



REST & RENEW!

“Jesus said,

***‘Come away by yourselves to someplace more remote,
and rest awhile.’”***

-Mark 6.31

PASTOR SABBATICAL BROCHURE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Sabbatical 2023

January 1, 2023 - March 31, 2023

Rev. Keith M. Haithcock, Pastor & Teacher

THE CHURCH ON THE AVENUE



ST. JOHN

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Bellevue, Kentucky

Strategic Leadership Council approves sabbatical for Pastor Keith

On April 12, 2022, the Strategic Leadership Council (SLC) unanimously approved a proposal from the Pastoral Relations Committee to grant Pastor Keith Haithcock a three-month paid sabbatical in 2023. Subsequently the SLC agreed that Keith's sabbatical would start January 1, 2023, with his return to the pulpit on Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023.

This aligns with the compensation guidelines and recommendations of the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ.

What is a sabbatical?

The word sabbatical has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath (“to rest” or “to cease”). Sabbath keeping is setting aside time that God consecrates, makes holy.

Sabbatical leave is a time for our pastor to shift gears, to rest, disengage, study, reflect, and travel to return to minister among us refreshed and renewed in body, mind, and spirit.

Sabbatical is a time for the pastor to receive spiritual nourishment and a change in perspective, to deepen his relationship with God, himself, and his family---a season of spiritual growth. This special time will also be a season of growth for the entire congregation.

Why does your pastor need a sabbatical?

For Physical Rest

Pastors are often on the go and “on call” from early in the morning until late at night. They juggle staff meetings and sermon prep during the day, with committee meetings or bible study in the evenings. Pastors often don't have much downtime in their regular schedules, and are available to their congregants pretty much 24/7, for emergency trips to the hospital, or to take care of situations at church, or to help a grieving family. This means there's a good chance your pastor is exhausted. A sabbatical provides an extended period of physical rest for your pastor.

For Mental & Creative Rejuvenation

Giving your pastor a break from the routine day to day through a sabbatical can help your pastor become inspired again, whether that's for sermon series ideas or casting new vision for your church. Having time to brainstorm, to think freely and without the immediate pressure of the task or challenge at hand, and to experience a different setting can be very stimulating and inspiring for your pastor.

For Replenishment

Not only is a sabbatical a time for rest, but it is also a time to replenish. In the same way that farmers rotate crops and leave fields fallow to rebalance and restore nutrients to the soil, so a sabbatical can be a time for a pastor to rebuild his or her own “nutrients” by reading and studying more extensively, spending time with other pastors to learn from them, and to think and dream creatively in unstructured time.

Why do pastors go on sabbatical?

The very nature of being an effective pastor involves continual spiritual growth. Spiritual depth takes intentional work. Congregations need to provide opportunities for their pastors to get away for extended periods of time for dedicated spiritual development.

Clergy renewal-leaves can help ensure we will benefit from the best practices of other congregations by allowing the pastor to visit other congregations.

Without renewal-leave there is a stronger chance that the clergy will burnout. It has been documented that people in the helping professions tend to burn out the fastest; in part because of the constant intimate involvement with the emotional freight of other people’s lives can be draining.

Has Keith taken a sabbatical in the past?

Yes, his last sabbatical was the first quarter of 2012 – a decade ago.

Do other pastors go on sabbatical?

A growing number of pastors are taking sabbaticals. In fact, it is common in most denominations. The United Church of Christ has strongly encouraged congregations to provide our pastors with regular sabbatical leaves, as stated above.

What can I do to support Pastor Keith while he is on sabbatical?

Continue coming to church to support the leaders, those preaching and teaching, our programs, the community, and most of all your own spiritual growth.

Please honor the time of reflection for Pastor Keith. Arrangements have been made for qualified people to oversee the ministries of the church while he is taking time to rest and renew.

Hold Pastor Keith in your thoughts and prayers while he is away, especially on Sunday mornings. Each Sunday morning Pastor Keith will set aside time to be in prayer for St. John United Church of Christ during our worship celebrations.

What will Pastor Keith do on his sabbatical?

He will devote his time to spiritual renewal through reading, contemplation, meditation, and rest.

Who will cover Pastor Keith's responsibilities during his absence?

