Resources for Sabbatical Planning
Bill Carter
www.pastoralsabbatical.org

Funding Possibilities

Lilly Endowment, Indianapolis, IN
- Sabbatical Grants now administered through Christian Theological Seminary
  http://www.cpx.cts.edu/renewal
- Very competitive program (87 grants given nationally in 2013)
- Up to $50,000, with up to $15,000 for substitute leadership
- Require full buy-in by congregational leaders
- Applications are available online as of November 1, 2013. Notice is given many months later.
- Excellent proposal tips on the website

Resource Center for Pastoral Excellence, Samford, AL
- http://www.samford.edu/rcpe
- Grants for Sabbath Leaves
- Stipends up to $6000, with matching funds required by participating congregations
- Residency expectation on campus of Samford University, Birmingham, AL

Board of Pensions, PC(USA)
- Sabbath Sabbatical Support Grants – for pastors of small churches (200 or less members)

Grants from your presbytery and synod, if applicable

Extended Study Opportunities

Louisville Institute, Pastoral Study Project Program
- Competitive grant program with funds originating from the Lilly Endowment
- Up to $15,000 for independent or collaborative study project
- Application deadline – September 1
- The Louisville Institute no longer provides sabbatical grants (SGPL grants).

Sabbatical Policies and Rationale

PC(USA) – Sample Sabbatical Policy
- This is the model that many presbyteries have established as policy.

Church of the Brethren – Guidelines for Sabbath Rest
- See especially the section on “Several Good Reasons for a Sabbath Rest”
Books on Sabbath

- *Sabbath in the Suburbs: A Family’s Experiment with Holy Time*, MaryAnn McKibben-Dana (Chalice Press, 2012)
- *Sabbath Pause: Seven Weeks of Holy Meditations*, Terry Chapman (Wood Lake, 2012)
- *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*, Walter Brueggemann (WJKP, forthcoming in 2014)

Resources on Sabbatical Planning

- *Why You Should Give Your Pastor a Sabbatical* (VHS), Roy Oswald (Alban, 2001)

Two Other Books That I Found Life-Giving

- *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*, Belden Lane (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Cool Things You Can Do:

- **Pastors2Go** – Go to a church in North Port, Florida. Live in their house. Do light pastoral work. Check it out at [www.clergysabbaticals.com](http://www.clergysabbaticals.com)
- Visit **William Gladstone’s library** in Wales and stay there: [www.gladstoneslibrary.org](http://www.gladstoneslibrary.org)
- The Collegeville Institute is a place in central Minnesota for writing and reflecting, "immersed in a Benedictine rhythm of work and prayer." Visit [www.collegevilleinstitute.org](http://www.collegevilleinstitute.org)
- Sensing the need to pray? Go to a monastery. Here is a directory: [www.osb.org/retreats](http://www.osb.org/retreats).
- Looking for a spiritual director? Here is the website for Spiritual Directors International: [www.sdiworld.org](http://www.sdiworld.org).
Helpful Articles, Websites, and Blogs

“Beyond the Howl of Coyotes: Reflections on a Good Sabbatical,” Bill Carter

“What Difference Does a Pastoral Sabbatical Make?” Sheldon Sorge

“Resources for Sabbath Keeping and Sabbatical Taking,” Julie Aageson
http://www.faithandleadership.com/programs/spe/articles/200509/resources-sabbath.html

“Remember the Sabbatical,” Gary Furr
http://www.faithandleadership.com/programs/spe/articles/200608/remember.html

“Wisdom from the Louisville Institute Sabbatical Program”
http://www.resourcingchristianity.org/sites/default/files/transcripts/clergy_sabbatical/SGPL_Retrospective_Louisville_Institute_Sabbaticals_0.pdf

“Sabbatical Nourishment,” Jane Tims, Presbyterian Outlook, 9 October 2013

“The Dark Side of Sabbatical,” Mark Miller-McLemore
http://www.faithandleadership.com/content/the-dark-side-sabbatical

