

Some Questions for Brian about his Sabbatical

What is a pastoral sabbatical?

A pastoral sabbatical is a planned, intentional break from pastoral ministry, especially the ministry of teaching and preaching. The practice is rooted in the Old Testament concept of a Sabbath day and a Sabbath year (Exodus 23:10-13). Sabbaticals have been used in the church and the university for centuries. Some churches require pastors to take a sabbatical on a regular basis. For a fuller explanation and history of pastoral sabbaticals visit www.my-pastor.com/pastor-sabbatical.html.

Why are you taking a sabbatical now?

As I shared in March, after almost nineteen years of preaching and leading, I find myself “out-of-gas,” particularly as it relates to teaching each weekend. A sabbatical is the only way I know to “refuel” so that I can continue to lead and preach effectively.

How long will your sabbatical be?

I will be on sabbatical for six months. My sabbatical will begin immediately following our baptism service on June 28 and will conclude in January. I will begin preaching again in February.

What will you do on your sabbatical?

Together with our church board, I am creating an intentional plan for how I will use my time away from pastoral ministry. This will involve some travel, some work outside the church setting, and some activities designed specifically for spiritual renewal.

Are you pursuing another career—perhaps in meat cutting?

No. My sabbatical has nothing to do with my interest in cutting meat, although you probably will see me sometimes behind the meat counter at Wegmans during my time away.

Will you be worshipping at McLane during your sabbatical?

No. I will be worshipping at another church where I can be involved in worship and ministry without the pastoral responsibilities that I have at McLane.

Will you stay in the area during your sabbatical?

I will be home for some parts of my sabbatical, and away for other parts.

Who will be “in charge” at the church while you are gone?

Bill will be the acting Senior Pastor in my absence. There is not a more competent person to handle this responsibility.

Who will preach while you are gone?

Preaching in Edinboro will be shared between Bill, Andy and Daryl. Bill will do about two-thirds of the preaching in Edinboro, with Andy and Daryl being responsible for the other one-third.

Will there be any “big changes” at the church while you are gone?

No. Ministry at the church will continue as it has. Our mission, values and vision guide us, and we will continue to pursue the accomplishment of these ideals as we have for almost two decades.

Is there “any more to the story” than you are telling us?

No. The rumors that have circulated regarding my sabbatical have been both colorful and interesting. They have also been false. There is no other reason for my taking a sabbatical than the need for a break from pastoral ministry—especially the teaching part of that ministry. Sorry—it’s no more interesting than that!

Are you coming back?

Yes. While none of us know how God will direct our future plans, the purpose of taking a sabbatical is so that I can return to ministry at McLane renewed and refreshed. I believe God has called me to lead and preach at McLane Church. I want to continue to do that effectively. I believe this sabbatical will provide me with the season of renewal I need to continue to lead our church effectively.

What can we do to support you while you are gone?

Please, please, please remain passionately committed to the mission, values and vision of McLane Church. What God is doing here through us is vitally important. People far from God are finding a new relationship with him. The success of our mission depends on each one of us being fully committed to the church. Please pray for me. Pray for Bill and give him your full support. Most of all, remain passionately committed to the church. It is God’s mechanism for redeeming our world!