

Vermont Conference United Church of Christ



**Candidate Evaluation & Interview
Preparation**

Online at:

vtcucc.org/settled-pastor-search/

HOW TO READ A PASTORAL PROFILE

"...discern what is the will of God..." Romans 12:1-13

I The Purpose of the Pastoral Profile:

- to **begin the discernment process** between committee and candidate;
- to aid in the **listening process** for committee members;
- to identify **initial candidates** for **initial interviews**.

II Things to Remember about Pastoral Profiles:

- they offer a picture, **an incomplete picture**, of who the candidate is;
- they are an **initial screening tool** only;
- once an initial candidate has been identified through the profile process, use a variety of ways to develop a "data bank" about the candidate.

III Steps in Reading a Pastoral Profile

Discernment . . . Reflection . . . Meditation

This part of the task is a crucial component to your ability to engage in a discernment process. Take some time to

- Lift up this candidate in prayer that you might learn something from them as well as about them as you read.
- Seek God's blessing on this person and on their call to ministry.
- Ask for God's guidance in your decision-making process regarding this person.
- Listen for stirrings in your heart and mind regarding this person.

- 1.) Set aside a quiet place and a period of time for your initial read-through. Have the profile, pen and/or marker to use on the profile and paper for additional notes nearby. Keep your Candidate Rating Sheet with the 10-12 skills, experience, gifts and needs that you have identified as desirable in your next pastor nearby as well.

Note the few facts on the first page as though you are being introduced for the first time – name, place of residence and authorization for ministry.

- 2.) There are the four **Ministry Essays** which follow. Listen as they tell you about themselves. These Essays ask the Candidate to reflect on their Call, Covenant, Passion, and Faith or Pastoral Formation. Read them as if the person was sitting across from you. If something gets you excited, underline it. If a sentence troubles you, highlight it. If you want to follow up on something the candidate wrote, make a note of it. Engage in a conversation of sorts with the candidate while you read through the Ministry Essays. Note possible clues to the skills, experience, gifts and needs you have identified as desirable in your next pastor.

You will find references to The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers in the United Church of Christ. This is a tool used by UCC Committees on Ministry

when they are journeying with a Member in Discernment regarding a call to ministry. Over time, this tool marks the progress in growth, knowledge and formation in Pastoral preparation and identity. It is also a tool which seasoned ministers use in considering areas for continuing education. Where are there still growing edges?

A copy of the 'Marks' will be provided to your Search Committee for your curiosity and information!

3.) Following your 'conversation' with this candidate, you are then invited to peruse their 'resume'. Read through the information about this person's **Formal Education**, other **Educational or Formative Experiences**, **Professional Development** and **Vocational History** along with descriptions of three **Key Accomplishments**. Look at the kind and depth of experience, potential for growth and readiness to assume the opportunities and challenges present in your congregation. Remember, not having done the kind of ministry you are looking for **should or does not indicate that the candidate cannot meet the challenge**. Sometimes churches are well served to call someone who will grow into the position; at other times it is best to call someone with significant prior experience. **Do not overlook nor devalue life experience and secular employment in second and third career candidates. Age and/or gender can bring unexpected gifts to a call that may not be apparent at first glance.** Again, note any possible clues to the skills, experience, gifts and needs you have identified as desirable in your next pastor.

4.) There are three **References**. Read each Reference as if you were listening to them tell you about the candidate you have met in the Ministry Essays and the 'Resume'. There are four reflections for each Reference – areas of strength, areas of growth, description of a significant experience with this person, and any additional comments.

Again, if something gets you excited, underline it. If a sentence troubles you, highlight it. If you would want to follow up on something the Reference wrote, make a note of it. Again, note on another piece of paper possible clues to the skills, experience, gifts and needs you have identified as desirable in your next pastor.

5.) You will then find yourself returning to your visit with the candidate as the ministerial candidate shares a **Self-Appraisal** with reflections on the same questions their References answered. Again, note excitement, troubling or follow-up questions on the profile as you read. Ask yourself if there are any inconsistencies between what the person wrote in his/her essays and this self-assessment. Note any inconsistencies between that the person has written and what the references have written. As well, note when there is seamless affirmation of a particular skill, experience or gift in ministry. Again, note any possible clues to the skills, experience, gifts and needs you have identified as desirable in your next pastor.

