



Our Interim Pastor
Lise Sparrow

“A church sabbatical is an exciting time for a church and its pastor. After years together, each of you will have the chance to grow in faith and health. Pastor Robin has the chance to dig deeper into interests which have been forgotten during busy times and to rest her body, mind and soul. This congregation has the opportunity to see and depend on each other in different ways. Once together again you can bring new ideas and forge a stronger relationship going forward.”

Rev. Dr. Lise Sparrow was the pastor of Guilford Community Church, UCC, for twenty years. She retired in 2020, leaving it a thriving church with a well-known music ministry and active youth group. She has expertise in the women of the Bible and shares Rev. Junker’s interest in Contemplative Practice and looks forward to learning from you!

SABBATICAL CONTACT INFORMATION:

Interim Pastor

Lise Sparrow

lisemsparrow@gmail.com, (802) 345-3982

Board

Joyce McKeeman, Moderator

Rosemarie Atwood, Secretary

Allan Bieber, Jamie Thaxton, Mary Thompson

Deacons

Scot Zens, Chair - Charlie Buttrey, Kate Hesser,

Didi Pershouse, Ben Williams, Norm Marshall

Calling & Caring Coordinator

Eleanor Zue

Music Team

Mark Tecca & Val Miller, Co-chairs, Lisa Willems

Youth Team

Vanessa & Nolan Riegler, Co-chairs

Miranda Holder, Hilary Armstrong, Allan Bieber,

Mary Thompson

Communion Team

Kim Knowlton-Young, Lisa Harmon,

Miranda Holder

Building-Use Coordinator

Val Miller

Peace & Equity Team

Mary Chin, Sherry Merrick, Val Miller,

Martha Tecca

Property Committee

David Hooke, Harry Atwood, Sean Boyce,

Jamie Holder

Fundraising Team

Liz Thames, chair, Jamie Holder, David Hooke,

Eleanor Zue, Mary Chin

Finance Team

Dave Lloyd, Jay Dunlap, Keith Merrick

Auction Team

Robin Osborne, Lee Steppacher

Administrative Assistant & Bookkeeper

Amanda Helali

**First Congregational Church
of Thetford**

**Sabbatical 2025
March 8th -
June 18th**

**Growing In
Faith Together:
G.I.F.T.**



What is a sabbatical?

The concept of a “sabbatical” is derived from the idea of Shabbat or “Sabbath,” the seventh day as a day of rest, grounded in the Genesis creation story, in which God created the world in six days and then rested on the seventh. The biblical idea of Sabbath is a profound and still revolutionary understanding of the necessity of rest for the ongoing renewal of creation at every level, including human life. In the biblical view, a sabbatical is not a luxury, but necessity.

Growing in Faith Together:

Our goal is to be a closer and stronger church family when Pastor Robin returns.

- Deepen our community bonds
- Develop spiritual practice during the week
- Support each other’s commitment to spiritual growth

How Pastor Robin will spend sabbatical

I am truly looking forward to my sabbatical and feel humbled by this opportunity.

The writing portion of my sabbatical will focus on human intimacy in a tech-driven age, raising religious children in a secular world, and a renewed vision for the progressive church. I will be working directly with two coaches: spiritual director and life coach Elizabeth Oldfield, and writing coach Sonya Matejko. My mornings will be dedicated to writing, prayer, and study, while my afternoons will provide open-ended opportunities to enjoy life, especially experiencing life in harmony with my family’s rhythm, as my work schedule often

requires me to gear up when the rest of my family is winding down. Some highlights will include a three-day family trip to Montreal, a visit with my college roommate, Caroline, in Atlanta, and a long-awaited trip with my son Ulysses to share time with friends in the UK. I will be there while the Bishop of London installs my dear friend Clare as a Prebendary at St. Paul’s Cathedral. Lastly, I will be present on the floor of the Statehouse if there is a vote to pass legislation for cell phone free schools in Vermont.

I look forward to returning with renewed strength, new ideas, and stories of my journey.

With great love for each one of you,
Pastor Robin



GIFT: Growing in Faith Together
Opportunities to get together during this time
(see Church Window or website for details)

Led by Deacons:

Norm Marshall: Touchstone Group
2nd & 4th Wednesdays 7:00 - 8:15 pm

Charlie Buttrey: Lenten Book Group:
C.S. Lewis’ Screwtape Letters

Scot Zens: Dinners, Movie Nights for
adults & children, Ice Fishing

Kate Hesser: Tea & Solace
Saturday Afternoons, 1:00 - 2:30 PM
Mar 8 & 22, Apr 5 & 19, May 3, & 31, Jun 14

David Thaxton: Trail run/hike

Didi Pershouse: Sledding & Pizza Party,
Darn Holy - a sock darning/clothing repair
party

Led by All

Spiritual Post-Worship Discussion
Every Sunday after worship in the
sanctuary

Opening our homes for small gatherings
and shared meals to get to know one
another

Church potlucks

June 18th: Welcome Home Potluck