

Sample Proposal 1

Note: All examples shown have been abbreviated to save space. Proposals should be 6 to 10 pages in length.

1. Purpose

I am applying to the Center for Congregational Resources Sabbath Leave Program out of the desire to be a good steward of the gifts that God has given. It is my belief that regular periods of time specifically devoted to rest, refreshment, prayer, and renewal are crucial to the health and effective leadership of any pastor. God's gift of a Sabbath day built into the cycle of each week renews God's people— not just for the week of work to come, but also, and especially, for the work of loving and serving God “as faithful witnesses to Christ our Lord,” as the Book of Common Prayer puts it.

Because I trust God's wisdom in including a day of rest in the ordering of the week, and because I have seen this practice bear fruit in my own life and ministry, I wish to explore the benefits of a longer period of Sabbath rest. I wish to serve God as a priest in his Church for the whole of my life, thus allowing for longer periods of Sabbath rest at regular intervals over the course of my ministry seems beneficial, if not crucial. I have found, and wish to find further, that time set aside for renewal is enormously helpful and practical, and is part of what it means to be faithful to God.

This gift of time and resources offered by the Sabbath Leave Program will be my first experience of such a leave. I am applying to this program with real enthusiasm, eager to make the most of the opportunity.

During my Sabbath Leave I propose working on a collection of poems which focus on my family's experience of the death of my son, Jacob, and his place in the communion of saints.

Jacob was born with a heart defect, which led to three surgeries over the course of his life. He died, at 21 months old, during the last surgery. This experience has created an indelible mark on our lives. We are learning more what grief and sorrow are, and how ours is related to that suffered by Jesus on the cross. We are also learning more what hope and joy are, and how both are rooted in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. During the Sabbath Leave, I will continue to work at expressing this through the poems I am writing.

2. Plan

For this project I will utilize the library, the computer lab, and, especially, a quiet place to sit and write. I plan also to make use of other campus facilities such as the chapel, the grounds, lectures, gymnasium, etc.

After my leave is over I plan to encourage my congregation and others to investigate ways to build Sabbath time in to their own lives, focusing on the teaching of Scripture that God commands us to rest on a regular basis. Because intentional, re-creative rest is counter-cultural in this present day, any opportunity I have to lead my congregation and others, especially by example, in the area of Sabbath is valuable. Leading by example is like voting with one's feet, it lets actions speak of trust in God. People learn well when taught by example. I intend to make the connection clear between this time of leave and the time of “leave” we are called to take as part of the cycle of each week in our lives— and, to be as healthy as possible, as part of the shape of each day.

3. Compatibility

This Sabbath Leave will make possible the creation of the time and space necessary for deep emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual renewal. Having the time to devote myself entirely to the work of writing will facilitate creativity, which is a prayerful response of thanksgiving to the Creator himself. All creative activity on the part of God's people is a sharing in the wonder and mystery of God's own creative activity. We are called to be co-creators with God. I have found that I am most healthy as a pastor, a husband, and a child of God when I am the most engaged in creative work, such as writing.

The reading required to write well, in addition to the intellectual stimulation of participating in the life of Samford University, will help foster the intellectual renewal I am seeking. As I intend to exercise regularly during the Sabbath Leave I anticipate a physical renewal. The work of processing and expressing loss and hope, death and resurrection

will go far to being emotionally and spiritually renewed. In these ways I think that my proposal relates well to the overall goals of the Sabbath Leave Program.

4. Benefit

I suspect that the generous act itself of creating and allowing time for their pastor to be away on a "Sabbath leave" in order to foster renewal and balance in his or her own life can have a healthy effect on any congregation. One example of this is that a congregation will learn to take a more active role in ministry themselves. Far from making congregational life more difficult for them, this will allow them an opportunity to deepen their relationships with one another by being more deeply involved in mutual ministry. This occasion, also, will help them to learn compassion. Being more active in ministry and growing in compassion will, almost inevitably, deepen their relationship with our Lord, strengthen them to reach out in the love of Christ to the neighborhood and the world, and embolden them to be agents of reconciliation in a world that, often, prefers to keep people divided and afraid.

I think, too, that the congregation will learn, with some surprise, how diverse church ministry is, and how involved. This awareness can foster a better appreciation for the grace and work required to develop and maintain a healthy community.