“Not Sure I Want to Be Back: Thoughts on Returning from Sabbatical,” John F. Hudson
http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=3400

Resources page, Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, Christian Reformed Church
http://www2.crcna.org/pages/spe_sabbaticals.cfm#resources

Wheat Ridge Ministries, “Ministry Sabbatical Resource Center” – Lots of helpful planning tips!
http://www.wheatridge.org/sabbaticals

Bill Carter’s 2006 Sabbatical Blog: http://psalmsabbatical.blogspot.com
Bill Carter’s 2013 Sabbatical Blog: http://spiritsmusic.blogspot.com

A Few Intriguing Sabbatical Articles from Outside the Church

“How to Plan a Sabbatical,” Srinivas Rao
http://www.flightster.com/2011/01/05/how-to-plan-a-sabbatical

“How to Plan a Sabbatical-Style Career Break,” Sumitha Bhandarkar

“Sabbatical Aren’t Just for Academics Anymore, Hillary Chura, New York Times
SAMPLE – Contract with Supply Pastor

This Covenant between the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Geneva and the Rev. XYYY is for the purpose of providing Temporary Supply during the sabbatical of the Rev. John Calvin. This relationship shall become effective June 16, 2018 until September 15, 2018 at which time the contract will conclude. It is understood that the Temporary Supply is accountable to the Presbytery through the Committee on Ministry. He will also report to the Session at scheduled meetings.

The Temporary Supply will fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Provide spiritual and administrative leadership for the congregation
- Lead worship, preach weekly, and administer the sacraments
- Officiate at weddings and funerals
- Provide pastoral care for the congregation and all who seek comfort and guidance of the church
- Serve as Moderator of the Session
- Serve as Head of Staff
- Assist church boards, committees, and ministry teams in their work
- Participate in any related activities or meetings of the presbytery, as time allows
- Assist the Session and Congregation as it explores God’s invitation to keep Sabbath
- The Temporary Supply will provide a written report of his work to the Pastor when he returns from his sabbatical.

The compensation for this agreement shall be as listed below:

**SALARY AND HOUSING** - $----- salary for the three-month period, plus $----- housing for the three-month term. Salary and housing will be payable semi-monthly.

**VACATION AND STUDY LEAVE** - Not applicable

**BENEFITS** – Voucheried expenses for medical costs, medication, and professional expenses will be reimbursed to the Temporary Supply, up to a cap of $----- for the three-month period.

**TRAVEL/MILEAGE** – Mileage for all church business will be reimbursed at the IRS rate (currently $.001 per mile) after a voucher is submitted to the church treasurer. Cap is $--- for the three-month period.

**WORK SCHEDULE** - The Temporary Supply will spend approximately 2.5 days per week (19.5 hours) at the church (normally Sunday mornings, Tuesdays, and Thursdays) or in the area (hospital visits, etc.). He will be on call for pastoral emergencies and special events in the church program (e.g. VBS closing celebration).

_________________________________  ________________________________  __________________________
Temporary Supply  Clerk of Session  Committee on Ministry
Dear Friends,

As you have probably heard, I will depart for a three-month pastoral sabbatical after worship on Sunday, June 16. I am grateful to the Session and the Presbytery for making this gift of time available to me and my family. This is a tremendous blessing, and I look forward to returning to you on Sunday, September 15.

We are particularly blessed to have a grant from the Aspirin Endowment to make this sabbatical possible. Thanks to the grant, the Rev. XXXYYY has been hired by the Session to preach each week and provide pastoral continuity in my absence. Many of you know him from his work at First Presbyterian Church in Anytown, from which he retired last September. You will find him to be a friendly and warm leader, and I am thrilled that we were able to secure him. He will be available for pastoral care at any time, and you can contact him through our church office.

