

## Pastoral Care Report

We, your committee on Pastoral Care, make the following recommendations regarding the care of lead and staff pastors, with the understanding that such care would be undertaken with Christian love and heart holiness. We believe adequate support for ministerial personnel will relieve personal pressures and promote ongoing spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental health. Holistic pastoral care can result in healthy ministry longevity and more effective leadership for Kingdom growth.

We recognize that each local congregation is different. Therefore, this document is not intended to be prescriptive but informative, providing creative ideas for a church board to utilize in caring for their pastoral staff.

### **We recommend:**

1. The Pastoral Care report should be sent to the church board secretary, church treasurer, and Finance Committee chairperson, with a copy to the pastor, for each church within thirty (30) days following the district assembly, and a copy should be provided to each church board member at the first board meeting following the district assembly.
2. The church board shall recommend a person or persons to oversee and facilitate ministry to the pastoral staff and their families. This should include prayer support, encouragement, and special seasonal (anniversary, birthdays, Christmas, etc.) expressions of love given to them.
3. The church board would commit to regularly praying for their pastor(s) and spouse/family.
4. The church board encourages the pastor to pursue ongoing physical health by allowing the time and resources that promote good physical health.
5. The church board encourages the pastor to pursue ongoing mental, marital, and spiritual health by utilizing professional counseling and therapy when needed. The church board should consider allowing the time and monetary resources to facilitate these sessions, considering that potential resources are available through the district and General church for counseling care.
6. The local church board reviews pastoral compensation at least annually with consideration given to both (a) cost of living increase and (b) merit increase; the Compensation Calculator under the Resources menu at [pbusa.org](http://pbusa.org) is a helpful source of information for this review. If pastoral compensation is needed to increase, we suggest a two-to-five-year plan of raises and/or benefit increases to bring compensation to a suitable level. (The district office can provide assistance upon request.)

### **Pastoral compensation should be evaluated and structured to maximize allowable IRS tax exclusion.**

1. Housing allowance in the amount of expected housing expenses, including:
  - a. Total rent or mortgage payments
  - b. Homeowner's Insurance
  - c. Property taxes
  - d. Home Improvement
  - e. Furnishings (purchase and repair)
  - f. Utilities (including phone service)
  - g. House Cleaning services
  - h. Home maintenance and repairs
  - i. Landscaping
2. The local church provides Health Insurance.
3. Social Security/Self-Employment (SECA) tax reimbursement for the pastor.
4. Annuities and Retirement Planning: The local church board should consider the specially designed retirement plans and tax-sheltered annuities provided by Pensions and Benefits USA of The Church of the Nazarene. (Helpful resources are available at [pbusa.org](http://pbusa.org))
5. Business Expenses: The pastoral compensation package should be carefully reviewed to be sure that legitimate business expenses are reimbursed and not treated as salary and benefits. These business expenses may include:
  - a. When the church does not provide a car, travel expenses incurred by the pastor while performing his duties should be a local church operational expense and be reimbursed at either the current IRS allowable rate or actual cost (including fuel, auto maintenance, tires, minor repairs, auto insurance, and business parking fees). This includes travel expenses for district assemblies and conventions and securing Lifelong Learning credits.

- b. Entertainment expenses for ministry purposes (at home and
- c. in restaurants)
- d. Ministry-related gifts (wedding, baby, etc.)
- e. Benevolent gifts for compassionate help
- f. Ministry related meals.
- g. Office expenses (including internet service)
- h. Study-related materials (books, subscriptions, etc.)
- i. Technology Allowance

**Pastoral Compensation - Vacation Time:**

Vacation Pay: Our churches are to encourage personal renewal for the pastor and the pastoral family through:

1. Regularly have at least one day off each week for rest and relaxation.
2. Vacation time is to be paid with total compensation, and the church will pay for the pulpit supply. Vacation time is to be granted in proportion to time served as a pastor in the Church of the Nazarene, built around the pattern of:
  - a. Two weeks (14 calendar days, including 2 Sundays) for pastors who have served in the denomination for up to 5 4 years.
  - b. Three weeks (21 calendar days, including 3 Sundays) for pastors serving the denomination from 5 to 12 years.
  - c. Four weeks (28 calendar days, including 4 Sundays) for pastors serving in the denomination for over 12 years.
3. It is urged that an explicit agreement be discussed in the pastoral calling process regarding how the pastor and the church will handle vacations. Note: The Pastor should give the church enough notice of upcoming vacations for the church to cover the time being gone.
4. Provisions of at least ~~one week each year~~, three days per quarter, are not to be combined beyond six days for study and improvement apart from church functions and vacations, with a report being given to the church board regarding the week's activities and with actual expenses being reimbursed to the pastor.

