

The Methodist Church of New Zealand

Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa

Administration Division
P O Box 931
CHRISTCHURCH

Information Leaflet No. 32

May 2016

WHEN A PRESBYTER OR DEACON SUFFERS ILLNESS OR DISABILITY

**Provisions and Guidelines of the
Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa**

INTRODUCTION

- The Parish/Division is expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Deacon/Presbyter (and family) is adequately provided for during periods of illness or disability.
- Decisions made will depend upon the seriousness, length and extent of the illness/disability involved.
- This leaflet, therefore, is issued to provide Guidelines for the assistance of both the Presbyter/Deacon and the Parish/Division.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

EAP (Employee Advocacy Programme)

EAP is available to all stationed Presbyters and Deacons. Counselling and a wide range of assistance is available at no cost to the Presbyter or parish. EAP can be contacted at 0800 327 669 or contact the General Secretary for assistance davidb@methodist.org.nz or 021 392 500.

Medical Insurance

Presbyters and Deacons are offered medical insurance when they commence their first appointment. When an issue arises please check to see if it might be covered by insurance. Contact the General Secretary davidb@methodist.org.nz or 021 392 500.

Stress and Fatigue

The new Health and Safety Legislation recognises the impact of stress and fatigue in the workplace.

A Parish/Board needs to be aware of factors which might be stressful and consult with the Presbyter/Deacon to address any areas of concern. Stress from personal and family circumstances can also impact on a Presbyter/Deacon. The EAP service is part of the Church's response to address stress.

The Presbyter/Deacon is responsible for self-care, taking appropriate leave, not working excessively long hours, taking stressful matters to Supervision or discussing with a Parish Steward/Board Chair.

See the full document at: www.icbnz.org/health-and-safety.html, pages 31 to 36.

FOR A BRIEF BUT INCAPACITATING ILLNESS OR DISABILITY

In the first instance, it will fall to the Parish Stewards or equivalent to initiate Parish support for the Presbyter/Deacon (and family) and the Parish itself.

The Presbyter/Deacon is strongly encouraged to obtain professional medical advice during times of illness.

Support for Presbyter/Deacon

- Relief should be offered promptly.
- It is important to offer help with those things which the Presbyter/Deacon is most concerned about and which they cannot handle comfortably themselves.
- Appropriate assistance should be discussed with the Presbyter/Deacon and/or spouse.

Support for the Parish

- Advise the Synod Superintendent(s) of the situation in order that they may offer support.
- Consult with and allocate responsibilities to parishioners wherever possible to ensure the life of the Parish continues to flow smoothly, eg. services, study groups, pastoral care, administration, meetings.

FOR A LONGER TERM INCAPACITY

Any illness of disability of more than three weeks is considered by the Church to be long term. When it appears that the Presbyter's/Deacon's incapacity will keep him/her out of commission for some time, there are more issues to think about and more resources available.

Support for Presbyter/Deacon

- Help with home and family: Most Parishes will have people ready to assist with housekeeping, property maintenance, family transport, hospitality, just as they would for other neighbours and friends.
However, it may be overwhelming for the Presbyter/Deacon and/or their family for uncoordinated support to be offered or given. It may be that a 'coordinator' would be appreciated by the Presbyter/Deacon or family.
- Financial assistance: The Presbyter/Deacon will need a continuing income. The Parish is encouraged to explore all avenues to ensure this happens, including Income Support Services and ACC where appropriate. If necessary, the Parish may liaise with Mission Resourcing about additional financial support.

Support for the Parish

- In some situations the Presbyter/Deacon will be able and may wish to continue with some tasks, depending on the nature of the

illness/disability. These decisions should be made in consultation with the Parish Officers.

- There may well be a Supernumerary Minister, Lay Preachers and other experienced people within the Parish who can pick up a share of the responsibilities.
- The Synod Superintendent(s) will also be able to assist with advice arising out of experience with other similar situations. It may be possible to arrange help from neighbouring Parishes and the Synod itself.
- If it is decided that a 'supply ministry' is desired, it is vital the Parish officers consult with the Synod Superintendent(s) and the Superintendent of Mission Resourcing for assistance in finding a suitable supply ministry, all related arrangements and ministry covenant, and possible limited financial help.

FOR VERY LONG TERM ILLNESS, PERMANENT DISABILITY (Complete or Partial) OR TERMINAL ILLNESS

- All of the above is relevant.
- Consult with the Synod Superintendent(s) and Mission Resourcing **IMMEDIATELY.**
- Supernumerary Fund: The Presbyter/Deacon and/or spouse will need to communicate with the General Secretary regarding their continuing relationship with the Fund and the benefits available.
- Parsonage: The Presbyter/Deacon and spouse are entitled to continue living in the parsonage for a time. Where a Minister dies, the spouse/partner shall be entitled to continue rent free occupancy of the house applicable to the appointment for three months after the death of the minister. Any other arrangements applying prior to the death shall continue during the three month period. (Law Book Section 2.24.3). Should a supply ministry be obtained, other arrangements for accommodation of the supply will be necessary.
- Housing Allowance: No directive exists regarding the continuance of Housing Allowance where a Presbyter/Deacon lives in their own home, but since such allowance is paid in lieu of the use of a parsonage it would be logical to negotiate the continuance of a Housing Allowance on the same basis as the use of the parsonage. At a stressful time a secure home is essential.

SOME GENERAL NOTES

- **Supernumerary Fund Contributions:** Parish contributions to superannuation continue during illness/disability. Personal contribution to superannuation should normally be paid. However, by negotiation with the Administration Division it may be possible for these payments to be held over until the resumption of work or for the Parish to make the payments on behalf of the Presbyter/Deacon as 'advance payments'.
- Reimbursing allowances should continue in full during sickness or disability for those tasks that the Presbyter/Deacon continues to carry out.
- **Travelling Allowance:** This is not normally paid during illness/disability. However, the Presbyter/Deacon may have loan repayments to make on the car which is used for Parish travelling. Continuation of all or some of the Travelling Allowance may be necessary after consultation with the Synod Superintendent(s), Mission Resourcing and/or the General Secretary.

ADDRESSES

Synod Superintendent(s)

Listed in the pink pages at the front of the Conference Year Book or on the Methodist web site www.methodist.org.nz

Mission Resourcing

Private Bag 11-903, Ellerslie, Auckland

Income Support Services }
ACC } for local assistance refer to
 } the telephone directory.

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION LEAFLETS

- No. 7 Ministers' Leave
- No. 24 Supernumerary Fund – Members' Handbook
- No. 25 Presbyter Remuneration
- No. 29 Stipends
- No. 37 Presbyters' Remuneration and Other Allowances
- No. 50 Parsonages
- No. 152 Guidelines for Parish Stewards
- No. 162 Privacy Act