Pastoral sabbaticals have emerged in the past two decades as essential practices for long-term pastorates. They provide for an extended break from the day-in, day-out demands of pastoral ministry. While my work is not physically demanding, it does require constant availability, emotional energy, spiritual presence, mental clarity, organizational oversight, and an enormous level of patience. I love what I do – yet a break will be good for my spiritual well-being.

In the distant past, it was common, for instance, for the Presbyterian pastor to take the month of July as vacation time, and the United Methodist pastor to take off for August. The churches would worship together during those two months and the pastors would cover for one another during this “quieter” time. Of course, a church like ours never has a “quieter” time; the pace is constant, energy is high. And as dual-income households became the norm, this practice disappeared. “Down time” for most of us is often scheduled in small chunks – and I find that time is short for truly resting from the emotional demands of ministry.

So I imagine an extended Sabbath time of peace and restoration. What will I do this summer? I have a plan and here is a random list of things that I aim to do at a very leisurely pace:

- Retreat in a Benedictine monastery
- Spend significant time with my family
- Read a few of my many unread books
- Chat regularly with a spiritual director
- Take three daughters on a pilgrimage to Scotland
- Get caught up on some sleep
- Listen to other preachers do what I do
- Allow creative new ideas to bubble up
- Hike with my wife in the mountains and plot out the impending “empty nest”
- Pray for the church that I love
- Sit in a favorite chair to watch the squirrels
- Reflect on my life, my work, and God’s grace

That is how the season of Sabbath will probably look for me. I hope it is a season when you can make the time to replenish your soul as well. As I will say in my sermon on June 16, Sabbath is God’s gift to us – and we must claim it if it is to have any benefit.

As mentioned elsewhere, I have started an online journal. It will be a great way to keep in touch while I am gone. You can find it at www.whitherthougoest.blog.com.

Holding you in my heart until I see you in September,

Rev. John Calvin
Pastoral Needs for Rev. Supply Pastor

Robin Redbreast – cancer biopsy on June 14, recurring hospitalizations for respiratory issues

Bon Voyage – serious respiratory issues, home-bound
- Gave him communion at home on June 13
- In case of funeral, he has requested Rev. Nancy Nanana to lead the funeral
- We would ask you to assist either of them, and to work with the family to coordinate the details
- It may be a memorial service, scheduled for sometime later. Don’t know yet.

Ike Icicle – Room 302, Geneva Nursing Home – “slipping,” as they say
- Deacon Jones has been his regular visitor, on behalf of the deacons

Janet Jumpup – Room 101, Anderson Nursing Home

Donny Osmond – a Deacon who has been absent from the church for a while. Serious health problems and financial problems, under great personal strain. I have reached out to him, but he is reluctant to accept help.

Charlie Brown recently lost his wife Lucy. He will be traveling a lot this summer.

Brain Trust recently lost his father, leaving his aged mother in New Jersey who needs some assistance.

Louise Louis recently lost her husband Louis.

Richie Rich’s mother (non-member, Pittsburgh) is having heart surgery on June 25

Each week during worship, one of the Deacons who is ushering will deliver “prayer cards” to you during the first hymn. These are prayer concerns that our folks bring to church with them, and I usually work them into the prayers of the people. Rather than disclose full names or medical/personal information, I read out loud the first names only.

Generally, we have a lot of 85-year-old saints who are getting along just fine. Many attend worship weekly, assist in the office, or serve on committees. At any moment, however, something can happen.

The Deacons make regular visits to the folks in greatest need. The Stephen Ministers will each volunteer to oversee a week of pastoral care, to complement the pastor. Please call on them for any help you may need.
Things that Rev. Supply Pastor needs to know about worship:

- **Worship Bulletin deadline** is Wednesday at noon. Our administrator prepares the bulletin and volunteers print it on Thursdays.

- We have one worship service all summer at 10 AM, until September 8, when we return to 9:00 and 10:55 AM. There is a refreshment hour after worship in the summer.

- **Lord’s Supper** is set for July 7, August 4, September 1. An elder usually assists at the Table with you.

