

Minister's Annual Report & Sabbatical 2024
Submitted by Rev. Kathryn Hawbaker

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Last year's Annual Congregational Meeting seems like long ago and far away. Adapting to the pandemic was hard and post-COVID has also been a challenge as the shifting circumstances and context for religious community and ministry is as changeable as the flood waters we've experienced recently. We have lost several members and our friends and families have struggled to get their bearings. We are moving forward slowly and there is still foundational work in our congregational system to address.

I have tried to be both responsive to needs and concerns, and proactive in going forward with a mission for our adaptive and expansive vision of a beloved community.

In the Fall, I was doing all I could to lead worship and used my Sundays free of duty to work with the kids and religious education activities. The cardboard boxes from the new stoves provided a welcome prop for addressing housing insecurities, which many of us are involved in addressing in different ways. Other activities were also fun and provided connection for young people and families. This area needs our best efforts. I began to attend committee meetings without taking on leadership, more as a consultant to help address doing what the minister must do, and avoid over-working.

Regular meetings included Worship & Music, Board of Trustees, Caring, Finance and Childcare Staff.

Sabbatical Activities in Jan. Feb. & March 2024

At first, sabbatical time felt like the COVID isolation and this was disturbing, but the time for deeper personal reflection and time with family was vital in remembering who I am. I have worked with a collegial coaching group (meets 2 Thursdays each month via Zoom (Feb.- May). I appreciate the focus on boundaries and accepting criticism. I find my poor boundaries often grow out of a desire to help and wanting to be needed.

Connecting with colleagues has been very beneficial. I've attended online gatherings with the Ohio Meadville chapter and the Lower Ohio Cluster, as

well as worship and webinars with UU Ministry For Earth (Full Moon gathering); UU Ministers Assoc. (contracts); Side with Love (prayers & training); Central East Region (multigenerational community and shared ministry). These rich resources are engaging and educational. The downside of attending webinars alone, instead of as a FUUSM team, is that I feel it contributes to widening the gap on how we view UUA initiatives & resources differently.

I have responded to requests for services while on sabbatical. I assisted in designation of GB as an officiant for weddings. I consulted with potential members on plans for their wedding in May 2024 (not at FUUSM). I continued to host African Drumming classes at FUUSM on 2nd Saturdays 3-5pm.

I have supported Caring Comm. on zoom, and provided material support, pastoral aid and encouragement via Facebook. I prepared and officiated the Celebration of Life for young Brodie DeLancy, and offered pastoral care to the family.

I listened to Today's Issues group for views on growth of UU & FUUSM, and to support respectful discussion around polyamory. I have previously suggested an offering of O.W.L. for adults, and/or Welcoming Congregation Renewal (LGBTQ+) workshops or other opportunities.

Half-time Schedule 2024 April-May-June 2024

In most of my professional life **Half-time ministry** was the norm. I know the discipline of shaping priorities within limitations and not trying to do everything, even though it all seems important. Self-awareness and assessment can help me find ways to give the best time to the most important tasks, and I welcome the practice of collaboration as the way we do things at FUUSM.

I view this time of transition with a half-time schedule to help focus on incorporating new learning and behaviors into the regular rhythm and schedule, and catch-up on both old documents and new ideas.

It could include leading worship 1 Sunday a month, presenting religious education 1 Sunday a month, and being in the Office one day a week.

I will engage with staff and committee leadership to plan and implement our shared ministries and programs, focusing on the changes we've made, and planning in a longer timeframe.

This phase supports integration of learning, and practices of better boundaries.

1. Learning and enhancing our pastoral care and mental health resources and programs, especially for families and new developments in global climate crisis related issues. Leadership development models that support a stronger democratic system are needed. Small groups would help facilitate some of our goals.
2. Explore messaging of our mission and ministry in multi-media ways.

Create appropriate & multi-use content. Enhance my own computer/ technical skills.

3) Review UU & FUUSM history and leadership. Sort and purge my old files and information into a useful narrative summary. (*Good where we've been...*).

In all gratitude for this opportunity to review and renew our shared ministry,
Bright Blessings, Rev. Kathryn Hawbaker