

Ministerial Settlement System

Congregational Record



The Unitarian Universalist Association declares and affirms its special responsibility, and that of its member congregations and organizations, to promote the full participation of persons in all of its and their activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, color, sex, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, or national origin.

Congregation: **The Unitarian Church in Westport**

Website address: **www.uuwestport.org**

Ministry title: **Senior Minister**

Congregation Size: **IV**

Congregation Wage Rate Area: **6**

Do the benefits and professional expenses provided for this position meet (or even exceed) the UUA Transitions Office recommendations as described in the "Open for Business" section of the [Settlement Handbook \(PDF\)](#)? **Yes**

If there is a range in the S&H, describe the objective, measurable criteria you will use in categorizing a potential candidate.

High \$ -

Mid \$ -

Low \$ -

Is the minister expected to occupy a parsonage? **no**

How much of the S&H is attributable to rental value? **housing not split** To utilities? **not split**

Number of adult members: **490** Av. Sunday attendance: **192**

Children & youth enrollment: **122** Av. children & youth attendance: **95**

Total operating expenditures: **997,394**

Total operating pledge income: **637,170** Number of pledge units: **318**

How many Sunday services? **2** Others during the week? **0**

How many months per year is the church at full operating capacity? **12**

Describe the character of the surrounding community:

Upon arriving at our church, you will immediately notice through the open glass walls that we are surrounded by trees. Each season has its special beauty in this inspiring setting that constantly links us to nature. The surrounding area, like most of New England, is heavily wooded. You will find

many trails through nature preserves, quaint historic towns with classic white church steeples, and rustic stone walls. Rolling hills, open meadows, leafy forests punctuated by rock outcroppings, small streams and rivers, make a lovely setting for birding, hiking, and biking.

At the same time, we are a coastal town on Long Island Sound, with a beautiful beach. Fishing, clamming, crabbing, sailing, kayaking, swimming, or just strolling along the beach, are all popular activities. A few hours away, there are many more glorious beaches on Long Island, in neighboring Rhode Island, and on the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The Berkshires, Boston, Cape Cod and the rest of New England are readily accessible.

Though our area retains much bucolic charm, it is not typical of the rest of Connecticut. We are in Fairfield County which is more oriented to New York City, and we belong to the UU Metro New York District. Our area is sophisticated and cosmopolitan. Only an hour from New York City, with frequent train service, we are home to many commuters in the fields of finance, advertising and business, as well as in-home entrepreneurs, artists, writers, teachers, real estate professionals, people running local businesses, and those in the medical and legal professions. Generally, as a population, we are well educated, high achieving, and competitive. The schools in the area are excellent. In general, people here expect good services and are willing to pay for them.

Since the 1930s, Westport in particular has been a haven for artists and writers, and more recently entertainment celebrities. We are home to the famous Westport Country Playhouse (featuring Broadway actors) and the Levitt Pavilion for the performing arts. A short distance away are the Quick Center (at Fairfield University), the Long Wharf Theatre and the Yale Repertory Theatre (in New Haven), and the symphony orchestras of Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, and New Haven. There are many art museums, children's museums, and craft fairs in the area. The excellent Westport Public Library, the hub of the community, is about to embark on a major expansion.

Though some say we are fast-paced, demanding, and materialistic, most people find this an interesting and stimulating place to live. Our congregation is a fascinating mix of talented, creative individuals, with plenty of opinions that we don't hesitate to voice, but also friendly and warm-hearted. Although Fairfield County is one of the wealthiest counties in the US, not everyone in our congregation is wealthy. A fair number struggle with unemployment, high college tuition or medical costs, and other financial challenges.

Demographically, Westport and the surrounding towns lack significant racial diversity, but more is found in the nearby urban communities of Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport. In Bridgeport, our congregation supports an elementary school (Beardsley School), and Mercy Learning Center, which provides literacy and life-skills training to low-income women. Many of us would like our congregation itself to become more diverse, in fulfillment of our mission statement that says we are "a diverse and welcoming religious community."

UUA District: **New York Metro District** District Executive: **Andrea Lerner**

APF contribution: **42,369** Fair Share? **yes**

Ministerial settlement rep.: **Craig Hirshberg** Compensation Consultant: **Charlotte Cowtan**

Provide your profile of the minister you seek:

After 29 years of a single beloved senior minister, our congregation is at a crossroads and faces

change with a mix of emotions. Some members hope their experience of church will continue much as before, while some feel the need for a new kind of ministry and are eager to embrace change.

Distilling the feedback from focus groups with 150 participants, completed surveys from 305 congregants, and in-depth conversations with our insightful, committed team of ministers and staff leaders, a key question regarding our new minister emerged. Are we looking for a fabulously inspiring preacher and pastor who is also willing to be an effective manager and administrator? Or an incredibly dynamic CEO to lead us through change who is also an adequate preacher?

Of course, obviously, we want both! Under our new Policy Governance model the minister is required to be Chief of Staff, and this is specified in the minister's contract. That said, however, we have concluded that first and foremost, our minister must have that indefinable charisma, warmth, and magnetism that will be obvious when she/he preaches and interacts with us. Without that connection, no other qualities will matter; with that, almost anything will be possible. Our congregation wants to be loved and wants to love its minister. If that happens, we will go far together.

Most importantly then, we seek a vibrant, engaging, and visionary preacher and pastor, one who inspires us to be our best selves, expands our minds, brings us together, feeds our souls, and helps us achieve our dreams and goals.

We hope for sermons that are intellectually stimulating and emotionally uplifting, that speak to all congregants whatever their religious backgrounds or beliefs (or lack thereof), that foster a sense of connection, that are leavened with humor, that might sometimes make us laugh and cry at the same time. We want to learn about diverse theological philosophies as they relate to Unitarian Universalism and how our UU faith traditions and principles make a difference in this complex, ever-changing world.

Our ideal minister will want to bring new thinking into our congregation and try out creative new ideas, but will take the time to understand our culture, build consensus, and hear differing viewpoints. She/he will be a good listener, who gets to know us as individuals and gains our trust with warmth, humor, and compassion, respecting and supporting our personal spiritual journeys. We expect our minister to be approachable, genuine and humble, with empathy and skill in pastoral care and personal counseling. He/she should have a healthy ego and be confident, yet be willing to listen to constructive feedback. We also hope to find a leader who has had experience dealing with conflict and can facilitate healing. We are a congregation with complex dynamics. We want a minister who interacts enthusiastically with our children and youth in RE, successfully attracts young families, passionately supports our LGBTQ members, and engages wholeheartedly with our seniors.

We hope our new minister will be strongly committed to social justice, speaking out publicly on important issues when appropriate, acting as the face of our congregation in the surrounding community and beyond. We seek a minister who is creative and articulate, who encourages diversity, and who will help us become better known throughout the area as a beacon of liberal religion.

Coming back again to the key question mentioned earlier, for us the holy grail will be if we can find a minister who can be all of the above while also having the potential to be a dynamic CEO of a

complex, expanding organization. As Chief of Staff, the minister needs to be an effective manager, one who supports the staff and works well with the Board. Such a minister will have strong leadership skills to collaboratively build our organizational strengths.