**Other compensation and reimbursement considerations should include:**

1. District/General Meetings, Conferences, and Continuing Education (Lifelong Learning): Reimbursement is to be paid for all expenses relating to attendance at district and general church meetings, considering fees, meals, lodging, and travel. Pastors should be encouraged to attend and participate in district and general activities. A four-year plan is suggested to save sufficient funds to send the lead pastor to the General Assembly, with consideration given to other full-time pastoral staff.
2. Pastor Appreciation: We encourage each local church to participate in a Pastor Appreciation Activity in October.
3. Gifts: Gifts to pastoral staff are permitted and encouraged for birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, and special recognition.
4. Each local church should develop a Sick Leave Policy per State and Federal guidelines and communicate this policy with all pastors and staff.
5. Each local church board develops a Pastoral Rest/Sabbatical Policy for the Lead Pastor and Pastoral Staff.

**Pastor Sabbath & Sabbatical**

**OVERVIEW:**

The concept of a Sabbath rest is a Biblical one. Rest on the seventh day is first seen in the second chapter of Genesis, where we are told that God “rested” from His creative work. This does not mean that God was fatigued or that He needed rest. Instead, the reason for God’s Sabbath rest is more appropriately associated with God’s desire to sanctify His creation. Genesis 2:3 says, “*Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it . . .*” (NASB) It is God’s intention that man should enter his blessing and be holy, even as He is holy. The Sabbath day becomes a memorial to remind man that he has been ordained to trust God and serve Him through faith and obedience. For this reason, God commanded that man, too, should enter the Sabbath rest.

The purpose of these Sabbaths is also closely tied to God’s plan for sanctification. Exodus 29:8 says, “*Remember*

*the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*” (NASB) The concept of the Sabbath extends to all facets of God’s creation and applies to animals, the land, debt, etc., The pattern of sevens associated with the Sabbath has a practical basis founded on God’s wisdom and a symbolic meaning associated with God’s plan for His Creation. In any event, Jesus made it clear to us that God ordained the Sabbath principle for the good of man (Mark 2:27).

The local church, along with the General Church of the Nazarene (2023 Manual 139.10), recognizes the particular need of its pastors to seek and obtain spiritual renewal. We also recognize the unique benefit and wisdom of a Sabbath renewal. Ministry is often associated with spiritual challenges not often encountered in the secular workplace. Beyond this, pastors are in danger of regarding their work as a job rather than a divine calling. Given the repetition of the routine and the demands of daily problems that seem “ordinary,” it is easy for a pastor to lose spiritual perspective, resort to their own talents and resources, or depend on their own efforts and energy. God’s Sabbath principle applied to their ministries provides an opportunity to rededicate (sanctify) one’s life and work to the Lord, reacquire God’s perspective, and freshen one’s spiritual health. In this way, the entire Body of Christ benefits and is blessed by the pastoral Sabbath.

*139.10. In order to encourage a healthy pastoral ministry and strong spiritual life of the pastor, the church board, in consultation with the district superintendent, should provide a sabbatical leave for the pastor during each fifth consecutive year of service in one congregation of the Church of the Nazarene. The timing and duration of the sabbatical shall be determined in consultation with the pastor, church board and district superintendent. The suggested timing is a minimum of four weeks. It is strongly urged that the pastor’s salary continue in full and the church board provide for pulpit supply during the sabbatical period. This topic is to be addressed by the district superintendent as part of the church/pastoral relationship review process that would come after year two and again in year six, once the viability of continuing the relationship has been established. Materials shall be developed and distributed by the Global Education and Clergy Development office to guide local congregations in establishing and implementing a sabbatical leave policy and procedure. At the church board’s discretion, such a program may also be implemented for a member of the pastoral staff.*

