

Following are samples of:

- Sabbatical Best Practices Outline
- Sabbatical Policy
- Guidelines for Planning
- Sabbatical Letters to Congregation
- Resources

Sample Best Practices of a Sabbatical



I. Local Board of Administration (LBA)

- A. What is the Church's Policy?
 - 1. Write one if you do not have one (*see sample)
- B. What type of Sabbatical is being taken and how long?
- C. What finances will be made available to the pastor for their Sabbatical?
 - 1. Research grants?
- D. What is the "chain of command" when the Sr. Pastor is gone?
 - 1. Staff
 - 2. Congregation
- E. How can the LBA effectively prepare for the Pastor's Sabbatical?
 - 1. Create a timeline
 - a. Preparation for weekend speakers
 - b. Communication timeline
- F. How should the Sabbatical be communicated to the church?
 - 1. LBA Vote
 - 2. Announcements with FAQ's
 - 3. Congregational Vote
 - 4. Follow up letter

II. Congregation

- A. How should the Sabbatical be communicated to the church?
 - 1. Announcements
 - a. Why a Sabbatical
 - b. Policy for Sabbatical
 - c. Type of Sabbatical and length
 - d. How the Congregational will be affected
 - e. How the Congregation can support
 - 2. Congregational Vote
- B. How can the church effectively prepare for the Pastor's Sabbatical?

III. Pastor

- A. What type of Sabbatical is being taken?
 - 1. How long?
- B. What can the Pastor effectively prepare for their Sabbatical?
 - 2. Time line
 - a. For church and staff
 - b. Personal

C. What resources are available?

1. Family time
2. Book resources
3. Coach
4. Financial

D. Follow up Summary

1. What's next after Sabbatical?
 - a. Report of sabbatical to LBA & Congregation
 - b. Thank you LBA, Congregation, speakers
 - c. Report of sabbatical to District Superintendent

Sample of a Sabbatical Policy

Sabbatical Policy

Purpose:

- Rest (Physical, Mental, and Spiritual)
- Educational Experience (Development)
- Reflection / Visioneering



Qualifications:

- Eligible after 7 consecutive years of “credentialed pastoral” service in ministry.

Money:

- Standard salary will be paid, with no deduction from PTO during the sabbatical.
- Total sabbatical provision budget includes pulpit supply budget and all associated costs, travel, etc.
 - 1.5x Lead Pastor Total Compensation (equivalent to roughly \$ (dollars) as of (date).
- Funds used for personal non-business related expense are taxable to Lead Pastor (show up on pay stub and annual W2 equivalent) (example: family vacation, etc)
- Funds used for business related expense, are not taxed to Lead Pastor personally, and treated as any other business expense. (ex: similar to current business travel, duty-related conferences, etc)

Time:

- Recommended time is between 8-13 weeks.

Conditions:

- Up to one pastor to take sabbatical at a time, per site at _____ church. (no overlap)
- Pastor to report outcomes to elders, congregation and staff, upon return from sabbatical (within 30 days of return, to allow for “re-entry”)
- Pastor must submit sabbatical plan and schedule for LBA approval. Plan must:
 - Include written discourse, illustrating the Lead Pastor has discerned God’s timing to Take the sabbatical include a detailed plan and timeline illustrating how the sabbatical will meet the defined purpose objectives:
 - Rest (Physical, Mental, and Spiritual)
 - Educational Experience (Development)
 - Reflection / Visioneering
 - Be submitted to the LBA no less than 9 months in advance of the first day of proposed sabbatical.

Communication:

- LBA will review and respond to the Lead Pastor no later than 3 months in advanced of Sabbatical date.
- LBA and Lead Pastor communicate to Congregation that a sabbatical has been approved and will be taken.