An essential indicator of an excellent new ministry would be that we see, over time, a turn-around in our pledge support leading to renewed financial abundance. We are looking for a minister who will actively support stewardship, talk about it, and give people a vision that will inspire greater generosity.

We will say “our cup runneth over” if our new minister, in addition to all the above qualities, is happy to be among us, is fun to be around, doesn’t mind being teased occasionally, and enjoys a good party once in a while.

The leadership of The Unitarian Church in Westport is an exceptional and challenging opportunity for a minister with vision, enthusiasm, and creativity. After 29 years, change is hard. But it is also exciting--as one door closes another opens—and we're ready to embark on a new stage of enthusiastic growth. We believe we have tremendous potential and endless possibilities on this challenging journey.

Provide your profile of your congregation:

We are a vibrant congregation of close to 500 members, with over fifty years of history behind us, strongly committed to our liberal religion and to social action. We draw from a wide geographic area with some members traveling as far as 25 miles to attend.

Our members tend to be forthright and outspoken. They especially enjoy sermons that are intellectually stimulating as well as emotionally uplifting, and appreciate worship services that offer new insights and viewpoints. Besides the minister and worship services, other experiences they most value in their involvement with the church are a sense of belonging, music, and opportunities for spiritual growth.

In general we are a committed crowd of talented and creative individuals with a love of music and the arts. We enjoy a robust sense of humor, which often comes out in our cabarets, spring flings, and roasts with musical skits. Poetry and drama have important places in our worship services. Members have participated in a wide range of cultural activities including storytelling festivals, book and movie discussion groups, and theatrical productions.

Our vigorous lay leadership is involved in myriad activities and committees and supports three crown jewels of the church – the social justice, music, and religious education programs.

We are one of the few UU congregations with a dedicated Director of Social Justice. Recently-established new initiatives include action for immigration reform, Advocates for the Prevention of Gun Violence, and raising awareness of climate change.

Our music program, with seven choirs, plus a bell choir, is outstanding. Music is one of our significant ways of inspiring and connecting.

A recently-hired RE director has brought new energy to our already excellent RE program, which touches children and youth from nursery through high school.

Our congregation plays a leadership role in the wider UU movement. A number of our members are very connected, with a contingent attending General Assembly, individual members being involved in UUA committee and advisory work, and even one who served as UUA Moderator. We have participated in the UU District of Metropolitan New York, and several of our members have served as president and/or board members of that district. We have members on the Board of, and consultants to, Meadville Lombard Theological College, and on the President's Council, and involved in the UUUNO.

The culture of our congregation is one of considerable variety. 30% of our members are former Catholics, another 30% are former Protestants, 25% are lifelong UU's or were UU before joining our church. 18% say they had no previous religion, 13% say they were agnostic or atheist, and 13% were raised Jewish.

Partly due to corporate transfers, a third of our membership historically turns over every ten years. The plus side of this is that we interact with people of many different cultures and backgrounds who bring energy and variety to our congregation.

That being said, we are overwhelmingly white and well-educated. We are an older congregation, with more than half of survey respondents 60 or over, and fewer than 5% under 40. We are approximately 60% female, and 9% of us identify as LGBTQQA. We have a spread of household income from less than \$50,000 a year to more than \$300,000 a year, with a median income between \$100,000 and \$125,000.

At this point in our evolution, we face two key challenges regarding our infrastructure. One is that our office systems and staff support have not kept pace with our growth. The other challenge is our need for more usable space for the diversity of our activities.

In the past few years, new initiatives have taken hold. They include the Pastoral Care Associates, the Worship Associates, a Year-Round Stewardship Committee (a member of the UUA's FORTH program) and more robust budget drive efforts, a re-invigorated Membership Committee and Welcome Table, and a dynamic new Young Adult Group. A new group calling itself UGNO (Unitarian Guys Night Out) meets monthly to enjoy beer and camaraderie. Voices Café has put our church on the map as a destination for music lovers. The Board has started moving toward Policy Governance, with the minister as Chief of Staff, in order to put itself in a position to govern a larger church.

In our focus groups and our survey, there were strongly-expressed desires both for a greater sense of community and for growth. Members are looking for renewed energy and purpose, for us to attract back members who have withdrawn during the interim as well as attract new members, for our congregation to become more visible in the community, and for more diversity in our congregation. Having learned from recent divisions, most of us are strongly determined to be a forward-looking congregation actively engaged in working for a larger vision of our future. Likely, more interim work is to be done, but we believe we have tremendous growth potential.

What role do the congregation and its leaders expect the minister to play in relation to the other paid staff? **The role that our congregation expects our next Minister to play can best be summed up by the word “leader”. We want someone with the qualities mentioned in the Profile to come together in a form of leadership that covers spiritual, pastoral and management issues. The responsibilities of this leadership role include acting as Chief of Staff, involved in all aspects of staff performance, tenure, and acting as the primary liaison between the staff and the Board of Trustees.**

There is much potential here due to the fact that we have new and energized committees that want to work for a shared ministry; the Pastoral Care Associates, the Worship Associates and the Committee on Ministries. In the leadership role, our new minister will help these committees learn more about how a shared ministry really works, and create an effective and inspirational ministry together. There is still much work to be done to complete the evolution to a Policy Governance model, and strong leadership is needed in order to make this a success. In our perfect world model, the Minister will have the charisma and intellect to be able to move smoothly from pulpit to Board meetings, to be inspiring and at the same time to understand that working with the leadership of the church is essential to achieving progress towards the goals that we all hope for.

Congregational history:

How and when was the congregation founded?

In February 1949 a group of twelve liberal thinkers and seekers met in Sarah Taylor’s living room in Bridgeport, CT and voted to establish “The First Unitarian Fellowship of Fairfield County.” There were already three Universalist churches in Fairfield County – in Bridgeport, Danbury and Stamford – but no Unitarian congregations.

In 1945 the board of the American Unitarian Association (AUA) had voted to explore forming lay-led centers in communities with too few Unitarians to warrant a church. Since there were not enough ordained ministers to support many new congregations, any significant growth would have to be generated by lay leadership. In May 1948 they launched the Lay Fellowship Plan, which encouraged new fellowships to choose their own leaders and evolve their own goals, methods, and philosophy. From 1948 through the early 1960’s this program attracted thousands of new members to hundreds of new Unitarian fellowships, some of which still exist and are among our most vibrant congregations today. The Unitarian Church in Westport is a prime example.

Within the first two years the founding group became too large to meet in members’ homes and moved to The Westport Women’s Club. By 1952 the fellowship had 80 members. They hired a minister, Rev. Karl M. Chworowsky, to lead worship services (note, they did not “call” a minister through settlement with the AUA but rather found a retired minister living on Long Island and offered him a position). By 1957 the congregation had grown to 260 members and moved weekly services to the Saugatuck Elementary School in Westport.

Although the school was physically adequate, the growing energetic membership wanted a home of its own. Under the leadership of Rev. Arnold Westwood, who became the congregation’s minister in 1958, a down payment was made on nine acres of land along Lyons Plains Road. Visionary architect Victor Lundy (a disciple of Frank Lloyd Wright) was hired to design a new church, and in 1961 work began on the church building – completed in 1965 – that exists today.

Just prior to that, a parsonage was also built on site, which is now used as a meeting house.

