

## Announcement for Pastor Fletcher's Sabbatical Leave

In the summer of 2019 Pastor Brian Fletcher and his family will be taking a sabbatical leave for a period of three months. Spring Run Presbyterian Church offers its pastors a sabbatical, as stated in our personnel policy.

4.1.6 SABBATICAL LEAVE SRPC supports periodic sabbatical leave for Pastoral and Program Staff for the purposes of rest, restoration, and spiritual renewal. As a demonstration of this support, the Session may approve sabbatical leave for such Staff and for such purposes, with full pay and benefits, for a period of no less than eight (8) and no more than sixteen (16) weeks, inclusive of vacation and accrued educational leave time for the intended Sabbatical year. The Staff member shall provide application to the Session for sabbatical leave no less than six (6) months prior to the proposed date for taking such leave. During the six (6) month notice period, a Sabbatical Plan will be developed jointly by the applicant and the Session to assure SRPC ministry stability and continuity, and personal sabbatical goals. Provided that the Staff member is in good standing with SRPC at the time of application, Pastoral and Program Staff shall be eligible for sabbatical leave after the completion of six (6) consecutive calendar years of full-time SRPC employment, and following each succeeding six (6) consecutive years of full-time employment.

What is a sabbatical and why does Pastor Fletcher need one?

The word sabbatical is derived from the Biblical word that means "to cease". We are instructed to cease weekly and observe the Sabbath day keeping it holy. In the Old Testament there were other times of ceasing every seven years. In the same vein, being an effective pastor involves continued spiritual growth and therefore requires time to cease for rest and renewal. It involves rediscovering spiritual disciplines of prayer, solitude, Bible reading, and reflection on the vocation of a pastor. It is an opportunity to think about refocusing or retooling ministry in the church. So, it involves aspects of rest, reflection, and renewal for ministry.

Pastor Fletcher and his family have been a part of Spring Run since it was launched in the spring of 2005. He has been on full-time staff with the church since September 2007. The need for a sabbatical comes from the emotional, spiritual and physical nature of pastoring a large congregation. While Pastor Fletcher feels just as energized today as he did his first day on the job, it is important to stop, rest, and have time to refocus his vision for ministry. Brian writes:

"I'm excited and blessed to have this time provided by the church to hit the pause button. I have been in full-time ministry for over 25 years and ready to reflect on what God has done during that time and dream about what He has in store for Julie and me in the next 25 years. We absolutely love Spring Run and feel it a privilege to be a part of the lives of dear friends we have made here.

As most of you know, our family has experienced tremendous joy and sorrow over the last few years. Things of this magnitude take a toll on a family. We are grateful for the support we have received from Spring Run. Julie and I feel that this sabbatical comes at a good time for us as a family."

We are currently applying for a Grant from the Lily Foundation that would provide the financial resources for this sabbatical. If we do not receive the grant, then the session will decide on an alternative plan for Pastor Fletcher.

If you were around in 2016 when Pastor Conrad took his sabbatical, you are aware that the congregation was able to participate in its own way. We brought in special speakers, we rested from some of the normal programs to give our volunteers a break and we spent special times of fellowship together. The Sabbatical Planning Team will be putting together a congregational plan for Pastor Fletcher's time away as well, and they will keep you updated.

If you have any questions about the Pastor Fletcher's sabbatical you can contact, Brian, Andrew or Ruling Elder, Bill Detwiler, who is the session liaison on the Sabbatical Planning Team ([nuclearnav@gmail.com](mailto:nuclearnav@gmail.com)).

### Frequently Asked Questions

How long will the sabbatical be?

The sabbatical is planning to be 12 weeks.

Is the Sabbatical a stepping stone for Pastor Fletcher to leave and move on to another ministry?

No. The sabbatical design and purpose is to give Pastor Fletcher rest and renewal to energize him for a long-term future in his current position here at Spring Run.

How much is the Grant from the Lily Foundation and what happens if we do not get the financial grant?

The Grant awards up to \$50,000, we will be asking for a total of \$38,800. If we do not get the grant, then alternate plans will be made which will dramatically decrease the activities Pastor Fletcher is able to do during his time away. The church has not currently budgeted for Sabbatical expenses.

I thought Sabbaticals were typically a time for study and further education?

While this may be true in other fields like colleges and universities, it is not necessarily true in churches. Pastor Fletcher will do some study; however, it is mainly for rest, renewal and refocus for ministry.

What will the Sabbatical Planning Team do?

It will plan the details of what the Sabbatical will include for both Pastor Fletcher and the congregation. They will also communicate to the congregation as time proceeds.