

Community Matters 3/30/23

Print Version (followed by full electronic version)

It's time to start planning for Rev. Lara's first FCU sabbatical! Sabbatical is a time to rekindle the energy of this amazing ministry in which we all share. The Sabbatical Team was formed to help us make the most of this opportunity, which will take place from the end of January to mid-May 2024. You can find more details of our work in the electronic version of Community Matters and in a listserv article. We look forward to what we know will be an exciting time of exploration and growth!

Debbie Eston, Mike Pilman, and Jackie Clement
Monica Pllman, liaison to the Executive Team

Electronic Version

It's time to start planning for Rev. Lara's first FCU sabbatical!

We wanted to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves and let you know a bit about our work. In March we were charged by the Standing Committee to help with the planning for Rev. Lara's much deserved sabbatical from the end of January to mid-May, 2024. We know you will join with us in celebrating our minister and the fact that we can offer her this opportunity to grow, refresh and deepen her own spiritual life, as we will do the same.

So just what is a sabbatical? Sabbatical leave is a tradition for Unitarian Universalist clergy that offers an extended time for study, reflection, rest, and renewal—all ingredients for effective ministry. Usually taken after approximately five to seven years of service, sabbatical leave is part of the congregation's covenant agreement with Lara as our minister. Just as importantly, the congregation will benefit as Lara returns refreshed, filled with new ideas and with rekindled energy. Further, it offers the staff and congregation the opportunity to undertake our own exploration, hear from different voices and engage our own spiritual journeys in a new way. Perhaps more than anything, it is a way for us to show our deep appreciation of Rev. Lara's ministry by investing in her continued growth and our own.

As a task force of the Standing Committee, we do not own all the work of preparation for this time, but we hope we can be a conduit to the congregation keeping you apprised of plans. Of course, Rev. Lara is planning how she will spend her sabbatical and we're sure she will share those plans as the time comes closer. The Standing Committee is making important decisions on budgeting and how ministerial duties will be covered in Lara's absence. The deacons are deep in conversation about the ways we, as a congregation, can use this time to tend to our community spirit. Other church committees and, certainly, our wonderful staff will have roles in planning and leading us through the time. The role of the sabbatical team is to create the

overarching plan that brings all these groups together to provide worship, pastoral care and administration and then to communicate that plan to the FCU community. And best of all, we will honor this special time and this wonderful ministry with celebrations at Lara's leave-taking and return!

Our first congregational gathering will be a multiplatform cottage meeting to explain the financial needs of sabbatical time. Along with the Standing Committee and Deacons we will offer a preview of financial plans and answer as many questions as we can. We hope you will be able to join us for the live session, but please know that it will be recorded and available for all who cannot make that date. Watch this space for announcement of the date and time and then a link to the recording.

Rev. Lara's sabbatical is nearly a full year off, but we know how quickly a year can go so we invite you to start thinking about how you want to be part of this exciting time. Do you have a service topic you've always wanted to explore? A class you've wanted to lead? Other skills you want to build in beloved community? Details on opportunities and how you can engage this time will be shared as plans unfold.

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