



Cedars Unitarian Universalist Church

Ministerial Search Committee

Recommendation

August 18, 2018

INTRODUCTION

The Cedars Board of Trustees created a Search Committee to explore ministerial options for the congregation following the end of Rev. Thomas Perchlik's interim ministry on July 31, 2019. The Board asked the Committee for an initial recommendation by August 18, 2018 and to complete the following tasks:

1. Analyzing possible options (including settled ministry, contract ministry, or other options) in light of budget restrictions and other factors,
2. Recommending a course of action, and
3. Managing the process that is adopted.

The congregation voted to appoint the following seven individuals to the Search Committee at the June 10, 2018 Congregational Meeting: Jeff Philip, Johanna Munson, Vinnie Perrone, Richard Wilson, John Wiens, Betsy Minkoff and Carol Ann Davidson.

The Search Committee began meeting soon after the Congregational Meeting. We selected Jeff Philip as the Chair for the first task of creating a recommendation on how to proceed with professional ministry. We agreed that any decisions would be made using the consensus model.

The Committee began gathering information early in the process. We reviewed UUA documents such as the Minister Settlement Handbook, as well as Cedars documents including the Cedars Bylaws, Policy Handbook, annual budget data and 2016 Congregational Survey. Throughout our process, we kept detailed notes of our meetings.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend seeking a Settled Minister for Cedars UU Church, as we believe this is the optimal choice for congregational growth (both spiritual and institutional). Settled ministry is the best option for establishing a stable and long term relationship with a minister who can nurture a growing congregation focused on our mission. In addition, we believe that, in the long term, settled ministry would be the more economical option in comparison to other ministerial options. (See Financial Considerations)

We recommend investing in settled ministry based on the congregation's desire for Ministry, as informed by the needs identified as important by the congregation (2016 survey): social justice work, religious education, pastoral care, and supporting the needs of families at all stages.

Keith Kron at UUA indicated that this year is a buyers' market for congregations, as there are likely to be 80 ministers looking for a position and 30 congregations undergoing the search for a settled minister. While the search process may cost around \$22,000, it will save us money in the long run as any other option would likely lead to another search in a few years to achieve

the congregation's desired outcome for settled ministry. Some contract ministers become settled ministers, but there is no guarantee of that, as our history shows. According to Rev. Kron, having a settled minister engenders confidence in the long-term health of the congregation from both current and potential members.

SUPPORTING DATA: CONGREGATIONAL INPUT

Cedars will celebrate its 60th anniversary at the conclusion of this church year, and those decades of growth and development from a 1959 founding to a current congregational presence with about 200 members and active friends have been filled with meaningful experience. Forward-looking lay leaders as well as seven ministers providing at least half-time service have helped the congregation reach its present level of organizational maturity.

Several generalizations are possible:

- Cedars is a spiritual community and the quality and appeal of its Sunday gathering and services are of paramount importance, with the minister typically providing inspiration and structure. This is also where newcomers usually find the congregation and consider the possibility of membership.
- Cedars is best served and its presence strengthened by ministers who choose to live in the greater Bainbridge and North Kitsap community rather than commuting from cross-sound or other locations.

In support of the search process for selecting a new settled minister, the Committee on Ministry conducted a formal assessment of the congregation's institutional health in 2016, soon after the planned retirement and departure of the Revs. Barbara and Jaco was announced. Using an instrument provided by the UUA and first used by Cedars in 2011, the Committee collected member and friend perceptions of congregational strength and performance as well as a listing of appreciated features and desired improvements.

Comments from the Survey

"Hire a new minister with a focus on families as well as seniors that will enable us to grow a congregation that is friendly, vibrant, caring, supportive, and provides all paths for personal and spiritual growth."

"[I would like a] minister who attracts young families, strengthen RE leadership"

Questions targeted 39 general propositions in 10 subject areas

- UU Faith and Values
- Congregational Identity
- Families, Youth, and Young Adults
- Visitors and New Members
- Wider Community Beyond Cedars
- Planning
- Growth
- Finances
- Space
- Leadership

In addition, narrative comment and demographic data were taken regarding

- General Observations,
- Looking Forward, and
- About You

Comments from the survey

“[I would like a minister with the] ability to relate to our changing (aging) congregation. Ability to relate and attract young people.”

