

A PROPOSAL FOR ORGANIZING AND FUNDING SABBATICAL LEAVES FOR ROSTERED LEADERS IN THE VIRGINIA SYNOD

A. Identifying the pool of those eligible for Sabbatical Leave

1. Begin with the list of all rostered leaders who are not retired.
2. Remove those who are already receiving or entitled to receive Sabbaticals from their congregations or employer.
3. Per Synod Sabbatical Guidelines, remove those who have been commissioned, consecrated or ordained for less than seven years.
4. Per Synod Sabbatical Guidelines, remove those who have served in their present position for less than five years.
5. Contact those whose names remain about their desire to take a Sabbatical. This step is included because a person in her present call for 10 or more years may be considering a move, and might not want to be bound by the requirement of one additional year of service in one's present ministry setting following a Sabbatical.

6. Prioritize the names of those whose names remain on the list according to the number of years they have been commissioned, consecrated or ordained, with those being ordained/credentialed the longest at the top of the list.

B. Organizing the Sabbatical (This is where the whole notion of Ministerium takes on some “flesh”!)

1. When a candidate for a Sabbatical has been identified within a certain conference, his or her colleagues will gather at the urging of the Bishop to divide up administrative and pastoral care responsibilities. One pastor will be the “administrative supply,” agreeing to attend all the Council meetings while his/her colleague is taking a Sabbatical. This arrangement will provide some continuity from month to month. The other pastors will divide up pastoral care (hospital visitation, etc.) responsibilities by the week. In most conferences, this should result in no more than one or two weeks being assigned to each pastor over the course of the Sabbatical. If there is a death during one week, the pastor in

charge of visitation that week would carry over responsibilities for that specific pastoral care issue into the next week.

C. Funding the Sabbatical

1. According to the proposed 2008 Compensation Guidelines pulpit supply costs for a 13-week Sabbatical would amount to about \$2,000. By adding a \$20,000 line item to its budget, the Synod could fund 10 Sabbaticals each year.

D. Education as to the Value of a Sabbatical

1. Purchase multiple copies of the Alban Institute's video, "Why You Should Give Your Pastor a Sabbatical." Enlist the aid of those who have already taken Sabbaticals and members from their congregations, as well as members of the Leadership Support Committee, to act as resource persons ready to visit congregations who are considering the offering of a Sabbatical Leave to their rostered leader(s).