

Pastoral Care Committee Report

How to care for your Pastoral Leadership

Confirm Review of Report: *We strongly recommend that church leadership boards give priority to the care of all pastoral leadership staff. Realizing that staffing and financial resources of local churches can vary, we request that the appropriate local committee to annually review all areas of this report and to send a copy of church board minutes to the District Office verifying discussion and action on the following items:*

I. Personal Well-Being: Every pastor is encouraged to maintain sound mental health and physical fitness through sufficient nourishment, exercise, and rest, with the following recommendations:

A. Physical

1. A full-time pastor is entitled to an annual paid vacation. As a minimum guideline, we suggest the following schedule for total years of full-time service to the denomination, including previous & current assignment:

- 0-4 Years 2 Weeks (14 days, including 2 Sundays)
- 5-14 Years 3 Weeks (21 Days, including 3 Sundays)
- 15 -24 Years 4 Weeks (28 Days, including 4 Sundays)
- 25 years+ 5 weeks (35 days, including 5 Sundays)

2. The full-time pastor is required to take at least one day per week for relaxation, healthy family interaction, and refreshment of the mind, soul, and body. Since this is not always possible, we recommend compensating days off be given and that the local church leadership board insist on a regular day off.

3. All pastoral leaders are encouraged to develop disciplines and routines that include:

- A. A healthy diet that considers appropriate nutritional awareness and daily portions of intake
- B. An appropriate amount of sleep to promote wellness and the efficient accomplishment of daily tasks
- C. A fitness routine that includes at least 20 minutes of cardio vascular activity at least 3 days a week.

4. The Sacramento District offers a year-round vacation resource to all full-time pastors/associates at a fully furnished condominium that sleeps 6 people, located in Kings Beach, CA (1 mile from the north shore of Lake Tahoe). Rental reservations can be made <https://www.sacnaz.org/district-condo>, and are made for a minimum of 3 nights, at the following cost:

Sacramento District Pastors: \$285 3 nights; \$360 4 nights; \$410 5 nights; \$460 6 nights; \$510 7 nights

(a 50% deposit is due when making your reservation, complete payment is due 30 days prior to check in.)

Off-District Pastors: \$375 3 nights; \$465 4 nights; \$550 5 nights; \$640 6 nights; \$725 7 nights

(a 50% deposit is due when making your reservation, complete payment is due 30 days prior to check in.)

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5. Local churches are encouraged to utilize a SUMMER vacation resource for full time ministers and their families through Point Loma Nazarene University's LOVE Apartment Program (Loma Ocean View Escapes) by calling: (619) 849-2410, or at: <https://www.pointloma.edu/events/loma-ocean-view-escapes-love>

B. Emotional

Pastoral leaders bear significant burdens as a result of sharing in the spiritual development of people from a wide range of backgrounds. They are under significant time demands that can adversely affect their own spiritual vitality. Therefore, it is critical that pastoral leaders be aware of and have access to professional counseling resources for both crisis management and ongoing personal care as needed.

We encourage the following best practices for all pastoral leaders:

1. Maintain consistent interaction through Spiritual Mentoring with other pastoral leaders, on the Sacramento District (ex. zone cohorts, one-on-one meetings, etc), with local community pastoral leaders, or other regional/national pastoral networks (see also Section E in this report.

2. Be willing to seek professional assistance for emotional and mental well-being whether through professional resources in your own local community, or by referrals obtained confidentially through the office of the Sacramento District Superintendent.

3. **THE SACRAMENTO DISTRICT RESPITE FUND** was established out of a deep concern for the personal care and well-being of pastors serving local congregations, designed to provide focused time for personal growth and development, away from normal routines.

- a. The Respite Fund is available to full-time assigned licensed or ordained ministers
- b. The Respite Fund provides assistance to individuals of up to \$500.00 and is available every two years, approved upon request. Further financial assistance is available for crisis counseling situations, up to \$1,500.00 per individual.
- c. The Respite Fund requires an application from the individual and endorsement by the local church board secretary submitted to the District Advisory Board. An accountability report and evaluation will be requested upon the conclusion of your personal time.
- d. To apply, contact the Sacramento District Office or go to: Respite Fund Request

4. Local churches are encouraged to identify resources that can be helpful to their pastoral leadership team in the area of personal care. The following links from Focus on the Family, Chris Adams with Flourishing in Ministry, and The Center for Pastoral Leadership at PLNU provides information on the kinds of resources currently available for ministry, retreat, and renewal:

- <https://www.usacanadaregion.org/>
- <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/resources-pastors/>
- <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/pastoral-and-ministry-leader-retreat-centers.pdf>

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- <https://www.flourishinginministry.org/>
- <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/center-pastoral-leadership>

C. Educational

1. Each church leadership board should encourage its entire pastoral staff to enrich their ministry at the local church by providing funds and time for continuing education. This should be a line item on the church budget separate from the pastor's compensation. This may include ministerial conventions, seminars, directed studies, as well as special college and seminary courses. This provision may also include the purchase of professional development materials (software, books, and periodicals), and the payment of professional dues or subscriptions.