6.) The Self-Appraisal is followed by a **Self-Disclosure**. The questions are straightforward. If the Candidate has to answer 'yes' to any of them, the Candidate is asked to provide detailed information for any affirmative answer.

- 7.) **Supplemental Material.** This includes a section which may or may not be filled in which is a place for **Interpreting the History** or **Special Factors** which need to be mentioned but weren't applicable to share elsewhere, and any **Web Presence** and **Closing Thoughts**. Consider whether this information answers any of the questions that have arisen as you read the profile.
- 8.) Finally you will find a **Criminal Background Check**.
- 9.) Make any final notes on this information to help you share your thoughts with the Search Committee when you meet next time.

Discernment . . . Reflection . . . Meditation

Now that you have met this person through their own words, the words of their references and your words and thoughts as you have underlined, exclamation-pointed, questioned-marked and taken notes – STOP - Take some time to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider the material you have just read:

- Again ask for God's guidance in your decision-making process regarding this individual.
 - Listen for stirrings in your heart and excitement in your mind regarding each person – or not.
 - Pray that God will guide this candidate to the ministry setting where their ministry will flourish in partnership with a congregation.
 - Pray that God will guide your church to the candidate whose ministry will flourish in partnership with you.
- 10.) Bring all of your notes with you to the Search Committee meeting. Be prepared to both **LISTEN AND SPEAK WITH YOUR HEART AND YOUR HEAD**. Remember to prayerfully consider each candidate and seek to listen for God's voice among the competing voices around the table and present in the congregation.

**YOU ARE SEEKING TO MAKE A DECISION THAT WILL PLEASE GOD FIRST . . .
. . . AND BY DOING SO, THE CONGREGATION CANNOT HELP BUT BE PLEASED!**

A Word on Baggage

Everyone brings a certain amount of life experience, preconceived notions, personal preferences and deeply held notions to the table of the Search Committee. **Some of those things will be of great value in the search process; some of those things will weigh you down and get in the way of discerning the will of God for the life of the congregation** as you seek new pastoral leadership. It's a lot like packing for a trip. You lay out all that you think you will need on your bed. Then, if you are really disciplined, you set aside half of it and pack half of what you think you will need. If, however, you are like most of us, you are not quite that disciplined. You pack

everything, and I mean everything! At the end of the trip, after lugging those bags around everywhere, you wished that you had left much of it at home.

Hopefully all of the “baggage” that you bring to the table of the Search Committee will be helpful, but be aware that some of your stuff might get in the way. May you have the grace to see what gets in the way, and discard it along the journey – lightening your load and making for a delightful trip. May God bless you in this exciting and challenging journey.

(This document was originally developed by Rev. Dr. Karen E. King, Penn Central Conference and greatly adapted by Rev. Pamela Y. Lucas, Vermont Conference in light of the new Ministerial Profile format.)

Statement of Consent

"The United Church of Christ recognizes that God calls certain of its members to various forms of ministry in and on behalf of the church for which ecclesiastical authorization is required." United Church of Christ Constitution, Article VI, paragraph 21.

Use of the UCC Ministerial Profile signifies that an individual has an Association's ecclesiastical authorization to seek a call as a minister in and on behalf of the church; has completed background check screening and fitness verification; has attested to certain statements in a document of self-disclosure; and has gained three references which speak to her/his practice of ministry. The Profile is a tool of testament and transparency, meant to demonstrate covenants of supportive cooperation and appropriate sharing of information among national offices, Conference and/or Association personnel, calling bodies, and the minister, as expressed in paragraph 25 of Article VI of the United Church of Christ Constitution.

It is essential that information contained within this document be sensitively and responsibly reviewed and interpreted. All those seeing the document have the responsibility to maintain or dispose of its contents confidentially.

