



March 3, 2021

212 EAST CAPITOL ST NE · WASHINGTON, DC 20003

Dear Pastor Lamar and the New and Renewing Missions Table,

Writing today to share my deep gratitude and appreciation for the Personal Sabbath Mini-Grant that was awarded to me last month. When I heard this idea was being discussed, I was excited to learn more and eagerly applied immediately after receiving the email.

My Sabbath was a restful three days with my fiancé, Marshall, and our dog, Bosco. The funds made it financially possible for us to rent a cabin in the forest near Front Royal, VA before the start of Lent. This allowed us to unplug, unwind, and get some distance not only from our work lives but also from the events that happened on our block and in our Capitol Hill neighborhood at the beginning of January.

While at the cabin, we spent a lot of time reading, playing cribbage, cooking good food, and drinking good wine. We had time in the hot tub, took some beautiful walks in the snowy woods, and enjoyed a change of pace and scenery. It was a blessing that the internet and cell service were spotty, so checking email was not even a worry of ours! We also had the opportunity to do some of our wedding preparation, planning, and homework, so having dedicated time without distractions to do that was a gift, as well.

Also, it was helpful to get away shortly after attending the Bishop's Academy on Sabbath and reprioritize rest and release in my life. While I was gone, I was able to think a lot about how I've let my work/life boundaries and balance slip, especially during the pandemic, and reprioritize and recommit to those boundaries for myself, my family, my congregation, and for God. I've decided to take a new Sabbath Day (Mondays) as I realized that there was too much on Fridays that I had to get done for Sunday, never allowing myself have a break. Living into that for a few weeks now has been life-giving and has allowed me to embrace 'doing less' and Sabbath as a spiritual practice.

Again, my many thanks for your support of my Sabbath getaway and for making this opportunity possible. It's incredible what a few days away can do to a person's mind and soul and the ways God shows up amidst our Sabbath rest, release, and resistance.

Peace,

Ben Hogue

P.S. I've attached some photos on the next page! Please feel free to use these photos or any words in Synod Communications. If you need a more succinct quote or blurb, I'm happy to provide one.