The church building's distinctive architecture, with its clear glass walls, and soaring roof sweeping upward like a bird in flight – or some say like a sail, others say like praying hands, the two sides never quite touching – is inspiring to members and visitors alike. Now nearly fifty years old, the building remains one of the congregation's greatest assets. At the same time, though, it has to be said that it is no longer optimal for present-day needs for office space, classrooms, storage, and social activities. In the past few years, ideas for alleviating the “space crunch” and competing visions of how this may be done have consumed much time and energy, and remain a priority to be resolved.

Note the three or four most important events in the congregation's history:

The following paragraphs describe relatively recent events in the life of the congregation.

The ministry of Rev. Frank Hall, Senior Minister:

During a remarkable 29-year ministry from 1984 to 2013, Frank Hall led this congregation from its youth to its maturity and set the tone for worship and involvement. The vast majority of present members have never known any other Senior Minister, and to many, he embodied the spirit of the church. Frank Hall's inspiring preaching, skill in conducting rites of passage, and love of poetry attracted and retained a growing number of loyal members.

The calling of Rev. Dr. Ed Thompson, Minister of Music:

Ed Thompson came to Westport in 1978 as part-time director of music and over the years has built a music program of exceptional scope and quality, acknowledged today as one of the crown jewels of our church. The congregation recognized the importance of this program and in 1997 ordained him as our Minister of Music.

The organ crisis:

In 1991, the congregation became bitterly divided over whether to install a large pipe organ. After a cardboard replica of the proposed organ was erected, the congregation narrowly voted it down. Feelings remained heated for some years, and it is still a touchpoint for some members, although few of today's congregants were involved.

The hiring of David Vita, Social Justice Director (and now also Membership Director):

In 2005 a member made a major donation to fund a part-time (25 hours per week) Director of Social Justice. We were fortunate to hire David Vita for this position. Under his leadership our social justice program has expanded and is now a major focus of many of our members. In addition, David is now also our Membership Director, working 15 hours per week in that capacity.

Recent challenges:

In 2006 Rev. Margie Allen was called as our new Associate Minister. During 2007 and 2008 it became increasingly and painfully clear that Frank Hall and Margie Allen were not working well together. Fraught meetings and visits with consultants from the UUA and the Alban Institute failed to resolve the differences, and eventually Margie resigned in March 2009. The congregation was left confused and divided, and the healing from this traumatic rift has been slow.

In 2007-2008, the congregation, as part of a bold vision to solve its space needs far into the future by expanding its campus, purchased property on an adjacent road called Sheila Lane. But due to the market crash of 2008, and even more so due to the distraction of the conflict between our ministers,

a capital campaign to pay off the mortgage was never implemented. After much angst, in 2012 the congregation sold the property at a considerable loss, a sad disappointment to some and a relief to others. (Fortunately since then, our Endowment through successful investment has recovered most of the loss and today stands at a healthy \$2 million.)

During 2010-2011, some within the congregation felt it was time for Frank Hall to announce a date for his retirement, and the Board strongly suggested that he consider a retirement date. However, others wished him to stay for ever and were angered by the Board's action. Frank's eventual announcement of his retirement date left hurt feelings and accusations between these factions. Several workshops were held to talk out the issues and heal the divisions, but there is still some lingering distrust of the Board and of those who were church leaders at the time.

Despite these recent difficulties, our congregation is remarkably resilient and seeks wholeness. Over the years, controversies have been painful but we have always tried to recover and move on. The church year 2012-2013 was a period of joyful celebrations of Frank's 29-year ministry, and the congregation has now embraced change under Interim Minister Roberta Finkelstein and looks eagerly toward its future.

List, most recent first, all clergy who have served since 1950 and earlier ministers of great importance, and interim ministers since 1980 (minister name, date arrived, date departed, reason for departure):

SENIOR MINISTERS

Rev. Frank A. Hall, Senior Minister

Date Arrived: 1984 Date departed: 2013

Reason for departure: Retired and became Minister Emeritus

Rev. Robert C. Swain

Date arrived: 1979 Date departed: 1982

Reason for departure: Called to serve church in Knoxville TN

Rev. Edwin A. Lane

Date arrived: 1967 Date departed: 1978

Reason for departure: Called to First Parish in Cambridge, MA, following a vote of no confidence by the Board.

Rev. Arnold F. Westwood

Date arrived: 1958 Date departed: 1966

Reason for departure: Called to UU Society in Cleveland OH

Rev. Karl M. Chworowsky

Date arrived: 1952 Date departed: 1958

Reason for departure: Retired as Minister Emeritus of the First Unitarian Church of Fairfield County

ASSOCIATE MINISTERS

Rev. Margaret H. Allen, Associate Minister

Date arrived: 2006 Date departed: 2009

Reason for departure: Irreconcilable differences. UUA consultants advised Board to uphold wishes of Sr. Minister.

Rev. Barbara G. Fast, Associate Minister (ordained and called)

Date arrived: 2000 Date departed: 2005

Reason for departure: Resigned prior to sabbatical for discernment time prior to going into search

Rev. Dr. John W. Tolley, Associate Minister

Date arrived: 1996 Date departed: 1999

Reason for departure: Took position at Meadville Lombard as Dean of Modified Residency Program

INTERIM MINISTERS

Rev. Roberta Finkelstein, Interim Minister

Date Arrived: 2013 Date departed: Currently serving as Interim Minister

Rev. Manish K. Mishra, Interim Associate Minister

Date arrived: 2005 Date departed 2006

Reason for departure: Completion of one-year interim appointment

James C. Brewer, Interim Minister

Date arrived: 1983 Date departed: 1984

Reason for departure: Completion of one-year interim appointment

Dr. Duncan Howlett, Interim Minister

Date arrived: 1982 Date departed: 1983

Reason for departure: Completion of one-year interim appointment

Dr. Josiah R. Bartlett, Interim Minister

Date arrived: 1978 Date departed: 1979

Reason for departure: Completion of one-year interim appointment

Rev. Richard E. Steiner, Interim Minister

Date arrived: 1966 Date departed: 1967

Reason for departure: Completion of five-month interim appointment

Rev. Chadbourne A. Spring, Interim Minister

Date arrived: 1966 Date departed: 1966

Reason for departure: Completion of five-month interim appointment

OTHER MINISTERS

Rev. Dr. Edward Thompson, Minister of Music. (ordained 1997)

Date arrived: 1978 Date departed: Still serving as Minister of Music

Rev. Debra Haffner, Endorsed Community Minister (ordained and endorsed 2003)

Date arrived: 2003 Date departed: Still serving as Endorsed Community Minister

Rev. Marion B. Visel, Endorsed Community Minister (ordained and endorsed 2000)

Date arrived: 2000 Date departed: 2004

Reason for departure: Moved status as endorsed Community Minister to the Hamden, CT congregation – closer to her home



