
V. Sample Newsletter Articles

Confidentiality is not secrecy! You need to be discreet about your search committee's work, but the congregation has a right to know how their search is proceeding. Ministerial settlement itself, with its rules and procedures, needs to be explained as well. You will want to report regularly on your work in a variety of ways. The following newsletter columns, which you may want to use as you create your own, do a good job of keeping confidentiality while shedding light on the search process. The first piece, from Belmont, Massachusetts, gives an overview of the process as a report on a seminar for search committee members. The remainder of the pieces are based on ones used in the UU Congregation of Atlanta, followed by a reprint of newsletter articles from the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, New York.

Report on Settlement Seminar

On the last Saturday in August, two members represented our search committee at the UUA's all-day Ministerial Settlement Seminar. We met UUs from throughout the Northeast and heard at length from Dan Hotchkiss, the UUA's Transitions Director. Dan talked about the search process as an undertaking that should be guided by four principles: Fairness, Collegiality, Relationship, and Unity.

FAIRNESS means that the process places every prospective minister on an equal footing before the committee. It also means protecting the prospective minister's standing with his or her present congregation, who may not be aware that he or she hopes to move.

RELATIONSHIP means that each prospective minister is treated as the one with whom we plan to have a lasting relationship of trust and good faith. Selecting a minister is like falling in love, Dan said. You don't grill your dates to find out if they will make good mates. Nevertheless, you do find out everything you can about each person, in a respectful but thorough way.

UNITY means that the search process avoids dividing the congregation among competing candidates. The search committee considers many ministers, gathers behind one candidate and presents that person to the congregation to consider. Though the committee may sometimes refer to "the candidates" (shorter than "the prospective ministers" by several syllables), there is only one Candidate.

"Serial candidating leads to multiple churches." Dan told us. Where the practice is to present two or three candidates and have the congregation vote for their favorites, churches splinter as each faction follows its candidate.

Fairness, Collegiality, Relationship, Unity: you'll hear more about how this works in practice as the search proceeds.

First meeting of the ministerial search committee

The ministerial search committee met for the first time on December 20. Roger Comstock and Jean Highsmith were elected co-chairpersons; Emily Adler, corresponding secretary; Roger Johnson, treasurer; and Carol Taylor, recording secretary. Todd Taylor is the Ministerial Settlement Representative for the UUA.

Todd explained the steps involved in the selection process and outlined the procedure for announcing a “vacant pulpit.” An announcement will be published in the *World* magazine.

Keeping mum: from the Settlement Handbook

Your congregation is entitled to know the process you are following and how far along you are at every point. At the same time, you need to keep confidential both the names of the ministers under consideration and the details of committee business. There are several reasons for the rule of confidentiality:

* Ministers settled in a congregation may not have told their present parishioners that they are contemplating a move. These parishioners are entitled to hear the news from their own minister at the appropriate time. To “leak” a minister’s name can undermine his or her ability to serve the present congregation, and will almost certainly damage your chances of attracting that potential candidate.

* When the identities of unsuccessful applicants are known, it heightens the competitive aspect of the search process. This hurts collegial feeling among ministers and (when neighboring congregations compete for the same minister) also can create hard feelings among congregations.

* It is harder to resolve differences among the members of a search committee when factions of the congregation are looking over your shoulders. It is better to resolve your differences in private.

An open book

Our ministerial search committee’s Search Packet is now complete (It’s the packet we send to prospective ministers) and is available for viewing in the church office. Stop by and see in how glorious and true a light our congregation is presented.

Search committee retreat successful

At the retreat over the weekend, the search committee heard from the prior search committee, shared personal information and prejudices, made procedural and voting rules, and worked on the time-line for our activities.

Some of the rules we adopted are:

* Members are expected to say why they choose to vote in a particular way, if asked.

* Major decisions require a 2/3 vote of those present. A simple majority rules otherwise.

* Any member may veto a candidate. This veto is to be used with care and tolerance. No candidate receiving a “no” vote will be presented to the congregation. Any candidate vetoed will be notified immediately.

