

Parental Leave Fund

Guidelines

Purpose: To provide financial support for local churches of the Alaska Conference where the church needs assistance in paying for pastoral coverage when their pastor goes on parental leave.

1. The Parental Leave Fund exists to assist local churches *who are not financially able* to fund costs directly related to providing interim pastoral leadership due to a pastor's parental leave. Normally, such assistance will provide only partial funding of the total costs involved.
2. Parental leave for clergy is defined in ¶356 of the 2020/2024 UMC *Book of Discipline*. This policy takes effect once the provisions of ¶356 have been met.
3. After the pastor files for parental leave under the provisions of ¶356.1, the Conference Superintendent will consult with the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the Finance Committee of the local church on the plan of interim pastoral coverage and to assess ability to fund costs directly related to providing such coverage.
4. If *it is determined* that a pastor would qualify for parental leave funds, the Conference Superintendent shall notify the Conference Benefits Officer by submitting and signing the application form. This notification shall include a recommended sum to be paid, a payment schedule, a time period for payment, and specify any other considerations regarding payment to the local church to assist with the cost of providing interim pastoral leadership, due to a pastor's maternity or paternity leave.
5. The Leadership Team in its capacity as the Conference Board of Pensions may provide a grant for up to one-half of the conference's base salary for the duration of the clergy member's leave, up to two months. For appointments that are less than full-time, the grant may be proportionally reduced. Area cost-of-living adjustments shall not apply. These funds are to be used solely to assist in securing temporary pastoral leadership during parental leave of an eligible appointed pastor.
6. The local church will continue to be responsible for no less than two months' salary and benefits of the pastor on parental leave (¶356.4). The pastor remains enrolled in benefit programs with the conference billing the church.
7. Funding will come from the Special Aid Fund of the Board of Pensions' accounts with the central treasury.

Reference: ¶ 356. Maternity or Paternity Leave—Maternity or paternity leave, not to exceed one-fourth of a year, will be available and shall be granted by the bishop and the cabinet, and the executive committee of the Board of Ordained Ministry to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who so requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption. 1. Persons desiring maternity or paternity leave should file their request with the committee on pastor-parish relations after consulting with the district superintendent at least ninety days prior to its beginning to allow adequate pastoral care for the churches involved to be developed. 2. During the leave, the clergy member's annual conference relations will remain unchanged, and the health and welfare benefit plans will remain in force. 3. A maternity or paternity leave of up to one-quarter of a year will be considered as an uninterrupted appointment for pension purposes. 4. Compensation will be maintained for no less than the first eight weeks of leave. 5. During the leave time, pastoral responsibility for the church or churches involved will be handled through consultation with the committee on pastor-parish relations of the local church(es) and the district superintendent. 6. Special arrangements shall be made for district superintendents, bishops, and those under special appointment.

Request for Parental Leave Funds

Having met the consultative requirements in ¶356.1 of the 2020/2024 UMC *Book of Discipline*, parental leave funding may be provided by the Conference Leadership Team according to the Parental Leave Fund Guidelines to assist a local church *who is not financially able to* fund costs directly related to providing interim pastoral leadership due to a pastor's maternity/paternity leave. The church will continue to be responsible for salary and benefits of the pastor going on parental leave according to ¶356.4 of the 2020/2024 UMC *Book of Discipline*.

Church Applicant: _____

Impacted Pastor: _____

Church Mailing Address: _____

City, State & Zip code: _____

Telephone: _____

Funding Request: _____

Describe the details of the Parental Leave: _____

How many months will it cover and what is the amount being requested? _____

When will payments begin? _____

Conference Superintendent: _____

has reviewed the parental leave request with the pastor taking leave, the church's SPRC, and notified the Bishop, and requests the above amount of funding from the conference board of pensions.

Signature and Date: _____

Returned signed request to: Kristi Durham, Conference Benefit Officer

kristi@umoi.org | (503) 802-9223

If applicable – send signed request to the relevant Board of Ordained Ministry Chair for the conference of membership.