

Grace Brevard

16 April 2023

Ps. 23:1-2 "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters."

Dear Grace Brevard (and beyond),

As Elders of Grace Brevard (and I'm sure you'll agree), we are incredibly blessed to have Brian Land as our Pastor. It is also our responsibility to care for him just as he cares and loves for each one of you. That is why we have determined, with Brian's agreement, to temporarily send our pastor out to pasture. (With good intent!) A Sabbatical is a biblical concept of renewal and rest. From the example of Leviticus 25 God calls on the farmers and land to rest on the 7th year after 6 years of labor and to trust on Him to provide during this time of rest. These are the points that we considered why now is the right time for a Sabbatical:

- Grace Brevard is now in its 7th year with Brian at the helm since the beginning.
- Brian has diligently worked in ministry now 27 years without ever having a Sabbatical.
- The idea of Sabbath rest is God ordained and is vital to rest, renew one's energies, gain perspective, reconnect with a deeper level with God and family.
- Statistics are absolutely shocking when looking at the rate of burnout for pastors. We would like to prevent that and decrease the stress that comes from such a weighty calling.
- Our church as a whole will benefit from this Sabbatical as we rely on God's provision during Brian's absence to fill his numerous roles which will challenge and grow us spiritually and as a body of believers.

This is what it will look like:

- Brian will start their Sabbatical on 1 June and return 28 August (10 weeks of paid time for Sabbatical and 2 weeks of vacation time). This is the average time amongst churches. Amy will join Brian periodically on the Sabbatical but will also continue her job here.
- There are 3 goals for Brian during Sabbatical: Rest, Renewal and Professional Development.
- This is his time to disconnect from Grace Brevard. Please no contact with Brian or Amy. The Elders will be available for any concerns/prayer requests as they occur.
- We are blessed to have men in this congregation and connections outside that will come in and preach during this period.

And just in case you were wondering, Brian has committed to returning to his original role as teaching elder\lead pastor following the Sabbatical (for no less than a year but, God willing, for many years ahead!) as he continues to love and serve God (as the Shema says) with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, and to love his neighbor as himself.

Please continue to be in prayer for Brian and Amy as they prepare for this important period in their lives. We would love to answer any questions you may have: Mark Emory (506-0102), Ethan Lydon (330 242-3929), Grant Pierron (423-2238).

Brian and Amy wanted to say a few words as well:

Grace Friends,

Amy and I are incredibly blessed to be part of this church. In the Fall of 2016 a handful of us met in a living room to dream and pray about the Lord creating a new Gospel-Community that would be founded on the freeing Grace of the Lord which propels us outward into our community. Like in just about every church plant, we had glorious seasons of growth, passion and love intermingled with difficult times that forced us to rely on the Lord's strength (and into the dance of repentance and forgiveness). Today, in a post-covid culture where things have changed far more radically than we can know, Grace Brevard is in a fantastic place of strength, growth and community, with excellent sacrificial-love reaching outward.

That being said, this is a God-ordained time for Amy and I to reset and re-fresh. We've been in full-time ministry for 27 years straight and have seen incredibly highs and painful lows. With Grace clicking on all cylinders, Amy and I are excited and blessed to have you all send us out to catch our breaths, reconnect with each other, reconnect with the Lord and prayerfully catch a fresh vision for what God has for us and Grace Brevard. This is a huge act of faith for both of us. We all get to reset and see how this is the Lord's church - for His Glory and our Good – as well as being a blessing to our town.

So, thank you. We are excited, nervous and prayerful. I deeply want to have my heart open to the Lord's voice; I need God to help me to turn off the distraction of busy-ness; I need to learn deeper and deeper the very thing I preach every week: that God's love and my value is based on the sacrifice and grace of Jesus, not on my performance. Please pray for us in these areas as we pray for all of you as you grow in the Gospel and in relationships with one another.

- HESED,

Brian and Amy