

Haydenville Congregational Church

Transition Documents

**Related to our search for a new settled pastor
September 2016 to September 2017**

Summary of All Church Member
Transitional Pastoral Meeting – Haydenville Congregational Church
September 20, 2016

An all Church Congregational Meeting of the Haydenville Congregational Church was held Tuesday, September 20, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is a follow-up to a written communication that was sent out on September 2, 2016 by the Rev. Dr. Andrea Ayvazian announcing her plans to retire on January 1, 2017.

Lynn Fogg, Church Moderator, stated the topic of this meeting is to discuss and discern the next steps in identifying transitional pastoral leadership starting in January, 2017. The Team Leaders who are coordinating data for this transition are:

Lynn Fogg, Moderator
Alice Barber, Head Trustee
Jo Cannon, Treasurer
Pat James, Co-head Deacon
Jim Foudy, H.R. Representative

Guest: Rev. Jill Graham, Pastor of The First Congregational Church of Sheffield, MA and Associate Conference Minister at the Massachusetts Conference of United Church of Christ

Lynn opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m., stating the following Objectives:

- Share planning process for the “good good-bye”.
- Review possible paths toward putting an Interim Pastor in place.
- Share information about what happens next.

She introduced the Rev. Jill Graham who is here to help our church through the transitioning process to provide guidance and understanding of the protocol, criteria and process of choosing not only an Interim Minister but a full time Pastor. The Rev. Jill Graham welcomed everyone saying she was glad we could all be here together - stating tonight we are to begin the congregational dialogue with each other. We do not have to go through this alone. She then led us in prayer..... and read the prayer We Are Never Alone.

Lynn called upon Jo Cannon, Treasurer and Jim Foudy, H.R. Representative for updates on the finances of the church. Jo stated October is approaching and that is the time we talk about and plan next year's budget. We did have funds from 2015 that were turned over to 2016. She stated it is too early in the process to actually tell us with absolute certainty what the amount of the 2017 budget will be. We do know it will be at least \$ 25,000 lower than the 2016 budget. It will mean cutting some staff which means only one pastor. The Budget Committee will be meeting regularly. There is a lot of process work still to be done. Jo wanted to remind us where we are at this point.

Pat James spoke telling us about her work as one of the leaders. One is assuring a “Great Goodbye” for Pastor Andrea. Trish is on the committee working on what we are to do for Andrea's last day here. After church, when Andrea preaches her last sermon, she wants a big pot-luck dinner. Andrea does not want a lot of parties and is very clear about what she would like. If anyone is interested in being part of the party planning process they are to see Trish or Pat.

The job that we have this Fall is to proceed and find out what we want for interim leadership. The Rev. Jill Graham is going to help us with this, providing clarification. This is not a vote but so that the

Leadership Team can get a sense of what options the membership wishes so we can proceed. She is here to act as a resource and then turned the meeting over to Rev. Graham.

Rev. Graham stated: As of 9/1/16 I am involved in many positions. I have had nine years of working with churches in transition. This is one of the most important things that I do in the Search and Call Process as this is what we call this. There are options outlined in the posters on the wall and we will clarify what these options mean to us and how it works logistically; and, we are here to examine what these options mean to the church membership and the future of the church. Rev. Graham stated the next step in this transition is to discern the course of our interim pastoral leadership starting in January. There are three options posted on the wall which we will review and open for discussion.

Out of the past nine years that I have been doing this something has morphed out of that in that the landscape within the churches is changing rapidly. We're trying to stay in front of the curve, meeting the needs of the churches who are in this process.

The most important thing to think about is the Discernment Process: It is different than the democratic way but that is about what we want and then utilizing our resources. Discernment is different than that in our congregational church history; how documents were made. People would come together that would prayerfully not want what I want; what God wants.

In my church that I serve there are very definite things that I want to happen. But what I hope always happens is that we trust in God's presence; however, listening, honesty and respect. A spirit of what God wants. Ultimately and hopefully that it can be what God wants. I can say this is what is best for the community and there is more to the community that we share together; more that binds us together than separates us. This is how I am inviting you to enter this time of discernment.

I am particularly grateful for my shirt tonight. I have gotten the Haydenville Congregational Church Welcome !

My job is to work with you during this Discernment Process. Let's take a stroll through this time as it will unfold:

January 1, 2017 comes: You have a great party. You laugh, you cry. Bid each other well and into the future. The process has not yet begun. We get ourselves all worked up. I am inviting us to breathe. Let it unfold as God lets it unfold.

January 2nd: You will continue to grieve. We are not going to put that down. Andrea is part of your life and will stay there. You will hear her voice in your head for days to come. You will grieve, you will celebrate, you will laugh as you will remember the years you spent together, the history and all the specifics that brought you to this day.

