

Letter of greeting to First Parish-

Rev. Christina and I envision this exchange as a unique opportunity to grow as ministers, strengthen both congregations' UU identities, and stimulate our congregants' creative juices. I told my congregation I expect this exchange to unleash some fresh thinking about how it projects UU values into the wider community. I hope I can help you achieve the same outcome at First Parish!

As I look at what I just wrote, I am also looking at a mug my wife Michele and I brought back from our vacation this summer. It says in big, colorful letters "Rise AND Shine?" and then in small type underneath "That's a lot to ask."

Rest assured, my vision for our time together is a reflection of the opportunity I see before us, not a crowded agenda. Most of all, I will come to you full of wonder about what's possible in our three weeks together. That's comforting to me and, I hope, to you because, in the words of Rev. Lynn Ungar, "When we start with wondering, we are never wrong,"

Rev. Ungar's view is that a "willingness to wonder" protects UU's from arrogantly making dogmatic claims, from blind hatred, and from rigid behavior. Wondering is the basis for scientific inquiry, but it also suits the UU approach to the persistent spiritual questions we encounter about human nature, Gods, death, and the meaning of our lives.

I promise not to stop with wondering. Our faith calls us to wonder and then respond lovingly. Just the way my new dog, Pan, always wants to know where I am, I will come to you always wanting to know where the Love some name as God lives in what we will experience together.

Blessed be,

Rev. Barnaby