Appendix X – Continuing Education Policy

1. Continuing education leave is defined as time away from the parish in order to participate in pastor-related studies or pastoral professional development.

2. In order to assure the on-going continuing education of its teaching elders and commissioned lay pastors, the Presbytery of Hudson River shall not approve a call or a contract for pastoral services which does not provide for continuing education leave with pay, cumulative under certain circumstances for up to three years. Each call or contract shall include the following:

   a. For a full-time call or contract, a minimum of 14 days (including two Sundays) per year for continuing education and a minimum expense reimbursement by voucher of up to the effective Presbytery of Hudson River defined continuing education minimum or any amount higher than the minimum in the terms of call. These time and expense reimbursement minimums will be examined annually and updated as necessary by the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry's Clergy Compensation Committee.

   b. For calls or contracts for less than full-time service, the time allotment shall remain 14 days, including two Sundays. The minimum monetary allotment may be pro-rated.

   c. Funds for continuing education shall be remitted to the pastor upon the submission of vouchers and receipts for the expenses incurred.

3. With session approval a pastor can accumulate continuing education time and expense reimbursement for up to three years.

   a. The session should be apprised at least three months in advance of the pastor’s intention to take accumulated continuing education leave.

   b. The session should be apprised at least six months before the end of the year and agree to a pastor's intention to carry over continuing education time or reimbursement to a subsequent year.

   c. It is suggested that accumulated funds be deposited by the church treasurer before the end of each year in a separate account to alleviate undue financial stress on the congregation when the time arrives to expend the funds.

4. Study leave may not be taken at the end of a pastor’s service to a particular church. Should the call or contract be dissolved or terminated for purposes other than the pastor moving to a new call or contract the pastor may receive one-third of the accumulated study leave time (paid), but none of the accumulated monies.

5. Congregations shall not be liable for continuing education time and funds which are not used within the designated time period (whether annual or cumulative).
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6. General Guidelines

   a. Pastors are encouraged to take their continuing education leave each year.
   b. Session shall approve the specific use of continuing education leave after a period of discernment between the pastor and the Session as to how it might best be spent, taking into consideration the needs of both the pastor and the congregation.
   c. Pastors shall inform the session of intent to take study leave at least one month in advance (except in the case of accumulated leave as described in 3-c above), noting the dates and content of the program and how they intend it to affect their ministry.
   d. If there are questions about the appropriateness of the continuing education leave, the final decision shall be that of the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry.
   e. Following the completion of a continuing education leave, the pastor shall report to the session how the leave might affect his/her ministry.
   f. Continuing education leave is not to be used solely for recreation or relaxation purposes. To insure mutual understanding, the pastor should inform the session when other activities, such as vacation, recreation or relaxation, are to be combined with a study leave.

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