

The Methodist Church of New Zealand

Te Hāhi Weteriana O Aotearoa

Administration Division

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CHRISTCHURCH

Information Leaflet No. 7

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MINISTERS' LEAVE

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

ANNUAL LEAVE

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

ANNUAL STUDY LEAVE

ONE MONTH STUDY LEAVE

LONG LEAVE

**SICKNESS, BEREAVEMENT OR
DISABILITY LEAVE**

PARENTAL LEAVE

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INTRODUCTION

The Methodist Church encourages its ordained Ministers to use the provisions made for their rest and recreation, continuing study, the refreshment and renewal of their own lives and of their families.

This Information Leaflet is issued to ensure Ministers and Parish officials are familiar with the provisions and guidelines for the various forms of Leave.

Further, it aims to acquaint Parish and Synod officials with their responsibilities in encouraging and facilitating the full and proper use of each type of leave.

This Information Leaflet contains all Conference approved leave provisions for Presbyters.

The Stipends Review Committee is responsible for the maintenance of this Information Leaflet.

PRESBYTER/DEACON RESPONSIBILITY

To ensure Parish Stewards (for Annual Leave, long leave and Study Leave) and Synod Superintendents (for Long Leave and one month Study Leave) are consulted well before leave is due to be taken. This needs to be at least six months in advance for Long Leave and one month for Study Leave.

To ensure application for leave form is supplied to the Parish Stewards.

To ensure adequate cover is in place for services, funerals and pastoral emergencies.

To ensure that timely medical assistance is sought when unwell. If unable to work because of illness a medical certificate could be provided to the Parish Stewards as a courtesy. For long term illness or disability a medical certificate is required.

To use leave provided as a means of refreshment.

PARISH STEWARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Primarily, to ensure that all the leave provisions approved by Conference are available to the Presbyter(s)/Deacon(s) in their Parish.

To encourage Ministers to take their Annual Leave.

To ensure an application for leave form is supplied to Connexional Payroll for processing.

To enable and support Ministers in taking their Study Leave and, for Presbyters, Long Leave.

To assist the Parish with the financial implications when Study Leave or Long Leave is being taken or when Illness or Disability Leave is necessary.

When necessary, to ensure that suitable 'Supply' arrangements are made for the duration of the leave in consultation with the Synod Superintendent(s) and Mission Resourcing.

To consult with the Synod Superintendent(s) regarding the Study Leave or Long Leave at least six months in advance of the date or when Illness or Disability Leave is necessary for the Minister.

SYNOD SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

In consultation with the appropriate Parish Steward(s), to ensure that all Presbyters take their Long Leave by the end of each tenth year in the work of the Presbyterate, unless special permission has been granted by the Synod for a departure from the normal provisions.

To be available for consultations with Ministers and Parish Stewards in making plans for Long Leave (Presbyters only) or One Month Study Leave or in making arrangements when necessitated by Long Term Illness or Disability Leave.

To give approval or agreement to the plans before they are finalised.

SYNOD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

To appoint a Study Leave Supervisor, who shall encourage Ministers to take their Study Leave and receive reports of study leave.

To compile a list of baches/holiday homes or other places, which might be available to a Minister for a time of study, reflection and/or writing. There are websites available for booking baches and holiday homes if need be.

To include in its agenda for the August Ministerial Synod the question "Which Presbyter(s) are now eligible for Long Leave?"

MINISTERS' RECORD OF SERVICE ENTITLEMENTS

The Administration Division has a supply of the above booklets for recording Ministers' Leave which are available to all Methodist Ministers free-of-charge.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Purpose

To encourage Ministers to take time out for themselves and their families. It is the responsibility of the Parish Steward to ensure Annual Leave is taken.

Entitlement

For full time appointees a total of 5 weeks or 25 working days per year. [Note: Presbyters full time work week 5 days. Part-time positions on pro-rata basis.]

Statutory (Public) holiday equivalent (*see below*).

Normally no more than 3 weeks may be taken at any one time.

Annual Leave may be taken in conjunction with:

- (a) Study Leave, provided that the regulations are followed for such Study Leave,
OR
- (b) Long Leave, thus extending the period of leave to a maximum of 13 weeks.

Unless otherwise negotiated with the Parish Stewards or their equivalent, it is expected that Annual Leave entitlement will be taken during the year in which it becomes due. The Connexional year runs from 1 February to 31 January in any year.

