

7.1.2024

Dear beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

After months of dialogue and meetings with key boards and leadership at St. Paul, it has been decided that I will be going on sabbatical this Fall, from the ***beginning of September through the end of November***. I want to personally write you all to share a bit about what a sabbatical is and why I am taking one at this time.

A sabbatical, a term derived from the Hebrew word for "rest," is an intentional period of rest, refreshment, and growth. For it to be considered a true sabbatical, most research agrees that the duration ought to be at least three months (hence, my September-November timeline). Here is a brief summary of the purpose of my sabbatical:

- 1.) **Rest**- After 11 years of ministry and a difficult recent stretch (the pandemic, some very difficult and tragic situations both personally and professionally, and many staffing transitions on the church side), my daily drive and energy level is at a low. With pastoral burnout on the rise (and having personally seen family and friends burn out of ministry), I am attempting to be proactive so that I can remain in this for the long haul.
- 2.) **Leadership Development**- Having been in the lead pastor role for 2 1/2 years, I recognize that I could use some time for reflection, conversation with other leaders, and dedicated learning towards my growth in leadership. I desire to be the best leader I can be for you all and want to use this time to evaluate how I can improve in this realm.
- 3.) **Academic Achievement**- I have completed all of my coursework in my Doctor of Ministry program, but have made little progress on my final project over the last two years. Some time away will allow me to regroup and work toward getting this done.
- 4.) **Setting the tone**- St. Paul is blessed to be a flourishing community, with hundreds of people involved in our church and school. But this creates a demanding context for the time and energy of our staff. We cannot best meet these opportunities if we do not take care of ourselves. My hope is that my sabbatical is an encouragement to our entire community, that we take steps to better focus on our health and refreshment so that we can better serve those God has placed in our lives.

It is my prayer that this sabbatical is a blessing to myself, my family, and this congregation. I welcome your prayers as we go through this season together (I will be praying for you!), hopeful that it sets us up well for the next season in ministry, empowering us to be ever stronger in our mission of ***Equipping Every Generation to Live Rooted in Jesus***.

Over the coming weeks, we will share more about the logistics and expectations of this three-month stretch. In the meantime, please feel free to talk to me and ask any questions you have. I am happy to talk about this!

The peace of the Lord be with you all!

-Pastor Luke Anderson

8.12.2024

“Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way.
The Lord be with you all.” 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Dear beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

As I announced several weeks ago, I will be going on sabbatical this Fall, beginning September 1st and going through November 30th. In my previous letter, I explained the reasoning behind this sabbatical and what I hope it will accomplish. Please reference that letter to learn the “what/why/when” of the sabbatical. This letter will aim to cover the “how,” sharing what you can expect as ministry continues to move forward at St. Paul in my absence.

On the church side of things, please note the following:

- The Elders, pastors, and other church leaders have ensured proper coverage for ministry in my absence. No major ministries of St. Paul will be paused during this season. Services, Bible classes, confirmation, visits, counseling, high school youth, and so forth will faithfully continue.
- Pastor Schultz will be the primary contact for all pastoral needs. Pastor Maschke, Pastor Prah, and other clergy of the congregation will assist him, but all major pastoral concerns should go to him first.

On the personal side of things, please note the following:

- I will be stepping away from my SPL email address and my cell phone during this period. I will be unable to answer emails, texts, phone calls, etc. As stated above, if a pastoral need arises, please reach out to Pastor Schultz or the church office.
- I will be worshipping among other congregations during this stretch, both to protect me from the emotional pull of ministry here during this season of rest and to give me the opportunity to see how others are faithfully carrying out ministry in their context.
- You may still see me around town. If you do, please feel free to greet me. I will be happy to see you! My humble request in these situations is that our conversations revolve around general day-to-day life and not concerns of a pastoral nature.
- Pastor Schultz and Mr. Yurk will remain in contact with me during this time.

During my absence, you all will remain in my prayers. Please keep me in your prayers also. I will eagerly anticipate our reunion in December, trusting that God will use this time to enable us to even more faithfully carry out our mission of Equipping Every Generation to Live Rooted in Jesus. I am looking forward to seeing what God has in store for us in the chapters to come!

In the love and fellowship of Christ,

Pastor Luke Anderson