In a customary church and call process, which we don't fall into that process, the transitional time lasts. We have a brand new church profile that tends to speed up between forty years and profile that will be six to twenty-four months. So in a customary time of transition we start to ask the question: Take a snapshot now: Who are we as a church? What are our strengths. The goal is to trust as many people involved as possible.

The second question: Who is our neighbor? Normally, it is with churches that have not participated in a Visionary Process so at that point that would include demographics, questionnaires. We are ahead of the game because we have been participating already as to what our vision is for this congregation. We won't have to spend as much time on that.

What is God calling us to do and become? You may think you already know based on your vision. But that may need some tweaking. You may say "No, we are still on target". We don't know the outcome before we begin.

The beauty of discernment is that those involved in the process with the transition, after meetings with the congregation, will feel that it is time to begin a Search Committee. You will submit those names. You can nominate yourself or you can nominate someone else. It will go to the Deacons. You want a Search Committee that is balanced, type of church membership, gender and organization. You want this balanced group of people that is a variety, has depth of faith. See if people who have their own personal agenda, and are respected within the church. People who have discernment have to have the ability to have consensus within themselves. All of these things are things that play into a positive outcome based on the information garnered over the communications you have with the Search Committee. This will not be done by February.

- Member Bonnie Atkins asked: It seems like we are developing the underpinning but not for someone we may need in the event of illness or a death. What happens then? Jill responded that we have each other for support (as we are all social workers).

Jill stated we are going to reflect about options and transitional leadership. I will try to provide information pertaining to Intentional Interim candidates who will write a 20 page profile.

The Senior Pastor resigns which sometimes happens in a transitional setting and the Associate Pastor stays on. The Interim Pastor comes and they work together; and our Haydenville Congregational Church reality is that we do not fit into a traditional church process. For all intents and purposes this was a new church start and Rev. Andrea Ayvazian was a new church Pastor. Not only is it a new church start, it is comprised of many new people coming into the life of the church. Together some of you have been through this before. Even though it is stressful things will move you and you don't have that merely to bank on. That brings an added level of stress.

If this were a traditional church Senior Pastor Church and the pastor left you try to maintain stability. If we try to initiate this whole thing in a short period of time I break out in a sweat. Having the Associate in place is one way to bring stability during the search process. Also, the other situation is a budget situation. Because there is a process to engage in I cannot even tell a congregation what to do.

We are governed automatically but we choose our own design in how to move forward. But instead we must provide continuity and stability so that we can listen to God. We try to tailor the process without dictating what to do so that it might best meet your needs.

At this point Jill stepped back and Pat James came forward thanking Jill for all that she has done in providing informational support and guidance. She stated there is an Intentional Interim approach and Jill can provide a handful of suitable candidates who would become the Intentional Interim. Then Pat referred to the information in the posters:

1. The Search Committee receives Pastoral Profiles from around the country and decides on a candidate to present to the church. Then you would have an Interim Pastor to guide us through this process, trained to see us through this process. Trained to carry us through this period of time; understands what our needs are and brings an objective set of eyes. Competency to this time. Also challenges one of which would be you have now doubled the grief adding another layer of "stuff" to the future. It depends on what you want to do.
2. Invite Pastor Chris to provide some of the continuity by becoming Acting Pastor. It is done occasionally which is different than being the Interim because he is Acting and he becomes his own process of discernment and then he is interviewed if the decision is made, but Chris stays out of that process. Working with the Search Committee Jill would be the coach for the committee.

Chris would not be involved in this. Then the Search Committee would consider Chris first, if in fact, his profile and their profile which he has not seen dovetails then the interview process would take place unless Chris moves on.

We get someone we don't know to lead us through this time that wouldn't get to be a Settled Pastor. They are experienced at doing this. It would be like a substitute pastor who is an enthusiastic pastor but we cannot have him as our pastor.

Pastor Chris could still submit his profile. If we want to consider Chris he has to be considered up front.

3. We have an Associate Pastor but it is decided we are going to go to an Acting Pastor who will provide the skills around the Discernment Process providing pastoral care. There would be no Children's Church. He will go into a period of discernment and so will we. If we do not chose Chris we would have to have another Interim Pastor.

There was a Question and Answer Period: Leaders Pat James and Alice Barber responded.

Lisa: Is Pastor Chris aware of the differences in being Interim Pastor and Acting Pastor? And, can he apply for either one of these as well as applying for Senior Pastor.

Answ: If the design was not to apply he would depart. Leaders have talked with Chris and he is aware.

Bonnie: In not having the funds for Children's Church and the budget being \$25,000 lower in 2017 that means what is currently as our Assoc. Pastor the position would have to go?

Answ: There will still be funds available for a Director of Children's Church but no Assoc. Pastor.

Carol S.: How do the salaries work for either Acting Pastor or Interim Pastor.

