

LAKE OSWEGO UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Sabbatical Planning Update "Creating Green Spaces"

Sabbatical planning continues for both Jennie Ott and LOUCC as we prepare for a sabbatical in the summer of 2017. In January, the Sabbatical Planning Team met to finalize Jennie's focus on her sabbatical goals, which include travel, time with family, time for creativity, and time for reflection. We chose the theme "Creating Green Spaces" to embody the purpose and hopes of this sabbatical.

"Creating Green Spaces" invites Jennie and our congregation to think about how we create both the time and the space for new growth in our lives. For Jennie, new growth comes from having time to explore new places, spend quality time with her family, and indulge in some of the creative pursuits that she doesn't have time for during the daily demands of congregational ministry.

As part of her sabbatical, Jennie plans to spend a month in Ireland (certainly a green space!) with her family, exploring a country known for its beauty, history, art, and religious tradition. While there, Jennie plans to do plenty of hiking and traveling the countryside, visiting historical and religious sites, attending the Cat Laughs Comedy Festival, and taking a pottery workshop. She also plans to spend a week in Maine on either side of the Ireland trip to visit with her parents and enjoy a few childfree days with Hilary.



Once back in Portland, Jennie will focus on her creative side, developing some of the right-brain skills that she has less time to build in day-to-day ministry. She plans to take an improv class at Curious Comedy Theater. As Jennie has discovered in a previous comedy class, many of the skills of improv and comedy are transferable to life as a minister—public speaking, responding in

the moment, and helping people laugh at themselves and the humor in our world. She also plans to take a pottery class and a photography class, two pursuits that she has always wanted to try.

Finally throughout the three-month sabbatical, Jennie plans to carve out both space and time for reading and reflection. Books on leadership, spiritual practices, and parenting and pastoring are at the top of her list, as well as having time to journal and reflect on what will then be seven years of ministry at LOUCC.

This sabbatical is designed to allow Jennie time for spiritual growth and refreshment, while also giving her a chance to hone strengths and develop new skills that she can bring back to our congregation. We trust that it will be a fruitful time for her.

Of course the sabbatical is not just for Jennie but also for our church. Now we have an opportunity as a congregation to think about we may want to be “Creating Green Spaces” in our communal life while she is away. Where or how do we want to experience growth? What new pursuits do we want to try? What may we need to clear out in order for new growth to come?

We shared some of our sabbatical dreams at our Congregational Meeting on January 31, and we will continue to dream over the next two months. Stay tuned for more opportunities to share your thoughts and hopes for the sabbatical time. Our next opportunity for sabbatical input will be on Sunday, February 7 at 9 a.m.. Come to hear more about Jennie’s plans and/or share your ideas with the planning team. You can also reach us by email at any time: Gary Tandy (gtandy@georgefox.edu), Bee Neufled (bqneufeld@gmail.com), Pam Rossio (rossio4@comcast.net), and Jennie Ott (pastor@loucc.org).

We look forward to sharing this sabbatical time together!

Thank you,

Pam Rossio, Gary Tandy, Bee Neufeld, and Jennie Ott
(Sabbatical Planning Team)