

# Your Ministerial Search Committee is ON THE **JOB**

The Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) started meeting in July, leading off with a team-building retreat. It was an intense couple of days as we got better acquainted with each other, developed a time line for our activities, and agreed on decision-making guidelines. We elected Chuck Harrington and Kristen Leddy as co-chairpersons, and we selected people for other critical roles and sub-committees. Since then we've been meeting weekly as a group, as well as within the sub-committees.

We know that it's very important to keep you informed of our progress. We will be sending regular E-blasts and submitting articles in Soundings. We will also make sure that MSC members are available after each service to answer questions and clarify concerns.

Many of you have been asking us about the timing of the selection of the new minister. So here is the schedule we'll be using, as well as some information about the tasks we'll need to perform over the next 8 months.

## **August through October, 2014 – Congregational Participation**

Focus Group Meetings are an important way for us to be guided by your wishes, your hopes, and your dreams for our new minister. These small group meetings will be held at various times and locations between August 17 and September 21. We've selected a variety of meeting times so that everyone will be able to participate in one of these meetings. The exact dates and times were not set at press-time, but will be widely circulated soon.

We'll also be conducting a complete survey of the congregation. The Congregational Survey tells us who you want as a new minister, but it also allows us to give potential candidates a glimpse of who we are as a congregation. The 2014 Congregational Survey will be available to the congregation on September 22, and will close on October 6. Wide participation in this survey is very important, so we will provide many ways for you to respond.

On October 18 and 19, Rev. Keith Kron, Director of the UUA Transitions Office will be here to present a program called Beyond Categorical Thinking. This program has been designed by the UUA Department of Faith in Action to promote inclusive thinking and to help prevent unfair discrimination in the ministerial search process. It includes a 3-hour workshop that helps participants examine their own ableism, ageism, heterosexism, racism, and sexism, followed up by a Sunday Service on the topic the following morning. We hope you'll be able to participate in this event.

## **August through November, 2014 - Preparing a Profile of our Congregation**

The matching of potential ministers to a congregation happens in a special area of the Unitarian Universalist Association's website, which is kind of like an internet dating site. Each congregation looking for a new minister creates a profile or 'resume' of themselves for ministers to review. Ministers interested in moving to a new congregation review the congregations' profiles. If they're interested in a particular congregation, they make their profiles available to the MSC of that congregation. Then the MSC reviews the minister's profile and decides whether they'd like to find out more about that minister.

Our congregation's profile describes the history and life of the church; it offers factual information about the congregation, e.g. membership, attendance, pledging, and budgets. More importantly, it offers candidates a picture of who we are: Why is our church important to us? What is its role in our lives? What tasks confront us in the coming years? What problems have we faced and how have we come to terms with them? This is our opportunity to shine, to boast about our strengths and yet be honest about our challenges. Our profile is made available to candidates by December 1.

*Continued on following page*

## January through March, 2015 – Reviewing Candidates for Minister

After January 2, 2015, we will start getting information from ministers interested in coming to our congregation. We will review the minister's profile of every minister who has expressed interest in being considered by the committee. By February 1 the MSC narrows this list to three or four pre-candidates.

From mid-February through March, the MSC will be checking references and biographical data of the pre-candidates, and we will invite each of them to Westport for a weekend that includes an extensive interview, a tour of our community and facilities, and a worship service conducted by the pre-candidate in a neutral pulpit. Because confidentiality is a critical part of the ministerial selection process, the members of the search committee will be the only members of our church who will be interacting with the pre-candidates during these visits.

## April through May, 2015 – Selecting a Minister

After much discussion, debate, evaluation and analysis, by April 2 the MSC selects one final ministerial candidate. In late April/early May the candidate is presented to the congregation in person. He/she visits the church. This visit includes preaching at both services for two Sundays in a row, attending meetings with key committees and groups, participating in social gatherings and other events, and interacting with members in a variety of ways. After the second Sunday Service, our congregation votes whether to call the new minister. If the congregation votes to approve the minister, and the minister accepts, we will have a new minister!

**Members of the Search Committee:** *Kristen Leddy, Charles Harrington, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Kathy Roberts, Jim Cooper, John Mason, Anita Pfluger, Linda Hudson and Carrie McEvoy*

*Get ready for the best party of 2014!*

*We can't wait to share the fun with you at*

*"Skyline Lounge" –*

*a night of late 1950s-1960s cocktails and music, on Saturday, October 25.*

- ✓ *Save the Date!* Invite friends and family to join you on Saturday, October 25, 2014 from 5pm – 10pm. Tickets are \$20 each or 8 for \$120 for an evening of scrumptious hors d'oeuvres, dinner, cocktails, live music, fellowship, and wonderful auction items.
- ✓ *Be a sponsor.* See if your company has a matching funds program. You never know— check it out! Also, help identify corporate or community sponsors and let the Auction Committee assist you in securing commitments.
- ✓ *Donate or solicit items* for the auction from your favorite merchants, clients, friends and family. Creativity and fun are key! Now is a great time to collect gift cards – re-gift ones you receive at the holidays or donate those extras you received when you made gift card purchases.
- ✓ *Get a commitment!* Use the enclosed sheets (there are e in the Foyer) to ask for donations. When you get a commitment, fill out the Donor Form and return it to the Auction Mailbox so we can keep track of our growing roster of exciting items.  
The Donor Letter is to be left with the donor as a receipt for tax purposes.
- ✓ *Give extra support.* We are in need of someone that is able to print our invitations, bid book and all supporting materials at little or no cost.