Any practice by calling bodies of routinely rejecting profiles on a perfunctory basis without a complete and individualized assessment, including a thoughtful review of commentary offered by the candidate, is strongly discouraged. In particular, criminal history information, including the conduct underlying that history, should be evaluated in terms of the nature and gravity of the offense or conduct, the time that has passed since the offense, conduct, and/or sentence, and the nature of the position sought by a candidate, so as to foster call and hiring decisions that are based on an individualized assessment that is job/ministry related and consistent with ministry/business necessity.

Relationships between calling bodies, authorized ministers, and those holding ministerial standing and fitness oversight rely upon practices of discernment and dialogue. Because such relationships require integrity and an honest exchange of relevant information, for the health and mission of the church, this minister pledges the following:

1. I attest that the information contained in the UCC Ministerial Profile is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for a calling body's declined consideration for, or termination of, a ministry position. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely manner to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that a response or information was incorrect when given or if the response or information, though accurate when given is no longer accurate.

2. I understand that I may designate certain Conference and/or Association staff and other persons and entities, to receive and circulate my UCC Ministerial Profile. I authorize all such persons and entities, and/or their agents, to make inquiries regarding all statements contained in my UCC Ministerial Profile. I also authorize all persons, entities, former employers, committees on ministry and their agents, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me and to supply verification of the information provided in my UCC Ministerial Profile. I understand that such persons may comment on and state their opinions regarding my background and character to those who execute the search process, such as members of a calling body or judicatory staff persons. To encourage such persons to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses and comments made in good faith and without malice.

Signature

[On File](#)

Name

Serene M. Davis

Timestamp

Monday, March 17, 2014 1:10 PM



Contact Information

Email Address

rhackenberg@lancasterseminary.edu

Full Name

Serene Monique Davis

Preferred Name

Serene

I Prefer To Be Contacted By

Email Address

Addresses

123 Main Street
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
United States

Type

Business

Primary

Mailing

Phone Numbers

Number	Extension	Type	Primary
987-654-3210		Business	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Ecclesiastical Authorization for Ministry

I am a member of Mount Zion United Church of Christ Church in Cleveland , None United States.

I am an Ordained Minister with full standing in the United Church of Christ. My current standing is held in the no Conference.

Verification

- The minister's standing is current and the candidate is deemed fit for ministry in and on behalf of the United Church of Christ.**
- A current criminal background check is attached at this time.**
- To the best of my knowledge, current employment information is accurate.**
- To the best of my knowledge, the background disclosure statement is accurate.**



 My signature below attests to the above four items.

Signature

[On File](#)

Name

MESA Validator

Timestamp

Monday, March 17, 2014 1:40 PM

Title

MESA Validator

Conference

MESA

Association

ProfilesOffice

Ministry Essays

 All essay questions reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers at the United Church of Christ](#).

 The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

My sense of being called by God and the church to authorized ministry (from "Spiritual Foundation for Ministry" section of *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers at the United Church of Christ*).

My sense of call was fostered at an early age by my home church, an American Baptist congregation in San Francisco, California, which encouraged the participation of all members in the work of ministry. As a young adult, I was blessed with opportunities to teach and preach in the church; these invitations and affirmations from the congregation, in addition to the mentorship of my pastor, convinced me of God's call to commit my life to the faithful service of the Living Word and the Body of Christ. Thus called and committed, but uncertain of my precise professional direction in ministry, I continued my vocational discernment through the Master of Divinity program at Andover Newton Theological School. My studies in practical theology and my internship years with Eighth Congregational UCC revealed my passion for congregational life and leadership as lived expressions of Christ. Now with almost thirty years of pastoral experience, it is still the ongoing transformation of the Body of Christ that energizes my work and renews my sense of call.

My concept of covenant and how it informs the nature, purpose, and polity of the United Church of Christ (from "UCC Identity for Ministry" section of *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers at the United Church of Christ*).

Because God has aligned God's well-being to humanity (Exodus 6:7, "I will take you as my people, and I will be your

God"), we commit ourselves to one another in imitation of God's covenantal commitment to humanity. Bound to one another by covenant -- like oxen bound by a wooden yoke or children bound together for a three-legged race -- we strive to live in such a way that the entire world is blessed by the knowledge of the love of God. The United Church of Christ, which I joined during my undergraduate years, has established covenantal relationships between ministers and churches, Conferences and Associations and national offices, deeming us equal and necessary partners in the work of loving God and all neighbors. Authorized ministers in the United Church of Christ are joyfully burdened with the responsibility of creating and fostering partnerships within their ministry settings, as well as in and on behalf of the wider church.