[Unless Conference approves otherwise, no unused Annual Leave entitlement will be carried over from one appointment to another without written consent from Parish Stewards or Board Chair.]

Please also refer to Annual Leave Policy [7a] as approved by the President on 1 February 2011.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The Holidays Act makes provision for taking another days leave when a person has to work on a public holiday. For a Presbyter or Deacon whose normal day off is a Monday, there is no provision for taking an extra day for a Monday holiday as this is not a working day.

In recognition that Presbyters and Deacons may be disadvantaged by this, Conference 2015 agreed that an extra week's Annual Leave,

making a total of 5 weeks Annual Leave be approved from 1st February 2016. In the future a Presbyterian or Deacon would not take a day in lieu, but would use their additional holiday allowance to compensate.

When a Public Holiday falls on a working day, that day would be taken as leave, or if the Presbyterian is required to work on a Public Holiday, an additional day may be taken, but not accumulated.

ANNUAL STUDY LEAVE

Purpose

To provide for and encourage Ministers to attend continuing education courses.

Entitlement

Six days which is one working week per year (not accumulated).

OR

2 working weeks in a two year period.

Costs for Annual Study Leave to be subsidised by the Parish/Board/Division up to \$25.00 per year.

Annual Study Leave may be taken in conjunction with Annual Leave.

ONE MONTH STUDY LEAVE

Purpose

To engage in an educational venture approved by Mission Resourcing.

Entitlement

Up to One Month Study Leave is available after each four years of service.

In the years in which One Month Study Leave becomes due, this Leave replaces the Annual Study Leave entitlement for that year.

One month Study Leave cannot be accumulated.

One Month Study Leave is taken with the agreement of the Superintendent of the Synod and the Parish/Board/Division.

Supply

Mission Resourcing has a list of people who may be available for Supply during One Month Study Leave.

LONG LEAVE

Purpose

To provide Presbyters with an opportunity for refreshment and renewal in the future. Therefore, Presbyters shall be released from all church-related work expectations and obligations during Long Leave.

Entitlement

One paid week for every complete year of service, available from completion of each seven years of service.

Entitlement will continue to accrue until a period of ten years service is completed. The maximum Long Leave that is available at any one time is 10 weeks.

Once Long Leave is taken the entitlement recommences as year one.

e.g. 7 weeks Long Leave may be taken in the 8th year of service. The 8th year becomes the first year of subsequent entitlement.

While Long Leave may not be accumulated beyond 10 weeks, it may be taken in conjunction with:

- (a) Annual Leave, thus extending the period of leave to a maximum of 13 weeks,
- OR*
- (b) Study Leave, provided that the regulations are followed for such Study Leave.

It is permissible for Long Leave to be split so that it is taken at different times within the Connexional year. In such cases, the entitlement must normally be completed by the end of the Connexional year in which the initial Long Leave was started.

Long Leave shall normally be taken in the second or succeeding years of a particular appointment.

Once the initial Long Leave has been taken, any remaining Long Leave that is not taken by the end of the Connexional year is forfeited.

The exceptions are:

- Family circumstances.
- A crisis.
- Stationing.

The Synod Superintendent and the Director of Mission Resourcing need to be consulted to determine if these circumstances apply in a particular situation.

Subsequent Long Leave

Presbyters shall be eligible for a second, or subsequent, period of Long Leave at the end of the seventh year following their previous Long Leave.

Subsequent Long Leave will be subject to the same conditions as outlined herein.

Stipend

As Long Leave is for refreshment and renewal, it is required to be taken as leave. Therefore a stipend equivalent cannot be paid in lieu of Long Leave.

Mutual Exchange of Ministries

Methodist Presbyters serving in appointments with partner Churches cannot normally take advantage of their Long Leave entitlement whilst serving in the partner Church. However, their Long Leave entitlement will continue to accumulate in line with conditions outlined above.

Long Leave accumulated in this way can be taken on returning to a Methodist appointment in line with conditions outlined above. For those who may have accumulated over 10 weeks Long Leave whilst serving in a partner Church, a maximum 10 weeks Long Leave may be taken on returning to a Methodist appointment (not normally the first year of such appointment) and the remainder be credited to current accumulation.

e.g. A Presbyterian returns to Methodist appointment with 14 weeks Long Leave entitlement – his/her entitlement remains at 14 weeks until Long Leave is taken.