Answ: If it is Chris he would take Andrea's Salary; we can fund half of Chris' salary for Children's Church. We need to refine this with more details as we progress further into the process.

Eleanor W.: The Acting Pastor guides us spiritually but the logistics would be done by the Search Committee.

Julie: Questioned the \$25,000 being basically not available without ever having been discussed and that we would be returning to a one pastor church. She stated she felt there was a lack of transparency and this information should have been made known to the members.

She also commented on how this was not mentioned during the different and many planning sessions we have had.

Karen McG: Responded that we were made aware of this earlier in the year when the budget was discussed at the Annual Meeting and Council Meetings.

Pat James: Stated these issues will be addressed at a later time. But there was a spike in growth and stewardship for two years and now it has gone back.

Karen explained that there was a \$ 150,000 donation for a part time position.

Alice Barber stated this was discussed during our Annual Meeting. We have had some deaths within our church family that had made generous donations. We have not been keeping this from anyone.

Bonnie: Commented on all the things that have been happening over this past year and the timing of these things is unfortunate. In this effort it is heart wrenching thinking about the extraordinary losses we have had and this process will provide clarity. Andrea has also been very essential in helping her with discerning a lot of this which she appreciated.

Carole B.: Questioned the information on the posters as to how the Assoc. Pastor details would work.

Jill responded that there is more work to be done on this.

Susan F.: Commented Chris is Assoc. Pastor. She asked if he became Acting Pastor would he have the same salary that Andrea has now?

Ans: This will be part of the discerning process with more details on this at future meetings.

Bev: Asked a general question for the benefit of all members in that it was recently made known that when Andrea retires we are not to be in contact with her for one year and asked if this was in fact a true policy.

Jill responded: That is true that Andrea will be absent from communication with us for one year to allow the designated pastor of our church to meet and get to know the members of the congregation and so that we would not be going to Andrea for answers instead of the pastor that will be here. Jill noted that we must shift our allegiance to the new pastor. If you see Andrea in the marketplace that is one thing but we should not be calling her or inviting her to our homes or for coffee, etc

Jeff commented this is to support the new pastor.

Jen commented that part of the ceremony when Andrea leaves is to allow Andrea to let go; that we are releasing you.

Alice Barber spoke and stated that those of us congregants who have feed-back to feel free to come and see any one of the team leaders. She stated the team is absolutely dedicated to providing support announced she will be sitting in Pew #36, where she always sits, so you know where to find her if you have questions.

Pat James advised that post-it notes were given to each person present to write a recommendation, or comment about the information on the posters and stick under each option listed to which it applies. These post- it notes will be gathered and given to the team leaders who will make a recommendation after reviewing each one. We need as many voices as possible and then this will be submitted to the Church Council.

Pat James stated that the members on the Search Committee team will be done by the nomination process; members may nominate themselves or any other member and recommendations will be made for the selection process. We need to do this as soon as possible.

She thanked everyone for coming.
The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

HAYDENVILLE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



September 30, 2016

Dear Church Family,

As you know, working on behalf of the Church Council, Trustees and Deacons, a Transition Leadership Team is guiding the process to select interim pastoral leadership for our church when Pastor Andrea retires on January 1st.

There are two interim leadership options, and they are outlined on the next page of this letter. Those who attended the All Church Meeting on September 20th discussed these options, and received an update on church finances, which has a bearing on the choices we make. The opinions shared that evening were very helpful, but the Leadership Team wants everyone to have the same information and have a chance to be heard on this important decision in the life of our church.

The financial considerations presented by Treasurer Jo Cannon look like this: We were \$26,000 short of our stewardship goal for this year. However, we did not have to cut the 2016 budget as we had extra income from fundraising and gifts, which we were able to carry over from 2015. This year we have no such extra income going forward. Trustees have begun looking at the 2017 budget. As you heard at our last annual meeting, there will likely be some significant budget cuts at the start of 2017.

It is too early in the budget committee's work to state anything with certainty, although Jo anticipates a budget about \$25,000 lower than this year. This will likely mean cutting staff and becoming a one-pastor congregation. Many churches our size have only one pastor. Specific details won't be worked out until we conclude our Stewardship campaign and form the full 2017 budget, but we felt that an early notice to the congregation is important.

So here are the next steps we must all take together:

On the next page of this letter are the two options for transitional pastoral leadership while we seek a new pastor (a process that can take a year or more). Read them and pray on them. In the next week tell us what option you prefer and why. You can do that by speaking to one of us; sending us an email, or by dropping a card in a box that will be in the church dining room. The cards do not need to be signed, but we do ask that you provide detail as to why you support the option you choose and *please write legibly*. All comments will be kept in strict confidence.

The deadline to comment is Tuesday, October 11.

