St. Andrew’s SABBATICAL HANDBOOK

“Reflect. Renew. Reform.”

Sabbatical 2017 Planning Task Force
Tom Ochsner (Founding Member)
Jim Yankech (Long-time Member)
Jody Busse (New Member, Council Member)
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 and makes holy.

Sabbatical leave is time for our pastor to shift gears so that she can rest, disengage, study, reflect, and travel in order to minister among us refreshed and renewed in body, mind, and spirit. It is **NOT** a time for routine work, mid-career assessment, job search, retirement planning, or terminal leave. In fact, it is the policy of the Nebraska Synod that when a pastor returns from a Sabbatical leave, s/he is obligated to serve that congregation for at least one more year in order for that congregation to receive the greatest benefit from the pastor’s learning, renewal, and energy.¹

The Policy Book approved by Council in February 2016 states that the pastor of St. Andrew’s may take a Sabbatical in her/his 5th year of service to our congregation. The late spring and summer of 2017 will be toward the end of Pastor Kim’s 7th year with St. Andrew’s.

Sabbatical is more than a vacation from meetings, budgets, sermons, and people in need. It is a time for Pastor Kim to receive spiritual nourishment and change in perspective, to deepen her relationship with God, herself, and her family – a season of spiritual growth. This special time will also be a season of growth for the entire congregation.

Do other clergy go on Sabbatical?
A growing number of clergy are taking Sabbaticals, and each Sabbatical experience looks different Nebraska Synod strongly urges congregations to offer Sabbatical leaves to their pastor(s).² Bishop Brian Maas has taken at least one himself, and is planning another for the summer of 2017.

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Pr. Tobi White at Our Saviour’s took a Sabbatical leave in 2016 to study how other congregations worship (both Lutheran and non-Lutheran). She returned renewed and refreshed, and her congregation is now moving into new phases of ministry.

Pr. Sarah Cordray in Syracuse also took a Sabbatical in 2016 to write her dissertation for her Doctor of Ministry degree in church leadership. The information she has gathered for her project is transforming the way they do ministry in her congregation.

Pr. Lance Ferguson took a Sabbatical in 2015 to develop his congregation’s website and to remodel a portion of his home. He also studied missional redevelopment and now teaches that information to other congregations.

**What are the benefits of a Sabbatical?**

1. **A pastor has emotional highs and lows unlike most other vocations.** In the course of a day, a pastor can deal with death, deep spiritual issues, great encouragement, petty criticisms, tragedies, illnesses, and celebrations of birth. The emotional roller coaster is draining. Your pastor needs a break—many times a break with no distractions.

2. **A pastor is on 24-hour call.** Most pastors don’t have an “off” switch. They go to sleep with the knowledge they could be awakened by a phone call at anytime of the day. Vacations are rarely uninterrupted. It can be an exhausting vocation, and a Sabbatical can be a welcome time to slow down.

3. **Pastors need time of uninterrupted study.** It doesn’t usually happen in the study at church or home. There is always the crisis or need of the moment. Church members expect sermons that reflect much prayer and study. The pastor’s schedule often works against that ideal. The Sabbatical can offer much needed, and uninterrupted, study time.
4. **Pastors who have Sabbaticals have longer tenure at churches.** Though this information is anecdotal, a trend can be seen. And while a cause-and-effect relationship cannot be proven, it is believed that pastors who have Sabbaticals are much more likely to stay at a church because they are less likely to experience burnout.

5. **Pastors who have Sabbaticals view the time off as an affirmation from their churches.** It has often been said by pastors who have been blessed with a Sabbatical: “I know my church loves me because they gave me a Sabbatical.” Pastors need affirmation. Sabbaticals can accomplish that goal.³ A Sabbatical is a significant investment in the education, health, well-being, and spiritual renewal of your pastor.

