

(Text to be inserted shown in *italics*.)

Presbytery of Southern New England Parental Leave

Recognizing and celebrating that the addition of children to a family is a gift and blessing of God, the Presbytery of Southern New England offers the following best practices for churches, ministers, commissioned ruling elders, and staff enrolled in the Board of Pensions benefits plans, in the event of the addition of new children, regardless of how the child came to be in the family (including, but not limited to, birth, adoption, and long term foster placement).

Churches are urged to develop a paid Parental Leave Policy as part of their Personnel Policies Manual. The Presbytery recommends that the following provisions be included in such a policy manual:

- 1) Pastors should inform the session and the Committee on Ministry (who will provide guidance as needed), at least two months in advance of the projected leave.
- 2) The addition of a new child to a family brings risks of complications, unexpected needs, and other uncertainties. Thus it is the duty of the pastor/professional and the session to deal with these issues in an open and caring relationship.
- 3) The session should make provisions for the continuation of the pastoral/professional functions during the leave period.
- 4) Parental leave should be granted for a period of twelve weeks, with full salary, housing, and benefits as stated in the terms of call or contract, with the possibility of adding an additional four weeks of unpaid leave. Leave may start prior to the addition of the child. *The three states in PSNE have paid family leave programs, of varying types. Please refer to your local state page for all current information. Like disability leave under the Board of Pensions, these programs allow for a percentage of salary to be paid during leave. Congregations should continue to pay the remaining percentage of salary remembering our ordination and installation vows of paying a pastor fairly. Not all programs are equal in all three States, maintaining salary parity for all clergy serving congregations is the policy of the Presbytery.*

Connecticut: https://ctpaidleave.org/s/?language=en_US

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml-overview-and-benefits>

Rhode Island: <http://ripaidleave.net>

- 5) Short term disability coverage *through the Board of Pensions* may be used to meet the cost of paid leave *when directed by a medical professional*. *Temporary disability coverage under the Board of Pensions pays 60% of effective salary. The remaining 40% should continue to be paid to the pastor, remembering our ordination and installation vows of paying a pastor fairly. Information about the temporary disability program of the Board of Pensions can be accessed at: <https://www.pensions.org/what-we-offer/financial-protection/temporary-disability>*
- 6) Paid leave should be given in the case of a critical family situation related to the addition of a child (including, but not limited to the case of miscarriage, still birth, or infant death) up to the full twelve weeks, as needed.
- 7) In the case of two applicable parents (ministers, CRE or staff enrolled in the BOP) serving the same church, parental leave may be taken concurrently or consecutively. (1
- 8) The Session should consider a “baby to work” option for new parents, permitting them to bring a child to the workplace (in appropriate situations) for up to age six months or when the baby begins to crawl.
- 9) *Congregations are urged to develop these policies and practices before they are needed. The development of policies and practices related to family leave when the situation is already upon the pastor and/or congregation can lead to misunderstandings.*

N.B. Churches for whom these provisions would be a financial hardship may apply to the Presbytery of Southern New England for assistance to help defray the costs of a supply pastor during the leave period.