



Email Sent to Congregation 6-21-2017

Dear UCC Members,

So many of us are anxious to see our pulpit filled on a full-time basis. Although Chuck has done a great job in keeping that spot warm, most of us would like to see that Senior Minister hired and in place yesterday! So, it is of no surprise that we get the question, "What is taking so long?"

Yes, the search committee is taking our time. Not because we are trying to slow down the process and extend the work. It is because we want to lay the groundwork for our next Senior Minister to have a long and successful tenure at UCC. That means we need to make the right choice. To do that, we need to ensure we know what we are looking for and how to find it.

A prior update from the committee included the results from the congregational survey. Those survey results helped us create the profile that was submitted to the region, a.k.a. the job posting. From here, the committee spent a great deal of time creating a rubric for judging a sermon. Yes, we paid attention when the congregation said that preaching was a top priority! To ensure we capture that element in the hiring process, we created a tool to help us objectively assess preaching and sermon strength, an otherwise subjective determination. We are fine tuning that tool as we listen to sermons posted on line from various sources. It is an interesting and at times a frustrating process. Can you describe a perfect sermon? It is much harder than you might think. We know when we hear a good sermon, but putting it in words that can capture different types of sermons, different congregational needs, and authentic beliefs of a preacher is extremely difficult. Again, we are attempting to create this tool to help us turn a subjective matter in to an objective judgement so that we can assess the preaching ability of the candidates.

At the same time, we have been working with industry experts to help craft interview questions based on the needs of the church and individual skills we outlined in the profile we submitted to the region. Here again, we want a tool we can use to evaluate subjective topics and issues raised in the interview process using objective criteria.

Most recently, the committee is sorting through the candidate profiles, or applications, as we receive them to determine who we will interview. The committee members worked very well together to determine what we wanted before we looked at a single application. Because we spent more time determining who we are looking for, it will be easier for us to agree on the candidate that God has prepared for UCC when we conclude the interview process.

So as you remember the search process and wonder why it is taking so long, please know that the committee is committed to making the right decision for UCC. We want the best possible candidate and that means taking our time to ensure a unanimous recommendation from our committee on who should be our next Senior Minister.

We thank you for your continued prayers for the committee, the church, and our new Senior Minister. Although the committee is only 12 people (including alternates and ex-officio members), we know that over 3,000 people are involved in this process. Your support is greatly appreciated.

**God bless,
Senior Minister Search Committee**