I will benefit from participating in this program by the renewal of mind, body, and soul. I fully expect that this time will help me both to remember and to rethink some of my ministry priorities. I am certain that this Sabbath leave will help me to remain grounded in the love of Christ. Being able to bring this groundedness to bear in my life with my congregation will benefit both them and me by helping to keep us focused on the redemptive love of God, and by allowing this to be the source of our prayer, motivations and behavior.

5. Preparation

I have begun to prepare my congregation for this experience by discussing it with the Vestry (the elected, governing body of the congregation), who have already given it their support. I will write about the Sabbath Leave Program in our church's monthly newsletter. Additionally, I will talk about it with the congregation at large. In these ways, I plan to educate the congregation about the program itself, to thank the Vestry for their support, to articulate the mutual benefits, and to express my desire to participate in this program.

The role of my lay liaison will include introducing the concept of this program to the congregation, serving as a contact person for communication between the congregation, the Center for Congregational Resources, and myself, and serving as an advocate for the program. Additionally, as this person will most likely be the Senior Warden of the Vestry, the lay liaison will handle many of the administrative details of the congregation while I am away.

6. Timeline

January 6, 2014 Arrive on Samford's campus

February 13, 2014 Depart from Samford's Campus

Note: I expect to be on the campus from around 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

7. Budget: Please see the Sample Budget for more information

Sample Proposal 2

SABBATH LEAVE PROPOSAL

PURPOSE

I have been in full time ministry since 1970. During these now 33 years of ministry I have taken one sabbatical. In 1977 I was fully immersed in a full time Bible College faculty position and I was pastor of the church we had planted in 1974. My sabbatical was a restful year as interim pastor of a small country church that needed reviving.

Since that sabbatical I have made two major moves (from Edmonton to Florida to Toronto) and changed roles from faculty member to Senior Pastor back to faculty member (at another institution) and then to Senior Pastor of a much larger church.

My pastoral experience had been first, in growing a new church plant from 13 adults to an average attendance of 150. Then in Florida I had pastored from 1983 to 1991 in a church where Sunday morning attendance average that grew from approximately 200 to 400.

Bayview Glen attendance was approximately 800 in attendance, or twice as large, when I arrived in 1994. For several months I was concluding my time as a full time seminary professor while beginning to serve as the new Senior Pastor of a multi-staff church. Added to this challenge was the fact that the church was under-staffed and in process of change.

The past almost ten years have been exhilarating, stretching and fulfilling. There has been attendance growth, debt elimination and a major building program. Along with this came many 12 -15 hour days, significant stress and overload. Far too often the urgent has taken precedent over the not urgent but important (Stephen Covey's Quadrant II).

I love being in ministry and have never resented the pace or the demands. However for several years I have felt that I would profit greatly from a Sabbath Leave. I sense that my energy and enthusiasm for leadership are not as high as they need to be.

Our church staff policy manual allowed for a sabbatical break and I began to discuss this in 2000 with the Chair of our Board. However we began a period of staff turnover which included key personnel (our worship pastor and my senior associate) who were not easily or quickly replaced.

At the same time we have experienced an exhilarating change from a largely Caucasian congregation to a very diverse group which more accurately reflects our multi-ethnic city. Over one hundred Chinese and one hundred Iranians presently attend, along with many from others from Asian countries, the Caribbean and the Middle East . In the past 18 months we have added a Chinese pastor and a Persian pastor to our staff.

With all of this change and challenge the time was not right until early 2003 for me to officially request a sabbatical. I am now 58 years old. In the will of God, I should have at least one more decade of strong leadership ministry. I want to finish well. A Sabbath Leave will help me to do that.

During these 30 years of ministry I have allotted little time for spiritual retreat, rest, in depth reading, or writing. Apart from family vacation, I have never stepped back from ministry for more than two or three days. It is time for a significant personal Sabbath renewal. I believe that the Samford University Sabbath Leave program can provide time for this type of re-creation.

PLAN

I want to spend time to consider at length how I can best put "first things first" in the next decade of ministry.

My wife and I will move to Birmingham in late January and remain until the first of May. We plan to enjoy a five day retreat in early March at the Benedictine Spirituality and Conference Center in nearby Cullman. We have never experienced more than a two day retreat before.

