

# The Goodness of Sabbatical



## St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Memphis

This has been prepared by the Sabbatical Planning Team for the good people of St. Mary's Cathedral, Memphis, to share information about Canon Laura Gettys' sabbatical experience in the Summer of 2017 and what our roles will be in her absence.

### Sabbatical Planning Team

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| Andy Andrews | Leanne Kleinmann      |
| Matt Morice  | Steve Kite-Powell     |
| Anne Boykin  | Miranda Cully Griffin |



**St MARY'S**  
Episcopal Cathedral



# Sabbatical: (*noun*)

a period of time during which someone does not work at his or her regular job and is able to rest, travel, do

Our tradition informs us that spiritual growth does not happen by accident. It takes attention and a certain discipline with time set aside for reading, prayer, solitude and reflection. Being intentional is an important part of maintaining one's focus, balance, commitment, passion and skill for doing God's work. This is true for lay people as well for the clergy.

## **What is a sabbatical?**

The word *sabbatical* has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath which means "to rest" or "to cease." Sabbath-keeping is part of a rhythm of life intended to refresh and renew all creation and keep us aware of God's intimate presence all around.

Sabbatical leave is a time for someone to reshape their life for a certain time to rest, reflect, disengage, study and travel in order to return to serve rejuvenated and

restored in mind, body and spirit.

In the Diocese of West Tennessee, all clergy are invited in their sixth year of ministry to take a sabbatical. Laura began as Canon with us in January 2011.

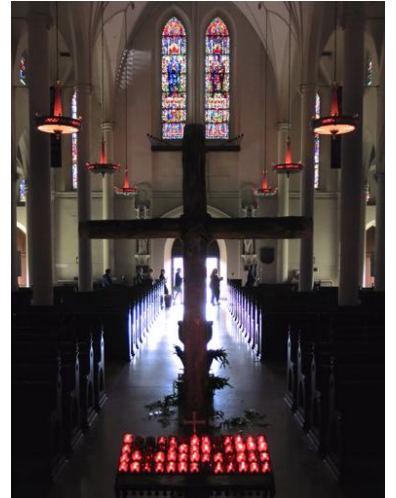
Sabbatical is more than a vacation from meetings, budgets, sermons and people in need. It is a time for Laura to receive spiritual nourishment and fresh eyes and ideas, to deepen her relationship with God, herself and her family – a season of spiritual growth.

This time of sabbatical will be nourishing not only for Laura but the St. Mary's family. We will look forward to deepening ourselves through thoughtful outside preachers and teachers.

# Scriptural references about the importance of Sabbath

**8** "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. **11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

*Exodus 20:8-11*

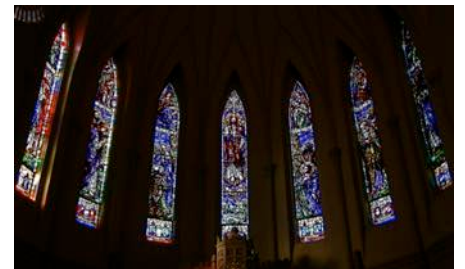


**9** So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, **10** for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

*Hebrews 4:9-10*

**27** And Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made for human, not human for the Sabbath."

*Mark 2:27*



**1** It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High; **2** to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, **3** to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. **4** For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy. **5** How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep! **6** The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this: **7** that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever; **8** but you, O LORD, are on high forever. **9** For behold, your enemies, O LORD, for behold, your enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. **10** But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; you have poured over me fresh oil. **11** My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. **12** The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. **13** They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. **14** They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, **15** to declare that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

*Psalms 92, A Song for the Sabbath*



# Commonly Asked Questions:

## **Do other clergy go on sabbatical?**

Yes. It is common practice among all Episcopal congregations to grant clergy sabbatical leave. A growing number of clergy from other denominations, faith and academic traditions understand it is a wise and healthy investment for all involved. Sabbaticals are to mark a new season of growth for the entire congregation.

## **How long will Laura be gone?**

Laura's last Sunday is Sunday, July 16 and she will return to the Cathedral on November 2, 2017. Laura will be gone for 3 months of sabbatical leave and 2 weeks of continued education.

