

## VACATION POLICY FOR VIRGINIA CONFERENCE CLERGY

Good vacation time benefits ministry. Since clergy are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, time away can bring renewal and refreshment for the tasks at hand. Given the total demand on the clergyperson's time, vacation time for those in ministry is different than vacation time for those in business and industry.

The following is the vacation policy for all clergy who are under full-time and part-time appointment in the Virginia Conference. This policy is applicable to licensed local pastors, provisional members, associate members, and members in full connection.

***Four weeks vacation shall be available beginning the first year of appointment and every year thereafter for all full-time clergy in the Virginia Conference. Four weeks of vacation shall also be available beginning the first year of appointment and every year thereafter for all part-time clergy; ¼ time pastors have four weeks of vacation from ¼ time service; ½ time pastors have four weeks of vacation from ½ time service; ¾ time pastors have four weeks of vacation from ¾ time service.***

It is further expected that clergy who are in the first year of an appointment show sensitivity concerning the scheduling of their vacations. It is recommended that clergy in their first year refrain from taking vacation during the first month of their new appointment. It is also recommended that first-year vacation be distributed across the year, not taken all at once. On the other hand, it is recognized that clergy 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 moving 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, but within the same employer-employee relationship.

Finally, we acknowledge that continuing education for clergy is a requirement of the denomination (§351, *The Book of Discipline*), and time should be allowed for fulfilling this requirement. Continuing education is not to be considered vacation time. Likewise, ministry such as a week serving as a minister-in-residence at a camp does not count against a pastor's vacation allowance.

This policy should be applied with utmost cooperation and sensitivity between the clergyperson and congregation, considering both the needs of the local church and of the clergy family. If there appears to be a problem in this regard, it is imperative that the clergyperson, the Pastor/Staff Parish Relations Committee, and the District Superintendent meet to seek a solution.

This policy was adopted by the Bishop's Cabinet on January 10, 2006, and updated on September 9, 2020 and December 4, 2025.