

Ministerial Search Timeline 2017-2018

- **Spring 2017** - Transition Team begins process of preparing FPB package of information for ministerial candidates, as service to to-be-elected Search Committee. Transition Team continues facilitating conversations with the congregation related to interim work.
- **April 2** –Rev Rebecca preaches on the topic of our upcoming transition and ministerial search.
- **April 3** – The formal nomination period for Search Committee membership opens (see details of this process below). FPB members in good standing will be asked to nominate up to five people they think would represent the interests of the church well, through a secure email process (or alternative, for those without email). If you have questions about your membership status, please check with Sonya immediately. In order to be a member in good standing you must have made a financial contribution of record sometime from July, 2016 and April 15th. (office@firstparishinbrookline.org).
- **April 16** – formal nomination period closes; Parish Board begins the review of nominations and selection of final candidates.
- **May 5** – Annual meeting agenda and slate of Search Committee nominees is mailed to members. In-person early voting, as described in our current bylaws, begins on May 8.
- **May 21** – Annual meeting; slate of Search Committee nominees are voted on by FP members in good standing.
- **Summer 2017** – Search committee retreat with UUA representative; begin work of team building; Transition Team collaboration to share learnings from interim ministry
- **September-November 2017** – Search Committee clarifies what church wants in a new minister and prepares church packet; schedules 3-4 neutral pulpit opportunities for 2018
- **Mid-November 2017** – FPB ministerial packet submitted to UUA
- **Start of December, 2017** – ministerial packets from all churches in search are available to candidate ministers; those who are interested in FPB signal their interest
- **Start of January, 2018** – FPB learns which ministerial candidates are interested in FPB; Search Committee begins reviewing their ministerial packets and selects generally 8 ministers to interview.
- **Late January-February 2018** – Search Committee conducts Skype interviews with approximately 8 candidates and examines these candidates' individual confidential websites (including sermons)
- **Late February-early March 2018** – Search Committee selects 3-4 candidates to invite to pre-candidate. Pre-candidating involves the candidate (and spouse/partner) visiting from Friday evening through Sunday. This weekend is spent with only the Search Committee. Church members do not meet ministerial candidates at this time. A typical weekend includes Friday dinner, confidential church tour, Saturday day-long interviews, Sunday preaching in Boston neutral pulpit, lunch Sunday.
- **Late March** Search Committee selects one candidate, offers job and negotiates package
- **April 2018** – Ministerial candidate comes to FPB for candidating week. This starts with the minister preaching on a Sunday here at FPB. They then spend the week meeting with congregants and staff. Search Committee coordinates a schedule to include things such as: tea with the minister, committee meetings, evening dinners etc. The minister then preaches a second Sunday. Immediately following that second Sunday of preaching there is a congregation vote on calling the minister. FPB's bylaws stipulate a minimum of a 90% positive vote for a minister to be called.

Ministerial Search Committee Policy
approved by the Parish Board on March 6, 2017

Objective: So as to provide a fair and reasonable method for the formation of a Ministerial Search Committee compatible with the method endorsed by the UUA, the First Parish in Brookline institutes this policy to outline the method for insuring as near universal as possible participation by each and all members of the congregation, and also to insure the Ministerial Search Committee will fairly represent our mission.

Qualities of Committee Members: The following are qualities that each Ministerial Search Committee member should have:

- 1) Respected and trusted by the congregation
- 2) Good listener and good speaker
- 3) Able to represent the congregation as a whole
- 4) Invested in the congregation's future
- 5) Reliable
- 6) Able to commit to a long-term time intensive process

Process: When the Parish Board determines a need for a Ministerial Search Committee to be formed, these steps will be followed:

- 1) An email message will go out to all members of First Parish in Brookline who are in good standing, requesting up to five nominations, including self-nominations, for membership on the Ministerial Search Committee. Nominees must be members of FPB in good standing. This email will include the desired qualities of members of the Ministerial Search Committee listed above. It will include a deadline for submission of nominations and an email address for submission of nominations.
- 2) Once the date of the deadline has passed, a list will be formed of all names mentioned, including the number of times they were mentioned.
- 3) From this list, the 12-14 names most often mentioned will be determined.