Future Considerations:

- Lead Pastor to develop an objective, consistent way to allocate sabbatical provision to staff pastors.
 - This plan to be reviewed and approved by LBA, prior to implementation

Suggested Guidelines and Best Practices for Planning Your Pastor's Sabbatical*

* Sample adapted from Western Canadian District

From the Church's perspective:

1. As a church, establish your own sabbatical policy and communicate it to your staff. See sample
2. Recommended time periods are 8-13 weeks after 7 years of full-time ministry. After the initial sabbatical, the years in between sabbaticals are not automatically set. They can be anywhere from 3-7 years.
3. It is recommended that for sabbaticals to have their maximum effect, they be taken as a whole and not divided into several parts.
4. Assign someone from your board to proactively address your sabbatical policy with staff and assist them in planning.
5. Plan for both the financial logistics to support the sabbatical and well as the human resource & communication logistics for the time period when the pastor is away. *(See "Elder Board Sabbatical Planning Checklist")*
6. Create a clear plan for the pastor's re-entry into congregational leadership and reporting back to the board the outcomes of his/her sabbatical. *(See "Sabbatical Transitioning Plan")*



From the Pastor's perspective:

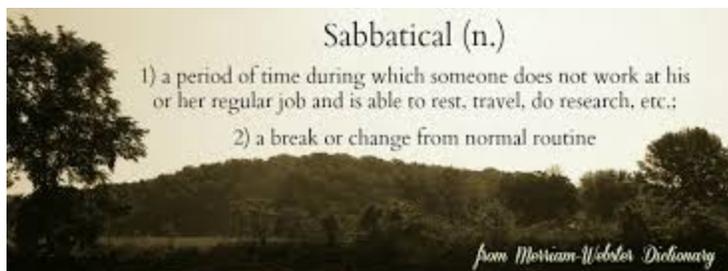
1. Plan well in advance to propose a sabbatical according to your local church's policy. If they do not have a policy, discuss your desire/need for a sabbatical with your board. They can access the resources of the District Office through their Coach to establish a policy.
2. Your proposal should contain the following: *(See Pastors Planning Template)*
 - a. A summary statement describing the overall character and purpose of your sabbatical proposal.
 - b. A description of how this will:
 - i. Contribute to your own renewal and development.
 - ii. Contribute to the effectiveness of your congregation/ministry
 - c. On your own, or depending on your church's policy, in conjunction with others, create a chronological outline of how you will spend your time on the sabbatical. A template is provided for this.
 - d. A plan for assigning ministry responsibility to others while you are on sabbatical.

When a sabbatical is not recommended

1. When significant conflict is present between pastor and the congregation. Time away will not rectify any self-defeating patterns of behavior that are causing the conflict. Handle the conflict using other resources such as mediators, District Staff etc.
2. When the timing is detrimental to the congregations' current context. Do not slavishly adhere to the policy's schedule for sabbaticals. Rather, talk honestly with each other as to the needs, goals and context of the church to determine the most acceptable time for the pastor to be away.
3. When it creates a serious financial burden to the church. Other paths may be available for assistance such as postponing it for another time so the church can work up to the finances required, or by requesting financial assistance from the District Office.

Before the Sabbatical – General Tips

- Consider strongly the idea of getting away during much of the entire sabbatical. This best provides the context for renewal, rest & reflection
- Pastors and the board are encouraged to respect the time away the sabbatical offers. If you do or must remain in town, set explicit boundaries with respect to interaction between the pastor and congregation. Communicate this clearly to the board and staff as well as to the congregation.
- Ensure areas of ministry responsibility that need coverage are assigned to staff or lay leaders. This may take a few months to accomplish, so be sure to plan far in advance for your sabbatical.
- Plan ahead so you can leave behind relevant information and resources to staff, volunteers and congregation members who might otherwise call on you.



During the Sabbatical – General Tips

- It will take at least 2 weeks to disconnect from church life mentally and emotionally – bear this in mind as you plan your renewal/development activities.
- Keep a journal before, during and after the sabbatical. This helps you discover what the sabbatical is doing for you and also helps you report back to the board and congregation.

- Remain connected to a peer cohort or other group as may be assigned by the board. A group like this provides spiritual companionship, accountability and nurture during the sabbatical period.
- DO NOT try to do too much.

After the Sabbatical – General Tips

- Together with the board, establish a clear re-entry plan. It is suggested to take 2-3 weeks to re-engage with your full ministry responsibilities. (See “*Sabbatical Transitioning Plan*”)
- Pastors should gauge their emotions and interactions carefully upon their return:
 - Immediate re-establishment and reassertion of your role in the congregation can be experienced negatively by congregants. Perceptions that the pastor is insecure, jealous or needing to reassert “authority” are not uncommon. Others have been leading in your absence. Thank them and gradually transition back to your leadership responsibilities.
 - Be careful not to look for evidence of things that did not go smoothly while you were away!
 - Take time to ask around concerning what happened in the life of the congregation while you were away
 - It is not uncommon for you to feel you can’t easily re-establish a pace or routine.
 - Transitioning back takes time. Give yourself space to readjust.
 - You may come back full of ideas and energy about the next steps, but remember that the rest of the church has not been on the journey you just took, so ease people into your new thoughts so there is a shared vision and sense of partnership in ministry
- Recognize and thank everyone who helped make your sabbatical possible.
- Report on your sabbatical.



