

1920 ✦ 2020
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EASTERN STAR CHURCH
EPHESIANS 2:19-22

Come, let us rest awhile

“But so many people were coming and going that Jesus and the apostles did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said, “Let’s go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest.” (Mark 6:31 CEV)

*This is an excerpt of an expression of love written by a devoted member to their pastor. There was no immediate health concern, but the need for Sabbath and rest was clear so that no health concern would emerge. The following conveys the sentiment of the Eastern Star church family for their
Senior Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr.*

A Thousand Years of Work

“Your legacy is written in the gold pavements approaching the mansion of our God! I've said it to you before and I'll say it again ...You need to take a seriously long sabbatical if you are to continue pastoring our church! Your life is far more precious to me than your pastoring position! You have sacrificed, you have devoted, you have given, you have exceeded even your own expectations! Your impact on this church and this nation is your legacy! Therefore, this is advice from one older and wiser! This is advice from one who loves you from the depths of his heart! This is advice for one whose concern is for your immediate family, who needs you healthy. You've put in a thousand years of work!”

THIS BROCHURE AND ITS AUDIENCE

Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr. and Eastern Star Church have engaged in many groundbreaking projects, programs, and initiatives for the church and the community. From multiple campus facilities to the ESC ROCK Initiative and many other examples, God has allowed "the Word to be explained and Jesus to be exalted" through the senior pastor and members of Eastern Star Church.

Eastern Star Church sets the pace again by introducing the church's first ever, "Come, Let Us Rest Awhile: A Spiritual Program of Pastoral, Congregational, and Staff Sabbath Rest and Renewal." Pastor Johnson will engage his first ever sabbatical to renew, refresh, and restore his relationship with God and his family for continued service in ministry. The congregation and staff will experience Sabbath with practices designed to help them restore relationship with God and family as well.

The primary audience for this brochure is the family of Eastern Star Church including leaders, members, staff, and friends of the church, as well as community partners and stakeholders, and non-profit organizations.

Also, the brochure speaks to Indiana churches and churches all over the world, especially to those who might not conceive of the benefits of sabbatical and Sabbath rest for pastor, congregation, and staff. We encourage churches to explore a time of Sabbath and sabbatical such that God can renew, refresh, and restore their ministry. Jesus does say to us all, "Let's go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest" (Mark 6:31 CEV).

***Special thanks to the Lilly Endowment Inc. Clergy Renewal Program
for Indiana Congregations at Christian Theological Seminary
for the generous grant that helps make possible
Sabbath and Sabbatical at Eastern Star Church.***

STATEMENT FROM ELDER JAMES S. POORE II

Vice-Moderator, Church Council, Eastern Star Church

We, the congregation of Eastern Star Church, have been tremendously blessed by the 32-year ministry of Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr. Pastor Johnson has sacrificed, given generously, and exceeded expectations far and beyond what this congregation could have seen, hoped, or dreamed. His impact on this church and nation is his huge legacy. We would like to see the quality of his leadership continue, and, therefore, for several years church leadership has been advising and offering a sabbatical to Pastor Johnson. This is not only for the church, but also out of concern for his health and the well-being of his family.

In October 2019, the leadership gave Pastor Johnson the gift of a six-month sabbatical. We believe that his exceptional leadership can only be sustained with a sabbatical. We also believe that the sabbatical would offer the opportunity for our church and staff to have Sabbath. Our language is sabbatical for the pastor and Sabbath for the congregation and staff. We believe that with Pastor Johnson setting the example of sabbatical, we will be able to teach and develop the concept of Sabbath in our congregational members and church staff.

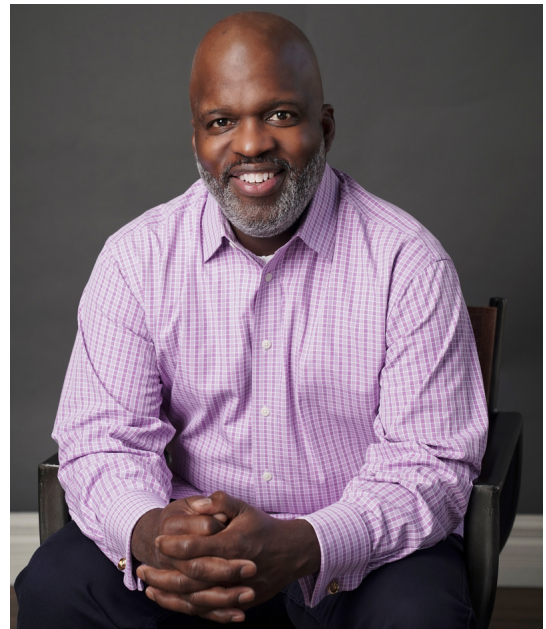
We formed a Sabbatical Planning Team (SPT) that has worked a year and a half to develop a plan for what Sabbath means for the congregation and the staff. The outlines are in this brochure. We see this as a golden opportunity for our pastor, the congregation and staff to look closely at our fast-paced lives and ministry, and vision and implement the true meaning of Sabbath in our lives.

