

News from the Ministerial Search Team

Marg Walker, on behalf of the Ministerial Search Team: Avi Viswanathan, Betsy Hearn, Mary Baremore, Pauline Eichten, Morgan France-Ramirez, Dan Huelster, Lia Rivamonte, and Jake Rueter

With the turning of the calendar toward the new church year in September, the MST is preparing for active congregational engagement in the search for our settled minister. A priority this fall is the creation of a congregational profile that describes who we are in clear-eyed, comprehensive, and – we hope – intriguing terms. To do this well and with integrity, we need to hear from you.

We'll begin by conducting a survey of congregants to learn more about ourselves and what we are looking for in our next settled minister. This survey will replace the board's annual survey, so you will only be asked to complete one. Keep an eye out for more information on the survey's launch later this month. Your input is vital to our work, and to potential candidates' understanding of Unity Church.

Then, in mid-September we'll begin a series of gatherings, both in person and virtual, where you'll have the chance to engage in conversation with one another. This will continue and deepen our understanding of where we are as a congregation, and what kind of ministry we need for the future we imagine. More information on these sessions will be available in the weeks ahead.

Finally, know that our work is undertaken in covenant with each other on the team, with you as a congregation, and with the UUA, its ministerial transitions staff, and searching ministers. The MST created the following covenant to express our commitment to all involved. By now you know you are at the heart of that promise.

Covenant:

1. We welcome each other with all our differences and needs, acknowledging that we all have good intentions, and always seeking to deepen our bonds.
2. We will speak openly and take initiative, yet practice humility and grace.
3. We will acknowledge the past, present, and future within, among, and beyond us.
4. We will center Unity's mission, values, and ends in this process.
5. We will honor and abide by the wisdom of the UUA Settlement Handbook.
6. We will safeguard the sacred trust of our congregation by informing as transparently as possible, listening with an open heart, and engaging broadly.
7. We commit to seeking equity, justice, and inclusion throughout the search process, mindful of our own personal, cultural, and social biases and assumptions so that, to the best of our ability, they are not a barrier to a fair and fruitful outcome.

If you would like to reach us, you can now email the team at mst@unityunitarian.org. And as always, you can follow our work by visiting www.unityunitarian.org/ministerial-transition.html.

Our Return to In-Person Services and Gatherings

Executive Team and members of the Staff Reopening Team

As we remember the joy of being together in community, we have already begun to gradually return to in-person opportunities. As we monitor state and local health guidelines, the Executive Team's decisions about how we open the church building remains grounded in values of equity, inclusion, consent, and the well-being of an interdependent community. Knowing that we will never be able to eliminate all the risk from Covid-19, we will make decisions in the best interest of all and with care and attention to those most impacted by the disease.

On June 1, we began moving forward with in-person gatherings at the church. Small groups are now able to meet in the church building. Those who are not vaccinated will be asked to wear a mask.

Our plan is to return to in-person worship on September 12, 2021, for the Merging of Waters services at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. We will make reasonable accommodations for those unable to participate in person and continue to offer Sunday services online. For families, we know that when we reopen for in-person classes, our youngest children will not yet be vaccinated and no setting will be entirely risk-free. Yet with more and more of us now fully vaccinated, and following recommendations from state and local authorities, the overall weight of available evidence informs our plans for in-person Religious Education. We expect our guidelines for in-person gatherings to evolve as we respond to the changing reality. Please watch for ongoing updates.

Heads up! Let us know your thoughts!

Watch your inbox for a survey coming your way later this month — your first chance to tell us what you are looking for in our next settled minister.