Elder Board Sabbatical Planning Checklist



___ Pastor's sabbatical proposal received

___ Proposed period of sabbatical: _____

___ Proposal aligns with elders' sabbatical policy

___ Assignment of a point person/liaison with the pastor for planning and communication purposes (to board, congregation and District Coach)

Budget considerations:

- Strategies for covering 100% of salary during sabbatical period
- Other considerations:
 - Tuition/education
 - Travel
 - Honorarium for guest speakers
 - Funding temporary or interim staff

Communication:

- Assignment of point person for contact with pastor during the sabbatical
- Frequency of reports from pastor to point person during sabbatical
- Communication to congregation prior, during and post-sabbatical
- Expectation for length of service required of pastor post-sabbatical

Accountability:

- Assignment of peer cohort (SPN) or board committee
- Follow up meeting to report on sabbatical outcomes to
 - Board
 - Congregation
 - To District:
 - Summary report provided to District Superintendent on link between the pastors personal development plans and the churches' ongoing effectiveness
 - Accountability during the sabbatical
 - Final report on sabbatical outcomes
 - In the case of sabbaticals due to crisis, ongoing reports to the District as per the instructions of the District Superintendent.

Leadership Continuity

- Plans in place to cover the pastors' leadership and ministry responsibilities while on sabbatical (see *Sabbatical Transitioning Plan*)

Sabbatical Transitioning Plan



This planning guide covers BOTH the transition out and the re-entry strategy for the pastor on sabbatical

Sabbatical Role Assignments:

The current roles & responsibilities of the pastor will be allocated to others as follows:

Pastors' Current Role	Primary responsibility during sabbatical	Secondary responsibility during sabbatical <i>(if needed)</i>

Ongoing strategic initiatives (if needed)

The following areas of ongoing strategic initiative are those which the pastor wishes the church to continue to pursue in his absence:

-
-
-

Miscellaneous initiatives (if needed):

General initiatives the pastor wishes to have pursued in his absence:

-
-
-

Communication plan to Staff & Congregation:

- Discussions with staff regarding purpose and sabbatical responsibilities
- Announcement to congregation (see sample *Communication to Congregation*)
 - Purpose of sabbatical
 - Dates
 - Key components of the transition plan

Re-entry Planning:

- Week one – 50% load
 - No preaching/teaching responsibility
 - Participate in all staff/ministry meetings with interim leaders continuing to lead
 - Meetings with staff and lay leadership to **hear** updates. (KEY is to hear only – no directives/advice to be given)
 - Meet with board designate to discuss any redefinition of roles/responsibilities
 - Report to the board and staff
- Week two – 75% load
 - Prepare for re-engaging with preaching/teaching in week three
 - Allow interim leaders to close out their leadership responsibilities. Publicly thank them.
 - Meet individually with leaders who took on your roles to thank them and receive any updates
 - Clarify any new or redefined roles and responsibilities and discuss with the board
- Week three – 100% load
 - Communicate with staff any changes in your role/responsibility
 - Resume preaching/teaching ministry & schedule
 - Resume full working hours



Sample Congregational Letter #1 : (add your church logo)



Date

Dear _____,

This past Sunday in church, I shared that the Advisory Team (AT) has extended to me an 8 week Sabbatical. The Sabbatical basically means that I will have a time off from my regular duties as Lead Pastor of _____. That Sabbatical will be taking place from _____.

There are two primary purposes to this time away.

The first purpose is personal – ***a time of rest and recharging.***

In _____ I am in my _____th year of full-time ministry, and my ___ year here at _____ Church. I need to catch my breath and recharge the batteries. The recommendation and encouragement for a sabbatical in the Wesleyan denomination that we are a part of is every 7 years.

The second purpose is for the church – ***a time of refocus.***

For the church, I need to be a pastor who leads with a clear, ***big view*** perspective of the current season and the next season, and how to lead in both. I think this will involve sharpening my focus. The plan is to connect with strategic reading and coaching experiences to enhance the quiet times of reflection and focus.

