



# GRACECHURCH

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January 27, 2019

Dear Church Family,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your pastor! I want to lead and pastor out of a place of rest and refreshment, and I want to continue to be a pastor that serves out of a "full tank". After 22 years of full-time ministry Heather and I will be participating in a sabbatical from the middle of May to the middle of August.

This time of rest and refreshment has been in the planning stage for over a year. When the word "sabbatical" is mentioned a couple of questions arise, and I would like to address those questions now. First, no moral or ethical failure has been committed and though the past few years have been difficult, my family and I are doing well. Secondly, I have every intention to return as I do not have plans for resignation.

Please read the following document that our church leadership has put together to help answer some of your questions and aid in communicating what we believe the will of the Lord is for this season of rest and refreshment.

With much love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jay".

Pastor Jay Bean

## **SABBATH-KEEPING**

### ***What Is a Sabbatical or Pastoral Spiritual Renewal?***

First of all, the word “sabbatical” comes from the biblical word, “Sabbath.” 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.

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

## **CEASING AND RESTING**

### ***What Does a Sabbatical look Like?***

A sabbatical rest will be a time to disengage gears from 13 years of senior pastoral ministry at Grace Church to cease from the usual routine of sermon preparation and preaching, meetings, counseling, weddings, funerals, the administration of day to day church affairs and the daily shepherding of people.

It is a time for:

- A complete break from ministry at Grace Church.
- Rest, reflection, evaluation, and some travel.
- Quality time with family.
- Attention to personal projects.
- Getting recharged by quality time in God’s Word and other inspirational reading.
- Renewed focus and vision for Grace Church.
- Dreaming dreams and receiving vision.

It is not considered to be a time of:

- Extended vacation.
- Sick leave.
- Focusing on negative aspects of ministry.
- Doing things that distract from the central purpose of rest and renewal.

## **RENEWING AND REFILLING**

### ***What are Pastor’s goals for this time?***

- To get away, disconnect and rest.
- To go to another level of intentional spiritual formation through reading, prayer, discerning and seeking spiritual direction.
- To consider what expanded ministry might look like for Grace Church.
- Organizing thoughts concerning ministry and personal priorities.
- Participate in pastoral retreat opportunities.
- To spend a significant amount of uninterrupted family time.

## **Questions you might have...**

### **Where did this idea come from?**

Foursquare is encouraging churches to provide times of sabbatical rest and renewal for pastors who have 7+ years in one church. The recommendation was discussed and unanimously approved by our Church Council in December 2017. By the time this sabbatical takes place this will be 18 months in the making. This sabbatical is not a response to an issue or crisis. Pastoral Sabbaticals are becoming standard practice in evangelical and pentecostal churches in order to help facilitate and sustain pastoral and congregational health.

### **Why now?**

About six years ago sabbatical was discussed and The Council did not feel the church was strong enough to sustain ministry for the three months that Pastor Jay and Heather would be gone. The Council now feels that there is a broad enough ministry team to sustain and actually thrive while Pastor Jay and Heather are gone. Pastor Jay and Heather have faithfully served the Lord and His church for the last 22 years of continuous ministry. It is no secret that the last several years have had unique challenges for the Bean family. As a Council we feel the timing is right for there to be a season of rest and refreshment.

### **How long will Pastor Jay be gone?**

May 13th to August 13th.

### **Will Heather be on Sabbatical with Pastor Jay?**

Yes

### **Who will cover Pastor's responsibilities?**

*Preaching* - We will have a mix of our staff and church leaders along with outside speakers. We are putting intentional effort into making sure that we will receive quality preaching each week.

*Day to Day Operations* - David Sissel along with the office staff of Amber Lewis, Mona Hebden and Ann Alexander will be responsible for the day to day operations of the church. Ken Hebden will continue to lead the facility team.

*Pastoral Care/Weddings/Funerals* - We have a Pastoral Care team already in place that will do hospital visits, etc that fall outside the responsibility of a Fusion Group. If you would like to be on this team, please let us know at [info@grace417.com](mailto:info@grace417.com). Carey Higgins, an ordained minister, will be available for weddings and funerals.

*Worship* - Rachel Hayden will be leading our worship teams while Heather is gone.

Our Church Council will continue to meet during pastor's sabbatical.

### **Will Grace be in a "holding pattern" while Pastor is away?**

*Absolutely Not!* All of our ministries will continue as usual while Pastor Jay is away, and perhaps even new ones will begin! The staff and council are working on providing some unique and fun opportunities for the church to gather together over the summer. It is important to remember that the Pastoral Spiritual Renewal is a two-way process: while Pastor is on his journey of sabbatical rest, renewal, discernment and reflection, Grace will embark on a journey as well – embracing the occasion for our own reflection and renewed focus on God's call to be His Body.

***Will Pastor Jay and Heather be in contact with us while he is on his sabbatical?***

An important part of this process is for Pastor Jay and Heather to make a complete break from the things that they do day in and day out. If Pastor Jay is needed to be contacted for an extraordinary emergency, Ken Hebden, on behalf of the staff and council, will be the one contacting him. Please honor Pastor Jay and Heather's time away.

***Who will pay for the Pastoral Spiritual Renewal?***

Pastor Jay and Heather's salaries will continue as normal to support their regular family budget. However, there will be extra expenses related to the sabbatical for travel, lodging, retreats, books, etc. Pastor has some funds available in his ministry budget for such items. If you would like to support their sabbatical with a financial offering it would be gratefully accepted. You can designate it "Pastor's Sabbatical" on an envelope or online. The council has budgeted to cover the additional ministry expenses that will be required in Pastor Jay's absence.

If you have any questions, concerns or words of encouragement, please email them to [info@grace417.com](mailto:info@grace417.com).

We believe that Pastor Jay, Heather and Grace 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.

*Grace Leadership Team*