I look forward to attending the Conger Lectures on Biblical Preaching in February and the Biblical Studies Lectures in April. I will enjoy using the University Library facilities extensively. In the past decade, most of my reading has been sermon related or church leadership related. I need to spend time reading more widely. This will include reading in church history and ancient spirituality – subjects that have not usually been high on my reading list.

I hope to write a major segment of a book while on Sabbath leave. Currently I have begun to work on a book tentatively titled “Living and Leading with Character”. However I am also interested in writing about leadership lessons from the Kings who are described in II Chronicles and on life lessons from Habakkuk and Haggai. I expect to do research and perhaps even complete one manuscript while on Sabbath leave.

I would enjoy the opportunity to speak at a chapel service or give a lecture on campus if invited.

I plan to spend one week (in mid-March) in Accra , Ghana as a teacher/trainer as part of the Million Leader Mandate – a ministry of Equip (based in Atlanta). The goal is to train 40,000 leaders who will each train 25 other leaders, in countries outside of North America . My church has agreed to fund our involvement with this ministry over the next three years.

At the same time, I believe that Sabbath Leave should not primarily focus on work, no matter how spiritual and profitable. I need to break with a tendency to “workaholism”. (I am sure I have only a mild case of this disease.)

For physical renewal I hope to join with the campus Outdoor Adventure Club if skiing or canoe trips are planned. I have done neither in recent years. I note that near to the campus is the famous Robert Trent Jones Trail. As an avid but very average golfer, I hope to explore part of the trail while at Samford.

I anticipate attending a variety of churches while on Sabbath Leave. There are some healthy congregations in Birmingham . I also have the goal of visiting several well known “cutting edge” churches, including Fellowship Church in Dallas (late January), Northpointe Church in Atlanta (March), and Ginghamburg in Ohio(April).

At each of these churches I want to spend time with a key staff person as well as observing their weekend services. During the last decade I have attended conferences at large churches, but have not had the opportunity to worship with them or observe their organization on Sundays. No matter how many books read or speakers heard, much can be learned by observing how things are done with excellence and relevance. I want to bring these perspectives back to our leadership team.

In my absence from the church, our Executive Pastor will be responsible for my normal leadership responsibilities. We have arranged for Dr. Gordon Smith, recently Academic Dean of Regent College (Vancouver) to serve as our preaching pastor. This will be a half time position. I am very grateful that the Board has arranged for this and built it into our annual budget.

COMPATIBILITY

I had a major heart by-pass operation in 1997. I returned to work within a few weeks. The ministry years of 2001 and 2002 were unusually stressful because of staff changes and being under-staffed while looking for replacements. We were also dealing with more than the usual complaints/criticisms over several leadership decisions.

Due to these factors, it was not possible for me to take any sabbatical time even though it was discussed with the Chair of our Board. Bayview Glen Church now has the strongest staff in its history, including an Executive Pastor who greatly relieves my leadership responsibilities.

Ministry is very strong at Bayview Glen. We have more “doors of entry” for unchurched people than ever before. We rejoice each month that there are more professions of faith than ever before. Many of these new believers are people from Muslim or Communist China backgrounds.

Thus this seems to be a very good time in which to take a Sabbath leave.

BENEFIT

I believe that my ministry will be refreshed and renewed as I take this Sabbath Leave. I want to return to the pulpit and to leadership with renewed energy and vision. I anticipate this as a wonderful break from which I can return for what is probably my last decade as a Senior Pastor.

Time for reflection and reading, interaction on campus and with pastors at significant, growing churches should broaden my perspective and strengthen the creativity which I bring to leadership.

For many years, people in my congregation have urged me to write books using expanded sermon material. The one book I have authored was published years before coming to Bayview Glen. Many of our people will be very pleased if I can do significant writing while on Sabbath Leave. They want others to benefit from my practical, biblical teaching.

The congregation will benefit from the ministry of a new, very gifted preaching pastor for the months that I am absent.

PREPARATION

For many years, Bayview Glen has included a sabbatical leave as part of the Human Resources policies. However, no one has ever taken advantage of the opportunity. In 2011, I began talking with the chair of our Elder's Board about a sabbatical. As a physician and professor, he was very open to the idea and began to informally talk with other elders about it. With the present chairman's approval and the approval of Human Resources Committee, I submitted a request for a sabbatical in February of 2013 to our Board. After some discussion, the Board strongly approved the request to take a sabbatical in 2014.