I am passionate about

I am passionate about community as a living expression of Christ. While the Church has its share of flaws and skeptics (among them, institutionally-wary Gen-Xers and a rising trend in Spiritual-but-not-Religious aficionados), I believe that we are called to practice the teachings of Christ within and extending out from covenantal communities, rather than striving to emit "This Little Light of Mine" entirely on our own as individuals. Thus from Council meetings to church bylaws, Sunday worship to Saturday breakfast group, in all that we do as a faith community, we aim to embody the fullness of Christ's love and grace.

Reflect on one mark from the "Personal and Professional Formation for Ministry" section of *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers at the United Church of Christ* (Please state which Mark that you will be reflecting on).

Section 3, Mark 10: "The ability to take initiative in leadership, and to frame and test a vision in community." In my experience of pastoral ministry, the discipline of leadership is a daily and prayerful practice of holding a vision that I do not own. The vision of who/what a faith community has been, is and will be, belongs to the people of that faith community itself first of all, and it belongs to Jesus Christ most of all. As the pastor, I lead the community in naming its vision, telling its stories and dreams, and living into Christ's ever-renewing call, always mindful that my leadership does not make the vision "mine"; rather, it is my privilege to catch sight of the vision in cooperation with the congregation and by the inspiration of Christ.

Educational Formation for Ministry

 In the following section I include a record of my Formal Education, any Regional Education Training Programs, or other formative educational experiences I have completed, as well as Continuing Education.

Formal Education

Institution / Program
 San Francisco City High School

City
 San Francisco

Region
 None

Country
 United States

Start Date of Attendance
 1976

End Date of Attendance
 1980

Degree / Certification Earned
 High School Diploma

.....



Institution / Program
Ohio State University

City
Columbus

Region
None

Country
United States

Start Date of Attendance
1980

End Date of Attendance
1984

Degree / Certification Earned
Bachelor of Arts in History

Institution / Program
Andover Newton Theological School

City
Newton Centre

Region
None

Country
United States

Start Date of Attendance
1984

End Date of Attendance
1987

Degree / Certification Earned
Master of Divinity

Institution / Program
Chicago Theological Seminary

City
Chicago

Region
None

Country
United States

Start Date of Attendance
1997

End Date of Attendance
2000

Degree / Certification Earned
Doctor of Ministry in Congregational Transformation

Regional Theological Educational Programs and Formative Educational Experiences

Professional Development

Continuing Education

Community and Wider Church Involvement

Led Annual Youth Mission Trip with Habitat for Humanity (1991-1995); Organized Ecumenical Community Meal Program (2000-2005); Initiated Interfaith Pride Worship Service (2007-2013); Served on Association Committee on Ministry (2012-2013)

Awards, Honors, and Publications

"Alumni Excellence in Pastoral Ministry" Award from Andover Newton Theological School (2004); Blog called "Living as Church" (2008-2013); Book of poetry entitled "Step by Step" (Cleveland Publishing, 2011)

Vocational History

 Below find a full history of my Vocational experiences, including Key Accomplishments for up to 3 selected experiences. All ecclesiastical service is listed.

Location / Setting Eighth Congregational United Church of Christ	Start Date of Service 1985
City Newton	End Date of Service 1987
Region None	Title / Position Student Pastor
Country United States	Job Type Part-Time

Location / Setting Hilltop Congregational United Church of Christ	Start Date of Service 1988
City Waltham	End Date of Service 1995
Region None	Title / Position Associate Pastor for Youth and Families
Country United States	Job Type Full-Time

Location / Setting Lakeside United Church of Christ	Start Date of Service 1995
City Evanston	End Date of Service 2005
Region None	Title / Position Pastor
Country United States	Job Type Full-Time



