

Sabbatical Grant Application

We're grateful that you've expressed interest in taking this faithful and courageous step to help your pastor and congregation find renewed inspiration, health, and passion by exploring Sabbaticals in partnership with The Brethren Church. We encourage you to refer to the *Renewal and Rest: a Guide to Pastoral and Congregational Sabbaticals* throughout this process, available at <https://www.brethrenchurch.org/products/>.

To ensure logistics don't stand in the way of accessing these funds, the Vitality Office will gladly host Zoom meetings to answer any questions you have about the application process. Miles Larson, Director of Pastoral and Congregational Vitality will also be available by phone or email throughout the process.

The Future

Because we want these grants to help build a culture of Sabbaticals in The Brethren Church, we want to see this practice incorporated into the life and documents of the local churches that receive this grant. So, as part of the application process, we need to see:

1. **Policy:** we need to know that this isn't a one-time thing but that your congregation is open to building the practice of sabbatical into your local church culture. To that end, please write a Sabbatical Policy for your local church and have it approved by your leadership or congregation. Then, in turn, submit that policy to Miles (There are sample policies in the *Renewal and Rest: a Guide to Pastoral and Congregational Sabbaticals*). Let us know where this policy exists as well. Is it in your Manual of Procedure, pastoral contract, or church bylaws?
2. **Funding:** to ensure that your local church keeps this in focus, we're also asking how much you are committing to invest in the *next* Sabbatical for your pastor. For reference, if you save just \$25/month, you'll have \$2,100 in this fund in seven years when your pastor is typically next eligible for Sabbatical. For \$36/month, you'll have \$3,000 that you've set aside. And if you commit \$50/month over seven years, you'd have \$4,200 for the next Sabbatical. We need to know what amount you're committing to (not that you're limited to any of these hypothetical amounts.)

The Present

We also don't want this grant to be used for an isolated week away or to pay for continuing education. Those are noble pursuits, but not the purpose of this funding. We need you to illustrate that this money will be used as a part

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of a larger Sabbatical Leave. The application you submit will also include the following;

1. **Dates of the Sabbatical:** the Sabbatical must be at least ten weeks long. We suggest 12 weeks universally.
2. **Sabbatical Plan:** in cooperation with the church leaders, the pastor ought to create a Sabbatical plan that includes the following.
 - A. Who is on your teams? We recommend building two teams: a Sabbatical Renewal Team and a Sabbatical Planning Team. These are further explained in *“Renewal and Rest: a Guide to Pastoral and Congregational Sabbaticals”* or ask Miles for clarity.
 - B. Goals or, better yet, “Intentions.”
 - C. Where will you travel (if travel is a part of your Sabbatical)
 - D. New or continued spiritual disciplines
 - E. Key verses
3. **People:** A general plan for who will be filling in for your major responsibilities at the church

We’re asking for this information to help ensure you’ve thought through all essential elements and that the church and pastor are protected.

Stewardship

We will ask for an explanation of how this \$3,000 will help you achieve the most fruitful time on Sabbatical. What portion will be used for the pastor’s getaways? How much for pulpit fill or other congregational expenses?

Why Sabbatical Now?

We want to hear from the Pastor and the Moderator or other significant church leaders that there is buy-in from both parties. Understanding that the congregation supports this effort is as vital as knowing that the pastor is ready to embrace this time earnestly. So, we would like a paragraph or two from the moderator and a paragraph or two from the pastor telling us why the Sabbatical is appropriate for them and why now is the right time.

Application Checklist

- Written and approved Sabbatical policy and where it exists
- Financial commitment to the next pastoral Sabbatical
- The Sabbatical Plan (agreed on by the Pastor and Church Leader) includes the above elements.
- Stewardship plan. (Where is the money to be used?)
- Why Sabbatical now from Pastor
- Why Sabbatical now from Moderator (or another church leader)