2. According to the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene, the expectation for all assigned and unassigned licensed and ordained ministers is to continue a pattern of Lifelong Learning to enhance the ministry to which God has called him or her. A minimum expectation is 20 contact hours each year. (Manual 521.6) see <https://learning.nazarene.org/>.

3. Each church should consider granting an occasional Sunday and or daylong opportunities for the full time pastoral leader to:

- a) visit other churches to gain insight for worship and missional ministries,
- b) be scheduled as a guest speaker for an appropriate event, and
- c) interact in settings that enhance creative ministry planning.

D. Inspirational

1. Each local church should provide the needed finances to send any and all pastoral staff and spouses to special events, such as Pastoral Team Retreat, District Assembly, PALCON (Nazarene Pastor's Leadership Conference), NYC (Nazarene Youth Conference), and the Nazarene General Assembly. We also encourage consideration of helpful conferences and seminars sponsored by other organizations as deemed appropriate and applicable to the local church mission. The amount budgeted should include the total registration fee plus any and all expenses (transportation, lodging, and meals).

2. Full payment of all shares for others will result in the District depositing \$100.00 towards registration of the senior/lead pastor for the Pastoral Team Retreat.

3. Local churches may also consider assisting a small church pastor, church planter, evangelist, missionary, or retired pastor in attending such functions.

E. Spiritual Mentoring

Every pastoral leader must have a spiritual mentoring relationship that is meeting on a consistent basis, that is sensitive to their unique situation (single, male/female), and when appropriate, seeks to develop cross-cultural awareness and interaction. It is always appropriate for a local church board to request pastoral accountability for such mentoring.

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The District Superintendent can also assist with identifying or locating a spiritual mentor. Mentoring opportunities with a respected colleague should provide for:

1. authentic accountability on a regular basis regarding personal behavior and spiritual well-being,
2. mutual encouragement in establishing specific disciplines necessary for those in spiritual leadership, and
3. safeguarding personal/family Sabbath time and accountability to a healthy home environment. *See also Section B.1. in this report.*

F. Extended Illness & Family Leave

In the event of significant family events, such as severe illness, child birth, adoption proceedings, bereavement, etc., that require time away from ministry responsibilities, we recommend that the church leadership board, in consultation with the District Superintendent, consider establishing the following understandings relative to the pastor's responsibilities and availability during such times of need:

1. to adequately delegate local responsibilities to qualified leaders within the congregation;
2. to provide for necessary personal needs (meals, transportation, child care, etc.);
3. to arrange for adequate financial support and assistance when able; and
4. to establish an appropriate duration of actual sick leave as recommended by a physician's order.

II. Personal Encouragement & Appreciation

1. Each church is encouraged to recognize all members of the paid pastoral staff at appropriate times of the year: birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, etc. Special attempts should be made to show appreciation and express love to the pastors and families at all times, being careful to remember children in the home. Suggested gifts could include but not be limited to gift certificates to favorite restaurants, retail stores or other places of interest to your pastoral family.

2. Each church should annually honor all pastoral staff (Clergy Appreciation Month), resourced at: <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/holidays/what-is-pastor-appreciation-day-and-clergy-appreciation-month.html>. We encourage local churches to remember retired ministers, missionaries, and evangelists with special and appropriate acts of love, kindness, and prayer.

3. In times of personal crisis, the immediate and long-term needs of a pastoral leader should be addressed and identified so that the local church and district can respond in an appropriate manner.

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III. Compensation

A. Salary

1. Each church, where possible, should endeavor to employ its senior/lead pastor on a full-time basis.

2. The salaries of the senior/lead pastor and pastoral staff are to be carefully reviewed semi-annually as a minimum. It should be recognized that a salary increase is only an actual increase when it is above the current cost-of-living index. When a pastor leads a church in growth that is reflected in increased finances, this should be a factor in determining the amount of increase in his or her salary and benefits.

The church board secretary is requested to notify the District Office when a salary increase is given, stating the amount of the increase.

