

## Circle Conversation Themes

Rev. KP Hong provided a summary of comments/themes reiterated throughout Circle Conversations, including:

- MST's expectation of candidate differed *remarkably* from congregation's expectation of future minister. How do we understand that? Did MST have necessary support and guidance? How were conversations among church bodies siloed? Right balance of transparency and confidentiality?
- Mismatch between the *norms* of Unity Church and the *rules* adhered to by MST.
- Who had the final authority to pause the search process when enough concerns warranted that?
- Questions about external conditions and environmental factors (echoed earlier) including: pool of candidates amid "great resignation," dynamics of grief, pandemic, cultural polarization, one-year interim, and shift from two senior co-ministers to one senior minister.
- Unity Church as "exceptional" or "outlier" with regard to polity governance, depth of shared ministry, and theology (especially regarding authority)? How did and will that shape search process?
- Queer identity and identity politics playing out unevenly across congregational continuum (from polarization to minimization to acceptance to adaptation), with particular point of conflict on "tokenization" and weaponization of antiracist tools.
- How were MST and congregation prepared for the complex work of *discernment*? Unanimity versus consensus, authority versus power, fight versus conflict?
- Circle Conversations touched the surface of the dynamics of complexity-coherence-conflict (e.g. coherent view of conflict versus complex view of conflict).

This is not an exhaustive list of all things shared in Circle Conversations, but themes that surfaced in multiple circles.