**How long will Pastor Kim be away?**
Pastor Kim will begin her Sabbatical leave after worship on Sunday, May 7, 2017. There will be a “sending” liturgy at the worship service. She will return to the office on August 1, 2017, and her first Sunday back in worship will be August 6. Worship that Sunday will include a brief “welcome back” liturgy. Pastor will be away for a total of twelve weeks. As per St. Andrew’s Sabbatical Guidelines, Sabbatical Time does not replace the pastor’s annual scheduled vacation time of four weeks (including four Sundays).⁴

**What will Pastor Kim be doing on her Sabbatical?**
As suggested in St. Andrew’s Policy Handbook, the idea of Sabbatical is to break up the twelve weeks into three parts: one-third is for Pastor to learn about something that will directly impact the life and ministry of St. Andrew’s, one-

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⁴ *St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church Personnel Policy Handbook*, p. 12
third is to learn about something that interests Pastor Kim, and one-third part will be for rest.\footnote{Ibid, p. 12}

The one-third of the Sabbatical designed to directly impact St. Andrew’s will focus on leadership development. Leadership continues to be a key area in our life and ministry together, particularly for St. Andrew’s future. There are many people at St. Andrew’s who are willing to work on projects, but few who are willing to lead them. One of the goals agreed upon when Pastor Kim was called to serve as our pastor was to learn more about lay leadership development. Pastor will use Sabbatical time to read some books on the matter and to learn how to more effectively develop the gifts of leadership in the congregation. During the four weeks that are set aside for study, she will visit four congregations that are similar in size to St. Andrew’s and interview the lay and ordained leadership to learn what strategies for leadership development are being used in those places and what might be helpful to implement here.

Pastor Kim and Ken love to travel, and so the one-third designated for her personal learning will involve some traveling abroad. She is particularly interested in the history of the Early Church as it began its mission in the world. To learn more about this, The Osborns will take a four-week trip to the Mediterranean to take a tour of the early churches of St. Paul to learn more directly about Paul’s leadership and vision for the Early Church. That will be followed by a trip to Rome and the Vatican, where Pastor will have the opportunity to learn about the Church during the Renaissance and our Reformational ties to Rome. A short stop in Germany to commemorate the Reformation and reflect on the leadership of Martin Luther will conclude their trip.
The remaining one-third of the Sabbatical time is set aside purely for rest. Pastor will reconnect with her family and friends and do some traveling in the US.

For a complete schedule/itinerary of the Sabbatical, please see page 13.

**What are the goals of this Sabbatical Project?**
The goals for this project are three-fold:

**Professional Goals:** Every pastor can learn to be a better leader. At a recent conference, Pastor Kim learned about an idea called “adaptive change.” It is also known as “systemic change” because this type of change affects the DNA of the organization and in its whole way of being, rather than just being a cosmetic, superficial, or even a temporary change. Pastor will learn more about this leadership strategy and how to use it at St. Andrew’s. During her four weeks of intentional study time, she will read four books that have been recommended to her by other pastors and seminary professors. She will also interview four different congregations that are similar in size to St. Andrew’s and observe their leadership styles in order to glean some strategies that will be useful to us here as we seek to raise up leaders in our own congregation.

**Personal Goals:** After 16+ years of ministry without any real break or opportunity for extended educational or spiritual renewal, Pastor Kim has become tired and weary, even seeing signs of burnout. She does not experience the energy and creativity she once had for ministry, and very much hopes the extended period of rest will help her rediscover that joy and excitement. Pastor has also been dealing with some health concerns this past year, which thankfully are beginning to resolve, but have been exhausting for her nonetheless. Again, an extended period of rest and intentional self-care will help with this concern. Tending to one’s own spiritual life as a pastor is also difficult, since the primary concern is often for the spiritual life of the
flock being served. Pastor’s personal spiritual life is very dry at the moment, and she very much wants to reconnect with God and with her own spirit during this time away by spending time at a monastery in silent retreat, reflection, study, and prayer.

**Congregational Goals:** The Sabbatical is one-fourth of the 12-month strategic plan of reflection proposed by the Church Council. This plan is called “60/500” because we began the journey right after celebrating our 60th anniversary as a congregation, and the journey will conclude shortly after the anniversary of the Reformation.

During the next 12 months, the congregation is going to be asked to reflect upon its ministry and mission. St. Andrew’s will be asked to identify and focus on a project that is life-giving and meaningful, as well as engaging all members of the congregation in it. By working together on that project, St. Andrew’s will find renewal and joy again. And, as a result of that reflection and renewal, St. Andrew’s will be reformed with new direction and zeal for ministry.

Each month, we will hear from speakers from the community to share with us how God is at work in the world and demonstrate how being a leader in that ministry makes a difference. Pastor Kim (or the summer supply pastor) will then use that information to ask “What does this mean?” and reflect on how we as Lutheran Christians can have a direct impact on that ministry. The goal of this is to learn more about leadership strategies and missional opportunities in our community, and to see if there is interest in the congregation for new projects.

