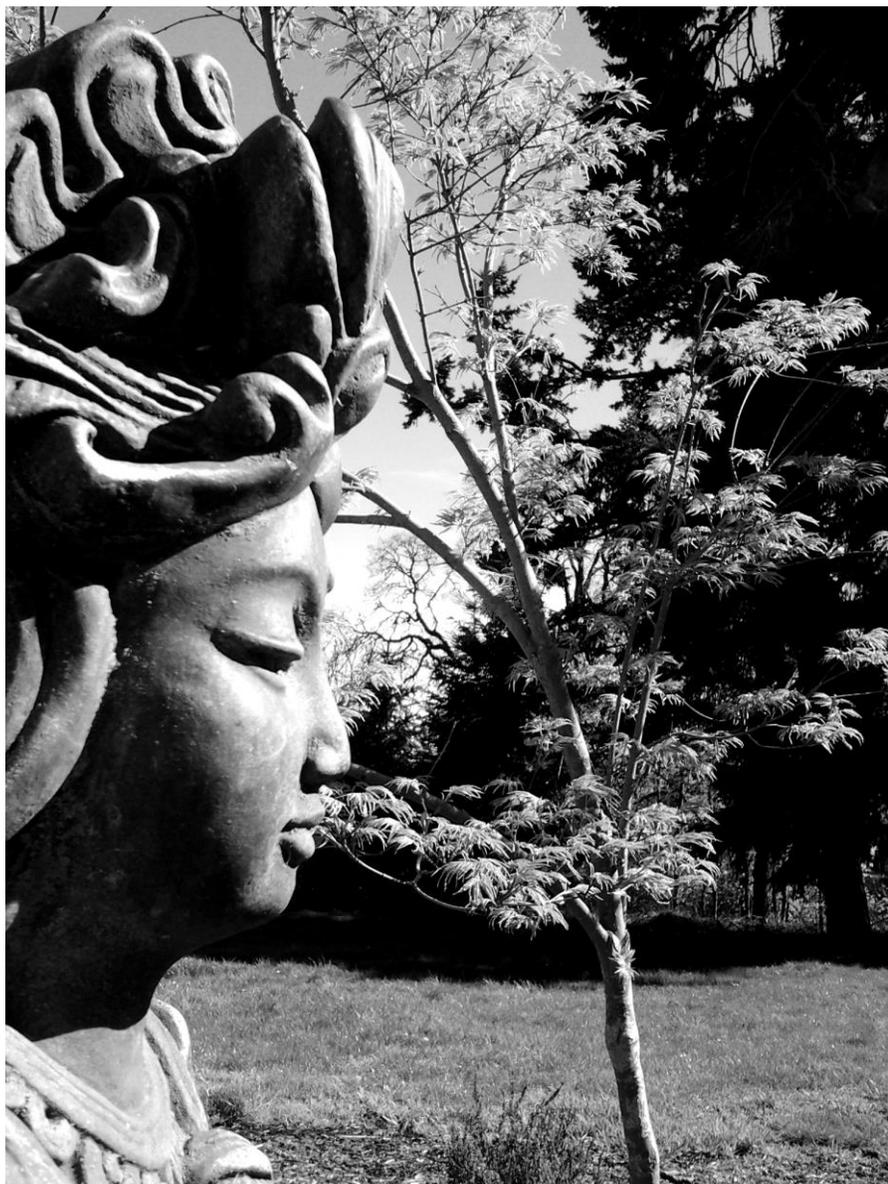


Sabbatical Guide

This guide is intended to provide an overview of our plans for Rev. Rick's sabbatical

April 2019 – July 2019



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF SALEM

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Introduction

After twenty-six years of ministerial service to our congregation our minister, Rev. Rick Davis, will take his first extended sabbatical from April 2019 through July 2019.

Rev. Rick has been consulting with congregational leaders and UUCS staff to ensure that his areas of responsibility will be covered during his time of renewal. The Rev. Mark Gallagher – who has spoken here often – will be our part time Sabbatical Minister. Other engaging speakers will work with our Worship Team will insure consistent, quality Sunday worship services. Our Life Lines Lay Ministry Team and our strong tradition of mutual care will continue with extra pastoral support provided as requested. Rites of passage will be available as needed. Our dedicated staff will ensure that other administrative and programmatic aspects of congregational life continue to run smoothly.

