

March 2024 Newsletter

A sabbatical is something very unique in certain professions. Professors—usually after seven years of service, take a sabbatical for a number of reasons. Some write scholarly articles; others write books. Some may travel to explore; while others take classes to delve deeper into their field of study. Regardless of what the reason is, usually, sabbaticals are needed, appreciated, and, obviously, accepted.

Furthermore, churches typically offer pastors a sabbatical, as well, after a handful of years of service. As I was preparing for my sabbatical, I informally (via text messaging and emailing) interviewed other pastors on what they did on their sabbatical. One pastor told me that they traveled to explore the civil right museums of the South—and that it was life changing. Another pastor told me that they accepted and led a lectureship at Harvard Divinity School. I spoke to a pastor in the Genessee Valley Association about three months ago and they said, “I slept a lot my first two weeks on sabbatical. I didn’t realize how exhausted I was.”

From June 2nd, 2024, through September 3rd, 2024, I will be taking a sabbatical to reflect, rest, explore, and travel. First, I will be attending the Joe Engle Preaching Institute at Princeton Theological Seminary as a Joe Engle Fellow. This is a huge honor. I will be studying preaching, ministry, and pastoral theology among some of the most brilliant minds in the field. Second, I am going to study some of the homiletical methods of the Rev. Dr. James Forbes. In 1993 and 1994, James Forbes was named by Ebony Magazine as one of the greatest preachers in the nation. Third, I plan to travel to visit some museums in Washington, DC and in the South. When I return, I think it would be beneficial for us to reflect together about my time away.

Finally, the Board of Religious Services, the Church Council, and I will ensure that the pulpit is filled every Sunday and that there is sufficient coverage.

Should you have any questions about my sabbatical in the meantime, please don’t hesitate to give me a call or send me an email so that we can meet for lunch or a cup of coffee.

With love, gratitude, and a pastor’s heart,

Michael