



February 18, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of the Tri-County Unitarian Universalist Congregation:

It is with a great many emotions that I write to formally let you know of my retirement from Unitarian Universalist ministry. I have been in love with the Tri-UU congregation for 10 years. You trusted me, supported me, and forgave me in what have been the richest years of my life. You made me the minister I am. To bring this relationship to a close is a wrenching process. But it's time. Actually, it's past time.

Several factors have triggered this announcement. As some of you know, I have been thinking about retirement for a year or so. Back in the fall of 2020 I made it known that I intended to stay with Tri-UU until it was safe to gather in-person. Six months later, we see new variants and the unknown efficacy of the vaccines against them. The uncertainty makes responsible planning impossible. But our enforced isolation did show us how to remain in community in virtual space. For almost a year we have maintained and even strengthened our relationships. In the pandemic time a fast and reliable internet connection has become more important than geography.

Which brings us to real estate. To prepare for eventual retirement Nelson and I put our Lake Weir house on the market, anticipating it would take many months to sell it. But the unanticipated happened. Two weeks after the listing – and two days before Christmas -- it sold with a January 31<sup>st</sup> closing date. We had to move sooner than we had planned.

Finally, in order to participate in the UUA process for helping congregations engage interim ministers (which happens at the beginning of each year) I was reminded that nothing could happen until I set a firm retirement date. That date is August 31, 2021. My last Sunday in the Tri-UU pulpit will be August 1st ... ten years from the date we began this journey together.

I am announcing my departure considerably earlier than the usual three months' notice required. This is to provide time for two opportunities. First, time to say good-bye well and complete any unfinished business that we may have. We both have some time to get used to this change; a process that often begins with grief. But as we move along this path remember how strong, how capable, and how precious you are to me and to each other. As daunting as this may seem, you have risen to other, far more challenging, situations.

Second, this early announcement gives time for you as a congregation to be intentional about your hopes for the future. This will allow you to prepare well for the upcoming interim period and your search for a new settled minister. Please join me after the service on Sunday to hear about the process for moving ahead in hope and goodwill.

Through all of this, please remember that for now I am still very much your minister. I hope you will continue to let me know how I can be of support to you individually and as a congregation.

With gratitude and love,

*Rev. Janet*