

## **As Our Time Together Begins to Draw to a Close ....**

### **From Gretchen Weis, Summer Minister**

Our time together is drawing to a close. In a little more than two short weeks, my time as Summer Minister at UUCA, and my time of regular, ongoing contact with the congregation will come to an end. My final day at UUCA will be co-leading worship with guest minister Rev. Steve Ross (D Ohlandt's father) on Sunday, August 25. I wish I could stay, but the rules say that I must leave as my internship here has come to an end. It will be time to say our official good-byes on Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup>, as I begin my final preparations to seek permission this fall to go into search and find a ministerial call and church of my own.

What a blessed year this has been for me as I completed my student minister internship here and gained additional "hands on" experience ministering with you over the summer. My heart swells with gratitude: gratitude for your graciousness in welcoming a struggling, learning newcomer into your midst last September and helping me feel at home; gratitude for your patience, your kindness and your willingness to let me make mistakes, and to help me learn from them; gratitude for your ongoing support – you wanted me to do well – and your faith in me helped me develop greater confidence and faith in myself as I now move forward in the final steps to become an ordained, fully employed minister.

Special heartfelt thanks goes to Rev. David, as my teaching pastor, mentor and ongoing guide. Rev. David has the courage to speak truths, even difficult truths, as needed, and I am so much the better prepared having developed under his firm, watchful eye and supportive care. I look forward to having him as my ongoing mentor and friend in my ministerial career ahead. My gratitude towards him knows no bounds.

I am also grateful for the gracious guidance and support I received from both Rev. Linda and Rev. Carlton in our time together. What a gift I experienced here at UUCA – the wise counsel of two additional informal teaching pastors. I am grateful for their experience, their laughter and their big hearts. Their continued loving support means the world to me as I transition from student to future ministerial colleague.

The staff has also taught me so much in our time together. No matter where I end up receiving a call, I hope I am blessed to work with a staff as knowledgeable, competent, dedicated and as fun as I have found here. I want to also give thanks to the many members of UUCA's volunteer leadership, who taught me so much by allowing me to work alongside you this past year – including, but not limited to, John Bohman and the Board of Trustees, our Covenant Group facilitators and steering team members, students and teachers in Religious Education, the Pastoral Care Team, the Music and Creative Arts team, the LGBT rights group, VOICE and the students in my adult RE prayer class, just to name a few.

I also want to name, lift up, celebrate and thank the ongoing support of an extremely special group of individuals who served on my ministerial intern committee during this past year: Barbara Hatheway, Cecelia Javier, Denise Kappler, Marcy Leverenz, David McTaggart and Sarah Munson. How can I ever thank you enough for your enthusiastic and loving belief in me?

I aspire to be as good a minister as you all believe I can, and someday will be. I will carry our precious time together inside my heart, no matter where I go from here on my path towards ministry.

Finally, thanks to everyone here at UUCA. There are too many other names to single out, but know I am so grateful for you all. You are an amazing faith community of such intelligent, committed, talented and loving people! My wish for you is continued growth, ongoing congregational health and the ability to attract and call a loving, talented, inspiring minister, capable of challenging and leading you forward to make a tremendous difference in your own lives, as well as the lives of so many others.

It is not possible to overestimate the importance that teaching congregations play in the creation of new ministers to serve and strengthen our future faith movement. Like ripples on a pond, our individual and collective acts of kindness radiate outward, impacting those we know in our immediate circle, but also touching lives in ways that we never realize. Know how much your many kindnesses and your ongoing support for my ministry have changed my life. May I bring the lessons learned here, in the presence of your graciousness, forward to continue to touch and bless the lives of others in our faith. I will never forget you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Amen, and blessed be.