- **Summer worship** begins with a hymn-sing at 9:45 AM. Please coordinate with the organist who will lead it (it may be you or someone else). Usually it’s 3 or 4 shortened hymns, we give a few announcements (ask other announcement-givers to keep them short), and then we move to prelude/call to worship.

- There is a weekly **liturgist**, who will lead the call to worship through the first scripture reading. Helen Troy recruits them, and our administrator Henry Jones will know who they are.

- Each week, someone prepares **special music** for our anthem. It’s a really mixed bag. Our organist coordinates this. If you want to play the saxophone for a tune, check in with her. They are expecting you to do your thing.

- The Sabbatical Team would request a brief prayer for me and my family during the prayers of the people. Judy Joyful is willing to work with you on this. There will also be a “prayer candle” lit each week during the sabbatical.

- On Sunday, July 7, many family members of elder Zimbabwe Rhodesia will worship with us from Capetown. They have asked to take part in the worship music, and our organist will coordinate this with them.

- Some clergy may show up to worship during the summer. They are wonderful cheerleaders, and include John Chrystostom (retired from Westminster Presbyterian in Ephesus, NC) and Bam-Bam Rubble (vacationing pastor of Bedrock Community Church, South Dakota).

- We would like you to give the Children’s Sermon on June 23 and July 21, when our educator Terry Cloth is away. She will handle all of the other children’s sermons through the summer.

- The Presbyterian Women will do their annual Mission Offering on June 30. One of them should make the pitch right before the plates are passed.

Things that Rev. Supply Pastor needs to know about Session and its committees:

- In addition to June 11 and September 10, there will be one summer **Session meeting** at Lake Hezekiah at the summer home of Phil Chesterton. It’s a picnic. This is a very, very nice affair, and usually ends with a boat ride. Spouses welcome!

- We need to have somebody take responsibility for **planning stewardship**. If somebody emerges, they will need some equipping and training. Stewardship Sunday is scheduled for November 3.
• We will call a **special congregational meeting** to elect Constance Dogood to fulfill a one-year unexpired term on Session. We need you to preside over the meeting (right after worship) and to install her when expedient.

• It is not necessary for you to attend most of the **committee meetings**. If they need your presence, they will let you know. Usually I attend Worship and People in Ministry, and others only if they ask for me. The committee chairs will check in before a meeting, if something requires the pastor’s attention.

• This summer, the **Deacons** will also take a month off from meetings. Tony Costanator is the moderator, and he will be in touch about meeting dates.

**Dates / Events that Rev. Supply Pastor needs to know:**

• The **office is closed** on July 4 and September 2.

• Three of our members are departing soon for a **mission trip to Haiti** (George Gorgeous, Louise Pepperspray, and Donna DeHatch). When they return, they will have stories to tell. Please help them find a suitable time to do that.

• **July 21** is a church outing to the NY Yankees baseball game. 50 tickets have been sold. You are not required to go, especially if you don’t like the Yankees. 😊

• **VBS is the week of July 22-26**, from 9 AM to 12:00 noon each day. Expect about 100 excited people in the building each day. There is an evening carnival at the end of the week.

• It is a good idea to have a **weekly 45-minute staff meeting** to review the doings around the church. They will be glad to meet at your mutual convenience. Because they are both very busy, it helps to meet all together.

• The **newsletter** (The Sound Off) will have a combined July-August issue (deadline is June 14, although you can sneak something in by the 21st). We need 3-4 paragraphs from you for page 3. There will also be a September issue, for which the deadline will be the third Friday in August (16th).

• **New flooring for Fellowship Hall** could be installed the week after VBS (July 29 and following). There is also movement afoot to re-stripe the parking lots.

• In case there is a member requesting financial assistance, send them to Len Lione, who chairs the **Assistance Fund** for that purpose.

• Feel free to get acquainted with **any potential new members**, or whoever else passes through.

• On **September 8**, the Sabbatical Team is planning a congregational event. Stay tuned for developments.