Location / Setting

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ

Start Date of Service

2006

City

Shaker Heights

End Date of Service

2013

Region

None

Title / Position

Senior Pastor

Country

United States

Job Type

Full-Time

Key Accomplishments

Description

I'm proud of the vision work that is underway at Mt. Zion UCC, driven by the question "What does it mean to be the Body of Christ to our local community?" Responses thus far focus on hospitality: the congregation hosts an annual Interfaith Pride Worship Service, participates in an ecumenical clothing bank, and shares space with a Spanish-speaking congregation. In addition, Mt. Zion is learning to "vision" our faith in our budget; the Church Council recently committed funds to hire an ASL interpreter for worship and the congregation has increased its OCWM giving.

.....

Description

At Lakeside UCC in Illinois, the work of faith formation was key to the church's revitalization. The congregation and I examined its traditional faith formation goals before daring to dream in new ways. An intergenerational faith formation program was initiated, incorporating the study of scripture with the love of neighbor; the congregation transformed its belief in justice to a practice of justice (exemplified in its participation in the ecumenical community meal program).

.....

Description

Across my years in ministry, I am proud of my consistency in preaching and pastoral care. I believe firmly in the impact of excellent pastoral care to foster congregational vitality by demonstrating Christ's presence at bedsides and firesides, across communion tables and kitchen tables. I continue to invest time and energy in the development of my preaching through both informal and formal education, so that I can be the best vessel possible for God's word.

References

Email Address

rachel@faithandwater.com

Full Name

Tomas A. Rey

Email Date

November 25, 2013

Address

.....



700 Prospect Ave
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
United States

Type
Business

Phone.....

Number	Extension	Type
216-736-3865		Business

Short Answers.....

This minister's areas of strength in the practice of ministry as I experience them are

There is no lack of depth to the wells of spiritual water that I know Serene to draw up from her years of practiced faith and trust.

Some areas of growth for this minister's practice of ministry in my experience of them are

Managing a staff is an area of growth for Serene -- or at least, she would be well-served to have administrative support.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this person in ministry

As a colleague of Serene in Cleveland, we worked together on ecumenical direct services, and our congregations' visioning processes also occurred at the same time. I am grateful for conversations and prayers shared.

Additional Comments

Serene clearly dedicates her time and energy to building up the people of the church, the Body of Christ.

Submit Date

November 25, 2013

Email Address

hackenbergr@ucc.org

Full Name

Rachel G. Hackenberg

Email Date

November 25, 2013

Address.....

700 Prospect Ave
Cleveland 44115
United States

Type
Business

Phone.....

Number **Extension** **Type**
216-736-2100 Business

Short Answers.....

This minister's areas of strength in the practice of ministry as I experience them are

I have experienced Pastor Davis' skills as a centered, collaborative, kind, and insightful minister. Her strengths are both personal and organizational: she beautifully conducted two funerals for my extended family, and she contributed prayerful ritual to trustee meetings for their discussions of budget. She has done and been all that I could ask for in a minister.

Some areas of growth for this minister's practice of ministry in my experience of them are

Pastor Davis appears to go in every direction equally and may risk burnout by continuing to do so.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this person in ministry

I keep copies of certain sermons and poems by Serene to read and share for inspiration.

Additional Comments

I am a member of the UCC national staff who is a parishioner at Mt. Zion United Church of Christ.

Submit Date

November 25, 2013

.....
Email Address

rachel.hackenberg@alum.ptsem.edu

Full Name

Rosemarie A. Williams

Email Date

November 25, 2013

Address.....

18500 Lee Road
Shaker Heights 44122
United States

Type
Business

Phone.....

Number **Extension** **Type**
216-345-7890 Business

Short Answers.....

This minister's areas of strength in the practice of ministry as I experience them are

Serene is a fantastic congregational leader, a minister of the highest caliber, not only exemplary in preaching but



exemplary in accompanying a congregation as a true servant.

Some areas of growth for this minister's practice of ministry in my experience of them are

While focused appropriately on her pastoral ministry within a congregation, sometimes I wonder if Serene's writing and proclamation ministry could reach wider audiences through new initiatives.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this person in ministry

I knew Serene when we were both studying at Andover Newton; we stay in touch to provide mutual encouragement through the respective development of our ministries, and I worship in Serene's congregations whenever I have the opportunity. As student colleagues in graduate school, both motivated to initiate ecumenical and interfaith justice collaborations, I remember it was Serene who grounded our work in communion and patient dialogue.