We are blessed to have outstanding leaders within the church. The church will continue to operate in a way that continues to meet needs and assist with the transformation of lives. Here are some responsibilities:

- **Pastor Relations Committee (PRC):** Robert Moreland, chair and the PRC will serve as the facilitating group for any concerns directly related to the absence of the pastor.
- **2023 Strategic Leadership Council members:** Will always be available to you and holds the primary administrative authority. Steve Howes is the 2023 President of SLC.
- **Sabbatical Pastors:** (Rev. Sue Jelinek and Rev. Dean Griffith) will serve as the *Sabbatical Pastors* during Pastor Keith's sabbatical. They will schedule in-house preachers and other guest preachers when/if needed, coordinate the order of worship services for Sunday mornings, officiate funerals, and other functions in coordination with the Strategic Leadership Council, the Music Ministry Transition Team, Administrative Assistant to the Pastor, and those preaching.
- **Congregational Care Team (CCT):** Coordinated by the Sabbatical Pastors this trained team of lay people will make home, hospital, and care-facility visits to members and others related to the congregation who need care and spiritual support. Call the office, 859.261.2066, ext. 201 with any spiritual care needs and leave a detailed message. If an ordained person is needed either the Sabbatical Pastors will make the contact or delegate another related United Church of Christ clergy person in the area.
- **Northern Kentucky Youth Group:** Rev. John Hodges-Batzka, coordinator: will handle all youth group matters.
- **Music Ministry Transition Team:** (Stephanie Dalsfoist, Theo Baldwin, and Steve Phillips) will coordinate and schedule music for all worship services.
- **Wednesday Morning Prayer:** Will be facilitated by Ken Weidinger & Tim Smith.

- **Interim Administrative Assistant to the Pastor**, Linda Schuster, will handle all office administrative functions until a new assistant is hired. The church office will be open during its usual hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Voice mail will be checked several times every day by the Administrative Assistant, or a substitute appointed by the Administrative Assistant.
- **Who should I contact to place a prayer request or receive the prayer list?**
Email your prayer request to PrayerList@StJohnChurch.net or call the office at 859.261.2066, ext. 201 or email at Office@StJohnChurch.net.
- **Who do I call if I have a family or personal crisis or care need?**
Call the office 859.261.2066, ext. 201 and leave a detailed message, your name, the name of the one you are calling about, phone numbers to reach you. Also, include other information like the name of a hospital or care facility and/or time of any medical procedure or event related to the care need. The Congregational Care Team will be informed, and a contact will be made accordingly.
- **Who will administer the church in Pastor Keith's absence?**
We have an excellent staff and a well-qualified Council that will administer the church in the pastor's absence. See the sabbatical contact lists below.

Who will pay for the sabbatical?

While gone, the pastor will be paid his normal salary. All other expenses (travel, conference registrations, and housing, etc.) will come from the pastor's personal resources and what has been allotted for professional expenses and conferences in the Mission and Ministry Action Plan (Budget).

Will the church just be in a "holding pattern" while the pastor is away?

All our ministries will continue to flourish while the pastor is away. Also, it is important to remember that the sabbatical is a two-way process: while the pastor is on his journey of rest and renewal, the congregation will embark on a journey as well to continue reflection on our prior work, to renew ourselves, and to strive to discern God's will for us.

Will the pastor be in contact with the church during the sabbatical?

An important part of a sabbatical is "to rest", "to cease". The only people who will be in direct contact with the pastor while he is away will be his family. In the unlikely event that some extraordinary news absolutely must be communicated to the pastor, the Strategic Leadership Council president, Steve Howes, will do so.

How will we get “reacquainted” when Pastor Keith returns?

Pastor Keith’s first Sunday back will include a brief “welcome back” reception (pending COVID guidelines) following the Palm Sunday service.

How can I learn more about the sabbatical?

Strategic Leadership Council and Pastor Relations Committee members are available to answer your questions. See the sabbatical contact lists below.

What other resources are available about sabbaticals?

The Clergy Compensation Policy of the Heartland Conference UCC is available on the conference website:

<https://heartlanducc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2022-Heartland-Conference-Authorized-Minister-Compensation-Guidelines-.pdf>

Here is an excellent article on why your pastor needs a sabbatical.

<https://www.vanderbloemen.com/blog/why-your-pastor-needs-a-sabbatical>

SABBATICAL CONTACT LIST

2023 Strategic Leadership Council

Steve Howes , SLC President	513.460.6774	howesfam5@aol.com
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Pastoral Relations Committee

Robert Moreland , Chair	513.550.3666	EthelVance@aol.com
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Cherie Draper	425.971.4703	cheriedraper@rocketmail.com
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Alan Imberg	859.743.7434	alan@alanimberg.com
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Support Staff

Linda Schuster , Administrative Asst.	859.261.2066, x.201	Office@StJohnChurch.net
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Prayer Requests:	859.261.2066, ext. 201	PrayerList@StJohnChurch.net
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Receive the Prayer List:	859.261.2066, ext. 201	Office@StJohnChurch.net
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John Hodges-Batzka , Youth Coord.	717.579.4493	john@lakesidechurch.org
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Music Ministry Transition Team

Stephanie Dalsfoist , Music	513.708.0246	sdalsfoist@gmail.com
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Sabbatical Pastors

Dean Griffith	513.407.0831	griffith@isoc.net
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Sue Jelinek	513.319.1914	pansylover@fuse.net
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