

# SABBATICAL TIMES

A LOOK AT OUR 2023 SABBATICAL ADVENTURE

Welcome to  
Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of  
Columbus Indiana

Pulley Sculpture

Memorial Walk

Sri Ganesh Temple

Labyrinth

Fire Pit

Mary Lu Orr  
Sensory Garden

Children's Area

Native plant Garden

Special  
Guest  
Speakers

## BUILDING & GROUNDS

Thanks to the hard work and careful planning of many volunteers, we have completed several projects that celebrate this special space we share, and the history of the people who gather here - in person and in memory.

GATHERINGS &  
CONNECTIONS

CELEBRATING OUR  
SPIRITUAL HOME



# LETTER FROM THE SABBATICAL CHAIR

*Hello Friends!*

This is a bittersweet writing assignment -my last as your sabbatical chair, and the beginning of an exciting new phase of our shared ministry. With the help of a Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Grant, it has been an exciting and rewarding four months. Rev. Nic was traveling and strengthen his roots around the world and in the surrounds of Columbus. The congregation has been undergoing a transformative experience reflecting deeply on our history and our future.. We hosted three special weekends:

- Scott Russell Sanders asked *Where Are We, and Where Are We Going?* as we explored Spirit of Place.
- Rev. Sarah Gettie McNeill & Rev. Darrick Jackson helped us cultivate and share our stories both personal and keystone moments in UUCCI's history. They also joined the Chicago Playback Theatre Ensemble – delighting us with *Identity Over Time: An Evening of Improv*.
- Carrie Newcomer entertained us with a concert, also featuring Scott Russell Sanders. Carrie helped us to honor our history, reflect upon our current inner and outer experiences, and envision our hopes for the future as we lean into our next growing edges.

And finally, on Homecoming Sunday, May 7, we welcomed back Rev. Nic. We've missed you terribly, and we can't wait to hear about your adventures. There is much to share.

*-Cate Hyatt*



## Check out these changes!

### *Interior (Telling Our Stories)*

Song (his is Our Journey, by our sabbatical community, with arr. by Carrie Newcomer)  
Leadership Wall  
Congregation Pictures  
Our UUCCI Homes Pictures  
Elsie Weekly Picture  
The Sabbatical Times

### *Exterior (Our Grounds)*

The Mary Lu Orr Sensory Garden  
Signage  
Plant Identification Labels  
Bat House  
Bottle Cap Bench  
Youth Mural on the shed  
Founders and Followers Garden

### *Sabbatical Extensions:*

Peace Camp:  
Appreciation Sunday:  
Environmental Justice Summit  
Land Acknowledgement Ceremony

# Sabbatical Extensions

---



## Interfaith Peace Camp 2023

From June 12-16, we will be hosting an interfaith day camp for ages 5-12. For more information about this event, please reach out to [children@uucci.org](mailto:children@uucci.org).

## Appreciation Sunday:

Our final Sabbatical offering will be this fall when we host a special Land Acknowledgement Ceremony and pay tribute to UUCCI's many founders and followers. During this ceremony we will give special honor our own UUCCI members, Sondra Bolte and Dave Kadlac, (creators of our new chalice) and sculptor Bob Pulley, for their numerous acts of generosity to UUCCI over the years.



## Community Offering focused on Environmental Justice

We'll bring Scott Russell Sanders back and partner with organizers as Scott asks again, *Who are we? And where are we?*



# A Message From the Board

By Linda Iwamuro

The 2023 Board of Trustees is deeply appreciative of the Sabbatical Team, for their dedication to and superb execution of the Congregation's renewal sabbatical program, over these past four months. We cannot thank them enough for their leadership and effort that made each retreat such a success. The Board also commends the past three Boards of Trustees, starting in 2020, led respectively by Cate Hyatt, Sondra Bolte and Lin Montgomery, who worked with Rev. Nic and Congregation members, bringing the vision of this sabbatical to the point of launch.

The Congregation has been fortunate to experience new ways of understanding UUCCI's place in time and being, so that we may anticipate our future with broadened perspective.

The Board awaits Rev. Nic's return with enthusiasm and energy, to forge a strong partnership as we prepare to develop our second generation of Ends, having completed five years with our minister and our mutual sabbatical journeys enlightening our outlook. We look forward to the Congregation's ideas and participation, as we move forward.



