

**Settled Minister Search Committee**  
**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Search Process**

**1. How are committee members chosen?**

The UUA recommends that a single slate of seven be nominated by a nominating committee or the governing board and then elected by the congregation. This is how our church chose its members last winter.

**2. How much time does it take for the Search Committee to complete its work?**

Between 12 – 18 months.

**3. What are the major milestones in the search process?** [As of May 31, 2009 we are at Step “d”]

- a. Impaneling of the Search Committee
- b. Search Committee Retreat
- c. Kick off of weekly meetings
- d. Congregational Survey distributed and tabulated
- e. Cottage Meetings held and synthesized
- f. Congregational Record completed for unveiling online
- g. Information packet about our congregation completed for review by potential candidates
- h. Potential candidates considered
- i. 3-4 candidates interviewed
- j. One candidate recommended
- k. Candidating week held and congregation votes on candidate
- l. Decommissioning of Search Committee
- m. Installation of new settled minister.

**4. Why is confidentiality so important?**

Confidentiality is not secrecy. The Search Committee must and will keep the congregation aware of their progress with the search process and will share all aspects of the process in which members have been involved, such as history conversations, the survey and cottage meetings. (See our bulletin board, Parish Notes, e-news and this web page.) The period of confidentiality begins when potential candidates are involved. There are several reasons for the rule on confidentiality:

Ministers settled in a congregation may not have told their present parishioners that they are contemplating a move. These parishioners are entitled to hear the news from their own minister at the appropriate time. To “leak” a minister’s name can undermine his or her ability to serve the present congregation, and will almost certainly damage a committee’s chances of attracting that potential candidate.

**5. What percentage of completed surveys does the Search Committee need?**

The best is to obtain 100% but if the response falls below 60% there is cause for concern. At best, the low response can mean that communicating the importance of completing the survey needs improvement. At worst, it can indicate that the congregation is not invested in the search.

**6. Is the vote to call a recommended candidate a ballot vote?**

Yes.

**7. Do you need to be a member of the church in order to vote on the called candidate?**

Yes.

**8. What percentage of the congregation has to vote to “call” a candidate?**

At least 90% of the members present and voting. Some ministers won't accept a call to a church if the vote is less than 95%.

**9. Will the congregation have the chance to meet the recommended candidate?**

Yes, there is a week of activities called “Candidating Week” where the candidate will preach two weekends in a row and in between attend a variety of other meetings and social events so that the congregation has a chance to meet him/her and we all get to know more about each other.

**10. What if all does not go well in the search process?**

The only failure – the *only* failure – lies in calling a minister who is a poor match for the congregation. Should the search committee not find a suitable candidate and/or for whatever reason a recommended candidate is not called, it is far better to have another year of interim ministry and work with the UUA to begin the search process again. Your search committee has pledged to do this.

**11. When would a newly called minister begin work?**

Usually in mid-August. In our church, this would allow the minister to participate in the annual Prudential Committee Retreat.

**12. When would the installation of the new minister be held?**

More recently congregations have waited until the following spring to hold the installation so that the minister and congregation can get to know one another and so as not to rush an installation at the beginning of a new church year which tends to be a very busy time for all. The installation is truly meant to be a celebration of a new covenant between the minister and the congregation. It is as much about celebrating the congregation as it is the minister.