**How can we measure the success of the Sabbatical?**
As stated above, Pastor will learn new strategies for leadership while she is away. She will develop a new appreciation for the leadership challenges faced by Paul and the Early Church and reflect on the similar challenges we face today in our own time. Perhaps most importantly,
Pastor will rest and return to us with renewed energy and a new focus for our mission and ministry in NE Lincoln.

As for the congregation, success will be measured by the level of participation by the members and leadership, the energy that returns to our congregation, and how we can use what we have learned during this time to cultivate new leadership, and to move forward and grow together in ministry.

**What’s in it for St. Andrew’s? Why should this congregation invest this time and financial resources in this educational opportunity for Pastor?**

A rested pastor is a more effective pastor. Giving Pastor Kim the gift of rest and renewal will be priceless, both for her and for the congregation. As you read above, there is a noticeable trend that pastors who take Sabbatical leaves tend to remain in congregations for a longer period of time. Not only is this beneficial for the long term scope of ministry for the congregation, it is also financially advantageous, since it is expensive to undergo the call process to find a new pastor. During the six to eighteen months of a call process, the mission of the congregation is often put on hold or hiatus, waiting for the new leader to arrive. That is a lot of time and financial resources that are not being used in mission. Finally, offering a Sabbatical to the Pastor of the congregation is stated in the Policy Handbook as being available after the 5th year of service. This subject was discussed by the Call Committee and Pastor Kim in the Call Process, and offering Pastor a Sabbatical during 2017 was approved by the Church Council at its July 2016 meeting.

**What will Pastor Kim bring back to us?**

First and foremost, Pastor will return to us refreshed and renewed, ready to take on the demands of ministry once again. In addition, Pastor Kim LOVES to learn new things; few things energize her more! By setting aside this time to go out into the world to see what other churches are doing, Pastor will bring new energy and fresh ideas for leadership.
development back to us to use in our own context. Third, by drawing on her experience of traveling to Israel in 1999 and Germany in 2010, she can only imagine how spending time walking in the footsteps of St. Paul and experiencing first-hand the life of the Early Church is going to impact her teaching ability in Bible Studies, confirmation, and Sunday preaching.

Although it may be hard to measure everything that is learned and experienced, Pastor will be bringing back to us a wealth of information, knowledge, experience, and energy that can only enrich and bless every one of us.

**Does the congregation also need a Sabbatical away from the pastor?**

The short answer is, “yes.” If any congregation becomes too dependent on a pastor, they can forget things about themselves and their own hopes and dreams for ministry. The only way to rediscover these dreams and gifts of the membership is for the key leader to go away for a while.  

**Who will cover Pastor Kim’s responsibilities during her absence? Who will lead worship?**

Arrangements are being made for Supply Pastors to lead worship, preach sermons, preside at communion, and to be available on Sunday mornings during the twelve weeks Pastor Kim is on Sabbatical. Pastors will also be available to cover all pastoral emergencies/concerns/pastoral duties, such as funeral, weddings, baptisms, etc., or even to offer prayer and support to someone who wants a “listening ear” while s/he is struggling with an issue.

**Who will I call for pastoral care or in an emergency?**

The Church Office will be open during its usual hours (M-F, 8am-4pm). The Office Manager and The Council President

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will make arrangements to cover funerals, weddings, baptisms, and so on.

There will be a pastoral on-call at all times during the twelve weeks. Please call the Church Office or the Council President to be connected to the pastor on-call for that week.

**How many worship services will we have while Pastor Kim is away?**
Since worship attendance tends to be lower during the summer months, and since attendance also tends to be lower when Pastor is out of town, on recommendation of the Worship Pillar, Council has decided that the months of May, June, and July, will be a perfect time to experiment with having one worship during the summer months. Worship will be at 9:30am. This includes Pastor Kim’s “launch” and “receiving” Sundays (May 7 and August 6, respectively), so we can be all together as one congregation to wish her well and to welcome her home.

**Who will pay for the Sabbatical?**
Pastor Kim did apply for a grant, but unfortunately was denied any assistance in funding. Thus, the Sabbatical will be funded by Pastor Kim herself. If there are members of the congregation who would like to make a “love offering” toward this project, you are welcome to do so. Just earmark the gift “Sabbatical 2017” and that gift will go toward the congregation’s expenses (pulpit supply, etc.) while she is away.

