

UUCMP SABBATICAL GUIDE

August 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022

Our Co-ministers, the Revs. Axel & Elaine Gehrmann, will be on sabbatical for 6 months, from August 1, 2021 to January 31, 2022.



What will they do?

Revs. Axel and Elaine plan to use their sabbatical for a combination of rest and renewal. They hope to visit other UU congregations, to travel, to rest, to read, and to feed their spirits.

Their travel hopes include U.S. roadtrips, and a visit to Germany, to visit extended family and religious relatives. They hope to refill their spiritual wells, and to return rejuvenated and refreshed.

What is a Sabbatical?

A sabbatical is an extended period of leave from one's usual work, especially for rest or renewal. The term has its roots in the Sabbath traditionally being a day of rest and in the practice of letting fields lay fallow for a season so that rejuvenation of the land can take place.

As part of their serving agreement, and as recommended by the UUA and UUMA, Revs. Elaine & Axel earn one month of sabbatical leave for each year served, not to exceed six months, to be taken after the fourth and before the seventh year. (The current 2020-21 year is their sixth year.)

What will UUCMP do for ministerial leadership?

Church life will continue. UUCMP will have a Sabbatical Minister who will lead worship, provide administrative and pastoral support, and help keep things running smoothly in the Co-ministers' absence.

Susan Panttaja, who is serving as our intern minister from August 15, 2020 through June 15, 2021, and who was a long time member at the UU congregation in Santa Rosa before going to seminary, will serve in this $\frac{3}{4}$ time role of Sabbatical minister. (Elaine & Axel each serve $\frac{3}{4}$ time, so this will be half of what our co-ministers provide). She knows our congregation well, and is well-liked and respected by our members, friends and staff.

What will UUCMP do for worship?

Sabbatical Minister Susan Panttaja will work with congregational staff and leaders to make sure that the core activities of worship, Religious Exploration, administration, music, and more, continue on course. Susan will not attend every committee and group meeting, but will be available as a resource, and will attend board and staff meetings, and other occasional meetings.

Susan will be responsible for the majority of the Sunday Worship services (either preaching herself or arranging for a guest preacher), in collaboration with the Worship Associates team. Worship Associates will continue to be responsible for one Sunday worship service a month.

What contact will we have with Revs. Axel and Elaine?

Their sabbatical will be a complete break from their duties as ministers, and they will not be available for direct communication from members. They will be notified of emergencies by the Sabbatical Minister or Board President.

If you see them around town, you may certainly greet them, however please refrain from discussing church business.

What will UUCMP do for pastoral care?

For pastoral care needs, we are very fortunate that Rev. Dennis Hamilton, a retired UU minister and long-time member of UUCMP, who has been working as a Pastoral Associate, will step up his role and be available for pastoral care calls and assistance, as Pastoral Care Coordinator.

The Caring Network, led by Carol Collin, will continue to serve as a valuable resource, providing support and services to our members and friends.

What if I have a question about a church matter during the sabbatical?

Susan Panttaja, the church staff, and the Sabbatical Committee are good resources to contact with questions.

Members of the Sabbatical Committee are Katie Hamilton, Be Astengo, Randy May, Page Galloway, Lauren Keenan, and Sue Ellen Stringer –They can be reached at sabbaticalcomm@uucmp.org

It's a win-win

Sabbaticals are an important ingredient in cultivating healthy and vital long-term ministries.

Sabbaticals benefit both ministers and congregations – providing opportunities for reflection, new perspectives, and continued growth – personal, spiritual, and institutional.

If you have any questions about the upcoming ministerial sabbatical at this point, please contact either of the co-ministers (minister@uucmp.org) or the Sabbatical Committee (sabbaticalcomm@uucmp.org). Thank you for your support of this important aspect of congregational life!