## **What will Laura be doing on her sabbatical?**

Laura has divided her time into 5 focus areas: Environmental/Natural World, Vocational, Spiritual/Prayer, Family, and Art/Poetry. In these areas, she will be exploring an environmental research project, visiting churches around the country to observe best practices and possibly taking a class, drawing on fresh practices for slowing down and communing with the Divine, picking up her children on time from school and traveling, and working with local artists in mixed media and stained glass. She also hopes to tackle the room in her house where the door is usually closed because the room filled with boxes...

## **Who will cover Laura's responsibilities during her absence?**

Dean Andy will be present with Drew. The St. Mary's staff will assume additional roles as needed while Pastoral Care teams will be overseen by Anne Boykin and Carol Morris and Miranda Cully Griffin.

## **Who will I call to plan special services?**

Just as before, please call the Cathedral office and someone on staff, with Dean Andy's guidance, will assist you in arranging weddings, baptisms, funerals and other special services.



## **Who will celebrate the liturgies?**

Dean Andy will serve as officiant and/or celebrant at the two Eucharists on Sunday, the Wednesday morning Eucharist and the Healing Service on the second Thursday of each month. The sabbatical team has recruited guest clergy to assist Dean Andy with celebrating, preaching, and teaching during Laura's sabbatical including Lisa McIndoo (Aug 6), Katherine Bush (Sept 10), Paula McGee (Sept 24), Walter Brownridge (Oct 15), and others. Wednesday am liturgies will also be full of fantastic guest officiants/celebrants. Gratefully, Deacon Drew Woodruff and our new clergy Patrick Williams will always be present.

## **Who should I contact for special prayer requests?**

To have names placed on the weekly prayer list, you may contact the Cathedral office, St. Mary's website, Dean Andy, Deacon Drew or any member of the Pastoral Care teams.

### **Who do I call if I have a family or personal crisis?**

For all pastoral concerns, contact Dean Andy, Deacon Drew, or the PC Team leaders Anne Boykin & Carol Morris. Together, these good folk, along with pc team members will have responsibility to visit newcomers, visit those in homes and hospitals, provide pastoral counseling, and refer parishioners to qualified professionals in the wider community.

### **Will St. Mary's 2017 budget need to increase to cover expenses around Laura's sabbatical?**

The Vestry has been setting aside funds planning for this event. Laura is not asking for additional funds and the expense for visiting clergy is minimal and has been budgeted for.

### **Will St. Mary's Cathedral be in a "holding pattern" while Laura is away?**

No Chance of that! No way! This will be a special time of spiritual growth not just for Laura but for the entire congregation. We have a dynamite staff and new additions to deepen the goodness while Laura is away and we are recruiting top clergy from all over the community to visit with us and stretch us with new ways to serve each other and the special needs of those in our neighborhood.

### **Will Laura be in contact with St. Mary's during her sabbatical?**

An important part of a sabbatical is to make a complete break from things. The only ones who will have direct contact with Laura while she is away will be her family. In the unlikely event that some extraordinary news must be communicated to Canon Laura, Dean Andy will notify her.

### **How will we get "reacquainted" when Laura returns?**

Laura's first Sunday back will be All Saints' Sunday, November 5, 2017. A brief "welcome back liturgy" will be planned in advance. The 10am Christian Formation classes on Sundays, Nov 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> will be times for the sharing of experiences (both Laura's and St. Mary's).

### **How can I learn more about the sabbatical?**

Ask any member of the sabbatical planning team (Matt Morice, Anne Boykin, Miranda Cully Griffin, Steve Kite-Powell, Leanne Kleinmann, and Andy Andrews). You can also read [Clergy Renewal: The Alban Guide to Sabbatical Planning](#). These bullet points were heavily copied from appendix D of this resource.





