

Sabbatical Guide



First Unitarian Church of Providence

a safe harbor that welcomes liberal religious seekers

Expectations and Resources
for Rev. Liz's Sabbatical

First Unitarian Universalist Church
of Providence

401-421-7970

<https://firstunitarianprov.org>

02/17/2022 Rev 1

A Sabbatical Guide



Dear Members and Friends,

Reverend Elizabeth Lerner Maclay has been leading our congregation for five years now—time does go by quickly! In that time, she has devoted her deep and diverse ministerial talents to our church, especially in these past trying two years. Part of our contractual commitment to Rev. Liz is one sabbatical month, per year of service. The time has come to afford Rev. Liz a sabbatical to renew and expand her personal spiritual, emotional, and intellectual strength—the foundation on which her ministry rests. We are pleased to honor our commitment to sustain Rev. Liz’s ministry, and we are confident her sabbatical from July 1, 2022, through January 31, 2023 will be rewarding for her and for our church community.

This guide, prepared by the First U Sabbatical Team, is a tool to help the church community embrace the challenges and opportunities that the sabbatical brings with it. The Sabbatical Team is comprised of the Committee on Ministry plus Director of Operations Nancy Forsstrom. Our goal is to ensure that First U operates smoothly during Rev. Liz’s absence. We aim to assist you in whatever way we can.

Ministerial sabbaticals must be taken between the minister’s fifth and seventh years, one month per year of service. Rev. Liz is taking her sabbatical following her fifth year, and she will be taking her vacation and study leave consecutively. She will be away in total for seven months, from July 2022 through January 2023. Rev. Liz’s sabbatical is a time for a complete break from her duties as our minister. The network described in this brochure will deal with all routine matters including choices around COVID protocols and practices. If there is an emergency, PruComm President Joan Richards, Director of Operations Nancy Forsstrom and Rev. Roger will confer about whether to reach out to Rev. Liz. In terms of communication, we’re asking folks to refrain from emailing, Facebook messaging, texting, or phoning Rev. Liz on anything that may be “church related.” Rev. Liz will likely be on Facebook and people are welcome to like or comment on her posts. Please look at page four of this guide for contact information for people happy to help you during the sabbatical.

—Sabbatical Team

Sabbaticals, Ministers, and Reverend Liz

A sabbatical, like a sabbath, is a time to cease our everyday work. For a Unitarian Universalist minister, a sabbatical can provide a block of time to acquire new skills or experiences or to pursue spiritual quests. Ministers may find the time refreshing, restful, and energizing. Successful UU churches incorporate sabbaticals into the professional lives of their ministers. The church community may also benefit from a sabbatical period during which it reaffirms its identity as a congregation and discovers new strengths.

During her sabbatical Rev. Liz plans to spend a lot of time writing and reflecting. She also expects to spend her time on activities that provide rest,



renewal, and inspiration, out in the countryside spending time with her husband Tim and her beloved flat-coated retrievers Blue and Rannoch.

Celebrating Our Minister's Sabbatical

Rev. Liz will begin her sabbatical July 1, 2022. On June 12 we will host a reception and give her a "travel" chalice, and she will present the congregation with a chalice she has chosen for us. On each Sunday she is away, we will light our chalice during the worship service and she will light her chalice wherever she is, and in this way we'll stay connected. We will welcome Liz back on February 5, 2023, with a gathering after the service.

What Will Happen During Sunday Services?

Rev. Roger will be bringing his gifts and insights to our pulpit, preaching one Sunday per month and co-leading our multigeneration services. Together with our Interim DRE, he will lead our congregation at the Water Service at the beginning of the church year and the Christmas services. The Worship Committee is working with Rev. Liz to line up dynamic and inspiring preachers to speak to us while she is away. And our Interim Music Director will be working as usual to support our vibrant music program in worship.

Care for Our Community

Pastoral care may require a visit to a sick member, help with meals, travel assistance when someone is ill, or counseling. Or it may call for conducting memorial services for deceased members. First U is a caring community that Loves Beyond Belief, and is well able to provide these types of care. Rev. Roger, our Assistant Minister for Pastoral Care, will continue to provide spiritual and emotional support to our members and to coordinate and lead our Care Crew and Lay Ministers. Rev. Roger will also perform weddings, memorial services, funerals, and child dedications for those in our church community.

Our Shared Responsibility

You and the other First U members and friends make everything at the church happen, and that will continue during our Senior Minister's sabbatical.



Here are key contacts that may be helpful:

Sabbatical Committee

If you have questions, contact the committee at admin@firstunitarianprov.org, and one of the members will respond to you. Members of the Sabbatical Committee are: Martha Rice Sanders, Skip Farinha, Michael Currier, Cheryl Bartholomew, Diane Baxter, Katy Killilea, and Nancy Forsstrom.

Prudential Committee President: Joan Richards, JoanLRichards@gmail.com

Assistant Minister: Rev. Roger Peltier, 401-965-1212 (cell). Voice or text is fine.

Director of Operations: Nancy Forsstrom, admin@firstunitarianprov.org

Membership Coordinator: Jenn Nardone, mem@firstunitarianprov.org

Interim Music Director: Jeff Allard, firstmusicdirector@gmail.com

Interim Director of Religious Education: TBD

COVID Protocols

COVID protocols and safety concerns will continue to be coordinated by the COVID-19 Team (formerly the Bridging Team) and the Pandemic Response Team. The COVID-19 Team's purpose is to advise PruComm on COVID-19 protocols for First U. The Pandemic Response Team is a smaller group within the COVID-19 Team that responds to requests from groups within the church, such as Spiritual Pathways. If you have questions for these teams, please contact the Prudential Committee President, Joan Richards, JoanLRichards@gmail.com.

Message from Reverend Elizabeth Lerner Maclay



The closer we get to the upcoming time for the sabbatical, the more aware I am of a need to reconnect with some places and pursuits which are powerful food for my soul. The traditional ministerial pursuits of study and reflection are often shortchanged or overlooked in the day-to-day rush of a modern ministry and a busy, thriving faith community. I'll be using this time to engage

with places and experiences that sustain my spirit and my vocation as a minister and hopefully to garner some inspiration and get some writing done.

I'll also use much of the time to be in Scotland, a place of great spiritual power and renewal for me. This sabbatical will be an uplifting, rejuvenating time for me. But it will also be a time when I will surely be missing you, hoping all are well among you, and looking forward to returning and being "us" again.

With Rev. Roger and the strong staff team and lay leadership, I know First U will do well while I am away. My hope is that the rich and revitalizing time I anticipate for myself will be the same for you—a chance for this congregation to renew its sense of its gifts and abilities apart from your senior minister, to live into the strengths we have been working to build in recent years, a chance to refresh your sense of yourselves as a community of people each with some ministry—wisdom, experience, creativity, care—to offer. I look both to this time to do some work that regular parish ministry prohibits—and to returning when this period of rejuvenation, reflection, and writing is over. Again, I will be so glad to return to this beloved congregation.

May this be a renewing, inspiring time for us all.

With gratitude and love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "hij", written over a horizontal line.