

1 **R3 PRITCHETT-GONZALES RESOLUTION**  
2 **"INDIANA ANNUAL CONFERENCE PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES"**

3  
4 **Resolution**

5 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

6 "We believe the family to be the basic human community through which persons are nurtured and sustained  
7 in mutual love, responsibility, respect, and fidelity." [1] While recognizing that families take on different  
8 shapes and sizes, and the needs of each family are unique, we seek to love one another and enable all  
9 members of the body of Christ to grow and flourish.

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11 The Indiana Annual Conference supports families and advocates for parental leave for all persons  
12 welcoming a child into their home, both clergy and lay. Further, we encourage all parents who are  
13 welcoming a child into their home to make full use of parental leave policies.

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15 The World Health Organization and the International Labor Organization advocate for at least 14 weeks of  
16 paid maternity leave, [2] and *The United Methodist Book of Discipline* allows for up to 13 weeks of "maternity  
17 or paternity leave" for clergy families. [3]

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19 The Indiana Annual Conference has developed this policy in order to assist clergy families, local churches,  
20 Conference Superintendents, and the Annual Conference in caring for family and advocating for parental  
21 leave in the church and beyond the church.

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23 This policy applies to all clergy, regardless of their part-time or full-time status. In this policy, "clergy" means  
24 any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full connection who is  
25 appointed to a local congregation or annual conference-funded extension ministry, including but not limited  
26 to conference and district positions, campus ministries, camping and retreat ministries, and conference staff.  
27 Clergy appointed to non-conference-funded extension ministries are encouraged to adapt similar policies  
28 for their settings.

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30 **BOOK OF DISCIPLINE FOUNDATIONS**

31 ¶1355. Maternity or Paternity Leave—Maternity or paternity leave, not to exceed one-fourth of a year, will  
32 be available and shall be granted by the bishop and the cabinet, and the executive committee of the Board  
33 of Ordained Ministry to any local pastor, provisional member, associate member, or clergy member in full  
34 connection who so requests it at the birth or arrival of a child into the home for purposes of adoption.

- 35 1. Persons desiring maternity or paternity leave should file their request with the committee on pastor-  
36 parish relations after consulting with the district superintendent at least ninety days prior to its  
37 beginning to allow adequate pastoral care for the churches involved to be developed.
- 38 2. During the leave, the clergy member's annual conference relations will remain unchanged, and the  
39 health and welfare benefit plans will remain in force.
- 40 3. A maternity or paternity leave of up to one-quarter of a year will be considered as an uninterrupted  
41 appointment for pension purposes.
- 42 4. Compensation will be maintained for no less than the first eight weeks of leave.

5. During the leave time, pastoral responsibility for the church or churches involved will be handled through consultation with the committee on pastor-parish relations of the local church(es) and the district superintendent.
6. Special arrangements shall be made for district superintendents, bishops, and those under special appointment.

