

## BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING

“Will the new minister hear me? Will my concerns and needs be met? Will the minister understand what I’m living with? How will the community respond to our minister?”

In answering these questions, a picture of the “ideal minister” (categorized by age, gender, gender identity, nationality, physical ability, race, and sexual orientation) comes to mind. With this picture in place, it can be easy to unintentionally exclude ministers who fall into certain categories. At times, as we get caught up in comparing candidates to our “picture,” we can even forget what it is we hoped for in a minister.

On the weekend of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ will participate in the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for congregations involved in the search for a new minister. The \_\_\_\_\_ Search Committee invites all congregational leaders, members, and friends to participate in this workshop.

The Beyond Categorical Thinking program is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. This program includes a Sunday morning service with BCT workshop facilitators followed by a three hour workshop. In the workshop, \_\_\_\_\_ members will:

- Consider the hopes, expectations, and concerns they have for a new minister
- Learn more about the ministerial search process, and
- Explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate.

Come on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in this UUA-sponsored workshop, led by \_\_\_\_\_.

SUGGESTION: You may insert a closing sentence that emphasizes the importance of attendance. An example follows; however, use language that you know will motivate your particular congregation members, friends, and staff to attend.

*The selection of a minister is important. The Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop is another opportunity for everyone in our congregation to be a part of that process. This experience will provide guidance for the search committee in our work.*