

MINISTERIAL SEARCH TEAM

Beyond Categorical Thinking

News from the Ministerial Search Team

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

We commit to seeking equity, justice, and inclusion throughout 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.

The lines above express the Ministerial Search Team's final covenantal promise in recognition of the very human tendency to favor what one is familiar with and/or to make decisions without being fully conscious about what has influenced the outcome. Identifying a new senior minister for Unity, or any church for that matter, demands a rigorous, thoroughly fair and equitable process, conducted with clarity and sensitivity in the bright light of day. But especially if we are to regard Unity's ends statements as sacred, this work of search must force us to become acquainted with how we think and why we think it. We must come to learn our biases and prejudices and know when these serve as barriers to our thinking — individually and as group.

We, at Unity Church, are fortunate to have gained some insight in this area of implicit bias through our work with Team Dynamics; the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) has also considered this topic to be vital regarding the ministerial search process. As a result, the Transitions Office has created a program called Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) to help congregations see what we might not see on our own. BCT provides for a skilled trainer to conduct a three-hour long workshop that will be open for all congregants. While BCT is not required, Unity's participation will send the message to prospective candidates that we are eager to mitigate a narrow mindset that might otherwise affect the search process and limit our options to the detriment of our community. This is the work of building a community free from systemic oppression.

The BCT workshop will be broken up into two one and a half hour parts: Part one will be held on Friday, October 15, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Part two is Saturday, October 16, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. If you would like to sign up, please plan to attend both workshop sessions. Here is the link to register: <https://bit.ly/ucumstbct>.

Listening Sessions

The Ministerial Search Team is holding a series of Listening Sessions to gather responses to important questions regarding the search for our next settled minister. During each session, participant will divide into small groups in order that everyone's voice is heard. This is a chance to have a conversation with others in our community about our future. Register here: www.unityunitarian.org/listening-sessions.html



LISTENING
SESSIONS

Listening Session at Unity Church

- Wednesday October 6 • 7-8:30 p.m. • In person
- Tuesday, October 12 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Zoom
- Wednesday, October 13 • 7-8:30 p.m. • In person
- Tuesday, October 17 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Zoom
- Wednesday, October 20 • 7-8:30 p.m. • In person
- Wednesday, October 27 • 7-8:30 p.m. • In person

Beyond Categorical Thinking

Part 1: Friday, October 15 • 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Part 2: Saturday, October 16 • 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Please plan to attend both workshop sessions.

Register: <https://bit.ly/ucumstbct>

The Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop, for all congregants at Unity Church and led by a skilled trainer from the Unitarian Universalist Association, is designed to promote inclusive thinking and prevent unfair discrimination during a congregation's search for a settled minister. Unity's participation will send the message to prospective candidates that we are eager to mitigate a narrow mindset that might otherwise affect the search process and limit our options to the detriment of our community. This is the work of building a community free from systemic oppression.



BEYOND
CATEGORICAL
THINKING

Search Survey

Final call: survey closes September 30.

Survey: bit.ly/mstsearchsurvey

The survey covers Sunday services, programming, our congregation, and asks for demographic information. All of this information is critical to the search process — so please complete the survey by September 30!



MINISTERIAL
SEARCH
SURVEY

Questions or comments? Please contact the Ministerial Search Team by email at mst@unityunitarian.org.