

Liaison Observations

I share these observations of my time spent with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee as a liaison for their October, 2015 meeting. Let me start with the bottom line, in case you aren't able to read this entire reflection...

Bottom line – The Ministerial Fellowship Committee is one of the most committed, engaged and thoughtful group of people that I have ever worked with. To a person, they take their role as Committee Members with a grace-filled mixture of seriousness, humility and integrity. They live out their covenant with each other impeccably. They commit a great deal of volunteer time to the process of preparing for and participating in their work. I was honored to be asked to serve as a liaison, and was transformed by participating in that role. I encourage anyone preparing to see the Committee, to trust these colleagues. They are proud stewards of Unitarian Universalism and care deeply about our ministers.

If you have time and interest to read further.....

I went before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee myself as a candidate in December, 2014. My preparation for the meeting began specifically when I became part of a study group. There were five of us in the group. We met every two weeks for three hours from May through December. Hailing from several New England states, we met at Andover Newton Theological School. This was a critical part of my preparation. Our meetings were not only were incredibly helpful in our intellectual preparation, but we formed deep and lasting collegial bonds that continue as we are now in the early years of our ministries.

Despite reading other liaison reports which all provided reassurance that the Ministerial Fellowship Committee had our best interests at heart, I was nervous coming before them as a candidate. The meeting was actually lovely. A crossing of a threshold. Members of the Committee were engaged, prepared and interested in getting to know me better. It was both intense, in a good way, and actually fun.

Serving as the liaison this October allowed me to see the workings behind the curtain. I cannot speak highly enough of what I learned. The Committee Members respect each other and the candidates that are coming before them. They recognize the work that candidates have done to get to the meeting. Members of the Committee come prepared, having read candidate's packets carefully and are excited to get to know the candidates. Committee members balance work with self-care and collegiality. They hold themselves accountable to time tables but are also present and take time to discuss all that needed discussing. The power that they held as a Committee was never arrogant or used for personal benefit. It was transformative to both witness and participate in as a liaison. They treated each other, the liaisons (there was one of us for each panel) the UUA staff, and the candidates with respect and care.

If the spirit of our forbearers are somehow present in those meetings, (and I believe that they are....if in only in memory) I trust that they are proud of the work being done to carry forward the legacy of the faith which they dedicated their lives to creating.

Yours in faith,

Rev. Rebecca M Bryan

November 6, 2015