This Sabbatical Handbook is intended to answer any questions related to Rev. Rick's sabbatical.

Sabbatical Sendoff Service: Sunday March 31, 2019

Sabbatical Return Service: Sunday September 8, 2019

Sabbatical Preparations

Rev. Rick has consulted with congregational leaders to ensure that the key roles he fulfills in the day to day life of the congregation will be covered. These responsibilities include:

- Preparing and Leading Worship Services
- Providing Pastoral Care
- Facilitating Connections Groups (Small Groups)
- Conducting Rites of Passage (weddings, memorial services)
- Working with teams, committees, Board
- Supporting and supervising staff
- Community Outreach and Involvement

In order to enhance communication during the sabbatical (Lynn Cardiff, Board chair, Rev. Mark Gallagher, sabbatical minister) will be conferring with the staff and the board on any matters of importance that may arise. Rev. Mark Gallagher will be filling the pulpit on most Sundays. Our Worship Team will continue to play a key role in facilitating Sunday services.

The following pages include a list of contacts that will be useful during Rev. Rick's time away. This will help you figure out who to contact when you might otherwise have contacted him. The list can be summarized as:

If you need to discuss the daily business operations of the congregation it is best to first contact the Office Administrator, Samantha Scales at 503 364 0932 or office@uusalem.org. If you need to discuss matters related to any of our staff you may contact Jo Nathan.

If you have a question about religious exploration, please contact the Director of Religious Exploration, Christi Olsen. (christi@uusalem.org)

If you need to discuss the “business” of the congregation (policies, procedures, finances, etc.) you can contact any member of the Board of Directors. The Board Chair, Lynn Cardiff is the best place to start.

If you need help resolving or managing a conflict with another UUCS member or friend you can contact the chairs of the Committee on the Ministry Joel Martin. For incidences involving sexual harassment, sexual abuse or conflict management contact Stephanie Jernstedt, Safer Congregation Committee Chair.

If you have need for pastoral care or direct assistance, please contact Lorna Youngs, Chair of Life Lines Lay Ministry. For pastoral emergencies arrangements have been made with Rev. Mark Gallagher to provide on-call pastoral care.

If you need to discuss any aspect of our worship services, contact Lennie Martin or Sara Pickett – co-chairs of the Worship Team.

Arrangements have been made for ceremonies such as weddings and memorial services. Please see the Rites of Passage section in this book.

Why a Sabbatical?

Members of UUCS may be familiar with the practice of colleges and universities granting their faculty members sabbatical leaves. Ministerial sabbaticals are similar in that the goal of both is restoration and renewal, but they are slightly different in that with ministerial sabbaticals emphasis is placed not just on gaining fresh intellectual perspectives but also on spiritual exploration and deepening.

Sabbatical leave is part of the congregation’s covenant with Rev. Rick as our minister. Per the standard letter of agreement between Unitarian Universalist congregations and their ministers, our minister accrues one month of sabbatical time per year of service. During the past twenty-six years of ministry here, Rev. Rick has chosen to use only a small portion of his allotted leave (never more than one month at a time), yet he recognizes the importance of having this opportunity for deeper reflection, reading, writing, meditating, and relaxing so that he can return to our shared ministry renewed and recharged.

Rev. Rick’s plans during his sabbatical

Regarding this, here’s what Rev. Rick says: There will be some travel, but long stretches away from home are not part of the plan. My wife Gordana and I will travel back east for their son’s graduation and I will use this opportunity to spend time a few days with a dear friend.

I meditate and walk every day, but never feel like I get to do as much of either as would be really good for me, so I want to do more of both. Indeed, I see some hikes happening during my sabbatical – maybe in the Columbia Gorge or up in the Cascades or on the coast. Or all three. Why not? We live in such a lovely state – I yearn to enjoy it more.

Then, there's a ministerial writing project that has been simmering on the back burner for several years now. I've never been able to find the time and space to make it a primary focus and get it done, but now I have a chance and new ideas are percolating in my mind. More on that later.

