

First Report

This is our first opportunity to formally communicate with the members, adherents, and friends of the First Unitarian Church of Hamilton, but it certainly won't be our last. We are committed to operating in an open and transparent manner about our work and the process we are following to call a settled minister for our church. We won't be able to share details about the individuals that we deal with—we have a responsibility to respect their right to confidentiality. But we will happily tell you all about what we are doing and how we are doing it. In fact, we are hosting a circle meeting right after church on Sunday, June 7 to do just that, and to start finding out more from the congregation about the priorities that need to guide our work.

The members of the Search Committee are: Ed Canning, Roy Dahl, Beverly Horton, Jennifer Kaye, Barb Wallace, Joanne Waters, and Mark Zenchuk. We have all taken on specific roles to facilitate the work of the Committee, and are especially grateful to Barb for taking on the role of Chair. As Chair, Barb is responsible for keeping the Committee on track and moving forward. She is also the lead for our contacts with the Canadian Unitarian Council, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and our own Board.

We have been charged by the congregation to call a settled minister to join our church in the fall of 2010. Of course, we're not looking for just any settled minister, but for a person whose skills and experience provide a good fit with our church and congregants. We will do our best to find the right person for the job by:

1. Learning more about ourselves as Committee members and making a commitment to work and grow together for the good of the church
2. Learning more about the needs and hopes of our church and congregants.
3. Putting together an information packet about our church and community for prospective candidates that explains why this is a rewarding opportunity for someone who has the ability to celebrate our successes with us and nurture us through our challenges.
4. Selecting and assessing potential candidates carefully, generously, and with an eye to the congregation.
5. Presenting the congregation with a proposed candidate who, in our estimation, is best able to enter into successful ministry with us. We will not put forward a candidate whose ability to do so seems uncertain.

We have already started work on the first point, having attended a full-day retreat at which we learned more about ourselves, each other, and the work ahead of us. We are starting to work on the second point, and this is where you come in. Over the next few months, we will be asking congregants to complete surveys, attend circle meetings, and participate in other events that are intended to help us to better understand the hopes and needs of the congregation for settled ministry. We know it's summertime, and that for many people, summer is a time to be less connected to the church. But we ask that you keep connected this summer to the work of the Search Committee, so that we can be ready to send out our information packet for prospective candidates in October.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the Search Committee or the search process, don't hesitate to ask any of us. We'd be happy to speak with you individually, or at our first circle meeting on June 7.

– Jennifer Kaye
Secretary, Search Committee