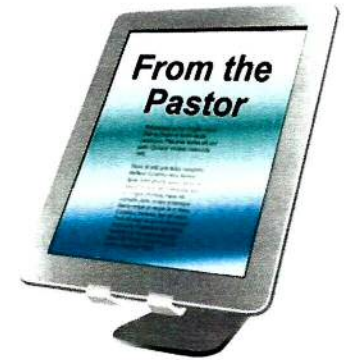


## From the Pastor

June 2021

Dear Friends,

As you have probably heard, I will depart for a three-month pastoral sabbatical on June 1. I am grateful to the Session and the Presbytery for making this gift of time available to me and my family. This is a tremendous blessing, and I look forward to returning to you on the last weekend of August.



We are fortunate to have grants from the Louisville Institute and Lackawanna Presbytery to make this sabbatical possible. Thanks to the grant, we have lined up an outstanding team to preach each week and provide pastoral continuity in my absence. The Rev. Bill Samford, recently retired from the Hawley church, will preach for the first three weeks of June and August, and the Rev. Jim Thyren, whom many of you have gotten to know, will preach during July. The Rev. Joanne Weiss will preach on the last Sunday of June, and Dr. Tabbi Miller-Scandle will preach on the fourth Sunday of August.

For pastoral care, we have secured the Rev. Rebecca Tanner for June and August, and the Rev. Ken Forbes for the month of July. You will find them to be warm and friendly pastors, and I am delighted that we have been able to secure them. They will be available for pastoral care at any time, and you can contact them through our church office.

Pastoral sabbaticals have emerged in the past two decades as essential practices for long-term pastors. They provide for an extended break from the day-in, day-out demands of pastoral ministry. In the best of years, my work requires constant availability, emotional energy, spiritual presence, mental clarity, organizational oversight, and an enormous level of patience. After fifteen months of working through the pandemic, this sabbatical break will be good for my spiritual well-being. I'm tired and it's time to fill the well.

So what will I do this summer? Relax, rest, restore – and write. As I've told many of you, I have begun working on a book to explore the connections between jazz and the spiritual life. The seeds for this project have been planted during my three decades of ministry with you. I have a deep sense that this is the time to harvest what we have experienced together and share it with the wider church.

Most of the weekdays, I will be holed up in one of the quiet writing places that we've set up. Weekends will offer time with family members and out-of-town friends. It will be a quiet summer Sabbath, without the distraction of heavy travel that I have undertaken in previous sabbaticals. If we should see one another at the supermarket or baseball stadium, I will smile and wave – and you'll understand that I will quickly return to the writing desk. I want to make the most of the time that I've been granted.

Please keep me and my family in your prayers, and trust that I keep you in my prayers as well. If you would like to keep up with my sabbatical project, I have started an online journal. It will be a great way to keep in touch while I am gone. You can find it at <https://thrivingonariff.blogspot.com>.

Holding you in my heart until I see you at the end of August,

**Rev. Bill Carter**