

Ministerial Search Committee Updates – September & October, 2015

By the end of August, members of the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) had been meeting weekly, updating each other on cottage meetings, and working, very intentionally, on items for the congregational record. We have continued meeting weekly through September and October, with a couple of extra meetings to meet with Digital Communications and a Saturday meeting to do packet work.



The cottage meetings, which ran through September, were well-attended. More than 120 people, including our youth, participated in these meetings, which also turned out to be a great way to do community-building.

From these meetings, we learned a great deal about Westside. We are open, welcoming, family oriented, and diverse in sexuality and theology. We also learned we are inclusive and want to play a bigger part in our wider community. And we learned that a successful ministry will be represented by growth in our membership, shared goals and inclusiveness, engaging reflections and more involvement in social action.

On August 26, the online survey was sent to congregants. The survey was open through September 26 and drew 129 respondents, about 57 percent of our membership and Friends. The committee had hoped for greater participation, but we also were aware that the church had conducted a long-range planning survey in early 2014.

Working collectively and individually, the MSC compiled the results of the cottage meetings and survey. Following are some of the questions asked in the survey and the most common responses:

Which of the following qualities do you think are the most important consideration for a minister?

Empathy 52%; Professional Competence 50%; Sense of Humor 36%; Character (strong moral consistency, stability, reliable) 33%.

Select all the responses that are the most important reason you attend church.

Community 86%; Intellectual stimulation 81%; Fellowship 79%; UU Beliefs 55%.

Which of the following Westside activities have you participated in during the last year?

Congregational Meeting 62%; Committee or Task Force 56%; Social Activity 59%; Sunday Service as a participant 46%.

How strongly do you believe Westside should be involved in social justice/action activities in our community?

Almost 80% said a strong commitment should be given to these endeavors.



Responses from the cottage survey and online survey were used to complete the congregational record and for information being prepared for the ministerial candidates. We have also received feedback from various Westside leaders and staff, and from some of our UUA staff. The MSC is preparing content for a website packet that will be shared with ministerial candidates and with the congregation.

We also have confirmed the dates for candidate visitation week. **Please mark your calendars for both April 24 and May 1:** Both of these Sunday services will be presented by the candidate put forth by this committee. May 1 will be the day the congregation votes on whether to call this candidate as our new settled minister.

The MSC could not do this work alone, and we have several people we wish to thank. **Caroline Nixon** was instrumental in various aspects of our retreat and helped record cottage meeting responses, and **Dianne Nixon** has contributed to our budget. **Lela Woods** has provided valuable history information, and **Linda Ice** took care of some technical issues and sent examples of our Order of Service. Most of our chairpersons and other leaders, plus staff, have also provided information. **Cathy Spitzenberger** will be editing and proofing some packet work, and **Bill Russell** has calculated youth attendance figures. **Bill Terry** and **Mary Alice Cretsinger** helped pull financial information together. Pictures have been received from **Gary Randall**, **Stan Yoder**, and from anyone who has posted them on our Facebook page. Finally, the Digital Communications Committee will be creating the website packet for prospective ministers and the congregation. We thank you all!