#### POLICY FOR BIRTHS OR ADOPTIONS

1. All clergy in the Indiana Annual Conference who are expecting the birth or adoption of a child are eligible for Parental Leave (see *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2016*, ¶ 355). Parental leave is guaranteed to all clergy who request it within the guidelines this policy.
2. Clergy are encouraged to begin communication with their district superintendent as soon as they are able to publicly share the anticipation of a child's arrival. Families giving birth are encouraged to begin planning as soon as they are public about their pregnancy. Adoptive parents are encouraged to make a plan as soon as they are approved for adoption/foster parenting.
3. Parental leave should be requested at least 90 days in advance of the anticipated beginning of the leave, in accordance with the *2016 Book of Discipline*. Clergy should send notification in writing to the Conference Superintendent, Episcopal Office, and the Board of Ministry Conference Relations Registrar.
4. Parental leave shall be encouraged and permitted for up to 13 weeks with full pay and will not affect the clergy person's pension, health benefits, and appointment status.
5. Churches will maintain their regular compensation for clergy on leave for the duration of the leave.
6. The Conference Superintendent will consult with the clergy person to arrange coverage for the duration of leave.
7. As needed, the Annual Conference will assist local churches with additional funding for pastoral coverage and compensation, in consultation with the clergy person and the SPRC, up to \$10,000 per leave. These funds will be approved by the Cabinet and will fall under a designated category to be determined by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.
8. Parental leave may be taken consecutively or nonconsecutively, full or part time, according to the needs of the family. All parental leave must be taken within nine months of the placement or birth of the child.
9. Parental leave is not vacation. The use of parental leave does not affect the clergy person's use of their annual vacation granted in the Annual Conference Rules.
10. Churches will make reasonable accommodations for breastfeeding and pumping parents, as well as for the feeding of infants. This can include private space, access to an outlet, and time/space to feed according to the infant's needs.
11. Churches and other ministry settings will also examine their personnel policies for lay staff and are encouraged to ensure adequate and equal parental leave for all.
12. Clergy in the Annual Conference will support and promote parental leave, including by providing pastoral care coverage if asked and needed, in accordance with their schedule.
13. The Annual Conference will support clergy on parental leave by excusing or making alternate arrangements for their district and conference duties. This includes the annual conference session, charge conference, district and conference committees, and residency requirements.

1 POLICY FOR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS

2 The Indiana Annual Conference recognizes the significant need for foster care families. The intended  
3 temporary nature, often short notice, and government financial support of foster parenting present  
4 different support needs from birth or adoption.

- 5 1. Clergy who serves as foster parents should be in communication with their SPRC and conference  
6 superintendent at the time of appointment or during the licensing process. Clergy should send  
7 notification in writing to the Conference Superintendent, Episcopal Office, and the Board of  
8 Ordained Ministry Conference Relations Registrar.
- 9 2. Foster parents are encouraged to make an advance plan of contingencies as soon as they are  
10 approved for foster parenting.
- 11 3. Should a clergy family welcome a child into their home for foster care, a specific plan will be worked  
12 out among the Conference Superintendent, SPRC, and the clergy family, with the goal of caring for  
13 the family.
  - 14 a. Foster parents generally anticipate taking off work for some days at the beginning of the  
15 placement, to arrange for daycare and/or school enrollment, potential medical or  
16 caseworker appointments, and to begin to establish a relationship of mutual trust with the  
17 child(ren). They typically return to a more normal work schedule more quickly than after the  
18 birth of a child.
  - 19 b. Foster parents may also need a few days at the end of a placement as well, to care for both  
20 the logistics and grief of transition.
- 21 4. Up to three weeks of paid parental leave may be given each calendar year to clergy beginning or  
22 ending foster placements.
- 23 5. As needed, the Annual Conference will assist local churches with additional funding for pastoral  
24 coverage and compensation, in consultation with the clergy person and the SPRC, up to \$1,000 per  
25 year. These funds will be approved by the Cabinet and will fall under a designated category to be  
26 determined by the Conference Council on Finance and Administration.

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28 **Rationale:**

29 These policies were drafted by a coalition of young clergywomen across the connection of The United  
30 Methodist Church in an effort to create clarity and consistency for parental leave policies and practices,  
31 beyond the existing language in The United Methodist Church. Our adoption of this resolution will strengthen  
32 our existing support of parenting clergy in our Conference and ensure all clergy can serve faithfully while  
33 also caring for their families.

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35 **Financial Implications:** Yes

36 As outlined in the resolution, these policies require designation of funds to provide support, as needed, for  
37 churches who require pastoral/preaching coverage during parental leave periods.

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39 **Groups to forward/affirm:**

- 40 Cabinet
- 41 Conference Council on Finance & Administration Indiana UMC
- 42 COSROW
- 43 Board of Ordained Ministries
- 44 Chairs of the Orders of Deacon and Elder, and Chair of Fellowship of Local Pastors

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