Finding time for Hot Meals during the sabbatical



# HOME-GROWN AND OUTSIDE SABBATICAL SPEAKERS

BY LOUISE HILLERY, SABBATICAL TEAM MEMBER

As the person responsible to organize all the Sunday services during our four-month sabbatical period, I had the privilege of working with each of our special guest speakers, as well as our home-grown service leaders. I could see the friendly warmth shown by so many of our members to our speakers, and our people's enthusiasm to get to know the guests better.

Our first Sunday service during Sabbatical time was Dancing into the New Year, led by Brandy Wills-Giles and Children's Coordinator Adrienne Summerlot. We all got our holiday-weary bodies moving with joy, and noticed what an excellent speaker Brandy turned out to be. In February, Adrienne led a service featuring the Birmingham Children's March for civil rights, and in March it was a service of activity stations to involve our children and honor our emotions. In April Adrienne introduced us to the proposed revision of our UUA bylaws known as Article 2.

Our special Sabbatical preacher, Elizabeth Valencia-Gutierrez, gained valuable experience toward her ministerial credentials as she led us through a seven-part series of sermons on welcoming change, the personal harm that can be caused by religions, seeking religious experiences to find our authentic selves, celebrating diverse religious traditions, how focusing on differences rather than on individuals is harmful to deeper connections, and finally on the pursuit of a multicultural beloved community.

Author Scott Russell Sanders explored our physical environment, our history, and feelings about home. Minister-trainers Rev. Darrick Jackson and Sarah Gettie McNeill conducted a weekend of exploring our past and our hopes for the future. At this writing, Carrie Newcomer's special Sabbatical weekend workshop is still in the planning stages, but promises to be a terrific culmination of our Sabbatical activities.

Two things were true for all of our home-grown and outside special speakers. They all enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to provide a Wonder Box moment for the children, and refused all offers to let someone else handle that part of the service. And all the speakers enjoyed planning services cooperatively with the worship associates who teamed with them.





# MY SABBATICAL REFLECTION

By Jim Farless



When the Sunday Services Team met for our quarterly retreat early in September of this past year, Rev. Nic had an introspective activity for us entitled “A Hope, a Fear, and a Gift”. We were each, including Rev. Nic, asked to share our personal perspective on each topic---hope, fear, and gift---as it might relate to the upcoming year.

Nic’s comment on fear was “Fear that the sabbatical is not taken advantage of.” I am uncertain whether he was thinking of himself or the congregation or both. If you have been reading of any of Nic’s experiences in “Notes from Mt. Horeb”, it is clear his fear was unrealized.

As for the congregation, my belief is that we have taken full advantage of the sabbatical period. When I joined the Sabbatical team at the end of September, I was not quite sure what to expect. What I found and what developed was a very detailed and well thought out sequence of events and services intended to build on the ideas of understanding place, revisiting our roots, reflecting on where we are now, and being asked to imagine what’s possible heading into the future. Even though our experiences were very different, we were, by design, on a parallel path with Rev. Nic as we both examined our rootedness and how that will impact us moving forward.

On our journey, we have been fortunate to be led by some very accomplished guides--- Elizabeth Valencia-Gutierrez, Scott Russell Sanders, Rev. Darirck Jackson, Rev. Sarah Gettie McNeill, and Carrie Newcomer---and an incredible staff---Louise Hillery, Adrienne Summerlot, and Brittany Phillips.

Over the weeks to come, we will be hearing about Rev. Nic’s sabbatical experiences, and he will be hearing about ours, and, hopefully, together we will grow as a congregation.



# THE SABBATICAL SPIRIT

BY LIN MONTGOMERY

The calendar says the time of Sabbatical has ended. Nic is back from his travels and all of the special events have taken place.

But, should the spirit of the Sabbatical end?

In the beginning, a sabbatical team was developed and under Cate's leadership, developed a vision of what we have, what we could/should create and what our future would look like. The team worked endlessly utilizing their various strengths and talents, but always with our community family members and the sacred grounds of UUCI in mind,

But, we ran out of time.

It is this invitation from the Sabbatical team, to continue on with the spirit and projects of the Sabbatical. There will be celebrations, physical changes and additions to our building and the grounds. We will take a moment to celebrate our ancestors and history; to recognize those who founded and followed to bring our community to this point. We will also investigate our future and what we can become. What part will you think play in the continuing story and the continuing spirit of this sabbatical.