The Transition Leadership Team will consider all opinions from now until October 11, including those from the Sept. 20 meeting. They will form the basis of our recommendation to the All Church Meeting Sunday, Oct. 16 following services. At that time the congregation will vote by secret ballot as to which path to take.

Your voice matters! Every voice matters! Please make every effort to share your opinions and attend this important All Church Meeting on Sunday, October 16 after services.

In prayer and peace,

Lynn Fogg, Moderator (lynnfogg32@gmail.com)
Alice Barber, Head Trustee (abarber821@aol.com)
Pat James, Co-head Deacon (minnesotapats@gmail.com)
Jo Cannon, Treasurer (treasurer@haydenvillechurch.org)
Jim Foudy, Human Resources Coordinator (cnjfoudy@gmail.com)

OPTIONS FOR TRANSITIONAL PASTORAL LEADERSHIP BEGINNING JAN 2, 2017

Intentional Interim Pastor Option

UCC Church Conference finds suitable candidates and leadership team selects an Interim Pastor. Interim Pastor helps us to write a church profile, typically 20-30 pages, which answers these questions:

- Who are we?
- Who is our neighbor?
- Who God is calling us to be?

The profile guides our selection of the next settled pastor and their selection of us.

- A Search Committee is formed by the Leadership Team with nominations from the congregation.

The Search Committee

- Receives pastoral profiles from around the country,
- Conducts interviews, and
- Decides on a candidate to present to the church.

Recommended candidate is presented at Candidating Sunday and the congregation votes.

The Interim Pastor leaves when we call our next settled pastor.

Acting Pastor Option

Chris Mereschuk becomes our Acting Pastor.

Someone from UCC Conference helps the congregation write the church profile (see above).

A Search Committee is formed by the Transition Leadership Team with nominations from the congregation.

When the Search Committee is ready to receive profiles, the Acting Pastor could present his profile. The Search Committee would evaluate him as a candidate. No other candidates are considered at that time.

If the Search Committee votes Yes, then he is presented as the final candidate with a Candidating Sunday, and the congregation votes. If the congregation vote is Yes, he then becomes the Settled Pastor.

If ...

- The Acting Pastor decides not to submit his profile, *or*
- The committee decides the Spirit is not calling them to consider him for the position, *or*
- Congregation votes No on Candidating Sunday,

Then...

- UCC Conference provides us with an interim pastor and the Acting Pastor leaves
- The Search Committee receives pastoral profiles from around the country, interviews candidates and, decides on a candidate to present to the church.

ALL CHURCH MEETING OCT. 16

An All Church Meeting will take place Sunday, Oct. 16 following services to determine the interim pastoral leadership when Pastor Andrea retires Jan. 1. This meeting will be in lieu of the previously scheduled Church Council meeting Oct. 9, which falls on what is a three-day holiday weekend for many.

In the next few days all members of the congregation will have received a letter, by mail or email, from the Transition Leadership Team outlining the two options for interim pastoral leadership. These are the same options outlined at the All Church Meeting Tuesday, Sept. 20.

The Transition Leadership Team is seeking the opinions of more members of the congregation on how to move forward. The different ways you can share your opinions with Leadership Team members will be explained in the letter.

After hearing from as many folks as possible, the Leadership Team will make a recommendation on the best path forward to the All Church Meeting Oct. 16. We will ask for a vote of the congregation at that time. Please read the letter, share your opinions, and put the important Oct. 16 meeting on your calendar. Every voice matters!

Your Transition Leadership Team,
Lynn Fogg, Moderator
Alice Barber, Head trustee
Pat James, Co-Head Deacons
Jo Cannon, Treasurer
Jim Foudy, Human Resources Coordinator.

The following two pages are the statement read to the all congregation meeting October 16, 2016 by Alice Barber. The statement explains the Transition Leadership Team's decision to offer Chris Mereschuk the position of Acting Pastor during our transition to a new settled pastor.

The congregation voted 64-25 to offer Chris the Acting Pastor position.

It is with deep faith and from a place of deep prayer that we, the Transition Leadership Team (Jim Foudy, Pat James, Jo Cannon, Lynn Fogg, Alice Barber), come to you with a recommendation for our time ahead. To be clear, this recommendation is about a temporary bridge. This bridge spans the time between Pastor Andrea's final sermon and the calling of a Settled Pastor, expected to be from 6-12 months.

Like you, the members of this team have spent hours here at the Haydenville Congregational Church in our pews, at coffee hour, and on committees. We have laughed, cried, questioned, grieved, and celebrated with you and among you in community. To this community we all have brought our most vulnerable selves. Indeed, these selves fill the pews. And, at the core of this unique community is a commitment to the most vulnerable and marginalized among us and in the world. This commitment is what drives our Open and Affirming status as a UCC Church. It is what drives us to be Trans-affirming. It drives us to work for peace and justice. It is what drives us to replace the Black Lives Matter sign over and over and over and over again.

