



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Sabbatical 2015

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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The Reverend Bert Baetz, Rector

WHAT IS A SABBATICAL? The word sabbatical has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath (“to rest” or “to cease”). Sabbath keeping is setting aside time that God consecrates and makes it holy.

Sabbatical leave is a time for our rector to shift gears to rest, disengage, study, reflect and travel in order to return to minister among us refreshed and renewed in body, mind and spirit. It is a time to break from the routine work.

Since his arrival in 2011, Fr. Bert's letter of agreement with St. Mark's specifies that he may take a sabbatical after the completion of six years of ordained ministry. Fr. Bert was ordained a priest on February 10, 2009.

Sabbatical is more than a vacation from meetings, budgets, sermons and people in need. It is a time for Fr. Bert to receive spiritual nourishment and a fresh perspective, to deepen his relationship with God, himself, and his family – a season of spiritual growth. This special time will also be a season of growth for the entire congregation.

DO OTHER CLERGY GO ON SABBATICAL? A growing number of clergy, including Bishop Doyle, are taking sabbaticals. Indeed, the Diocese of Texas has strongly encouraged congregations in our diocese to provide our pastors with regular sabbatical leaves.

HOW LONG WILL FR. BERT BE GONE? Fr. Bert will leave on Monday, May 25, 2015 and return to the parish on Sunday, August 23 for the Blessing of the Backpacks. Fr. Bert will be away for twelve weeks.

WHAT WILL FR. BERT DO ON HIS SABBATICAL? Fr. Bert will spend a bit of time travelling in Texas. In June, Fr. Bert and his family will travel to Costa Rica where Fr. Bert will enroll in a Spanish immersion course. In July, Fr. Bert and his family will be in Colorado where Fr. Bert plans to write, rest, and further develop his ministry connecting fly fishing and the Christian life. Throughout the twelve weeks, Fr. Bert seeks to be spiritually refreshed by God. This is the primary goal of any sabbatical.

WILL FR. BERT'S FAMILY GO WITH HIM? Yes. Fr. Bert intends to reconnect with his family. Fr. Bert appreciates their support of him and his ministry, and Fr. Bert looks forward to nurturing his relationships with Sarah, Eloise, and Oliver.

WHO WILL COVER FR. BERT'S RESPONSIBILITIES DURING HIS ABSENCE? The Vestry has contracted with the Reverend Kristin Sullivan to provide worship services and pastoral oversight while Fr. Bert is gone. With the support of the Daughters of King, the Reverend Kristin Sullivan will address any pastoral concerns that may arise while Fr. Bert is gone. Our vestry wardens, Barbara Scheibner and Fairis Samuelson, assisted by lay leaders and members of the vestry, will bear primary administrative authority. Ultimately, the wardens and vestry will exercise the authority to address any concerns of the parish.

WHOM WILL I CALL TO PLAN A SPECIAL SERVICE? The church office will be open during its usual hours, staffed by our parish administrator and other lay ministers. Kim Hart and Reverend Kristin Sullivan will be available to arrange for weddings, funerals, baptisms and other special services.

WHO WILL CONDUCT THE WORSHIP? The Reverend Kristin Sullivan will be with us most of the time Fr. Bert is away on sabbatical. While Fr. Bert is on sabbatical, the Reverend Sullivan will celebrate and preach at the majority of the services on Sundays, and she will be in the office one day of the week (Mondays will be her usual day in the office).

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT FOR SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS? You may email prayerrequest@stmarksfortbend.org to have names placed on the prayer list. The Pastoral Care team will provide pastoral visitation when requested.

WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE A FAMILY OR PERSONAL CRISIS? For pastoral concerns, you may follow the plan on the back of this brochure. Together the staff, the Daughters of the King (DOK), and the Reverend Kristin Sullivan will share responsibility to visit newcomers, provide pastoral counseling, visit those who are homebound or in the hospital, and refer parishioners as appropriate to qualified professionals in the wider community.