In June the Board wrote a letter to the congregation informing them of my planned sabbatical and explaining the importance of a sabbatical. We will do more communicating this fall to the congregation.

TIMELINE

Jan and I expect to arrive in Birmingham by January 27th. We will settle into a rented apartment for the next 14 weeks, leaving in early May.

- January 25 Visit Fellowship Church in Dallas, TX
- January 27 Arrive in Birmingham
- February 9-13 Five day retreat at Benedictine Spirituality and Conference Center in Cullman, AL
- March 5-7 Visit Northpointe Church in Atlanta, Ga
- March 14-21 Accra, Ghana (funding covered by church and not part of SLP request)
- April 16-18 Visit Ginghamburg Church in Ohio
- May 8 Depart from Birmingham

BUDGET

Bayview Glen will continue my full salary while I am on Sabbath Leave. They will also pay for a preaching pastor (\$15,000.00) to maintain pulpit excellence while I am away.

Sabbath Leave Expenses (estimated)

	Requested From CCR	Church Contributions
Rental Housing	\$3,600.00	
Food	\$2,000.00	
Return trip: Toronto – Birmingham	\$800.00	
Weekend visits to several key		

congregations.

Travel and housing costs.	\$1,500.00	
Fellowship in Dallas \$900.00 (includes a conference fee of \$400.00)		
Northpointe in Atlanta \$250.00		
Ginhamsburg in Ohio \$350.00		
Computer printing, copying and book costs.	\$350.00	
Recreation – retreats and golf (estimate)	\$750.00	
Retreat (5 days) - \$310.00		
Golf (8 games x \$55) - \$440.00		
Preaching Pastor		\$15,000
Colloquium	\$1,000.00	
Total Request	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00

Sample Proposal 3

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE:

Having spent the last twelve years developing Contemplative Outreach Birmingham as an organization while also serving on the staff of the Benedictine Spirituality and Conference Center here in Cullman, I am in need of some deep rest and renewal. I am also very worn out from the care of my Mother who died a year ago at the age of 94. For the past ten years I had been her primary care-taker. I also assumed some care of two of her sisters, and one has passed. My energy is at the lowest ebb I have ever experienced.

As Coordinator of Contemplative Outreach Birmingham, I taught Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina in Birmingham and north Alabama by training leaders, coordinating an annual conference, organizing, networking and visiting support groups, giving introductory day-long workshops and weekend retreats, giving intensive weekend retreats, giving annual Ten-Day Intensive Retreats, and offering Formation for Contemplative Outreach Service. I am presently in the process of passing this position of leadership to another capable and experienced woman

While serving on the Team of the Benedictine Spirituality and Conference Center in Cullman, I have provided individual directed retreats, led contemplative prayer, given group retreats, offered spiritual direction, massage, and healing touch. I plan to continue this ministry of spiritual direction and the offering of retreats, but I need a deep rest, a chance to reflect, and some ongoing education to enhance the ministry I offer. I am excited about the possibility of deepening the healing touch I offer by opening to the Judeo-Christian background of healing.

PLAN:

There are three aspects I seek in the Sabbath Leave Program. First, I need time to rest and recuperate—time to give inner space to grief work, including some silent retreat experience. My physical health can be aided by seeking regular massages and/or healing touch in the Birmingham area.

Secondly, I have been wishing to write some reflections about my experiences of God. I had a significant “vision” several years ago in which the “strong moments” of my whole life journey came in an “instant replay.” Since then, though I had no time to do so, I have been feeling the call to reflect on each of these experiences more deeply. I would love to use resources at Samford for this writing project.

Thirdly, I hope to take some workshops on Healing Touch as Spiritual Ministry.

I became a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner in 2001. Through Healing Touch, Inc. I was trained by nurses for basically a nursing protocol. I have been using Healing Touch in my ministry of spiritual direction for many years. In January, 2004 a new organization, Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, Inc., was founded that has developed the Judeo-Christian perspective. See their website: www.htspiritualministry.com. Their philosophy is summarized: “Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry, Inc. offers an exciting new curriculum springing from the Christian tradition of laying-on of hands and anointing with oil modeled by Jesus as a major part of his ministry. This is an energy-based therapeutic approach to health and healing that includes the practice of many modern-day Christian healers. It is built upon a philosophy of caring that starts with the premise that we are conduits for the healing energies of God.” I would like to take two of their weekend workshops in order to deepen in this ministry that I am feeling the most drawn to. These workshops are offered at various locations around the country, so I will be traveling out of state. I have enclosed two flyers with more information.

