

# REST ~ REFLECT ~ (RIDE) ~ RENEW

## THE PASTOR'S SABBATICAL ITINERARY

Several members of Calvary have expressed a desire to know where our pastor will be and what he'll be doing during his sabbatical this summer. While an exhaustive itinerary would be neither practical nor useful, the overview below should give you a general idea of where his travels will take him. Please remember that you'll be able to see some pictures and read occasional reflections on his time away by visiting his personal blog, which can be found at [www.ruralrev.net](http://www.ruralrev.net).

### PHASE 1: "DECOMPRESSION" AND FAMILY VACATION

"Phase 1" of Pastor Alex's sabbatical officially begins on Monday, May 30, 2022. For the first three and a half weeks of his time away, he'll take some time to "decompress" by doing things that allow him to disconnect from the busy rhythms of ministry at Calvary. His activities during this time will include reading, riding his bicycle, visiting with members of his family, and making final preparations for "Phase 2" of his sabbatical. The highlight of this phase will be a family vacation that will take Pastor Alex, Teresa, and Windham to Orlando for some fun at the Disneyworld and Universal Studios theme parks.



### PHASE 2: "CYCLING WITH THE SAINTS," A SABBATICAL PILGRIMAGE

"Phase 2," which is the heart of Pastor Alex's sabbatical, will be "cycling pilgrimage" in the United Kingdom. Over the course of about seven weeks, he'll ride through parts of Ireland, Scotland, and England, visiting communities that have been significant in the development and spread of the Celtic Christian tradition in that part of the world. The specific contours of this journey look like this:

- **June 23:** Pastor Alex flies out of Raleigh, bound for Dublin Ireland.
- **June 24 to 28 in Dublin:** Pastor Alex will spend a few days seeing the sights in Dublin, the Irish capital. His plans include a visit to the library of Trinity College to see *The Book of Kells*, an illuminated copy of the Gospels that dates back to around 800 AD; and a day trip to Glendalough, the site of an early Christian monastic settlement that dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> century.
- **June 29 to July 2 in Kildare:** On June 29, Pastor Alex takes a commuter train to the community of Kildare, where he'll pick up the bicycle that he'll be using for the summer. Before he hits the road, however, he'll spend a few days studying the history of this ancient community, which was founded by Saint Brigid, an early female Christian leader who's considered to be one of the three great saints of Ireland.
- **July 3 to July 4 in Clonmacnoise:** After his first significant day of cycling—a 55-mile ride from Kildare—Pastor Alex will spend two days in Clonmacnoise, the site of another well-known, early Christian community. Along with the ruins of an ancient cathedral and castle, Clonmacnoise is known for its "High Crosses," the decorative and theologically instructive monuments that were often erected to mark the entrance of monastic settlements.
- **July 5:** Cycling from Clonmacnoise to Athboy
- **July 6:** Cycling from Athboy to Dundalk
- **July 7:** Cycling from Dundalk to Downpatrick



- **July 8 to July 10 in Downpatrick:** Pastor Alex's next major stop is in Downpatrick, a community in Northern Ireland whose cathedral is believed to be the burial place of Saint Patrick. The life of this early Christian leader is much more dynamic than our "Saint Patrick's Day" festivities would lead us to believe. Having escaped from slavery in Ireland, Saint Patrick received a vision in which God instructed him to return and share the gospel with his captors. His ministry led to the establishment of so many churches and monastic communities that it launched a movement which eventually renewed the Christian faith in Europe as it was declining following the fall of the Roman Empire. Downpatrick now hosts a museum at which Pastor Alex intends to study Patrick's life and writings.
- **July 11 – Cycling (and Ferrying) to Scotland:** Bright and early on the morning of the July 11, Pastor Alex will cycle from Downpatrick to Belfast, where he'll catch a ferry that will take him to Cairnryan in Scotland.
- **July 12:** Cycling from Cairnryan to Ayr
- **July 13:** Cycling from Ayr to Glasgow
- **July 14:** Train from Glasgow to Oban
- **July 15 – Cycling (and Ferrying) from Oban to Iona**
- **July 16 to 18 in Iona:** A small island off the western coast of Scotland, Iona is the home of a monastery established by Columba in 563 AD. The monastery became an important center of learning and mission. Among other things, Pastor Alex hopes to participate in worship at Iona Abbey, the restored ancient church that still stands on the island.



