



## Life and Mission Agency: Agence Vie et Mission

### VACATION ENTITLEMENT

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The Presbyterian Church in Canada regards the ministry of Word and Sacraments as Christ's gift for the continual renewal of the church. Recognizing the demands that ordained service places on ministers and their families, the church provides ministers annually with a minimum of 5 weeks of vacation including five Sundays, which need not be taken all at one time (A&P 1980, p. 353).

**Within every 12 months of service in a pastoral charge**, ministers are entitled to 5 weeks of vacation including 5 Sundays. During vacation, the minister's pastoral charge continues to provide the same stipend and allowances as during the other months of the year. The congregation also covers the cost of pulpit supply, if needed.

Two examples for a minister taking vacation in August:

1. A minister begins serving in a new pastoral charge in September 2007 and takes vacation for Year 1 (September 1, 2007 – August 31, 2008) in August 2008. In this case, the minister has worked a full year before taking vacation.
2. A minister begins serving in a new pastoral charge in June 2007 and takes vacation for Year 1 (June 1, 2007 – May 31, 2008) in August 2007. In this case, much of the service of Year 1 takes place after the first vacation period.

The advantage of this approach is that it permits our ministers to continue to take summer vacation (when families are free), regardless of when they move between pastoral charges. The church's practice finds ministers being inducted during all the months of the year – not just in the fall months when summer vacation is over.

It should be noted that years-of-service increments on the General Assembly's Schedule of Minimum Stipend and Allowances and years-of-service increments for the church's pension plan are calculated in the same way.

## Vacation Entitlement before Leaving

How much vacation do sending congregations provide their ministers before they leave? Because the church calculates vacation entitlement within each year of service in the congregation, the answer to this question is, “It depends.” It depends on the date the minister began serving in the sending pastoral charge, the finishing date, and how much vacation the minister has taken.

Two examples for a minister retiring on November 1, 2009:

1. The minister began serving on September 1, 2000, so that the “12-months-of-service periods” extend from September 1 to August 31. The minister takes 5 weeks of vacation including 5 Sundays in August 2001 (vacation for Year 1), and in every August thereafter until August 2008 (the vacation for Year 8). However the minister chooses not to take vacation in August 2009, having decided to retire on November 1, 2009. On October 31, 2009, vacation entitlement is **5 weeks of vacation including 5 Sundays** (for Year 9, September 2008 – August 2009) **plus 1 week of vacation including 1 Sunday** (approximately 2/12 of 5 weeks, for the 2 months of September – October 2009).
2. The minister began serving on June 1, 2000, so that the “12-months-of-service periods” extend from June 1 to May 31. The minister takes 5 weeks of vacation including 5 Sundays in August 2000 (vacation for Year 1), and in every August thereafter until August 2008 (vacation for Year 9). However the minister chooses not to take vacation in August 2009, having decided to retire on November 1, 2009. On October 31, 2009, vacation entitlement is **2 weeks of vacation including 2 Sundays** (approximately 5/12 of 5 weeks, for the 5 months of June – October 2009).

Sending congregations continue to provide stipend and allowances while their minister is on vacation. Often the minister’s final vacation period extends from the date of the minister’s last Sunday service until the date when the dissolution of the pastoral tie is in effect.

## Comments

As explained above, depending on their start-date in the congregation, ministers are often in the position of taking their full vacation entitlement before having worked a full year in the congregation. This approach is so highly represented in the church’s practice because it meets needs: each year, ministers need the opportunity to withdraw from the demands of ministry, and, also each year, their families need time when they can be the focus of the minister’s energy and attention.

Nevertheless there are occasions when a minister and congregation choose a revised approach in which the vacation entitlement is prorated in the first and last year. If the second retirement example above were handled in this way, a minister starting in June 1,

2000 would be granted **3 weeks of vacation including 3 Sundays** (approximately 7/12 of 5 weeks) in 2000; **5 weeks of vacation including 5 Sundays** each year in 2001 - 2008; **4 weeks of vacation including 4 Sundays** (approximately 10/12 of 5 weeks) in 2009.

(A&P 1980, p. 353, 60; A&P 2017, p. 276-277, 30)