Table I Membership, Attendance, and Pledging

Year Ending	Data Represents	Months	Adult Members	Average Adult Sunday Attendance	Children & Youth Enrollment	Average Children & Youth Attendance	No. of Pledge Units	Total Operating Pledges	Operating Pledge per pledge Unit (col 6/col 5)
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2015	a program year of:	4	490	162	122	95	318	637170	2004
2014	a twelve-month year	12	501	192	119	92	453	612839	1353
2013	a twelve-month year	12	502	264	133	112	463	677674	1467
2012	a twelve-month year	12	510	239		135	462	683611	1480
2011	a twelve-month year	12	537	259		135	390	679865	1743
2010	a twelve-month year	12	483	248		140	334	657042	1967
2009	a twelve-month year	12	504	305		190	307	610724	1989
2005	a twelve-month year	12	590	0			268	551409	2058
2000	a twelve-month year	12	592	0	300	200	454	499511	1100
1995	a twelve-month year	12	465	0	0	120	0	260950	0
1990	a twelve-month year	12	471	0	0	0	0	240762	0
1985	a twelve-month year	12	423	0	0	0	0	132311	0
1980	a twelve-month year	12	554	0	0	0	0	70690	0
1975	a twelve-month year	12	694	0	0	0	224	53150	237

Year Ending	Total Operating Pledges	Other Contributions	Fundraising Events	Endowment Investment Income	Building Rentals	Other Income	Total Income (sum of 1...6)	Total Endowment
2015	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
2014	\$ 612839	\$ 148392	\$ 18452	\$ 5828	\$ 152074	\$ 5867	\$ 943452	\$ 2234419
2013	\$ 677674	\$ 61177	\$ 27049	\$ 10684	\$ 140597	\$ 5523	\$ 922704	\$ 2766424
2012	\$ 683611	\$ 37831	\$ 19956	\$ 0	\$ 132639	\$ 3790	\$ 877827	\$ 2511343
2011	\$ 679865	\$ 51048	\$ 18051	\$ 0	\$ 124644	\$ 6251	\$ 879859	\$ 2430352
2010	\$ 657042	\$ 84222	\$ 7333	\$ 0	\$ 129683	\$ 1170	\$ 879450	\$ 2039996
2009	\$ 610724	\$ 107381	\$ 588	\$ 0	\$ 122751	\$ 7982	\$ 849426	\$ 1939762
2005	\$ 554110	\$ 73002	\$ 3015	\$ 0	\$ 74594	\$ 5579	\$ 710300	\$ 612924
2000	\$ 453416	\$ 62581	\$ 16296	\$ 0	\$ 69338	\$ 3256	\$ 604887	\$ 656356
1995	\$ 260950	\$ 41093	\$ 14853	\$ 0	\$ 64511	\$ 5427	\$ 386834	\$ 334941
1990	\$ 240762	\$ 49098	\$ 11228	\$ 0	\$ 58846	\$ 7786	\$ 367720	\$ 96043
1985	\$ 132311	\$ 33173	\$ 11985	\$ 0	\$ 28562	\$ 13371	\$ 219402	\$ 77242
1980	\$ 70690	\$ 26513	\$ 5726	\$ 0	\$ 13323	\$ 5214	\$ 121466	\$ 1184
1975	\$ 53150	\$ 6569	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 9682	\$ 6967	\$ 76368	\$ 0

Year Ending	Building & Grounds & Utilities	Minister(s) S&H	Minister's Benefits & Professional Expenses	Other Staff Compensation	Religious Education	Social Justice & Service	Debt Service	Other Current Expenses	Total Expenses	Total Debt
2015	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
2014	\$ 123017	\$ 228709	\$ 46119	\$ 260722	\$ 93493	\$ 50152	\$ 76429	\$ 118753	\$ 997394	\$ 0
2013	\$ 123496	\$ 215108	\$ 16713	\$ 229980	\$ 83961	\$ 46535	\$ 88634	\$ 105541	\$ 909968	\$ 1375000
2012	\$ 116149	\$ 213108	\$ 17444	\$ 228753	\$ 111876	\$ 49759	\$ 64989	\$ 99878	\$ 901956	\$ 1375000
2011	\$ 139590	\$ 215330	\$ 16965	\$ 222122	\$ 128886	\$ 48226	\$ 67989	\$ 104117	\$ 943225	\$ 1675000

2010	\$ 115388	\$ 210598	\$ 20695	\$ 222409	\$ 130977	\$ 45812	\$ 64989	\$ 97078	\$ 907946	\$ 1675000
2009	\$ 129050	\$ 318010	\$ 46487	\$ 239376	\$ 121288	\$ 52904	\$ 0	\$ 118099	\$ 1025214	\$ 0
2005	\$ 117310	\$ 233455	\$ 36008	\$ 170323	\$ 78963	\$ 1159	\$ 0	\$ 97290	\$ 734508	\$ 0
2000	\$ 86056	\$ 185229	\$ 0	\$ 110127	\$ 9853	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 213622	\$ 604887	\$ 0
1995	\$ 67559	\$ 87510	\$ 0	\$ 67209	\$ 029401	\$ 1146	\$ 0	\$ 133745	\$ 386570	\$ 0
1990	\$ 60549	\$ 69088	\$ 0	\$ 89468	\$ 2542	\$ 274	\$ 54302	\$ 75936	\$ 352159	\$ 157250
1985	\$ 53932	\$ 40236	\$ 0	\$ 10634	\$ 2487	\$ 417	\$ 17131	\$ 90061	\$ 214898	\$ 15158
1980	\$ 26519	\$ 24880	\$ 0	\$ 17611	\$ 5464	\$ 0	\$ 21568	\$ 24676	\$ 120718	\$ 84562
1975	\$ 14569	\$ 19057	\$ 0	\$ 6403	\$ 1005	\$ 0	\$ 21568	\$ 13601	\$ 76203	\$ 156223

Explanation of any anomalies:

"Adult Members" is defined as individuals 14 and older and is the number of voting members shown in the annual report.

At the end of fiscal year 2014 (6/30/14), voting membership was 501. Due to refinements and updates in the membership database, the number of total voting members as of 9/30/14 is 490.

The numbers of "Children & Youth Enrollment" for 2014(119) and 2015 (122) reflect those who are officially registered in the RE program. More than 200 children and youth actually attend.

Pledge units at the end of fiscal year 2014 (6/30/14) were 453. Again, due to refinements and updates in the membership database, pledge units for the current fiscal year (7/1/14 - 6/30/15) are 318.

"Total Operating Pledges" (as is also shown on table II) is defined as pledges collected in year.

The "2015 Total Operating Pledges" is a forecast. It also includes an approximately \$25,000 collection of pledges from the prior year.

The difference in "Average Adult Sunday Attendance" between 2014 and 2015 reflects typically lower attendance during summer months. The number listed (162) is the average for July - October, 2014.

"Other Contributions" includes bequests. In 2014 the bequest income was \$79,000.

"Total Endowment" is as of March 31st for the years 2011-2014.

"Total Endowment" for 2014 reflects the Sheila Lane loan repayment.

2005 "Building Rentals" includes all facility rentals including parking lot rentals.

"Buildings and Grounds" from 2005 on includes office equipment leases.

"Debt Service" comprises interest for Sheila Lane loan through 2012; for 2013 & 2014 it includes property tax etc. in addition.

"Other Staff compensation" from 2005 on includes employee taxes for all staff and the salary and benefits for non-ministerial staff excluding RE and Social Justice-related compensation.

"Total Debt" does not include current liabilities for the years 2005 on and is at June 30th of the year.

"Covered by Health Plan..Retire Plan" are interpreted as eligible for coverage and not whether individual took coverage.

