



"Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while."

For there were many [people] coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Mark 6:31



What is Sabbatical?

The word sabbatical has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath ("to rest" or "to cease"). Sabbath keeping is setting aside time that God consecrates and makes holy. Ministers and congregations need a time set aside to be in God's presence.

Sabbatical leave is a time for our pastor to shift gears in, or to rest, disengage, study, reflect, and travel in order to return to minister among us refreshed and renewed in body, mind and spirit. (It is not a time for routine work, mid-career assessment, job search, retirement planning, or terminal leave. It is not a vacation).

Fr. Asonye's letter of agreement with Meade Church specifies that two weeks will be set aside for every year he serves at Meade Church for Sabbatical. It is normally taken within the first five to seven (5-7) years.

The year 2015 will be Fr. Asonye's seventh year with us. What a great blessing to be part of this wonderful opportunity for Ministry. Fr Asonye will be gone for his regular sabbatical four months and two weeks, one month regular vacation and two weeks continued education.

Sabbatical is a break from meetings, budgets, sermons, and people in need. It is a time for Fr. Asonye to receive spiritual nourishment and a change in perspective, to deepen his relationship with God, himself, and his family—a season of spiritual growth. This special time will also be a season of growth for the entire congregation. We are in Sabbatical as well. It is a special time for the congregation to engage anew their spiritual commitment. It is our community journey -- please come with us on this journey and you will never be the same.

Do other clergy go on sabbatical?

A growing number of clergy are taking sabbaticals. Indeed, Bishop Johnston has strongly encouraged congregations in our Diocese to provide our pastors with regular sabbatical leaves. For example, Bishop Johnston has been on Sabbatical since August 2015 for four months. The Rev. Jenny Montgomery of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, in Arlington and Rev. Ann Gillespie of Christ Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA are currently on Sabbatical. The Rev. David Gortner and Rev. Allison St. Louis returned recently from Sabbatical. They have returned refreshed and revitalized, and their parish and/or ministry has moved into new phases.

How long will Fr. Asonye be gone?

Fr. Asonye will leave on January 1, 2016 and return to the parish on June 1, 2016. His first Sunday back will be June 5, 2016.

What will Fr. Asonye be doing on his sabbatical?

In the first month of his sabbatical, Fr. Asonye will begin a two month travel to rediscover his spiritual journey to Nigeria for spiritual refreshment. This will be followed by 2 two weeks each visit to Wall Street Church, NY and Saddleback Church, CA. He will then spend another month in the Holy Land and Italy for retreat and to study. Upon return to the United States, Fr. Asonye will use the remaining time to read, write, rest, and vacation with his family .