

Trulls Road Church

Sabbatical FAQs (frequently asked questions)

What is a Pastoral Sabbatical?

A Sabbatical is based on the Biblical concept of Sabbath or “rest” first instituted in Old Testament law and later modeled by Jesus’ own withdrawal to quiet places to pray and be renewed. (See Gen 2:1-3; Ex 20:8-11, 23:10-12; Lev 25; Ps 23; Mat 11:28-30; Mark 6:30-32; Lk 5:15,16)

A Pastoral Sabbatical is a time for the pastor to step away from the responsibilities of regular ministry to draw near to God in an undistracted and prolonged manner. This differs from a vacation with intentional, planned components of seeking God through rest, prayer, study, exploration, reflection and recreation. It is a time to be spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically refreshed and renewed, building a strong foundation for future ministry.

What does our Church believe regarding Sabbaticals?

Our goal at Trulls Road Church is sustainable ministry based on Biblical principles, and we believe this includes planned seasons of pastoral rest and renewal. Our Free Methodist Church in Canada (FMCiC) guidelines recommend a 3-month Sabbatical after every 5 consecutive years of full-time ministry. Pastor Jon has served at our church for the last 8.5 years, having the Lead Pastor role for 6.5 years.

Consistent with our denomination’s guidelines and our Employee Manual, full compensation and benefits for Pastor Jon will continue through the sabbatical from January 1st to March 10, 2024.

The Official Board unanimously supports this Sabbatical and anticipates great benefits for P. Jon as well as our church family!

This seems very sudden. Should I be concerned?

Though this plan may be news, Pastor Jon and the Official Board have been discussing and planning this for several years. The timing of this Sabbatical is an indication that we have a healthy church with strong, capable leaders, both on staff and through a variety of volunteer roles. We can enter this time confident that God has provided both all we need and all P Jon needs to continue growing in Him. The Board and Pastor Jon see this time away as contributing to a healthy, good rhythm for Pastor Jon and for the congregation as a whole.

What are Pastor Jon's plans for his sabbatical?

Pastor Jon has plans to engage in writing, Bible study, and prayer along with extended family time, travel and personal development activities. He has some Bible related projects he will be working on as well as receiving further pastoral education, spiritual direction and leadership coaching. All these pieces are included to help Pastor Jon rest, hear from God and be refreshed so he can be the person, dad, friend, and pastor God has called him to be.

Who will cover for Pastor Jon during this time? What if I need him for something?

Pastor Jon will be unavailable throughout his sabbatical and it's requested that you do not try and contact him. If there is a pastoral need, you can contact Pastor Joan or Pastor Angelica and they will be able to find the best way to help. If there are other concerns you may contact any member of the Official Board. In case of emergency, please contact the office.

What are the benefits to the congregation of a Pastoral Sabbatical?

A sabbatical is an investment in the future of the congregation. As pastors cultivate a deeper relationship with God, self and family, they return reporting renewed energy and enthusiasm for ministry. Healthy pastors provide healthy leadership for God's people which enhances the life and ministry of the congregations they serve.

Congregations also often experience growth during the pastor's sabbatical. People gain confidence in their leadership abilities. Lay leadership may develop in creative ways as Spiritual gifts come to light. The congregation hears from a range of voices in preaching

and teaching. The pastor's absence is an invitation to the entire congregation to see ministry from a wider perspective and to fully participate with trust in God's provision.

How can I best support Pastor Jon and our church throughout this sabbatical time?

- **First**, please Pray for our Pastors and Leaders.

Pray for Pastor Jon. Pray that throughout this Sabbatical, God will grow him even more into a man after His own heart!

Pray that Pastor Jon returns renewed and energized for Ministry.

Pray for Pastor Joan, Pastor Angelica and the Official Board. Pray God equips and encourages all Pastors and Leaders as they continue serving through this sabbatical period.

- **Second**, please pray and discern how you can provide extra support for our church family and staff during this time of added responsibility.

What Spiritual gifts can you share to help build up the body of Trulls Road Church?

Take this opportunity to engage even deeper with your church family as together we participate in the grace of God's faithful provision.

- **Third**, be encouraged by Paul's reminder that the Church is built on the cornerstone of Christ our Lord. He is the head of our Church and our trust is in Him!

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in His holy people, and His incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

*And God placed all things under His feet and appointed **Him** to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.*

Eph 1:18-23