There are other Open and Affirming churches in the area. However, even among Open and Affirming UCC congregations, we are radical. Our embrace is bigger, kinder, more active and more progressive. If it were otherwise, we would go elsewhere. It is this core of our beliefs that led our Saints to welcome Pastor Andrea into their family. As one saint told me, "We really went into our search with our community in mind; we thought about who we were and what we wanted as a community, not as individuals." The members of the Transition Leadership Team unanimously agree that our community, in the coming months, needs to maintain its radical, Jesus-filled welcome. We unanimously agree that we need to protect the most vulnerable among us. As one member said, "With regard to our core values, we cannot move backwards. Not even one single inch."

We have heard you. We have heard your voicemails, we have read your letters and emails (every single one), we have talked with you. We have heard your concerns. We have also heard your hopes with regard to the position of Settled Pastor. What we are determining today – to be clear – is the role of a pastor to lead us through a time of transition, this in-between time. It is with this and our core values in mind that the Transition Leadership Team unanimously supports offering the position of Acting Pastor to Chris Mereschuk during the next leg of our journey together as a community.

We feel that the potential risk of an unknown Intentional Interim Pastor, who may not understand or embrace our welcoming, justice seeking, diverse community, from a small pool of pastors sent to us by the UCC, is too great. We do not want our core values– the ones so eloquently and passionately celebrated and fought for by Pastor Andrea, Pastor Chris, our Saints and the rest of us - compromised for a year, a week, even for a day.

We make this recommendation with the knowledge that it is not without concern by many of you. We have heard you. We also make this recommendation with the certainty that the journey of any Pastor following in the footsteps of Andrea Ayvazian will be difficult. Pastor Chris understands this. He understands that the role of Acting Pastor is different from the role of Settled Pastor and from his current role as Associate Pastor. He understands that this would usher in a time of thoughtful and

prayerful discernment. At the end of that time he or we may decide that he is not a good fit as our Settled Pastor. Some of you have expressed concern that appointing Chris as Acting Pastor will mean that he automatically becomes our Settled Pastor. That is not the case. The search for a Settled Pastor comes later, and will be conducted by a search committee that you will appoint. Chris fully understands all of this.

Pastor Chris has served our community in the shadow of Pastor Andrea. We, the 5 members of the Transition Leadership Team, humbly and unanimously recommend that you give him a chance to help us through this time, to grow with us in community and to continue to uphold our core values.

November, 2016

Report of the Transition Leadership Committee

The Transition Leadership Team was formed in September following Rev. Andrea Ayvazian's announcement that she would retire as our pastor as of Jan. 1 of this year. The team, working on behalf of Church Council, Trustees and Deacons, was given three charges:

1. The help ensure a "good goodbye" for Pastor Andrea
2. Help the congregation select an interim pastor to lead the church from the time Andrea retired until a settled pastor is chosen, a process that could take six months to a year.
3. Guide the congregation in its search for a settled pastor.

Task 1 turned out fabulous, thanks to a super effort by Trish LaFrenier and a great group of volunteers who put on a terrific buffet and program Jan. 1 following Andrea's final service. There was music, speeches, great food, gifts, tears and lot of sharing of memories.

Our second task was the real challenge. In discussions with Massachusetts United Church of Christ leadership we learned about the process and timeline for selecting a new settled pastor, and the work the congregation would need to do to prepare our own church profile for pastoral candidates to consider.

We determined there were two options for interim pastoral leadership:

One was to have UCC recommend several intentional interim pastors for us to choose from. The interim pastor would lead the congregation, run the church, and help the congregation write its profile. The interim pastor would not be a candidate for settled pastor.

The other option was to hire Associate Pastor Chris Mereschuk as our Acting Pastor until such time as a settled pastor is chosen. Chris would be eligible to apply for the settled pastor position, when the congregation completes its profile and is ready to consider candidates.

The transition team spent many weeks talking with parishioners about the options. We had an open meeting Sept. 20 attended by about 50 people. Team members invited parishioners to give us feedback in person, by phone and email. We heard from many of you and your comments, and a lot of prayer and reflection, led to our own consensus on how to proceed.

We decided that the question was best decided by a vote of the congregation. An All-Church Meriting was held following services Sunday Oct. 16. Trustee chair Alice Barber read the recommendation of the transition team to offer the acting pastor position to Chris Mereschuk. In explaining the recommendation, Alice wrote:

"We feel that the potential risk of an unknown Intentional Interim Pastor, who may not understand or embrace our welcoming, justice seeking, diverse community, from a small pool of pastors sent to us by the UCC, is too great. We do not want our core values— the ones so eloquently and passionately celebrated and fought for by Pastor Andrea, Pastor Chris, our Saints and the rest of us - compromised for a year, a week, even for a day."