Rest, Recharge and Refocus – those are the primary purposes of this Sabbatical.

You may be thinking about all that this is going to mean – certainly questions about who will cover my responsibilities, teaching, leading the staff, etc. The Staff, AT, and West Michigan District have been processing these details for several months and I want to assure you that we have done our best to consider everything.

I know by the end of _____ I will be longing to be back with you. But I'm also anticipating connection with God in perhaps the deepest measure I have ever known. Thanks for joining me, the Advisory Team and the West Michigan District in praying for this Sabbatical experience.

Grateful for you and all that God has called us together,

Pastor _____

Sample letter to Congregation #2 (add your church logo)



Date

Dear Church,

Several weeks ago we announced that we are giving our Lead Pastor, _____, a three month sabbatical which will be from _____ through _____, 20____. As promised, on behalf of our Local Board of Administration, I wanted to follow up to provide a framework for the sabbatical as well as encouragement to all of us as the time approaches.

BIBLICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Sabbatical comes from the image of Sabbath, the cycle of rest found in the scriptures. There is a weekly rest (Sabbath), a cyclical rest (through each of the feasts of the year), a year-long rest (for the land every seven years}, and a year of jubilee, where everything was restored in Israel - property, debts canceled, slaves freed, and a year-long celebration (every 50 years). Rest and renewal are deeply entrenched biblical principles. Jesus himself would often steal away to be with the Father, to refresh and restore his soul. In the same way, we want to provide rhythms of rest and restoration to our spiritual leaders.

DENOMINATIONAL VALUE

As a local board of administration, we met for Pastor _____'s review last summer with our district superintendent - a process we do together every four years - and collectively wanted to better serve our leadership team, by offering a Sabbatical rest for _____. We also were reminded of our denominational value which desires for each local church to provide a Sabbatical rest every seven years for the pastoral leadership. _____ has been here for _____ years and we feel a bit remiss that this has not happened sooner. We prayed and concluded together that it was a good time to do it now and were excited to let him know this.

WHAT WILL THIS BE LIKE FOR US?

As Pastor _____ steps out for the _____ month Sabbatical in _____, our leadership team will step in to fulfill his role in many ways. They are capable and ready to do this well. We, as a Board, feel very positive about the leadership team's planning and preparation for this time. The teaching team, supplemented with a few guests, will continue to teach on Sundays without _____, in order to assist and encourage our growth. The leadership and administrative responsibilities _____ carries will be delegated to the leadership team (_____ at the point leadership, _____ and _____). The Local Board will continue in our role as elders alongside of the staff leadership team. We are very confident in the leadership team the Lord has raised up here at _____ Church, and excited for this season ahead!

WHERE WILL _____ BE AND WHAT WILL HE BE DOING?

_____ has anchored events planned each month as part of the Sabbatical. In _____ he/she will have a week at a monastery for a silent retreat and reflection to begin his time away. He and his family will also have a week away together - a way to celebrate together the years they have collectively served with him on our behalf. He and _____ will have a trip planned that will encompass time visiting

several churches and surrounded by some time together for rest and investment in their marriage. The remainder of his time will be for rest and spiritual renewal. He will not be present at the church during the three month period and will disconnect from phone, email and social media during that time as well. He will return the beginning of _____ to his duties here, but with a gradual engagement over the first month - the re-entry is very important to help solidify the learnings and benefits of the Sabbatical.

OUR LEARNING TOO

We all have a role in the learning process while he is away. Our leadership team will learn and grow during this time as they take on new roles and responsibilities that will assist us not only now, but going forward. Many of you can also engage in the interim in ways that will move you forward in personal growth and in service too. Please ask your ministry leaders how you can help in the months ahead! Also, God wants to do a work in each of us during this time. While _____ is gone please pray for him; grow alongside of him and with us as a team. God is going to do something in all of us - even while apart - that will work beautifully as we come back together. Be part of that work.

OUR FOCUS IN THE COMING SEASON

As the new ministry year approaches, we have two major initiatives we believe God is calling us to, in order to live out our mission to be radically loving, and growing together in Christ.

1. We must reach the unchurched and de-churched in our area. There are over 20,000 people in the Tri-Cities area and another 3000 in Coopersville who do not attend church or know the love of

Jesus. We have a great redemptive potential and the summer is a key time to ramp up our focus to reach out in the coming year.

