GA-1333
(Sense-of-the-Assembly)
REGARDING PARENTAL LEAVE

Adopted by the General Assembly as Amended

WHEREAS, the church is called to model healthy, balanced lives of compassion, and to support clergy and lay families serving in all expressions of the church; and

WHEREAS, other mainline denominations including our ecumenical partner the United Church of Christ have some form of parental leave policies at their National and Conference level\(^1\), \(^2\), \(^3\); and

WHEREAS, the church is called to model the importance of Sabbath and rest as called forth by the covenants of God in Creation and the 10 Commandments; and

WHEREAS, standards and expectations often differ based upon the gender of the employee involved; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that a family benefits from the love, care, and bonding time from one family member to another and can alleviate damage to a person’s ability to perform in the work environment due to lack of time to find a family and work balance\(^4\), \(^5\), \(^6\);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada meeting in Orlando, Florida, July 13 - 17, 2013, encourages congregations, regions, general ministries and institutions of higher education to have appropriate, written maternity and paternity leave policies compliant with state and federal regulations for all benefit eligible employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the church consider adopting maternity or paternity leave policies. The policy would provide for at least eight weeks paid with full benefits, not including vacation time, sabbatical, or sick leave. The policy would permit this time to be taken within the first six months of a child’s life or in the first six months after a child is adopted and that this time may be altered prior to or following a child’s arrival due to fluctuating church, medical, and adoptive needs; and

\(^1\) The Methodist Book of Order, 2008, Section 356, p. 275. \url{http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1755}
\(^3\) Presbyterian (USA), \url{http://oga.pcusa.org/section/departments/mid-councils/ministers/}
\(^4\) \url{http://healthland.time.com/2011/07/21/study-why-maternity-leave-is-important/}
\(^5\) Chicago Tribune, \url{http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-06/features/ct-biz-0507-work-advice-huppke-20120506_1_national-partnership-women-families-women-and-work}
\(^6\) Additional references are listed below.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all expressions of the church consider adopting the Family Medical Leave Act, which provides additional leave for medical-related matters for all employees, but from which the church is legally exempt; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that maternity and paternity leave be negotiated at time of call, when possible; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that these standards and practices are submitted to emphasize the importance of our employees, while modeling compassion, Sabbath, justice, and hospitality.

Pacific Southwest Region
First Christian Church of Orange, CA
Foothills Christian Church, Glendale, AZ