



Westminster Presbyterian Church

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Rev. Kate McGee
Pastor

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Dear saints,

Last year, we received a Clergy Renewal Grant (CRG) from the Lilly Foundation of almost \$50,000, with the intention for me to take a twelve-week sabbatical in the summer of 2021. However, as the pandemic dragged on, the CRG program graciously allowed me to delay it by a year. This delay gives us more time for the risk of COVID-19 to decline and more places to re-open for this once-in-a-lifetime visit. It also allowed me to be present in an important transition time as we re-opened our building to in-person ministry and worship and began rebuilding relationships.

Our Personnel Policy provides for a sabbatical every five years, and the CRG is an amazing avenue to make that a reality. They want to renew pastors and churches so that ministry can continue: "The grants provide congregations support to enable their pastors to take time away from ministerial responsibilities for reflection and renewal. Pastors use the respite to engage in renewal experiences that often include travel, scholarly research and immersive experiences with different cultures and traditions...Ministers whose congregations are awarded the grants use their time away from the demands of daily ministry to engage in reflection and renewal. The approach respects the "Sabbath time" concept, offering ministers a carefully considered respite that may include travel, study, rest, prayer and immersive arts and cultural experiences."

I called my proposal "Chosen Family: The Sacrament of Belonging," exploring the way those concepts of family and belonging have taken root in both my personal and professional life. I'm incredibly proud of the work that our congregation has done in being family to each other, especially people who have not gotten to experience that in a church before. It is such a privilege to watch you choose each other again and again, to become family through baptism and sharing the Lord's Supper.

The Clergy Renewal Grant encourages pastors to use this time for rest and renewal, rather than taking on another project or even a labor of love. That's my intention - to rest in the love of our chosen family, to be renewed by my vocation of motherhood, to celebrate and catch up with friends I have known for over 15 years, and to reflect on my calling as pastor and who God is calling WPC to be in 2022 and beyond. As you probably can guess, it will be hard for me at first to separate from worrying about each of you every day! Even as I disconnect for a short while, I will be praying for you and looking forward to our August reunion and continuation of sharing the Water with all who thirst.

At least half of our sabbatical time, I will be in England with Lee and the boys, allowing them to meet much more of our extended family and chosen family across the pond. We will trace some of

Lee's childhood footsteps and let the boys do things that he did when he was a kid. It will also allow me to lean into my roles as wife and mom, and set my pastor hat down to be fully present with my family in a way I haven't gotten to do yet. We also will have a short jaunt to Rome, the city so special to our Christian family (and for the boys to taste real Italian food!) Special thanks to Dane Argentini and Erin Baltensperger for their planning advice!

In addition to providing for my own sabbatical expenses, I allocated the maximum percentage of the grant allowed for Westminster, which will provide for a sabbatical pastor, as well a church video project, telling our story and stories about our chosen family. Caitlin Cooke will be heading up that video storytelling project, and I'm so excited to see the results.

Personnel Committee will host a "Bon Voyage" and "Welcome Home" meals to mark the beginning and end of my sabbatical. In addition to a sabbatical pastor, Rev. Miranda Trussell and Rev. Dr. Jim Reinartz will be available for pastoral care and leadership as well.

Beloved friends, as we are in our eighth year of ministry together, I hope you know how much Westminster means to me and what a privilege it is to serve God alongside you, my chosen family. I planned this sabbatical with full confidence that God will continue to lead you in my absence - that with your energy, intelligence, imagination, and love, our mission will continue as strong as ever.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate McGee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Kate