

BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING

Publicity Blurb

THINK OF A MINISTER. DON'T THINK OF AN ELEPHANT.

Chances are you thought of both. And distinct images perhaps came to mind. In terms of a minister, what images came to mind? Was it a person of a particular gender, race, or age?

Beyond Categorical Thinking is a highly recommended part of the search process for our congregation. In finding the person who would be the best match for our minister, we could potentially overlook or even let biases keep us from knowing that a particular person would be the best match for us.

Other congregations have assumed that their ideal minister looks a certain way, and often ministers who are not white or male or heterosexual or able-bodied or of a particular age or class are discounted and seen as “less than” in some ways.

Ministers in our faith who are people of color, bisexual, gay, lesbian, female, transgender, differently-abled, young, old, ethnically different, or of a different class—all of these credentialed ministers still face discrimination as part of the ministerial search process.

In our efforts to find the best match, our congregation will host a Beyond Categorical Thinking worship service and workshop on _____, 20____. We will have trainers come and meet with our search committee, lead the Sunday service, and facilitate a 3-hour conversation where will have a chance to examine how we can avoid letting prejudice become a part of our search process. This is yet another way for us to put our faith into lived experience and improve the odds that regardless of identity, we will find the minister who is the best match for us and will serve us well

This opportunity allows the entire congregation fuller participation in the search process. It will allow us to explore our hopes and concerns for a new minister, learn more about the search process, and see how our own history (both personal and congregational) might interfere with our efforts in this search.

So come on (day/date) to participate in this service provided by the UUA, whom our congregations have asked for help in this process. Our trainer(s) will be _____ and _____.

You may include reference to lunch being provided, that attendance is encouraged for everyone in the congregation (and if you can, that you are providing child care.) The program is now 20 years running and proves very useful and valuable to the congregations in the search process. You may also adapt any of this as suits your needs.