

MFC Liaison Report
Rev. Karen Foster
Fall 2015

I had the privilege of serving as Candidate Liaison to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee in October of 2015, after having seen the committee in December of 2014. The thing that kept coming to me over and over again as I observed was, "Wow, this is such a *human* process."

Which seems a bit obvious, doesn't it? And yet, in the face of the power over our lives that the MFC wields, we forget that. We forget it when we allow fear to get the best of us. I have heard the dismaying stories of folks throwing up all night, shaking in their boots, so strung out with nervousness that they are unable to be themselves in front of the committee.

It really is a *human* process made up of *human* beings. Human beings who are facing difficulties in their lives just like you. Who just lost a beloved friend last week, who are facing health challenges, who have family members who are struggling, who feel confusion and ambivalence, and some who have so much going on, they are challenged just to stay in the room and be present.

And.....they really, REALLY want you to be successful! They are pulling for you! In fact, they pray for each candidate before they come into the room! They are very human faces with very human lives, and they want nothing more than to award you a "one," celebrate with you, and send you away elated.

But alas, you have to do your part, too. In that regard, I have nothing to add to the prep you know you need to do. But I do have one piece of advice. Don't do something funky with the sermon. This was the best piece of advice given to me. You may be tempted to think, "They sit and listen to sermons all day, surely something creative and out of the ordinary will move them." Don't take the risk of something that might not go well. Half of them will love it and half will hate it and then they will have to deal with that reality when trying evaluate you. Just preach your best traditional-preaching-style sermon. I love creativity and risk-taking, but in this instance, conventional wisdom is best.

Lastly, do your prep and then the night before your interview and the day of, quit your cramming and just relax, breathe, meditate, do your spiritual prep, and be yourself. You will very likely learn something from the experience that you didn't expect!