We believe that this is a significant inflection point for our church ministry, and without sabbatical and Sabbath, it would ultimately mean a decline in the quality of our ministry and the spiritual lives of our pastor, church, and staff. At the conclusion of Pastor Johnson's sabbatical and the Sabbath practices of the church and staff, Eastern Star will be in a significantly stronger position to carry out its future ministry.

Sincerely,

James S Poore II

James S. Poore II



STATEMENT FROM JEFFREY A. JOHNSON, SR.

Senior Pastor, Eastern Star Church

Eastern Star Church is 100 years old and continues to be steadfast in living out its vision and mission of saving souls, making disciples, and being a social expression of faith in community. The Eastern Star Church Spiritual Program of Pastoral, Congregational, and Staff Sabbath Rest and Renewal provides an opportunity for rest, restoration, reflection, and rejoicing for our entire church family. Our theme is "Come, Let Us Rest Awhile," and the goal is the chance to restart and regroup with God, our families, and our church family.

Our Theme Scripture is Mark 6:31 CEV: "But so many people were coming and going that Jesus and the apostles did not even have a chance to eat. Then Jesus said, "Let's go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest."

The sabbatical, for me, as a pastor, is a time to rest and reconnect with my wife of 35 years, my four sons, and my extended family. The sabbatical provides a time for me to decompress and rest after 32 years of full time ministry in one church. In addition, the sabbatical offers me time to reassess what God is doing in my life, ministry, marriage and family. My hope is that this sabbatical will help me to be even stronger for future years of ministry.

I pray that we all, after years of sacrifice and service, we take this opportunity to slow down, hear from God, and recommit ourselves to the vision of our church. May we reflect and give thanks to God for the ways He has used us to accomplish His purpose and, moreover, take time to rejoice as we give Him the glory for the successes and victories of our church.

To His Glory!



Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr.
Senior Pastor, Eastern Star Church



STATEMENT FROM SHARON JOHNSON

First Lady, Eastern Star Church

Given the call from God for a first family, I have shared my husband and the father of my children with the Eastern Star Church family for over 30 years. God has richly blessed us for the sacrifices to have six months of time to reconnect and center our marital relationship as foremost in our lives. We will spend quantity and quality time in gorgeous, peaceful, spiritual, and relaxed atmospheres.

Thank you, Eastern Star Church, for being such a great and loving church family that understands the importance of rest and relaxation. An active mind gets tired just like an active body. Rest is healing and rest always improves!! I'm so excited for the time we'll have together creating precious memories that we'll never forget. The Lord always knows what's best for His children.

I appreciate this blessing and the demonstration of His love towards Pastor and me.

To His Glory,

Sharon Johnson

Sharon Johnson
First Lady, Eastern Star Church



STATEMENT FROM JEFFREY A. JOHNSON, II

Associate Pastor, Eastern Star Church

As a family member and staff member, I am extremely excited about the opportunity for my dad to have a six-month sabbatical. He has been putting in work with Eastern Star Church for 32 years; that is for as long as I have been alive. Growing up, I have had great memories of him present in my life. He was a great father, growing a church, leading the community, and taking care of his wife — all at the same time. And he made it all look so easy. I am aware of how much my mom and dad need this sabbatical and could not be more joyous to see them blessed and enjoying the fruit of their labor. In my mind, he is the G.O.A.T (Greatest of all Time). I look forward to him spending time with the family and his grandson.

I am also excited about the preaching and leadership opportunity presented to me in his absence. I look forward to ministering the word of God and growing together with the people of Eastern Star Church as we continue in the journey to have “the Word explained and Jesus exalted.” I am excited that my parents get to enjoy the fruits of their labor. It was difficult for my father to take time and step away, but I know that he will come back better, more fully present, and blessed beyond belief.