* On the final vote to select a candidate, no abstentions will be allowed. A point system will be used to ensure solid, enthusiastic support for the successful candidate.

* The committee intends to remain “open” to discuss all procedural matters with members of the congregation. We are not able to divulge names or personal information about the candidates.

We have a list!

We have a list of candidates supplied by the UUA Ministerial Transitions Office in Boston. While we cannot related details about the individuals on the list, we can say that the candidates seem excited about us. Fifty percent of them responded within a week of receiving our packets, and their letters indicate that they consider us to be one of the most attractive churches in the denomination. We look forward to meeting with them. Though confidentiality must be preserved, the committee would like to share information about the search process. This Sunday, after the service, the search committee will be at a table in the social hall to answer your questions.

Help requested

What would you like to know about our candidates for Senior Minister? We can't tell you who they are, but we can use your questions during our interviews. So please tell us: What would you like to know about their philosophy of church leadership, or Sunday worship, or programming, or outreach, or social action? What are your concerns? We appreciate the good ideas we've received so far, and we'd like to have more. Just contact any member of the search committee, or leave a note in our box in the church office. Thanks!

What's “in” a ministerial search interview?

Each candidate is invited for a weekend. Each one arrives on a Friday for an informal evening. Saturday is reserved for formal interviewing. Sunday the candidate presents a service and then meets briefly with the committee. The interview format and content are worked out cooperatively with each prospective minister, but each interview includes the following elements:

- * Introduction of ministerial search committee to candidates;
- * Discussion of minister's professional history — including any statement or questions from the search committee as well as those from the candidate;
- * Discussion of important areas of church life. Time is allowed in each area for questions from the candidate as well as the committee. Areas covered include: Religious philosophy and worship; pastoral care and working with people; church programming; leadership roles; religious education and youth; and financial and contract matters.

The Search Committee has prepared questions for each area to be used by members as guidelines. Advance preparation for each weekend includes review of the candidate's packet, checking of references, consultation with the Ministerial Transitions Director in Boston, and coordination of the weekend's activities. Every interview has a facilitator who is responsible for time-keeping, question coverage, and other general business. The list of general questions asked of each candidate is available in the church office.

Why can't we present more than one candidate?

The question most frequently asked by people who are not thoroughly acquainted with the UUA search process is: “Why can't we meet all of the top candidates for Senior Minister and hear them preach? Isn't it undemocratic for the search committee to present us with only one final candidate? The reason that serial candidating — the process of presenting

more than one candidate to the congregation — is frowned upon is that it tends to be destructive to the candidates and to the congregations to which they are presented. Suppose one group likes and politics for Candidate A, another is for Candidate B, and still another for Candidate C. The congregation could be split asunder before the process has been completed and it is unlikely that any candidate would receive the vote of confidence needed for a successful ministry. From the point of view of the candidates, the confidentiality of the process would be broken and their effectiveness in their current congregation seriously impaired.

So, at the end of a long process of interviewing, evaluation, reference-checking, and consensus-building, your Search Committee will present you with the one candidate who is, in their opinion, best for our congregation. Then, after a full week of Sunday services, meetings, and social engagements, when you will be able to meet and size up the candidate for yourselves, you will make the final decision in the congregational vote to call or not to call.

The Ministerial Search Committee responds to questions

Q: Are you still maintaining an information table in the Social Room on Sundays?

A: Yes and no. The table is there every Sunday. Members of former search committees have taken over and they welcome your interest and questions. Most of the members of the current Search Committee are busy weekends interviewing candidates.

Q: Will a new Senior Minister take over planning adult activity programs and ancillary groups?

A: If your questions means just what it says, “take over,” the answer is “No.” The lay leadership in our congregation have always initiated, orchestrated, and produced the great majority of our adult programs and activities. A Senior Minister could suggest and enrich what is already here and add new dimensions, but “take over”? NO.

Q: You mean the congregation is going to get to meet only ONE candidate? We aren't going to hear and see several and then choose?

A: You are correct about the congregation hearing and seeing only one candidate. The selection process recommended by the UUA and UUMA entrusts the search committee with the responsibility of presenting one candidate who it thinks best meets the needs of the whole congregation.

