

Dear UUCSC members and friends,

As you read this, I will be ending my ministry with you. It has been such a profound gift of learning, expansion, challenge, and growth. Never more so than during this pandemic year.

We've tried so much. Joys and concerns online. Three different forms of online worship. Twice weekly check ins, for months. Once weekly working groups on anti-racism, for a year. Choir and Michael created incredibly wonderful music videos. Lee and Hippo and RE created so much joy and connection, too. Many groups focused on replenishing our spirit, while we simultaneously had conversation after conversation about how it would look different if and when we survived the pandemic.

The fears, when some of our own got sick, and thought they might not make it. The huge numbers of those lost to this pandemic. The difficulty of being isolated, especially for our elders, parents, and children. The not-knowing, about ever so much. The big questions in our world with a pandemic, the Black Lives Matter Uprising, and an incredibly important Presidential Election in the midst of that.

So very much. I think our hearts, bodies, and spirits will be processing this last year for some years to come, making sense and meaning of it all.

What a gift to arrive at the other side of this with none lost from *this* community to COVID. Which isn't to say we aren't mourning. Many among us lost beloveds this year, both to COVID and other causes. It was a hard year of saying goodbye to both Ruth Rubenstein and Carolyn Hurdis. During all that, to be deprived of each other's company and touch, has taken a toll.

It's a year for me of ministry, then, like no other. I am deeply proud of the work we've done together this year, from the pastoral care team's help with calling our members and friends, again and again, to support them through this journey, to our anti-racism work that led to a strongly supportive congregational adoption of the 8th principle. In the midst of so much fear and unknown, we became ever more aware of the interdependence of our lives.

Which makes it feel like a very unexpected time for my departure, I know. I thought we had several years of ministry together yet. But I think the truth is that this year has taken a toll on many – on me, on our board, and on you. There were many weeks when it was almost impossible to know what to preach to you, even, as I was working through my own very real-time emotions and responses with respect to the pandemic, Uprising, and presidential politics.

I leave so very grateful for you. I will not forget the beauty of seeing you inside your homes, with your furry beloveds, week after week, of the gifts and frustrations of zooming together, of the tears and the laughter, of the worry and the hope.

With so much love and blessings for your journey,
Rev. DL