

**What is Renewal Leave?** A Pastoral Renewal Leave is an extended period of time, up to 12 weeks, spent away from the church, for a pastor to focus on resting and rejuvenating his/her body and soul to return to a more vital ministry in the local church. Pastor Mark will rest, reflect, and take a break from his pastoral duties during the first four weeks. The second four weeks of the Leave will be a time to rejuvenate and reignite his passion for ministry through continuing education classes, a personal spiritual retreat, and working with a mentor. The final four weeks of the Renewal Leave will be a time for him to phase back into the life of the UMCOP.

**How long will the Renewal Leave last?**

The Renewal Leave will last 12 weeks, from January 4 to March 27, 2022.

**Will Pastor Mark be paid during the Renewal Leave?**

Yes, the UMCOP will continue to pay Pastor Mark his salary and benefits during the Renewal Leave. According to Paragraphs 350 and 351 in the 2016 United Methodist Church Book of Discipline, a pastor on renewal leave maintains his/her appointment to the local church during the Renewal Leave. The Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church interprets that to mean the local church is responsible for paying the Pastor's salary and benefits during the Leave. We have applied for financial assistance from the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation to partially cover the cost of the Leave.

**Is the Renewal Leave considered part of Pastor Mark's vacation?**

No, the Renewal Leave is separate from vacation leave.

**Does Pastor Mark communicate with the church during the Renewal Leave?**

Pastor Mark will not communicate with the church during the first two months of the Leave. If a member or friend of the congregation needs something the pastor would normally do, that person should contact Merry Jorgensen, the Church Administrator (715-356-3041; [office@umchurchofthepines.org](mailto:office@umchurchofthepines.org)), and the concern will be forwarded to the appropriate person. Emerson Coy, Pat Nolet, or other area pastors will be available if there is a death or serious situation with a church member. If there is a crisis situation, Pastor Mark may be contacted by the leadership.

### **What happens to the continuity in the life of the church?**

As much as possible, we will try to keep the church running as it is now. Worship times, online worship and in-person worship, Church School for children, committee meetings, church communications, etc., will all continue. Pastor Mark

and the lay leadership have already planned a Lenten devotional and activities for Lent.

### **Who will take on Pastor Mark's duties while he is gone?**

The multiple tasks of the pastor have been assigned to various people within the congregation. For instance, Holly Nash, Emerson Coy, and Pat Nolet will take the lead in worship and provide the message. Jim Andersen (Council of Ministries Chair), Emerson Coy (Lay Leader), Holly Nash (SPRC Chair), and Merry Jorgensen (Church Administrator) will take the lead in the administration duties of Pastor Mark while he is on Leave. Merry Jorgensen (Church Administrator) will serve as a clearinghouse for questions. During the Renewal Leave, if a member or friend of the congregation needs something the pastor would normally do, that person should contact Merry Jorgensen (715-356-3041; [office@umchurchofthepines.org](mailto:office@umchurchofthepines.org)) and the concern will be forwarded to the appropriate person.

### **Will the Committees of the UMCOP still be able to meet and function?**

Yes, all the Committees will continue to meet and function in Pastor Mark's absence. However, if a critical issue develops, the District Superintendent would be able to assist us.

### **Are we assured Pastor Mark will not be moved to a new church in 2022?**

The Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church cannot assure us that Pastor Mark will not receive an assignment to a new church in 2022. However, we have asked that if we are to cover the cost of the Leave, our congregation should have time to benefit from it. Therefore, we have asked the Cabinet of the Wisconsin Conference not to reappoint Pastor Mark in 2022.

### **If I have questions regarding the Renewal Leave, who should I contact?**

Before the Renewal Leave, you may contact Pastor Mark (715-356-3041) or the members of the SPRC Renewal Team: Holly Nash (715-356-6861), George Douma (715-356-7443), or Sara Rausch (715-571-9614).