

SABBATICAL 2021

What is a sabbatical?

A sabbatical (from the word sabbath) is time away from the regular routines of work for rest, renewal, and rebirth. The essence of sabbatical is rooted in the biblical practice of the Sabbath day described in the creation story. Jesus kept this practice when he took time in his ministry for renewal. He often went away to pray and reflect in silence and meditation "on mountain tops and by lakesides." The daily practice of ministry may involve the pressure of many tasks compressed into too few hours, leaving little opportunity for reflective, prayerful time. In the context of ministry, sabbatical time is for learning through reflection, revitalization, and recreation.

Why is the sabbatical happening?

The United Church of Canada has adopted a policy on Sabbatical Leave, which is incorporated into a call or appointment to a pastoral charge. It is applicable to ministry personnel who have completed five or more years of service in the pastoral charge. When we hired Kate, we contracted with her to support her ministry in this way.

When will this happen?

Rev. Kate will be away for 4 months. The **sabbatical leave** will be from May 16-August 21. This will mean that her **last worship service with us** will be April 18, 2021. Her **first service back** will be August 29, 2021.

It is also recommended that a portion of her leave and/or Continuing Education be added to the sabbatical time. Therefore Rev. Kate's time off will be:

- *April 18 – last week of work begins*
- *April 25-May 1 – Holiday*
- *May 2-15 – Continuing Education*
- *May 16-August 21 - Sabbatical*
- *August 22-28 – Continuing Education/Re-entry*
- *August 29 – first week of work begins*

Proposal

The Council approved the Sabbatical Leave in November of 2018. The Ministry and Personnel Team is overseeing the details, and established a Sabbatical Working Group in February 2019, to work directly with Kate and the congregation both before, during

and after the leave. The anticipated sabbatical was delayed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In December, 2020, Council approved the reinstatement of the sabbatical leave, this time for 2021. Council has approved the revised goals and plan for the sabbatical.

The members Sabbatical Working Group (SWG) are: Charles MacDonald, Janice Sinker and Rev. Dr. Kate Crawford.

What are the goals for the sabbatical?

Working with Council, Kate has set the following goals:

- Rest – One month of unstructured time, divided into two periods, one to precede and one to follow the more structured time, allowing for transition out of and back into the work routine.
- Learning and Personal Growth – Expanding on our stated goal of Community building, and including our commitment to accessibility, Rev. Kate will be spending time working with L'Arche Antigonish, a community of support for adults with intellectual and physical disabilities, part of the global L'Arche International movement.

What is the plan for the sabbatical?

Working with the Sabbatical Working Group, a detailed plan has been created, based on Kate's official responsibilities with us. These include Sunday morning worship, sacraments, pastoral care, attendance at meetings, etc. Council has approved the plan, and Regional Council has received a copy.

What will happen during the sabbatical?

A) Worship – Leadership will be offered by local Licensed Lay Worship Leaders who are known to us, **Name, and Name**, as well as members of the congregation. There is money set aside for this purpose, which came to us through the Restorative Care Plan while Rev. Kate was on her recent sick leave.

B) Pastoral Care and Funerals – Emergency Pastoral Care (funerals) will be provided by neighbouring clergy. A plan is being developed by Council to employ a designated pastoral care provider as well, for visitation, as this is a much appreciated ministry of the congregation, and cannot fall entirely to our wonderful volunteer Congregational Visitors.

C) Meetings - Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council has appointed **Name** as our Pastoral Charge Supervisor for the duration of the sabbatical leave. They will attend Council and meetings of the Board of Trustees.

D) Questions – You may take your concerns during the Sabbatical either to **Name**, the Chair of Council or to The Sabbatical Working Group, Janice Sinker, Charles MacDonald and Rev. Kate (until April 25). They are the first point of contact for questions and concerns.

Transitions

Leaving: On Sunday **April 18** during worship there will be a short blessing of the sabbatical leave.

Returning: Rev. Kate will be back on **August 29**. There will be an opportunity to hear from her about her experiences of the sabbatical.

Will we survive?

Yes! Many congregations report an unexpected blessing during the Sabbatical Leave, as new ways of doing things emerge, and new leadership gifts are offered. Local churches with experience of successful sabbaticals include St. Andrew's United, in Bayfield; London Road West United, in Sarnia; and upcoming at Lakeshore United in Goderich.

When ministry personnel take a sabbatical, communities of faith benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their mission and ministry and, experience different gifts of lay leadership. The sabbatical offers the community of faith a minister who returns with new energy and clarity about the tasks at hand.

What if you have more questions?

Please speak to a member of the Sabbatical Working Group: Charles MacDonald and Janice Sinker

The sabbatical is seen as an opportunity to renew the energy and mission of both the minister and the congregation.

Thanks to everyone for making this experience possible!!