To His Glory,

Jeffrey A. Johnson, II

Jeffrey A. Johnson, II
Associate Pastor, Eastern Star Church



Biblical Foundations: Why Sabbath?



The origin of Sabbath is predicated upon the creation narratives and is codified in the fourth of the Ten Commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy." The biblical writer wants to lift up the admonition to "remember" or, more instructively stated, "re-member" as in reconnect, re-join, and stay in harmony with the body. We are disconnected from the body/our body when we do not set aside a day/time of holy rest. Reconnect with the Creator God who instructed and modeled Sabbath.

First, honor the Sabbath. A study of Sabbath in the Old Testament reveals that honoring the Sabbath was not a mere instruction for the Israelites. It was an expression of both God's and Israel's identity, and of God's compassion for his people.

Second, "keep" the Sabbath. Guard the sanctity of Sabbath by consecrating Sabbath. The word "keep" in this text comes from the Hebrew word, "qadash," which means "proclaim sanctify." In other words, shout it out, declare that this is a holy day that is to be protected from any intruders.

Jesus provides us a model of Sabbath in the New Testament. When Jesus spoke and demonstrated Sabbath, it often hinged upon rest, worship, and mercy. Sabbath is derived from the Greek word "sabbaton," meaning "day of weekly repose from secular avocations."

Sabbath & Sabbatical Values

Flowing from biblical guidance, all of our work around sabbatical and Sabbath for Pastor Johnson, the staff and congregation is based on the following four core values:

- ✦ Sabbath is a partnership with God, family, friends, and co-workers and includes accountability.
- ✦ Honor what the Bible says about Sabbath.
- ✦ Sabbath is not a “one size fits all.” It is distinct and intentional for every person, family, and church.
- ✦ Sabbath is more than a release from busyness; Sabbath is holistic including mind, body, and spirit.





Sabbath & Sabbatical Practices

PRACTICE #1: TIME & REST

"Let's go to a place where we can be alone and get some rest." (Mark 6:31 CEV)



Principle: Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, a leading Jewish theologian, helps us see ourselves and how we can be transformed by Sabbath rest. He writes, "Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath, we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul."

We must cultivate and nurture the seed of eternity within us, which connects us to God and to one another. We do so by taking time to withdraw from our labor. This allows us the time to consider God's work in us.

Consider that God was so mindful of honoring rest on the Sabbath day, that this same God "waited" until the first day of the week to raise the crucified Christ. The Sabbath was made for rest. When we rest, we are imitating God.

Application: How often do you unplug? Do you have a private place to hear from God? Are you intentionally taking time to hear from God? Do you engage in mental rest? Taking time for self? Seeking to have God move more in your life?

Suggestions: 1) Set aside one day a week for Sabbath. It might not be the whole day, but maybe a part of the day. 2) Set aside a space (home/office/nature) to serve as a Prayer Closet. One to two times a day, unplug, rest, and go to the Prayer Closet to commune with God.



PRACTICE #2: SANCTIFICATION

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my sabbaths.'" (Exodus 31:12, NIV)

Principle: God reminds us of God's holiness through the Sabbath. As God's people, we are obligated to honor the Sabbath to keep us sanctified (set apart).

God told the people of Israel that the Sabbath is a reminder of God's holy covenant, from "generation to generation."

Therefore, we are under God's eternal command to set apart time to rest and remember God's holiness.

Application: Identify the things that you routinely "set apart" time for. Pray for God to show you where they align in our holy covenant of Sabbath. (Exodus 31:12-16)

Suggestions: 1) Schedule a designated time each week for intimate conversation and connection with family, friends, and community with no distractions, television, cellphones, etc. 2) Set apart one day a week for radical self-care (spa, gym, therapy, etc.). 3) Set aside time for reflection on God's holiness (prayer, journaling, scripture reading, meditation, etc.).