3. A resource for establishing pastoral salaries is available from the District Office.

4. We recommend local churches seek assistance relating to tax laws and liability of all pastoral staff. Professional assistance is available through Nazarene Benefits USA (<https://www.nbusa.org/>).

5. The District Office provides an annual digital copy of the following compensation related resources:

a. Church and Non-Profit Tax Guide (for pastoral leaders, church treasurers, finance committees)

b. Minister's Tax Guide (for matters specifically related to pastoral compensation)

B. Compensation for Interim/Guest Pastoral Leadership

1. With regard to interim or temporary pastoral supply, consideration should be given to reimbursement for

a) travel at the 2025 IRS mileage rate (72.5 cents/mile for business miles);

b) food and lodging, and

c) a minimum honorarium relative to the following factors of the specific local church:

- Worship size (0-100) \$150.00 for one service, \$175.00 for multiple one day services
- Worship size (101-200) \$200.00 for one service, \$250.00 for multiple one day services
- Worship size (201-300) \$250.00 for one service, \$300.00 for multiple one day services
- Worship size (301+) \$350.00 for one service, \$400.00 for multiple one day services

2. Salary and/or honorarium for full time interim pastors or tenured evangelists serving long-term should be equal to the full time senior/lead pastor's weekly salary plus benefits.

C. Housing

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1. Churches should discuss with all paid pastoral staff the option of purchasing their own home. The church may wish to consider an interest-free loan, down payment assistance, or a shared equity arrangement. Churches may also consider the long-term value of a church-owned parsonage. We encourage pastors and church boards to review the materials available through Nazarene Benefits USA (<https://www.nbusa.org/>) for comparing the benefits of providing a parsonage or providing a housing allowance. Nazarene Benefits USA also provides helpful resources in Finance and Compensation Planning Memos, as well as the Pastor's Compensation Worksheet.

2. When any pastor or staff purchases their own home, a housing allowance should be established commensurate with current housing and utility costs (gas/electric/water/sewer/garbage), or with regard to what tax laws refer to as the fair rental value.

3. If a local church owns a parsonage, the appropriate committee or board should be aware of and responsible for needed repairs, maintenance, and improvements. We recommend a parsonage inspection semi-annually by the leadership board or appropriate committee so that repairs are cared for properly and adequately.

D. Health Insurance

1. Providing health insurance for any or all full time paid pastoral staff is the responsibility of the local church.

2. For those churches that are financially able we urge local church leadership boards to consider:

- a. providing dental and vision care for any or all paid pastoral staff. Wellness & wholeness are inseparable.
- b. assisting with medical expenses not paid by insurance for any or all paid pastoral staff.

3. Other insurance coverages that may be considered for any or all full time paid pastoral staff are long term care insurance and long-term disability insurance through private carriers.

4. Various health insurance resources include but are not limited to the following (the Sacramento District is not affiliated with, nor does the District endorse any of the following resources; this list is only for the purpose of providing reference to the kinds of resources that can assist clergy in determining a viable option for the health care needs of their family):

- Covered California (<https://www.coveredca.com/>)
- Nevada Health Link (<https://www.nevadahealthlink.com/>)
- Christian Healthcare Ministries (<https://www.chministries.org/>)
- GuideStone Financial Resources (<https://www.guidestone.org/>)
- Samaritan Ministries - Health Care Sharing (<https://samaritanministries.org/>)

E. Local Church Expense

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1. The local church should reimburse ministry related pastoral car expense at a rate approved by the local church board. The 2026 IRS mileage rate is 72.5 cents/mile for business miles. Because of tax benefits, some churches may choose to provide a vehicle for professional/pastoral use only.

2. Each church should make provisions for functional and efficient office resources for its pastors, either onsite or at an appropriate location, including: supplies, postage, phone service, computer, internet/email provider, fax, and when possible, paid or volunteer office/clerical assistance. 3. Recognizing that hospitality may be incurred as a local church expense, consideration should be given to establishing an account to reimburse pastors for expenses incurred in carrying out appropriate professional responsibilities such as hosting for meals, providing refreshments, etc.

IV. Sacramento District Sabbatical Policy

A. Purpose:

1. To encourage adequate opportunity for reflection and renewal of a vision for ministry, the Pastoral Care Committee recommends that each local church adopt the Sabbatical Policy & Understandings for Full Time Pastoral Leadership (Manual 139.10). During each fifth consecutive year of service in one congregation of the Church of the Nazarene, a sabbatical rest of one to three months may be considered for qualified full-time pastors. This is intended to defray the high level of stress and demand for those in full time vocational ministry.