WILL THE PARISH BUDGET NEED TO BE INCREASED TO COVER ITS SHARE OF THE EXPENSES? No. There are three sources of funds that will make Fr. Bert's sabbatical possible: anonymous gifts, a grant from the Diocese of Texas, and financial support from a local non-profit entity.

WHO WILL ADMINISTER THE PARISH IN FR. BERT'S ABSENCE? Our vestry wardens, Barbara Scheibner and Fairis Samuelson, aided by vestry members and other lay leaders, will supervise the staff, facilitate communications and oversee the use of the parish facilities.

WILL THE CHURCH JUST BE IN A "HOLDING PATTERN" WHILE FR. BERT IS AWAY? We have always been and will continue to be an *empowered* church. All of our ministries will continue to flourish while Fr. Bert is away, and newer ministries like VBS will be launched this summer. Also, it is important to remember that the sabbatical is a two-way process: while Fr. Bert is on his journey of renewal, refreshment and reflection, we the parish will embark on a journey as well – to continue reflection on our prior work, to renew ourselves and to discern God's will for us.

WILL FR. BERT BE IN CONTACT WITH ST. MARK'S 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 Fr. Bert while he is away will be his family. In the unlikely event that some extraordinary news absolutely must be communicated to Fr. Bert, the church wardens will notify him. Fr. Bert will post reflections of his experiences on a blog while on sabbatical and you may choose to follow his journey during his time away.

HOW WILL WE GET "REACQUAINTED" WITH FR. BERT WHEN HE RETURNS? Fr. Bert's first Sunday back at St. Mark's will be at the Blessing of the Backpacks on August 23. In addition, an opportunity for the sharing of experiences (both Fr. Bert's and St. Mark's) will be planned by Fr. Bert and the Vestry.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SABBATICAL? Ask a member of the Vestry or the Reverend Kristin Sullivan.

ADMINISTRATION and BUILDING & GROUNDS:

Administration	Barbara Scheibner: barbs4@earthlink.net
Ongoing Building & Grounds	Fairis Samuelson: f.samuelson@hughes.net

LITURGY:

Baptisms, Funerals, Weddings, Other	Kim Hart: office@stmarksfortbend.org
General Liturgy Questions (Primary)	The Rev. Kristin Sullivan: klsullivan04@gmail.com
General Liturgy Questions (Secondary)	Sarah Peters: smmpeters@hotmail.com

PASTORAL CARE

Pastoral Care Need (Primary)	Caron Marble: cmarble164@aol.com
Pastoral Care Need (Secondary)	Isobel Gotschall: bbell04@yahoo.com
Emergencies: Life, Death, Crisis	The Rev. Kristin Sullivan: 979-318-6766
First Responders	Caron Marble, Isobel Gotschall, Nancy Brown, Ann Chrisman, Alysoun Marks, and Sarah Peters
Prayer Request	prayerrequest@stmarksfortbend.org

PROCESS TO RECEIVE NON-EMERGENCY PASTORAL CARE DURING FR. BERT'S SABBATICAL

The vision and mission of Pastoral Care at St. Mark's is to celebrate life's joys and bear one another's burdens and sorrows in fulfillment of God's command to love one another as God loves us. We seek to connect parishioners within the St. Mark's community to provide a network of care in times of need.

1. Email Caron Marble (Co-president of the Daughters of the King) for a non-emergency request for pastoral care. Caron will contact a member of the Pastoral Care Team and someone on the team will be in touch with you.
2. If you are unable to reach Caron, you may email Isobel Gotschall (Co-president of the Daughters of the King), and she will respond to your request, and you can expect to hear from one of the members of the Pastoral Care Team.
3. A member of the Pastoral Care Team will respond to your needs, and if you are in need of a visit from the priest or in case of an emergency, you may reach the Rev. Kristin Sullivan at 979-318-6766.