



## The Assistance Program — Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants

*The Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grant program, a program for small churches which began January 1, 2008, provides a limited number of grants of up to \$3,000 to help fund pastors' sabbatical studies. The grants are apportioned by synod based on the number of small congregations within its bounds.*

### Purpose

Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants are designed to help pastors serving small congregations take sabbaticals that will strengthen their skills and renew their ministries.

### Background

The pastors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seek to live faithful and committed lives in answer to their calling. At the same time, pastors lead busy, demanding, even stressful lives. They are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These stresses, if not attended to, can have emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual consequences that lead to burnout for the pastors who are called to serve our congregations.

Sabbaticals can help alleviate burnout; they allow pastors to enhance their spiritual life, strengthen their skills, and renew their ministries. But most pastors taking sabbaticals serve larger congregations with significant financial resources and staff; smaller congregations often lack the funds or staff to support sabbaticals. The Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grant program addresses this need, making it possible for pastors of smaller congregations to engage in a time of personal and professional renewal. It is hoped that the program will strengthen ministries throughout the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and develop stronger church leadership.

### Program Description

The Assistance Program will provide 110 grants of up to \$3,000 each to pastors of small churches who have submitted an approved plan to their middle governing body, as applicable (see list on reverse side). The grants will be administered in cooperation with the middle governing bodies. The full grant may be used to supplement the funding for the pastor's sabbatical leave, or, at the discretion of the presbytery and the pastor, a portion (up to \$500) of the grant may be used to provide pulpit supply and pastoral support for the congregation during the pastor's sabbatical leave.

### Eligibility

You are eligible to apply for this grant if you meet *all* of the following:

- you are a pastor who is currently serving a congregation of fewer than 200 members and can demonstrate financial need
- you have served the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as a minister of the Word and Sacrament for at least 10 years as an ordained pastor, have served your current congregation for at least six years, and are an active member of the Benefits Plan (Traditional Program)
- you are receiving additional financial support for the sabbatical from other sources, such as congregations, foundations, your synod or presbytery, or other contributors
- your sabbatical is for a period of not less than four weeks. (The Sabbath Sabbatical may be taken in conjunction with annual study leave and/or vacation.)

**Note:** Expenses related to Doctor of Ministry or other degree programs do not qualify for this program.

### Additional Requirements

You are responsible for receiving congregational approval for a Sabbath Sabbatical and for providing a project plan for your proposed sabbatical. You also must provide a post-sabbatical summary to your congregation, presbytery, synod, and the Board of Pensions. In addition, you must commit to returning to your congregation for at least one year following the Sabbath Sabbatical.

Individual synods may place further requirements on you or your plan.



## Application

You are advised to contact your synod or presbytery *before* completing an application and sabbatical plan to determine if grants are available. Application forms are available through the contact person listed below. (A synod may only endorse a pre-determined number of grant applications per year; the number is based on the relative proportion of congregations with fewer than 200 members within the synod's bounds, and so, only a few grants may be available.)

If a grant is available, submit your application to the synod through your presbytery (or as otherwise provided by your synod's guidelines). If the synod approves your application, it will submit the application and its endorsement to the Board of Pensions for further approval and payment.

## About the Assistance Program

The Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions comprises a range of programs designed to meet specific assistance needs of Presbyterian pastors and other church workers at various points in their lives.

These programs complement the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and provide an important safety net to church workers and their families who have specific needs that exceed personal resources or other means of support. Through the Assistance Program, the church community provides care for:

- church workers' *urgent financial needs* through Shared, Emergency Assistance, Adoption Assistance, and Transition-to-College Assistance Grants
- retired church workers' *financial and housing needs* through Income and Housing Supplements
- pastors' *vocational leadership needs* through Seminary Debt Assistance, Middle Governing Body Grants, Presbyterian CREDO, and Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants

The Assistance Program is funded by gifts, legacies, income from endowments, and half of the Christmas Joy Offering.

*For information about applying for assistance other than Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants, call 800-773-7752 (800-PRESPLAN), or visit Pensions.org.*

## Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grant Contacts

Synod	Synod Contact Person	Contact Information
Alaska-Northwest	Joyce Emery, Transitional Synod Executive	800-932-4156 jemery@synodnw.org
Boriquen/Puerto Rico	Edwin Quiles, Ejecutivo	787-832-8375 equiles@libertypr.net
Covenant	Margaret Haney, Interim Synod Executive	800-848-1030 soc@synodofthecovenant.org
Lakes and Prairies	Diana Barber, Associate Synod Executive	800-328-1880 dbarber@lakesandprairies.org
Lincoln Trails	Carol McDonald, Co-Executive	800-566-5996 carol@lincolntrails.org
Living Waters	Terry Newland, Synod Executive	615-261-4008 livingwaters@mindspring.com
Mid-America	Nancy Kahaian, Interim Synod Executive	913-384-3020 executive@synodma.org
Mid-Atlantic	Janice Chick, Synod Staff	800-743-7670 jchick@synatlantic.org
Northeast	Mary Lynn Flowers, Stated Clerk	800-585-5881 mlflowers@synodne.org
Pacific	Rob Brink, Synod Executive	866-374-3508 rob@synodpacific.org
Rocky Mountains	Zane Buxton, Synod Executive	888-702-5968 zbuxton@att.net
South Atlantic	Reg Parsons, Synod Executive/Stated Clerk	904-356-6070 Regparsons123@aol.com
So. Calif. and Hawaii	Margaret (Margy) Wentz, Temp. Synod Executive/Stated Clerk	213-483-3840 margywentz@synod.org
Southwest	Conrad Rocha, Interim Synod Executive	520-982-8173 conrad@synodsw.org
Sun	Judy Fletcher, Synod Executive	866-381-7075 fletcher@synodsun.com
Trinity	Bruce Stevens, Synod Executive	800-242-0534 bstevens@syntrinity.org