**Will the budget need to be increased to cover additional expenses, such as pulpit supply?**
No. Regular home visitations will be covered by The Prayer and Care Team, and emergencies (hospital calls, funerals, etc.) will be covered by Pastor Kim’s colleagues at no charge (or perhaps mileage). As encouraged by Nebraska Synod, and as stated in St. Andrew’s Policy Handbook, Pastor Kim’s salary and benefits will continue as scheduled. Pulpit Supply expenses and mileage will be covered by the Continuing
Education Fund and “Special” Sabbatical Fund. There will not be any further financial burden to the congregation.

What if I have a question or a concern while Pastor Kim is away?
The Church Council will resolve all issues concerning parish life. When necessary, the pastor who is on-call may be contacted for consultation.

Will the church just be in a “holding pattern” while Pastor Kim is away?
Not at all. All of our ministries will continue as usual while Pastor Kim is away, and perhaps new ones will be formed. Also, it is important to remember that the Sabbatical is a two-way process: while Pastor is on her journey of renewal, refreshment, and reflection, the congregation will be embark on a journey as well – to continue reflection on our prior work, to renew ourselves, and to discern God’s plans for us.

Will Pastor Kim be in contact with St. Andrew’s during her Sabbatical?
An important part of a Sabbatical is to make a complete break from the current routine. The only people who will be in direct contact with Pastor Kim while she is away will be her family. She will not be checking her Facebook or Twitter feeds, her email will be set to “vacation mode,” and her cell phone will be turned off. In the unlikely event that some extraordinary news absolutely must be communicated with Pastor Kim, the Council President will notify her.

Having said that, however, Pastor Kim will be glad to be sharing information with you! She will post pictures and stories of her adventures on her blog, and she will send newsletter articles to the congregation while she is gone to keep in some contact. You will be able to read what she is up to and about what she is learning, but you will not be able to contact her. You can start following her now at http://reflectrenewreform.blogspot.com.
Again, this “cut-off” in communication is not because Pastor doesn’t want to talk to you; far from it! The communication cut-off is simply to help her to get the rest that she needs.

**Will Ken be going with her?**
Yes, Ken is going on the trip abroad, too, and they are very much looking forward to spending this special time together.

**How will we get “reacquainted” when Pastor Kim returns?**
Pastor Kim’s first Sunday back will include a brief “welcome back” liturgy planned in advance by the music director and the Sabbatical Planning Task Force. In addition, an opportunity for the sharing of experiences (both St. Andrew’s and Pastor’s), as well as some evaluation with input from the entire congregation, is being planned by Pastor Kim and the Sabbatical Planning Task Force.

Upon her return, Pastor and the Council will work together to reflect on these three months and form a strategic plan to best use the information Pastor Kim and the congregation have learned in her time away.

**How can I learn more about the Sabbatical?**
You can speak to Pastor Kim, or ask any member of the Sabbatical Planning Task Force (listed on the front of this brochure).  

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PASTOR KIM’S 12-WEEK SABBATICAL ITINERARY

The Basic Plan
- **May 8-20**: rest/travel/family
- **May 21-June 1**: study/interviewing pastors and leaders in congregations similar to ours/silent retreat in monastery
- **June 2-29** Europe*
- **June 30-July 15** study/interviewing pastors and leaders in congregations similar to ours/silent retreat in monastery
- **July 16-31**: rest/travel/family

*THE ITINERARY FOR EUROPE

June 1 - Flight to Athens
June 2 – Arrive in Athens
June 3 - Athens
June 4 - Athens
June 5 - Thessalonika
June 6 - Philippi, Kavala
June 7 - Veria, Kalambaka
June 8 - Valaam, St. Stephen’s
June 9 - Athens, Lavrion, Piraeus-Mykonos
June 10 - Ephesus, Patmos
June 11 - Crete, Santorini, Knossos
June 12 - Athens
June 13 - Rome

June 14 - Rome
June 15 - Rome
June 16 – Vatican Square
June 17 - Assisi, Orvieto
June 18 - Mass @ Vatican
June 19 - Florence
June 20 - Duomo, Dante
June 21 - Venice
June 22 - Florence, Santa Croce
June 23 - Milan
June 24 - Florence
June 25 - Berlin
June 26 - Wittenberg
June 27 - Berlin
June 28 - Flight home
APPENDIX I
Sabbatical Leave Policy of St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church

Sabbatical Leave

To be modified in accordance with the recommended sabbatical policy from the Nebraska Synod of the ELCA.