Then, there's a stack of unread books calling out to me. A few of them have to do with "Non-violent Communication." A good friend has invited me to engage in deeper study of this in preparation for some community forums he'd like me to participate in. The purpose of NVC is to help create deeper insight into how we engage and communicate, especially in stressful circumstances. This is one of a number of tools that can help us stay in covenantal relationships, and I hope what I learn will help us all.

As you may know, for the past couple of years our Social Justice in Action Team and I have been involved with a wonderful organization called "Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice" to which we belong. I have volunteered to travel around the state some to help them organize and promote the good IMIrJ work does on behalf of immigrant justice. I have so much more to say about my admiration and gratitude for this organization - it has opened up whole new areas of awareness for me - so wait for a sermon describing my social justice/spiritual experiences with IMIrJ.

Above all, just having some time away will give me an opportunity to look at the big picture and gain a loftier perspective. A person can get in a rut of routine and miss recognizing new ways of seeing and doing things. This will be a precious opportunity for me to do that, and I deeply grateful to you for affording me this opportunity.

How can we contact Rev. Rick?

If cases of emergency arise, key leaders and Rev. Rick will confer and decide if his return is necessary. In general, he will be taking a complete break from his duties as our minister. He will be liberated from answering emails and phone calls and he hardly knows how to text anyway, so that won't be an issue. If you see him wandering around town you don't have to pretend you don't know him, but if you are tempted to start talking congregational business well...maybe let that wait till he gets back.

What will UUCS be doing during this time?

You'll be doing quite well because there are so many wonderful volunteers and a conscientious staff to keep things on track. Then, too, it'll be good to have this chance to see what new insights, ideas and inspirations emerge during this time. Here is a chance for the congregation to reflect upon the deeper meanings and higher purposes we serve and how we might do this in new and creative ways. Then, too, may it serve as a time for each member and friend to reflect upon how you feel called to participate in and serve UUCS.

Meet our Sabbatical Minister



Rev. Mark Gallagher

Mark has been a Unitarian Universalist minister for over 25 years, serving as pastor of the UU Church of Vancouver (WA) most of that time. Since 2015 he has been pursuing a private-practice ministry, doing the parts of ministry he loves most: preaching, teaching, and leading workshops. He is familiar to many at UUUCS, having been a regular guest preacher with us.

He is married to Jennifer Gallagher and still lives in Vancouver with their grown children: Quinn and Miles (both in college, living at home).

Like our pastor, Rick, Mark has practiced Buddhist meditation for many years. His faith journey centers on deepening in reverence for the Great Mystery of existence – especially the natural Universe and the mystery of consciousness.



Sunday Services

We have an enriching worship schedule planned during this sabbatical time. The Rev. Mark Gallagher, our sabbatical minister will be leading worship on most Sundays. Other UU clergy and UUCS members will be filling the pulpit on the other Sundays.

April 7

A Soul's Eye View

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Normally, we experience our lives from a small-self point of view – focused on personal relationships, household affairs, career, and so forth. It is good sometimes to step back and gaze upon the world from a soul's eye view.

April 14

TBA

Tom Ellis, UUCS Member

Join us for Tom's insights on how Permaculture principles can help address issues surrounding climate change.

April 21 Easter Miracle of Miracles! An Easter/Earth Day Celebration

Reverend Mark Gallagher

The holy day of Easter celebrates the miracle of Jesus rising from the tomb, symbolizing the Christian promise of life eternal. This year Easter coincides closely with Earth Day (April 22). Today we celebrate the stupendous miracle of being part of the life of this unique, beautiful planet – Earth.

April 28

Science & Theology

Reverend Mark Gallagher

This is the first in a six-part series on the interplay of science and theology. In this post-modern age, many fundamental questions about reality are being considered afresh. Science and theology are two important ways of looking at these questions.

May 5

Reflections from the UUA

Judy McGavin, former member of the UUA Board of Trustees

Reflections on being on the UUA Board of Trustees and thoughts about the future of Unitarian Universalism.

May 12

Matter, Energy, Space, & Time

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Science & Theology Series [Part 2 of 6]: What is the fundamental 'stuff' of the Universe? How does it work? How do we know? What does this say about how we perceive and how we live?

