

FAQ's: First Congregational UCC, Eugene's Transition and Pastoral Succession Plan

Q: When is Greg Flint retiring?

A: Greg has indicated a desire to retire in June 2012. At the time of this writing, Greg has 17 months of active service as our Senior Pastor.

Q: Why do we need a transition plan?

A: We have many months with Greg Flint as Senior Pastor at our helm before his retirement in June 2012. During the time before his retirement, we will be reflecting on our church as a whole: our mission, our membership experience, our finances, our future.

Q: What is the Church Profile and why is it necessary?

A: The Local Church Profile is a UCC document that must be completed as part of the process of calling a new Senior Pastor. We reflect on who we are as a church at this point in time. It helps us plan where we want to go in the future as well as help a candidate determine if he or she wishes to apply as a candidate for our congregation. We have a committee from the Board to organize the documents and plan for collection of information from all of our members.

Q: How will information be collected for this profile?

A: The search committee and Board members will be meeting with standing committees and other small groups to gather information and listen closely to you. This committee wants to know what our members value, how we are doing, what we could do differently, and how we want to grow in our church. We want to be sure we are listening to God's call and how we want to respond as a church.

Q: What happens to this Profile?

A: A copy will be submitted to the UCC to be available to potential candidates. Copies will be available to all members of our congregation on our website or in print form. This profile will be a great help to the Search Committee. When they begin the search, they will be doing so with the collective view of the congregation.

Q: Why don't we just hire one of our Associate Ministers?

A: We are blessed to have two talented Associate Ministers on our staff. Neither Janet nor Melanie are interested in the Senior Pastor position. They both intend to stay on in their current positions at FCUCC now and after the new Senior Pastor is called and confirmed by the congregation. The Search Committee will find a Senior Pastor who is a good match for working with our current staff.

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Q: Why do we need a Search Committee and how will they be appointed?

A: The Church Board has appointed a Nominating Committee made up of Board members. The nominating committee is currently developing a plan for appointing members to the Search Committee. We hope to have a group representing the make up of our congregation as well as have the skills necessary to conduct a Search and Call. Characteristics of effective Search committee members are identified in "A Pilgrimage Through Transitions and New Beginnings" (Section 3-2)

Q: What is "A Pilgrimage Through Transitions and New Beginnings"?

A: The United Church of Christ has developed a document describing the whole process of Search and Call. It is available on the UCC website at <http://www.ucc.org/ministers/a-pilgrimage-through.html> Most of the document applies to our local church. Some of the processes are outdated and are being updated by UCC. The electronic age has had a big impact on the process of Search and Call and we will make use of it. Of course, we will adapt the document and recommendations to our needs.

Q: To whom does the Search Committee report?

A: The Search committee will provide direct monthly progress reports to the Board. The Moderator will serve on the Committee as a non-voting member and serve as liaison with the Board. Monthly reports to the congregation will occur through The Shalom and our website. The Search Committee shall maintain complete confidentiality regarding all candidates.

Q: What does the Search Committee do, and why will it take so long to hire a new Senior Pastor?

A: Here is a general overview:

- The Senior Pastor profile must be completed
- The Senior Pastor profile is posted through the UCC
- Our Local Church Profile must be completed
- Potential candidates may be specifically identified and contacted
- Candidates send their profiles to the Search Committee for review
- The Search Committee must select a sub-group of candidates for phone interviews
- Final candidates will be selected and brought in for interviews
- Members from the Search Committee may wish to visit a church or churches of final candidates
- One candidate is chosen to be presented to the congregation
- The congregation must accept or reject this candidate, as per FCUCC's by-laws.

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Q: Will we be a different church?

A: Our past leaders and saints of our church have done a lot of work creating and describing our Mission and Vision. We have a "Key Missional Statement" which guides the work of our clergy, Board, standing committees, and staff. These documents have been reviewed as recently as Fall of 2009. The congregation updated our Mission Statement in June 2010. These documents are available in a booklet form for all of us to use.

These Mission and Vision documents are ours. We will remain a church committed to the "Eight Points of Progressive Christianity." They reflect who we are, what we value and guide our work. We will not change because our Senior Pastor Leader retires. Our Vision and Mission will continue to direct our activities even with a new Senior Pastor Leader.

And yet, we know one person can make a change. You have changed us because you have joined our church. Our church grows and changes as we listen to God speaking. Our core missional principles and values evolve as we evaluate and grow.

Our church has grown and changed since its founding by Dr. Condon many years ago. We listen to God's call. We listen to the needs and desire of our members. We listen to the voices of our community. We listen. We respond, We evolve. We change.

We will find a new Senior Pastor leader who "fits" with our mission and vision. He or She will help us live our values as our church continues to respond to new realities in new ways.

Q: When will the new Senior Pastor Leader begin?

A: We hope to have the Search Committee commissioned on April 3, 2011 during worship service. We plan to have a "fill-in interim" period. After Greg retires we will have several months where Pastor Janet and Pastor Melanie will continue to serve, preach, and provide pastoral care. We will also make use of the members of our congregation who are clergy. We have done this successfully for sabbaticals, travel, and health needs in the past. How long this "fill-in interim" lasts will be negotiated with our new Senior Pastor Leader.