

Ministerial Sabbatical Plans – Dates: March 28 – July 9, 2024

*When you come to the place between,
when you are traveling
toward the life you know not;
May it become for you a place to rest; a place to dream.
May the morning make of it
an altar, a path, a place to begin again.*
- Jan Richardson

Sabbatical Plan:

Ministerial sabbaticals are encouraged on a regular basis, expected every 4-7 years by the Ministerial letter of agreement, as a practice of rest, enrichment, and nourishment for ministry. This may include personal spiritual renewal, learning and reflection, and travel. Sabbatical is for the benefit of both ministers and congregations, providing space and time for renewal, reflection, and learning, away from the logistics of day-to-day operations and programs.

This is Rev. Luke's 7th year with us, and his first sabbatical. During this time, we will have a leadership team in place, including a *Sabbatical Minister* (half time) to help care for the ministries of the church. Here are some of the details for the sabbatical:

Renewal and Learning Plan:

During this time, Rev. Luke will be reflecting and learning about worship, congregational programming, and building projects in several other Unitarian Universalist congregations around the country. This will include many Sunday visits to attend services, along with direct conversation with ministerial colleagues about worship practices, and in particular, how congregational life and building needs have changed since/during the pandemic. Between Sunday service travels, he will be in conversation with ministerial colleagues, and doing writing and reflecting. He will also still be in town, attending to his family life while not away. Upon return, he will offer opportunities to share his reflections with the Board and the congregation.

Leadership during Sabbatical:

During this time, leadership will be held collaboratively among the Board, Staff, Shared Ministry Teams and a hired Sabbatical Minister (half time). A *Sabbatical Leadership Team (SLT)* will consist of the Sabbatical Minister, a member of the Board, and another church member. The SLT will attend to any critical needs, including discerning when Rev. Luke should be contacted about a significant matter within the church. The Sabbatical Minister will provide leadership and support for Sunday services, spiritual care, general programming, and day to day operations of the church, with a combination of in-person and virtual connections. This is a wonderful opportunity for the congregation to be in relationship with another Minister, offering their own gifts, skills, and perspectives.

Sabbatical Minister: Rev. Ruth MacKenzie

We are thrilled to welcome the Rev. Ruth MacKenzie as our Sabbatical Minister during this time. Rev. Ruth served First Universalist Church in Minneapolis, focused on worship, for several years, and recently served at First Unitarian Church in Dallas, TX. A classmate of Rev. Luke at United Theological Seminary, Ruth has experience in congregational life, youth programming, and has learned from building campaigns in both of those congregations. She is a talented musician and minister, and will be commuting from her home in St. Paul, where she and her wife, Rebecca, are members of Unity Church-Unitarian.

Questions:

What happens in case of emergencies (related to member health crises, building catastrophes, or other institutional challenges?)

The Board Officers and Sabbatical Minister will care for most needs in the life of the church during this time, including illnesses, spiritual care, and immediate building needs. They will also be in regular, though limited, communication with Rev. Luke with any pressing needs or questions. Cases of extreme crisis or critical need will be handled on a case by case basis. Rites of passage (especially memorials) may either be delayed until Luke returns, led by the Sabbatical Minister, or another plan made depending on circumstances.

How is this funded?

Ministerial coverage for the Sabbatical Minister follows UUA guidance, and has been set aside and saved in recent years to be fully funded. Rev. Luke's compensation will continue uninterrupted (which is standard UUA practice and part of the Ministerial Letter of Agreement).

Sabbatical Leadership Team:

Rev. Ruth MacKenzie, Sabbatical Minister
Paul Trewartha Weiner, Board of Directors (current Vice President)
Beth Atkinson, Longtime member and currently on Worship Team

Other questions?

Please feel free to reach out to the *Sabbatical Leadership Team*, Board Officers or Rev. Luke with any questions related to sabbatical.