Sabbatical Leaves are for full-time called clergy. Clergy are eligible to request such leave after five years of full-time employment with St. Andrew’s Church. An employee granted Sabbatical Leave shall be committed to a minimum of one year of service to St. Andrew’s Church after the conclusion of the sabbatical.

A sabbatical will normally be for three months. Vacation time will not be included as sabbatical time.

The responsibility for planning how the sabbatical will be used is up to the called staff person in consultation with the Synod Office and the Council. It would normally be one month of total rest and relaxation, one month of learning for the sake of learning, and one month of learning or preparation that will directly benefit the congregation.

The congregation will continue to pay full salary and benefits for the person on sabbatical. Planning should begin the calendar year before the sabbatical so that the congregational budget can allow for additional expenses.

Adopted 1/15/08, Revised 2/16/16

APPENDIX II
Sabbatical Leave Policy of Nebraska Synod

Congregations are strongly encouraged to consider providing sabbatical leave for their pastor(s) and rostered personnel. Some of the benefits to the congregation of such leave are:

- Sabbaticals offer an experienced pastor or rostered person renewed energy and rediscovered zeal for ministry;
- Sabbaticals enable an opportunity to develop congregational leadership and to come to a greater understanding of the congregation’s ministry by assuming some of the pastoral or rostered person’s duties during the interim;
Sabbaticals are often an occasion for the congregation to reflect and assess their partnership with the pastor or rostered person and discover ways to strengthen and improve ministry;

Sabbaticals provide the opportunity to show support and care for a beloved pastor or rostered person and his/her family;

Sabbaticals can be a time for congregational members to reconsider their commitment and to assess their relationship to the life and witness of the congregation;

In the long run, Sabbaticals are often cost effective. When burn-out causes an experienced pastor or rostered leader to leave, the congregation loses money during an interim period, incurs expenses for moving, has the potential loss of members in the interim and loses efficiency while a new relationship develops.

In addition, some of the benefits to the pastor or rostered person are:

Sabbaticals often provide a needed break from long hours, high pressure, personal sacrifice and the 24/7 nature of pastoral ministry;

Sabbaticals can offer a unique opportunity for prayer, rest, study and renewal;

Sabbaticals are often an opportunity for the pastor or rostered person to discover more in depth the importance of what they do because of who they are rather than because of what they do;

Sabbaticals provide the opportunity to develop greater self-awareness and spiritual depth.

Some suggested guidelines for sabbatical leave:

If sabbatical leave is offered, it should be offered to all full-time rostered personnel under the same policy guidelines. Such guidelines should be drawn up in advance and approved by the appropriate congregational committee or the Congregational Council.

The length of sabbatical leave varies. Some congregations provide a two-month sabbatical leave after four continuous years of service to the congregation. Others provide sabbatical leave after five continuous years of service. The length of leave should be
determined by the congregation in consultation with the pastor or rostered person. Typically a sabbatical of less than two months is considered counter-productive. The timing of a sabbatical leave should be determined in consultation with the pastor or rostered person and the appropriate congregational committee and take into consideration the needs of the congregation.

At a minimum, congregations should continue to provide full salary and benefits during the sabbatical. Travel mileage reimbursement is often suspended during this period. During the calendar year of the sabbatical, time normally allotted for continuing education is usually not granted. Continuing education funds allotted for that year are normally applied to sabbatical expenses. Vacation time should not be reduced because of sabbatical leave, however.

A written proposal for the sabbatical should be presented to the appropriate congregational committee by the pastor or rostered person at least six months prior to the beginning of the sabbatical. The proposal should include a listing of desired outcomes, a description of activities planned during the sabbatical, a summary of travel plans (in general terms) and a listing of the church tasks that need to be cared for during the person’s absence during the sabbatical. In addition, the pastor or rostered person should develop some method to record and report results of the sabbatical leave to the congregation following the sabbatical.

To allow the congregation to benefit fully from the sabbatical, the pastor or rostered person is expected to remain with the congregation for a period of at least a year following the sabbatical. If the person should leave earlier than that, financial arrangements for repayment of expenditures for the sabbatical may be made.

No hiring of permanent personnel should be considered in response to the sabbatical leave. The congregation may, however, consider adding short-term staff and/or additional compensation for other staff members whose responsibilities are increased during the sabbatical.