



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

A Place to Connect, Grow and Serve

Connecting with the Search Committee

What did you do on your summer vacation?

By Frank Corsoro, Ministerial Search Committee

Some of us visited exotic locales, some of us took road trips, some of us reconnected with family and friends, some of us stayed home and reflected and meditated. Quite a few of you spent some time at Chautauqua Institution in Western New York, a stone's throw from my hometown of Dunkirk (I tell people I am from Buffalo, about 40 miles away). My wife and I had plans to spend a few days at Chautauqua ourselves, but life sometimes gets in the way. Most of my summer was spent recovering from surgery! Oh well, I hear you can live to a ripe old age minus a gall bladder – and I've also done quite nicely without my appendix for the past 50 years. My Unitarian Universalist faith has taught me to count my blessings, whether it be health or family or friends. Life is good.

But I digress. What has your Ministerial Search Committee, which we affectionately refer to as “the MSC”, been up to this summer? That is what inquiring minds want to know. Well, let me tell you, a busy summer it has been!

The MSC continued to meet bi-weekly, with the primary focus on several upcoming late summer/early fall rollouts. First up will be presenting to the congregation the results of the survey a record number of you completed way back in May and June. The data has been compiled and analyzed and formatted into an incredibly concise report and executive summary. Many thanks to the entire MSC team, but especially to our survey process lead Sarah Yue. Her combination of both critical and creative thinking skills were put to the test throughout the whole process, beginning with the development of the questions right on through the last “i” dotted and “t” crossed in the report.

And you will be seeing the labor of the MSC work because the survey will be presented as the lead-in to the next major rollout--the congregation-wide “Cottage” meetings! Over 300 of you attended these meetings as part of our last senior minister search way back in 2013. They were then called “Discovery Sessions” – but the intent is the same regardless of the change in nomenclature.

The cottage meeting format, tirelessly organized and led by our estimable MSC member Allen Keiswetter, will begin with a shared briefing (20 minutes) about the survey followed by breakout groups of 8-10 persons

each. Facilitators and reporters will present a series of questions to each small group designed to procure feedback—your thoughts and aspirations as congregants—that will aid us in the process that will lead us to call the best minister in early spring of 2020.

Possible discussion topics:

- General reaction to the survey
- What does the survey say about UUCA's future as we search for a new minister
- What questions would congregants ask ministerial candidates
- Further questions/themes MSC might want to bring out to help us answer congregation record questions

When does all this kick-off? Well, it's right around the corner. Ingathering is a special service on September 8 set to mark the "new" church year. So, it seemed like an appropriate time for the kickoff since so many of you will be attending services after the summer hiatus. Two sessions will be held on Sunday, September 8: following first service (remember, we are back to two Sunday services) from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and following the second service from 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. Pizza will be served. Both cottage meetings will be open to all church members and friends. [Sign up HERE](#).

Subsequently we will have a series of cottage meetings through early October. They will include 1) one or two meetings a week at the church including one after the Happy Hour the MSC is sponsoring (date TBD), and 2) focus group sessions with various church groups including the Board and staff. Many of the sessions will be open to all, so just come as you are able.

So—what did you do on your summer vacation?

Frank