

Dear Members and Friends,

Hello, this is Rev. Karen Gale, your new Intentional Interim Pastor. I'm looking forward to joining you in November and getting to know the congregation as we start ministry together. As we prepare for that, let me tell you a little about myself.

I have served as a Pastor and Teacher in the UCC in many different ways since 1998. I moved many times while growing up including stays in California, Virginia, Ohio, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. I went to the University of Virginia for undergraduate work and then received an MDiv and MA at Pacific School of Religion, a UCC affiliated seminary in Berkeley, CA. After seminary I went to Durban, South Africa as a UCC missionary intern. While there I taught theology to pastors working in the black townships, and facilitated workshops on many topics including understanding domestic violence.

When I returned to the US, I was called as a settled pastor to a large college town church in East Lansing, Michigan. I served for ten years and worked with the congregation to grow the church into a multi-staff, social justice oriented community. I then took a year off and traveled around the world with my family for a year before moving to Plymouth about ten years ago to be closer to my family.

I have served as an intentional interim pastor in Lexington and in Swansea and have loved watching those communities grow and change as they moved through the process to finally call a settled pastor. I enjoy interim work. I enjoy helping church members recognize their gifts and encouraging congregations to try new ways of being. I ask a lot of questions (you will be sick of my questions!) about why a community does what it does. I encourage congregations to seek how God is calling them forth now, in this moment.

My life outside of church is also full. I have a second job in adult literacy at the Plymouth Public Library. I teach adult students working on getting their GED as well as match ESL students with tutors. I also have a 15-year-old son at home, whom I co-parent. Finally, I have a large organic garden that keeps me grounded (literally) in the good months, and a huge pile of yarn waiting to be knitted when it's chilly.

God is good. All the time. I see God in the blazing maple leaves outside my kitchen window and in the patient slow work of church people serving neighbors and strangers. My hope is to get to know you, to hear your struggles and your joys, to assist you in seeing what God might do in your midst, and to walk toward that future together. I will see you in a couple weeks.

Blessings,

*Karen*

