

## **Overture #1-5**

### **To Encouraging Ministry Sabbaticals to Church Workers and Ministries**

WHEREAS, ministry sabbaticals serve to bless both the church worker and the ministry; and

WHEREAS, The Word of God points to the command for Sabbath rest, (Genesis 2:3 Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 25:4ff); and

WHEREAS, Many Christian denominations strongly encourage pastors to take sabbaticals, recognizing the importance of periodic rest and renewal for sustained ministry effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, A ministry sabbatical is a structured time for spiritual reflection, study, personal development, and rest for church workers; and

WHEREAS, There is historical precedent in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod going back to the first Synod President, C.F. W. Walther, who in 1859 took much needed ministry sabbatical to be refreshed and renewed; and

WHEREAS, Walther's example of returning with renewed energy and great productivity blessed the LCMS; and

WHEREAS, Currently we are seeing a decrease of seminary graduates, DCEs, Lutheran School teachers and Commissioned Ministers available to fill a growing number of calls and to replace a growing number of retiring church workers; and

WHEREAS, A ministry sabbatical is an investment in a local ministry to reinvigorate the ministry and the church worker, strengthening it for future ministry; and

WHEREAS, ministry sabbaticals can help church workers combat burnout, refresh their perspective, and return to ministry with renewed energy and focus; and

WHEREAS, Even some in the business world have recognized the benefit of offering sabbaticals to retain good workers. Sabbaticals can also enable retention and longer service in churches; and

WHEREAS, Since the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen higher expectations placed on Church Workers with decreased participation and a steady decline in ministry settings, leading to discouragement and burnout among current church workers; and

WHEREAS, The need to continually cultivate longevity among current church workers is beneficial to the whole church; Therefore, be it

35 *Resolved*, That ministries study the benefits of ministry sabbaticals on their workers;  
36 and be it further

37 *Resolved*, That the District provide a template for a Ministry Sabbatical Policy Guideline  
38 for ministries to adapt and adopt to their circumstances; and be it further

39 *Resolved*, That ministries be encouraged to set aside funding regularly to support their  
40 church workers in taking a sabbatical; and be it further

41 *Resolved*, That districts work together to put together a list of available grants and  
42 scholarships which help provide necessary funding for a Ministry Sabbatical; and be it  
43 finally

44 *Resolved*, That Districts avail themselves of available resources within the LCMS,  
45 including those provided by Lutheran Church Extension Fund (through Grace Place  
46 Wellness), to explore and promote healthier church workers and healthier ministries.

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Submitted By

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CNH District Board of Directors