

Guidance Concerning Teaching Elder and/or Certified Christian Educator
Maternity/Paternity Leave
Presbytery of New Covenant

There is not a policy or mandate from the PCUSA regarding a maternity/paternity policy. This policy vacuum often causes the Teaching Elder (TE) or Certified Christian Educator (CCE) to negotiate with their called church in regards to the amount of leave available. This involves assistance from their presbytery or other PCUSA governing bodies. Individual presbyteries have developed policies based on their discretion. As a result, the 221st General Assembly made this statement:

"The 221st General Assembly (2014) encourages presbyteries and denominational agencies to adopt parental leave policies with minimum terms of six weeks at 100 percent of prorated annual salary that does not require the employee to exhaust other types of paid leave and full housing allowance. Parental leave is negotiated when a teaching elder/employee of an agency or partner is to give birth or is to adopt a child."

Obviously, churches differ in personnel and financial capabilities. For instance, a church with multiple pastors may be able to maintain close to "normal operations" when a TE takes maternity or paternity leave while a church with one TE may find it much more difficult. In addition, a smaller church with limited financial resources may find it difficult to pay the salary of a pastor on leave while paying for someone to carry out pastoral duties during the leave of absence. As a result, it is strongly suggested that the TE or CCE meet with the Session (or Personnel committee) to discuss and/or negotiate a mutually beneficial agreement regarding maternity/paternity leave as soon as it becomes an issue.

As mentioned above, quite a few presbyteries within the PCUSA have developed their own policies regarding maternity and paternity leave. After researching these policies, it is the COM's suggestion that churches use the examples below as guidelines or options for developing their own policy regarding maternity and paternity leave. Duration and time of leave shall be mutually agreed upon between the Teaching Elder and Session. The negotiated leave shall be incorporated into the terms of call, if at all possible.

Approach 1

Maternity Leave: A Teaching Elder employed for at least a year may have up to three months of maternity leave with reduced pay. Compensation will be at 50% of effective salary, except the first week will be at 100%. This arrangement can be adjusted to 100% of effective salary for eight weeks. Pension and benefits for the time of leave will be paid by the church on the applicable salary.

Paternity Leave: A Teaching Elder employed at the church for at least a year may have up to three months paternity leave with reduced pay. Compensation will be at 50% of effective salary. Pension and benefits for the time of leave will be paid by the church on the reduced salary base. This arrangement can be adjusted to 100 % of effective salary for two weeks.

Approach 2

Maternity Leave: Maternity leave should ordinarily begin with the physician's certification that the TE/CCE can no longer perform her duties and end when she is medically released by her physician to return to her professional duties. This is ordinarily an eight week period, during which the pastor shall receive full effective salary and full Pension dues shall be paid. A pastor may lengthen the period of maternity leave at her discretion by using accrued vacation.

Paternity Leave: A request for paternity leave shall be made no later than a month before the requested leave is to begin. Paternity leave may be up to three weeks in length, during which time the TE/CCE shall receive full effective salary and full pension dues shall be paid. If additional leave is necessary, the Session or employing agency should be consulted as soon as possible. A pastor may lengthen the period of paternity leave at his discretion by using accrued vacation.

Adoption Leave: The amount of time off available should correspond to either the maternity or paternity leaves mentioned above. Note that if a single male TE or CCE adopts, he should be allowed time off based on the maternity leave policy.

Approach 3

Maternal Leave: Leave begins when the minister gives birth or adopts a child. Beyond sick leave or vacation terms, options are as follows: 1. 45 days at 100% of effective salary, 2. 60 days at 75 % of effective salary and 3. 90 days at 60% of effective salary. Pension and medical benefits are continued by the congregation at the salary and allowance level for the maternity leave period. This leave should be negotiated between the Teaching Elder and the Session within a reasonable time prior to arrival of the child.

Paternal Leave: Same as above but with the following remuneration options: 1. 7 days @100% of effective salary, 2. 14 days @75% of effective salary, 3. 21 days @ 60% of effective salary.

These options are only a few ideas regarding maternity and paternity leave for Teaching Elders and Certified Christian Educators within our presbytery. As mentioned in the opening paragraph, the PCUSA does not have any definite policies regarding these specific types of leave. Though not a mandate, this document is intended to assist in developing dialogue between churches and Teaching Elders or Certified Christian Educators. This result from the dialogue should be a mutually beneficial agreement between the two parties in question. The committee suggests that this dialogue begin as soon as pregnancy (or the adoption process) has been confirmed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Committee on Ministry approved 11/3/15