# Laura's Reading List

**Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging**, Sebastian Junger  
**The Mother of All Questions**, Rebecca Solnit

**The Color of Water**, James McBride

**Upstream**, Mary Oliver

**The Essential Writings of Howard Thurman**

**America's Original Sin**, Jim Wallis

**Hallelujah Anyway**, Anne Lamott

**Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art**, Madeline L'Engle

**Beale Street Dynasty**, Preston Lauterbach

**Anything is Possible**, Elizabeth Strout

**Milk and Honey**, Rupi Kaur

**Accidental Saints: Finding God in**

*All the Wrong Places*, Nadia Bolz

Weber

**Who Lynched Willie Earle?**, Will Willimon



# Guest preachers:

## Paula McGee & Walter Brownridge

**The Rev. Dr. Paula McGee will be at St. Mary's to preach on September 24, 2017.** Paula McGee joined the faculty of Memphis Theological Seminary in 2016. She grew up in Flint, Michigan and is often recognized for her achievements in women's basketball at the University of Michigan-Flint. Ordained as a Missionary Baptist preacher, Dr. McGee started Paula McGee Ministries, a non-profit whose mission is to empower others to "accept their greatness." After being invited to preach at several prosperity supermegachurches, she returned to Southern California to pursue a doctorate degree and study black megachurches and theologies of prosperity. In 2009, she was awarded the Fund for Theological Education Dissertation Fellowship for her dissertation entitled: *The Wal-Martization of African American Religion: T.D. Jakes and Woman Thou Art Loosed*, to be released by Orbis Press in Spring, 2017. Dr. McGee describes herself as a public theologian, because she believes that most social justice issues end up as questions of "ultimate concern." She raises critical questions about these New Black churches and their celebrity pastors. These religious entrepreneurs are capitalizing on the new identities of post-civil rights, middle-class African Americans, who have become comfortable with their access to the American dream. As a result, many have disregarded the stories of struggle and the social justice mission of the traditional Black Church. Her research and work is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. She concludes that this reality is the most devastating to the world's poorest citizens because they are asked to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps," when they have neither straps nor boots. The voices of the poor are not only becoming more marginalized, but they are also being silenced. Not because they have nothing to say, but because too many of us have simply stopped listening. Dr. McGee intends to speak so that not only their voices are heard, but that her voice resonates with the great cloud of witnesses of those called prophets that dared to speak truth to power.

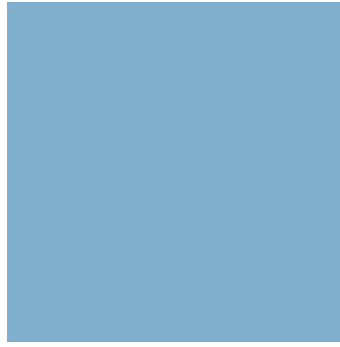


The Reverend Dr. Paula McGee



The Very Reverend Walter Brownridge

**The Very Rev. Walter Brownridge will be at St. Mary's to preach on October 15, 2017.** He recently served as Dean of the Cathedral of St. Andrew in Honolulu, Hawaii. Formerly, he was Associate Dean for Community Life at the School of Theology, Sewanee. Prior to Sewanee, Fr. Brownridge served in the Diocese of Cape Town, South Africa. Walter practiced law and worked in public policy for ten years.. Fr. Brownridge has long maintained a scholarly and personal interest in political theology and the role of religion and faith-based organizations in public policy. He has served on the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland's Commission on Racism. In the Diocese of Ohio he served on the Peace and Justice Commission and The Episcopal Peace Fellowship. Fr. Brownridge is a member of the Episcopal Church's National and Ohio Public Policy Network. He has lectured and written on the issues of race, public policy, and the role of the church. Walter is a member of The Potomac Coalition, a political and public policy group whose primary (but not exclusively) membership is African-American professionals who are interested in the political and economic development and opportunity in the urban America. Fr. Brownridge's experience in South Africa has highlighted for him to the vital role of spirituality and pastoral care as a matter of personal and community development. In South Africa, he has studied and trained in Spiritual Direction and Pastoral Counseling. Fr. Brownridge is a graduate of John Carroll University with a B.A. in Political Science (1978). He holds a M.A. in International Relations from the University of San Diego (1985) and a J.D. from Georgetown University (1987) and a Masters of Divinity from the General Theological Seminary in New York City (2000).



St. Mary's Episcopal Cathedral  
700 Poplar Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38105  
901.527.3361  
[www.stmarysmemphis.org](http://www.stmarysmemphis.org)