#### PURPOSE:

To help ensure long pastorates by providing for weekly rest (Gen. 2:2-3, Ex. 20:8), frequent “wilderness” experiences (Luke 5:16), and periodic Sabbaticals (Lev. 25:1-7, II Chron. 36:20-21). In taking a Sabbath, pastors proclaim they are more than what they do - that their meaning does not flow out of the pastoral function but by simply being a child of God. A pastor is trying to create a culture around Christ. Sabbath plays a large part in this “culture making” by stopping all busyness to simply rest in the healing presence of Jesus. To remember this, churches are called on to make space for their pastors to take weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly sabbath rests. This will enable pastors to nourish their relationship with God, their family, themselves, and their world.

#### PLAN:

1. Weekly rest: Pastors shall routinely and reliably take off at least one 24-hour period per week. The pastoral staff and Board should do everything possible to protect this time, and this rest should be missed only in highly unusual situations (such as a death in the church).
2. Quarterly retreats: Pastors shall have three “floating” days off per quarter. On a quarterly basis, pastoral staff should take 3 to 4 days away (not counting regular off days of the week) from the ministry for rest, recreation, and prayer. Staff members should work this out in conjunction with the Lead Pastor.
3. Periodic Sabbatical: When a pastoral staff member stays for an extended ministry, the pastor will be eligible for periodic extended Sabbaticals according to current Church of the Nazarene Manual guidelines.
4. The purpose of the Sabbatical shall be REST. It is not for furthering pastoral education, degrees, ministry elsewhere, etc. Study for personal spiritual renewal is encouraged. However, this should not be for “ministry planning” or preparing future preaching/teaching. Additionally, the sabbatical shall be continuous and not broken into segments spread throughout the year.
5. The policy shall be:
  - a. First Sabbatical:

- i. Pastors shall be eligible for a Sabbatical after completing four years of service and during their fifth year.
- ii. Previous years of full-time pastoring at another Nazarene church without a Sabbatical will be credited as follows:
  1. One year of credit will be given for each prior three years of full-time pastoring (without Sabbatical) up to a maximum of two years of credit. [Examples: 3-5 years of previous service would make the pastor eligible for a Sabbatical after three full years. Six or more years of previous service (without Sabbatical) would make the pastor eligible after ~~four~~ two full years of service.]
- b. Subsequent Sabbaticals:
  - i. A pastor who has served four full years since his/her last Sabbatical will be eligible for Sabbatical again during their fifth year.
  - ii. Length:
    1. The length of Sabbaticals will be a minimum of ~~six~~ four weeks and a maximum of eight weeks. The Lead Pastor will work with the Board to schedule this to optimize the time window for him/herself or staff pastors taking Sabbatical.
- c. Approval of Sabbaticals:
  - i. All Sabbaticals must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the Board; The Board shall consider such things as filling the pulpit or paying for an “interim” pastor.
  - ii. Upon approval by the board, the pastor will notify the district office/DS of the scheduled sabbatical time and plan for pulpit supply.

**PROCEDURE:**

- A pastor or associate staff member, with Board approval, shall take a four to eight-week sabbatical leave during the fifth consecutive year of service to the congregation.
- Pastoral or full-time associate staff may receive up to one year of “credit” toward their sabbatical-eligible years for contiguous ministry in the Church of the Nazarene immediately preceding joining the staff at their current local church assignment. (See Policy above.)
- It is each pastor’s responsibility to schedule and take her or his own Sabbatical leave in coordination with the demands of the ministry at the Church. However, the demands of ministry at the church do not constitute an adequate reason to prevent the Sabbatical leave.
- Ongoing salary and benefits will be provided during the Sabbatical leave.
- A Sabbatical Fund (or budget line) is encouraged to equip the pastor for any sabbatical-related expenses.
- Sabbaticals may not be accrued and must be taken roughly in the year they are due (in the year following the fourth year in the ministry cycle).
- The Sabbatical leave may not be taken as terminal leave (i.e., as leave at the end of employment).
- Sabbatical leave cannot be combined with vacation time and cannot occur any less than four weeks before or after the vacation leave.
- Cash or other forms of compensation may not be offered or accepted in lieu of Sabbatical leave.
- The activities of the Sabbatical represent a stewardship to be exercised by the Sabbatical pastor, and the church will not otherwise stipulate them. The overarching concept for a sabbatical is REST. It should not be used for official study, advancing education/training, or other ministry preparation or service forms.
- The timing of the sabbatical leave for pastoral staff will be coordinated with the supervising or lead pastor with the approval of the Church Board.
- The District Superintendent will be notified of the lead pastor or pastoral staff member’s scheduling of sabbatical leave.
- Care should be given to avoid scheduling overlapping Sabbatical leave between pastoral staff members. The church office should establish a calendar of scheduled pastoral leave as a planning resource for pastors.