# REVEREND NIC'S STOLE

## *A Story in Told in Thread*

BY LYNETTE FARLESS



We celebrated our return together with Reverend Nic May 7th after our respective four-month periods of learning. In gratitude to Nic for all his preparation to help our congregation grow and learn together we welcomed him back and gifted him a stole. This piece of art is a lasting gift to him from our congregation.

Finding an artist who would be interested in crafting this one-of-a-kind gift for Rev. Nic at first seemed daunting. However, after researching through several websites, one quickly came to the top of the team's list. Kit's Karma Creations featured beautiful stoles artistically created for specific endeavors.

Kit Wright, the owner and creator of the stoles, thoughtfully explored Nic's sabbatical themes of paths or journeys, UU identity, family, roots, love of nature and travel. She suggested many green fabrics with prints illustrating things in nature and highlighted with gold thread for the background. Kit also was inspired to represent his roots through a four seasons tree which is depicted on both sides of the stole. Unitarian Universalism is highlighted by a chalice with intersecting circles to include both traditions upholding a vessel to light our way in the World. The German castle toward the bottom refers to his travel to the Frankfurt area where his maternal family side migrated from in the 1800s. Note the path for the journey is sewn throughout the stole from side to side, weaving the stories together.

The many pieces blend to make one beautiful whole. Kit was able to represent Nic's vision of the aspects of the sabbatical Journey. She was happy to share her creative artistry and collaborate with our congregation on this very important gift to celebrate our sabbatical return.

Kit's Karma Creations

Kathleen Wright. 502 Bethel ST Salisbury, MD 21804

[kitskarmacreations4uu@gmail.com](mailto:kitskarmacreations4uu@gmail.com)



---

# 2023 SABBATICAL

## *Retreat Thoughts*

By Cynthia Scott

Scott Russell Sanders read his nature-based stories, sharing his love of trees. Those readings help me to recall my own childhood memories of exploring a creek where mysterious creatures lived and climbing a towering pine tree. Attendees were encouraged to share similar memories of connecting to nature. I came away with more reasons to actively protect the natural environment around us.

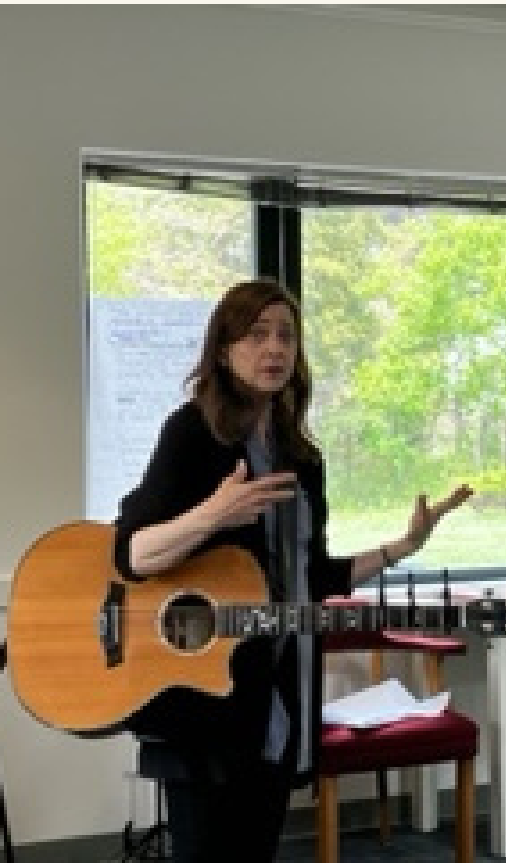
Rev. Darrick Jackson helped me dig into personal memories, the ones that shaped who I am today. His gentle interviewing technique drew out more detail than I intended to mention, but I soon saw why. His performance troupe created an uncanny combination of utterances, poses, and drumbeats to represent my story in a tableau. All the participant's stories became deeply moving when presented this way.

Rev. Sarah Getty McNeil encouraged us to share the earliest history of our congregation, something we have done before. I was amazed to witness how much we remembered hearing from our pioneers in previous sessions. By repeatedly sharing those early years, all members can and do have a better sense of our history to preserve for those coming after us.

Carrie Newcomer conducts concerts and retreats for many audiences, but her songs and poems seem to resonate especially for Unitarian Universalists. Her concert had all of us tapping our toes, clapping, and swaying as we absorbed her inspiring rhythms and lyrics. In the workshop, by asking questions and stringing our answers into phrases, she helped us to compose a song expressing how we journey forward as a congregation.

