

April 14, 2021

Dear Friends and Family of St. Matthew,

After a few months of deep discernment and planning and with special blessings and encouragement from our bishop and lay leaders within our own congregation, I am announcing that I will be taking my long delayed Sabbatical this year **from May 29th thru September 25th**. As many of you know, I was originally slated to go on Sabbatical in 2018, but then delayed until 2019, and then again to 2020. In each of these years, there was either a timing issue that wasn't right or, in the case of last year, a worldwide pandemic struck causing a complete disruption to our total operations.

As it turns out, this year will actually be the perfect opportunity for the Sabbatical for a number of reasons:

1. There is currently a whole host of online academic courses that are available this summer that did not exist in previous years and may not happen again as the world reclaims physical gathering over the next 12 months. I have already selected courses to attend virtually from Yale Divinity School (New Haven, Connecticut), Vancouver School of Theology (Vancouver, British Columbia), and Ripon College Cuddeson (England) with more offerings being discerned.
2. As with academic courses, several academic and "industry specific" conferences are also going all virtual making accessible a plethora of opportunities that would have been impossible prior to this year both for cost and the sheer ability of time to travel.
3. As we are still in an all-virtual format until vaccines are available to all age groups, there will never be a less expensive time for the parish to cover the Sunday liturgies as there will be no supply clergy costs. As vaccination trials for children continue, the timing is also perfect upon my return on St. Matthew Day, September 26th to assess physically gathering in the early autumn since the landscape of infections to vaccine availability will likely change greatly by the then. Additionally, our aspirants for Holy Orders, Caitlin Dawes and Elizabeth Holland, will have the unique opportunity to preach with regularity over the summer, thus providing them with invaluable experience in their preparations for seminary.
4. Doing it now as opposed to 2022 or even 2023 preserves total focus not only on post-pandemic recovery, but also to pick up where we left off prior to the pandemic with regard to our growth initiatives around children's ministries and social justice. The courses I will be taking will also specifically address these areas as well.

As the weeks draw closer to the end of May, I will be publishing an itinerary of opportunities I will be partaking in along with some specific goals and rhythms I'll be practicing to enhance my spiritual, mental, and physical wellness. I will also publish a list of books and articles I've compiled for study and reflection. Additionally, teams will be announced to handle the divisions of labor while I am away so that this time goes smoothly for all of us.

In closing, I wish to thank all of those in the parish who have been so supportive of this process of discernment and have helped make this Sabbatical a reality. I am excited for this opportunity for personal and professional development and for the opportunities it will bring to the parish for years to come.

Peace in Christ,



Kendall