

November 22, 2017

Dear Luther Place Congregation and Friends,

This is a short note about my taking a Sabbatical with Luther Place in the late summer into fall of 2018.

In Genesis, it talks about God taking a “rest,” after a week creating. That “rest,” is called a Sabbath — and the word “Sabbatical,” comes from the word Sabbath.

The Lutheran Magazine suggests that full-time church workers should have a sabbatical every five to seven years. It further suggests a time period of 12-15 weeks, enough time for the individual to disengage from the congregation and pastoral role.

The “Rostered Leadership Compensation Guidelines for 2018” prepared by the Metro Washington, D.C. Synod include this statement: “An extended leave/sabbatical of one to three months may be granted after the pastor has served a congregation three to five years beyond the First Call Theological Education Program.”

I am one of the fortunate pastors whose congregation gave me (and itself) the gift of a sabbatical. In 2002, I had a four-month break from parish duties in my 12th year as serving as an ordained pastor in Baltimore, MD.

I know from firsthand experience, that the Sabbath rest of Sabbatical brings a significant level of renewal. After serving almost nine years with Luther Place, I am grateful for having the chance to serve through multiple transitions in the life of the congregation. Our efforts have brought some significant and important change, and as we complete the Luther Place Vision for 2017, it seems like a good time to engage an extended time of rest and renewal. And, in returning from Sabbatical, it is my commitment to be part of engaging and leading the congregation in its next Vision Plan.

The Sabbatical planned in 2018 is included in our congregation’s budget. In addition to the budget, it is my plan do fundraising through a clergy sabbatical platform.

In addition to being a gift for clergy, a Sabbatical can give gifts to the congregation. What often occurs is that as the congregation takes responsibilities and engages in meaningful ministry, people find new life and vibrancy in their discipleship in congregational life.

Our congregation’s leadership is already working with me to put together the Sabbatical Plan. The Personnel Committee and the Congregation Council are eager to guide the congregation through this season of Sabbatical planning and implementation.

I am grateful for the chance to work towards a Sabbatical, and I trust God will lead and guide us all through this new way of being in ministry together.

In Christ,

Pastor Karen Brau