2. We want to become more like Jesus, and believe this can be summed up in one word. The love of Jesus is displayed in one word, generosity. God so loved the world that HE GAVE His only son... Jesus, to save us. As the fall approaches we will be working to prepare a teaching series and serving opportunities that will help us to grow in the likeness of Jesus through becoming generous people. Join us in engaging in the mission god has for us, together!

Thank you for your support, encouragement, and engagement in this process as we honor our Lead Pastor through this gift of time, rest and renewal. Thank you too for your prayers and ongoing ministry here at _____ Church! The best is yet to come.

LBA Vice Chair

Sample Congregational Letter #3

(add your church logo)

Date



Dear _____ Church Family,

_____ Church recently celebrated _____ years (date) in existence! As we celebrated _____ years the _____ family (names of Pastor's family) have completed _____ years as church planters/founders/pastor of _____ Church. For the past 16 months the District Board, lead team, deacon team, and staff have been preparing to offer a sabbatical leave to Pastor _____ and his family. Pastor _____'s sabbatical will commence on _____ and the _____'s will return to ministry on _____ (____ weeks).

What is a Sabbatical?

It is an extended time away from routine ministry for the purpose of renewal, retooling, and receiving a fresh vision. It is meant to provide a time of special renewal for the pastor that will bring personal nourishment to his/her soul, a deeper relationship with the Lord, family renewal, and a clearer understanding of God's vision for the church. A sabbatical helps prevent ministry burnout and may give the pastor a fresh perspective for his/her ministry.

What does the Bible say about Sabbaticals?

"The concept of sabbatical is deeply and indisputably rooted in Scripture. The term is derived from the Old Testament idea of "Sabbath." The Hebrew word means "rest." God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:1-3). During the Hebrew children's exodus from Egypt, God directed them (Exodus 16:26) to gather the manna daily but to rest on the seventh day (Sabbath). In numerous Old Testament passages, God admonished his people to work six days but to devote the seventh day to God as a day of rest (Exodus 20:9-10, 23:12, 31:15, 34:21, 35:2; Leviticus 23:3 and Deuteronomy 5:13). Among the Israelites, God instituted the Sabbath year (Leviticus 25:1-5). On every seventh year, the children of Israel were to refrain from farming the land and let the earth rest. Both the Israelites and the land benefited from the Sabbath rest.

These passages suggest that there is a rhythm to life. As the preacher said, for everything there is a season (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Jesus' own life and ministry reflect a deep understanding and appreciation for the rhythms of life. The demands upon Him were so great that his own ministry was punctuated with times of withdrawal for prayer and spiritual solitude (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16, 6:12)." (written by Tennessee Baptist Convention)

Why have we decided to grant this sabbatical:

- We are following Biblical and best practices for long-term ministry health
- Spiritual renewal and recharging for another 7-years!
- Further education as Pastor _____ continues _____ studies

What is the Sabbatical Policy at _____ Church:

“The role of a pastor is one that requires continual sharpening and renewal, not only to acquire additional skills, but also to enable them to deal with the ever-changing nature of ministry in the modern world. Overflow gives a sabbatical to its full-time pastoral staff after 7 years of service to its leadership and congregation and every 7 years thereafter. It should not be viewed as a vacation nor will the sabbatical be counted against accrued vacation time.”

What is the plan during Pastor _____’s absence?

- **Weekend Sermons:** Great guest speakers and _____’s teaching team
- **Ministry Leadership:** _____ Staff and ministry team directors
- **Operations/Administration:** Office Manager and Operations Director
- **Congregational Care:** Pastoral team (Pastor _____, Pastor _____, and Pastor _____)
- **Strategic Leadership:** Lead team and Deacons

What is your role during this sabbatical?

- Pray, encourage, and support Pastor _____ and his family
- Pray and step-up at the church so the church is strengthened during this time:
 - Attend regularly and invite others
 - Give faithfully and generously
 - Volunteer and serve consistently
- Respect the boundaries with the _____’s.
 - They will be traveling quite a bit, but also will not have access to Pastor _____’s phone, email, or social media. Expect to see words of inspiration and encouragement from Pastor _____ via his blog and social media, but know that it is all being prepared ahead of time. They are not to engage in any “ministry or work” talk during their sabbatical.

