REV. DR. TANYA SADAGOPAN

STANDING

- Ordained in 2007 within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- Has full standing in the UCC
- Current standing is held in the NH Conference by the Merrimack Association

SELECTED EDUCATION

- **D. Min**, UTS; Dissertation "Faith, Fault Lines, and Family: Multicultural Interfaith Couples and Social Change Agency"
- **M. Div** Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN
- **MA** Sociology, The Ohio State University

SELECTED VOCATIONAL HISTORY

- **Minister,** South Congregational Church UCC, Concord NH; current
- **Book Author,** *From Outlaw to In-Law: How Multicultural Interfaith Couples Can Become Agents for Social Change*, Wiph & Stock Publishers, 2024
- **Adjunct Faculty**, UTS; current
- **Blog Author**, Everyday Life Everyday Faith Ministries; current
- **Minister**, First Congregational UCC, Janesville WI
- **Director of Continuing Education and Outreach**, Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, Chicago IL
- **Minister of Christian Education and Family Life,** Union Church of Hinsdale, UCC
- **Senior Minister**, First Christian Church (DoC) Downers Grove, IL

SELECTED WORDS FROM THE CANDIDATE

- To be part of God's redeeming work we must collaborate, partner with non-profits, and garner resources beyond what was conventional. Our work is more organic and intentional, prophetic and personal.
- Local ministries continue to rebuild and restructure what being the church means. Some are choosing to end their physical ministries, others are adapting and growing in new ways. This work takes time and tenderness.
- I believe in the work of the UCC to be a united & uniting church, multiracial & multicultural, open & affirming, immigrant welcoming, and accessible for all. In a denominational setting, it can be rare to feel at home in my theology as well as affirmed in the radical hospitality of Christ. I consciously choose to forward the urgent work of the UCC.
- My goal is to create communities of empowered courageous people who dare to live their faith out loud. My prayer is for God to use me to broaden the reach of hope, extend the arms of justice, and gather together those who once have been lost, left out, or excluded from centers of faith and power.
- Disentangling Christian nationalism, racially biased rhetoric, and heterosexist and gender conforming stories from the practice of our faith requires tender hands and a loving heart. Within the mostly white UCC we are often blind to how the past has contributed to the ongoing social concerns we are wrestling with today.

SELECTED REMARKS FROM REFERENCES

- Has a lot of integrity, knows herself, and is not afraid to do the emotional work.
- She participated in the Catalyst Project's work to examine how structures and systems of philanthropy are based on Colonized European culture.
- Has a lot of skill as an administrator; has a lot of great ideas and knows how to get them done; not in a barrel through sort of way but rather bringing a group along.
- She can make bold and courageous statements and do bold and courageous things without leaving others behind.
- She has seen Tanya work well with a small church in difficulty. There was an example with a situation in which a nearby rural/farmer church was in conflict with their pastor and a number of those farmers reached out to Tanya for support.
- Tanya is great at finding that "thing" that groups with different views can connect over, bridging differences.

SELECTED FEEDBACK FROM OUR PANELISTS

- Discussed the use of diverse rituals as ways to deepen connection; inspired by her ideas of connecting into nature; broad understanding of inclusivity across multiple demographics.
- Strengths were compassion, relationality, honesty, heart for justice and feeling comfortable in her own skin.
- Would call all of us back into sacred and respectful relationships with one another
- Understands the difference between rural and urban churches on readiness to engage in social justice issues; first issue before reimaging would be to hear from communities.
- Rarely been more impressed with a candidate than with TS; keen mind, very engaging, caring.
- Willing to name her weaknesses and to work with people who have more experience; well versed in justice ministry.
- Known to be innovative, energetic, and eager to share her time and energy; significant experience in social justice, interfaith relations and other areas.

THOUGHTS FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

- After considerable discussion, discernment, and prayer this candidate emerged as the best fit for where our Conference is right now and where God is calling us as reflected in the profile.
- While none of our finalists had previous staff level judicatory experience, this candidate stepped most fully into a CM voice in her COMMAntary article and prophetic witness talk.
- Her experience and messaging around social justice is extensive, broad, and very inclusive.
- It is believed that her approach to social justice work can be well received across the conference and will continue to lead us forward especially on our commitment to dismantling white supremacy.
- She will have growth edges, as would any candidate, and references have described her as genuine, open to feedback, willing to grow, and able to seek and utilize resources when she does not know something.

- While not universal across all panels, more than any other finalist, this candidate held a space that inspired emotion, personal sharing, and vulnerability in those with whom she was interacting.