

Pastor Justin's Upcoming Sabbatical

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Sabbatical?

It is an extended time away from routine ministry duties for the purpose of experiencing God through an extended Sabbath rest. It is meant to provide a time of special renewal for the pastor that will bring personal nourishment to his soul, a deeper relationship with the Lord, family refreshment and focus and a clearer understanding of God's calling on his life. A sabbatical helps prevent ministry burnout and may give the pastor a fresh perspective for his ministry calling.

What does the Bible say about Sabbaticals?

The concept of sabbatical is deeply rooted in Scripture. The term is derived from the Old Testament idea of "Sabbath." The Hebrew word means "rest." God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:1-3). During the Hebrew children's exodus from Egypt, God directed them (Exodus 16:26) to gather the manna daily but to rest on the seventh day (Sabbath). In numerous Old Testament passages, God admonished his people to work six days but to devote the seventh day to God as a day of rest (Exodus 20:9-10, 23:12, 31:15, 34:21, 35:2; Leviticus 23:3 and Deuteronomy 5:13). Among the Israelites, God instituted the Sabbath year (Leviticus 25:1-5). On every seventh year, the children of Israel were to refrain from farming the land and let the earth rest. Both the Israelites and the land benefited from the Sabbath rest. These passages suggest that there is a rhythm to life. As the man of wisdom said, "For everything there is a season" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Jesus' own life and ministry reflect a deep understanding and appreciation for the rhythms of life. The demands upon him were so great that his own ministry was punctuated with times of withdrawal for prayer and spiritual solitude (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16, 6:12).

What is a Sabbatical not?

For the sake of clarity, a sabbatical is not:

- Just a vacation: Pastor Justin has vacation time each year. This is not just a longer version of vacation.
- Job training: While Pastor Justin will be spending time with the Lord and in the Word, reading, studying and learning – which will all benefit him as a pastor – this is not a 3-month pastor training or continuing education.
- Because something bad happened: Pastor Justin is not in trouble nor is he sick and/or tired of being a pastor. Think of this as preventative care so that neither of those become true. =)

Why have the PGC elders decided to grant this sabbatical?

We are following biblical and best practices for long-term ministry health

- Rest: Spiritual renewal and recharging after 7 years of serving at PGC (our policy manual grants each full-time pastor a 3-month sabbatical every 7 years)
- Family: Opportunity to invest more deeply in his wife and daughter.
- Reminder: For both Pastor Justin and the church family of PGC, this break can serve as a reminder that we have one Head of our Body, one Shepherd and Teacher, one Bridegroom; His name is Jesus! The church neither rises nor falls on anyone else's shoulder's. A sabbatical can serve as a helpful way to underline that reality. It allows others to step up as teachers and servants.

When and how will the Sabbatical take place?

- All of June, July and August of this year, 2023.
 - Summer was picked specifically because we have fewer ministries occurring, it was easier to find preaching help, and it is a great time to travel!
- This means during that time period, Pastor Justin will not:
 - Be preaching or teaching
 - Be in the office working
 - Counseling or scheduling meetings with his “pastor hat” on
 - Leading ministries
- However, during this time period, when Pastor Justin and his family are in town, they may:
 - Attend Sunday morning service or other church functions, and engage with the church family with his “regular ol’ church member hat” on
 - Attend other churches to experience how other churches lead their services and to worship without leadership responsibility

What will Pastor Justin be doing while he is away?

- Spending six weeks based out of California with his wife’s family
- Traveling to national parks
- Spending time with family & friends
- Hiking, canoeing, camping and exploring God’s beautiful creation
- Spending lengthy times of solitude for prayer and scripture reading.
- Reading books to help him grow as a disciple of Christ.
- Connecting regularly with a professional counselor, ministry coach and spiritual mentor.

What is the coverage plan for pastoral leadership during Pastor Justin’s absence?

- **Preaching:** We will be blessed with two wonderful preachers from our Charis Fellowship – Clancy Cruise from Ohio and Bruce Barlow from Indiana. Pastor Ross will preach a short series (and he’s wonderful as well! =)
- **Pastoral Care:** Our church is led by a plurality of Christ-like elders who will continue to lead this summer. If there are any special needs (counseling, concerns, etc.) contact Pastor Ross.

What is the church’s role during this sabbatical?

- Pray, encourage, and support Pastor Justin and his family.
- Respect the Franchino family’s time away.
 - Pastor Justin will not be accessing his church email or engaging in work-related calls or texts during this time. This is intended to give him a dedicated time of rest from his normal pastoral duties.
 - But you are still allowed to talk to the Franchino family if you see them at church or Fred Meyer =)