Sincerely,

_____ Church Lead Team

Sample Congregational Letter #3
(add your church logo)



Date

Dear Church Family,

It's exciting times! The Well will be celebrating our third year of existence this coming Fall! God has done and is doing an amazing work in our midst. As we prepare to celebrate and surge forward this coming Fall, Emily and I are preparing to enter into a phase we are calling "soul-rest." Over the past few years, we have been working diligently and the Lord has been blessing. Last Fall, the District Board of Administration, The Well's Discernment Team, and Ministry Leadership Team have been preparing to offer us a 30 day sabbatical leave during the month of July.

The West Michigan District of the Wesleyan Church encourages sabbaticals, knowing that it's these types of resting periods that produce long term fruit. Just like you have to let the soil rest before you plant crops again, it's the same for pastors. This particular sabbatical is on the short side, so we are calling it a mini sabbatical. The typical sabbatical experience is three to four months. However, we felt like 30 days was suitable for this time and our stage of development. I have never had a sabbatical in my 15 years of ministry, so I am looking forward to a deep work that the Lord wants to do in my life. There is a certain hardship that comes with planting that is difficult to explain, but it is very different from typical pastorate roles. Planting is rewarding and exhilarating, but it also takes a lot out of you. We hope this mini-sabbatical will fill us back up so we can be stronger and even more effective pastors in the future. My desire in this letter is to prep you all with a little bit of information and context for what is unfolding:

What is a Sabbatical?

It is an extended time away from routine ministry for the purpose of retooling, and receiving a fresh vision. It is meant to provide a time of special renewal for the pastor that will bring personal nourishment to his/her soul, a deeper relationship with the Lord, family refreshment and focus and a clearer understanding of God's vision for the church. A sabbatical helps prevent ministry burnout and may give the pastor a fresh perspective for his/her ministry.

What does the Bible say about Sabbaticals?

"The concept of sabbatical is deeply rooted in Scripture. The term is derived from the Old Testament idea of "Sabbath." The Hebrew word means "rest." God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:1-3). During the Hebrew children's exodus from Egypt, God directed them (Exodus 16:26) to gather the manna daily but to rest on the seventh day (Sabbath). In numerous Old Testament passages, God admonished his people to work six days but to devote the seventh day to God as a day of rest (Exodus 20:9-10, 23:12, 31:15, 34:21, 35:2; Leviticus 23:3 and Deuteronomy 5:13). Among the Israelites, God instituted the Sabbath year (Leviticus 25:1-5). On every seventh year, the children of Israel were to refrain from farming the land and let the earth rest. Both the Israelites and the land benefited from the Sabbath rest.

These passages suggest that there is a rhythm to life. As the man of wisdom said, "For everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Jesus' own life and ministry reflect a deep understanding and appreciation for the rhythms of life. The demands upon him were so great that his own ministry was punctuated with times of withdrawal for prayer and spiritual solitude (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16, 6:12)."

Why The Well has decided to grant this sabbatical:

We are following biblical and best practices for long-term ministry health

- Spiritual renewal and recharging for another strong ministry run! *[Just so you know, I sense the Lord calling our family to stay planted at The Well, and my role in the church planting movement that we are a part of will be to catalyze, coach, and coordinate other church plants and church planters. We hope to see The Well (and the Greenhouse Planting Network) become a hub for church multiplication efforts].*
- The Love family needs to spend quality and quantity time together in order to stay united and strong in the Lord.

What is the Sabbatical Policy of the West Michigan District of the Wesleyan Church?

“The role of a pastor is one that requires continual sharpening and renewal, not only to acquire additional skills, but also to enable them to deal with the ever-changing nature of ministry in the modern world. The WMD grants a sabbatical to its full-time pastoral staff after 5 years of service and every 5 years thereafter. It should not be viewed as a vacation nor will the sabbatical be counted against accrued vacation time.”

What is the plan during Ed’s absence?