### *Special Thanks To Our Sabbatical Team!*

During the last year, countless hours have gone into planning events for the congregation that were memorable and meaningful. Thank you to our sabbatical team for these gifts of your time and the opportunities that you have created. Through these special weekend retreats, we have celebrated the history of our congregation, shared our personal stories, and worked together to set our intentions for the future.





# THE JOURNEY WE TRAVEL

*Written by Carrie Newcomer and the UCCI Community  
Arranged by Carrie Newcomer*

Wandering on a winding path,  
I was yearning for more.  
Until I found this loving place.  
Didn't know I was looking for.

CHORUS: This is our journey  
Through shadow and light,  
traveling together,  
hearts burning bright.

The kitchen hums, the coffee's warm,  
We share our stories here,  
A place to grow, a place to learn,  
Letting go of what we fear

CHORUS: This is our journey  
Through shadow and light,  
traveling together,  
hearts burning bright.



Working toward a better world  
Within, among, beyond,  
Teaching children and ourselves  
To carry on the song.

CHORUS (2 times): This is our journey  
Through shadow and light,  
traveling together,

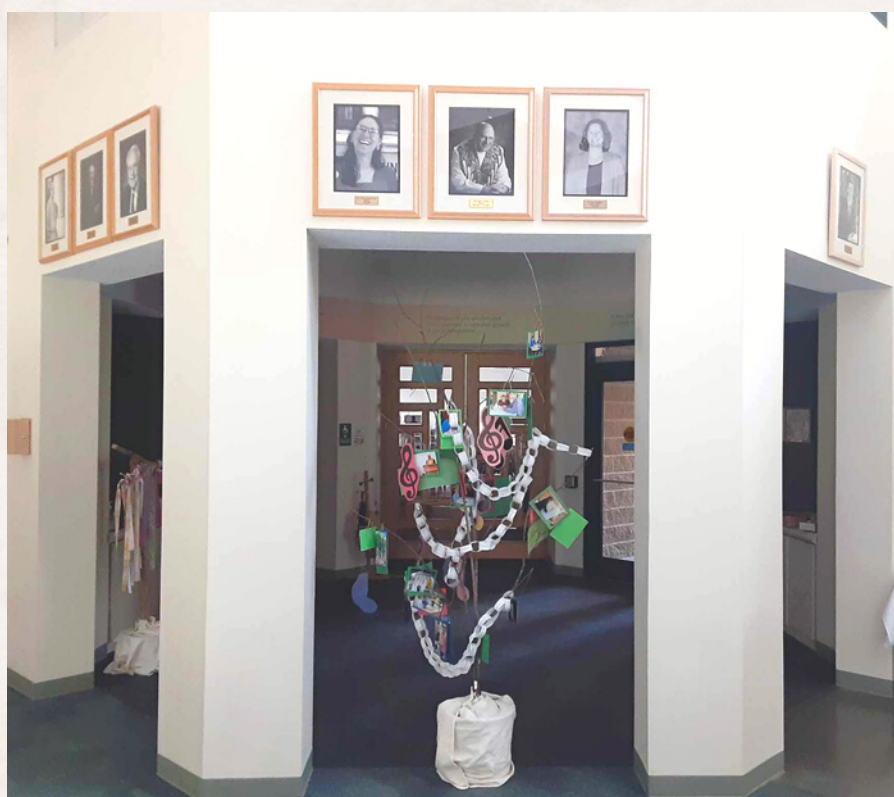
hearts burning bright.  
Hearts burning bright,  
Hearts burning bright,  
Hearts burning bright.





# HONORING OUR HISTORY

## PAST MINISTERS AND STAFF PORTRAITS

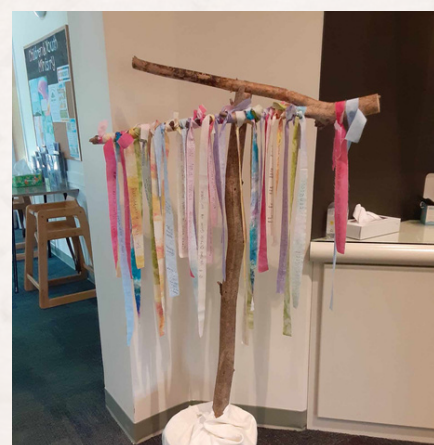


As you step into the narthex and fellowship hall after service, you may notice beautifully framed portraits of our past ministers and current staff. These portraits were thoughtfully prepared by Kathleen Leason and Barry Kastner.



