



First Unitarian
A Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Albuquerque • Edgewood • Socorro • Carlsbad

The Rev. Christine Robinson, Senior Minister
The Rev. Angela Herrera, Minister

November 23, 2016

Dear Members and Friends of First Unitarian,

Last spring, I decided that the time had come in my life and the life of this church for me to retire from full time ministry, and as the senior minister of this church. I set a date, August 31, 2017. I have nothing but gratitude and satisfaction in my heart for my years here. Nobody could have asked for a better career. I know that this letter comes on the heels of a challenging month, but I also know that you are a resilient people and your leadership is equal to the task of transition.

Your leaders started thinking about this coming transition several years ago, and the Board, Angela, and I spent the Summer finalizing the transition plan, which you may read about in the next letter. It lines out the decisions the congregation will need to make to discern your future leadership.

Angela is interested in being your senior minister, and it is important that I play no role in that mutual decision. All I am allowed to say is that during her seven years with us, Angela has learned all aspects of ministry in a large church and has served us very well. She will be a superb senior minister for some UU church. Whether she is the right senior minister for this church now is for her and you to decide.

William and I expect to continue to live in Albuquerque for some years. Ministerial protocol demands that I stay away from the congregation until your new Senior Minister has been in place for at least a year. That gives you and your new ministry team a chance to bond and gives me time to get used to the idea that I'm not in charge any more. After things settle down, if it feels good to me and to the church's leadership, I could be around again as a regular church member. This prohibition on contact between a former minister and a congregation may seem harsh, but it is crucial. While I will miss you, the health of the church must come first.

This is not goodbye; I still have 9 months of ministry with you and I intend to make it count in the same way that the last 28 years have counted. As you take on the task of looking to your future and the strengths and traits you want in your next senior minister, I will continue to tend to you and to this congregation. Come Spring, at least the first stage of that discernment will be complete, and we can turn to saying goodbye to this ministry and to each other, so that we can appreciate all that we've learned and done in the past 29 years, and therefore face the future with optimism and joy.

With Love and Gratitude,

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association
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