- **The Sunday Message:** Pastor Steve Hubbard, our next church planting intern/resident, will be joining us in June and will be preparing a 5 week July teaching series. I have been working with Steve on this series and we are calling it “All In: A Study in Philippians”. This will help our body connect with Steve and The Well will be blessed by his particular focus with us.
 - **August sermon series:** I am already preparing an August teaching series called “Ridiculous Faith: The Story of Elisha” which is going to be incredible as we journey into this OT head-spinning narrative.
- **Ministry Leadership:** The Well’s Staff and ministry team directors are amazing and everyone is stepping up to make things happen.
- **Operations/Administration:** _____ will be the primary contact for needs that may arise or questions that need to be answered. Email _____
- **Congregational Care:** _____, will serve as our interim pastor. If there are any illnesses, hospitalizations, prayer requests, or special needs that require attention contact _____ at: _____
- **Strategic Leadership Contacts:**
 -

What is your role during this sabbatical?

- Pray, encourage, and support us and our family
- Pray and step-up at the church so the church is strengthened during this time: *(This will also give us a sense of peace that everything is okay and good while we are away... pretty please with sugar on top! ☺)*
 - Attend regularly and invite others
 - Give faithfully and generously
 - Volunteer and serve consistently
 - Continue to be the church
- Respect the Love family boundaries.
 - We will be traveling quite a bit, and will not be accessing phone calls, email, or social media. Obviously, if there was a case of an extreme emergency or tragedy, we will drop our plans and be there to support those in need. However, as a rule of thumb for us, we will not be engaging in any “ministry related/work talk” during our sabbatical. The goal is to have a complete brain-break and realign our identities around Christ and not our work efforts for Christ.

We are so very grateful that we have actually been encouraged to do this. We love our church family and feel so blessed to be able to do life together with you. Much obliged.

Sincerely,
Pastor Ed and Emily

P.S.: Please continue to pray for The Well’s Prayer Focus:

- Being MISSIONARIES (sent ones) to those around us
- Living as faithful SERVANTS
- Relying on the Lord’s STRENGTH
- Practicing irrational GENEROSITY



SABBATICAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Glossary of Terms

The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church: This body of text is the governing guidebook for Wesleyan Churches across North America. Guidance and procedures for governance are documented in this authoritative text, for the purposes of preserving the operational integrity of Wesleyan Churches, as well as protect the local church from undue risk and corruption. The guidebook has been prayerfully crafted through decades of spiritual discernment, and aligns with best practices of healthy organizations and churches. All Wesleyan Churches subscribe to the policies and procedures of The Discipline.

Lead Pastor: Commonly referred to as “Senior Pastor” as well, the Lead Pastor position is the organizational leader responsible for the spiritual growth and health of the local church. In our context, Pastor _____ was elected by the congregation of _____ Church to serve as Lead Pastor on _____.

(if Applicable) Lead Team: A well established team of departmental leaders, on staff, who have partnered with the Lead Pastor (_____) in operationalizing the _____ year strategic plan. This team provides leadership to the Administration of _____ Church.

LBA: An acronym that stands for “Local Board of Administration.” Commonly known as the “Board of Elders” in the life of _____ Church. This _____ person board consists of the Lead Pastor (Board Chair), and _____ volunteer members elected into service at the annual congregational meeting.

As stated in paragraph 750 of The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church (2012), the local board of administration carries out the will of the local church conference, serving as the chief governing and coordinating body of the local church in the interim of local church conference sessions.

Sabbatical: A sabbatical is a period of paid leave, granted to a pastor, usually after seven consecutive years of service. The leave is designed to accomplish a purpose and specific intent. During a sabbatical (or a spiritual renewal leave), Pastors engage in activities and experiences that offer rest, education, and vision-enhancement, as they seek to hear clearly from the Lord, and bring an even better version of themselves back to serve their congregation.

FAQ's:

Q: I've never heard of a sabbatical before. Why is it important to the LBA to offer a sabbatical to Pastor _____?

- A:**
- 1) Aligns with Wesleyan Denomination's recommendation (paragraph 724 of The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church)
 - 2) It is a significant learning and enriching experience that will greatly enhance our collective understanding of scripture and how to apply it in our lives.
 - 3) Pastoral ministry carries another dimension of weight to it, and providing this opportunity is a special way to appreciate and value the Lead Pastor role.

4) Pastor _____ celebrates ____ consecutive years of pastoral service in _____.

5) This is an increasingly common benefit offered to pastors as a result of the wording found in The Discipline.

Q: Is the sabbatical policy new to _____ Church?

A: The Wesleyan Denomination adopted a sabbatical provision policy in 2004. While the policy has been in place at the denominational level, KCC had not specifically aligned its policies with this until now. The LBA performed extensive research on this practice and formulated the Lead Pastor Sabbatical Policy.

