

## **DUCC SEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Congregational Meeting March 17, 2024**

### **The Search Committee**

The Search Committee, originally consisting of 7 members—now 6, was chosen by the church council and represents a cross section of the congregation. The committee members are Bill Briggs, Ginny Makita, Phill Raywood, and Kirsten Stannis with Greg Sherman, and Jeff Spangler acting as co-chairs.

The purpose of the Search Committee is to find the next pastor using the *Search and Call* process as established by the United Church of Christ. The committee works independently, under the guidance of our UCC conference minister Lawrence Richardson. The deliberations of the committee and the identities of the candidates are confidential.

### **The Church Profile**

The first part of the committee's work is to write a church profile which is a document that is posted on the United Church of Christ website *UCC.org* for ministers that are seeking a church. The church profile informs the candidate who we are and what we are looking for in a pastor. Any ordained minister may submit a profile through the UCC conference.

### **The Listening Sessions**

The Search Committee held a series of three listening sessions in January. This gave us valuable information to add to the profile and to use as a guide when evaluating candidates to determine if they are a good fit for our congregation. In typical DUCC fashion, we had a total of 98 participants!

The church profile and the listening session comments are posted in the *E-Pistle* and on our church website. Please take the time to read these. You will find a lot of great information that you might not have known about our church!

### **A Different Process**

It was recommended—but not required—that we interview UCC candidates first and if that pool of candidates was exhausted, non-CC candidates should be considered. At our first meeting we decided that we would consider UCC and non-UCC on an equal basis and if chosen, they must agree to become ordained in the UCC. The reason being is that our beloved pastor Sal Sapienza came to us as an interfaith minister and quickly fulfilled the UCC ordination requirement. And we all know how that turned out!

## What's happening Now?

Soon after the profile was posted, we received nine ministerial profiles from pastors that expressed interest in our church. The search committee got to work evaluating the profiles to determine which ones we would like to interview. First, would be a *Zoom* interview or interviews, and then a personal interview if we decide we want to hear more from them. We are now in the interviewing stage for the first group of candidates. This week we received an additional five. Search Committees may choose to move forward with a profile, keep it in reserve, or end consideration of a profile.

If we decide to advance a candidate further, we have the option of having a *neutral pulpit* which is where a candidate gives a sermon/homily at a Sunday service at a nearby third-party church that the committee members attend. Another option is a *private pulpit* held at our church but only for the Search Committee.

## The Final Steps

If the search committee selects a final candidate, the church will host a *Candidating Weekend*. This is an opportunity for various groups in the church to meet the final candidate and for the whole congregation to experience a Sunday service with the candidate leading and giving a homily. Throughout the weekend, the Search Committee takes the lead in presenting the candidate as a match to the vision expressed in the Local Church Profile. The final event of the *Candidating Weekend* is a congregational vote on the candidate by members in attendance after the Sunday Service, conducted by the Church Council in accordance with church bylaws. If the congregational vote is affirmative, the candidate will accept the call and become our pastor.

## The Big Question

The big question is: When will we have a new pastor? The answer is: we don't know yet. We could choose someone out of the first group of candidates which would make it a very short process, or we might decide that none of these candidates are a good fit for us and then wait for more to come in.

We know there is a new pastor for us. With the help of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the support of this wonderful congregation, we will get there! Our interim minister will help us. Please keep the search committee in your prayers. Your attendance on Sunday, continued involvement in our many programs, and your viewership online helps us so much in this time of transition.

*Remember: These things and greater you can do!*

