

26 May 2018

UUAA Ministerial Search Team Final Report to the Congregation & Board of Trustees

May 2018



Summary

Since the retirement of our previous Senior Minister, the Reverend Gail R. Geisenhainer in August of 2016, the Congregation has been well served by our staff and Worship Team, led by Interim Senior Minister, Reverend Doug Wadkins. In April 2017, in accordance with our bylaws, a seven member Senior Minister Search Committee (Search Team) was formed.

In July of 2017 the Search Team officially began the ministerial search process following procedures recommended by the Transitions Office of the UUA for calling a senior minister. In January, 2018 we received the names of 15 interested ministers. After reviewing records, conducting video interviews and engaging in much discernment, we invited three ministers to Pre-Candidating weekend visits to Ann Arbor. Each pre-candidate took part in day-long interviews, meals with the Search Team and each led a Sunday service at a nearby “neutral pulpit”. The Search Team further evaluated the preaching styles, information from interviews and overall communication and connection with each candidate.

Our preferred candidate, The Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti accepted our provisional offer on March 29, 2018 and was announced to the congregation on the 15th of April, 2018. He came to Ann Arbor for Candidating Week April 28 through May 6th. A special congregational meeting was held on May 6th and the UUAA Congregation voted unanimously (293 - 0) to call the Reverend Manish Mishra-Marzetti as our thirteenth settled senior minister. Rev. Manish joyfully accepted the Congregation’s call, based on the terms in the signed Letter of Agreement and a Covenant Document prepared in advance of the vote. He will begin serving UUAA in August 2018.

The Ministerial Search Team has concluded our work and after archiving materials and submitting this report will dissolve the committee.

The Search Team

The Ministerial Search Team consisted of seven members, 4 elected by the congregation and 3 appointed by the Board of Trustees. The Search Team operated independently from the Board and staff. Their work was to understand and assemble materials to accurately represent the Congregation's senior ministerial needs for the future, to research and interview ministerial candidates and to recommend a senior minister candidate who would be the best possible fit for the congregation's needs. We undertook this work in covenant with the Congregation and each other, through deep listening, data gathering and analysis, discernment and consensus seeking, while following the recommended UUA search process. The Search Team met weekly or more frequently as needed. We wrote and frequently recited the following covenant.

As we strive to recruit an outstanding candidate to serve as our congregation's next Senior Minister, we covenant with each other to:

- *Work as a team*
- *Speak from the heart*
- *Listen deeply, with respect*
- *Take time to discern*
- *Dedicate time to complete tasks well*
- *Communicate with one team voice to the congregation and staff*
- *Communicate effectively with each other*
- *Keep the best interests of our congregation at the center of our work*

As a UUA affiliated congregation following the UUA search procedures, we took advantage of resources from the UUA Transitions Office, which manages the settlement process. This meant that we had good advice and counseling and access to candidates who were all UUA ministers in good standing.

Search Team Activities

July / August 2017

A two-day retreat with our UUA District Transitions Coach, Rev. Lynn Kerr.
Developed a covenant, search calendar, communications plan, and materials to inform and engage the congregation

September

Prepared and implemented the Congregational Survey
Conducted extensive Small Group Listening Sessions

October

Reviewed and analyzed survey and listening session results
Prepared Congregational Record and submitted to Transitions Coach for review
Continued work on Congregational Portfolio (search website)

Began logistics planning for neutral pulpit visits in 2018

November

Submitted final Congregational Record to UUA Transitions Office for posting to their website
Continued work on Congregational Portfolio (search website)
Scheduled Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) workshop with UUA Transitions Office
Participated in Examining Whiteness workshop - Part 1

December

Shared Congregational Portfolio (website) with Transitions Coach for review
Discerned senior minister key qualities and criteria
Participated in Examining Whiteness workshop - Part 2

January 2018

Received names of 15 ministerial applicants and reviewed Ministerial Records
Sponsored and participated in Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) workshop and worship
Discerned and came to consensus on top 6 applicants for further consideration
Completed video interviews with top 4 applicants
Discerned and came to consensus on 3 pre-candidates
Scheduled neutral pulpit visits with pre-candidates
Informed UUA Transitions Office of our pre-candidate list and schedule
Prepared Search Report for Winter Congregational Meeting
Held Congregational Portfolio (search website) viewing sessions after both services on 1/28

