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Hi everyone, my name is Hilary Allen and I'm one of the congregational life consultants in the

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New England region of our UUA. We wanted to share this short video with you as a way to clarify and

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provide some more information about our approach to ministerial startups here in the region. We know that there have been varied approaches through the years and also that sometimes people

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come from other regions where things were done a little differently. So our hope is that this will give you a sense of how we do things here in New England and answer any questions you might have

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about startups. So what is a startup? Startups are part of the region's suite of transition services.

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We offer them at times of ministerial transition. Startups are really a particularly focused retreat

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facilitated by us as regional staff with the new minister or ministers and congregational

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leadership. And the name is really meant to be descriptive. So it's to get the shared ministry

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started up. Obviously there have been many parts leading up to a new ministry getting started, but we want the retreat to be a way for everyone to come together and have focused conversation

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about beginning that new shared ministry. We want to emphasize that startups are open to all, not

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just settled ministries. We do startup retreats for interim contract and developmental ministries

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as well. Sometimes people ask, do startups happen for other religious professionals? And yes,

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from time to time, as capacity allows, we'll do a startup for a new religious educator. And

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sometimes people wonder, well, what's the purpose? Yes, you know, I understand wanting to get everybody together at the start of a new ministry, but we also want to emphasize that this is a time

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to align the mission of the congregation with the shared ministry. So hopefully this has been part of the search and contracting process. Um, but just to be extra clear that everybody knows what

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it is that everyone's trying to do together. So there are core components of a startup, the sort of essential ingredients if you will. Storytelling the past continues to be a feature of these

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retreats and that hopefully continues work that has already been underway as well as exploring congregational culture. It's very important for leaders to be able to share their understanding of

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the culture of the congregation as well as for new ministers to be able to have a sense of that. We

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also focus on defining roles and responsibilities, making sure everybody understands sort of what

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their lane or responsibilities are and having that be an open conversation so that it can be attended

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to over time. And then there's also some space for prioritizing the near future. Sometimes this

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looks like setting goals or defining priorities just so that everybody's entering into the shared ministry with the same expectations about what it is that we're trying to do together. This is all

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with a focus on justice, equity, inclusion, and dismantling white supremacy culture, as is true of all of our work. So, we want to be sure to emphasize that there's lots of room

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for customization for startups. Yes, we have a standardized agenda and experience leading

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these in lots of different sorts of situations and congregations, but there's also lots of

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places where we can do some adaptation for what might be useful for your congregation.

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So this looks like again uh customizing the design based on what your unique needs are.

Um

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that can draw from the standardized agenda that we have but also can be uh especially tailored

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for what you need. We can also customize when the startup happens. So that could be scheduled when it's convenient for you and your co-leaders. We generally recommend that settled and contract

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ministries have startup retreats in the winter and that interim retreats happen in the fall.

But

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again, that can all be dependent on your unique needs. And the wear is also customizable.

So we

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have done hybrid events where some folks are online, some folks are in person. We've also

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done a series of events over time. And we can do uh an in-person portion followed by maybe an

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online portion or vice versa. So all of that can be customized and also the who of the startup can

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be customized. So obviously minister and board need to be in the conversation but

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we've had startups where committees on ministry or transition teams or councils if those exist have

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participated. Also staff sometimes participate in a startup and there have also been portions where

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the entire congregation is invited to participate. So all of that can be customized. So all of that

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is to say let's talk more. Hopefully this has been clarifying about how we approach startups in New

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England but would love to be in conversation with you about what you can imagine your needs would be at this time of starting up a new ministry. We're excited to work together. Thanks so much.

Sync to video time

All

From New England Region UUA