“[I would like a] minister who practices pastoral care, social justice and reaching out to each congregant with an emphasis on growth from within or externally.”

“[We need a] greater presence in the Kitsap community; bringing in new families to membership; doing more visible activities that shows our dedication to our principles.”

The survey drew responses from 72 members and 15 friends, representing approximately 50 percent of the active congregation. In general, the survey found that Cedars was a relatively stable congregation experiencing modest strengthening in several areas of activity while weakening in others. Significant findings relevant to the ministerial search process were as follows:

- Continuing with professional ministry is very strongly supported
- A collaborative relationship with lay leaders is extremely important
- Innovative services and sermon quality are very important
- Focus on religious education, children, teens, young adults and families is important
- Growth and outreach on Bainbridge Island and particularly North Kitsap is important

COMPARING MINISTRY ALTERNATIVES

We reviewed all of the available options for professional ministry: called/settled ministry; interim ministry; contract/consulting ministry; and developmental ministry. The following table summarizes the various characteristics of each of the four ministry options.

Called / Settled Ministry	Interim Ministry	Contract / Consulting Ministry	Developmental Ministry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expected commitment to reside in our community. ● The most thorough search process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific Training Guidelines for the Minister ● Specific Selection Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited choice of candidates ● Limited time frame - one to three, or perhaps up to five. ● Shorter search process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focused on a significant goal or issue to address. ● Usually for a church in crisis

(continued)

Called / Settled Ministry	Interim Ministry	Contract / Consulting Ministry	Developmental Ministry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Search process adheres to specific timing deadlines ● Search Cost: \$10K - \$30K ● In covenant (contract) with the Congregation. ● Expectation of full benefits, including health care, retirement, sabbatical, freedom of the pulpit, Ministerial expenses etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A step on the path to Settled Ministry ● Typically, a second Interim is because the search for settled was not complete. ● Typically full time. ● Typically one or two years ● In contract with the Board of Trustees ● Search Cost: \$5K - \$15K ● Search process adheres to specific timing deadlines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In contract with the Board of Trustees ● May not reside in the community. ● Can focus on particular issues - can be very limited or expansive. ● Based on goal identification ● May have the freedom to push the congregation more without regard to long term minister relationship. ● Expectation of full benefits, including health care, retirement, etc. ● Search Cost: \$5K - \$15K 	

The committee concluded that both interim ministry and developmental ministry options were not appropriate for our current situation. The purpose of interim ministry is to move on to called/settled ministry. Since we will have completed 2 years of interim ministry with Reverend Perchlik, nothing would be gained by continuing with another interim ministry except to delay the move to a called/settled ministry. Furthermore, the congregation would incur costs for both an interim minister search now and costs for a settled minister search which would occur after one or two years of the interim ministry.

Developmental minister was also rejected since we did not feel that our congregation is in acute crisis. Developmental ministry is an opportunity for congregations, once they have completed interim ministry, to delve deeper into areas of congregational life that require specific attention, or cultural shifts, prior to the calling of a settled minister.

The two remaining feasible options, called/settled ministry and contract/consulting ministry, were evaluated in more depth. The following table summarizes the pros and cons of each option.