Q: Do you have some good — really good — candidates?

A: No question here. We have a fine candidate list. Our most difficult decision may be to decide who's best among the best!

Search committee update

Interviewing of candidates for Minister has been completed. The search committee now retreats to evaluate and set up a second round of interviews with the most viable potential candidates.

The talents and personalities of all our prospects are strong; all are compelling and are well qualified — and they are very different! There is a wide diversity in speaking and leadership styles, in major concerns and visions for a liberal church community.

Prospective ministers have expressed concerns about our salary package, staffing, unrealistic expectations for a “workable schedule,” and adequate time for scholastic and spiritual investigation. The committee is working on viable alternatives for these areas.

The ministers have also expressed excitement about us. One candidate said, “Are you for real?” Some of our plus factors are: our organizational abilities; the professional quality and numbers of lay leaders; geographic location and the potential for meaningful contributions to liberal religious concern in the city, state, and country.

Search update: the three-part process

In its quest to find the best possible Senior Minister for UUCA, your search committee has qualified for the Guinness Book of World Records in the following categories:

Most miles traveled to attend Sunday service: over 1200 miles, one way,

Most pot-luck dinners, bagels, and coffee consumed over a three-month period by any nine people,

Most renditions over the same period of “Morning Has Broken,” and

Most improved souls as the result of reading sermons.

In the course of the course of the UUA-approved three-part process of evaluating ministerial candidates (reading a packet of sermons, biographical data, and information on the minister’s current church; participating in an intensive two-way interview with the minister; and attending a service conducted by the minister in a nearby neutral pulpit, your search committee has managed to survive:

- * A flight canceled on account of a snowstorm,
- * A weird variety of Southern-Chinese cuisine,
- * An empty gas-tank on the way to the Atlanta airport,
- * A weekend debriefing interrupted by a fashion show,
- * Silences because the musician failed to show up for a service, and
- * Near heart failure when the minister’s car got lost and its occupants came within minutes of missing the service. (A member of the committee began preparing a substitute sermon, but — fortunately for all concerned — was spared just in time.)

White smoke?

From our ministerial search committee, with unanimous enthusiasm:

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE WE HAVE INVITED A MINISTER TO
CANDIDATE WITH OUR CONGREGATION.

In mid-November, the candidate will spend a “candidating week” with us — in the pulpit, meeting our members, talking with us. The week will provide an opportunity for our congregation to decide whether to “call” him or her, as well as an opportunity for the minister to evaluate before deciding to accept. It’s a week we anticipate with excitement as a way to introduce an extraordinary person to an extraordinary congregation.

In a few weeks, when the candidate has had time to discuss this decision with the leaders of his or her current church, we will be free to share more information with you.

First Unitarian Church of Rochester NY

Settled Parish Minister Search Committee Newsletter Articles

From May 2003 through a successful call in May 2004

(republished with permission)

May 12, 2003

Have you got it yet?

That big white envelope with the congregational survey?

Can we get 100% return rate? We hope so!

Read it, think about it, fill it out, and return it to church.

If you never complete out another survey, do this one – it's important to us, the Search Committee, to you, the congregation, to our new minister!

It's *your* voice we need.

Thank you, from the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee

parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

May 26, 2003

Why do we keep asking for your input? Because it matters – to us, to our new minister, to you. Your responses count, every one of them. The survey and cottage meetings are an incredibly important part of the search process. During the summer we'll compile results and put together a Congregational Record, which we'll post on the web for interested ministerial candidates. What we say about our congregation makes all the difference in who becomes interested in us. Later, as we hear from candidates, the Search Committee will be guided by your wishes as we try to find the best match for our parish minister, given what you've told us. So, attend a cottage meeting if you haven't already, complete that survey (we're still looking for 100% return), and return it to the church. And thank you, thank you, for your participation. We can't do this without you! The Settled Parish Minister Search Committee (parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org)

