



## THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST

*An Open & Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

October 23, 2014

Dear Members and Friends of First Church,

As members of the Ministerial Search Team, we want to express our gratitude for the trust you have placed in us. These past few weeks, we held several meetings including one with Rev. Tamara Moreland, our Associate Conference Minister who is working closely with us. We also held an all-day retreat for the Search Team organized by Reverend Dianne Arakawa to discuss the process in greater detail and to get to know each other even better than we have in the past. During the meeting we elected co-chairs, a chaplain, a clerk and a corresponding secretary.

The purpose of this letter is to share with you a brief summary of the Search and Call process in the United Church of Christ.

1. We will seek your perspectives on our church and its ministry through a survey (online or written) and a series of small group meetings. As a result of this listening process, we will incorporate your ideas about new ministerial leadership into the Church Profile (Profile) that we are developing. We are in the process of designing the survey and questions for the cottage meetings. The cottage meetings are scheduled in the Parson's Study for Wednesday, November 5 at 7:00 pm and Sunday, November 9, immediately following the 10:00 am worship. So that we can encourage as many people as possible to attend the meeting after the service, babysitting will be provided in the nursery after Church School. You also will hear directly from your small group leaders about the possibility of holding similar discussions in those settings.
2. We expect to have our Profile completed by early 2015 and we will share it with you at that time. Once the Profile is ready, our vacancy will then be listed in "UCC Employment Opportunities."
3. While the work on the Profile requires the input of many in the congregation, the names of candidates will be held in strict confidence within our committee. We ask you to respect the essential confidentiality of this process. We will make every effort to keep you informed about our progress.
4. Persons who have been authorized to complete a UCC Ministerial Profile will submit profiles for our Team through the Conference/Association office. The Ministerial Profile includes information about the candidate's educational background, experience, a detailed faith statement, eight written references, a background check form, and a national criminal background check.

5. We will share our Profile with candidates and we will begin to follow up with persons in whom we have particular interest. The follow up will include telephone/Skype interviews, written and DVD services of worship and reference checks. While pursuing these steps, we also will continue to evaluate new Ministerial Profiles.
6. We will select a small number of candidates for personal interviews, following which we will make arrangements for our Search Team members to worship with them, most often in a neutral church setting arranged by our Conference/Association office.
7. We will invite at least two candidates back for second interviews, following which we will seek God's guidance and prayerfully make a decision on a candidate.
8. If the candidate we recommend chooses to accept, a covenant – contract with compensation arrangements will be clarified, and a date for a “candidating weekend” will be established.
9. You will have an opportunity to meet the candidate (and family) that weekend in informal settings as well as the formal worship service where the candidate will preach. A congregational meeting following the worship service will offer each member an opportunity to ask questions of the Search Committee, and to vote on the Call to our new pastor.

We are grateful during this time for the excellent interim leadership of Rev. Arakawa. We profoundly trust that God will guide both our candidates and the members of our Search Committee. We ask you to pray for us regularly. We are blessed with a wonderful church community; with hard work and God's guidance, we will be blessed with a wonderful pastor to guide us as we minister in the name of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,

Senior Minister Search Committee

Mario Chiappetti, Mark Scully – Co-Chairs  
Louise Gould – Clerk  
Karen Palotti – Corresponding Secretary  
Melinda Westbrook – Chaplain  
Rev. Dianne Arakawa, Ex Officio  
Francesca Caponetti  
Len Clough  
Rick Dupree  
Andy Granger  
Barbara Spear  
Jim Trimble, Ex Officio