Q: How long will Pastor _____ be gone?

A: Pastor _____ will be taking a ____ week sabbatical beginning _____.

Q: Who will cover for Lead Pastor while he is away?

A: Consistent with normal practice, The Lead Team and staff will continue to manage day-to-day operations. Specifically, the Lead Team (with LBA governance as needed) will address issues that would normally be handled by the Lead Pastor. If needed, there is a process in place for emergency matters that may require contacting the Lead Pastor.

Q: How will we know the sabbatical was effective in meeting its stated purpose?

A: 1) The LBA carefully reviewed and approved the Lead Pastor's itinerary and plan, through the criteria of Rest, Education, and Vision.
2) The Lead Pastor will share key learnings from this experience during a time of telling, with the entire congregation.

Q: Are pastors, who are not Lead Pastors, eligible for sabbaticals?

A: The LBA feels strongly that aligning _____ Church 's policy with the Wesleyan Denomination's encouragement to provide sabbatical for pastors is important. For this reason, a pastoral staff sabbatical policy is now in place for staff pastors who are eligible.

Q: Who is going to be speaking while the Lead Pastor is away?

A: The worship arts ministry, in conjunction with the lead team (with approval from the LBA), have planned an incredible lineup of guest pastors and speakers this summer. Plan for an amazing _____ weeks filled with sermons.

Q: How is the sabbatical funded?

A: _____ C will pay for the sabbatical expenses, which have been pre-approved by the LBA. The expenses are included as part of the operating budget. As stated in paragraph 724 of The Discipline of The Wesleyan Church (2012), each church is encouraged to provide a sabbatical leave for its pastor(s) at least every seven years of service. After surveying several like-sized churches, and seeking counsel of _____ Church's District Superintendent, the LBA has determined moving forward to include this as a budgeted line item.

Q: Where is Lead Pastor _____ going?

A: _____ has planned several spiritually reflective experiences, educational trips, and also time for R&R. Upon his return, he will be sharing some of the highlights from his sabbatical, including any word God revealed to him while away.

Q: Pastor _____ recently noted he feels we are picking up momentum and alignment in staff. Does his absence concern the LBA, as a risk of loss of momentum?

A: No. The LBA is not concerned about a risk of loss of momentum as a result of the timing of the sabbatical. Part of the discernment process included _____ confirming that now is the time for him to take a sabbatical. _____ has done a great job guiding the Leadership Team at _____ Church, in our vision. The Team will collectively lead and guide the church in _____'s absence.

Q: I'd like to discuss this decision with a LBA member. Who should I talk with?

A: The Local Board of Administration welcomes your questions and dialogue. Please contact _____ at _____ (email) or _____ (phone #) will direct your questions/comments to the appropriate person.

Resources

Resources

- <http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal>
Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs: granting qualifying churches with grants to support a pastor's renewal.

Websites (articles)

- <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/pastor-ministry-guidelines-successful-sabbatical-vacation>
- <http://thomrainer.com/2014/02/five-reasons-your-pastor-should-take-a-sabbatical/>
- http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/152163-martin_sanders_and_warren_bird_what_pastors_wish_they_knew_before_their_sabbatical.html
- <http://dallaswillardcenter.com/>
- <http://www.transformingcenter.org/in/about/ruth-bio.shtml#.Vx-ClfkrKCg>
- <http://embracinggrace.com/category/every-pastor-needs-a-sabbatical/> (for the Pastor's wife)

Conferences

- <https://renovare.org/events>
Renovaré Events: Spiritual Formation Retreats

Coaches

- www.pastorserve.org
Coach: Email: jay.fowler@pastorserve.net (Peter Yohonis recommended & used summer 2015)



Books

- <http://www.amazon.com/Sabbath-Resistance-Saying-Culture-Now/dp/0664239285>
- http://www.amazon.com/Sabbath-City-Sustaining-Pastoral-Excellence/dp/066423349X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1444340597&sr=1-1&keywords=sabbath+in+the+city
- <http://www.amazon.com/The-Emotionally-Healthy-Leader-Transforming/dp/0310494575>
- http://www.amazon.com/Sabbatical-Primer-Pastors-Initiate-Spiritual/dp/1495255166/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1461681942&sr=1-2&keywords=sabbatical+planning recommended by Pastor Peter Yohonis