Resources I could utilize at Samford are the walking tracks/gym for physical well-being, the library and space for writing, and perhaps printing possibilities. I will also enjoy the weekly colloquium. I am excited to learn about other resources that may be at my disposal, particularly any events in the theology lecture series.

COMPATIBILITY:

My three-pronged plan seems well suited to the goal of the Sabbath Leave Program because it includes a physical health regimen, a writing project, and especially a deep rest time on retreat. I am hoping that I can consult some of the Samford theologians as I am engaged in the writing project. These factors, in fact, include emotional, spiritual, physical and intellectual renewal.

BENEFIT:

Each of the retreats I hope to experience would be in a different environment. Besides the restorative nature of these experiences, they can give me some insight into how other retreat centers host retreatants. This will be very relevant to my retreat ministry. I look forward to the deep solitude at Holy Trinity as well as receiving spiritual direction there.

At this point I am not sure if the writing project is for myself, a deep journaling experience, or if the material will be worth printing. I definitely hope to use some of this material in the retreats I give.

I constantly talk to retreatants about the Sabbath. My example of taking quality time for a real sabbatical will hopefully inspire others. Many of my directees are working in church ministry. They are experiencing a crying need to learn to rest in God and to delight in the array of God's gifts in their lives. I hope I can be a model of that.

The Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry workshops will give the conceptual background of healing in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The laying-on of hands and anointing with oil was modeled by Jesus as a major part of his ministry. This background will be especially useful in my ministry of spiritual direction in which I include massage and/or healing touch if directees wish.

PREPARATION:

My position as Coordinator of Contemplative Outreach Birmingham is in the process of being passed on to another capable woman. Because of this I will have some time freed up in the near future.

I am already telling my directees of my unavailability for spiritual direction in the fall. The Conference Center staff is now planning next year's calendar, so I am structuring the schedule of retreats I will give accordingly.

PROPOSED TIMELINE IN 2014

In late August I will begin sabbatical rest at our Lodge on Smith Lake or at the seashore.

I will be on the Samford University campus from Labor Day until just before Christmas—September 7 through December 10. While on campus I will undertake the writing project on my experiences of God. Since I am a Benedictine Sister, I will be living with my religious community. I will be staying at one of our two houses in Birmingham, where our sisters live who do a variety of ministries. On some weekends I will be returning to the monastery in Cullman.

I hope to go to two weekend Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry workshops:

October 1-4—Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry workshop in Arvada CO

November 19-22—Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry workshop in Donaldson IN

I plan to take two retreat experiences:

November 1-12—Hermitage experience and Spiritual Direction at Holy Trinity Shrine Retreat, Holy Trinity AL

December 3-5—Advent Weekend Retreat at St. Francis of Assisi, Bessemer AL

December 12-17 - Last deep rest with solitude time in a nature setting

BUDGET:

Sabbatical Leave Program

I am a Benedictine Sister, which implies community living, so I will be staying at one of our houses in Birmingham, while using Samford resources. I will return to the monastery in Cullman on many weekends.

I do need help in covering the cost of the following:

Health Insurance	2,000
Travel to Cullman weekly	450
Healing Touch Spiritual Ministry	
2 Weekend Workshops	500
Room & Board	800
Travel	900
Hermitage and Spiritual Direction	
Stipend	650
Travel	150
Advent Retreat	200
Weekly Massage &/or Healing Touch	500
Writing Project	
Books, misc. expenses	700
Perhaps printing	700
Meals at Samford/Other meals	851
Colloquium	900

TOTAL

Center for Cong. Resources
\$9,301

Benedictine Sisters

Housing 3,600
Food: 2,000
Use of car provided

Benedictine Sisters
\$5,600

Sample Proposal 4

Purpose and Rationale

I am applying to the Center for Congregational Resources Sabbath Leave program in order to pursue for myself what I have helped provide for others. Since 1987, I have either been on staff in a church setting or served as the pastoral leader in a community of faith. For the last five years I have served as the founding director of the Center for Ministry, a shared work of the Mississippi Conference of the United Methodist Church and Millsaps College. In seventeen years of active ministry, I have not taken a Sabbath leave. Establishing the Center for Ministry has provided five years of challenging and rewarding work, but it has also been emotionally and spiritually draining. The purpose of applying for this Sabbath leave is to refocus my energy, to renew my spirit, and revisit my own calling to ministry. To be in Birmingham for extended periods of time will provide the needed physical and emotional distance from work responsibilities. Samford's campus will provide an excellent atmosphere in which to study, write, reflect, converse, and rest.

