

SEMINARY AND SABBATICAL

I have been asked to teach again at our seminary in Columbia, SC. Congregation council has approved incorporating this teaching opportunity into this year's sabbatical leave. I have been blessed to have had a sabbatical every seventh year during my ministry at Nativity. For this one, my third, I have requested that the thirteen weeks be divided into two blocks of time:

- 1) ten-weeks this summer, and;
- 2) fifteen Tuesdays this fall.

The former provides time for resting, learning (through travel and study), and creating a course of study for our seminary in Columbia, SC. The latter would allow me to teach this course during the Fall Semester. The catalyst for this plan was the invitation to serve as an adjunct professor at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary for the purpose of teaching:

MIN 660. LUTHERAN POLITY AND LEADERSHIP. Prerequisite: Senior Status. Particular attention is given to the day-to-day operation of the local congregation. Issues addressed include rostered leadership and church-wide relationships, contextual and theological assessment, vision and mission development, finances and risk management, council and committee organization, staff and volunteer motivation, job descriptions and evaluations, record keeping and administration. Three credits.

Preparing for this teaching assignment will return me to my doctoral work in order to create a syllabus and develop lesson plans for this course. I am excited that this sabbatical holds the possibility of shaping a new generation of parish pastors through formal education. Moreover, Nativity will benefit from this as I renew my own daily ministry by learning through teaching. It will help us regain the focus of our fourfold ministry (Worship, Learn, Care, Give) within a three-pastor framework.

A sabbatical leave is a time to rest, learn and create. The first goal is to enjoy a well-rounded time of pure rest -- physical, vocational, emotional and spiritual. It includes at its core the weekly opportunity to worship in a variety of Christian communities while not having any leadership responsibilities. The second goal is to learn through travel and study. Exposure to different cultures and concepts can rejuvenate a joyful spirit. Together these two goals make possible the third goal: Creating something new. Adequate time for resting, learning and creating can make a sabbatical worthwhile for both this pastor and our parish.

I believe that the benefits of this sabbatical plan are as follows:

- 1) Renewal of a pastor as he begins his thirty-second year in parish ministry, twenty-second year at Nativity and thirtieth year of marriage.
- 2) Deepening of pastor-parishioner relationships with Pastors Gregg and Rachel.
- 3) Empowerment of parish leaders.
- 4) Enhancement of more effective ministry together as a parish.

Thanks again for calling me as your pastor and providing time for sabbaticals throughout my tenure. I trust that this investment will bear fruit and make Christ known.

+ Pastor Mark