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# Reverend Christine Brownlie

## SABBATICAL

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Dear Members and Friends of the Congregation,

Our minister, Reverend Christine Brownlie, will be on sabbatical between February 4<sup>th</sup> and July 4<sup>th</sup> of 2007. With her seven years of service to the congregation, Chris was eligible for a sabbatical leave by UUA guidelines over two years ago. She graciously delayed her leave request in order to share in the congregation's vision and planning for our building expansion.

The remainder of this brochure answers Frequently Asked Questions. We hope the information conveys the assurance of continued congregational vitality throughout the sabbatical. We are excited for the renewal that the sabbatical holds for Chris and enthusiastic about the ways that our congregation will develop and grow during this period.

Sincerely,

Sabbatical Committee

Co-Chairs: Mark Benson (*mbenson8@gmail.com*)  
Susan Neu (*neususan@hotmail.com*)

Members: Darla Bray, Julie Dunsmore, Clay Nichols,  
Pat Traynor, Lisa Evanylo, Kristine Reid

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## **What is the purpose of a sabbatical?**

According to most world religions, renewal plays a key role in human life. Taking time for renewal serves to sustain creative and intensive endeavors. Universities and religious institutions commonly offer sabbatical leave as a time for self-renewal, professional development, and new pursuits.

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## **How does a sabbatical affect the congregation?**

The sabbatical partnership provides benefits for both the minister and congregation. Chris' sabbatical will provide an "opening" for the talents and gifts of members to emerge. Our vision is that the Congregation will experience a new sense of fulfillment from sharing responsibility for maintaining our religious community and caring for one another. For our minister, Chris, we envision that her time for study, reflection, and rest will provide a renewal in the fullest sense. We look forward to these opportunities for our beloved minister and ourselves, and to Chris' joyful return at mid-year when we celebrate our changes and growth, both spiritual and physical endeavors.

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## **Can I contact Chris during the sabbatical?**

In a word – no. During the sabbatical, the minister is freed from all normal responsibilities. To protect the integrity of her leave, we politely request that congregants avoid contacting Chris *for any reason* during the sabbatical period. Should you see her somewhere in town, a friendly hello or a hug is fine. Please respect her special time away, however, by avoiding discussion of congregational issues or personal problems in person, by phone, or by email. If you are uncertain whom to contact during Chris' absence, please contact any Sabbatical Committee member listed in the last question below.

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## **How can we help?**

Our continued attendance at Sunday Services during the sabbatical period is crucial and serves to maintain the vitality of the congregation. Our commitment to engage and participate in all facets of congregational life during this time of spiritual and physical growth will nurture and sustain our beloved community.

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## **As we get ready for construction, is this a good time for the minister to be away?**

Yes. With plans to break ground in the spring, the building will still be in the early stages of the construction process when Chris returns in July.

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## What are the roles of the Resident Minister and Guest Minister?

During the sabbatical period, two experienced ministers have agreed to serve our congregation. The primary role of these two ministers will be to lead the Sunday services. They will not be involved with the work of the Board, programs, groups, or committees. Reverend Don Johnson will lead Sunday services twice a month, and Reverend Karen Day will lead services once a month.

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## What is our Resident Minister's background?

Don Johnson relates that he was reared in a non-religious home. After university and seminary work, he served as a minister of the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church for 15 years. Later he served as Dean of Religious Life at Stephens College in Columbia, MO. Don has also served as Senior Leader in ethical societies in New York and St. Louis and taught religion, philosophy, and ethics in several colleges. Retired in 2005, Don is married to Beverly Collier, lives in Patrick County, and has four adult daughters. Don organizes the film series at the Reynolds Homestead and participates in Socrates Café discussion groups. He and Beverly also enjoy bird-watching and traveling the Blue Ridge Parkway. We are thrilled to have Don Johnson join us as the ***Resident Minister*** during Chris Brownlie's sabbatical.

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## What is our Guest Minister's background?

Karen Day has been a teacher, dancer, improviser, mother, lover, hiker, papermaker, storyteller and minister. She grew up in Kansas City, Mo., lived for many years in Chicago and then traveled to Asheville, San Francisco and Greenville, NC before landing in Floyd County a year ago. After attending Meadville Lombard and working as a religious educator, Karen graduated from Starr King School and was ordained by the Greenville UU congregation in 2001. Karen brings her experience of the wholeness of body, mind and soul to her preaching and pastoral work through listening, touch and song. In Floyd she and her partner, potter McCabe Coolidge, have a studio at the Jacksonville Center where they welcome visitors and creative collaboration.