June 22, 2003

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: A major part of our job this summer is to put together a Congregational Record which describes the life and history of this church. Potential candidates will read this document online in the fall to decide whether they're interested in the First Unitarian Church of Rochester. As we work on the CR, we find ourselves wrestling with weighty questions about the church's vision, the way we run this church, and the open second ministerial position. To do a thorough job,

we're seeking input from the Board, the Transition Team, and a diverse group of cottage meeting attendees. Our hope is that these necessary conversations about the future of our church will both inform the Congregational Record, and, by continuing through next year, help us move forward toward calling the right candidate. The Search Committee can't do it alone. We trust that all the thoughtful discussions we're having as a congregation will only make us a better church. We appreciate all the support and input you give us.

parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

June 29, 2003

Search Committee Update: What a wonderful response! We received 506 surveys and talked with 160 of you at cottage meetings. Your strong response sends a powerful message to prospective candidates. Thank you! Summertime will NOT be slow for your Parish Minister Search Committee! We will be busy analyzing the data to report back to you in September. We will also begin work on a Candidate Packet. This will be a colorful binder given to potential candidates, telling them all about us in words, photos and perhaps even a video. By the way, the best way to consistently reach us until September is individually by phone or at Parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org.

August 24, 2003

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: In the midst of vacations and lovely time spent by – or on – the water, the Search Committee has had a busy summer. We've been analyzing the abundant data from last May's congregational survey and cottage meetings and we've completed the Congregational Record which tells prospective ministers about our church. We're eager to share the results with you.

Please plan to attend one of four information sessions we'll host during the week of September 14. (Look for details about times and places in the next newsletter.) After an overview of the survey results, we'll have a conversation about the picture we've painted of our congregation and the qualities we'd like in our new minister. (The complete survey report will be available on-line, for those of you who would like all the details.)

As always, please contact us with questions or concerns. Look for us on Sunday mornings, call any of us, or e-mail us at parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

Steve Brown, Joy Collins, Larry Eldridge, Mark Jackson, Cynthia Looney, Libby Moore, Nancy Warren-Oliver, John Weas

September 23, 2003

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee:

Here's a quiz about the congregation, from last week's information meetings about the results of the survey and cottage meetings:

1. *What is the median age of the respondents to the congregational survey?*
 a) 41 b) 59 c) 75
2. *What percentage of our congregation holds graduate or professional degrees?*
 a) 34% b) 49% c) 64%
3. *How many respondents have children in Religious Education?*
 a) 30% b) 50% c) 70%
4. *How pleased were we at the turnout for these meetings?*
 a) very b) extremely c) enormously

Answers will be in next week's newsletter. If you can't wait until then, or you'd like more details, check out the complete survey report at www.rochesterunitarian.org or look for the full report in the church office.

September 30, 2003

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee:

Mark your calendars for October 19! During the Survey Report-Out meetings, many of you heard us mention the *Beyond Categorical Thinking* Workshop, to be held on October 19. Our survey showed that we are somewhat open to our next parish minister being from any category of gender, race, age, sexual orientation etc. But a surprising number were not, or were unsure.

Consciously or not, our survey showed that our picture of our ideal minister most likely fits into specific categories. Come participate in this UUA-sponsored program which will include the Sunday service, lunch, and a 1-4 pm workshop afterwards. We will be talking about our concerns, hopes and expectations for our next minister, as we open our hearts to choosing the best candidate. We'll be there along with the Transition Team, who are co-sponsoring the workshop. Please sign up at church on the first two Sundays in October to reserve a lunch or to request child care. Contact Anne Perry or Joy Collins for further information.

BTW, the answers to last week's quiz are: 1. b (59 is the median age of respondents); 2. c (64% hold graduate or professional degrees); 3. a (30% have children in RE); 4. all of the above.