PRACTICE #3: MERCY

On another Sabbath, Jesus was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. Jesus told the man, “Stretch out your hand!” He did so and his hand was completely restored. (Luke 6:6-11)

Principle: Jesus wanted us to be mindful that mercy is wrapped up in Sabbath. Jesus was admonished by the Pharisees (religious police) for “working” on the Sabbath. There was no disagreement that the Sabbath was holy and a day to refrain from work. What the religious police called work Jesus called acts of mercy. Jesus did not let them control the narrative by putting handcuffs on godly acts. Jesus’ retort to the offended was that he was Lord of the Sabbath and the intent of the Sabbath was in no way meant to restrict acts of mercy and justice. When Jesus saw a man who needed healing on the Sabbath, Jesus’ compassion moved him to heal (Luke 6: 6-11).

Application: The need for mercy is all around us — from feeding the hungry to clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, and standing up for social justice. How do you experience showing mercy? How can you show more mercy and develop this area in your life? “If you see a good fight, get in it” (Rev. Dr. Vernon Johns).

Suggestions: 1) Pick one church ministry as your “ministry of mercy” and volunteer (become more active in your church. This might be in the CARE Center, Exhortation Ministry, or prayer ministry). 2) Practice radical generosity (blessing people with unexpected thoughtfulness) that expresses your love and support (cards, phone calls, gifts, food, time, etc.). 3) Become involved in your community (vote, attend school board meetings, write your political representatives, mentor, support social justice initiatives).



PRACTICE #4: RELEASE FROM BURDENS

Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.
(Genesis 2:3)

Principle: In Genesis 2:2-3, God is established as the king of the universe, having conquered the chaos of the waters and brought order to creation. God, as Israel's King, delivered them from their burden of exceedingly heavy labor in Egypt and offered them rest.

Dr. Sandra Richter, German philologist and literary scholar points out that in Genesis 2, "sabat" is used to describe ceasing from one's labor. The language is not typically used to describe rest, but would resound with echoes of the Exodus from bondage and unbearable labor in Egypt. God offers relief from our burdens.

Application: What are your burdens? A job, excessive work drive, perception of being unproductive, financial pressures, family relationships, trying to accumulate material possessions, being perfect, fear of failure, etc.? What is going on that causes you to feel like you cannot rest?

Suggestions: 1) Pick at least one burden (e.g., cut back your work hours, etc.) and release it to God. 2) Release a person from a burden (forgive, apologize, offer forgiveness, repent, forgive yourself). 3) Make a decision to be okay with not being perfect, fear of failure, doing it all yourself, (let someone else get the credit).



PRACTICE #5: WORSHIP

Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day, he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. (Luke 4:16)

Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together... (Hebrews 10:25)

Principle: Jesus was consistently found in the house of worship, the synagogue, on the Sabbath day "as was his custom." (Luke 4:16). The synagogue was a place of assembly Jesus would know from his Jewish upbringing. Jesus also worshipped individually, taking time away to worship, study scripture, and commune with God alone. Being among other believers and independently studying God's word allows room for revelation, reflection, and repentance (Hebrews 10:25).

Application: What would it look like if we made a full commitment to participate in both individual and communal worship with our church family?

Suggestions: 1) Participate in communal worship (Sunday morning, midweek, special services, teen/youth/children worship). 2) Participate in the Christian education opportunities available to you (Sunday school, Women of the Word, Financial Freedom Institute, Men of Purpose, etc.)* 3) Participate in individual and personal worship (devotional life, scripture reading, prayer, worship music, meditation, etc.).

*NOTE: Some ministries have additional criteria for participation, spiritual gift assessment necessary.



PASTOR JOHNSON'S SABBATICAL

(JUNE 2021-DECEMBER 2021)

A pastoral sabbatical is an extended time in which the pastor steps away from the day-to-day practices of the ministry in order to focus on spiritual restoration and return enlivened, quickened by the Spirit of God, refreshed, and renewed. As part of his sabbatical, Pastor Johnson's activities are coordinated around three specific areas of renewal: personal, marriage and family.

Spiritual and Personal Renewal

Personal renewal is where Pastor Johnson can experience a time of spiritual pilgrimage by himself to hear from God unencumbered by the tethers of duty and day-to-day operations. There will be time for comfortable environments that allow for reading, meditation, writing, and introspection. The opportunity for relishing fresh mountain air, captivating scenery, sand, and water will renew Pastor Johnson's spirit.



Marriage Renewal

Marriage renewal is the opportunity for Pastor Johnson and Lady Sharon to have time to commemorate, cement, and renew their relationship. It allows them to fully be in each other's presence without the intrusion of hectic schedules and deadlines. It also enables them to mutually enjoy their love of travel, sports and the arts.



