

Sabbatical FAQ: What You Need to Know About Rev. Sarah's Sabbatical

When is the sabbatical happening?

Rev. Sarah will be on sabbatical from **September 1, 2025, through January 1, 2026**. They'll return to the pulpit and congregational life on **Sunday, January 4, 2026**.

Why is Rev. Sarah taking a sabbatical?

Sabbaticals are a time for **renewal, rest, and reflection**. Just as fields are left fallow to restore their fertility, ministers need intentional time away from daily responsibilities to recharge their spirits, deepen their wisdom, and return with fresh energy and vision for ministry. This time will also strengthen the congregation's capacity to thrive with shared leadership.

Who will lead the congregation during the sabbatical?

We have strong lay leaders ready to guide the church during this time. We will be joined by Northwoods member and UU minister **Rev. Katie Norris**, who will lead the majority of the worship services and offer some emergency pastoral care as needed. Other lay volunteers from the Mutual Aid Circle and other parts of congregational life will be supporting this time as well.

Will Rev. Sarah be available by phone or email?

Nope! Sabbatical is a full break. Rev. Sarah will **not be checking church email, attending meetings, or responding to calls or texts related to church business**. This is a vital part of what allows sabbatical to be truly restorative.

What can we expect during the sabbatical?

Expect a season of **creativity, different style of worship, room for new leadership vision, and community care**. Worship will continue each Sunday, pastoral care will be available, and many ministries will continue—or even grow! Sabbatical is not just a time for clergy renewal, but for **congregational deepening** as well.

What if I have a pastoral care need while Rev. Sarah is away?

You are not alone. Our **Mutual Aid Circle and Soul Supporters** are here to support you. Trained lay caregivers are available for listening, support, and accompaniment through life's challenges, and if you need more practical help like meals or a ride, we've got you covered! You can reach out for support using the form on the "Care and Support" page of our website, reach out to one of the monthly Care Coordinators (listed in the Beacon Bits and order of service) or by speaking to a congregant wearing a green pin on their nametag.

What if something big happens while she's gone? Will she be told?

Rev. Katie and Northwoods staff are in touch with Rev. Sarah's emergency contact. If there's a truly urgent or extraordinary situation that needs her attention, she will be contacted through the appropriate channels. Otherwise, she's fully unplugged and trusting the congregation to carry the work of ministry together.

Where is Rev. Sarah going? What will she be doing?

Sabbatical is a time for stepping back in order to lean in—into deeper questions, slower

rhythms, and wider vision. Rather than a checklist of tasks, Rev. Sarah is entering this sabbatical with a heart full of inquiry: *What does prayer look like in a Unitarian Universalist context? How can we lead in ways that center shared power and care? What practices sustain ministry and community over the long haul? What does it mean to truly rest, and how does rest change us?*

This sabbatical isn't just for Rev. Sarah's renewal—it's a shared investment in the long-term health of our community. When your minister returns, she'll bring fresh insight and energy for the road ahead. But for now, trust that the questions she's carrying are holy ones—and that this time of stepping away is an essential part of showing up well.

Will church life slow down while Rev. Sarah is gone?

It might, in some ways. But while some things may feel different, church life continues—with **vibrant worship, programs, and leadership**. In fact, sabbatical is often a time of discovery—new voices in the pulpit, fresh ideas in leadership, and renewed clarity about who we are as a congregation.

How can I stay involved in church life while she's away? (

Sabbatical is a perfect time to **lean into community**. Opportunities for connection, care, and spiritual growth continue—and your presence matters more than ever. You can:

- **Show up!** Come to services and events, support one another, and keep our community strong.
- **Say yes!** If you're invited to help with something—reading, greeting, pastoral care, or coffee hour—consider it an invitation to practice shared ministry.
- **Trust the process.** Sabbaticals are sacred time, and we've prepared well for this one.