As always, you can reach us at parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

October 14, 2003

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee

We are moving into a new phase of our search: REAL CANDIDATES! We're reviewing those who responded to our Congregational Record and contacting ministers who were suggested by members of the congregation. BUT, we're not going to be able to divulge names under consideration or details of our discussions. There are several good reasons for this rule of confidentiality:

- Ministers settled in a parish may not have told their present congregation that they're contemplating a move. Their parishioners are entitled to hear the news from their own minister at the appropriate time. "Leaks" of information can damage a candidate's relationship with the present congregation and could jeopardize our chances of attracting that candidate.
- When the identities of successful candidates are known, it heightens the competitive aspect of the search process. It hurts collegial feelings among ministers and can create hard feelings among congregations.
- It is harder to resolve differences within the Search Committee (yes, we're human) if the names are public. It's better to resolve any differences in private.

Other than that, we're always happy to answer questions about the process and to listen to your concerns. Look for our flashing red lights after Sunday services or e-mail us at parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org.

October 27, 2003

Did you know...of the approximate 125 Unitarian ministers seeking new positions, it is estimated that about 3-6 are people of color; 15-20 are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered; 2-3 have disabilities; and 43% are female, 57% are male? These are some of the fascinating statistics we learned at the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop on October 19. About 70 of us attended, including the entire search committee. Thank you! We experienced thought-provoking exercises and faced our own personal biases, as we tried to open our hearts and minds to the variety of ministers who may apply to be our next settled parish minister. As the facilitators said, "the diversity in our ministry enriches our religious community, offering gifts to be celebrated and honored."

A special thanks to the Transition Team, headed by Anne Perry, for coordinating with the terrific facilitators, organizing a dinner for them to meet church leaders, and putting on a lunch for the workshop participants.

Do thank them when you see them.

Feel free to contact us at parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

November 4, 2003

You may be wondering what we're doing these days when we're not standing around wearing flashing red lights. It may not look like it, but we're busier than ever. In the beginning of the search process, we gathered lots of information which resulted in the survey report, congregational record, and a packet of information for ministers. We're also putting together a video for ministerial candidates and potential new members. We're grateful for all who helped with the video, and for all your thoughtful and helpful input during this first part of our process.

Now we've moved into a different phase of the search. We've received some candidates' packets (we expect more as we get closer to December) and we are narrowing the field to those we want to get to know better. In November we'll conduct phone interviews with the most promising candidates. From that group, we'll choose a few to preach in "neutral pulpits"—churches where neither we nor they are known—in January and February. From that group, we'll select the one final candidate who will come to our church in late April to meet congregants and preach on two Sundays. We'll ask you to vote to call that minister at a congregational meeting on May 2.

Until we announce the final candidate, we won't be able to give you any information about candidates, but we'll be happy to talk to you about any other aspect of the process. Please look for those flashing red lights. We'll be at a table in the gallery every Sunday after both services and would love to talk with you. As always, you can also contact us at parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org.

December 16, 2003

At this darkest time of the year, we are starting to see light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. Our gift to you will come next spring, when we offer you our selection for the position of parish minister in our beloved church. Your gift to us goes on and on, in your enthusiasm and support and love for our church community. We thank you for that. All of us on the Search Committee wish you a season of joy and peace. May we all find light in the darkness. Steve Brown, Joy Collins, Larry Eldridge, Mark Jackson, Cynthia Looney, Libby Moore, Nancy Warren Oliver, John Weas

January 20, 2004

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: On schedule, we're moving into the critical phase of the search process. Within the next two months, we'll make our final choice from an impressive pool of candidates. We want to remind you that we will present only one choice at the end. Why only one? For a successful ministry, any candidate will want an overwhelming affirmation in the final congregational vote. If we presented multiple choices, no candidate would receive the almost unanimous "yes" vote that signifies that affirmation, and the congregation might find itself split into camps. We value the trust and confidence you have placed in us to make this momentous decision. By the time we present you with our choice, we will have reviewed a significant number of applications, checked dozens of references, interviewed candidates for countless hours, and discussed the candidates in depth. At every stage, we hold in mind the hopes, dreams, and concerns of our congregation. When it comes to the final decision, we will offer our selection for an up-or-down, yes-or-no vote. We're confident that you'll be as enthusiastic as we are about the choice. Thank you for your input during this process.

parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

February 3, 2004

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: After extensive review of an amazing pool of ministerial candidates, we have selected the "pre-candidates" for the position of parish minister of our beloved church. As we get to know these ministers in depth, through interviews, informal talks, reference calls, and sermons, it seemed a good time to review the ministerial attributes you, the congregation, defined last spring through the survey and cottage meetings. We heard that you value strong preaching, warmth, caring and openness, acceptance of our theological differences, intellectual stimulation, enthusiasm, humor, excitement about religious education and social justice, and a cooperative, yet visionary leadership style. The ministers on our short list seem to fit the bill, we're happy to report. The congregation's participation in this process has helped us stay on target, and we're looking forward to the day, several months from now, when we can announce our final choice. parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

February 10, 2003

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: It may seem as though our committee has gone underground for a while, but we're working as hard as ever. This is a weighty decision, requiring all our attention and discernment. Our hope is to announce our selection in late March or early April, the exact timing to be coordinated with the candidate. After the announcement, we will provide lots of information about how our choice fits the church's criteria, and we'll offer opportunities for you to ask questions. The final candidating week will have to be confirmed with the candidate, but our

tentative plan is for the candidate to preach at both services and be available at receptions after each service on Sunday, April 25. During the following week, we will hold meetings and social gatherings so you can interact, ask questions, and feel comfortable with our choice. Sunday May 2 is the big day. After the candidate preaches at both services, there will be a congregational meeting to vote on calling the minister. (We'll provide lunch beforehand, of course.) By then you will have had ample opportunity to make your own decision. We hope you'll agree we've made the right choice and vote "yes" in overwhelming numbers. parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

March 2, 2004

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: It's our anniversary, a whole year since our election to this awesome task! Before last March, few of our committee had ever used the word "discernment" in a sentence. We began to notice it cropping up in ministerial records last fall and chuckled a little at what seemed like overuse. As we approach our final decision, though, the word has taken on depth and significance. *Discernment*, according to one dictionary, means the act or process of exhibiting keen insight or good judgment, exactly what we are called upon to do now.

All of the ministers in our final pool of candidates offer great gifts and unique strengths along with human realities. We as a committee must reflect together on those qualities and evaluate them against the congregation's needs and desires. We take our task very seriously. You have placed great trust in us, and we respect that. In less than two months, we will present our candidate, and you will have the opportunity to discern for yourselves whether we have made the right choice for our congregation. We hope that you will agree and that you will vote "yes" in overwhelming numbers to call the minister we present. In the end, it is this affirmation by the congregation that matters. This is truly a time of deep discernment for all of us. Steve Brown, Joy Collins, Larry Eldridge, Mark Jackson, Cynthia Looney, Libby Moore, Nancy Warren-Oliver, John Weas parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

March 16, 2004

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee: By now we hope you've heard our joyful news: we recommend the team of the Reverends Kaaren Anderson and Scott Tayler to be our settled parish co-ministers. When you get to know them as we do, we think you'll be pleased. Before and during Candidating Week (April 25 – May 2), we'll do all we can to help you understand why they are such an outstanding choice.

We came to this decision after an exhaustive search. After the survey and cottage meetings last spring, we produced our congregational record, packet, and video for prospective candidates. We've written 32 newsletter columns to keep you informed. We followed up on all the suggestions from congregants about potential candidates. We read 30 ministerial records and countless sermons, exchanged packets with 10 ministers, held 6 phone interviews with candidates and made dozens of reference calls. We hosted our top candidates on three weekends (including Valentine's Day, which created some

situations) plus an extra Sunday. By one estimate, we've each logged at least 450 hours on this project, but none of us really wants to count. We exchanged 2267 e-mails, give or take, and met once a week, often twice, at Joy's house. We adopted Joy's chocolate lab Toblerone and discovered a mutual fondness for red wine, chocolate, and stick shift cars. We got to know and respect each other.

