

Minister's Musings – September 2020

It's so good to be back! Thank you for the warm welcome from so many of you – emails, chat messages in my first Sunday back, texts, messages on Facebook! It was really good (and necessary) to be away and it is good to be back.

I feel deeply grateful for the chance to take a whole month's leave to rest, relax and rejuvenate. We spent the month in the town we used to live in, practicing social distancing, walking in beauty every day, sometimes with our dog Vera, sometimes with friends or mentors. We kayaked on our anniversary. I got to see family from both ends of the age spectrum – our grandkids, including the 3 ½ year old (the newest baby wasn't quite born yet), and my grandfather's cousin, aged 93, who holds a special place in my heart.

To be fully honest, I feel something akin to guilt. I know that I am not the only one in need of a break, in need of a chance to rest and renew, in need of a month (or more!) away from the space the pandemic has made all too familiar. No doubt you, dear congregant, have felt or are feeling that need, too. I want to thank you for allowing me the chance to take my leave. I have colleagues, some UU, some other denominations, who have not yet gotten a true rest since the pandemic hit. When reflecting upon that reality, it gives me yet another reason to feel so lucky to be your Minister.

It's the start of a new congregational year. Given the pandemic, it will be a year like no other this congregation has known. We will continue to stay primarily virtual through the end of the calendar year, perhaps longer. We are having a few outdoor, socially distanced events while the weather allows – hope you will participate in our fun Water OUT(door)Gathering on September 5th in the morning. Sign up here for a time slot to take part.

Our path to membership class, which we call YoUU & TUS, is holding its first of three meetings in the parking lot so that folks get a chance to meet each other (masks on) and tell their spiritual journey stories. (Psst: it's the biggest membership class we've had in a long time!)

Like many other UU congregations, we follow the Soul Matters theme-based ministry, which gives us a monthly theme to organize our activities around.



In addition to the Soul Matters themes, this year we are going to have an overarching theme for the year. Chosen by our Sabbatical Committee, Widening Circles, provides a chance for committees, teams, care-rings, Spirit Lab, even Sunday services, to explore what it can mean to widen our circles.

Widen circles of compassion? Of inclusion? Of liberation? Of beauty? How might we find our groove with this concept, aiming for spiritual growth, not just spiritual satisfaction? How can we explore this, both as individuals and as a congregation? There is potential

here, if we choose to engage it!

I am blessed to be on this journey with you,

~ Rev. Karen