

## **St. John's Settled Search Process**

### **St. John's By Law, Section 1. Method of Selection:**

When the selection of a minister becomes necessary, the Board of Trustees will take a plan of selection to the Congregation for approval.

### **2009 – 2010 Selection Process Outline:**

The Board of Trustees of St. John's Unitarian Universalist Church has organized the search for the next called minister according to the guidelines disseminated by the UUA and the requirements of the Church's by-laws.

The board accepts the responsibilities to:

- Empanel the Settled Search Committee
- Create a budget for the committee's work and the expenses of the transition
- Appoint a negotiating team, separate from the search committee, to draft the ministry agreement for the called minister.

### **St. John's By Law, Section 2. Ministerial Search Committee:**

Whenever it becomes necessary to select a new Minister, a ministerial search committee shall be elected by the Congregation to conduct the search. The plan prepared by the Board for selection of the Minister shall specify the size and responsibilities of this committee.

### **2009 – 2010 Settled Search Selection Process:**

The Board of Trustees, with the assistance of the Nominating Committee, will put together a slate of seven (7) candidates to be presented at the Congregational Meeting in June. The congregation will be asked to vote for the entire slate of candidates. If the congregation does not elect the slate the Board of Trustees will put together a second slate for a vote at a special meeting.

At the time of being nominated to the slate the nominee must be a voting member of the Church. Members may suggest others to the Board or Nominating Committee or they may self nominate. Nominations must be accompanied by a written description of why the individual is interested in serving on the search committee. Alternate or ex-officio membership on the search committee is not permitted. If a member of the search committee resigns during the search process the slot will not be filled.

The Board of Trustees is committed to forming a Search Committee balanced by sex, age, interests, and tenure of membership to reflect the diversity of the congregation. We seek a committee that will represent major areas of church life including religious education, social action, property management, finance, and music. The ideal committee will be balanced by the following attributes: organizational ability, broad theological awareness, computer skills, ability to facilitate dialogue and collaborative behaviors. Individuals who have served on the past two settled searches will not be included in the committee for the current search.

### **The criteria for selection to the Search Committee are as follows:**

- Known and respected by others in the congregation
- More strongly committed to the congregation as a whole than to any subgroup – we are looking for participants in church life, not partisans to an interest area, personality or other narrow focus
- Willing and able to commit to the demands and time requirements of the search process. These include attending every meeting of the committee, reading the various handbooks and guidelines and able to give between 250 – 400 hours to the process over the 12 -18 months required to call the new minister.

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- Willing to become the called minister's Committee on Ministry for their first year in service. (See By-law Section 9. Committee on Ministry)
- Not paid members of the church staff
- Pledged to conduct a search that is fair and nondiscriminatory with respect to race, color, disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, and national origin
- Committed to maintain confidentiality and to seek consensus
- Capable of both self-assertion and compromise
- Not stressed by differences of opinion. Open to dialogue
- Not prone to extreme reactions to ministers.
- Well suited to teamwork, able to collaborate.
- Knowledgeable about how the church 'works' – this includes both polity, policy and the de facto or 'tribal knowledge' aspects of the congregation

## Organization of the Search Committee

The committee is expected to organize it self so that it is able to complete the search checklist in the time necessary. The following roles are needed to assure success:

**Chair:** The chair is responsible for the care and feeding of the committee and for holding the vision. The chair needs to enjoy keeping a finger on the pulse of everything and to be easy to reach, not terrified by conflict, and able to use tough love if necessary. The chair convenes meetings and is the primary communicator with the board, the Transitions Office, the MSR, and the District Executive

**Packet Editor and Distributor:** The editor needs to have an artistic flair, love compiling material, and be confident of creating a fair and attractive picture of the congregation. In distribution mode, the editor sends copies of the packet to prospective candidates, receives and renews returned ones, and receives candidates' packets and creates the means by which all committee members see them in a timely fashion.

**Arranger:** The arranger sets up preaching dates in area churches for pre-candidates and sees that everyone has all the information they need. Flexibility and creativity are required, since the arrangements are for a minister unknown with a church not known whose administrator (also not known) wants to get the Sunday morning schedule squared away before the details can be known. The arranger also looks to the care and comfort of the pre-candidates (and later the candidate) from the moment they arrive until they leave. Who will meet them? Where will they stay? Where/when will they eat? Who will drive them where? What will a tour include? No detail is too small to influence a candidate's first impression of the congregation.

**Reference Checker:** The checker designs some type of instrument to chart the information the committee wants about each candidate and devises a way to communicate findings to the committee.

**Secretary:** The secretary communicates with the prospective candidates, keeping them informed of the committee's process. The secretary is also the primary communicator to the congregation of the committee's progress, by a regular newsletter column, a well-designed and often-updated bulletin board, and other means. The secretary also keeps detailed notes and minutes of committee meetings. The amount of communication needed is inestimable; the secretary needs to like doing it.

**Survey coordinator:** The surveyor needs to have a passion for learning who the congregation is and what their wants/needs/hopes/desires are, and a vision of how to do it. The surveyor will create the survey instrument and survey events capable of eliciting

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thoughtful, reflective, and copious response in a form that will effectively communicate that response to the prospective candidates.

**Treasurer:** The treasurer creates the budget, keeps expenses on track, and makes sure committee members account for expenses and are reimbursed in a timely fashion. The treasurer reports to the Finance Committee, but in such a way that the identities of the ministers under consideration are not revealed. The treasurer often heads up the negotiating team.

