



Seeking Sabbath in a Frantic World: Transformative Practices for Ourselves and Our Ministries

Doctor of Ministry Cohort

Faculty Mentor: Rev. Dr. Carol M. Bechtel

Length: A 36-credit degree comprised of six in-person seminars over three years, plus completion and defense of the Doctor of Ministry project.

Locations: Western Theological Seminary, Holland, MI
At least one seminar will be held in another location – details below.

Seminar Schedule: Fall 2024: October 21-25, 2024
Spring 2025: May 19-23, 2025
Fall 2025: October (exact dates TBA)
Spring 2026: May (exact dates TBA)
Fall 2026: October (exact dates TBA)
Spring 2027: April (exact dates TBA)

Guest Instructors: During our week-long seminars or virtually between seminars we will engage with practitioners, scholars, and pastors who are exploring and engaging the gift of Sabbath in their contexts.

Purpose:

This Doctor of Ministry cohort is designed specifically for women in pastoral ministry and will provide a framework for exploring what it means to receive the gift of Sabbath—as individuals and in our community/ministry contexts. Together we will seek Sabbath as a practice that both honors God and transforms our world. Out of this practice, students will explore Sabbath through contextually-designed research and creative thesis projects.

Humans have created such a loud, fast tempo of perfection and production that we often forget—if we ever knew it at all—the rhythms designed for our well-being.
(April Fiet, *The Sacred Pulse*)

Sabbath is the gift designed by God to give us rest and renewal in the midst of a frantic world. God knows we need it! Yet Christians have largely lost touch with this important part of our spiritual heritage. Even those of us who say we “keep Sabbath” are often unaware of its potential for re-forming our walk with God, with others, and with all creation.

In this cohort we’ll explore what it means to celebrate Sabbath. Through study, practice, writing, and celebration, we will “seek Sabbath” together. Some of the questions we will explore include:

- Is Sabbath more than self-care? If so, how/why?
- Is Sabbath selfish?
- How can busy pastors realistically celebrate Sabbath?
- What are the real-life consequences of rejecting the gift of Sabbath? For us? For others? For the world?
- What practical suggestions and practices are available for supporting Sabbath celebration?
- Why is Sabbath about more like a party with people we love than it is a list of obligations?

Framework:

Each year will revolve around two annual seminars, one in October and one in May (or April in Year 3). We will have multiple guest lecturers, working from different contexts and with distinct voices, to help us integrate Sabbath formation into our own unique settings.

Year One

The focus of our first year together will be on enriching our understanding of what Sabbath is—and is not. Our communal menu will include Bible study, selected readings, guest lectures, and rich conversation. However, it is not enough just to *think* about Sabbath. Henri Nouwen once observed that, "You don't think your way into a new kind of living. You live your way into a new kind of thinking." With that bit of wisdom in mind, we will seek to discover *practices* that better allow us to accept God's gift of rest and delight. Our time together and apart will feature opportunities for worship, silence, rest, and celebration.

Year Two

We hope that after the first year of this cohort you will feel like Sabbath "is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now." While that quote was commandeered from C. S. Lewis' *The Last Battle*, the invitation that follows close on its heels also fits the focus of this second year: "Come further up! Come further in!" Having discovered some ideas and practices that allow us to enter into Sabbath's "circle of quiet," we will begin to imagine the implications of this gift for our various contexts. As we seek to discern our individual projects, we will support one another as we ask, "How is the Holy Spirit calling you to share the gift of Sabbath?"

Year Three

The irony of this cohort is that we are all *working hard* on the topic of Sabbath! Rather than ignore that irony, Year Three is designed to help us embrace it. As we continue to refine, research, and write our individual projects, our collective commitment will be to support one another in maintaining healthy rhythms of work and rest. We will also strategize about ways to maintain our commitment to celebrating Sabbath over the course of our lifetime—and beyond.

Tuition, Costs, and Fees:

Tuition rates remain fixed for the duration of the three-year program, with an additional cost if students need further time to complete their final projects.

This cohort will be subject to the 2024/2025 tuition rate, which will be set in February 2024. For current D.Min. tuition and fees please see [the WTS website](#).

Students are responsible for all travel, food, and lodging costs associated with attending the six required seminars.

Projected Schedule:

Course	Dates	Location
Launch <i>DM850</i>	October 21-25, 2024	WTS
2 nd Seminar <i>DM851</i>	May 19-23, 2025	WTS
3 rd Seminar <i>DM860</i>	October 2025	Possible off-site
4 th Seminar <i>DM861</i>	May 2026	WTS
5 th Seminar <i>DM870</i>	October 2026	Possible off-site writing retreat
Final Seminar <i>DM871</i>	April 2027	WTS
Commencement	April 2027	WTS

Possible travel sites:

- [Casa Cares](#) Retreat Center (Reggello, Italy—near Florence)
- [Mt. Olivet Conference Center](#) (Farmington, MN)

More information on the Doctor of Ministry at WTS is available at our [website](#).

Questions? Please contact the following:

Cohort information

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Application & Admission

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D.Min. Program

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