

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
937 Charles Ave
Mankato, MN 56001

March 2, 2023

Dear friends,

It is with feelings bittersweet that I announce my resignation as your minister, effective at the end of this program year, June 30, 2023. Family circumstances call me back to Buffalo, NY, where I will be close to my daughter. Living back east will make it easier also to help my mother and sister in Pittsburgh, PA, both of whom have been widowed since 2020. It has been a difficult decision, which I reached through much personal discernment and long conversations with colleagues and friends.

Though my decision is necessary, it has not been an easy one. I am so proud of what we have achieved together. Before the pandemic, we defined core justice commitments; committed to responding as a congregation with written statements and public witness to injustice in the Greater Mankato community; and educated ourselves to understanding and celebration of trans lives and to growing more radically welcoming. Since the pandemic, we found many ways of continuing as an energetic and fully present religious community. We learned that Zoom could be a means to keep relationship and worship alive. We trained and hired new staff and created new staff positions. We continued to meet our financial and program commitments as a UUA member congregation. We sustained justice action. We maintained robust engagement as a caring community. We did all this together, minister and congregation, as we learned the value and the magnitude of possibility through our shared ministry.

And, you have helped me so much. Ministering with you in this Fellowship has made me the minister I am today. You installed me, making a profound commitment to shared ministry with your first full-time called minister. Your vitality and support helped me to practice my skills and learn new ones so that I could move from Preliminary to Full Fellowship within the Unitarian Universalist Association. I do not know exactly what ministry may unfold for me—whether in a community setting, a church setting, or a chaplaincy—but I have faith that my ministry has a future, and I await its emergence.

You will have the support of the Transitions Office of the UUA to find the best path forward for the Fellowship. Your Board President Bob Finley and I have worked together to begin planning a process through the next several months and beyond. And this process involves congregational self-awareness of the blessing that you are. It has been a joy to serve the Fellowship—participating in the greater Mankato community to make the world better; engaging in expanding your spirits through deeper spiritual awareness and learning; and compensating staff equitably as well as treating us respectfully and with kindness. You can be sure that I will spread the good news of UUFM far and wide, and I will make sure that your goodness is known to ministers and to the denomination.

I am so grateful that I served you as you celebrated the milestone of 70 years as a Fellowship, ready to meet the challenges of this moment and able to imagine a future of 70+ years more. Though I will depart at the end of June, I am your minister until then. I am here to meet with you about my decision and to accompany you through the personal trials and joys of your lives. I am grateful for a strong Board

of Directors and the support of your President, confident that together we will determine the best way I can serve you and the Fellowship in the coming months. Though our relationship is headed for a change, I remain faithful to you until it is time for me to depart.

With much love and deep gratitude for our relationship,

Rita A. Capezzi

Rev. Rita A. Capezzi