2. It is assumed that a qualified pastor has demonstrated deep compassion for people, loyalty to the church, a consistent work ethic, and significant leadership impact as evidenced by the overall health and effectiveness of the church in their current assignment.

3. The sabbatical is an intentional time away from normal responsibilities to provide full time-paid pastoral staff and their family an opportunity for extended personal rest, spiritual renewal, and professional development. It is hoped that during a sabbatical the pastor will be able to replenish their vision and passion for continued effective ministry at their current assignment. 4. It is preferred that a sabbatical be taken in consecutive weeks. However, a two-session sabbatical could be considered by the local church leadership board.

B. Procedure:

1. The full-time pastor should submit a written proposal for a sabbatical to the local church leadership board and District Superintendent for consideration at least three to five months prior to a potential starting date. The proposal should reflect the intentions and objectives of the sabbatical (e.g. renewal, rest, travel, projects, continuing education), and the amount of time requested. Final approval for a sabbatical rest with the local church leadership board.

2. The impact of a full-time pastor's absence should be a determining factor in the schedule and approval of a sabbatical leave. A sabbatical proposal should describe how the pastor's

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normal duties will be conducted and by whom during the sabbatical absence (e.g. congregational care, pulpit/teaching responsibilities and administrative duties).

3. In churches with multiple full-time staff, only one pastoral staff member should be absent on sabbatical at any given time.

C. Understandings:

1. During the sabbatical, the full-time pastor should continue to receive full compensation and benefits. Any additional funds requested for such items as travel, expenses, etc. should be described in the sabbatical proposal and must be approved by the local church leadership board as a special budget item. Sabbatical leave does not negate any of the pastor's earned vacation; however, vacation days may not be used to extend the length of sabbatical leave.

2. In consultation with the local church leadership board the pastor should establish communication expectations and a plan for emergency contact based on pre-established guidelines. A pastor and local church leadership board might consider establishing a separate phone/cell number account to be used exclusively during the sabbatical to enable a pastor to be relieved of monitoring a current number for church purposes throughout a sabbatical.

3. During the sabbatical, contact with the senior pastor should be limited to the following: a. A church situation that the local church board determines to be an extreme emergency. b. Death or extreme personal crisis of a member of the congregation.

**The district superintendent is always available for local church assistance during a sabbatical.*

4. During a senior/lead pastor sabbatical, any hiring or dismissal of personnel should not take place unless approval is pre-arranged by the senior pastor and local church leadership board.

D. Evaluation:

1. Upon return from a sabbatical, the pastor should meet with the local church leadership board to share the ways in which the sabbatical proposal was fulfilled, and to review significant issues in the church that occurred during the sabbatical relative to their ministry.

2. Within the first month of the pastor's return, a celebration of reunification should be planned to look forward to the days ahead.

3. The pastor and the local church leadership board should each prepare a written reflection of the valuable aspects of the sabbatical experience for future reference.

E. Resources:

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1. An extensive, excellent resource entitled "Taking a Sabbatical" is available through the District Office, originally published by Christianity Today International, 2010: (https://www.bclstore.com/products/taking-sabbatical?_pos=1&_sid=5a217da86&_ss=r).
2. For grant or scholarship opportunities for sabbatical please click this link and visit [Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program](#). *The Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs at Christian Theological Seminary seek to strengthen Christian congregations by providing opportunities for their pastors to step away briefly from the demands of daily parish life and engage in a period of renewal and reflection. These competitive grants programs help congregations in the US and Puerto Rico fund renewal leaves for their pastors with awards of up to \$60,000 each.*
3. An excellent resource is available through the USA/Canada Region website, and can be found here: <https://www.usacanadaregion.org/clergy-development/sabbaticals>. It gives examples on developing a sabbatical policy, resources for sabbatical planning and the overall why, what and how for Clergy Sabbatical.
4. The District Office can provide referrals or printed resources to a pastor or local church board from district pastors who have previously completed sabbaticals.

V. Social Security, Retirement & Life Insurance Benefits

1. The local church should reimburse the pastor/associate the full amount of Social Security tax based on the total of the salary and housing allowance or parsonage rental value (including utilities) computed on 15.30% of these stated items. Each local church should review regularly the impact of current tax law as it relates to estate and retirement planning through qualified independent counsel.
2. The Church of the Nazarene USA Benefits Guide is an exceptional resource for insurance and retirement planning, available at: <https://www.nbusa.org/resources/reports/funded-benefits-guide.pdf>, and should be reviewed annually by local Church Boards.

Respectfully submitted by the Pastoral Care Committee:

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