"Annualized Compensation (S&H)" does not include any benefits or employment taxes.

Data from 1975 to 2000 are from the previously filed Congregational Record.

In Current Staff table the interim Senior Minister is working 11 months this fiscal year; additional contracted help is used on Sundays.

Current congregational life

Does the congregation have a mission -- not a mission statement, but a glowing coal at its center -- and if so, what is it?

If there is one word that drives the passions of our congregation, it would be Connection. This 'glowing coal' was identified several years ago during our Vision 2028 long range planning process; the statement "Within, among, and beyond" emerged and captured our shared sense of purpose and vision.

Within--We connect with our own spiritual sides and get in touch with deeper, more authentic understandings of ourselves.

Among— We connect with others and strengthen the bonds of our community through programs such as our Small Group Ministry, Neighborhood Circles, and Shawl Ministry. The love of music and joy of singing foster rich connections among the approximately 140 members who participate in one or more choirs. The sharing of joys and concerns is a ritual of each worship service, and informal gatherings of UGNOs, book clubs, movie discussions, and senior get-togethers extend opportunities for interconnections and treasured relationships.

Beyond— We connect with the wider world. Through our multifaceted Social Justice program we address such issues as racial justice, LGBTQ concerns, prisoner re-entry, micro-finance, gun violence, and recently, climate change. This dedication begins early in RE, e.g. collecting food for Mercy Learning Center, making mittens for Beardsley students, and Youth Group service trips to New York. Recently 60 members of our congregation participated in the march on Climate Change in NYC. Connections to families in our Partner Church in Alsoboldogfalva, Romania, begun in

2003, remain strong among a few members.

Congregational strengths:

Outstanding music program

Vigorous RE program

Long term commitment to social justice

Small Group Ministries are a way to connect for many

Pastoral Care and Worship Associates (shared ministry programs)

Dedicated and committed lay leaders

Energetic, enthusiastic, well-educated, and talented congregation

Enjoyment of celebrations and making connections

Tremendous potential

Congregational challenges:

Mending trust issues among members and Board

Stewardship challenges and underfunded budgets

Growing the membership in both numbers and diversity

Physical space restricts opportunities and needs expansion

Accessibility needs

Strengthening office systems

Strengthening governance structure and institutional support structure

What congregational issues are likely to be most pressing within the next couple years:

Trust issues with the board—Our transition team facilitated valuable ‘healing’ workshops during our first year of transition as many members still harbored bad feelings related to Frank’s retirement and lingering divisions over Margie’s resignation. Increased efforts to provide transparency in Board activities and decisions have helped change perceptions, yet this area will demand the particular attentiveness of a new minister.

Funding—Financial support from our congregation remains a challenge. Generous giving exists among relatively few, and it is not a widespread part of the culture. For some years now we have not been optimally funded for a church of our size and complexity. A quarter of the congregation contributes two-thirds of the pledge total. The three-quarters of the members who contribute the remaining third of the pledge total give, on average, less than \$700 per year. While we recently established a year-round stewardship committee, we continue to struggle with low pledges, no pledges, or members unable to fulfill their pledges. In addition, during the past interim year the number of pledging households dropped as some members withdrew, either because they were disaffected or because they adopted a “wait and see” attitude. As a result, staffing is not at optimal levels. We lost a Youth Outreach Coordinator, and our Administrative Associate is now part time. With more funds we could add a data entry assistant and an accompanist for our seven choirs. While the expansion of our physical space would be funded by a capital campaign, launching such a campaign seems challenging at the moment based on current giving patterns.

Growth—Those who participated in our Focus Groups and survey expressed a strong desire for growth in membership in the near future.

Accessibility—The board discussed, examined, and approved funding for a lift to operate between

the lower level of the church and the main floor. Due to unexpected town planning issues this project has been temporarily put on hold, although the congregation approved this expenditure at the annual meeting in June, 2014.

Office Systems— We often say we are “a large church with a small church infrastructure.” Our office systems need upgrading. Our database is slowly being re-evaluated, re-organized, and accommodated to serve our needs, but this is an ongoing process.

What congregational issues are likely to be most pressing over the next ten years:

Funding— Adequate funding has been an issue for the past several years and may continue to absorb our efforts for some years to come. More funds would enable us to increase staff support, upgrade office systems, and expand programs. For 10 years (1996 – 2006) we had an associate minister, and we would like to bring funding to a level that would allow this once again.

Space Needs— We are outgrowing our 50-year-old building. While beautiful and inspiring, it is not optimal for present office space and storage needs, nor for areas for social interaction. Office spaces are cramped, and meeting spaces are limited. We have no social hall (the sanctuary has to double as our social hall), and storage for such items as choir music and instruments is constricted.

The unique design of our beautiful building limits enlargement. In April, 2011, a group calling themselves “the space cadets” met with the original architect who suggested plans for adding wings to our building while maintaining its architectural integrity. A capital campaign, perhaps several years in the future, will be needed to realize this dream.

In 2007-2008 as part of a bold vision to solve our space needs far into the future by expanding our campus, we purchased adjacent property on a road called Sheila Lane. Unfortunately we were unable to fund the purchase and were obliged to sell it in 2012 at a considerable loss.

Diversity— As indicated in the survey, our congregation has a high proportion of older members, i.e. approximately 75% are 50 or older. One of the main wishes revealed in the focus group data is the desire for a greater number of younger families. Racially we are an extremely homogenous group--94% of us are white. We would like greater diversity in both areas, but this is a challenge.

Another long term thought is establishing satellite campuses should we grow sufficiently.

Name Change— Our congregation is comprised of people from many religious backgrounds. The word ‘church’ in our name is felt, by some, to be a barrier. There have been ongoing conversations for many years about a name change, and we hope to formally address this in the future.

What congregational issues may never be resolved?

Location— We are located in an area not served by public transportation. In order to get to our church, one has to own a vehicle, hitch a ride with a friend, hire a taxi, or ride a bike. We are not likely to attract urban dwellers who do not own cars from the nearby cities of Bridgeport and/or Norwalk, which limits our ability to become ethnically diverse.

To what degree does the congregation possess a dominant theology?

Our congregation has great respect for the individual’s freedom to develop a personal theology. Once or twice each year during Frank’s tenure he taught a very popular Building Your Own

Theology class in which participants, particularly new members, explored their personal inspirations and reflections as the sources of their own theologies.

When survey respondents were asked to pick up to three belief systems that most closely aligned with what they believed, the five most most popular answers were earth-centered religion (32%), religious humanism (31%), pantheism (30%), agnosticism (29%), and secular humanism (26%). Other responses included theism (17%), atheism (11%), deism (10%), and other (9%).

When asked to check any or all religions that they found particularly inspirational, by far the largest number of survey respondents picked Buddhism (68%). Other responses in order of popularity were Christianity (36%), Judaism (32%), the traditions and teachings of indigenous peoples (24%), all the religions listed (23%), Hinduism (22%), Taoism (17%), other (10%), Mysticism (8.5%), Confucianism (7%), Neo-paganism (5.5%), and Islam (5%).

