

Appeared in Newsletter 1.75 years before sabbatical:

Sabbatical Proposal

The Ministerial Relations Committee and Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee unanimously recommend the following proposal be adopted by the congregation at our Annual Meeting on May 5, 2002 at 12:45 PM.

1. Whereas Drew Kennedy has served as our minister for the past 16 years and has not taken a sabbatical;
2. Whereas Drew's original 1986 Settlement Agreement provides for a sabbatical to be taken as early as 1991-1992 (accruing at a rate of one month per year of service);
3. Whereas the church has grown significantly in membership, programs, and vitality on Drew's watch;
4. Whereas sabbaticals are standard practice in the Unitarian Universalist ministry among ministers serving churches full time;
5. Whereas when a climate of trust exists sabbaticals can benefit both the congregation and the minister in significant and mutually strengthening ways;

Therefore, we encourage Drew, with our blessing, to take a sabbatical of not more than five months sometime in the 2003-2004 church year provided:

1. A sabbatical plan prepared by Drew and the Ministerial Relations Committee is approved by the Board of Trustees;
2. Adequate replacement services and/or coverage are successfully lined up and approved by the Board of Trustees;
3. Drew agrees to serve the church for at least one year upon return from sabbatical.

Furthermore, we encourage Drew to apply to the Lilly Endowment's National Clergy Renewal Program for one of its Clergy Renewal grants.

YOURS DREWLY

Elsewhere in this newsletter you should find the official notice of our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 5, at 12:45 PM. One of the items on the agenda is a resolution adopted by the Ministerial Relations Committee and the Board of Trustees recommending to congregation that I be encouraged to take a sabbatical the year after next. Please read the full text of the "Sabbatical Proposal" before proceeding with the following Questions and Answers that may be helpful in more fully understanding this proposal.

QUESTION: When are you thinking about taking this sabbatical and for how long?

ANSWER: Sometime in the 2003-2004 church year, probably beginning in January for five months.

QUESTION: If there are provisions for a sabbatical in your settlement agreement (contract), why haven't you taken one in sixteen years?

ANSWER: Primarily because I couldn't see being away studying or traveling when my children were young and in school. It has only been in the last couple of years that I have started to think more seriously about a sabbatical, now that our younger of two children is in college. Plus we always seemed to be in the middle of something here at church.

QUESTION: If a sabbatical leave is provided for in your settlement agreement (contract), why is it being brought to the congregation for a vote?

ANSWER: For two reasons. First, I want to apply to the Eli Lilly Endowment's National Clergy Renewal Program for one of its grants and one of the things they look for is strong support from the congregation for the minister to take the sabbatical. Secondly, as I explained to the Board, I wouldn't want to take a sabbatical if the congregation did not support my doing so. So, I am asking for your support.

QUESTION: What would you plan to do on the sabbatical?

ANSWER: I'm not sure yet, but I have a long list of possibilities, including "Trekking the Himalayas Visiting Holy Sites" through the Alban Institute, visiting some larger UU churches to learn how to "do" a larger church, exploring further work with silence, perhaps through a 30 day silent retreat at the Shalem Institute, taking a workshop on "Longer Term Ministries," being a Minister in Residence at Meadville Lombard Theological School or applying for a Merrill Fellowship to study at Harvard. The Ministerial Relations Committee will help me finalize a proposal which will eventually have to be approved by the Board.

QUESTION: Who would mind the store while you are gone?

ANSWER: One possibility is a retired minister coming in for all or part of the time. Another possibility is contracting for some part time help. In either case, we would probably call upon guest ministers and other pulpit guests, as well as some lay-led services. Additionally, we might call upon some of our professional counselors to assist our Pastoral Care Associates, etc.,. Again, the Ministerial Relations Committee would help me figure out a plan which would have to be approved by the Board.

QUESTION: What would be the financial arrangements, and how would we pay for it?

ANSWER: As stipulated in my settlement agreement (and as is customary), the church would continue to pay my salary and benefits. If I get lucky and win a Lilly Clergy Renewal grant, they will pay up to \$20,000 for my sabbatical expenses and up to \$10,000 for the church's additional replacement expenses. Since 2003-04 would normally be an Intern Minister year and I wouldn't be here to supervise an intern, we might use the money normally used for the intern minister's stipend for sabbatical expenses. There may be other ways to do it, as well, but it will be a stretch.

QUESTION: What's this about serving the church for a year upon return from the sabbatical?

ANSWER: This is a standard sabbatical provision. It is found in academia, in my settlement agreement, and in the Lilly Clergy Renewal grant provisions. The idea is to insure that I don't use the year to find another job. Besides, you are making an investment in me by sending me on a sabbatical; you deserve some minimal return on your investment.

Cheers and love,
Drew