As soon as possible after these 12-14 names are determined, the Parish Board, and other designees if necessary, will:

- 1) Determine willingness to serve by contacting each member on the list.
- 2) Prepare a written ballot with the names listed alphabetically.
- 3) Collect brief and consistent bios for each person on the slate. These bios will include length of time of membership at FPB, previous committee work done, and a statement of why they are interested in serving on the Search Committee. Along with the slate of candidates, these bios will be shared with the congregation in advance of the annual meeting or other formally called congregational meeting.
- 4) Inform members in good standing that they have 4 votes to cast, and that each vote must be for a different individual.

Results of the Elections: After the election the Parish Board will:

- 1) Meet in executive session to count the ballots. The 4 individuals with the most votes will be elected.
- 2) Appoint 3 other individuals from the remaining names on the list, keeping the need for diversity on the committee in mind.

As soon as possible and in whatever way is expedient, the Parish Board will announce the members of the Ministerial Search Committee to the congregation. The congregation will not know who was elected and who was appointed by the Parish Board.

Self Nomination: Self nomination for the Ministerial Search Committee will be accepted during the time of congregational solicitation, and not after the Parish Board has prepared the ballot of names, and not at the Annual Meeting.

Conflicts of Interest: In order to prevent conflicts of interest on the Ministerial Search Committee, persons related by blood or by marriage or other affectional bond will not serve together on a Ministerial Search

Committee. Also, if a selected and approved member is also on the Parish Board, they will step down from that position in order to take on membership of the Ministerial Search Committee. Finally, Transition Team members are excluded from membership on the Search Committee, per their Team covenant.

Expanded list of qualities for Search Committee members

The following list was developed by the UUA and recommended by Laura Graham, our ministerial settlement representative:

What are the good qualities needed for someone to serve on a Ministerial Search Committee?

- Who in the congregation works well with others?
- Who can represent and serve the whole congregation well (including looking out for the needs of children) and not just a piece or “faction” of the congregation? Who would have no “axe to grind”?
- Who knows the history and culture of the congregation, whether a member of long standing or relatively new?
- Who has been and/or is active in the congregation and has demonstrated both responsible participation and responsible leadership?
- After a high salary, the most attractive quality a congregation can have is self-awareness – awareness of strengths and weaknesses, what the congregation is like at its best and at its worst, as well as on an average day. Who would be able to know and relate all this to potential candidates?
- After thinking about all of these questions, whom would you trust to serve on the Search Committee on behalf of the congregation? Who is trusted?

The following list of important Search Committee member qualities is a summary of recent conversations with (a) the FPB search committee that resulted in the calling of Revs Sherblom and Niebanck, and (b) the FPB search committee that resulted in the hiring of Rev Vlassidis Burgoa.

- **Communication** - can listen well; willingness to speak up in a tactful and loving way; ability to listen non-defensively and without pre-conceived answers
- **Team Member** – works well with others; has worked on teams and enjoyed it; experience with making compromises
- **Perceptive** – good judge of character; observant of group process
- **Centrist** - understand that they’re there for the common good, not just for their own needs or preferences; can think of others as they evaluate candidates; can compromise; can balance preferences of the whole congregation; ability to take the perspective of others
- **Time commitment** – willing and able to commit to regular meetings; summer availability, some time-intensive periods; prepared to make Search Committee the primary focus of FPB involvement (all former Search Committees emphasized both that the time commitment was significant *and* extremely fulfilling – they all deeply valued the experience)
- **Confidentiality** – the ability to hold information confidential is crucial to the process of the search work; prior experience in maintaining confidentiality would be helpful

NB: Most members of the previous Search Committee were working full time at the time of their service, and many had school-age children at the time.

While this past Search Committee did not recommend the following as selection criteria, they did find the following skills crucial to their work; they either had them internally on the committee or found other church members who could lend their expertise as needed:

- Writing ability – for communication with the congregation about the unfolding process
- Personnel expertise – for negotiating comp & benefits, letters of agreement, etc.
- Survey research – for online surveys of congregational opinions and perspectives
- Facilitation skills – for running their internal meetings and congregation-wide meetings
- Administrative skill – for organizing, tabulating, reporting functions
- Computer skill – for producing reports, preparing web-based collections, etc.
- Leadership ability – for guiding the process in a steady way