

Rev. Britt's Clergy Sabbatical Program

(As approved by Salisbury United Church Board & Yellowhead Presbytery)

Creation: Iconography

My major sabbatical project will be to spend time in an art studio in Saskatoon writing a traditional Christian icon. I have already written two smaller icons over the past two summers with the same artist. The process of writing an icon is actually a theological parallel to the stages of creation described in the Book of Genesis. Additionally the art materials are all naturally derived from ground crystals and egg to form the pigment. Therefore, simply writing an icon, regardless of the image, invites contemplation on creation as a story. The art studio I will be working at will be in Saskatoon, and I expect it will take about 3 weeks to complete the icon.



These Connecting Candles will link us while we are apart. Children's Church will prepare two candles. Rev. Britt will keep one and we will light one every Sunday.

Rest & Renewal

Rest and renewal are also part of any sabbatical. Time for daily meditation, a gardening project and an as-yet-unplanned short trip with my kids will also be part of what I do with my sabbatical time.

Cosmology: Reading List

Cosmology is the science of the origin and development of the universe. Theology explores the meaning, direction and purpose of the universe. My sabbatical reading list will include books that blend cosmology and theology, with a focus on the writing of Teilhard de Chardin. The reading list will include:

- Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin, by Ursula King.*
- Teilhard in the 21st Century: The Emerging Spirit of Earth, by Arthur Fable and Donald St. John.
- Living Cosmology: Christian Responses to the Journey of the Universe, by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim.
- The Singing Heart of the World, by John Feehan.
- The Inward Garden: Creating a Place of Beauty and Meaning, by Julie Moir Messervy and Sam Abell.

*Teilhard de Chardin was a Jesuit priest, geologist, paleontologist, and scientist. He sought to link the realms of science and spirituality. He spent 22 years in fieldwork in China after serving as a stretcher bearer in WWI. His work was considered controversial at the time but is now foundational reading in the area of "evolutionary theology" and cosmology.

season of renewal

Continuing to connect hearts, minds and lives in community with God, whether together or apart.

What is a Sabbatical?

The United Church allows eligible ministers a sabbatical of at least three consecutive months unencumbered by their customary responsibilities, while still receiving their usual remuneration and benefits. Sabbaticals provide opportunities for study, rest, reflection, and prayer and are beneficial to both ministry personnel and pastoral charges.

What happens in the congregation?

Careful planning of a sabbatical experience can make it a meaningful and enriching time for the congregation as well. At Salisbury, a Sabbatical Planning Committee has been established. The committee is planning for continuity and creativity in our worship, children's church and pastoral care. The members of the Sabbatical Planning Committee are:

Lou Ann Beaton
Lynne Wilson
Carol Clark
Lucille Birkett
Frieda Lovig
Rev. Britt Aerhart

The United Church also appoints a Supervisor for the congregation when the minister is away for an extended period.

Congregational Worship

Worship leadership will involve a variety of speakers representing various backgrounds and interests. The choir will continue in music leadership. Lay worship leadership will also continue as a part of worship. Communion will continue to be served the first Sunday of the month. Lynne Wilson will lead Discovery Time during worship, and will continue to offer Children's Church as usual. She has hinted that more than likely, the church will go to the birds because Foxy will also be away.

Congregational Art Project

While Rev. Britt is away, we will have a congregational art project of our own to work on. It will be planned and offered in May and June by Lynne Wilson, our Children's Church Coordinator. As many people in the congregation as possible will be encouraged to participate in this project.

Congregational Care

Congregational care visits will continue through our care team made up of Sylvia Ewanchuk, Lou-ann Beaton, Jayne McKnight & Chris Lyka. Emergency pastoral care will be arranged with neighboring ministers as needed.

"Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man(sic) will have discovered fire."

-Pierre Teilhard de Chardin-



Britt will write an icon of the Archangel Raphael, the Angel of Healing. Within mystical Judaism, Raphael has a special task to help heal the earth from human misconduct.

What happens after the Sabbatical?

Rev. Britt's annual vacation will follow her sabbatical. She will return in mid-August, 2017. Rev. Britt will then be required to provide a brief written report to the Board about her leave. She will also have her icon to share and the congregation will share it's art project. We will mutually admire each other's creations. Foxy will return. Life and ministry will continue together.

"All of creation is an icon of the face of God."

--St. John of Damascus--

Cosmology, Creation, Rest, Renewal



Rev Britt L. Aerhart
Salisbury United Church
Sherwood Park
April 23- July 22, 2016

Pastoral Sabbatical 2017