Family Renewal

Family renewal is the occasion to share time with the entire family — sons, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. It is the opportunity to share intergenerational time together as they bond, experience deeper connections, and enjoy one another's company during a time of refreshment as a family.



ABBREVIATED LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS PASTOR JEFFREY A. JOHNSON, SR.

- 1993** - Awarded the "Drum Major Award in Religion," Circle City Frontiers Service Club, Inc.
- 1996** - Recognized with the "Indianapolis Education Association Human Rights" award
- 1997** - Received the "Indiana Christian Leadership Conference" award
- 1999** - Recognized with the "40 Under Forty" award from Indianapolis Business Journal
- 2001** - Led ESC's first church planting, "New Life Worship Center" with Pastor John F. Ramsey
- 2003** - Joined ESC in opening its Northeast Campus in Fishers, Indiana
- 2004** - Led ESC's second church planting, "New Beginnings Fellowship Church" with Pastor James A. Jackson
- 2006** - Led ESC's third church planting, "New Horizons Church with Pastor Eric Wiggins
- 2007** - Published his first book, "The Song of Solomon," and launched Kingdom Word Ministries
- 2008** - Received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Martin University in Indianapolis
- 2009** - Received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Paul Quinn College in Dallas, Texas
- 2010** - Joined ESC in opening the doors of its Northwest Campus on Cooper Road in Indianapolis
- 2011** - Honored with the Distinguished Hoosier Award from Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels
- 2012** - Recognized as "Best Pulpit" by Black Christian News Network One
- 2014** - Published his sixth book, "Dialogue with Single Parents"
- 2015** - Received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Indiana Wesleyan University
- 2016** - Honored with the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Award from Boy Scouts of America
- 2017** - Launched the ROCK Initiative (Renewing Our Community for the Kingdom)
- 2018** - Received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Christian Theological Seminary (CTS)
- 2019** - Honored with the gift of a six-month sabbatical from the ESC Church Council
- 2020** - Awarded a Clergy Renewal grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. Indiana Clergy Renewal Program at Christian Theological Seminary
- 2020** - Led ESC in transitioning to an all-digital church worship and learning experience after the COVID-19 pandemic
- 2020** - Launched daily devotional series to provide spiritual content 24/7 on YouTube and Facebook
- 2020** - Celebrated the mortgage burning for the Cooper Road Campus with church members
- 2020** - Mentored other ministers and churches on how to adapt to online ministry and outreach

Metrics



In order to be successful in our sabbatical and Sabbath program, it is important that we are clear about metrics of success.. We detail them below for all to see. Our hope is that you would help us to be successful by your participation. Whenever Eastern Star Church sets it mind to anything, with God's help, we overwhelmingly accomplish our goals and plans. We are absolutely certain that we will be successful and the pastor, church, the staff, and the congregation will be unusually blessed by God. We would like to let you know how you can help us be successful with your participation in the following:

Eastern Star Church - Congregation Metrics

**As an Eastern Star Church body,
we want to demonstrate our love
and support of Pastor Johnson's
Sabbatical through ...**

- ☒ Consistent worship and Christian education attendance
- ☒ Consistent giving

**As an Eastern Star Church body,
we embrace and integrate the
practice of the Sabbath into our
lives through ...**

- ☒ Reviewing the Sabbatical and Sabbath brochure developed by Eastern Star Church
- ☒ Integrating Sabbath practices into our lives

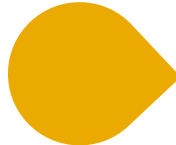
Timeline

2021 - Q1



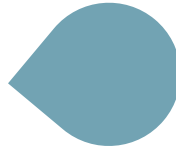
- Start promoting Sabbath on ESC website, social media platforms, and via community partners and media (radio, TV, etc.)

- Launch 2021 Fast with "Restoration" theme

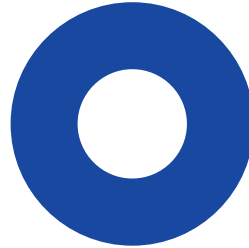


- Start promoting short devotionals, teachings and testimonials from Sabbatical and Theology Team

- Start promoting short devotionals, teachings and testimonials from ESC pastors, staff and guest speakers.

