



A Sabbath to the Lord

Extracts of Proposal to PCC – 3 March 2026 (v1)

Summary

This document contains extracts of a proposal to the extraordinary PCC meeting on 3 March 2026.

Vision

Baked into creation itself is the principle of Sabbath rest (Genesis 2.1-3; Exodus 20.8-11). It continues as a key theme throughout Scripture, as a sign of the covenant, part of the prophets' vision of new creation, finding fulfilment in Jesus, and pointing to our everlasting inheritance and perfect rest (Hebrews 4.9-10).

An aspect of this is the seventh-year Sabbath (Leviticus 25.1-7): an extended period of time giving rest both to the people and to the land. It had agricultural significance – letting the land lie fallow – and spiritual significance – trusting in God's provision and not their own work. Jesus develops this when he talks about God pruning the vine (John 15.1-4): bearing less fruit *today* to bear more fruit *tomorrow*.

I believe God is calling us to observe an extended Sabbath, to rest, pray, grow in fellowship and discern God's vision for our future mission and ministry: his 'bigger yes', his 'immeasurably more'.

I believe God is calling us to lay down and let go of our midweek ministries, giving thanks for the faithfulness of many, so our hands may be open and ready to receive all he is calling us into next.

Proposal – 'A Sabbath to the Lord'

1. From an agreed date (for discussion) and for an indefinite period of time, we call the church to observe an extended 'Sabbath to the Lord'...
 - a. Making and holding space for rest, prayer, fellowship and discernment
 - b. Stopping most of our midweek ministries
 - c. Reaffirming our commitment to God, one another and our shared vision and mission
2. During the extended Sabbath...
 - a. The following ministries will stop (not pause):
 - i. Bereavement Group
 - ii. Lunch Club
 - iii. Walking Group
 - iv. Coffee Mates (and Knit & Natter)
 - v. Life Groups (including Renew Wednesday) will be given the opportunity to stop
 - vi. (See separate proposal regarding Monday and Thursday Toddlers)
 - b. The following ministries will continue / start:
 - i. Sunday services and activities
 - ii. Alongsiding, with a focus on prayer, discernment and 'Immeasurably More'
 - iii. Regular opportunities for corporate prayer (for discussion)
 - iv. Midweek fellowship for those who need additional support (for discussion)
 - v. Social activities to help us grow / reconnect in fellowship

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3. By the end of the extended Sabbath we hope to have...
 - a. Grown in prayer and devotion to God, one another and our neighbour
 - b. Researched our local area and gathered ministry ideas
 - c. Discerned a clear vision for how God is calling us to serve our parish
 - d. Identified leaders to share responsibility for mission and ministry

Engagement

If as a PCC we believe this is the right thing to do, how do we engage the wider church, to 'sell' the vision and help people engage fully with it, to make the most of this time?

If we agree the APCM as the start date that gives us almost two months to do wider communication and engagement without delaying things too much (the summer is almost five months away). For example:

1. Using 'Vicar Writes' to share information / explore Sabbath themes in the Bible
2. Planning Holy Week reflections on 'waiting' – maybe even with evening prayer on Zoom?
3. Stop the John series at Easter, and have two weeks teaching on relevant themes, before APCM
4. In the meantime, we adjust the idea of holding small gatherings / me + a PCC member visiting Life Groups – we could do that between now and the APCM, with a focus on sharing the vision for the Sabbath time and hearing people's questions about that, instead of finance / wider vision

Something else we should consider is a form of service / liturgical way for people to give thanks *and mourn* for what has gone before and is now ended. We must recognise the reality of sadness – but also that for Christians death / loss isn't the end of our story. This is something I suggest we plan for early on during the Sabbath time (I don't know what it would be yet).