The Center for Ministry is a unique partnership between the Mississippi Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and Millsaps College. Launched in 1999, its task is to foster leadership for effective ministry in the Church, College, and Community. As the founding director and now the Executive Director, it has been my task to identify the needs in clergy professional formation and lay education and design learning experiences that broaden knowledge, deepen faith, and sharpen skills for ministry (see enclosed brochures). My own need for renewal and Sabbath gave birth to portions of the Center's Pastoral Excellence Project (a Lilly Endowment funded program similar to the Center for Congregational Resources). The multi-faceted design of our project allows for pastors to take Sabbath time in various forms (see enclosed brochure). Unfortunately, as Executive Director of the Center for Ministry, I cannot reap the benefits of our design.

My time in the parish and the work of founding the Center for Ministry have provided incredible learning opportunities for me. If my request for Sabbath Leave is granted, the time away from the demands of a hectic professional and family life will offer a chance to rest and to reflect on ministry in a framework of spiritual development. In addition to the necessary re-creation of Sabbath rest, I will use the time to work on a book-length manuscript that has been in the formative stage for several years. The book will weave together my parish ministry experience and what I have learned through resourcing pastors and congregations. We have observed that those congregations and pastors doing good and faithful ministry exhibit certain characteristics: vital worship, grounded in scripture, value tradition, and a strong sense of community. Those four characteristics will give direction to the manuscript. Its focus will be on worship as spiritual direction for the community of faith (the tentative title is Conversation, Connection, and Covenant). I will propose a framework, grounded in the experience of Old and New Testament communities, for understanding worship through the lens of spiritual direction. As part of that framework, I will design worship resources that can be used in various congregational settings. These resources will include worship services and ideas for including laity in worship planning and leadership. The worship resources, as well as the information for the book, are in various stages of completion. Part of the time on Samford's campus would be used to continue data gathering and in compilation of the resources.

The Center for Congregational Resources Sabbath Leave Program will provide much needed distance from daily demands of the office and my supervisory role in the Center for Ministry. The rest, reflection, and writing will renew my spirit and energy to engage the challenges of ministry in the next phase of the Center's existence. I hope the resources produced will benefit the Center for Ministry and the Church. The writing will benefit me as a way of expressing my own calling as a pastor, teacher, and worship leader.

Plan

As stated above, my proposal is to spend time in rest and reflection, to flesh out a book, and to develop worship resources for congregational use. To pursue those goals, I will utilize the Beeson Divinity School library for research, worship with the Samford community, and build relationships with faculty. David Bains, Assistant Professor of Religion, has consented to serve as a consultant on this project. While in Birmingham, I will meet with a spiritual director and a personal trainer. I will utilize the chapel and the beautiful campus for prayer and meditation and the gym for exercise. If it can be arranged, I will spend one week in retreat at the Benedictine monastery in Cullman, Alabama. Weather permitting, I will make several day-hikes in areas around Birmingham.

I will also meet with colleagues who lead worship in Alabama and Mississippi and make resources developed during the Sabbath Leave available for their use. In order to identify these colleagues, I will draw on already established connections with the Institute for Clergy Effectiveness in Alabama and the Center for Congregational Resources as well as Center for Ministry connections in Mississippi. The Sabbath Leave Colloquium will also allow for

conversations with pastors from various traditions and expand my own horizons regarding faith and practice. During the Sabbath Leave, I will utilize the Pitts Library at Candler School of Theology for research and consult with Dr. Don Saliers, professor of systematic theology and worship, as well as other faculty members who may be available.

Compatibility

This proposal is under girded by the same principles that nourish the Sabbath Leave Program. The kind of research, reading, reflection, and writing that I envision for this Sabbath time is best done outside of one's usual context and in a community of scholars and students. It will allow me to reconnect with and rethink my call to ordained ministry and how that ordination serves the Church in my current role as a pastoral leader outside of a parish setting. The community of learners at Samford will allow for community building across traditional dividing lines within the Church. My experience in developing programs for pastoral formation will enrich the conversation and community of the Sabbath Leave Colloquium. The connection with Samford students will also give an opportunity for me to be renewed by their spirit and for me to offer my own insight as one who has served in parish settings and who now finds himself called to a different kind of ministry.

