



FRIDAY, JANUARY 5TH, 2024



Dearly Beloved,

I'm writing a special letter to you this morning to begin the conversation about my retirement. Since well before my 65th birthday, several of you asked me what I was thinking; I wasn't thinking anything! But I now know that my plan to die with my boots on isn't really a plan at all. I've seen that among my colleagues, and don't want to do that to you. Now in my 67th year, I assume this is a surprise to no one but me: It grieves my heart to say it, but it seems it's time.

No, I'm not burned out — not at all. I love this work, and, as you well know, I'm crazy about you. I can't imagine not living and breathing Arlington Street. But this ministry isn't about me — it never has been. It's about you, and about what's best for this beloved spiritual community. The ideal is for the minister to go out high, while the leadership is strong and the congregation is thriving — poised for someone new, someone great, to lead (and follow!) you into the next best thing. That someone doesn't know it yet, but they are so, so lucky. You will be, too.

The great good news is that Rev. Beth Robbins will continue to serve as our executive minister. The Unitarian Universalist Association will help us to find our next senior minister. Between now and June, I'll be working with Rev. Keith Kron, who directs the UUA's Transitions Office, to be sure this transition is as smooth as possible. Rev. Keith assures me that most churches say goodbye to outgoing ministers and hello to new ones every few years; "piece of cake." Obviously, our long relationship — this is my 35th year serving at Arlington Street — is an outlier. But the process will be the same: Beginning next month, UUA staff will work with you to identify

an interim senior minister; their job, in turn, will be to work with you for two years to get everything in order for a new, settled senior minister, whom you will choose. As you might well imagine, Arlington Street is an extremely desirable church, and you are beyond every minister's dream of a congregation. There will be a bounty of excellent candidates from whom to make your choice.

At first, it will be important for me to make myself pretty scarce and mostly cheer you on from afar, to make room for the next ministry to grow roots and wings. If you vote to make me your senior minister emerita, your new ministers — first the interim, then the called — and I will covenant with one another, and there will be some small role for me here.

We've made it through so much, beloveds — hard and glorious. Together, over these next six months, we will make it through this. Let's keep doing all that we do so well, with great love. Then you will go on to thrive, and make me proud and grateful, as you always have

*Faithfully yours, with love always,
Kim*

