

## ***From the Minister***

Dear members and friends of Westside,

With both gratitude and grief, I am writing to let you know that I have accepted an offer to candidate with another congregation. If all goes well I will begin serving them on August 1. Thus, I anticipate wrapping up my ministry at Westside by July.

I love Westside and you. It has been an honor and privilege to get to know you, to share your joys and sorrows, to serve the mission and vision of this congregation, and to work with your lay leaders and staff. I have loved developing our shared ministries of worship and religious education, pastoral care and social action. I experience deep affection for the members and friends of this church, and admiration for your caring, conviction, and vision.

My decision to explore another ministry possibility – and ultimately, to say yes to it – does not come out of any conflict or challenge with Westside. It has been driven by geography: the desire to be closer to family, especially aging parents, and to get back to the climate and seasons that feel like home to me. For me, leaving you will be the hardest part of this change.

The Board of Directors is developing a road map for this transition, with support from the Unitarian Universalist Association, and as appropriate, with my support; please see the message from Carol Cappa, Board President, that follows this note from me. You will also find a Frequently Asked Questions list from me, to further address some of the questions that may arise for you.

Westside is a special church community. This church has continued to develop in wonderful ways over the past four years and is in a different place than even the last time you went through a minister transition. I believe this will be an attractive setting for an interim minister, and then for your next settled minister. Please know that I will communicate to my colleagues that this is a church that values professional ministry and treats its minister and staff well.

For the health of the church, we will want to take time over these next several months to celebrate the ministry we have done together, to process the many feelings that may arise, and to say our goodbyes. I will begin to speak to this transition in our Zoom-based worship this Sunday, April 12. I anticipate developing opportunities to connect in small groups and one-to-one, as well, over our remaining months together – please stay tuned for more on that.

Meanwhile, I will continue to serve as your minister and support the mission and people of this church. I am still here for you now.

Love,  
Shari

Rev. Shari Woodbury