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## What is the plan for Sunday Services?

The tentative schedule for Sunday Services appears on the back cover of this booklet. The Worship Committee will organize these services and coordinate with our resident minister, guest minister, and other speakers. The Worship Committee will also coordinate other elements of the service, including the worship convener, chalice lighter, flower signup, music, readings, children's time, and sanctuary setup.

### Worship Committee Chair

Karen Gray ([grayferg@blacksburg.net](mailto:grayferg@blacksburg.net))

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## **How are special services handled (e.g., marriage, memorial services, and child dedications)?**

During the sabbatical period both, Don Johnson and Karen Day will be available to conduct marriage, child dedication, and memorial services. Members of the congregation will be able to contact the minister of their choice for such services without charge. Those who are not members will be asked to make payment arrangements with the minister providing the service.

Though Chris Brownlie might attend such services when available, she'll be free from any expectations for leadership, consistent with the aims of the sabbatical.

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## **Who will conduct Pastoral Care?**

Our minister's sabbatical offers an opportunity for able members within the congregation to provide pastoral care. The Caring Network (formerly the Caring Committee) will continue to provide caring support for members and friends through short-term provision of such essentials as meals, transportation, child care, shopping, or brief visiting. The Caring Visitors Team will provide services to members and friends who are experiencing a crisis in their lives or are home-bound or shut-ins who would like visits. Lay pastoral care is a natural outgrowth of our ministry as our congregation increases in size, and we anticipate this service will continue after Chris returns. In rare instances, when pastoral care needs exceed the Caring Visitors' roles, they may request some limited involvement from the Resident Minister.

### **Caring Network Co-Chairs**

Diana Zaldivar and Debbie Keighton (*caring@uucnrv.org*)

### **Caring Visitor Co-Chairs**

Jane Keppel-Benson (*jkeppelbenson@gmail.com*)

Frank DuPont (*uufrank@verizon.net*)

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## **Will other programs and committees in the congregation continue as usual?**

Yes. The work of all groups and committees in our congregation will continue without interruption. All program offerings including Religious Education, Sunday Circles, Covenant Groups, Adult Enrichment, and Circle Suppers will continue to operate normally during the sabbatical. All Standing and Special Committees – Finance, Membership, Social Justice, Ministries, Stewardship, Auction, Trustees, Executive Board, and Building Expansion Taskforce – will likewise continue with their important work. All special interest groups (e.g., Choir, Women's Breakfast, Yoga Group, Morning Meditation, Sages, NRV Interweave, Tai Chi classes, and WomenSpirit will continue as usual.

Please see the monthly newsletter and UUC website – *www.uucnrv.org* – for information about these groups and scheduled activities.

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## What about conflicts or problems?

As usual, the Committee on Ministries is available to address conflicts that may arise between congregants or between a congregant and a staff member. While historically such conflicts have been rare, the Committee on Ministries has taken the extra step of forming a Conflict Resolution Team to assist in the unlikely event of an intransigent conflict.

### Committee on Ministries

Steve Keighton, Chair ([keighton@adelphia.net](mailto:keighton@adelphia.net))

Cynthia Luke

Ethel-Marie Underhill

Patrick Hughes

Molly Lazar

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## Will the roles of staff change?

No. Our multi-talented staff members, Kristine Reid, Director of Religious Education, and Lisa Evanylo, Administrator, will maintain their cornerstone roles in the congregation. Frank DuPont, Board Co-President, will meet with the staff on a regular basis.

Kristine Reid ([dre@uucnrv.org](mailto:dre@uucnrv.org))

Lisa Evanylo ([administrator@uucnrv.org](mailto:administrator@uucnrv.org))

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## How are sabbatical costs covered?

The Board allocated \$8,000 in the FY 2006-07 budget to cover costs associated with the sabbatical. The major portion of this money will be used to reimburse the Resident and Guest Ministers.

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## Will our minister be in touch during the sabbatical?

To keep us informed about her activities and experiences, Chris Brownlie will write an article for the newsletter each month. In addition, she will post occasional entries about her activities to an online web log (*blog*) that will be linked to on the UUC website. At the conclusion of the sabbatical, Chris will share her inner journey in a Sunday Service on July 8.

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## What is the role of the Sabbatical Committee?

The Sabbatical Committee serves a support role to the committees involved with the many aspects of congregational ministries. The committee also serves a coordinating role in facilitating collaboration among these groups. Committees involved in the important operations functions (Finance, Canvas, Building Expansion) will continue to rely on the Board for guidance and approval. If you are unsure whom to contact, please feel free to ask someone on the Sabbatical Committee.