**Sabbatical FAQ’s**

**What is a sabbatical?**

A pastoral sabbatical is an intentional period of rest, prayer, and study, usually taken once every seven years. This practice is based upon the biblical pattern of allowing the fields to rest once every seven years from work so that they may be refreshed (Leviticus 25:3-4). In 2018 the session of REPC approved a sabbatical policy that granted each ordained minister a twelve-week sabbatical leave every seventh year of ministry. Pastor Ron Cox was the first to take a sabbatical in the summer of 2018 followed by Pastor Shane Whelan in 2019, and Pastor Brett Eubank in 2020.

**Why now?**

It is hard to believe but I have been at Rivermont since 2017. I am now serving in my seventh year at Rivermont which means I am up for a sabbatical leave in the summer of 2024 according to REPC’s sabbatical policy.

**What will your year look like?**

Much of the year will look similar to any other year of ministry with the exception of a twelve-week leave during the summer. However, I will be leading liturgy more often and therefore preaching about 10% less than usual. I hope to gain a better understanding of leading the worship service through the liturgy.

During the twelve-week leave, I will spend nine weeks traveling with my family to various European sights connected to our liturgical history. These sites include Strasbourg, Geneva, Canterbury, Westminster, and Edinburgh.

**Who will preach?**

Thankfully we have three other pastors who are well-equipped to preach. They will each preach a few extra Sundays throughout the year. During the summer each pastor will have an opportunity to preach a four-week sermon series.

**Is this a long vacation?**

A sabbatical has some similarities to a vacation but is much more intentional in its design and outcomes. A sabbatical must be approved by the session. It has a plan, or a theme meant to enrich ministry personally and for the church. A sabbatical provides extended time away not merely to relax but to gain spiritual refreshment in prayer, study, and reflection. Following a sabbatical, a presentation is given to the session and to the congregation to share insights about the time away.

**Does this mean you are leaving REPC?**

Quite the contrary. A sabbatical is designed to maintain spiritual health so that pastors can continue to minister for the long haul. I hope that this sabbatical year will only strengthen

my relationship with REPC. In addition, the REPC sabbatical policy requires any minister taking a sabbatical to serve at least 18 months following the sabbatical.

**How is this funded?**

The session-approved sabbatical policy provides for a $3000 stipend for sabbatical expenses. Any expenses beyond that stipend are personally funded.