

There is no one way to be a minister.

I know before I saw the MFC I was comparing myself to all the ministers I had met during my Internship. I thought of their leadership and preaching styles and felt a flash of fear when I thought, *that's not how I lead, that's not how I preach*. On the day of my interview, I was prepared with all kinds of historical figures and theological phrases swimming through my head. But I wondered if my way of being a minister would be what the MFC was looking for.

In December, 2014 I served as a liaison on the MFC. It was wonderful to see how many different people, different personalities, preaching styles, theologies and life stories were ushered on into preliminary fellowship. There is no one way to be a minister. The ministers and lay leaders on the panel know this because they themselves represent different ways of living our faith.

I am also grateful that our denomination has set standards that all of our ministers with their different personalities, preaching styles, theologies and life stories must meet. We have committed to the work of weaving Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression and Multiculturalism into our understanding of ourselves and the world we live in. Our ministers are called to know our faith, to serve multigenerational communities and to hold themselves to a high standard of professional ethics and sexual health. I am grateful that these are not simply competencies to check off and move on from, but commitments that will require continuous growth throughout an entire career of ministry.

Before a candidate walks in, someone on the panel offers a prayer. They pray for the other members on the panel, urging everyone to open their hearts and minds to greet this new candidate with renewed curiosity and compassion. They pray for the candidate, that the candidate will trust in their own spiritual and emotional resources and feel welcomed and supported.

If I could go back to talk to the very nervous Eve who was waiting to give her MFC sermon just a few months ago, this is what I would say: Trust yourself. Trust the faith you are dedicating your life to. Trust these compassionate and committed stewards of Unitarian Universalism who we call "The MFC." After serving with them for a week, I now know that these compassionate and committed stewards of our faith feel privileged to spend an hour getting to know each candidate and learning their plans for serving our faith with integrity and commitment.

This interview doesn't make or break you as a minister. This interview is about where you are on your path of continuing growth. Remember that there is no one way to be a minister. Don't be afraid to laugh during your interview. Trust that the members of the MFC want you to succeed. Show them the minister you know you are!

Wishing you well on your journey,

Rev. Eve Stevens