Subsequently, the maximum 10 weeks Long Leave is taken. At the end of the year in which Long Leave is taken the Presbyterian's entitlement becomes 5 weeks – 4 weeks' balance of entitlement accumulated plus 1 week for the year in which Leave was taken.

Nearing Superannuation

Presbyters with not less than two years to superannuation may take as Long Leave the number of weeks accumulated, though these may be less than the normal minimum seven years. Normally, such leave shall not be taken in the final year of a Presbyter's ministry.

SICKNESS, BEREAVEMENT OR DISABILITY LEAVE

General Information

The Parish/Division is expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Deacon/Presbyter (and dependent family) is adequately provided for during periods of sickness, disability or bereavement.

Decisions made will depend upon the seriousness, length and extent of the illness/disability involved.

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 Minister

Relief should be offered promptly.

It is important to offer help with those things which the Presbyter/Deacon is not 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

The Parish Officers should 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, e.g. services, study groups, pastoral care, administration, meetings.

For a Longer Term Incapacity

Any illness or disability of more than three weeks, as determined by a medical professional, is considered by the Church to be long term. When it appears that the Presbyterian'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 Minister

Financial Assistance: The Presbyterian/Deacon will need a continuing income.

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 Presbyterian (and/or their family) for unco-ordinated support to be offered or given. It may be that a 'co-ordinator' would be appreciated by the Presbyterian (and/or family).*

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 Presbyterian/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 Supernumerary Presbyterian(s), 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 Director 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 Presbyterian/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 Presbyterian/Deacon and spouse are entitled to continue living in the parsonage for a time. In the case of death, the spouse is entitled to continue living in the parsonage up to 3 months (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 Presbyterian/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 Presbyterian/Deacon as 'advance payments'.

Reimbursing Allowances

These should continue in full during sickness or disability, but only for those tasks which the Presbyterian/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 their 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.

PARENTAL LEAVE

The Provisions for Parental Leave are set out below as per the Law Book Section 2-25.2.1.

- 25.1 Conference shall from time to time make provision for Annual Leave, Study Leave, Long Service Leave, Parental Leave, and Illness/Disability Leave. (*See Information Leaflet No 7*)
- 25.2.1 Parental leave provisions as legislated under New Zealand Law apply to Presbyters and Deacons
- 25.2.2 Arrangements for this leave shall be made with the Parish Stewards or appropriate officers and the Synod Superintendent.
- 25.2.3 During such parental leave, the Presbyter or Deacon shall:
 - (a) receive a top up to parental leave payments to the level of the stipend to which she/he was entitled prior to the commencement of the leave;
 - (b) receive allowances other than travelling allowances;
 - (c) pay Supernumerary Fund and Kiwi Saver contributions.
- 25.2.4 Responsibility for meeting stipend top up and allowances is are as follows:
 - (a) first month Parish
 - (b) second & subsequent months Connexional Expenses Fund (*see 10.10.3.1.(j)*)
 - (c) Stipend top up does not extend past the paid parental leave period.
- 25.2.5 Parental leave shall be additional to any other leave or holiday entitlement of the Minister.

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

General Information

There are currently no specific provisions for Compassionate Leave.

Support for Minister

The Parish/Division is expected to take all reasonable pastoral care of the Presbyter (and family) during periods of bereavement and other occasions where Compassionate Leave is considered appropriate.

The Synod Superintendent(s) will also exercise pastoral care of the Presbyter (and family) during these periods and will be able to assist the Parish/Division with advice arising out of experience with other similar situations.

JURY SERVICE

General Information

When a Presbyter is requested to attend Jury Service, the Parish/Board/Division must release the Minister to allow them to undertake this duty. If circumstances prevent the Minister from undertaking this duty, it is their responsibility to apply to be released from their responsibility.

It is expected that, on any day when the Presbyter is not required to spend the full day in court, they will return to usual activities for that day.

Jury Service will not affect other leave entitlements.

Court Expenses

Court Expenses usually make two distinctions:

- (a) daily attendance allowance.
- (b) transport allowance.

It is suggested that the Presbyter receive full stipend for the whole of the period of Jury Service, and that the daily attendance allowance component of Court Expenses be forwarded to the Parish/Board/Division.