

## WCD Sabbatical Strategy

### Executive Summary

#### Purpose:

A key priority of the Western Canadian District is to “*encourage and challenge pastors to experience lifelong personal and professional health for effective ministry*”. This **Sabbatical Strategy** document provides a deliberate and proactive approach which focuses on developing a pastor from strength to strength.

#### Preamble:

1. The WCD Sabbatical Strategy applies to all WCD churches that need assistance implementing their own local sabbatical policy for lead pastors and pastoral staff.
2. Prior to considering the request of a local church to access the provision of this Strategy, a church must have their own sabbatical policies established. The District Coach can be engaged by the local church to develop a policy for sabbaticals. Guidelines for establishing a sabbatical policy and examples of existing policies are available from the District Office.
3. All requests for sabbatical assistance are to be made to the District Coach.

#### General Guidelines:

1. The policy is applicable to all eligible pastoral staff under the local church’s sabbatical policy.
2. The District may be involved in extended sabbaticals of longer than 3 months for pastors who have greater than 6 years of continuous service in the same church.
3. At times a sabbatical/leave may be required to address a personal or health crisis. The District may consider these on a case by case basis.
  - a. In these circumstances the Board, Pastor and Coach will collaborate on a sabbatical plan that addresses the reasons for the pastors’ circumstance and a follow-up strategy to mitigate a repeat of the issue.
  - b. Should counseling or medical supervision be involved, regular reporting will be required; the frequency to be determined by the District Coach
4. The WCD, in addition to the provisions of the local church’s policy, requires:
  - a. A demonstration of the link between the sabbatical plan and the church’s Ministry Action Plan. The premise being: “How will this sabbatical period contribute to the development of not only the pastor, but the church?”
  - b. The establishment of a group for encouragement, guidance and accountability for the pastor while on sabbatical. This could include their Strategic Peer Network (SPN) or another group approved by the board.
  - c. A reporting mechanism post-sabbatical to the board as well as to the District Coach.