The congregation voted 64 to 25 to offer Chris Mereschuk the position, which he accepted. Chris became Acting Pastor Jan. 2, 2017.

The third part of our charge comes as we start our search for a settled pastor. Because Pastor Chris may chose to be a candidate for the settled position, he can not be involved in the search or the writing of the church profile. The next step for the Transitional Leadership Team will be to help the congregation choose two committee: One to write the church profile, the other committee to receive and review applications, interview candidates and decide on a candidate to present to the congregation for consideration. A process for nominating people to serve on those two separate committees will be outlined in the next few

weeks. The transition team will also reach out to a veteran pastor to guide and assist the Profile Committee with its work.

We serve with a deep respect for the members of the Haydenville Congregational Church and all that the church stands for. We are grateful for the candid dialog and words of support that has gotten us this far. We look forward to taking the next steps together.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Fogg, Moderator
Alice Barber, Head Trustee
Pat James, Head Deacon
Jo Cannon, Treasurer
Jim Foudy, Human Resources Coordinator

March 17, 2017

Profile Writing Committee appointed

On Sunday, March 12 the Church Council approved the names of people to serve on the committee that will write our Church Profile, the next major step in our transition to a new settled pastor.

Those who agreed to serve on the Profile Committee are: Anne Warner, Fred Goodhue, Jan Varnon, Mariel Addis and Nancy Winninger.

They will be working with Rev. Peter Wells, former Area Minister for the Massachusetts UCC. Peter has helped churches write profiles in the past. Members of the Transition Leadership Team will provide support and assistance to the Profile Committee as needed.

The purpose of the profile is to describe who we are as a church and what we want to become. With Rev. Peter Well's guidance, the Profile Committee will be working off a template provided by the Massachusetts United Church of Christ. It will ask us to consider and answer a number of questions as we explore where we have been as a church, who we are today, and what our vision is for the future. The profile also helps define the skills, gifts and graces we are looking for in our next settled pastor. It serves as a de facto job description for anyone considering that role.

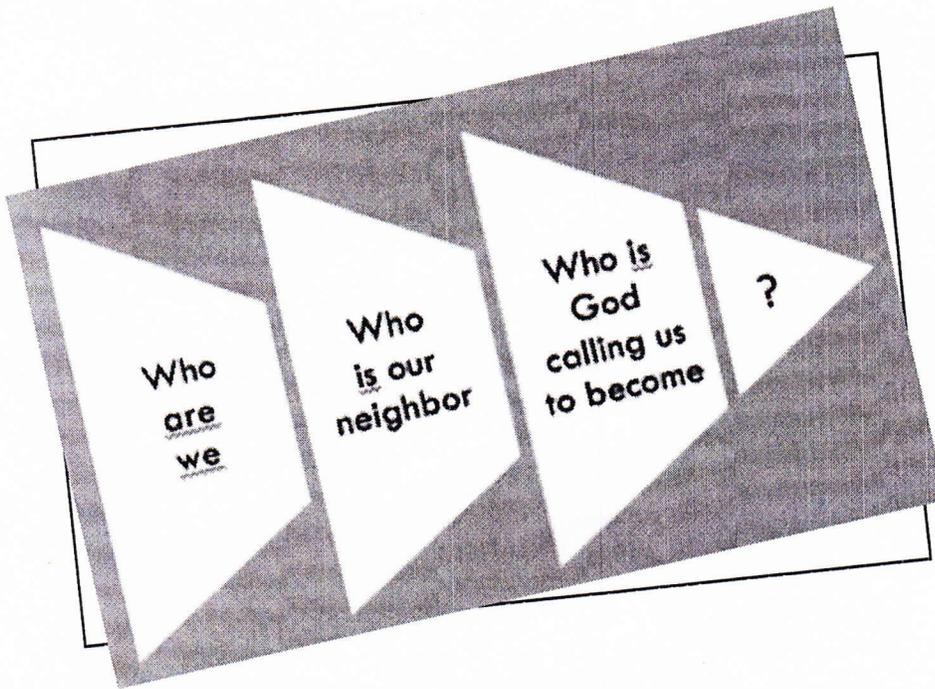
The Profile Committee's work will include a lot of meetings, interviews and conversations with members of the congregation, including several all-congregation meetings. For the profile to be complete, it must reflect the interests and concerns of all constituencies in the congregation; it must present our best collective vision for the future. The Profile Committee members are the agents who will make this happen.

The goal is to have the Church Profile completed by September. At that point a separate Search Committee will use the Church Profile to review the profiles of pastoral candidates, beginning with our Acting Pastor, if he wishes to be considered.

Our deep thanks for the willingness of the Profile Committee members to serve our congregation in this very important way.

