

[This is the message that went out to the whole congregation.](#)

July 1, 2024

Hello all,

It is with both great joy and sadness that I am officially announcing my retirement as Director of Religious Education effective August 31, 2024.

It has been a delightful journey. Twenty-two years ago Sylvia Beeman asked me to co-lead the early elementary class with Kathleen Oldfather. I've rarely missed a Sunday since. I've decided that after more than 1000 Sundays, it's time to step aside and make way for a new era.

I'm quite confident that together the RE Team and Board will help you all get through the next steps.

It's been an honor to serve the fellowship in the RE program and as DRE since 2012. Thank you for giving me the gift of spending time with your children.

Over the next several weeks there will be ample opportunity to ask questions and say goodbye.

I love each and every one of you and look forward to greeting you at the grocery store, coffee shop, library...

Remember: Children are always the only future the human race has; teach them well.

See you soon,

Sandy Nelson

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[And Board Chair Dick Beeman and Pastor Isabel shared some kind words as well...](#)

*From the Board Chair and the Minister*

We feel sadness, too, at Sandy's departure. Her absence will be profoundly felt by all ages here at the Fellowship. We will deeply miss Sandy's engaging presence at the Time for All Ages, where we have all come to expect a key life-lesson or dose of wise advice, wrapped in a charming narrative and graced with her usual light touch and folksy delivery. Sandy might be leaving, but her ideas and positive influence are staying put! We think of her many innovations and enrichments for RE—recruiting a range of members to periodically share their interests and expertise, popcorn theology, movie nights, camp-outs, trunk-or-treat, doing, singing, making, always including fun as a vital part of learning. It is with gratitude and joy that we remember so many good years, laughs, shrieks, and romps. We wish Sandy the very best for all the relaxing Sunday mornings in her future.

We have the next two months to let Sandy know how much we value her gifts to the community. August 11th will be a formal recognition of Sandy's time as Director of Religious Education at the annual all ages Blessing of the Backpacks. We'll all get a chance to put our blessings into Sandy's

backpack. After August 31st, Sandy will be stepping away from Fellowship life and work. She may return at some point in the future, but we'll be giving her a breather to enjoy retirement. Please make sure to ask your questions and share your love before then.

Sandy is developing a coverage plan for religious education programs for the upcoming term (through December). The UUFM Board will begin conversations about RE needs and staffing, both short- and long-term, and there will be opportunities for congregation members to share their hopes and desires. We're grateful to Sandy for giving the Board and the RE Team a heads-up over the past year. Now that we know the exact date, we can focus our efforts to help Sandy, the RE Team, and all our families prepare for the transition. We'll be sure to keep the congregation apprised of any decisions about staffing.

Over the next month while Pastor Isabel is away, please reach out to Board Chair Dick Beeman with any questions or concerns. Pastor Isabel will also be available to hear your thoughts when she returns August 5th.

Trusting transformation,  
Board Chair Dick Beeman  
Pastor Isabel Call