

## When should a Committee on Ministry grant Leave of Absence?

Leave of Absence is a good and unbiased standing in the UCC for authorized ministers who are neither active nor retired. Leave of Absence is not a tool for fitness proceedings or for avoiding fitness proceedings, but rather a tool for vocational discernment. The conditions of Leave of Absence (including expectations of boundary training, voting privileges in the Association and Conference, what if any functions of ministry may be performed, etc.) should be determined and specified in writing between the Committee on Ministry and the authorized minister.

**If an authorized minister is not actively serving or retired, ask...**

**Is the minister currently SEEKING a call?**

Yes, this minister is in active search and does not need to request Leave of Absence.

This minister has been in search for over 2 years, or this minister has suspended their search. Leave of Absence should be granted with a plan for vocational discernment.

**Is the minister FOCUSING ON A LIFE EVENT?**

Yes, this minister is taking time away from a ministry setting to focus on a life event (such as family, illness, extended study). Leave of Absence should be granted, renewable annually for up to 5 years, and conditions of Leave of Absence should be outlined.

**Is the minister DISCERNING whether to stay in ministry?**

Yes, this minister is discerning whether to stay in ministry. A 1-year Leave of Absence should be granted with a plan for discernment for both COM and minister. Should discernment lead to a decision to depart from authorized ministry, the COM votes to grant an administrative termination of standing.