Additional Comments

With no reservations whatsoever, I celebrate Serene's gifts and accomplishments in ministry.

Submit Date

November 25, 2013

Self-Appraisal

Some Areas of Strength in My Practice of Ministry

Perhaps most outstanding in my practice of ministry is my dedication to the work of congregational vitality (regardless of a church's numeric size, annual budget or community context) through the identification of gifts and passions already present in the faith community and an inclusive invitation for all to invest their creative gifts in the congregation's life.

Some Areas for Growth in My Practice of Ministry

I believe that a minister is never finished in her learning, through formal and continuing education opportunities, but most of all through maintaining a teachable spirit in leadership.

A Meaningful Experience I Have Had in Ministry

During my pastoral service at Mt. Zion, I have been moved and inspired by the inclusion of ASL interpretation in worship. The visual representation of language, the dance-like quality of ASL, not only calls my attention to the continued need for greater worship accessibility at Mt. Zion but also teaches me that language -- like community -- is at its best when we invite all of its dimensions into conversation together.

Additional Comments

In addition to the joy that I continue to find in pastoral ministry, I have been blessed by the joy of parenting two children, now adults. A rescue dog named Gustav keeps me active and helps me meet neighbors on our long walks each day.

Self-Disclosure

 **Ministers completing a United Church of Christ Ministerial Profile must make a conscientious assertion about their ethical performance and are given space for relevant commentary.**

In your response to the "Vocational History" question in the profile, did you omit any ecclesiastical employment?

No



Have you ever been the subject of a fitness review in any entity affiliated with or setting of the United Church of Christ that resulted in:

Censure

No

Suspension

No

Termination of Ministerial Standing

No

Are you currently engaged in a program of growth as the result of a fitness review in the United Church of Christ?

No

Are there any fitness reviews pending against you at this time by any setting or entity of or affiliated with the United Church of Christ?

No

Have you ever been the subject of an official disciplinary proceeding by another denomination, professional association, credentialing body, guild or employer that resulted in disciplinary action?

No

Are there any official disciplinary proceedings pending against you at this time by another denomination, professional association, credentialing body, guild or employer?

No

Have you ever been the subject of a civil law suit alleging that you attempted or actually engaged in sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct; which has ever resulted in a judgment being entered against you, settled out of court, or dismissed because the statute of limitations had expired?

No

Have you had your driving license suspended or revoked within the last 5 years?

No

Have you ever been found guilty of, pled guilty to, or pled no contest to criminal charges? (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated; any misdemeanor conviction for which probation was successfully completed; offenses about which inquiry is not permissible in the state in which you are seeking a position; acts of civil disobedience. With respect to driving record, only include matters of reckless driving, driving while intoxicated and/or driving under the influence of a controlled substance.)

No

Has your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials, ever been terminated or revoked, or have you been asked not to return to employment or a volunteer position in the future because you attempted or actually engaged in:

Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct

No

Physical abuse

No

Child abuse



No

Financial misconduct

No

Have you ever terminated your employment, a volunteer position, or professional credentials in order to avoid facing or to avoid being terminated because of charges of actual or attempted:

Sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct

No

Physical abuse

No

Child abuse

No

Financial misconduct

No

Are there any facts or circumstances involving you or your background that should be disclosed and/or further reviewed before you are entrusted with the responsibilities of ministry on behalf of a calling body of the United Church of Christ?

No

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide detailed explanation for all such affirmative answers. In addition to providing other relevant material, be sure to include dates and information for related official decisions, actions, reviews, etc. (by you and/or other parties) that affected your employment and/or ministerial standing and/or professional credentials.

n/a

Criminal Background Check

Attached

Report Date

February 18, 2013

Expiration Date

August 18, 2014

Supplemental Material



You are invited to include below what is relevant to interpreting your history, whether Criminal Background Check information or Vocational History. You are also invited to include for the Calling Body's awareness, any special factors not mentioned elsewhere.

