



Organized 1835

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH of SAINT LOUIS

“Memory ~ Hope ~ Reverence”

Dear Members and Friends,

We thank you for the trust you've placed in us. We feel keenly the responsibility to represent our congregation in searching for a settled minister. Our duty is not only to pursue the fittest candidate, but also to earn your confidence in our process and our judgment.

To that end, here is a timeline of the search process from now through early autumn. You can also find it on the church website's Ministerial Search page or at our station in Fellowship Hall.

1. Committee retreat and organization

Winter 2009-2010

On December 3, we met with Axel Gehrman, the Central Midwest District's Ministerial Search Representative. He explained the search process recommended by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). We are not required to follow this process in lockstep, but we realize that each step is advised based on the experiences of many congregations who have preceded us on this journey. (You have access to the same UUA materials we are consulting at www.uua.org/leaders/leadership/transitions/20679.shtml)

On January 22 and 23, we gathered at Mercy Conference and Retreat Center with Patricia D'Auria, a facilitator who specializes in UU search committee retreats. At that time we:

- began to develop the trust and care for each other that we'll need as we face important choices affecting the congregation's future
- reviewed and discussed the UUA's recommended process again
- compared our personal strengths to the tasks we will undertake and each assumed responsibility for some part of the process

2. Come to understand who we are and whom we seek

Winter-Summer 2010

We are gathering information about our congregation in a systematic way throughout March and April. Some data will come from church records, but the most important details will come from you. We are arranging a series of meetings during which you can discuss and respond to the questions on a written survey. We will ask you to describe First Unitarian Church as you experience it now and to point us toward “the coming church” that you'd like us to be. If you're on a church committee, we may already have arranged a time to meet with your group. If not, please attend one of the sessions after church on March 21, March 28, or April 11. We'll also schedule a Saturday afternoon session with child care.

The written survey will be our committee's primary source for understanding your needs and wishes. It is vital that you respond.

(Please see other side)

REV. SAMUEL SCHAAL
Transition Minister

LYNN HUNT
Credentialed Religious Educator

MARY WARD
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Our analysis of your descriptions and prescriptions will function as:

- a positive and accurate picture of our church and its needs for candidates
- a gauge against which to measure the skills and qualities of candidates

3. Prepare materials to describe ourselves and our needs to candidates

Spring-Fall 2010

We will create two main documents to represent First Unitarian Church to prospective ministers. In the first, the Congregational Record (CR), we'll answer a set of questions posed to all congregations in search. In the fall, congregations' CRs will be posted online so that any UU minister can look at them.

The second document is a packet containing information about our members, programs, activities, worship services, history, constitution and bylaws, finances, building, surrounding community; in short, everything a seriously interested candidate might want to know. Unlike the CR, which contains narrative and numbers, the packet can include pictures and publications, even audio or video recordings.

Beginning in the fall, ministers who read our CR and wish to be considered will signal their interest, and our committee will begin evaluating prospective candidates. We'll describe these later steps in more detail when we're closer to them. Please understand, though, that we won't ever be able to tell you who has shown interest in being considered.

In the meantime, please look for news of our activities in the following places:

- our station in Fellowship Hall
- the Ministerial Search page on the church website: firstuustlouis.org
- email announcements (you can sign up for these by contacting the church office)
- the monthly newsletter
- the "Yellow Pages" in Sunday's order of service

Please contact us with your questions and concerns about the search process. You can reach all seven of us by sending an email to MinisterialSearch@FirstUUSTLouis.org.

With deep regard,

The Ministerial Search Committee