



Senior Pastor Sabbatical April 12 - July 9, 2021 Frequently Asked Questions

Where did this idea come from?

Mainly, two places: (1) The Bible, and (2) Brian's Letter-of-Call.

1. The keeping of the Sabbath originates in God Himself. "By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all His work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work of creating that He had done" (Genesis 2:2-3). The word Sabbath means "to cease" or "to rest." The Bible instructs us on three Sabbath-keeping practices:
 - The Sabbath Day ordained as a weekly observance set aside solely for the cessation of work in order to renew people in body, mind and spirit.
 - The Sabbath Year to occur every seven years when all crop-bearing land would be allowed to lie fallow so the earth could rest and be replenished for future harvests.
 - The Year of Jubilee to be celebrated every 50 years with no harvest or rent, but instead, debt forgiveness, restoration and the making of offerings.

The keeping of Sabbath – ceasing and resting, renewing and refilling – is part of the Judeo-Christian rhythm of work and play, of production and reflection, of giving out and taking in.

2. Through communication with and guidance from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest, Brian's original Letter-of-Call, dated July 2012, called for a two-month Sabbatical at five years. The CCC Board approved the change to three Sabbatical months after seven years.

Why now?

It is definitely worth asking if taking a Sabbatical during an ongoing pandemic is a good idea. There are advantages and disadvantages to scheduling the Sabbatical during any time or any season. The need for renewal and recharge following 2020 is very high, and the availability of guest preachers is optimal right now. After two years of consideration, plans began to form in October 2020 for an April-June 2021 timeframe.

What are Brian's plans for his Sabbatical?

- **Explore a ministry partnership with Truett Seminary**

I am in conversation to provide leadership in some capacity in Truett's Sports and Ministry Institute. I intend to use a significant amount of Sabbatical time in preparation.

- **Spend intentional time on a lifelong goal of developing writing projects.**
 - Possible participation at a Christian Writer's Conference
 - Sports Spectrum devotionals
 - Homiletics Online/Magazine

- **Rest and renewal: Spend some time at Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat**

Many Disciples camps offer subsidized (free) housing for pastors on Spiritual retreat.

- **International Leadership Institute Involvement**

Most likely, Brian will serve on 1-2 faculties for "History Makers" conferences. These are Christian leadership seminars for young (18-24) leaders. ILI hosts conferences all over the world, but I am most connected with the European director, Martin Durham, in London. All the History Makers are currently online, but they may be moving to some limited in-person events at some point in 2021.

- **Spend time with family**
 - Help Kiley apply for college scholarships
 - Kiley's Graduation
 - Vacation to Gulf Shores, AL with my sister's family in June to celebrate graduations

How will Brian's responsibilities be covered?

In general, **through a combination of lay leaders and CCC Staff.** Specifically:

- **Worship/Preaching:** The Sabbatical Planning Team is lining up guest preachers. So far, among others, Newell Williams, the President of Brite Divinity School; Andy Mangum, the CCSW Regional Minister; and Emily Williams, Program Director at Disciples Crossing, are scheduled to preach. Kristin will cover 2-3 Sundays, as will Brenda Shuttlesworth. Elders are going to help with the Pastoral Prayer and the Communion Meditation. Worship Leaders also will have an enhanced role in worship during the Sabbatical.
- **Pastoral Care:** Both the Elders and the Care Ministry Team will be notified of health issues, prayer concerns, hospitalizations, deaths, etc.
- **Administrative Duties:** **Nancy Hollinger, the CCC Church Administrator, is the person to contact with questions or issues for which you might typically contact Brian.** She will route the issue to the appropriate lay leader or staff person. All regularly scheduled church meetings will still take place.

How will Brian be in contact with CCC during the Sabbatical?

An important goal of this process is for Brian to make a complete break from the things he does day in and day out. If he needs to be contacted for an extraordinary emergency, Nick Teixeira, the Sabbatical Planning Committee Chair, on behalf of the staff and Board, will be the person contacting him. Please do try to honor Brian's time away. And please do not hesitate to contact Nancy Hollinger in the church office if you have any special needs or concerns.

How is the Sabbatical paid for?

Brian's salary and benefits will continue through the Sabbatical. As travel is still limited due to the pandemic, the need for extra funding is minimal. The Finance Team has approved \$275 honorariums for the guest preachers. Some of these honorariums are already budgeted. The remainder of the funds come from a surplus that CCC had in 2020. Conference and/or workshop participation is already in the CCC Budget as continuing education.

Will Central be in a "holding pattern" while Brian is away?

Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, ministry will continue to thrive and quite possibly grow. For instance, we are planning an all-church "Return to Sunday School" on April 11. It is important to remember that the Pastoral Spiritual Renewal is a two-way process: while Brian is on his journey of sabbatical rest, renewal, discernment and reflection, CCC has an opportunity to embark on a journey as well – embracing the occasion for our own reflection and renewed focus on God's call to be His Body.

From the Sabbatical Planning Team: We believe that Brian and Central Christian Church will be stronger and healthier because of this sabbatical. It is an awesome opportunity for us as a body of believers to minister to one another and our community.