



July 27, 2016

Beloved Friends and Members of First Unitarian Church,

It is with a whole spectrum of emotions that I write to let you know that my time as your minister will end on October 23, 2016. I have accepted a job as Congregational Life Staff with the Southern Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association, serving over 215 congregations in 12 states, Mexico, and the US Virgin Islands.

This does not come out of any conflict with the congregation. In some ways, that might be easier to accept. I love you all, individually and collectively. I have simply found that my vocation has shifted from parish ministry to the sustainability of religious life. In short, I am called to help congregations (plural) learn to adapt to the changes churches are experiencing in this 21st century. And the Southern Region, with its reputation for innovation and its cutting edge growth, is the ideal place to answer the call.

While I am very excited about my new position, I am also full of sorrow to say goodbye to such an amazing congregation. It has been an honor and a privilege to be your minister, to walk with you the past 7 years, to watch you grow into a delightful and inspiring church.

In the next few months, we will have time to more fully process our grief, express our gratitude for one another, honor what has been, and say goodbye. I have attached a document that I hope addresses many of the questions you might have. I will be speaking about this transition in a homily on July 31 – I hope to see you there.

In Love and Faith,

The Rev. Dawn Cooley