

**Pastor Lee to be out during January**

Friends,

I learned late last week that Bishop Lowry has approved my taking Renewal Leave during the month of January. This will keep me out of the office and out of the pulpit for the month; I will return on Sunday, Feb. 2. In my absence, Trudy Smith will attend to any pastoral care issues that arise, and I have no doubt that, between our very capable staff and outstanding lay leaders, that things will run smoothly. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Louis Carr, will arrange for guest preachers to fill the pulpit during January.

I requested this leave at the urging of Rev. Carr, who suggests that I and the church will benefit from me taking some time to refuel spiritually. It is difficult to pour into others when your own well is running low. I will spend my time away in study and devotion and will spend some time in spiritual retreat at a monastery that is kind enough to open its doors to this type of endeavor. The United Methodist Church encourages pastors to take such a Renewal Leave every few years, but I have not done so in my 15 years in ministry. I am looking forward to returning in February more spiritually and physically healthy.

I covet all of your prayers during this time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lee". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the "L" and "e" connected.