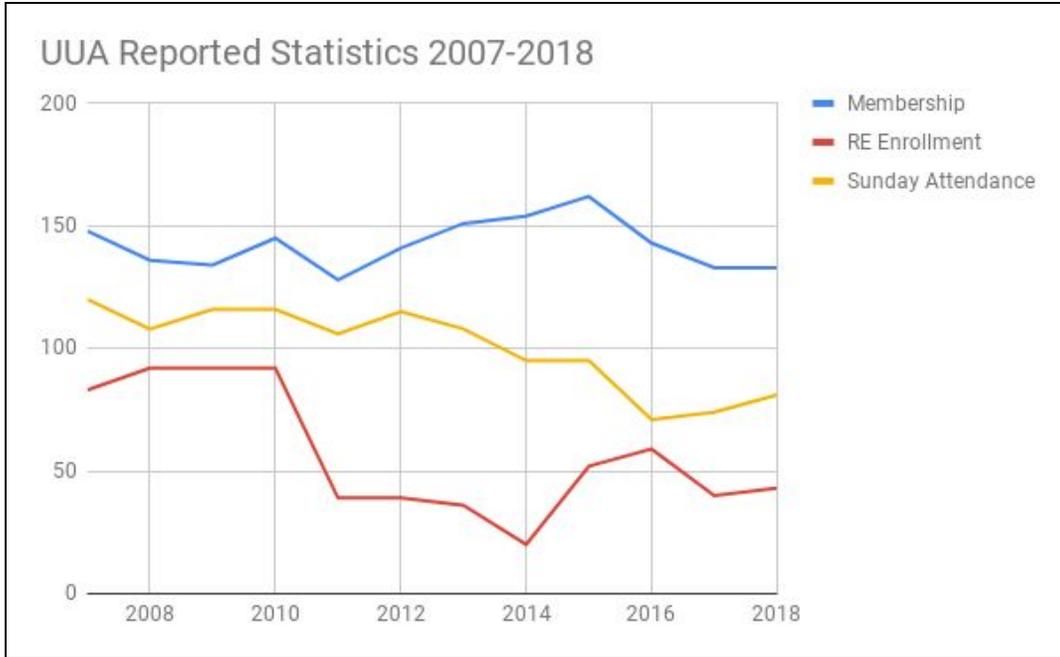
	Called/Settled Ministry	Contract/Consulting Ministry
PROS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lives in the community. Brings a sense of consistency. ● More in depth search process to get to know candidates and for them to know us. ● Could fit the ministry to our current budget by serving part-time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easier to move on to a new minister if things don't work out. ● Could fit the ministry to our current budget by serving part-time.
CONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relies on faith in our ability to grow, because our budget does not currently support this ministry. ● Our current budget would likely not be attractive to quality candidates. ● Higher search cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● May not reside in the community. ● May not have the bandwidth to focus on our goals and serve our other typical needs. ● Smaller candidate pool. ● Less rich search process to assess goodness of fit.

Hiring a contract minister offers possible reduced search and salary costs at the outset, but Cedars would incur additional hiring/search costs each time the contract expires. A transition at the end of the contract, particularly if there is strong relationship with the minister, could hinder the growth and health of the congregation. Also, a contract minister would not be making a long term commitment and personal investment in Cedars that is necessary to attain the congregation's stated goals.

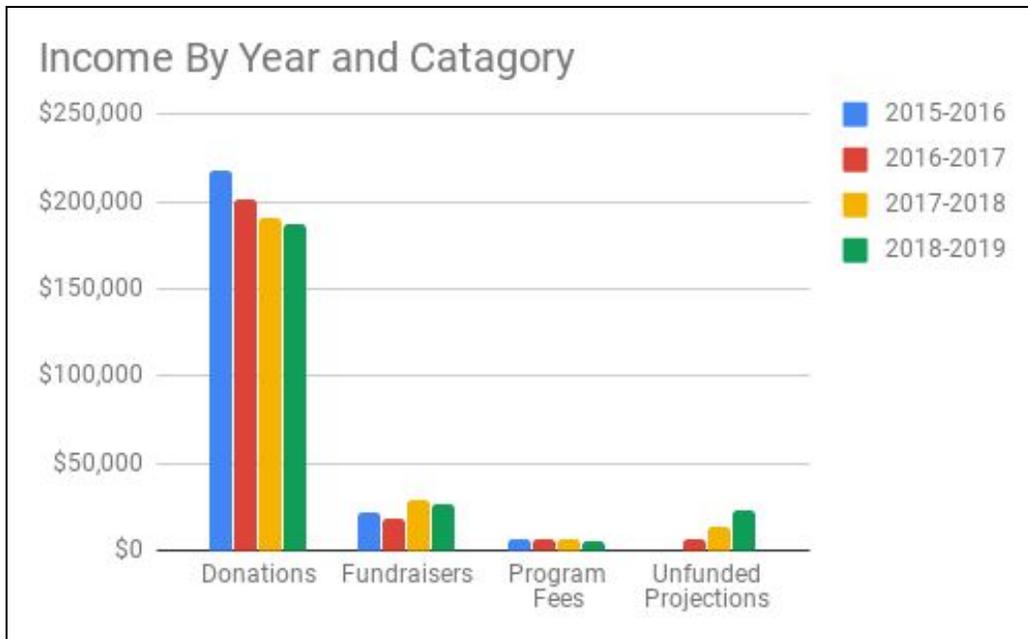
Given the limitations of contract/consulting ministry, we concluded that called/settled ministry was the best option for the congregation to achieve its stated goals. In addition, over the next few years, selecting a full-time called/settled ministry now would be less expensive than choosing a contract minister or another interim minister at this time. Some consideration may be given to sharing a part-time minister to fit our budget constraints. However, this committee recommends hiring a full time minister fully dedicated to one congregation.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the Search Committee deliberated on the best path forward for professional ministry, the church's financial status was a key consideration. After reviewing budget data for the past four years as well as membership numbers, we saw that the number of active members has fluctuated significantly in the past 10 years, as has Religious Education enrollment and average attendance at Sunday Worship Services. We also noted that no funding had been allocated for a Minister Search budget. Below is the recorded membership numbers according to the UUA.