Your Transition Leadership Team

Alice Barber, Jo Cannon, Carolyn DuBois, Jim Foudy, Sam Icklan



These are the questions that the UCC profile asks us to answer as we search for a new settled pastor. The Profile Writing Team, led by Rev. Peter Wells, needs the whole congregation to help answer these and other questions. To that end we are all invited to participate in two after-Church congregational gatherings.

- On **May 7** we will focus on the questions of who are we and who is our neighbor? We will explore how our history has shaped us and discover the core values that make us who we are. We will also reflect on demographic information and its implications for our congregational life and ministry.

- On **May 21** we will focus on the question of who is God calling us to become? What is our vision for the Church? What are our hopes and dreams for the future? And what gifts and graces will we need in pastoral leadership to help us fulfill our dreams and realize our hopes?

Each of the events will begin after services. Please plan on attending – we need your participation!

Your Profile Writing Team: *Maribel Addis, Fred Goodhue, Jan Varnon, Anne Warner, Nancy Winninger.*

May 17, 2017

Our work to transition to a new settled pastor

Here's where we are in our work to transition to a new settled pastor.

Our Profile Writing Committee has been meeting regularly on Thursday nights since the end of March and will continue through the summer, with the goal of having a draft of the Church Profile ready by the end of September and completed in October.

Those serving on the Profile Writing Team are: Anne Warner, Fred Goodhue, Jan Varnon, Mariel Addis and Nancy Winner. They are guided by Rev. Peter Wells, a former Area Minister for the Massachusetts UCC who knows our church well and has helped churches in this process in the past.

The profile template from the Massachusetts United Church of Christ asks us to consider and answer a number of questions as we explore where we have been as a church, who we are today, and what our vision is for the future. The profile also helps define the skills, gifts and graces we are looking for in our next settled pastor.

During meetings the committee has reviewed the profile asking questions like:

- What do we already know
- What do we not know that we should find out
- How do we find out what we don't know
- Who do we need to talk to
- How do we involve the congregation and others in the process

That last question is perhaps the most important given we want the profile to reflect the Haydenville Congregational Church. This can only be done with as much input as possible.

The Profile Committee's work includes a lot of meetings, interviews and conversations with members of the congregation as well as gathering financial and demographic information about the church. Two all-church meetings were held in May and the profile committee is asking every church family to complete an anonymous survey form. (The survey can be found under the News and Events section of our church web site [www.http://haydenvillechurch.org](http://haydenvillechurch.org).)

In addition they have and will continue to reach out to leadership, committees, staff, members and friends, and stakeholders to help create the profile.

For the profile to be complete, it must reflect the interests and concerns of all constituencies in the congregation; it must present our best collective vision for the future.

Once the Church Profile completed, the Transition Leadership Team will then work with the congregation to select a Search Committee. Candidates for the Search Committee will be presented to Church Council for approval.

The Search Committee will use the Church Profile to review the profiles of pastoral candidates, beginning with our Acting Pastor, if he wishes to be considered. Once the Search Committee makes a decision about a final candidate, that person will be presented to the congregation at a Candidating Sunday. The congregation will then vote on whether to call that person as our settled pastor.

The profile template and documents being used by the Profile Writing Committee can be found with this article on our web site under the News and Events section.

Our deep thanks for the willingness of the Profile Writing Committee to serve our spiritual community in this important way.

Your Transition Leadership Team

Jim Foudy, Jo Cannon, Carolyn DuBois, Sam Icklan

The Profile Committee Is Still Listening

The committee writing our Church Profile is making a final push to hear from the church community on the qualities you hope to see in our next pastor. The listening phase will soon shift to the writing phase. Here's how you can be heard.

THIS SUNDAY (June 18) Profile Committee members will host small group discussions after services. The groups will be for LGBTQ members, parents of young children, new members (5 years or less), and those concerned with social justice issues. The groups will meet in different parts of the church. Discussions will be informal.

SURVEY: Take the survey. The forms and collection box are in the dining room. Mariel will continue to tally results through end of June.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSIONS: The Profile Committee wants to be sure it has heard from those who face marginalization based on race, class, age, sexual identification or some physical or mental ability. If you have thoughts to share about the future of the church, or feel a need for additional discussion on a particular topic, please contact one of us.

Your Profile Committee: Fred Goodhue, Jan Varnon, Mariel Addis, Nancy Winninger, Pat James

August 20, 2017

The Search For Our Next Settled Pastor

September will be a busy month in the life of Haydenville Congregational for many reasons, including the next big steps in our search for a new settled pastor.

Over the summer, a dedicated group put in many hours writing the Church Profile that will be used to select our next pastor. Copies of the profile will be available in mid-September in the church library, after it's accepted by Church Council.