## **Negotiation Team**

The Board of Trustees will appoint a negotiation team to prepare a draft of the ministry agreement into which the congregation and minister will eventually enter. This team will be formed two months after the search committee is selected. The team will be made up of three people to include one Board member, one member of the Search committee and a third person recruited from the general congregation. The team's purpose is to develop for Board approval a draft ministry agreement that reflects the relationship the congregation hopes to have with the minister it calls and then to negotiate it with the ministerial candidate. The team should meet with the board several times to achieve a clear understanding on the budget, policy and other relevant polity information.

## Checklist—search for a called minister

### Direction-Finding

2009

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|---|---------------|
| 1. Board arrange for visits of District Executive (DE), Ministerial Settlement Representative (MSR), and District Compensation Consultant; provide requested information to MSR | Mar-Jun _____ |
| 2. Board plan search committee selection process  | Mar-Jun _____ |
| 3. Board adopt search committee budget  | Mar-Jun _____ |
| 4. Board conduct congregation's election of search committee  | Mar-Jun _____ |

### Self-Study

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|---|----------------|
| 5. Search committee (SC) provide requested information to and meet with MSR (second consultation)       | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 6. SC familiarize itself with the Transitions Office website and the Ministerial Settlement System      | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 7. SC print out copies of the <i>Settlement Handbook</i> and the <i>Resource Guide</i> for every member | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 8. SC go on facilitated overnight retreat   | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 9. SC select chair (and Transitions Office contact), allocate tasks, establish time-line                | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 10. Board select negotiating team to recommend ministerial compensation package and draft agreement     | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 11. SC gather information by cottage meetings, survey, interviews, etc.                                 | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 12. SC schedule Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop for congregation.                                  | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 13. SC compose Congregational Record (CR)   | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 14. SC begin compilation of informational packet for exchange with interested ministers                 | Jun-Sept _____ |
| 15. Negotiating team present recommended compensation package and draft agreement to board              | Jun-Sept _____ |

### Framing the Search

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| 16. SC set up neutral pulpit arrangements with nearby congregations  | Sept-Oct _____       |
| 17. SC create, distribute, and analyze results of congregational survey and other information-gathering  | Sept-Oct _____       |
| 18. Board tender approved compensation package and draft agreement to search committee (if a vote by the Congregation is required on the package, allow time for it) | Sept-Oct _____       |
| 19. <b>SC complete online Application for Minister by</b>  | <b>Oct. 31</b> _____ |
| 20. <b>SC complete online CR by</b>  | <b>Oct. 31</b> _____ |
| 21. <b>SC request MSR to give go-ahead for Transitions to unveil CR; follow up to make sure the unveiling occurs by</b>  | <b>Oct. 31</b> _____ |
| 22. SC prepare informational packet, including draft agreement and survey results, and make copies for potential candidates; send copy to MSR for review             | Sept-Oct _____       |

### Open for Business

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| 23. <b>SC meet with MSR for third consultancy (often by conference call) ideally <i>no later than</i></b>             | <b>Nov. 30</b> _____ |
| 24. <b>SC can request access to Ministerial Records when the following are in order, ideally <i>no later than</i></b> | <b>Nov. 30</b> _____ |
| · Survey results, draft agreement, and compensation package reviewed by the Transitions Director                      |                      |
| · Informational packet reviewed by the MSR  |                      |
| · MSR's third consultancy is imminent   |                      |

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| 25. SC call interested ministers, exchange packets with those whose interest it reciprocates   | Nov-Jan _____         |
| 26. SC sponsor Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop  | Nov-Jan _____         |
| 27. SC receive, circulate, and evaluate ministers' packets, conduct group phone interviews, interview named references   | Nov-Jan _____         |
| 28. Transitions make available MRs of additional interested ministers as manifested  | Nov-Jan _____         |
| <b>29. SC select and schedule three or four pre-candidates for pre-candidating weekends including neutral pulpits</b>  | <b>Jan 30</b> _____   |
| 30. SC request interpretive file summaries from Transitions  | Jan-Feb _____         |
| 31. SC, <i>with the pre-candidates' acknowledgement</i> , interview developed references in congregations in which the pre-candidates have <i>previously</i> served and with previous employers and named references in current congregation | Jan-Feb _____         |
| <b>Pre-Candidating Weekends</b>  |                       |
| <b>32. Pre-candidating weekends!</b>   | <b>Feb-Mar</b> _____  |
| <b>Selection</b>   |                       |
| <b>33. SC decide on proposed candidate and make offer contingent on satisfactory criminal record background check and interviews of developed references in current congregation/employment <i>no earlier than</i></b>                       | <b>March 15</b> _____ |
| 34. SC, <i>with the proposed candidate's acknowledgement</i> , interview developed references in current congregation or employment  | Mar-Apr _____         |
| 35. SC conduct criminal record background check on proposed candidate  | Mar-Apr _____         |
| 36. Negotiating team conclude ministry agreement with candidate, including compensation matters, subject if necessary to contingencies in step 33  | Mar-Apr _____         |
| 37. SC conclude background check and reference interviews  | Mar-Apr _____         |
| 38. Board and candidate execute ministry agreement subject to extension of call by congregation and acceptance by candidate  | Mar-Apr _____         |
| 39. Board announces candidacy  | Mar-Apr _____         |
| <b>Candidating Week</b>  |                       |
| <b>40. Congregation extends call and minister accepts</b>  | <b>Apr-May</b> _____  |
| 41. SC submits Notice of Call to Transitions   | Apr-May _____         |