

## UUFSD Ministerial Search FAQs

### Why are we conducting a ministerial search?

*Our last settled minister, Rev. David Miller, went to a larger church in northern Virginia in 2015. Rev. Meghan Cefalu has been serving as interim minister and then contract minister since August 2015. The congregation desires to have another settled minister to serve us on a long-term basis.*

### How do we get a settled minister?

*The UUA Settlement Office manages the ministerial search process. The UUFSD Board proposed a 7-person search committee, and the congregation approved the nominees. The Search Committee has been working with the UUA since July 2016 to go through the process. The main elements of the search process are:*

- *Search Committee retreat with UUA advisor*
- *Conduct survey and small group meetings to collect information on who the congregation is and what we are seeking in a settled minister*
- *Prepare “Congregational Record” which is a form from the UUA that describes the congregation’s history, finances, organizational structure, membership profile, and more. One element is a profile of what we are seeking in a settled minister. This form is made available to any ministers interested in finding a new position. Ministers in search prepare their “Ministerial Record” as their introduction to interested search committees, if/when the UUA authorizes it.*
- *Up to this point, the UUFSD search committee did not consider Rev. Meghan per se, but focused on what the congregational survey and focus groups said, in order to develop a profile of what attributes an ideal candidate would have.*
- *When there is an “internal candidate,” the search committee must determine if that candidate will be invited to become their settled minister before they are allowed to see applications from any other candidates. In our case, after considerable deliberation, we unanimously agreed that Rev. Meghan was a very good match to the profile of what we wanted in a settled minister. We notified the UUA and Rev. Meghan that we did want to consider her. We were authorized to give her our Congregational Record and she gave us her Ministerial Record.*
- *After we reviewed Meghan’s MR and she reviewed our CR, there was mutual agreement to continue in discussion about the possibility of calling her as our settled minister. We notified the UUA of our decision to invite Meghan to be our pre-candidate.*
- *Prepare congregational “packet” which is actually a website, with additional information about the geographic region, job opportunities, housing, schools, and more details about the congregation, based on the survey and focus groups and other inputs. This packet/website is exchanged for the “ministerial packet” with ministers in search who the UUFSD Search Committee identifies if there is*

*mutual interest. We were required to prepare this packet so that if we did not go forward with Meghan, we would be ready to join the regular search process and consider outside candidates.*

- *Conduct pre-candidate evaluation – the search committee contacted references and conducted a very in-depth interview (more than 5 hours) with Rev. Meghan. In addition to detailed questions and answers, we invited Rev. Meghan to develop a worship service with us, around a theme we gave her on the spot (anger and spirituality).*
- *During that interview, Meghan informed us that she had applied for a waiver of the “3-year rule” from the UU Ministerial Fellowship Committee Executive Committee, and had been denied. She assured us that she had no reservations about moving forward with us regardless. She is scheduled to appeal the MFC’s decision in March if she accepts a call from UUFSD.*
- *After the reference checks and interview, the search committee again considered possible next steps and again unanimously agreed to continue forward with Meghan.*
- *The negotiations team (Chris Butler, Alisa Guralnick and Heather Stroud) met with Meghan and agreed on terms of a potential contract. The search committee reported its decision to the Board, explained the situation with the UUA, and presented the proposed contract. The Board unanimously agreed with moving forward to present Rev. Meghan as our candidate for settled ministry. The schedule for candidating week and the congregational meeting were agreed.*
- *Search committee sent a letter and email to the congregation announcing the decision to present Meghan as our candidate for settled minister.*
- *During candidating week, the candidate delivers two sermons and in between meets with committees, groups, and individuals to get to know the congregation better and to allow the congregation to get to know the candidate.*
- *Following the second Sunday service, a congregational vote determines whether or not to call the candidate; then the candidate decides whether to accept a call if offered.*
- *If agreement is not reached between UUFSD and Rev. Meghan, in principle the search committee could be authorized to look at other ministers in search, and see if there are any candidates of interest who are also interested in UUFSD. Alternatively, UUFSD could seek another interim minister and start a new search in the future.*

What is the 3-year rule and why is it there?

- *This rule of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) says that someone cannot become a settled minister at a congregation where they have been employed as an interim minister or in several other capacities within the last 3 years. The exact wording has changed in the last few years, which was part of the confusion related to our search process.*

- *The main intent, as we understand it, is to preserve the integrity of the interim ministry system. An interim minister is supposed to come into a congregation knowing s/he will be leaving in one or two years. Their role is to identify and help solve any problems or challenges that need attention in order to make the congregation healthy and more likely to have a successful relationship with their next settled ministry. If the interim minister anticipated staying on as a settled minister, they might not tackle problems in the same way as if they knew they were moving on. The UUA Interim Ministers' Guild specifically does not want interim ministry to become a back door for candidates for settled ministry.*

What are the implications for UUFSD if we call Rev. Meghan in violation of the 3-year rule?

- *UU congregations enjoy "congregational polity" and can hire anyone they want as minister. The search committee has had intense discussions with various UUA representatives and has been assured that the decision to call Rev. Meghan as our settled minister will not harm our relationships with regional and national UUA staff. We do not anticipate any repercussions. UUA staff have repeatedly told us that the rule in question only applies to Rev. Meghan and the MFC, and is not an issue for the congregation.*

What are the implications for Rev. Meghan if she accepts our call in violation of the 3-year rule?

- *Rev. Meghan is still in discussions with the MFC and hopeful that a waiver may still be granted. However, she assures us that becoming the settled minister at UUFSD will not affect her ministerial career or cause her any other harm regardless of the result of the discussions with the MFC. She is a duly ordained UU minister and that cannot be taken away. She is eager to become our settled minister if we call her, and expects to remain in right relations with her UU ministerial colleagues. While some in the UUA establishment will be unhappy with the situation, the Board, the search committee, and Rev. Meghan judiciously followed the advice and guidance that we were given by the UUA representatives who were assigned to work with us, in order to be able to consider Rev. Meghan for settled ministry. Along the way the UUA personnel and the rules changed and there were several instances where we got incorrect or out-of-date information.*

Who can I talk to if I have questions or concerns?

- *Rev. Meghan is available by appointment to meet with anyone ([revmeghan@uufsd.org](mailto:revmeghan@uufsd.org)). You are also welcome to contact the search committee ([search@uufsd.org](mailto:search@uufsd.org)) for a confidential discussion.*