

**MISSOURI UNION PRESBYTERY
CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY
EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 27, 2021**

Pastors and Sessions in Missouri Union Presbytery (MUP) are to work together in scheduling Continuing Education for the pastor each year. Pastors need to seek approval for time away for Continuing Education from the Session. Pastors are encouraged to inform their Sessions as to the type of study chosen and how they will anticipate it will fit into their ministry needs and/or goals. The Presbytery is always ready to serve as a resource if help is requested when seeking Continuing Education opportunities. Grants may be available through the Presbytery to help offset costs. Several educational opportunities are offered within the bounds of MUP free of charge and pastors are encouraged to invite elders or other congregational members, when appropriate, to attend these events so that learning is extended to the larger church. MUP will continue to make Continuing Education opportunities available and communicate those opportunities to member pastors and churches.

Both clergy and churches are encouraged to respect a pastor's time away. Calls back to the church to see how things are going or consulting with the pastor who is away are discouraged. Pastors and Sessions are encouraged to review their administrative procedures so as to ensure the church is able to continue to function smoothly during the pastor's absence so he/she need not be called.

Pastors serving in validated ministries, while not being under the jurisdiction of MUP in regard to Continuing Education requirements, are encouraged to participate in Continuing Education and share their learnings with the Presbytery.

MUP has developed guidelines for Pastors taking Sabbaticals and those guidelines are available on the Presbytery website or upon request from the Presbytery office.

Types of Approved Continuing Education

Continuing Education should provide an opportunity for professional enhancement and/or spiritual refreshment. MUP understands that what refreshes one pastor may cause anxiety for another. MUP therefore suggests the following list of activities or events. While the list is not meant to be absolute or definitive, ministers should be able to provide sound reasoning for those kinds of Continuing Education events that fall outside of these categories:

1. Formal workshops, seminars, and other events sponsored by
 - a. Accredited bodies of higher learning
 - b. Governing bodies of the church
 - c. Other recognized and approved institutions
2. Courses of study leading to further professional degrees (M.A., D. Min, PhD, etc)
3. Travel that is specifically study oriented and will enhance one's work
4. Time at a spiritual retreat center or time in solo retreat
5. A disciplined, systematic, self-directed reading program

Reporting Process

One of the goals of Continuing Education is to equip the individual to serve his/her faith community more effectively. Recognizing that sharing new learning opportunities may also serve the larger church, MUP will request that the pastors inform the Presbytery yearly of the pastor's study. A report form is provided for such a purpose. This information will be shared in print with the entire presbytery. The reported study may be one completed or one planned in the near future. A time will be set aside at one Presbytery meeting for pastors who are willing to share their learning with the gathered community as a whole and in small groups. At the local congregational level pastors are strongly encouraged to share their educational experience in creative ways such as –

1. Direct report to the Session
2. Newsletter articles
3. Incorporated into their preaching and/or teaching
4. Mini Workshops
5. Development of a new innovative program or mission

MUP REPORT FORM FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Pastor:

Date:

Continuing Education Event Planned or Undertaken including date:

Reason(s) this event was helpful or non-helpful:

I would recommend this event

Yes/No