## CONGREGATIONAL GIFTS & PROJECTS

Within UUCCI, you can find many changes, inside and out, that are the result of months of planning. Other changes happened more organically during our sabbatical weekends where we spent time together in celebration and reflection. Wherever you look around our spiritual home, you will find different representations of who we are as a community, and our stories- old and new.





## Exterior Changes

# CELEBRATING OUR GROUNDS



## MARY LU ORR SENSORY GARDEN



For many weeks, Dean Schertz has worked tirelessly to breathe new life into our walkway outside the fellowship hall. This space will now be a place to honor Mary Lu Orr, a UUCI founder and gardening enthusiast. In this sensory garden, you can find beautiful plants to see, hear, feel, taste, and smell.



## RECYCLED BOTTLE CAP BENCH

Many thanks to volunteers over the past few years and recent times to see our Bottlecaps to bench project. This project was started before Covid under the direction of Nancy Olson. This spring we decided the time was here to finish this project. We collected, sorted, and weighed 200 pounds of plastic bottle caps and transported them 150 miles to Green Tree Plastics in Evansville, IN. Gratitude to Liz Nolan-Greven and the assistance of many helping hands to transform them into a 6 foot bench that we can use outside at UUCI.

-Adrienne Summerlot



Thank you Sondra and Liz!



## Exterior Changes

# CELEBRATING OUR GROUNDS



## FINDING OUR WAY



Thank you to Cheryl Liz who created the sign to not just honor our history, but to encourage everyone who visits UUCCI to experience the present. From Mary Lu's Sensory Garden to the many plaques inside and out, our spiritual home is filled with invitations to learn about the past and be present in the moment.



## YOUTH GROUP SHED MURAL

This past April, our youth group of 4th-8th graders volunteered to paint the doors of our Shed. Thank you to Sunny Currier, Dan Meyers, and Brittany Phillips for assisting with this project.

As you walk around the sidewalks and trails, you may also notice several small black signs with the names of various plants and trees. On May 7th, our youths enjoyed a nature walk and friendly competition to see who can identify the most plants!





# OUR FOUNDERS GARDEN

LIN MONTGOMERY, SABBATICAL TEAM MEMBER



We have spent months, if not years, reviewing and learning of the history and founders of the UU movement on a national basis and then again, on the history and founders of our UUCI in Columbus. We have reviewed the humble beginnings from the living rooms of devotees to the various locations in Columbus and then to our sacred campus on Goeller Blvd. Without those individuals, there would be no UU or UUCI. We're talking about the Founding Fathers of the Universalist and Unitarian religious formation through the ages to our current beliefs, principles and emphasis of today.

And it is true that we would not be where we are now without their dedication, sacrifice, ideals and steadfastness.

But, without naming names, we cannot overlook the founding "followers". Those who decided to be the fire keepers; those who kept the flame lit and glowing; those who opened their homes, who have baked goods and made coffee, volunteered at the fundraisers, who made posters and sat at a booth; those who walked the talk of justice. They are the unnamed founders who need to be held up. Their names may or may not be on a plaque, or in the history book, but who contributed what they could. They may have done great things or may have contributed all that they could.

During this sabbatical period, it was decided to dedicate a garden to those who have done it...and at the same time, dedicate a garden to those who have received those seeds and who will tend the UUCI gardens now and in the future. May we all set down our roots, grow, bloom and spread into the future.



# WILD FACTS ABOUT BATS

**Bats can live more than 30 years and can fly at speeds of 60 miles per hour (or more!)**



In fact, University of Tennessee researchers found that the Mexican free-tailed bat could reach speeds up to 100 mph, making it by far the fastest mammal on Earth.

**Bats can eat up to 1,200 mosquitoes an hour.**



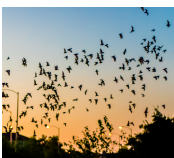
Often, bats consume their body weight in insects every night, helping keep bug populations in check.

**Bat droppings, called guano, are one of the richest fertilizers.**



Bat guano was once a big business—guano was Texas' largest mineral export before oil! In fact, Austin is a seasonal home to North America's largest urban population of Mexican free-tailed bats, which live beneath the Congress Avenue Bridge. Approximately 1.5 million bats reside there.

