

Vacation Policy for Appointed Clergy Alabama-West Florida Conference

Pastors in all classifications (licensed local pastors, provisional members, associate members and members in full connection, including those receiving Equitable Compensation grants) shall receive annual paid vacation with the church/charge being responsible for pulpit supply. Good vacation time benefits ministry. Since pastors are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, time away (when the parish is “vacated”) can bring renewal and refreshment for the tasks at hand.

Time devoted to continuing education or spiritual formation shall not be considered vacation time.

At least one day per week should be considered personal time, apart from vacation.

It is further expected that pastors who are in the first year of an appointment need to show sensitivity concerning the scheduling of their vacations. It is recommended that pastors in their first year refrain from taking vacation during the first month of their new assignment. Also, please be sensitive to extenuating circumstances that might arise from unforeseen moves. It is also recommended that first-year vacation be distributed across the year and not taken all at once. On the other hand, it is recognized that pastors and their families having just moved, with all the stress moving can bring, certainly are entitled to, and should take, some vacation time during the first summer.

It should be emphasized that clergy who move from one church to another within the United Methodist connection should not be expected to “earn” vacation in each new place as new employees. The situation is analogous to a branch-manager of a company being sent to another branch within the company.

Finally, continuing education for pastors is a requirement of the denomination (§ 350) and time should be allowed for fulfilling this requirement. Continuing education is not to be considered vacation time. A clergy member’s continuing education and spiritual growth program shall include professional formation leaves at least one week each year and may include at least one month during one year of every quadrennium (§ 350.2).

These policies should be applied with utmost cooperation and sensitivity between pastors and congregations, considering both the needs of the local churches and of pastors’ families. If there appears to be a problem, it is imperative that the pastor, the Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee, and the district superintendent meet to seek a solution.

The church pays the cost of providing pulpit supply during vacation period. Vacation days not used in any single appointment year are lost and do not accrue, nor shall the charge be obligated to pay additional compensation for any such unused days.

Guidelines for vacation periods shall be based on the credited years of service as indicated in the service record published annually in the Alabama-West Florida Conference Journal. Vacation shall be calculated based on the conference year July 1 – June 30.

Full- time pastors in all classifications shall receive the following minimum annual paid vacation with the church/charge responsible for pulpit supply:

- 1-3 years = 2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
- 4-7 years = 3 weeks, including 3 Sundays
- 8-10 years = 4 weeks, including 4 Sundays
- 11 or more years = 5 weeks, including 5 Sundays

Part-time pastors in all classifications shall receive a minimum of two weeks of annual paid vacation, including two Sundays, with the church/ charge responsible for pulpit supply.