Describe the role of music and the arts in the life of the congregation:

Music and the arts are an important and integral part of our community experience. Our rich and diverse music program, which includes no fewer than eight choirs, involving approximately 140 people, is one of the crown jewels of the Unitarian Church in Westport. Music is interwoven with the theme of each Sunday service for a rich and moving experience that deepens one's spirituality.

Our church offers many avenues for participation and engagement through music. Adult choirs open to anyone include Men's Choir, Women's Choir, Once & Again Folksingers, Special Projects Choir (for larger choral works, sometimes with professional instrumentalists and soloists), and Bell Choir. The Chamber Choir, consisting of 16 hand-picked singers, achieves the highest choral standard. There are two choirs for younger folks, the Youth Choir (ages 8-12) and the Teen Choir (ages 13-up).

All of this is directed by our talented, Juilliard-educated Minister of Music, Rev. Dr. Ed Thompson. Ed is a past Dean of the Fairfield West Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and has concertized throughout the United States and Europe, and is a well known composer. Ed says, "It is only through engagement in a medium that goes beyond the intellect that one gains an experience of something greater than one's own ego. In other words, music and the arts engage the whole person. It is something that the great theologians, philosophers and artists speak of, but can only be 'understood' experientially."

Ed works closely with the Senior Minister to plan how music can enhance each service. He composes many of our musical offerings himself and also encourages members to do so. His participation in the UU Musician's Network brings new musical experiences to the congregation each year. He sometimes invites guest professional musicians and vocal soloists to perform in our church. Besides classical repertoire, we also see and hear folk music, jazz combos, African rhythms, Brazilian rhythms, and the list goes on. The program also fosters the musical growth of individuals through sight-reading classes and voice workshops offered by a professional singer.

The music program also extends to more lighthearted, comedic events that capture our members' many acting and performing talents, such as Cabaret nights twice a year, an occasional Spring Fling, and other humorous skits and musical numbers.

In the past few years, a group of enthusiastic members started Voices Café, which showcases

professional folk and jazz groups approximately monthly in our church. This program, now well known throughout the area, has become part of the circuit for touring musicians and has put our church on the map for music-lovers, attracting many visitors.

There is much theatrical talent among our membership. A professional director mounts a major production each year in which congregants have a chance to show off their considerable acting skills.

Describe the religious education programs for children, youth and adults:

Our children are our future! From the very beginning, we welcome new babies into our community through our child dedication ceremony. As our children grow, our extensive religious education program provides a strong spiritual community. It encourages an open search for meaning with emphasis on respect for diversity of ideas, development of a personal theology, wonder and awe for the sacredness and interconnectedness of all life, and a passion for putting one's beliefs and principles into practice.

The program currently includes 208 students attending regularly (not all registered) and 74 adult volunteers who serve in teaching teams. Classes are offered for PreK-3rd grade during the 9 am service and PreK through 12th Grade at the 11 am service. There is paid childcare for Nursery and Pre-School children.

Every Sunday, the K-5th graders join the beginning of worship services with the entire congregation (this is a relatively new initiative). They participate as chalice lighters and readers, and interact with multicultural stories, before proceeding to their RE classes. The entire congregation is together for multi-generational worship for Homecoming, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Pageant, Coming of Age & Youth Services, Religious Education Sunday (including Bridging for graduating Senior High Youth), and Flower Communion Service. At certain other services, such as Seventh Principle/Earth Day Service, and Easter/Passover/Spring, the children may participate for half an hour and then move to other activities outside.

Starting in Preschool, children begin with a rotation of UUA Pre-School Curriculum (Chalice Children, We Are Many, We Are One) and engage in supervised play and experiential learning.

In K-1 and 2-3rd Grade faith formation continues with learning values, and spiritual practices, symbols and stories as "UU Explorers." During the year the program offers eight sessions about Unitarian Universalism, four sessions each from Jewish and Christian traditions, and in alternating years four sessions each on Buddhism and Islam, and Hindu and Earth-Based religions. Social actions are woven into the year.

In 4th and 5th Grade we utilize UUA's Tapestry of Faith curriculum – currently the "Toolbox of Faith" – and are inspired by its Faith in Action ideas to find local stewardship and service opportunities such as making stepping stones for the auction, and Caring Congregation gifts and visits to homebound members.

In 6th and 7th Grade the RE Council has chosen to alternate years with "Neighboring Faiths" and "Heeding the Call," another Tapestry program. It also encourages attendance of Junior and Senior Youth in district events.

In 8th Grade students progress to “Our Whole Lives” (OWL), and then in April of 8th Grade they begin “Coming of Age” (COA). For the last 35 years there has traditionally been a Boston Heritage Trip in the Spring. “Coming of Age” culminates in a special worship ceremony that the group creates where they present their personal credo statements to the congregation.

After “Coming of Age,” students join Youth Group (9th-12th Grade), where they explore and share their questions about life, relationships, spirituality, and social justice. The teens plan and carry out social justice projects and activities throughout the year with the support of adult advisors. We are currently focusing on local connections, and inviting youth to share what they think is important to participate in. We are also encouraging multi-age involvement in our Social Justice outreach such as Connecticut Food Bank, Beardsley School, and the Climate March in New York City on Sept 21, 2014.

Some of our youth were involved in two trips to New Orleans that were organized after Hurricane Katrina. Youth also took part in two inter-generational trips with United with Kenya, a non-profit organization founded by a young couple in our congregation that works within our social justice umbrella. The participants helped build clean water systems and assisted in the building and stocking of a community library. The next trip is planned for 2016.

Youth are encouraged to develop leadership skills, and have several opportunities throughout the year to create and lead worship services for the larger congregation.

Adult Education Programming is in the process of moving to the Religious Education Council in hopes of creating a program towards Lifespan Faith Development and to explore opportunities for multi-age learning.

In Fall 2014, parents requested an online webinar type program, and we are exploring how to do that. The goal is to work toward offering Social Justice, Spiritual Practice, as well as The Parent’s Trilogy for parents and other adults who have children ask them theological questions. (Parents as Resident Theologians in 2014-2015)

Mary Collins, our Director of Religious Education, joined us two years ago after serving as DRE for 11 years at another nearby UU congregation. She uses her skills in storytelling and puppetry to enthusiastically connect with young audiences. Our other RE staff consists of Cal Wacker (Youth Program Director, currently a student at Meadville Lombard Theological College), Hayden Parker (RE Assistant), and Sarah Andrew (Nursery-PreK Teacher).

Lay leadership

In practice, are responsibilities for governance widely shared or confined among relatively few members? Give some examples:

From a historical perspective, the governance of the Unitarian Church in Westport has been the responsibility of a Board of Trustees made up of eleven lay leaders. As we move towards a mature Policy Governance system, the depth of our formal leadership team is becoming broader as we gain governance and policy committees. One example of this widening responsibility is the recent creation of the Size Clarity Task Force which is made up of Board and non-board members working together to clarify not only our definition of membership, but the process of maintaining clean membership data . The Task Force will also be discussing and possibly suggesting revisions to

the Constitutional language concerning membership.

Because of the size of our congregation, we've found it challenging to discover members' strengths and interests and to communicate leadership opportunities to those who would be willing and able to serve. Over the past few years we've been working towards building a more organized leadership development process, as evidenced by changing the Nominating Committee to the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee. We have involved an ever widening group of volunteers that have brought an increase of energy and a wealth of new ideas to the Church through the Membership committee, RE, social justice, pastoral care and worship associates.