Congregationally-approved budgets reflecting changing membership numbers have funded our operations throughout our history. In some years expenses exceeded income projections or relied on fewer people giving more. We were able to review the past four years of data, as shown below.



The Committee agreed that for Cedars Unitarian Universalist Church to be successful in the long term, and to attract quality minister candidates, we must operate the church in a sustainable manner. We recalled that in the mid 2000's the church had developed a long range plan that

included membership projections and organizational aspirations. The annual Stewardship Campaign was also planned beginning in the Fall and enacted in the Spring, often with a personal canvass to maximize engagement with the people in the Congregation.

The Search Committee encourages the Cedars Board of Trustees to engage in focused long-term strategic planning including early stewardship planning, dialog with the congregation about sustainable membership numbers, and program planning to match our Mission Statement.

In addition, we encourage the Trustees to engage in a supplemental, robust fiscal analysis of the annual cost of operating the church (including Settled Ministry) and how to sustain funding. The Search Committee did not have time to perform a detailed analysis, but believe it would be helpful in the long term strategic planning, and could be an important factor to some Ministers considering joining with us. This analysis could be performed by a number qualified individuals, including the Finance Committee (Frank Petrie, Pat and Dean Sampson, Jeff Philip), Scot Hedrick, Demi Rasmussen, Fran Korten, John Bonow, Heidi Parkington, and Tyler Weaver.

Finally, we encourage the Cedars Board of Trustees to consider utilizing some of the Marvin Evans Funds as an investment in the search process. Not only do we believe that this would be consistent with his wishes, we believe it to be an investment in the future of Cedars. A healthy, vibrant community led by a committed engaging leader will lead to greater financial stability of the church. According to the UUA Minister Settlement Handbook, a congregation can expect to spend 20% (\$13,000) of the Minister's annual salary on the search process (in the current budget year), and another 14% (\$9,000) for relocation expenses (in the next budget year). The Trustees may also consider a paddle raise for search at the auction, or other opportunity for the congregation to participate in raising the additional funds.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

We recommend creating a detailed plan as to timeline and strategy for the Ministerial Search Process as well as communicating next steps to the Congregation.

2018-2019

- August 18: Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) submits recommendation to Board of Trustees.
- August 23: Board meets to review recommendation.
- August 26: Board presents decision to congregation at the Sunday service and communicates the next steps via other means.

Assuming MSC recommendation is adopted:

- September 1 to November 30, the MSC participates in UUA workshops on compensation, and roles and responsibilities.
- September 1 to October 10: MSC creates the Congregational Record to be posted to attract interested Ministers.

- October 10: MSC presents draft Congregational Record to Board for approval.
- October 1 to November 15: MSC creates a Congregational Search Packet to submit to UUA by December 1 for distribution to interested ministers. The MSC gives a draft of the Packet to the Board by November 15 for approval and editing.
- December 2018- January 2019: MSC schedules interviews and pre-candidating weekends/neutral pulpits.
- January 7, 2019, to March 4, 2019: pre-candidate weekends.
- April 1, 2019, to April 30: final selection and announcement of the Candidate for Cedars Minister.
- May 1-15, 2019: Final approval by Board and Congregation. Contract Negotiations with Negotiations Team (not necessarily the MSC) and Candidate
- May 15-31, 2019: Candidating Week- greeting the new minister, an all-day meeting with the new minister and Board to talk about roles, expectations, and the direction for the first year, and Congregational Meeting for official Call.