And in the end, we all agreed on this decision. We'll be available to answer your questions after both services and we're looking forward to introducing you to Scott and Kaaren. Steve Brown, Joy Collins, Larry Eldridge, Mark Jackson, Cynthia Looney, Libby Moore, Nancy Warren-Oliver, John Weas. parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

March 23, 2004

From the Settled Parish Minister Search Committee:

So, we've made our selection and announced the news to the congregation. What's left for us to do, you ask? Now we come to the fun part, when we can drop the confidentiality and tell you what we're doing. Our big project now is Candidating Week, Sunday April 25 through Sunday May 2. Let us try to answer some of your questions:

Who are the candidates? The Search Committee has selected the Reverends Kaaren Anderson and Scott Tayler as our choice to share the one position of Parish Minister. They are referred to as "candidates" until the congregation calls them as Parish Co-Ministers of our church.

What does it mean, "call the minister?" The Search Committee has worked long and hard to select our candidate, but the congregation has the final say. At the congregational meeting on May 2, the congregation votes to affirm the Search Committee's choice. With an overwhelming yes vote, Kaaren and Scott will know that the congregation has truly "called" them to be our ministers.

What is Candidating Week, anyway? It's when you'll get to know Scott and Kaaren up close and personal, and they'll get to know the people who make our church so special. We've told them a great deal about our congregation, but this is a time of mutual discovery, a time to get to know the real people. They'll serve in worship on both Sundays, attend meetings, and participate in informal receptions and gatherings where you'll have time to get to know them and they'll have time to hear your ideas and concerns. Their children will be here for at least part of the week.

We'll provide a detailed schedule of events within the next few weeks, after we've confirmed our plans with Kaaren and Scott. In the meantime, look for our flashing red lights (yes, we're baaaack!) after both services every Sunday. We'll have pictures and information about Scott and Kaaren at our table. Please feel free to call any of us or e-mail us at parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org

Steve Brown, Joy Collins, Larry Eldridge, Mark Jackson, Cynthia Looney, Libby Moore, Nancy Warren-Oliver, John Weas

Candidating Week Is Coming!!

April 25 through May 2, 2004

In the life of our church, calling a minister ranks among the most significant acts of our congregation. We on the Search Committee feel wonderful about the candidates we have chosen for the position of Parish Co-Ministers, Scott Tayler and Kaaren Anderson. You'll find lots of information about Kaaren and Scott at our table after Sunday services and on the First Unitarian Church website www.rochesterunitarian.org. The more exciting news is that in just a few weeks, we will present them to you in person during Candidating Week. Our hope is that by the end of that week, you will know them and appreciate them as we do.

Candidating Week provides many opportunities for interaction. The congregation and the candidates will have time to share what we love about this church, talk about our passions and concerns, and tell our stories. Kaaren and Scott will lead worship services on both Sundays, April 25 and May 2, and will attend many events, listed on the other side of this page. The culmination of Candidating Week is the congregational meeting to call the ministers on May 2.

During Candidating Week, we hope that you will attend at least one event with Scott and Kaaren and come to one or more worship services before the vote to call. Kaaren and Scott will each preach at one of the services on the two Sundays. For these two weeks only, the early and late services will be different in both sermons and music, so that you can get a good sense of what it will be like to have these co-ministers sharing worship. They will also participate in the family service on May 2.

We have planned receptions with light refreshments, open discussion times, and meetings with key committees and groups. At these events, Scott and Kaaren will be available for informal dialogue and a question and answer period. On Friday evening, they and their children will attend the Doing Plays performance and the ice cream social afterwards. We have left their schedule open on Saturday, when they will be making final preparations for the Sunday worship services.

We are thrilled to be coming to the happy conclusion of this most amazing year of search. After the second service on Sunday, May 2, our congregation will gather together to make a momentous decision, whether to call Kaaren Anderson and Scott Tayler to be our Parish Co-Ministers. Before this meeting, we hope you will get to know them and learn to treasure their strengths as we do. You have put great trust in us to choose the best for our church, and we are grateful for that trust. We want to hear your excitement and your concerns, before and during Candidating Week. Please contact us at our table on Sunday mornings, or through e-mail (parish_search@rochesterunitarian.org) or by calling any of us. Steve Brown, Joy Collins, Larry Eldridge, Mark Jackson, Cynthia Looney, Libby Moore, Nancy Warren-Oliver, John Weas