

Rev. Nancy Bird Pellegrini—Spring 2014
MFC Liaison to Candidates Report

Dear Candidates,

After investing so much time and energy in all the many steps required for ministry, coming before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) for the interview can without a doubt be viewed as a terrifying experience. To reiterate what others have said, take heart, the MFC is rooting for you. I was particularly moved by the way the committee prayed for each candidate before their interview. They also were hopeful about candidates coming back for a second time and looking forward to seeing improvement.

I would like to share some major things I observed that the MFC seems to look for that will hopefully be helpful to you in your preparations:

- **A meaningful sermon:** This involves giving a sermon that has a definite message. For example, if you are preaching about your journey to ministry, rather than just providing your autobiography alone, what is the broader significance of what you have learned from your life experiences?
- **Ministerial authority:** This is a bit hard to define but basically involves showing that you have confidence in yourself in your role as minister. It has to do with how you present yourself as a minister in addition to demonstrating competence.
- **Knowledge of UU history and polity:** This does not just mean facts and dates, but as one MFC member characterized it, “having our history in your bones” in order to be able to draw from it. It is also important to know current UU polity personalities and issues.
- **Fulfillment of Regional Sub-Committee on Candidacy (RSCC) recommendations:** It is essential to be able to show that you took these recommendations seriously and be able to explain specifically what you did to carry them out.
- **Pastoral care skills:** This means showing your ability to be pastoral, acting from your heart as well as your head. MFC members ask themselves whether you are someone they would want for their minister. For example, a candidate who cries during the interview because they cannot remember the answer to a question but shows heart can succeed in their interview whereas someone who answers all the questions fully but appears emotionally aloof can run into trouble.

The MFC carefully considers your packet. Although each packet takes hours to read, committee members really do read them thoroughly. Therefore it is important for candidates to respect the process by giving the same careful attention to preparing their packet fully and completely.

It was a privilege for me to participate in the MFC interviews and meetings with such a dedicated group of caring and discerning ministers. This committee not only does the interviews but also adjudicates numerous ministerial fellowship issues and formulates new policies related to ministry. MFC members are particularly attentive to their process, careful to take time for anti-oppression, anti-racism, and multiculturalism training. They also seek to insure that all voices on the committee are heard during deliberations, including those of the candidate liaisons. This process gives me great hope for the future of our denomination and our ministry.

In the words of Howard Thurman, “Don’t ask yourself what the world needs, ask yourself what makes you come alive, and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” May you come alive with your ministry. Many blessings as you prepare for your interview. I look forward to welcoming you as a colleague.