

Sabbatical FAQs

Dear Members and Friends,

The Board of Trustees, together with Rev. Jane, invite you to a Congregational Listening Session on October 29 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. This session will provide important information about Rev. Jane's upcoming sabbatical leave and offer an opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have.

Some of you may be wondering about the Unitarian Universalist tradition of sabbatical leaves and what it means for our community. We want to let you know that we're preparing carefully for this time and how we, as a congregation, will support worship services, pastoral care needs, congregational activities, and more. To make our upcoming Listening Session as productive and engaging as possible, we've put together some FAQs for you to review beforehand.

What is a sabbatical?

The term "sabbatical" comes from the Hebrew word *Shabbat*, meaning rest. It is rooted in the biblical tradition where farmers allowed their fields to rest every seventh year for renewal. In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, sabbatical leaves are periods of rest and renewal typically offered every 4 to 7 years. While on sabbatical, a minister engages in personal and professional renewal activities such as study, writing, rest, travel, or engaging with other faith communities.

Why are sabbaticals important?

Ministry, by its nature, is both deeply rewarding and deeply demanding. Ministers are expected to be present in times of joy, sorrow, and transition, often holding the congregation's emotional and spiritual needs. Balancing the various responsibilities of a minister's job, such as preparing and leading worship services, pastoral care, working with committees, community outreach, and communication, requires a great deal of emotional and mental energy.

A sabbatical is a time for ministers to pause and recharge. This can go a long way toward preventing burnout and enhancing their ability to minister over the long term. When ministers take part in these times of reflection and personal growth, they return to the congregation refreshed and energized, with new insights so they can better serve the community.

How long will Rev. Jane's sabbatical last?

Rev. Jane's sabbatical will last four months, from February 3 to June 2, 2025.

What does this mean for our Sunday mornings?

We are in the process of searching for an Anchor Minister who will help lead worship services and provide pastoral care. Alongside our Anchor Minister, we will invite guest ministers to lead services and we will also rely on the leadership and involvement of our talented Liturgy Team.

The Anchor Minister will lead one service each month, join us for fellowship during coffee hour, and facilitate Sunday's After discussions as needed. Guest ministers will also lead one service each month, where they will add new ideas and perspectives to our spiritual explorations. Additionally, our dedicated Liturgy Team will lead two services each month and work closely with the Anchor Minister and guest ministers to ensure continuity in our worship experience.

What if I need to talk with Rev. Jane?

A minister's sabbatical is a time for them to fully disconnect from their regular duties and focus on renewal. With very few exceptions, Rev. Jane will not be available for meetings during this time. Our Anchor Minister will be available to address pastoral care needs, and we are intentionally seeking candidates with solid skills in this area.

What does this mean for other church activities?

Our church activities will continue as they usually do during the sabbatical. Rev. Jane will work with lay leaders to ensure everything is covered while she's away. Our strong network of committees, teams, and task forces will continue their important work. Before she leaves, Rev. Jane will be available to meet with different groups and provide any guidance or support needed to keep things running smoothly.

How can we support Rev. Jane during this time?

The best way to support a minister during their sabbatical is to respect their time away. You can also help by staying engaged in the congregation's life: attending services, supporting the Anchor Minister, guest ministers, and lay leaders, and participating in the important work of our committees, teams, and task forces.

How can I find out more about Rev. Jane's sabbatical leave?

You can learn more about Rev. Jane's sabbatical by attending the upcoming Listening Session. You can also look back at the August and September newsletters for information in Rev. Jane's column, in the Board Bits and in the related article. Additionally, be sure to keep checking the monthly Board Bits column and keep an eye out for future updates.

We look forward to seeing you at the Listening Session on October 29 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. The Zoom link is below.

All the best,

Kris Tyssowski
Sabbatical Liaison
tyssowski.kris@gmail.com