Interpreting The History

Additional Comments



Optional Web Presence.....

URL	Type	Primary
http://www.living-as-church.com	Blog	

Closing Thoughts

You are invited to share a prayer or dream for the community which you imagine serving ... a poem, a Scripture passage, or a piece of music that is meaningful to you.

Closing Thoughts

May the LORD bless you and keep you, may God guide us both in wisdom and in mystery, and may the Spirit spark something new through our fellowship.

Attachments



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FINAL REPORT CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

December 9, 2013

UCC Ministerial Excellence Support & Authorization - (#784)

ATTN: The Rev. Holly MillerShank

700 Prospect Avenue

Cleveland, OH 44115

RE: Malcolm E Himschoot

Location:

Dear Ms. MillerShank:

We have completed the background investigation on the above-named person in accordance with your request. We are reporting results for the following research services performed:

Special Service

Test Test

Clear

This report is submitted with the understanding that it is to be held in strict confidence. Except as may be required by law, no information in this report may be revealed directly or indirectly to any third parties not involved in the current decision-making process.

Oxford Document Management has used good faith in attempting to obtain the information in this report from sources deemed reliable. Because this information is secured from and managed by fallible sources (human and otherwise), Oxford Document Management cannot be either an insurer or a guarantor of the accuracy of the information reported. The employees of Oxford Document Management are not allowed to render opinions regarding information contained in this report.

If you have further questions about this file, please feel free to call.

Respectfully yours,

Robert G. Leverentz
Vice President

Interview Questions

Four recently called pastors, three Area Ministers, and five congregations in the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ contributed to compiling this list of questions which local church Search Committees and candidates used in their search process. We are grateful to Molly Phinney Baskette, Suzanne Woolston Bossert, Curt Preston, Natalie Shiras, Beverly Weinhold, Dale Hempen, Laura Lee Kent, and Peter Wells, as well as to the Church on the Hill in Lenox, First Congregational Church of Somerville, UCC, First Church of Christ in Longmeadow, United Parish of Brookline, and the Wellesley Congregational Church for their assistance.

Questions that Search Committees ask

Opening questions:

- We have read your profile but would like you to describe your faith journey to us.
- Tell us about one of your favorite biblical characters, or Bible story, or a biblical statement that puzzles you. Why?
- As you think about the facets of pastoral ministry, what is it that you feel the most passionately about?

Questions about worship

- How would you describe your style of Sunday worship and how would you involve the music director and deacons?
- What is the wackiest thing you have tried in worship? How did it work out?
- How do you go about preparing a sermon? (One candidate reported that the committee handed her a pericope, and asked her to discuss how she would preach it. She said they seemed to want both some quick ideas of theological themes, plus the resources she uses to prepare sermons).

Working with others, including dealing with conflict

- The position of Associate Pastor requires independent leadership skills working within a team system. What do you see as your greatest strengths in this environment? What do you perceive to be your greatest challenges? Give examples of times when you've worked effectively and not so effectively in this environment.
- How do you feel about working with lay people? Delegating? Sharing?
- Describe a situation in which you got people to change from the way they were doing something to the way you had suggested. How did you accomplish this?
- How would you handle conflict with the church among members or between a member and yourself?
- Despite our small size and lack of ethnic diversity, our congregation is surprisingly diverse in many ways – in thought, attendance, participation, faith commitment, age, income and stewardship. Is that an opportunity or challenge, and how will you address it?
- Should gays be able to marry? What is your experience with Open and Affirming?

Christian education and youth ministry

- What ideas do you have for creating an effective Christian Education program for all ages?
- We have a strong children's ministry and a growing adult education program. One of our next goals is a strong youth program. How would you help us do this in the short term and long term? What do you believe this age group is looking for and needs regarding religion?
- How would you develop meaningful relationships with members of the youth group? Describe how you would work with a youth regarding a personal crisis situation.

Mission and Evangelism

- How do you understand missions and outreach in the life of a church? What personal experience do you have in this realm? What vision might you have for this congregation in this area?
- How would you draw people into the church? How would you get them to come and then to stay?