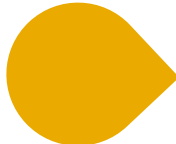


2021 - Q2



- Distribute Sabbath Living Journal & Toolbox

- Staff and congregation send off for Pastor Johnson

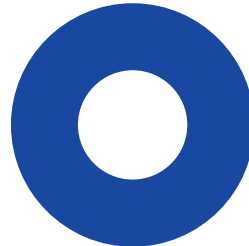


- Launch ESC community service events

- Staff creates one to two individual performance goals to reflect Sabbath renewal

- Vacation Bible School Theme: Restoration/Renewal

2021 - Q3



- August ministry hiatus

- Provide ESC staff with weekly "gift of time"



- Invite church members to share their own experiences related to Sabbath

2021 - Q4



- Sponsor a staff "Rotational Day of Fun"

- Church hosts annual revival



- Observe the annual ESC hiatus of rest for ministries and staff (August and December)



**ESC Senior Pastor
Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr.**

Pastor's Playlist:

Who Will Preach in Pastor's Absence?

When Senior Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr., is on sabbatical in 2021, he has selected the following preachers and pastors, among others, to preach in his absence. ESC's Associate Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson II will be the principal preacher during his father's sabbatical.



**ESC Associate Pastor
Jeffrey A. Johnson, II**



Pastor John Jenkins
First Baptist Church
of Glenarden



Dr. Frank A. Thomas
Christian Theological Seminary



Dr. Frederick Haynes III
Friendship-West Baptist Church



Dr. Leah Gunning Francis
Christian Theological Seminary



Dr. Ralph D. West II
The Church Without Walls



Pastor Janae Pitts-Murdock
Light of the World Christian Church



Pastor Michael Bryant
Westside Baptist Church



Pastor Eric Wiggins
New Horizons Church



Dr. James A. Jackson
New Beginnings
Fellowship Church



Pastor Michael Johnson
Mount Pleasant Missionary
Baptist Church



Pastor Kim Outlaw
Living Water
Fellowship Church



Dr. Maurice Watson
Metropolitan Baptist Church

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a sabbatical?

A: A pastoral sabbatical is an extended period of time when a pastor steps away from the day-to-day practices of ministry to focus on their own spiritual development and restoration with an eye toward returning to the congregation with renewed energy for ministry.

Q: Is a sabbatical biblical?

A: There are numerous examples, including in Genesis 2:2 (NASB): "By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done,"

Q: Is anyone else taking a sabbatical?

A: The plan also calls for the entire church, including staff, to take a time of Sabbath. Our plan will allow the pastor and congregation to be blessed by spiritual renewal and motivate us to move forward through the next years of ministry that God has laid before us.

Q: How will the administrative structure function in Pastor Johnson's absence?

A: For any decision that would normally require Pastor Johnson, an appropriate Church Council member will operate in that role. No "new" initiatives, voting items, or major decisions are planned due to congregation and staff "rest" also. Normal operational procedure will be executed. Pastor Johnson will establish any worship changes prior to his departure.

Q: Who will be preaching in Pastor Johnson's absence?

A: Pastor Johnson has a wonderful agenda of speakers/leaders prepared. (Please see page 19 of this brochure).

Q: How can the congregation help make the sabbatical a success?

A: Maintain consistent worship and Christian education attendance; maintain consistent giving; regularly pray; review the sabbatical and Sabbath brochure developed by Eastern Star Church; and integrate Sabbath practices into our lives. (Please see pages 10-14, 18 of this brochure).

Thank you to the staff of Eastern Star Church

As much as the skeletal frame provides support, shape, and protection to the soft tissue, muscles, and organs of the human body, so does the staff provide support, shape, and protection to the ministries, programs, and initiatives of Eastern Star Church. This reality is no different with “Come, Let Us Rest Awhile: A Spiritual Program of Pastoral, Congregational, and Staff Sabbath Rest and Renewal.” We simply could not have gotten this far without determination, creativity, responsiveness, expertise, and vision of the staff.

On behalf of Pastor Johnson, the Church Council, and the entire congregation, we salute and take our hats off to the staff. You are simply amazing. God bless you richly for the unseen hours of sacrifice and dedication.

Thank you!



Not all Eastern Star Church employees represented in the photo.

Thank you to the volunteers of Eastern Star Church

Eastern Star Church volunteers are our heroes behind the scenes. Thank you for dedicating your time and talent to help with the duties and details of our various ministries. You help us reach and touch the congregation, the community and the world. Without you, we couldn't get it done at this high level of excellence. May you be blessed beyond measure. We love and appreciate you for all that you do.

