

# Dr. Kutter will take a Sabbatical

When First Baptist Church invited Joe to serve as pastor in 1997, a part of the invitation included the promise of a sabbatical after 7 years of service. As the 7 year mark rolled around, life in the congregation and denomination made the taking of the sabbatical very difficult. Now at the tenth anniversary of his call, the Board of Ministries has approved a 2 month sabbatical which will be taken in the months of May and June, 2007.

The purpose of the sabbatical is twofold. 1. It is to be a time of personal renewal including some time for recreation and 2. It is to be a time for focused study and reflection.

For study and reflection, Joe will consider the relationship between the distinctive traits of our Baptist history and life and relate them to the spiritual life. For example: Our deep historic commitment to "soul liberty" shapes the way that we pray and conduct our daily walk with God. Our commitment to congregational autonomy shapes the way that we fulfill our responsibilities to Christ through the local church. Our commitment to the separation of church and state shapes our expectations of the government in our religious life.

The schedule currently looks like this:

May 1-22: travel in England looking both at historic Baptist sites and other places enjoyed by all tourists. The hope is to spend some time in Oxford at Regents Park College, a Baptist University.

May 23 – June 9: Time, some at home, for study and renewal.

June 10-15: The Center for Baptist Studies, Mercer University where Joe has been accepted as a "Newman Scholar." He will study with Dr. Walter Shurden, one of the premier Baptist scholars of our time.

June 16- 28: Time for study and renewal, some at home

June 29-July 2: ABC-USA biennial in Washington, D.C.

There is no money in the church budget to support the sabbatical and it is in large measure self-funded. If you wish to support Joe and Peggy financially, you may do so with a check, payable to First Baptist Church and mark "Joe Kutter sabbatical" in the Memo.