

October 3, 2023

Dear Douglas UCC Family,

It is with a bittersweet heart that I share the news with all of you that I will be leaving Douglas UCC at the start of the new year, as I have been called to serve as the Senior Pastor at the United Church of Rowayton, a UCC church in Connecticut, beginning in January 2024.

My apologies for sharing this news with you all via this mass email, but such is the protocol when a pastor's departure is announced, as it allows for everyone in the congregation to receive the pastor's resignation at the same time and in the pastor's own words.

My nearly ten years at Douglas UCC have been some of the happiest and most fulfilling ones of my entire life. However, after much prayer and consideration, I feel the Spirit of God calling me in a different direction, one that will continue to nourish and strengthen my vocation and personal life, just as my time at Douglas UCC has done.

Not only will this new call challenge me to grow in my ministry, but the move to Connecticut will also bring my husband, Gregg, closer to his work as a JFK-based flight attendant and nearer to our family members in New York.

I will continue to serve as your pastor for the remainder of the year, and during that time, our Michigan Conference Associate Minister will be assisting Douglas UCC in the process of preparing to call a new pastor. We will also continue forward with all our planned services and events, including our Campus Stewardship Drive, which we've been working on for over a year.

As you all know, Douglas UCC is abundantly blessed with a strong and dedicated lay leadership and several gifted clergy members, as well, so I have no doubts that this time of transition will be a smooth one. Should you have questions or concerns, I will do my best to address them in church this Sunday, and please don't hesitate to see me during office hours, as well.

Though there is sadness, I am sincerely grateful for all the love, support, and encouragement you have shown me these past ten years, and I am confident that Douglas UCC will continue to be a beacon of God's inclusive love in our community and in the world.

Blessings,

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza

Rev. Salvatore Sapienza, Pastor
Douglas United Church of Christ