Benefit

The Sabbath Leave would be an experience of grace for me. The major benefit to me will be the realization of a long-time goal of developing resources for worship and compiling them into book form so that they may be used by communities of faith seeking a deeper experience with the Risen One. It will also be a gift to have time away not just to relax, but to expend intellectual and spiritual energy in a way that is not directly tied to my work at the Center for Ministry (though it is certainly congruent with that work). The structure for the Sabbath Leave I am proposing builds in accountability for work produced but also for spiritual discernment and physical self-care. The time away from my office responsibilities will benefit my family as well. Kim (my wife) and two daughters will accompany me to Birmingham for part of the Sabbath Leave. Even when we are not able to be together, the family will benefit from my renewed energy and engagement in the ministry.

As I stated above, others will have access to the worship services, prayers, and liturgies developed during the Sabbath Leave. They will give feedback regarding the usefulness of these resources and will help refine them for wider use. The Center for Ministry and its constituents will benefit through connections I will develop outside of Mississippi during the leave time and from the resources made available.

Preparation

Before applying for the Sabbath Leave project, I sought the support of the Center for Ministry Board of Directors. One of the concerns expressed consistently by the board in their evaluation of me has been that I do not have (or take) time away from the Center's work for rest and reflection. They voted unanimously to support my application to the Sabbath Leave Program. The Center for Ministry's contribution will be to continue my salary while I am on Sabbath leave. I will work with our very able staff to prepare for my time out of the office so that I may engage myself fully in the Sabbath leave.

Timeline

I am asking for eight weeks of Sabbath leave divided into four two-week segments. The division is functional in nature. It would be difficult for me to have extended time out of the office given the multiple events and programs that are part of what we do through the Center for Ministry. The division of time also allows me to design worship resources in advance of the liturgical seasons, distribute them to the congregations that will use them, receive feedback, and refine the resources when I am in residence in Birmingham again. The segmented leave will also allow me to write in stages and review the writing over time.

First segment -- mid-August

- Spend time in reflection, prayer, meditation
- Research and draft sections of book
- Compile and edit resources for All Saints Day and Advent worship
- Meet with Spiritual Director/retreat in Cullman, AL if can be arranged
- Day hikes

Second segment -- early October

- Spend time in reflection, prayer, meditation
- Continue research and drafting book

- Compile and edit resources for Lent worship
- Meet with Spiritual Director
- Day hikes

Third segment -- mid-March

- Spend time in reflection, prayer, meditation
- Continue research and drafting book
- Compile and edit resources for All Saints & Advent worship feedback
- Meet with Spiritual Director
- Day hikes

Fourth segment -- early to mid May

- Spend time in reflection, prayer, meditation
- Review and edit drafted portions of book
- Compile and edit resources for Lent worship feedback
- Meet with Spiritual Director
- Day hikes

Depending on their schedules, I will meet with faculty at Beeson Divinity School and Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, during the Sabbath leave. My family will also join me in Birmingham periodically during the Sabbath time. I will take day trips to areas around Birmingham such as Rickwood Cavern, Oak Mountain, and Cheaha state parks to hike.

Budget

Lodging	8 weeks @ \$485/week	=	\$3,880
Food	\$17/day x 56 days (8 wks)	=	\$ 952
Spiritual Director	8 sessions x \$75	=	\$ 600
Pastoral Counseling	3 sessions x \$100	=	\$ 300
Resource Person Consults			\$ 800
			Subtotal \$6,552
Colloquium (10%)			\$ 655

Total grant request from RCPE **\$7,187**

(Cost for the retreat at the Benedictine Spirituality Center will be deducted from the lodging line item above).

Center for Ministry Matching

Continued Salary for 8 weeks of Sabbath leave	\$10,096
Personal Financial Contribution to the Project (Travel)	\$ 1,838

*8 roundtrips to Birmingham from Jackson MS = \$ 1,500
(500 miles x 8 x \$0.375)*

1 roundtrip from Birmingham to Atlanta = \$113

Roundtrips – Birmingham to hiking = \$ 225