**The Bracken Bat Cave in TX is home to the world's largest bat colony.**



Millions of Mexican free-tailed bats roost in the Bracken Cave each year between March and October. Learn more about



## CHECK OUT THE UUCCI BAT HOUSE!

*By Donna Stanley*

There are 16 varieties of bats that can be found in Indiana and unfortunately most of those species are declining. All of our bats in Indiana are insect eaters. Many of the beetles and moths the bats feed on are species that damage farm crops. The loss of streamside forest habitat (where there were lots of insects) used to be main problem bats had, but in recent years a fungal disease accidentally introduced from Europe has sharply reduced bat populations.

In the summer most bats live in forest areas and roost under the bark of shaggy-barked trees (like hickory) during the day. A few species of bats, mostly big brown bats and little brown bats, will sleep in attics and barns. In the winter some bats migrate south to find insects while others gather together in large roosts in certain caves and mines where they lower their metabolic rate and hopefully sleep through the winter.

Like many properties UUCCI has a shortage of large trees with shaggy bark for bats to live in. The Sabbatical committee recently purchased a 4-chambered bat house to try to help bats with their housing shortage, and on March 10 the house was installed. Many thanks go to Jon Fischer, Jason Swanson, and Tony Johnson for doing what was not an easy installation. We hope we will see signs of occupants in our bat motel soon!

[Click Here to learn more info about bats at The Nature Conservancy](#)

# Lighting the Flame

This chalice was a loving collaboration by UUCCI members, David Kadlec and Sondra Bolte. It is given to UUCCI on the occasion of the completion of this significant sabbatical for the congregation and our minister, Rev Nic cable.

The rings are symbols of unitarian and universalist traditions. They are imperfect circles representing our ongoing striving for truth and meaning. The tree symbolizes the organic nature of UUCCI within the wider UUA . The chalice tree has roots into the base, allowing it to grow in place.



Similarly, our workshop with Scott Russell Sanders helped us focus on this place as our home, grounding us for the light we bring into the world. There is an implication of staying put in this congregation, supporting the flame, a beacon of hope in Columbus and the world we touch.

David is an artist and welder. Sondra is a novice artist and welder, grateful for the opportunity to work with David. The UU chalice is all steel, made with scrap donations from Josh Kroot.



By Sondra Bolte

For many years, our sanctuary featured a beautiful chalice created by Bob Pulley. This peice of art that represents our history is displayed in a place of honor in our Elsie Weekly room.





# THE JOYS OF SABBATICAL

When Cate Hyatt asked if I wanted to write about my "trials and tribulations" for the Sabbatical Times, I laughed. Now, it's true that every single team, group, and committee in our congregation has put in extra energy and hours during the last few months, but I wouldn't call this a time a "trial". Like the time and effort put in to holiday preparations, when we do something difficult for people that we care about, we rarely remember the struggles. When all is done, the memories that linger might be the look of joy on the faces of loved ones or sharing laughter and stories around the table. It has been a joy and an honor to work with the members of our sabbatical team, who made the months of work a joyful experience with friends, and who helped create such meaningful memories. Thank you all for this gift to our congregation.

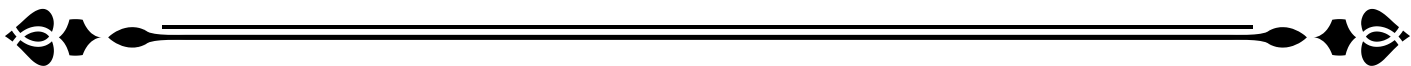


As we go forward in the coming months, I invite you to take an occasional moment to enjoy the spirit of this community we share. Close your eyes in the sanctuary during service and feel the love and support surrounding you. Listen in the fellowship hall and hear the happiness that our congregation brings to others. Look out into the grounds and see our children, the future of our congregation, playing in our beautiful spiritual habitat. And of course, stop and smell the coffee. Grab a cup with a friend, and celebrate this spiritual home that we work together to build each day.

