

August 7, 2014 Highlight article

Planning for Rev. Rodgers' Retirement - Shared Ministry Committee Update

IMPORTANT DATES: Sept. 14 – Informational meeting after worship; Sept. 21 – Congregation vote

As mentioned in the June and July issues, Church Council, aided by past Council Presidents, is preparing for the pastoral transition following Rev. John Rodgers' planned retirement.

On September 21, at a special Congregational Meeting after the 9:30 service, the Congregation votes on whether to approve the Shared Ministry transition model to accommodate the calling of a new Senior Pastor when Pastor Rodgers retires. The Shared Ministry Task Force is working to educate members about the proposed transition plan, so individuals can make an informed decision on Sept. 21. We share some more questions and answers below.

Q: What is the vote about?

A: There are two primary paths to pastoral succession in the UCC: the traditional and most prevalent *Interim Ministry* model, and the more contemporary *Shared Ministry* (or co-pastor) model. The Interim model employs an Interim minister for typically 12-24 months, thereby allowing time and space for the new senior pastor to be called and to have a clean start. In the Shared Ministry model, instead of a hard break between pastorates, there would be a transitional period of shared leadership, with the Senior Minister and Senior Minister Elect spending 3-6 months working together.

Both approaches are valid, and each can work well, depending on the particular circumstances. The Congregation will be asked whether to approve the Shared Ministry succession model, as recommended by the full Church Council and past Council Presidents. This will be a (yes or no) ballot vote.

Q: What happens after the vote?

A: If the Shared Ministry model is approved by the Congregation, then a Senior Pastor Search Committee will be appointed by Council. Jonathan Knight, Associate Conference Minister for the Fox Valley Association and IL Conference of the UCC, will work with the Search Committee, whichever route we choose.

If the Shared Ministry model is not approved, then the alternative is the Interim Ministry approach. At some point Rev. John Rodgers will notify the Council of his retirement date, and a Search Committee would be named to find an interim minister to serve while a senior minister is sought. Later, a second Search Committee would be formed to find a new senior pastor. The Rodgers would be required to stay away from our church for a 2 year period of time.

Q: How do I find out more information about these two models?

A: The Shared Ministry task force has provided a variety of documents to inform members about the options. There are five informational binders available in the Church Library (Parlor), or see our church web site under Downloads > Pastoral Transition Documents (<http://www.cuccstc.org/pastoral-transition-documents/>).

Look for more updates and information via the Highlight, emails, postal mail, and discussion. A representative from Council will be available to answer questions during Coffee Fellowship after worship most Sundays. You may also submit questions or comments via the Shared Ministry Question Box in the parlor, or email Kathy Westman, chair of the Shared Ministry task force, at kwestman911@gmail.com.

Please join us after worship on **Sun., Sept. 14** for a Congregational discussion hosted by Church Council.

- Lisa Sidor