Describe the process you used to complete this form:

At our retreat in July, the MSC considered the best ways to learn from the congregation their wishes and desires for a new minister. The MSC began by holding 16 Focus Groups that ran from Aug. 17 – Sept. 21 and were attended by more than 150 congregants. An additional Focus Group was held for the Youth Group on Oct. 12. Each Focus Group was asked two basic questions:

- 1. Looking back, after our new minister has been here for two years, what will be the measures of success? What achievements will make you say you're glad this minister is among us?**
- 2. If you were on the Search Committee, what are the most important attributes you would look for? What attributes don't you want?**

During the sessions responses were listed on a flip chart. At the end of each session, participants were asked to check off on the flip chart their top three responses to each question. All the data was subsequently analyzed and ranked by a member of the MSC.

Meanwhile, a sub-committee of the MSC was examining the sample survey in the Settlement Handbook and comparing it to the information required for the CR. The survey committee chose questions carefully, taking into account preliminary data from the Focus Groups, to create an online survey using Survey Monkey. The survey was open to all members and friends from Sept. 23 to Oct. 6. Again, raw data from the more than 300 responses was summarized and analyzed in order to accurately answer the CR questions.

During this time MSC members interviewed our Minister of Music, Endorsed Community Minister, Director of Religious Education, social Justice/Membership Director, Director of Operations, Youth Program Director, and Administrative Associate concerning their thoughts about working with a new minister. Insights from these conversations were incorporated where appropriate into the CR.

Specific information was sought and obtained from a variety of other sources:

- o Archival information from church administrator, annual reports, Board minutes, and the last CR completed in 2005 when we were searching for an Associate Minister**
- o Discovery Survey Results from Our Future Story, a 3-year visioning/long range planning process completed in March, 2012**
- o Interviews with the interim minister and staff**
- o The Board treasurer met with our new Director of Operations to gather and verify the requested financial and statistical data.**

While only three MSC members were in charge of writing the CR, the evolving document was shared with the rest of the committee for thoroughness, accuracy, and discussions as needed. It was then carefully vetted by our Interim Minister. Its final iteration was submitted to our Ministerial Transitions Representative, Rev. Craig Hirshberg, on Nov. 15, 2014.

Committees

Name the committees that have recently had the greatest success:

Committees with recent success would be the Pastoral Care Associates and Worship Associates, both of which are fairly new.

The Pastoral Care Associates was formed during the latter period of Frank Hall's ministry, when we realized that without an Associate Minister, our pastoral care needs were too large for one person to handle. They undertook extensive training and were recognized in a special ceremony during worship. A Pastoral Care Associate is present and visible during each Sunday service.

Interim minister Roberta Finkelstein has instituted a Worship Associates program, drawing lay leaders into worship, with participants at every service. The Associates also have responsibility for creating worship throughout the year and supporting guest ministers. While worship associates are common in most congregations, they are a refreshing innovation in ours.

While not a committee, the formation this past spring of a Young Adult group has been a rousing success. Members regularly get together and have sponsored a church-wide beach event. There is also a Young Adult Small Group Ministry. Newcomers are readily drawn into this dynamic and committed group. There are currently 20+ members of this group.

Name the committees that have recently had the least success:

Struggling areas are the Neighborhood Circles, Adult Education, Stewardship, and possibly Small Group Ministry.

The Neighborhood Circles were organized a few years ago to provide networks where members could connect in their local geographic neighborhoods. The concept of building community through small groups of neighbors was strong, but the program has met with uneven participation. Some groups gather regularly and stay in touch, while others have rarely or never met. Newcomers, once placed in a group, are sometimes never contacted. Volunteer circle coordinators can eventually get burned out, and finding others to step forward to replace them can be a challenge.

Our adult education program, called Odyssey for many years, is currently in hiatus during this interim period. It used to comprise a mix of minister-led spiritual enrichment classes, as well as offerings from the laity. Classes from our members could range from organic gardening to tai chi to mask-making or any other skill or passion they wished to share. The program was traditionally supported by the Associate Minister, but we have not had an Associate Minister since 2009. There is great potential to revive a robust adult education program in the future.

After talking for some years about getting beyond the annual budget drive to a model of year-round stewardship, our Year-Round Stewardship Committee was founded and began regular meetings in 2011. It is a dedicated team of thoughtful individuals who attend workshops, participate in the UUA's "FORTH" program, and discuss ways to educate and engage the congregation about growing their generosity. Just the fact that we now talk about stewardship on an ongoing basis

throughout the year, as opposed to only during budget drive, is a huge advance for us. At the moment, unfortunately, stewardship is suffering the effects of the loss of a long-time beloved minister and uncertainty during the interim. Some members have temporarily withdrawn their support; some have reduced their pledges. In addition, the long-term culture at TUCW has been that the minister does not talk about money, nor take a lead role in supporting the budget drive or in offering congregants a spiritual vision that will inspire generosity. We are hoping our new minister will change that, and if so, know that there's a dynamic Year-Round Stewardship Committee already in place that would be eager to work with you.

Small Group Ministry has been strong for over a decade, with 13-15 active groups, but currently seems to be somewhat stagnating, possibly due to lack of turnover in leadership, lack of ministerial guidance, and a drop-off in church attendance resulting in fewer new people joining groups. A recent workshop with Rev. M'ellen Kennedy has infused new energy into the facilitators, but some feel the program could be even stronger, with even broader participation.

Major financial support

List the dollar amounts of the ten largest operating pledges received in the most recently completed fiscal year:

\$30,000.00

\$20,000.00

\$15,000.00

\$13,500.00

\$13,500.00

\$12,500.00

\$12,000.00

\$12,000.00

\$12,000.00

\$11,000.00

Give the dates of the last two capital fund drives, and the funds raised (a) by contribution and (b) by debt: **The last capital fund drive that was undertaken by the congregation occurred in 1999, and it raised \$1.4 million without taking on any debt. It was called Campaign 50 because it was planned for the 50th anniversary of the church. Spending during the first year of construction brought the former parsonage up to code so that it could be used as a meeting space and for RE classes. The second year of spending allowed us to update the foyer, kitchen, bathrooms and offices on the main floor of the main building as well as improve the children's chapel on the lower level.**

Prior to Campaign 50, there was a capital campaign in 1985 that raised \$475,000. Replacement of the temporary roof was slated to use \$150,000 of these funds, but the costs exceeded this amount. The remaining money was spent on various repairs and upgrades as well as landscaping.

What is the condition of the church buildings, and what funds may need to be raised in the future? **We are very proud of the building that we call our church home which received a Progressive Architecture Award in 1960. However, beauty doesn't always indicate function, and we are always looking for creative ways to solve our need for storage as well as provide our staff with adequate space for their work. In April, 2011, a group calling themselves "the space cadets" met with the original architect who suggested plans for adding wings to our building while maintaining its architectural integrity. A capital campaign in the amount of \$1.3 million will be needed to realize**

this dream.

