

Who should I contact for special prayer requests?

Please call or email the office for special prayer requests. The prayer box is always available to you, where you place your prayer request. Our prayer ministry prays with them for 7 days and then they are forwarded to Silent Unity, where they are prayed with for another 30 days. You may call or contact **Rev. Ray Nelson**, our Pastoral Care Minister. It is an honor to pray with you.

Who do I call if I have a family or personal crisis?

For pastoral concerns, contact **Rev. Ray Nelson** or call **Connie Eckert** to put you in touch with one of our pastoral care teams. If you would like a home or hospital visit, please notify the church office so that we can be of greater service to you. Rev. Ray is available for spiritual counseling and can also refer as appropriate to qualified professionals in the wider community.

Who will pay for the sabbatical?

While gone, Rev. Pat will be paid his normal salary. The Board has been planning this event for five years and has placed money aside in a sabbatical reserve account each month to cover the expenses of Rev. Pat's duties while he is gone.

Will the church budget need to be increased to cover any expenses?

No. Designated funds are in place to cover expenses related to this sabbatical. The church budget may need to be increased but not because of the sabbatical.

Who will administer the church in Rev. Pat's absence?

We have an excellent staff in place, and a well-qualified Board of

Trustees that will administer the church in Rev. Pat's absence.

Will the church just be in a "holding pattern" while Rev. Pat is away?

All of our ministries will continue to flourish while Rev. Pat is away. Also, it is important to remember that the sabbatical is a two-way process: while Rev. Pat is on his journey of renewal, refreshment, and reflection, we will embark on a journey as well--- to continue reflection on our prior work, to renew ourselves, and to continue to discern God's will for us.

Will Rev. Pat be in contact with Unity Christ Church during his sabbatical?

An important part of a sabbatical is to make a *complete* break from things. The only people who will be in direct contact with Rev. Pat while he is away will be his family. In the unlikely event that some *extraordinary* news absolutely must be communicated to Rev. Pat, the presiding Board president, currently **Jeff Kaiserman**, will do so.

How will we get "reacquainted" when Rev. Pat returns?

Rev. Pat's first Sunday back will include a brief "welcome back" as part of the Palm Sunday service. In addition, an opportunity for the two-way sharing of experiences as well as some evaluation with input from the entire congregation will be planned by Rev. Pat and the Board.

How can I learn more about the sabbatical?

Rev. Pat or any Board member will be happy to answer questions that you may have concerning Rev. Pat's sabbatical.

UNITY CHRIST CHURCH

Rev. Pat Williamson
Sabbatical 2012

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is a Sabbatical?

The word sabbatical has its roots in the biblical concept of Sabbath (“to rest” or “to cease”). Sabbath keeping is setting aside time that God consecrates and makes holy.

Sabbatical leave is a time for our pastor to shift gears in order to rest, disengage, study, reflect, and travel in order to return to minister among us refreshed and renewed in body, mind and spirit. It is *not* a time for routine work, mid-career assessment, job search, retirement planning, or permanent leave.

Rev. Pat’s letter of agreement with our church specifies that he may take a sabbatical after five years of his service at Unity Christ Church. Rev. Pat completed five years of service on May 21, 2011.

Sabbatical is more than a vacation from meetings, budgets, sermons, and people in need. It is a time for Rev. Pat to receive spiritual nourishment and a change in perspective, to deepen his relationship with God, himself, and his family—a season of spiritual growth. This special time will also be a season of growth for the entire congregation.

Why do ministers go on sabbatical?

- ◆ The very nature of being an effective pastor involves continual spiritual growth. Spiritual depth does not happen by accident; it takes hard intentional work. Trying to do this while working is nearly impossible. Congregations need to provide opportunities for their ministers to get away for extended periods of time dedicated to spiritual development.
- ◆ Without renewal there is a stronger chance that the clergy will, over time, burn out. It has been documented that people in the helping professions tend to burn out the fastest; in part because the constant intimate involvement with the emotional weight of other people’s lives can be draining.
- ◆ Another lethal effect of burn out is that it makes a minister dull, hollow, and uninteresting.
- ◆ Pastors are rarely afforded the luxury of having two consecutive days off every week like most laypeople enjoy.

Do other clergy go on sabbatical?

A growing number of clergy are taking sabbaticals. In fact, it is common in most denominations. Indeed, Unity Worldwide Ministries has strongly encouraged congregations to provide our pastors with regular sabbatical leaves every five years.

How long will Rev. Pat be gone?

Rev. Pat will leave on January 1, 2012 and return on April 1, 2012. His first Sunday back will be April 1, 2012, Palm Sunday. Rev. Pat will be gone for three months.

What can I do to support Rev. Pat while he is on sabbatical?

- ◆ Continue coming to church to support the speakers, the programs, the community and, most of all, your own spiritual growth.
- ◆ Please honor the time of renewal and rest and reflection for Rev. Pat. There are plenty of qualified people who will be able to meet your needs while he is taking his time of rest and renewal. Just call the office at 763-521-4793.
- ◆ Remember Rev. Pat and his family in your thoughts and prayers while he is away, especially on Sunday mornings. Each and every Sunday morning Rev. Pat will set aside time to be in prayer with Unity Christ Church during our worship celebrations. Hold Rev. Pat in your prayers.

What will Rev. Pat be doing on his sabbatical?

Rev. Pat will be visiting family and friends outside of the Twin Cities. He will spend time doing spiritual renewal work, reading and resting. He will also spend time alone.

Who will cover Rev. Pat’s responsibilities during his absence?

We are so blessed to have outstanding leaders within our community. The church will continue to operate in a way that meets personal needs and assist with the transformation of lives.

Here are some examples of responsibilities:

Connie Eckert, Office Administrator: Handles all administrative functions. This is an excellent place to begin when you have a need or a request.

Rev. Ray Nelson, Associate Minister: Director of Pastoral Care, Adult Education, Spiritual Counseling, and Director of Sacred Services. Rev. Ray works with our pastoral care and ministry teams.

Rev. Sher McNeal, Executive Director: All facilities issues, day in and day out operations of the church, and administrator of support programs such as communications. She also serves as staff liaison to the finance and accessibility committees.

Nancy Maiello, Youth and Family Director: Handles all youth and family matters, from nursery through YOU.

Lori Dokken, Music Director: Handles the music for all services.

Jess Drenth, Electronics Communications Coordinator: Coordinates our electronic communications such as the weekly Peek At The Week, email and social media.

Of course, we have our elected Board of Trustees headed by **Jeff Kaiserman**. The Board is always available to you and has primary administrative authority.

Who will I call to plan a special service?

The church office will be open during its usual hours, staffed by **Connie Eckert** and volunteers. Connie will arrange for weddings, funerals, memorial services, christenings, and other special services.

Who will conduct the worship?

We are certainly blessed to have many credential leaders who will be leading worship. Some of those leading worship will be: **Rev. Ray Nelson, Rev. Shirley Engelmeier, Rev. Sher McNeal, and Rev. David Belton**. Each and every Sunday will be an inspiring and informative lesson. Of course, our music will still be under the direction of **Lori Dokken**, our Music Director. **Thank you God for all of the volunteers who make Sunday morning happen.**