**Maternity/Paternity/Family Medical Leave**

Many of the required leave programs should be covered in employee handbooks at a church level. How

they are handled for “self-employed” pastors is vague, but we are still required to participate in the Oregon Paid Leave. Most employees of churches wouldn’t qualify for the Oregon Family Leave Act because OFLA needs 25 or more employees, and FMLA needs 50 or more employees. Both also have other requirements that the employees must meet.

Employee Rights Page for Oregon Bureau of Labor  
<https://www.oregon.gov/boli/workers/Pages/your-rights-at-work.aspx>

U.S. Department of Labor - <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla>

Oregon Paid Leave - <https://paidleave.oregon.gov/employers-overview/>

Since Jan 1, 2023, employers have been required to either choose a State Plan or an Equivalent Plan to administer PLO. A total 1% contribution rate will fund the plan. As of Jan. 1, 2023, employers should have started deducting the .06% from each employee and contributing their .40% to the plan for each employee based on their wages. Employees who have contributed to the plan since last year should be eligible to apply for PLO on the website (for the state) and through their Equivalent Plan manager (for the EQplan).

## **Background Check Policy**

### **Pastoral Staff**

- Each candidate for a pastoral assignment in the district is required to complete a comprehensive screening application that includes both the individual’s agreement for the district to conduct background checks before being approved for service as a senior/lead pastor or as a pastoral staff member, paid or unpaid and their agreement for this information to be shared on a need-to-know basis or with whomever the district is legally obligated to disclose such information.
  - The district will invoice the local church for the cost of this background check for all candidates for senior/lead pastor roles.
  - The district will invoice the local church for this expense for all paid and unpaid associates it wishes to have on its ministerial staff.
    - No district superintendent approval to have or to hire associate pastors and staff (see list in Manual 211.13) will be given until after the background check has been found clear. The background check must be completed before taking the candidate to the church board for final approval.
- The district will contract with a professional vendor to conduct background checks, including National Criminal Database Search, a criminal history search at the county level jurisdiction(s) for each county where the applicant has lived for the previous seven years, and other searches as necessary.
- The district will prepare all documents to acquire the appropriate information to do background checks, own the background information, and assume responsibility for securely maintaining it.
- The background check policy, process, and tools for completing the background check and hiring an associate are available on the district website at [orpac.org](http://orpac.org).

***"No person who has committed sexual abuse against a child may hold any ministerial credential, serve in any position of responsibility for or ministry with children, or be elected or appointed to any leadership role in the local church. This means that such individuals may serve as parishioners only, with no other***

*responsibilities within the church." BGS Ruling (October 2020)*

**Church Volunteers and Non-Pastoral Staff**

"Please note that the sentence above means that NO PERSON who has engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor can SERVE in ANY capacity in the church, i.e., they can only attend. The practical implication of this "ruling" is that we must perform background checks for ALL volunteers regardless of voluntary role -- not just those who serve minors (even janitors and lawn care).

In addition, we strongly recommend that ALL volunteers go through the Ministry Safe training (<https://ministrysafe.com/>). We cannot stress enough the importance of you doing background checks for all your volunteers.

If doing background checks on all your volunteers and participating in the Ministry Safe training causes financial hardship for you as a church, please contact the district office, and we will attempt to help you somehow. The ORPAC District utilizes the National Screening Bureau (NATSB) for background checks at various depths and price ranges. They will offer any church in the ORPAC District the exact pricing we receive. Please see the district website to download the account registration form.