

Dear First UU Community,

The Search Committee has begun meeting. We are honored you have entrusted us with identifying a candidate for our next settled minister. We will be interacting with the community a great deal over the coming months, and will do our best to keep you informed. As a way of introduction, we want to share the following.

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Houston (First UU) created a Search Committee in order to identify a candidate for the congregation to consider as a called minister. This has been the plan since we entered into a Developmental Ministry in 2020. At that time, Reverend Dr. Colin Bossen had been serving as our interim minister for two years and indicated he would be interested in staying on as First UU's Developmental Minister. The Board agreed to this and signed a five-year contract with him which will expire on July 25, 2025. Rev. Colin has communicated to the Board and Search Committee that he is interested in being considered for First UU's settled minister position.

The difference between a Settled Minister and any other ministerial position (Interim, Developmental, Assistant, etc.) is a Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) distinction. In our faith, we practice congregational polity, meaning that we make our own decisions including our own vision, mission, and covenant - as we did recently, and calling our own minister. We also believe that the democratic process is important. Therefore, calling a settled minister is not delegated to the Board or directed by the Unitarian Universalist Association. Calling a settled minister is the right and responsibility of the Congregation.

When UUA congregations are ready to call a Settled Minister, they must first form a Search Committee with members approved by congregational vote. The Search Committee is then responsible for canvassing members, creating a congregational profile to share with potential candidates, interviewing candidates, and finally making a recommendation to the congregation. Generally, candidates do not consider accepting a call unless there is 90-95% approval by the congregation.

A national search process is complex. Because Rev. Colin has indicated an interest in being our called minister, it would be much easier to skip the process. However, Rev. Colin, the UUA, and the Search Committee agree it would be unwise to do that. Instead, we are taking a two phase approach to the search.

Phase One will be to canvas the congregation and determine if the congregation believes Rev. Colin is a good fit to continue as First UU's Settled Minister. This phase will be concluded in October, at which time we will make a recommendation to the BOD about whether to call a congregational vote.

If the congregation does not choose to call Rev. Colin, the Search Committee will then enter Phase Two of the search. Phase Two will consist of a national search and all that entails. In the coming weeks, we will conduct a survey to determine what the congregation values most about FUUCH and what qualities it feels are most important for the next settled minister to have to help us fulfill our mission of widening love's circle.

We will be reaching out in other ways for your input. *Please note that the Search Committee does not and will not take a position in this process.* Our role is to ask questions and to listen to your wishes for the future of First UU. We urge you to participate in this important democratic process.

We hope this clarifies what the Ministerial Search Committee was elected to do and why. If you have any questions, please contact any one of us or email us at [Search@firstuu.org](mailto:Search@firstuu.org). We will communicate openly about our processes but our deliberations are confidential.

Thank you for trusting us to lead this very important work for our community.

The Ministerial Search Committee,

Ruth Hoffman-Lach

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Steve Braun

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Johanna DeYoung

Becky Smith

Lydia Luz