

Search Committee Report: Read during March 31, 2019 Worship Service

Here we are, your Search Committee, to tell you what we've learned and what has happened in this task you set us. First, you picked a great team, and we have worked together so well, bonded, come to consensus easily, shared the same values and hopes, and just enjoyed each other and deepened our relationships. Searching together like we have has been a real learning experience in so many ways and we all agree that we've grown stronger and become more aware of this congregation and the world of the UUA as we've done the work. We thank you for trusting us with something so important in our lives. We worked very hard and very thoughtfully on your behalf and we'd like to thank our families and friends who have supported us as we have spent time away from them. We have been changed by this work and these are the some of the things we've learned that will last long after the search is done:

Stay positive

Be hopeful, not just for UUCM, but for the candidates whose careers are at stake in this process and for the staffers at the UUA who had an especially busy year rolling out a new set of procedures and process;

Look forward to the possible, not back at the obvious;

Celebrate what you find, especially the goodness in people and the coincidences that show you lovely connections and intersections in the greater UU world;

Respect one another, the process and everyone you meet. You are making a lasting impression by the work you do;

Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen;

Focus on potential, not shortcomings;

Notice that everyone is interesting and caring and wants the best for us. We learned to be open to where the journey took us, for along the way you meet people who enrich you, support you, challenge your assumptions and show you the capacity to love. We made a good impression out there in the larger world of the UUA that you can be proud of because we led with our compassion and shared values.

Be generous with what you have and who you are. When you are generous with your time, your hopes, and your effort, your life is richer. If you are generous with your time, you learn to treasure the moments that build a satisfying life; If you are generous with your purse, you learn the real value of what money can do for others; If you are generous of spirit you learn to see more in community than you ever saw as an individual; Generosity isn't about things; it is about hope. We have had hope for this congregation at the heart of our process and we never let go of it.

What I have to tell you is hopeful, but not what we wanted to come to you with this morning. The news is that we found a candidate who had nearly all the qualities we are all looking for – a wonderful, caring, and strong individual we were all quite excited about. Last Monday we named this individual as our choice and were ready to make our offer. We learned this past Tuesday that this minister has chosen another congregation. We were very very disappointed. None of the three others we met with over pre-candidating weekends between February 15th and March 24th had enough of the skills or experience that we thought fit our congregation right now. So, we came very close. We will be going into a second year of search with the same hopeful hearts, open minds, and positive attitude we've had all along. We've learned a lot so the search next year will be easier all around in practical ways. We have work to do this summer and fall, and it involves all of you. This pledge drive is part of the hope that needs to continue to build. It matters so much, for it says who we are and what we value. Candidates see how we did and what our budget will be, so it's an important reflection of loveable, caring, community oriented us. Obviously we learned that we are competing for talented ministers, so we need to be proactive in several ways. One of them is what we can offer as compensation. Generosity has many facets and we need to be aware of all of them as we search. We need to talk to you again individually and in focus groups. We need to do the survey again, adding questions that probe more specifically about a few issues. As a congregation we need to do some follow up to the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop we had last fall. As a Search Committee we need to continue to listen and you talk to us. We came close, but we can't dwell on the downer that we didn't get our candidate. This happens to many congregations. So we begin again. Be positive, be hopeful, focus on the possible and be generous with what you have and how you share yourself and your time. It's what defines us as the congregation that we are very proud to represent and rave about out there.