

Blessing for a Sabbatical

May you enter trustingly into this sabbath space
May you enter quietly into this sabbath rest
May you enter joyfully into this sabbath play

Let your body unfold in this sabbath
Let your mind unwind into this sabbath
Let your spirit expand into this sabbath

May it reveal its secrets to you gently
May it embody its truth in you authentically
May it release new life in you abundantly

So go with gladness into this sabbath
Go with gratitude into this sabbath
And may God who rests on the sabbath look at
her labor in you and proclaim, 'It is very good.'

Nicola Slee



Sabbatical Commissioning
Common Ground, the Presbyterian Church USA
Congregation in the Colonial Heights
Neighborhood
The Rev. Linda Stewart-Kalen
October 17, 2021



THE HAND OF GOD SHALL HOLD YOU

Marty Haugen

The hand of God shall hold you, the peace of God en-
fold you, the love that dreamed and formed you, still sur-
rounds you here to-day; The light of God be-side you, a-
bove, be-neath, in-side you, the light that shines to
guide you home to the lov-ing hand of God.

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Emily Hebbon, Clerk of Session: Pastor Linda, you began your ministry among us just over 16 years ago, and were installed as our pastor on July 31, 2005. On that day, we exchanged promises. You promised to seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. You have not only kept those promises, but have continually walked the extra mile beside us, as well as serving the community and the Presbytery. We promised to pay you fairly, provide for your welfare, stand by you in trouble, and share your joy. This sabbatical period that you have so well earned and so well deserve is part of our commitment to you. It seems appropriate to make new promises – not to replace the old ones, but to further fulfill them.

Congregation: Pastor Linda, we promise to let you go freely into this time of rest, renewal, exploration of those things that bring you joy and growth, and focus on your family and your friendships outside of this congregation. We trust God that your life and ours are in God's hands. We will remain faithful to the ministry God has called us to in this place, through our worship, our service, and support of those providing leadership and care during this time.

Emma Maley, on behalf of our Deacons: We promise to ask just one thing of you during the next 3 months. That one thing is that you seek to walk into this time, with your hands held open like a cup, like a chalice, like a basin, like a bowl to receive what arrives as unbidden, unsought, unmeasured love.

Pastor Linda: I look forward to this time and am grateful for the opportunities it will provide. When I return to service as your teaching elder and pastor in Advent, I will reclaim our shared calling, remembering that together we are called to daily practice our identity in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit as we

- Honor Diversity & Support Vulnerable Communities,
- Increase Stewardship of the Environment / Care of Creation,
- Promote Music & the Arts,
- Strengthen Families & Children,
- Support Education & Nurture Across Generation

We rejoice to “Creatively practice our confidence in God and caring in community.”

Congregation: On the seventh day God rested and celebrated all of creation. God surveyed all that God had made and said, “It is good.” God deemed the seventh day The Sabbath, and called it Holy. Go with our blessing, and with the blessing of our Triune God.

We invite all to join us with the sabbatical blessing prayer & song for Pastor Linda. Linda will be in the office this week Monday afternoon, Tuesday and Wednesday for the full day this final week before Sabbatical if you would like to offer personal good wishes and blessings.