

**Report of  
Pastor for Parish Life  
The Rev. John H. Brock  
January 2020**

January was as regular as any month can be - preaching, presiding, some home visits, and a bit of vacation, and an adult baptism as well.

We all did some planning for late winter / Lent events. During our next Wednesday Connect series, I will be leading a discussion on "Which Jesus?" - an examination of similarities and differences between many of the Christian Denominations. I am looking forward to this.

During my health adventures of the past few years, while I met one on one with individual support folks, regular meetings with my Mutual Ministry team fell by the wayside. With the aid of my wonderful MM Chair, Mike Schwalm, we revamped the team. I had the first meeting in January, where, among other things, we discussed my proposal for a sabbatical. As laid out in our Policy Manual (2.95), a sabbatical may be up to three months in length. The policy also states that the individual taking a sabbatical must commit to "to return to service for at least one year following the end of the leave." To alleviate some fears that have already been expressed to me: no, this sabbatical is **not** a prelude to a retirement.

For the sabbatical, I am considering July - September, which will hopefully not place too much of a burden on the other two pastors (while I would almost prefer August - October, I am concerned that going two months into the school year would put too many responsibilities on the other pastors).

The three goals of the time away would be to, first, contact other large, primarily Lutheran, congregations, as to how they keep track of their membership, how do they do home visitations, as well as followup with inactive members. At the same time, for the second, I want to meet with other associate pastors. Bishop Dunlop had encouraged me to put together a workshop for associate pastors, and I want to determine what might be a good format, as well as topics, for such an endeavor. My third goal is to relax. I plan on visiting with friends as I visit with larger congregations in the Midwest. Marianne & I are already planning on a trip to Germany with my in-laws in September. And I have a desire to go to one of my favorite places for a bit of a longer stay (I'm talking about Walt Disney World here, people).

God's peace,

Pastor John Brock