

Sabbatical Sound Bite #1

In the weeks between now and February 7th, the Sabbatical Team will put out a brief description of one aspect of the sabbatical time in 2016. This is the first of these notes to keep you updated and informed about the rich opportunities that lie ahead for us as a congregation and for our community.

The Facts: Our church contracted to provide Pastor Barb with a three month paid sabbatical in her seventh year. That time has come! Sabbatical time: Feb 14, 2016- May 14, 2016

The Joy: We applied for a grant to cover expenses and renewal activities for both the church and Barb and we got it! ... Christian Theological Seminary granted First Congregational Church of Montague and our Pastor a total of \$49,478 through the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Program.

The Sabbatical Team is thrilled to share with you over the coming weeks all the details of programs and activities planned and paid for through the grant monies.

The Fear: Will this be too much of a financial and spiritual burden on the church? What will happen if there is a death or other urgent need during the time Pastor Barb is away? Some churches do suffer during a pastors three month sabbatical leave. We hope to avoid that through the extensive and thoughtful work the Sabbatical Team and Pastor are doing to plan for worship, pastoral coverage and leadership during Barb's absence. All costs are covered by the grant monies so this will not affect our budget in a negative way.

The Journey: A sabbatical is "a time for drinking again from God's life-giving waters, for regaining enthusiasm and creativity for ministry." Like walking a labyrinth, we will journey together, as a church body, exploring the twists and turns of our spiritual life while Barb does the same. We will come together again in May, refreshed and renewed, to share our respective experiences.

What's Next? Learn more about pastoral coverage plans in next weeks Sabbatical Soundbite