May 19

Universe & Cosmos

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Science & Theology Series [Part 3 of 6]: How big is the Universe? What patterns can be seen in the big picture? How has it developed? Where did it come from and how did it get started? What is the place of planet Earth in the cosmic scheme? Is the known Universe all there is to reality?

May 26

Evolution & Creation

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Science & Theology Series [Part 4 of 6]: Since the dawn of self-awareness, humanity has wondered how we came to be and what is our relation to the other animals. Darwin's theory of evolution provided a scientific answer at odds with traditional theological answers, and the debate has raged ever since. What does 'evolution' mean? How strong is the evidence for it? What are the arguments against it?

June 2

Standing Together

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Given the lengths the Nazi regime went to rid Europe of Jews, would you believe that over 2000 Jews survived in Berlin through World War II, with the full knowledge of the Nazi authorities? We may take inspiration from this triumph of solidarity.

Today we have our annual Flower Communion ritual of mutual appreciation and solidarity. Please bring a flower to share.

June 9

Mind, Brain, & Spirit

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Science & Theology Series [Part 5 of 6]: We know that we are experiencing, and we know the brain has something to do with it. But what is the relationship between the physical brain and the intangible realm of experience? Is there any experience apart from a living brain? How can we know if there is or isn't?

June 16

Spirituality in a Scientific Age

Reverend Mark Gallagher

Science & Theology Series [Part 6 - Final]: How may we live with depth and integrity in light of what the careful observation of nature reveals about the Universe and humanity? Do these revelations undercut spiritual experience, or deepen it? Do they weaken our moral sense, or strengthen it?

June 23

TBA

Reverend Marcia Stanard, UU Congregation at Willamette Falls

June 30

TBA

Reverend Kathryn Bert, UU Church of Vancouver

Pastoral Care

One of our strengths as a congregation is how we care for one another. We have our Life Lines Lay ministry program which meets monthly with Rev. Rick to discuss the wellbeing of members and friends and they plan how to be of help to those in need. We have our monthly ritual of “Compassionate Connection” where we offer our compassionate presence and support to those who are going through difficult times. Those who are members of Connections Groups (approximately half our membership) also receive support from their fellow members. (If you would like to belong to a connections group another opportunity to join will arise.) Beyond this, you are a caring community – you reach out to one another in so many loving ways and will certainly do so during Rev. Rick’s sabbatical.

Rites of Passage

Those who are seeking an officiant for a wedding should contact Samantha Scales at the UUCS office. If the date of a wedding is during Rev. Rick’s sabbatical, she can provide names of other local UU ministers who may be of assistance. If the date falls after Rev. Rick’s return, she will pass the information on to him so arrangements can be made.

Members and friends of the congregation in need of someone to officiate at a memorial service should contact the Rev. Mary Gear (contact info). Depending upon the required timing of the service, Rev. Rick or Rev. Gear may be able to conduct the service or will find another nearby UU minister. Requests for memorial services from those not connected to UUCS should contact Samantha Scales, Office Administrator.

Congregational Operations

Rev. Rick has been in conversation with key congregational leaders, our staff and Rev. Mark Gallagher (our sabbatical minister) concerning major aspects of congregational life, especially where Rev. Rick plays a significant role. Then, too, we are most fortunate to have our board chair Lynn Cardiff and the chair of our human relations committee, Jo Nathan who provide invaluable guidance and support for our staff.



Message from Rev. Rick

In the final weeks before my sabbatical one thing becomes ever more abundantly clear to me – I feel so honored and grateful to serve as your minister - it brings me such joy and pleasure to share life with you as we work to help our congregation thrive, thereby blessing ourselves and the surrounding community. We are learning to trust in the love that is shared and this empowers us. And I trust that our time apart will help us gain even more clarity and a renewed sense of purpose.

I am so grateful to my good friend and dear colleague Rev. Mark Gallagher for agreeing to serve as our sabbatical minister. Our friendship stretches back more than twenty-five years, and we are like brothers. Mark and I have met and discussed this sabbatical time a number of times and I have invited him to offer his many gifts to our beloved congregation. What a wonderful, excellent minister you will have with you during this time. Please open your hearts to him and enjoy what he has to offer (a lot!) to the fullest.

May it be so!

