

Community Matters article for Sep 10, 2023 **FULL VERSION (OS Version below)**

Rev. Lara's 2024 Sabbatical

As we gather at the beginning of this new church year, we wanted to give you an update on how plans for Rev. Lara's upcoming sabbatical are coming together. It's not too early to start celebrating all the many contributions of this fantastic community in supporting and appreciating our minister.

Here's the highlights of what has happened so far:

- The Standing Committee formed the Sabbatical Team in March 2023 and charged us with helping to plan for the 2024 sabbatical time (January 22 - May 13, 2024).
- We continue as we began, coordinating with Rev. Lara to see how we can best support her sabbatical experience and plan for a rich time here in the congregation.
- In April, we presented our budget recommendations to the Standing Committee, the SC voted to accept our recommendation and a cottage meeting was held on April 30 for anyone interested in learning about the projected costs of sabbatical.
- At the 2023 Annual Meeting, the congregation voted to adopt the proposed budget that includes celebrations for beginning and ending the sabbatical time as well as a half-time Sabbatical Minister.
- We were delighted to have such a large and involved participation in the Worship Workshop we presented in May to learn a bit about how to do worship services and brainstorm some potential topics. We're happy to announce that there were more than enough ideas generated and people willing to carry them through that the Deacons have a list long enough to cover not only the sabbatical time but the entire year of planned lay services!
- The Deacons embraced the task of developing a congregational charge to guide the spiritual direction for our time without Rev. Lara. It is below.
- Over the summer we put together a job description for the Sabbatical Minister we seek. It has been sent to the UUA for posting on the ministerial job board. Let the search begin!

We are already so inspired by all the creativity and contributions to this process - from the Standing Committee, the Executive Team, the Deacons, everyone who has attended our events and said yes and, of course, from Rev. Lara. We are so grateful and look forward to keeping you up to date as we go forward. You can check out the existing information and look for future updates on the FCU website in the "Sabbatical" area under the Beloved Community menu.

Sabbatical Team members Jackie Clement, Debbie Eston, Mike Pilman and Monica Pilman, ET Liaison

Here is the Deacon's sabbatical charge for our congregation. We are confident that these words will act as a great guide for this time.

Sabbatical Charge to the Congregation 2024

Following her sabbatical, we expect Rev. Lara to return refreshed and renewed in spirit. We, the congregation of First Church Unitarian, Littleton, pledge to meet her the same way, refreshed and renewed in both our commitment to our shared UU values and to each other..

We promise:

We will pay attention to what is important in our church community: love, service, truth, and helping one another.

We will explore our UU values and principles, combine them with our skills and turn them into action.

And

We will seek connection with something greater than ourselves and bring our values-in-action outside of our walls and into the wider community.

VERSION FOR ORDER OF SERVICE

Rev. Lara's 2024 Sabbatical

Preparation for Rev. Lara's sabbatical time (January 22 - March 13, 2024) continues. See the email version of Community matters for a full update of what we have accomplished so far as well as the Deacon's Charge to the Congregation for the sabbatical period. You can also check out the existing information and look for future updates on the FCU website in the "Sabbatical" area under the Beloved Community menu.