February

Completed the first and second pre-candidating weekend visits involving the entire Search Team from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.
Continued to meet weekly to review pre-candidates, plan pre-candidating visits and begin planning candidating week
Communicated with UUA Transitions Office
Engaged the UUAA Negotiating Team to review questions about the Letter of Agreement
Performed initial reference checks on pre-candidates
Communicated with the pre-candidates with follow-up questions and/or responses to their questions.
Held Congregational Portfolio (search website) viewing sessions after both services on 2/25

March

Completed the third pre-candidating weekend visit involving the entire Search Team from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon.
Continued to meet weekly to review pre-candidates and plan candidating week
Met to discern our preferred ministerial candidate
Advised the UUA Transitions Office of our order of preference
Informed the Board that a consensus had been reached on the preferred candidate
Engaged the UUAA Negotiating Team to update the Letter of Agreement

Communicated with the preferred Candidate on outstanding issues / questions
Made an official offer to our preferred candidate, The Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti on 3/29.

April

Continued to meet weekly to plan the Announcement and Candidating Week
Informed the congregation of a successful search on 4/8 at both services
Announced the Candidate, the Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti on 4/15 at both services
Updated the UUAA website with information about Rev. Manish and Candidating Week
Contacted developed references of Rev. Manish
Performed criminal background check as recommended by UUA Transitions Office
Facilitated and participated in Candidating Week activities - beginning on April 28
Supported Rev. Manish as he led both services on 4/29

May

Facilitated and participated in Candidating Week activities - through May 6
Supported Rev. Manish as he led both services on May 6
Participated in special Congregational Meeting and vote to call Rev. Manish as the 13th Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor on May 6, 2018
Archive relevant information for the next search team
Archive materials for our historical records in the Bentley Library.

Cost of the Search Process

As of May 2018 the full search process cost the congregation about \$10,500 as follows (a spreadsheet documenting all expenses will be archived):

- About \$1,600 was spent during the preparation phase. Costs included the Search Team facilitated retreat and fee for UUA Transitions coach, the search website, the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop and various communications materials.
- About \$5,000 was spent on travel, food and lodging for the three pre-candidate weekends.
- About \$3,900 was spent on travel, food and events during Candidating Week.

We are very grateful for the donations of time, goods and talent that kept costs lower than they might have been. Notably, Search Team member Mike Halerz donated his time and skills to producing professional videos for our search website. And UUAA member Lisa Lemble arranged for housing and loans of cars and car seats during Candidating Week for Rev. Manish and his family.

Conclusion

The successful search for our 13th settled minister identified the Rev. Manish Mishra-Marzetti as our preferred candidate and UUAA was also the first choice congregation for Rev. Manish. The Search Team strongly believes Rev. Manish is the minister who best matches the Congregation's needs and will lead us into a very promising dawning future.

He brings a passion for social justice and spiritual growth, combined with a strong sense of purpose and desire to make the word a better place for all. He has demonstrated the ability and willingness to minister to and inspire congregations that hold diverse beliefs. He displays strong communication and organizational abilities and an aptitude for details. He is warm, engaging, energetic and radiates joy and love. He serves in the leadership of our denomination and can help us develop deeper connections to the larger UU conversations. In the words of our emeritus Minister Kenneth Phifer, a minister and congregation must love and challenge each other. The Search Team believes Rev. Manish will both love us and challenge us to live our beliefs out loud.

Rev. Manish and his family were with us for "Candidating Week" (28 April through 6 May). The Congregation had opportunities to meet the Candidate and on May 6th, voted unanimously to call him as our next senior minister. Rev. Manish will officially begin employment on the first of August 2018 and formal ministry at the beginning of the congregational year in September 2018.

The Search Team thanks the Congregation and Board of Trustees for having the wisdom and confidence to vote/appoint a talented, motivated team with complimentary abilities and personalities. You sent us on a journey of discovery about our UU Faith, our Congregation and ourselves that has made a profound impact on us. We have kept the love and care of the entire Congregation in our hearts and minds throughout this process and like all of you, value UUAA as our liberal religious home. As we journey together into our dawning future, the Congregation will grow and evolve, striving to live our covenant and principles together in gratitude for each other and the wondrous world around us. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to serve.

In Service, Love and Community,

UUAA Ministerial Search Team

Ken Klein, Chair
Kate Hutchens
Leigh Robertson
Mike Halerz
Sandy Simon
Tom Reischl
Vilma Mesa