Theology

- What is your theology of baptism and communion?
- In what sense would you say that you love Jesus?
- What do you think about the movie "The Passion of Christ?"

Your Strengths

- What did you learn about yourself in your field education experience in seminary? Your gifts and your growing edges?
- What do you believe are the three greatest strengths of your ministry and how do you believe they contribute to the success of your ministry here?
- Please describe a challenge or problem you have faced in ministry thus far. How did you respond to this challenge?

Balance and Self-Care, Soul-Care

- Each pastor has his or her own administrative style. How will you balance your time at the office, sermon preparation, pastoral calls, committee meetings, etc.?
- What do you need to feel happy and satisfied in your work? (with colleagues? in relation to a congregation?)
- What causes you stress? How do you handle stress?
- How do you keep balance in your physical, spiritual, social and family life?
- What books are currently on your bedside table? What book have you recently read that has impacted your spiritual life? In what ways?

What appeals to you about this church and made you want to interview with us?

And now, as we prepare to conclude, we'd like to ask: what questions did we not ask you, that you wish we had?

Questions Candidates asked Search Committees

Assessing the Congregation's Strengths

- (To each person on the committee) How did you come to be involved in the church? What do you see as its greatest strength? In what aspect of your church involvement does your faith feel most alive?

- What made you feel loved by your last pastor? How did you show your last pastor that you loved them?
- What is the overall ethos and character of this church? What makes it different or more special from other Protestant churches, including the other three, I see right here on the same street?

Identity

- What role does this church and its members play in supporting the area, conference, regional and national settings of the UCC?
- How important is the denomination to the identity of this local church?

Evangelism and Justice

- How do you understand what needs to happen in order for you to grow? (the difference between being friendly and being truly welcoming) Why do you want to grow? What is the congregation's actual size? Worship attendance? Describe past trends in membership.
- How do you understand your pastor's role as a public figure in the community? (The candidate who asked this does a lot of justice work, and wanted to know if the church would be ashamed of it, ignore it or be excited about it)

Conflict

- Can you give me an example of a change in how you did things that disrupted your community life? How do you respond to change as a church?
- What is your church's relationship to the question of "open and affirming?" Have you ever imagined discussing it as a whole church?
- If someone came up and complained to you about the pastor, what would you say?
- Tell me about the characters in your congregation.

Other Questions

- How is worship planned in this church?
- What are your hopes/dreams for the future?
- How did you arrive at this job description? Is the congregation aware of this job description and is your personnel committee and your governing board on the same page as the search committee on this job description?
- What roadblocks/challenges currently block movement on the congregation's stated goals listed in Profile?
- What is your experience with having a Pastor Parish Relations Committee?

What do you wish search committees would ask candidates?

Tell us about your theology. What are the primary themes of your sermons?

Tell us about a project you have been involved with from idea to implementation.

For a position on a multiple staff: In the ideal circumstance, how would the Senior and Associate Pastors work together for common ministry despite big differences in job description?

What has been your greatest failure (that you are willing to share) and what did you learn from it?

How does ministry differ from other professions?

For second career candidates: What experiences/learning/skills from your previous career will serve you well in ministry? What experiences/learning/skills will you need to leave behind?

What is the funniest thing that has occurred in your ministry?

Where do you find joy and delight in ministry and the Church?

If you had a Sabbatical, what would you do? What would your members/overseers recommend?

Have you ever seriously considered leaving ministry to do something else? If so, what would you do? Why?

What do you wish candidates would ask search committees?

Raise questions from the Church's profile and ask about where the energy is - Other than worship - what do people 'show up for'? What feeds/nourishes/keeps you here?

Tell me about your congregation's understanding and practices of stewardship. Why is it or why is not important to you?

What happens around here when people truly disagree with each other?

How do you prioritize the goals you have set for this church?

What biblical story best describes the "atmosphere/spirit" of your Church?

How do outsiders describe this church?

Why do people stay and join? Or, Why would I want to join this church? Is evangelism important to you? Why or why not?

Why do people leave?

As best as you can name it, what is the vocation/purpose of your church? How would a new person identify this to be true?