

## **Grace Community Church**

### **Sabbatical 2018 for Pastor Henry F. Meyers**

#### ***Frequently Asked Questions:***

This brochure has been prepared for the body at Grace to share information about Pastor Henry's sabbatical experience planned for early 2018 and what the role of the Elders will be in his absence. Additional questions not answered here should be directed to the Elders.

#### ***What is a sabbatical?***

The word *sabbatical* has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath (meaning "to rest" or "to cease"). Sabbath keeping is setting aside time that God consecrates and makes holy.

Sabbatical leave is a time for our pastor to shift gears in order to rest, disengage, study, reflect, and travel in order to return to minister among us refreshed and renewed in mind, body, and spirit.

Grace Community Church's Pastoral Staff Sabbatical Policy that was adopted in 2005 states "1. Three weeks' sabbatical is available after three years of ministry; six weeks after an additional three years, and six weeks after the next three years. 2. Sabbatical to be taken after three consecutive years; credit for continuous service at a previous church could be given at the elders' discretion if no sabbatical was given during that time."

He has been granted six weeks of sabbatical in 2018.

Sabbatical is more than a vacation from meetings, budgets, sermons, and people in need. It is a time for Henry to receive spiritual nourishment and a change in perspective. It is a time to deepen and strengthen his relationship with both Jesus and his family. This special time will also be a season of growth for the entire congregation.

#### ***Do other pastors or staff go on sabbatical?***

Many other pastors and leaders in the EFCA (and many other denominations) have made a sabbatical a normal and critical part of their lives and ministry. Visit the North Central District of the EFCA website to hear from other pastors who have taken a sabbatical. Go to [ncdefca.org](http://ncdefca.org) and click on District Ministries and then Pastoral Care and scroll down.

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

Pastor Henry will leave on January 15 and will be back with us in the office on February 27. His first Sunday back will be March 4 where he will share about his sabbatical. Pastor Henry will be gone approximately *six* weeks.

#### ***What will Pastor Henry be doing on his sabbatical?***

From our sabbatical policy: "Pastors would submit their sabbatical proposal to the board, outlining their plan for the sabbatical time. It is recommended that sabbatical proposals reflect a balance of physical rest, personal recreation, intellectual stimulation and spiritual renewal. The pastor should include sufficient family time during the sabbatical. A sabbatical differs from vacation time in that there is some expectation of spiritual and professional renewal which would directly enhance the pastor's ministry. These aspects should be discussed at the time of the request for the sabbatical."

Pastor Henry's sabbatical will have intentional time with Carrie built into the latter part in order to strengthen their marriage and their friendship with the Annual NCD Pastors and Wives Retreat.

A large portion of the time will be spent in God's Word and prayer, as well as other books and resources, and will be used to reflect, refocus and realign himself with what God chooses to speak to his heart and how that enhances his calling here at Grace as the Senior Pastor. He will share those insights with the Elders upon his return.

Pastor Henry will also be purposefully spending time with his family both collectively (as they are able with older kids) and individually. His Sabbatical will conclude Sunday, February 25 and he will be back in the church office for appointments on Tuesday, February 27. (Monday is his sermon prep day - he will be in the office but unavailable)

***Who will cover Pastor Henry's responsibilities in his absence?***

The Elders will be responsible to fill the pulpit in his absence. The Elders will manage the day to day ministry needs of Grace along with the Administrative Assistant Team and they will be attending to the needs of the body during that time. Pastor Henry will not be available by cell phone.

***Who will I call to plan a special service or if I have a family or personal crisis?***

You can call the church office as usual at 320-523-2711 or email the Grace Community Church office at [office@sharinggodsgrace.com](mailto:office@sharinggodsgrace.com). The Elders will arrange for weddings, funerals, baptisms and other special services as needed. Together, the Elders will share the responsibility to visit newcomers, provide counseling, and visit those who are sick. Professional needs may be referenced as needed. The Elders collectively will have the authority to resolve all issues regarding Body Life during the Sabbatical.

***Will Pastor Henry be in contact at all with Grace during his sabbatical?***

An important part of a sabbatical is to make a *complete* break from things. The only people who will be in direct contact with Pastor Henry while he is away will be his family. In the unlikely event that some *extraordinary* news absolutely must be communicated to Pastor Henry, a designated Elder will contact Carrie directly.

Though Pastor Henry will not be around, his family will be free to attend activities and ministries at Grace as they so choose.

***Who will lead the worship services at Grace?***

We already share the responsibilities of the Sunday morning worship service as the Elders and will continue to do so during the Sabbatical.

***How much will the Sabbatical cost and who will pay for it?***

We have budgeted \$3000 to be able to fund/reimburse Pastor Henry's Sabbatical. All Sabbatical expenses paid to Pastor Henry are taxable as extra income according to the IRS and will be included on his W-2 for the 2018 tax year. The only exceptions to this would be the Pastors and Wives Retreat and any official conferences or workshops that Pastor Henry would attend that would instead be paid for out of his conference account.

***Will the church just be in a "holding pattern" while Pastor Henry is away?***

All of our ministries will continue to operate and flourish while Pastor Henry is away, and perhaps even new ones will be formed as God leads us. Remember that the Sabbatical is a two-way process: while Pastor Henry is on his journey of renewal, refreshment and reflection, *WE* will embark on a journey as well: to continue to pray for Pastor Henry, his family and the Elders dependently and regularly; to reflect on our own lives, ministries and calling; and to renew and refresh ourselves during the Sabbatical time. The Elders are making plans to lead the entire church through the Peacemakers study while Pastor Henry is away.

***How will we get "reacquainted" when Pastor Henry returns?***

Pastor Henry's first Sunday back (March 4) will include a special time of fellowship and he will be sharing with us some highlights from his Sabbatical. The Elders, along with the body of Grace, will also be encouraged to share what God did in them and through them during the Sabbatical.

***How can I learn more about what a Sabbatical is?***

You can go online to our website at [sharinggodsgrace.com/sabbatical](http://sharinggodsgrace.com/sabbatical) and follow the links to great resources or download a copy of our Sabbatical policy. You can also download the worksheet to be used by the Elders upon the end of their terms of service as they too take a Sabbatical from ministry from time to time. You are encouraged to engage in prayerful consideration of how to use any of these resources for your own personal use.