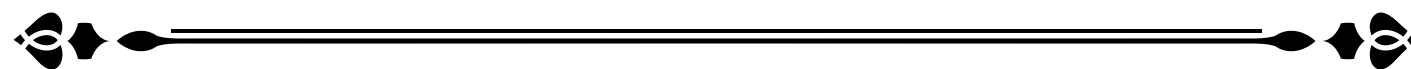


with love,  
*Brittany Phillips*





# HOMECOMING SUNDAY



During this special Sunday service, our sabbatical presented the congregation with some of the projects that they have been working on for the past months. These included our new chalice for the congregation and a new stole for Nic. Nic also brought gifts for the congregation: A beautiful framed quote from a beloved artist and a crystal singing bowl.



## A TALE OF TWO STOLES



During the Wonder Box portion of our service, our children presented a stole that they created. This stole is full of images that represent important lessons for Reverend Nic, including a tree so that he remembers to play and climb trees.



Adrienne asked, "Has anyone else here ever made a stole?" As it happens, Jim and Lynette Farless had a stole specially made to represent Nic, his journey, and his cultural roots. This was presented on "Flat Nic", a cut out display which was carried into the sanctuary.





---

# THE FEAST

---

Our homecoming celebration was not just a party to welcome the Cable family as they returned from their long journey, but also a celebration of the congregation returning home. Founders, first time visitors, and everyone in between gathered to share in a feast of fellowship within our spiritual home on this day. Our halls were filled with joy and laughter, and our grounds were alive with dancing, children playing, and friends connecting to one another.



## CHALICE CIRCLE

We are very grateful to the Chalice Circle for organizing and serving this great fest for our homecoming celebration.





**SABBATICAL TEAM**

# GRATITUDE

**BY CATE HYATT**

One of the joys of my spiritual life has been to chair the sabbatical team during these last few months. We weathered trips to exotic places, soccer tournaments, even a few surgeries to get the job done. This phenomenal team stepped up, met deadlines, laughed our way through a few glitches, all the while enjoying one another and trusting the process.



## **Your Sensational Sabbatical Team:**

Sondra Bolte  
Lynette Farliss  
Steve Jasper  
Lin Montgomery  
Patty Wade  
Nicole Wiltrout  
Linda Imauro, representing the  
Board of Trustees

## **Many leaders and Teams**

The Board of Trustees, Linda Iwamuro (President) and Scott Rittenhouse (Treasurer) Communications/ Electronics, Marty (you are Priceless) Iwamuro! Thanks Marty -for everything you saw and heard Kathleen Leason and Barry Kastner for countless hours to redo our Leadership Wall Buildings and Grounds - the whole bunch of them, Jon Fischer, Michael Greven, Donna Stanley, Donna Kuhlman, Bob Hyatt, Care Team, Chalice Circle, Sharon Mangas; Mark Kevitt for hosting Homecoming lunch, Youth and Owl, Sunny Currier for our beautiful mural on the shed, Marcia Walker, photographer and volunteer coordinator, and the Courageous Action, and Safety and Security teams.



**We have a tie in the BEST FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR category. We can never thank them enough!**

Tony Johnson lives next door and he.s ever ready, whether it is to spreading new gravel, patching holes, cutting beautiful wooden centerpieces, helping hang that heavy bat house, or making sure we have a warm fire for gatherings.

Dean Schertz, gardener extraordinaire, renewed the front gardens, now the Founders and Followers Gardens. Together he and Mary Lu Orr plotted out our new sensory garden to delight young and old alike.







## Special Thanks

Scott Russell Sanders  
Rev. Sarah Gettie McNeill  
Rev. Darrick Jackson  
Carrie Newcomer  
Nancy Olsen  
Cathy Caldie  
Cynthia Scott  
Kathleen Leason  
Lissa Fischer  
Linda Iwamuro  
Sondra Bolte  
Connie Marbach  
Marsh Walker  
Brittany Phillips  
Catherine Myers  
Jon Fischer  
Mary Harmon  
Carla Askerberg  
Ann Beattie  
Carol K  
Diana Spofford

## Floral Arrangements

Backfield Flowers brightened us with their magical arrangements. Thanks Hannah and Connor

## And Your Amazing Staff:

They are all, on the books. as part- time, but overtime in spirit and help every week, every checklist, every deadline.

Louise Hillary, Acting Music Director

Brittany Phillips, Administrative Assistant

Adrienne Summerlot, Children and Youth Ministry

And lastly, Rev. Nic  
for trusting in us!

With all my heart, forever grateful,

*Cate Hyatt*



Please excuse me if we've missed you. Know you are loved and appreciated nevertheless.