and rostered person prior to their accumulation. Such an agreement should include what amount or percentage of funds would be transferred to another setting should the rostered person retire or change calls. This accumulation should be reviewed annually.

Study leave is for bona fide study programs, retreats, or independent study (i.e., Trexler Fellowship Trips). It is not to be considered or used as vacation time. All rostered personnel shall be granted time for study leave of 2 weeks per year which may be accumulated up to 6 weeks at the same place of ministry. All time for study leave must be taken in consultation with and with

the approval of the Congregation Council (or appropriate group for those in specialized ministry).

The Upstate New York Synod affirms that 2 weeks of study leave each year be included in the minimum compensation package for all rostered persons. These 2 weeks may include 2 Sundays. If the study leave is taken one day at a time, the 2 weeks shall be equivalent to 12 days (no Sundays).

Study leave may be accumulated for up to 3 years (up to 6 weeks total) if the Congregation Council (or other appropriate body) has approved the rostered person's request to do so, prior to the beginning of the accumulation. This accumulation is to be reviewed annually. Study leave may not normally be carried from one ministry to another.

**Study Leave and Continuing Education Funds for Part Time Calls** - Both continuing education funds and study leave time will be decided on an individual basis to be determined at the time of issuance or renewal of each parttime call, using the policy for fulltime calls as a guideline.

**Sabbaticals** - A sabbatical is understood to be a time away from normal duties in order that a rostered leader may devote time to study and renewal. The Upstate New York Synod affirms that a sabbatical may be granted for a period of up to 6 months".

Sabbatical requests should be negotiated with the Congregation Council and in consultation with the bishop.

Such discussion should happen well in advance of the planned sabbatical and should include plans for replacement services, financial considerations, type of study and post sabbatical reporting.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Synod 700-7 DRAFT 1218115