



January 31, 2019

Dear Friends and Members of First Presbyterian Church,

After more than eight years of service to this congregation, Mark Davis is taking a well-deserved sabbatical starting March 4<sup>th</sup> and ending June 11<sup>th</sup>.

While Mark develops his sabbatical plan, we are helping him gather the resources he will need to see his plans through. We are asking you to join us.

First Presbyterian set up a Sabbatical Fund in 2012. It has been used three times, once for the Director of Music and Arts, Marlon Hurst, in 2012, once for the Director of Youth and Their Families, Kelly Abraham, in 2013, and most recently for the Associate Minister Caitlin Foehse, in 2017. Each time, friends and members of the congregation contributed to the fund. On each occasion the church made a portion of the fund available to cover many of the costs of the sabbatical.

A published resource on sabbatical planning reminds us that “pastors are essential to nurture and sustain the spiritual vitality of Christian congregations. Spiritual guide, scholar, counselor, preacher, administrator, confidant, teacher, pastoral visitor and friend, pastors are called on to play many roles in leading the ministries of congregations. The job is demanding ... and requires a rare balance of intelligence, love, humility, compassion and endurance. Most importantly it demands that pastors remain in touch with the source of their life and strength. .... good pastors need time to renew and refresh spiritual energies and regain their enthusiasm and creativity for ministry.”

Mark plans to spend portions of his sabbatical in Australia, Europe and the United States. Mark and Beth have completed plans for an extended visit to Tasmania for rest and renewal. Tasmania is home to unique wildlife and presents an opportunity for quiet walking and extraordinary private time. In late May, Mark will participate in a 2-week Spanish immersion program (24/7 – no English) in Malaga, Spain.

In Mark’s absence the Rev. Dr. Melissa Bane Sevier will serve as sabbatical head of staff. Melissa will be available to members and friends as requested, and she will capably fill the various roles required by our pastor. Mark will be available to both search teams as needed during our pivot to an Associate Pastor for Christian Formation and our new fulltime Director of Children and Youth.

We hope you will give prayerful consideration to how you can help Mark rest and renew this spring. We've enclosed an envelope for mailing in or dropping in the Sunday offering. Please write “sabbatical fund” on the memo line. Or you can give on line by clicking on the “Donate Now” link on the homepage of the website ([www.fpclex.org](http://www.fpclex.org)) and selecting “Sabbatical Support” under the Donation Allocation drop down menu. On-line donations are processed through Vanco to keep them secure.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to talking with you!

Sabbatical Support Team,

Seth Hall

Eben Hollingsworth

Griffin Miller

Bettina Morrish

Ann Render