

2025 MNYS ASSEMBLY

The MNYS Council and the Reference and Counsel Committee recommend the adoption of Resolution 1.

Resolution 1. MNYS Parental and Family Leave

Resolution to the 2025 Metro New York Synod Assembly

MNYS Parental and Family Medical Leave

WHEREAS, the current recommendation for parental leave in the Metropolitan New York Synod 2025 Minimum Expectations for Clergy Compensation is “Parental leave should include up to six weeks full salary, housing, and benefits. The number of weeks leave before and after the birth or adoption of a child should be negotiated and specified in advance”; and

WHEREAS, the current recommendation for family leave in the Metropolitan New York Synod 2025 Minimum Expectations for Clergy Compensation is, “When paid leave is used for an FMLA-covered reason, the leave is FMLA-protected,” and “an employee must follow the employer’s normal leave rules to substitute paid leave,” and “a specific Family Leave plan should be carefully drawn up in open consultation with your pastor.”; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA social statement on Abortion (1991) states, “Because parenthood is a vocation that women and men share, this church supports public and private initiatives to provide adequate maternity and paternity leaves, greater flexibility in the workplace, and efforts to correct the disparity between the incomes of men and women,” (p. 8); and

WHEREAS in *Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling* (1998), scholars Barbara Brown Zikmund, Adair T. Lummis, and Patricia Mei Yin Chang found that female clergy leave ministry at a quicker rate than men due to limitations on their ministry imposed by unequal demands of parenting; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA draft social statement on “Women and Justice” (2017) states that we: “Seek, support, and advocate for resources for families and communities that empower parents, whether single or coupled, to nurture, protect, and provide for their household in ways that do not reinforce gender-based stereotypes. In particular, advocate for men to participate in all family roles associated with the home, caregiving, parenting, and nurturing,” (p. 47); and

WHEREAS, the International Labour Organization recommends 14 weeks of maternity leave, including 6 weeks of compulsory postnatal leave and concludes “maternity, paternity, and care responsibilities should become a normal fact of business life;”

WHEREAS, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research “Paid Parental Leave in the United States,” (2014) part of Scholars’ Papers sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of American Women: Report of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women, 1963 states: “Family leave, both paid and unpaid, has been shown to have significant benefits for the health of individual family members and for the well-being of the family overall.”

WHEREAS, according to Paid Family Leave of New York, workers governed by the New York State Workers’ Compensation Board are eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid time off to care for family in the case of “bonding with a child born within 12 months of birth, adoption, or foster placement, care for a family member with a serious health condition, or assisting loved ones when a family member is deployed abroad,” and

WHEREAS, the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly Memorials included a resolution, “To encourage the synods of this church to include the following in their compensation guidelines for rostered ministers: ‘Parental and Family Leave: Parental Leave: Paid leave of up to 12 weeks is recommended upon the birth or adoption of a child to recover and/or care for a new child. Family Medical Leave: Paid

leave of up to 12 weeks is recommended to care for a family member with a serious health condition' and 'To recommend that synods make available to congregations resources such as lists of supply pastors and model short-term supply contracts and compensation rates that may encourage congregations to offer the parental and family medical leave described in this action.'; and

WHEREAS, existing paid-leave programs such as sabbatical already argue that time away to invest in health, wellness, and ministry training is a benefit to congregations and other ministry settings because we know that when pastors are healthy and well, they able to focus on the ministry at hand. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Metro New York Synod insert the following into their standard compensation guidelines: "Parental and Family Leave: Parental Leave: Paid leave including full salary, housing, and benefits of up to 12 weeks is recommended upon the birth or adoption of a child to recover and/or care for a new family member. Family Medical Leave: Paid leave negotiations should be in accordance with current FMLA guidelines. Paid leave of up to 12 weeks including full salary, housing, and benefits is recommended when needed to care for a family member with a serious health condition or to assist loved ones when a family member is deployed abroad."; and be it further

RESOLVED, that congregations of the Metro New York Synod heed these guidelines for rostered ministers whenever possible; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Metro New York Synod provide resources to congregations to help support the effective implementation of these policies such as: up to date lists of and rates for potential supply pastors, rates for emergency coverage, contracts for short-term interim coverage, training for short-term interim coverage by deacons and lay leaders of congregation, and investigation into the value of a line of discretionary funding to make providing such leave affordable and manageable for congregations.

Endorsed by the Clergy of the Peconic Conference:

The Rev. Paul Downing
The Rev. George Dietrich
The Rev. Dr. Peter Boehringer
The Rev. Charles Vogeley
The Rev. Elsa Marty, Ph.D.
The Rev. Jean Dougherty
The Rev. Win Dookram
The Rev. Kerstin Weidmann
The Rev. Garret Johnson
The Rev. Laurie Cline
The Rev. Dale Newton

And the following colleagues from throughout the synod:

The Rev. Jennifer Boyd
The Rev. Zachary Dean
The Rev. Abby Ferjak
The Rev. Dr. Katrina D Foster
The Rev. Martha S. Jacobi, PhD, LCSW-R
The Rev. Alyssa Kaplan
The Rev. Justin Lathrop
The Rev. Danielle Miller
The Rev. Jim O'Hanlon
The Rev. Nicole Schwalbe
The Rev. Becca Sealy
The Rev. Ann Tiemeyer

The Rev. Analyse Triolo Lewis
The Rev. Timothy Weisman
The Rev. Kristin Wuerffel