

Oak Ridge Lutheran Brethren Church
PASTORAL SABBATICAL POLICY¹

Rationale:

When a pastor serves Oak Ridge Lutheran Brethren Church (ORLBC) for seven years or longer, He would be eligible for a sabbatical. An extended time away for the purpose of study, enrichment, vision casting, travel, rest, prayer and/or visiting different cultures provides the needed respite that is pivotal in helping assure continued healthy leadership. ORLBC will be strengthened by offering our pastor(s) a sabbatical – time to briefly step away from the cyclical, unending demands of daily ministry life.

A sabbatical allows the pastor to get off the treadmill in exchange for a battery recharge of vision and hope. It creates an opportunity for the pastor to:

- ...recapture a sense of vision,
- ...be nurtured in faith and skills,
- ...become introspective,
- ...rekindle spiritual passion,
- ...refocus priorities,
- ...review the pastoral journey, and
- ...reflect on the call of God for life and ministry.

Ultimately it is an opportunity for those who have given consistently of themselves in ministry to refill their own hearts and resources in order that they might continue to lead the congregation and serve the Lord in his calling.

Sabbatical Policy:

1. The term “sabbatical” means the pastor is relieved of all routine and emergency duties during the time granted. Prior to the sabbatical, pastor/ elders and congregation leadership will develop a plan for covering the pastor’s duties during the absence. Sabbatical is not the same as accrued vacation, and is not considered part of the pastor’s annual vacation time. Vacation time can not be taken in the four (4) weeks prior to or subsequent to the pastor’s sabbatical experience. Sabbatical time will not become vested and will not be paid as a severance payment if a pastor ceases to be employed by ORLBC.
2. All pastoral staff shall be eligible for sabbatical consideration after each seven (7) year period of continuous, full time service at ORLBC.
3. The sabbatical leave will not exceed twelve (12) weeks.
4. The sabbatical needs to be scheduled to have the least overall disruptive impact on the church. It is encouraged that leave be taken within one year of eligibility. Sabbatical leave must be taken continuously; it may not be broken

¹ Developed by Triumph LBC, Moorhead, MN and Hope LBC, Barnesville, MN

up into segments. Approved but unused sabbatical leave may not be used at another time.

5. A written request for sabbatical leave shall be made at least twelve (12) months in advance of the intended leave. The pastor/ elders and congregation leadership shall present a sabbatical plan, consistent with synod norms, to the Congregation Council at least six (6) months prior to the sabbatical, outlining how the time will be used. The proposal should include the following:
 - a. Activities for physical rest, personal recreation, family responsibilities, intellectual stimulation, and spiritual renewal.
 - b. Type of ministry-related development planned for sabbatical.
 - c. Plans for ministerial coverage during the sabbatical.
 - d. Expected educational expenses.
6. Within two months after the conclusion of the sabbatical, a report shall be presented to the Congregation Council. It shall include how the time was invested and what benefits were realized.
7. The pastor's full wages and benefits shall continue during the sabbatical. Educational costs of the sabbatical will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Elder Board and Property and Finance Committee. No compensation shall be given for unused sabbatical time. Sabbatical shall not be used for working a second job to gain double income during the leave.
8. The Elder Board and Property and Finance Committee, on a case-by-case basis, will address exceptions to the above policy.
9. The Elder Board reserves the right to make changes to this policy.