

EPISCOPACY

Each year this committee which consists of Keith Blank, Gerald Baum, Robert Shuey, Lewie Bennett, Bishop Bruce Hill, and Marlin Lafferty presents a report to this National Conference body. And each year we stress the fact that our Bishop is a man of great integrity with a fantastic work ethic.

At our quarterly Episcopacy meetings we discuss anything and everything as it pertains to the office of the Bishop including his family life. He has an excellent relationship with his Church Center Staff family as well as his immediate family with a very supportive wife, Gloria.

As you may recall from previous reports it has always been a bit of a push to get the Bishop to take his vacation time each year which points to his ongoing desire to be involved in the building of God's Kingdom.

Here is but a few of the major emphases that the Bishop worked on this year:

1. **Strategic Evaluation-** the Bishop launched a detailed evaluation of the new denominational structure which was implemented. This much needed evaluation focused on three areas: operational, relational, and financial.
2. **Ministry Standards-** He worked with Jeff Byerly to plan courses to make sure we meet the rule requirements that all individuals with EC pastoral credentials take courses on EC doctrine, polity, etc.

And in his spare time (ha) he worked on:

3. **Annual Conference-** (a lot of work done here)- he has reimagined, rearranged, and reinstated what Annual Conference means, from start to finish...he has established an all new structure with educational, fellowship and worship as the focus.

Other than these main concerns he has many day to day "normal" responsibilities such as his involvement in stationing, and being an ex officio member of every committee. I do believe we would be hard pressed to keep up with his schedule.

In light of all these responsibilities we strongly recommend the approval of the attached document stating the need for our Bishop to take a much needed sabbatical.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Marlin Lafferty, Chairman

Sabbatical for the Bishop of the Evangelical Congregational Church - 2019

Background

According to the Evangelical Congregational Church Sabbatical/Renewal Leave Guidelines for Pastors, "The word sabbatical has its roots in the Biblical concept of the 'Sabbath' which means to rest or to cease work after seven days or years. Genesis 2:1-3 notes that God rested from his work of creation after seven days. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11) describe the Sabbath as a day that you cease from work and rest. Leviticus 25 is subtitled 'The Sabbath Year.' Deuteronomy 15 describes a period after seven years in which release from several kinds of debt and labor are itemized. Jesus' forty days in the wilderness marked a turning point in his ministry. Moses' time tending sheep prepared him to hear God's call. Paul spent time in the desert of Arabia after his Damascus road experience preparing him for the work God was calling him to do."

Following the death of Bishop Leibensperger in 2010, the Healthy Leaders Task Force shared the following recommendation for Episcopal sabbaticals with the Episcopacy Committee in 2010. It was then presented to the 2011 National Conference which adopted and implemented the following:

1. The Bishop needs protracted time during each term in office to rest, renew himself, spend time with his family, and to engage in educational / enrichment opportunities which he otherwise may not be able to do due to the high demands of the office.
2. The timing of the sabbatical will be set in consultation with the Episcopacy Committee and National Executive Committee, though experience has shown that a sabbatical between mid-June through mid-September is advantageous.
3. In the year of the sabbatical, the commission meetings and budget preparation should be shifted to later in the fall with the National Ministry Team meeting held after Thanksgiving so as to not overwhelm the returning Bishop and family with an overflowing schedule.
4. The Bishop should be freed from preaching at all camp meetings during the sabbatical.
5. The sabbatical shall consist of no fewer than:
 - 30 consecutive days during the third year of the first term
 - 60 consecutive days during the third year of the second term
 - 30 consecutive days during the third year of the third term

Three aspects of Sabbatical

This sabbatical provides an opportunity to set aside time for **renewal** through rest and digging deeper into God's purpose; as well as experiences to **retool** by exploring new frontier through study, retreat, and dialogue; and to **refocus** by being open to the Holy Spirit's leading.

The Sabbatical Plan for Bishop Bruce D. Hill

The three aspects of this Sabbatical

1. Renewal

- Bishop Hill will spend significant time engaging in physically and emotionally renewing activities.
- Bishop Hill will set aside time to meet with God through prayer and study of the Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

2. Retool

- Bishop Hill will participate in a continuing educational experience as opportunities are identified.

3. Refocus

- Bishop Hill will provide the Episcopacy Committee with a document summing up what he's learned during this sabbatical experience.

Compensation:

- The Bishop will receive his full compensation during the time of the sabbatical.
- The sabbatical is in addition to and separate from the vacation time provided to the Bishop.
- The Bishop's continuing education fund will be used for educational opportunities.

Timing:

- The 60-day sabbatical will begin July 1, 2019 and run through September 1, 2019; a total of 63 days.

Responsibilities:

- Bishop Hill will be released from the normal and usual responsibilities of the office including participating in denominational and affiliate board and committee meetings.
- Bishop Hill will be released from all preaching responsibilities.
- The Vice-Chairman of National Conference with the National Conference Executive Committee is available to deal with issues as they arise.

- Daily responsibilities of the bishop's office will be handled by the Executive Director and Assistant to the Bishop.
- The Executive Director will facilitate the bi-monthly Conference Network Team tactical meetings and monthly BEDAS (Bishop, Executive Director, Associates and Secretary of National Conference) group meetings.
- Each Associate will oversee their area of responsibility.
 - Church Health
 - Global Ministries
 - Kingdom Extension
 - Ministerial Development
- District Field Directors will oversee the work and direction of their individual districts.

Communication:

- General Communication
 - Various announcements will be made to the members of National Conference to inform them of the bishop's sabbatical and the need for this time to be uninterrupted.
 - This includes refraining from calling his cell phone and emails to the bhill@eccenter.com email address.
 - Directions will be given (with appropriate reminders) of who is handling specific responsibilities during the bishop's sabbatical.
 - An automated "Out of Office" announcement will be set up on the bishop's email account directing people to the proper individuals to contact.
 - The bishop's Church Center voicemail will be changed to announce the sabbatical and direct people to those handling the responsibilities of the office.
- Specific Communication
 - A new private email address will be set up so the Executive Director and Assistant to the Bishop can email the bishop as needed.
 - This will allow for communication with the bishop without drawing the bishop into all the email that comes to his normal account.
 - The Executive Director and Assistant to the Bishop will be empowered to call the bishop's cell phone to consult with him as needed.