Thank you!



3

Thank you to the Sabbatical Planning Team

In September 2019, Pastor Jeffrey a Johnson, Sr., and the Church Council of Eastern Star Church convened the Sabbatical Planning Team to offer a vision and plan for sabbatical for Pastor Johnson and Sabbath for the congregation and staff. Pastor Johnson invited Dr. Frank A. Thomas to serve as a consultant to the process. This Sabbatical Planning Team developed, "Come, Let Us Rest Awhile: A Spiritual Program of Pastoral, Congregational, and Staff Sabbath Rest and Renewal."

Given their hard work, discipline, spiritual insight, creativity, energy, and outstanding final product, Pastor Johnson and the Church Council, on behalf of the entire Eastern Star congregation and staff would like to say thank you to the Sabbatical Planning Team.

Sabbatical Planning Team

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Elder James Poore (Planning Team chair)
Pastor Anthony Murdock
Rene Parson
Anthony Warren

THEOLOGY & SABBATH TEAM

Minister Darrell Daniel (lead)
Minister Nicole Barnes
Minister Andrea Lewis
Minister Kimacka Randle

RESEARCH TEAM

Howard Stevenson (lead)
Eric Dozier
Jean Rogers

BENEFIT AND RENEWAL TEAM

Deacon Robert Wright (lead)
Tony Mason
Nancy Rogers

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

Elder Bill Shrewsberry (lead)
Tim Coleman
Kristin Corbitt
Patrick Wooten

FINANCIAL IMPACT TEAM

Elder Randall Lewis (lead)
David Pack
Tarah Reid

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Shari Finnell (lead)
Brenda Harrington
Maurice Markey
Elder Lukau Matuka

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Lisa Rattler

CONSULTANT

Dr. Frank A. Thomas

EASTERN STAR NEWS RELEASE FOR RECIPIENTS OF GRANTS IN THE 2020 LILLY ENDOWMENT CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR INDIANA CONGREGATIONS

Contact: Shari Finnell, ESC Director of Communications
Email: sfinnell@easternstarchurch.org

For Immediate Release: Jan. 17, 2021

Eastern Star Church has received a grant of \$50,000 to enable its senior pastor, Pastor Jeffrey A. Johnson, Sr., to participate in the 2020 Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations. Eastern Star Church is one of 28 congregations in Indiana selected to participate in this competitive program, which is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and administered by Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. Established by the Endowment in 1999, the program's grants allow congregations to support their pastors with the gift of extended time away from their ministerial duties and responsibilities.

Ministers whose congregations are awarded the grants use their renewal experiences 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. Through the program, Indiana congregations may apply for grants of up to \$50,000 to support renewal experiences for their pastors. Collaborative in nature and implementation, the program allows congregations to partner with their ministers in developing experiences that address their unique renewal needs and aspirations. Recognizing that ministers' families are subject to the stress and demands placed on pastoral leaders, the program encourages pastors to involve their families in renewal activities. Congregational needs during the minister's renewal experience also are considered. Up to \$15,000 of the grant may be used to fund interim pastoral leadership during the pastor's retreat, as well as for renewal activities within the congregation.

Since the Endowment established the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations in 1999 and the National Clergy Renewal Program for congregations in the other 49 states in 2000, more than 3,000 congregations have participated in the program, including the 28 Indiana congregations receiving grants in 2020.

"Pastors play an important role in nourishing the spiritual lives of individuals and in guiding the work of the Christian congregations they serve," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "Through these grants, we seek to honor pastors for their extraordinary service and enable them to engage in a brief period of rest and renewal. We have learned that such experiences invigorate the leadership of pastors and bring new vitality to their congregations as well."

The Rev Dr. Robert Saler, director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs, noted that the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations integrates key attributes of healthy congregations, including a mutual respect for the renewal needs of both ministers and the congregations they serve.

"The program provides an opportunity for congregations to express appreciation for their ministers' service and leadership," Saler said. "At a time when leaders are often praised for their pace of innovation and productivity, the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations pays homage to the timeless wisdom embedded in the practice of reflection and renewal."

Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis directs the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program for Indiana Congregations and a second program for congregations across the United States through its Center for Pastoral Excellence.



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