In terms of building maintenance, there are several looming projects that would require a capital campaign due to the fact that their total cost exceeds \$300,000. These include replacing the roof sometime in the next five years, repair of the skylight, tightening structural cables, replacing the sliding glass doors that line the Sanctuary, and providing new heating for the Sanctuary. These are just the projects that we have gotten estimates for in the last several years, given the fact that the building is almost 50 years old there are always regular maintenance issues to consider.

We are currently in the process of improving accessibility through the installation of a lift. This project has been funded by private donations but has not been completed due to unexpected requirements from the Town of Westport. We need to raise additional funds to make this project a reality, and we plan to do so in the near future.

Ministry

Describe the process by which the minister will be called:

The 2014 Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) is adhering to the guidelines for calling a new senior minister as outlined in the Settlement Handbook provided by the UUA.

We began our work in mid- July with the team-building retreat. Subsequently more than 150 congregants participated in Focus Groups, and 305 completed the Congregational Survey. The Beyond Categorical Thinking program was offered by Rev. Keith Kron from the Transitions Office.

Our MSC is intent on keeping the congregation regularly informed of how the search is proceeding. A chart showing step-by step progress, a calendar, and other pertinent information is posted on a dedicated MSC kiosk in the Meeting Room/Foyer. An MSC e-mail account is available for congregants to ask questions or make comments. We communicate regularly with the congregation via E-blasts, articles in Soundings (our newsletter), and a dedicated web page. One MSC member provides a brief update of the search process at each worship service.

We will begin our initial review of potential candidates on Jan. 2, 2015, and follow the established procedures for choosing a candidate by April 2, 2015. We've tentatively set aside April 25 – May 3, 2015, as Candidating Week for our candidate. According to our constitution, which was revised June 19, 2011, a Called Minister must be chosen by a vote of at least 80% of those members present. The quorum for this special meeting to call a Minister is 40% of the voting members (as opposed to 15% for other congregational meetings.)

Describe the process by which the Ministerial Search Committee (or its equivalent) was chosen:

As required by our constitution, the MSC is composed of nine members nominated by the Board of Trustees and elected by a majority of the members voting at an annual meeting. The process used this year was designed by Rev. David Keys, the dean of the Interim Ministers.

In March, 2014, a letter from the Board Chair and the Transition Team Chair was sent to all TUCW members explaining the Keys process and listing the standards (as noted in the Settlement Handbook) by which congregants should consider prospective individuals.

Members of the Board and the Transition Team contacted by phone approximately 100 random members for the names of three people whom they most trusted to be part of the search committee. The rest of the congregation was urged to submit the same information through Survey Monkey.

The resulting list was ranked according to numbers of recommendations. The Chair of the Board and the Head of the Transition Team contacted those listed to ask if they would accept a nomination to be on the MSC. Some members whose names were suggested by the congregation were unable or unwilling to be considered. Through much discussion the top 9 candidates were identified, and the Board voted on the list. MSC nominees prepared brief biographical descriptions which were submitted to the congregation in May. The vote to accept the MSC committee occurred at the annual meeting on June 8, 2014.

Ministerial skills and enthusiasms most needed by the congregation:

4 -Crucial 3 -Significant 2 -Modest 1 -Of less consequence

3 Administration

1 Adult religious education

1 Children's religious education

1 Committee work

4 Community building

2 Denominational activities

1 Facilitation

3 Stewardship

2 Home visitation

2 Hospital calling

2 Leadership Development

4 Membership growth

1 Music & liturgical arts

3 Personal counseling

4 Preaching

4 Scholarship

2 Social action

4 Spiritual guidance

3 Staff relations

3 Worship

1 Youth work

Assess the capacity of the congregation to exercise forbearance and nurture in assisting a minister's development:

During the past 20 years our congregation has fostered the development and resulting ordinations of 15 new ministers, six of whom are currently serving other congregations. We nurtured and supported each of them as they grew in their senses of themselves as ministers, evolving in style and substance in worship and each growing in their individual specialty skills. Our Youth Program Director, Cal Wacker, is currently a student at Meadville Lombard, and we are proud to support him in his growth and development.

In 2003 long-term member Debra Haffner was ordained and endorsed by this congregation as our community minister. Debra, currently the Director of the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing, offers several sermons throughout the year, participates in special holiday

services, and serves as a resource in areas of sexuality and pastoral care. Her history with and knowledge of the congregation will provide an excellent source of nurturance and support to the new senior minister.

We realize that a new minister's innovative ideas and methods can cause clashes among members used to tradition. Yet we have learned through the interim process that changes in worship, procedures, and programs, while new and different, are not only possible, but also energizing. We believe that there is a requirement of patience on the part of the congregation as well as the minister, so our expectation is that both will 'bring their best' and assure that communication--and therefore understanding—are achieved. One way this will happen is through our new Committee on Ministries, which is ready to start its work as soon as the Search is completed. This committee will provide consultation, education, conflict management, and assessment to the leaders and members of the congregation.

What expectations, however silent, may there be about the minister's family and personal life? We have no standard expectations in this area. Up until now Ministers' and/or Associate Ministers' spouses or partners have not been involved in the congregation to any great extent, although we surely would welcome them in the future if they so desired. We would expect that the minister and spouse or partner have a shared understanding of the types of demands on time and energy that come with the calling of ministry, and we would hope the minister's family expectations are compatible with those demands.

Describe the worst mistake your new minister could make:

We received 210 responses to this question in our survey. Many of them seemed to reinforce the concept that the “burning coal” at the center of our congregation is “connection.” Failure to connect in various ways was an underlying concern behind much of the feedback.

The most prominent theme among worst mistakes was a minister who is divisive or who alienates people, who plays politics and takes sides, or who may try to impose their own agenda without respecting the history and traditions of the congregation. Examples included a minister who comes with preconceived ideas, who makes too many changes too quickly without first taking the time to get to know us, who assumes they understand how the congregation functions, who thinks they are a great “turnaround artist,” who tries to make the congregation “theirs,” and who may try to take the church in a direction it doesn't want to go.

Another prominent theme was personality issues such as not connecting one-on-one, being cold, aloof and arrogant, lacking humility, and lacking empathy. Examples included a minister who is “all business and no heart,” who doesn't get to know us, who doesn't show a genuine interest in each person, who isn't down to earth, is not approachable, has no sense of humor, doesn't listen, doesn't shake hands, doesn't hug us, doesn't love us.

In a similar vein, some said the worst mistake would be not to be authentic, to try to be someone you're not. Some examples were to be “preachy,” to talk down to us from the pulpit, to be self-absorbed, phony, holier than thou, think you know all the answers, not be honest about your own mistakes, think you have “arrived,” and be trying to prove yourself.

These issues were often mentioned in the context of sermons that would turn people off. For many, the worst mistake would be to be uninspiring, to preach boring, dogmatic sermons that “try to teach” and do not “connect religion to our personal lives” and do not “minister to the soul.”

While it's important to connect with us before attempting to make major changes, on the other hand there were those who said the minister's worst mistake would be to be too afraid to try new things, to be a "follower," a "pushover" or too easily intimidated, to be weak or indecisive, to try to please everyone, and to not have a clear sense of direction. One person said the worst mistake would be to "try to be exactly like Frank or exactly not like Frank." And another said the worst mistake would be to "fail to unite us in the post-Frank-Hall era, allowing old differences to continue to divide us – we need a strong unifying leader who can bring us all back together."

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