- **July 19:** Cycling (and Ferrying) from Iona to Oban
- **July 20:** Cycling from Oban to Lochgilphead
- **July 21:** Cycling from Lochgilphead to Dunoon
- **July 22:** Cycling from Dunoon to Glasgow
- **July 23 to July 25 in Glasgow:** As the largest city in Scotland, Glasgow offers a variety of museums, parks, and other attractions. Pastor Alex anticipates some sightseeing, some relaxation, and – *with any luck* – some opportunities to hear live performances of Celtic music.
- **July 26:** Cycling from Glasgow to Edinburgh



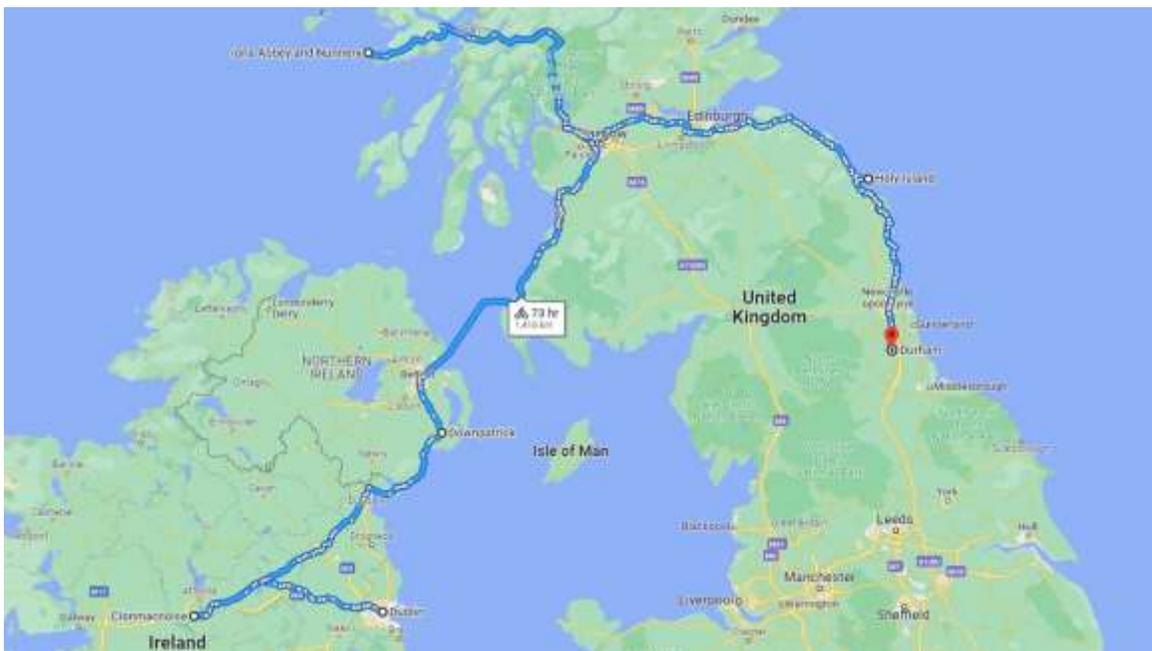
- **July 27 to July 29 in Edinburgh:** With a medieval castle rising from its center, Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland and plays host to many sites of historical and cultural interest. As he tours the city, Pastor Alex hopes to visit the University of Edinburgh, one of the oldest universities in continuous operation in the English-speaking world.
- **July 30:** Cycling from Edinburgh to Dryburgh
- **July 31:** Cycling from Dryburgh to Holy Island

- **August 1 to August 3 in Holy Island:** The Holy Island of Lindisfarne is a small island of the coast of northern England that is cut off from the mainland twice a day by rising tides. In 634 AD, a monastery was established there by Saint Aidan, who had been sent from Iona when the local ruler, King Oswald, requested missionaries who could share the gospel with his people. In the years to come, Lindisfarne became a base for Christian evangelism in England and Europe. Pastor Alex will be staying on the island and will take advantage of its isolation for times of reading, reflection, and prayer.
- **August 4:** Cycling from Holy Island to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea
- **August 5:** Cycling from Newbiggin-by-the-Sea to Durham
- **August 6 to August 8 in Durham:** The city of Durham, England, was founded back to 995 AD, when monks from Lindisfarne chose the location as the burial place for Saint Cuthbert, an important leader of the monastic community on Holy Island. Roughly 25 years later, the city was also chosen as the resting place of Bede the Venerable, often called “The Father of English History,” which made it a popular destination for spiritual pilgrims. Durham hosts a beautiful cathedral where Pastor Alex hopes to participate in worship.
- **August 9:** Train from Durham to London
- **August 10 in London:** Pastor Alex visited London many years ago. And although he’ll have only one full day in the city, he looks forward to a walking tour to see how it has changed.
- **August 11:** Pastor Alex catches a flight for home, arriving in Greensboro just after 7 o’clock in the evening.



### PHASE 3: REST, REFLECTION, AND “READY TO GO”

“Phase 3” of Pastor Alex’s sabbatical will give him the opportunity to recover from his “cycling pilgrimage” and to get ready for the resumption of his duties. In addition to “catching up” with Teresa and Windham, he hopes to spend a few days in the mountains and/or Williamsburg to write reflections about his journey and to think strategically about Calvary’s Fall ministry schedule. His first Sunday back in the pulpit will be Sunday, August 28, 2022.



Although not exact, the marked route gives some indication of where Pastor Alex will travel.