



ARLINGTON
STREET CHURCH
Unitarian Universalist

September 27th, 2007

Dear Friends,

Many of you know by now that Rev. Vera OBrien, who has been so important to this beloved community for the past two years, is leaving her job as our Lifespan Religious Educator. I'm heartbroken to lose my very special colleague in ministry here at Arlington Street, and I know that those who have worked and played with Vera join me in this sentiment.

Vera also serves as a chaplain at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Balancing two half-time jobs is challenging in the best of circumstances. My own past experience is that there's really no such thing as a half-time job, only a full-time job for which you're paid half-time. Ministry is especially without "edges," and Vera has often felt the candle burning at both ends.

This past Tuesday evening, the Prudential Committee and the Human Resources Committee met with me for several hours. Our agenda was to craft an interim solution to the challenge of Vera's departure, but we also began to ask ourselves deeper, harder questions, such as how best to support and retain all our excellent staff. For example, while our staff is now paid at the salary levels recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association, there are still concerns about our benefits package. I want to extend my deepest thanks to these lay leaders, who, even in the face of budgetary constraints, are committed to addressing these concerns.

In this interim period, our intern minister, Dan Kane, will assume responsibility for the church school, and many educators among us have stepped forward to offer adult programming this fall, about which you'll be hearing more in the weeks to come. I am also in the process of trying to hire another religious educator to begin working with our children as soon as possible.

Gathered in love and service for justice and peace


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Even good change is hard, and change that doesn't feel good is harder. I am among those of you who are feeling acutely the impending loss of Vera's steady presence. This is a difficult passage, and I hope and pray you will join me in good faith, working to accept this loss and to make room in our hearts for someone new to love.

We will have two opportunities to say thank you to Vera. This coming Wednesday, October 3rd, she will be the speaker at our 6:30 PM mid-week worship service, Wednesday Gathering: First Wednesday. And following the service on Sunday, October 21st, coffee hour will be in her honor.

I'll say more then about Vera's gifts and the fruit of her time with us; in the meantime, on behalf of the congregation and the staff, Vera, I offer you our profound thanks, and our love.

Faithfully yours, with love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of connected loops and a final downward stroke, positioned above the printed name.

Rev. Kim K. Crawford Harvie