A Search Committee is being formed and will begin work this month using the Church Profile as its guide. A Church Council meeting Sunday, Sept. 10 will be asked to accept the Profile and approve the names of those who will serve on the Church Committee. Updates will appear in the Sunday Bulletin and on our web site.

The Search Committee's role is to review candidates, read their profiles, see how they fit with our's, and then make a recommendation to the congregation, which has the final say in calling a pastor. The Search Committee will be guided by Rev. Jill Graham, our area conference minister.

If, after reading the Church Profile, Acting Pastor Chris Mereschuk puts himself forward as a candidate, the Search Committee will review his Profile and consider him first before engaging in a national search. This is expected to happen by the end of September.

The Profile describes the history and finances of the church, our goals for the future, and the gifts and skills needed in our next pastor. Deep thanks for the hard work of the Profile Writing committee, Mariel Addis, Fred Goodhue, Pat James, Jan Varnon, and Nancy Winninger, who worked under the direction of Rev. Peter Wells. To craft the profile, they used a 35 page template provided by the Massachusetts United Church of Christ to ask and answer questions on where we have been as a church, who we are today, and what our vision is for the future. Their responses were based on the conversations in the all- church meetings and smaller discussions this spring and from the visioning work done last year.

Your Transition Leadership Team

Oct. 1, 2017

Our path to a new settled pastor

Dear Church Family,

The process of finding a new settled pastor takes an important next step with the commissioning of a Pastoral Search Committee on Sunday, October 1. We started on this path in August of 2016 when Pastor Andrea Ayvazian announced her retirement as the leader of our spiritual community. As we move forward with the search process, the Transition Leadership Team offers this brief overview of what will happen now and how we got here.

(For a closer look at the Transition Process to this point, the documents referenced here, along with the Church Profile, key meeting minutes and other materials from the transition to a new pastor can be found in Transition Documents, which are in a binder in the church library and online in the News and Events section of our church website at <http://haydenvillechurch.org>.)

Where we are today

The blessing and commissioning of Pastoral Search Committee members marks the formal start of their work.

On Sept. 10 the Church Council accepted the recommendation of the Transition Leadership Team and appointed the seven-member committee: Cate Shaw, Toby Davis, Susan Farrell, Tina Marini, Richard Spencer, Ellen Tobiassen and Nancy Winninger. The Council also adopted the Church Profile, which will be used by the Search Committee to guide its work. The Search Committee has already met with Rev. Jill Graham, our area conference minister, to understand their mission.

The Search Committee does not call a new pastor. They only make a recommendation to the congregation, which takes a vote on who to call. In the United Church of Christ, the congregation makes the decision.

The Search Committee members are on a weekly schedule of meetings. They started with a close read of the 60-page Church Profile, which identifies the key skills and gifts church members say they want in the next pastor. They will then review the Profile of Acting Pastor Chris Mereschuk and interview him for the position. This includes checking references.

The Search Committee must then decide whether to recommend him to the congregation as our next settled pastor. Their decision must be unanimous. Their decision and their reasoning will be conveyed to the congregation in a letter. If they do recommend Chris Mereschuk as our next settled pastor, he will be asked to preach a sermon at a Candidating Sunday. At the end of that service, the congregation will vote on whether to call him as our next settled pastor. If the Search Committee or the congregation say no to Chris, then the UCC will provide the Search Committee with the profiles of other UCC ministers to consider. Chris will leave and an interim pastor will be appointed until a new settled pastor is called.

What is the timetable for all this? The Search Committee is hoping to make its decision by the end of October, but it could take longer. There is no deadline. This needs to be a thoughtful and deliberative process.

Why is Chris considered first? Based on years of experience, UCC has found it best to consider internal candidates first before opening up the process. This is meant to be fair to those candidates and it

also acknowledges that other ministers will not apply for pastoral opening when there is an internal candidate. (UCC Policy on Pastor Search can be found in the Transition Documents.)

What will guide the Search Committee? The church profile is their primary guide. It draws from the visioning work conducted in 2015, the all-church meetings held last spring, the small group discussion in June, numerous conversation with church leaders and others, and the written church-wide survey. The Profile is the touchstone for Search Committee members in their deliberations.

How can the congregation help the Search Committee? Respect that their deliberations and discussions need to remain confidential. Pray for them and offer gratitude as they undertake this sacred and serious task on behalf of all of us.

How did we get to this point

Following Pastor Andrea's announcement of her retirement after 12 years of leading the congregation, a Transition Leadership Team was named to guide the search for a new pastor. The first TLT consisted of Lynn Fogg, Church Council moderator; Alice Barber, chair of trustee; Pat James, co-head deacon; Jo Cannon, treasurer; Jim Foudy, Human Resources coordinator. We consulted with UCC officials and read up on the process, which was new for all of us. We soon understood that the search for a new pastor would take a year or more. Andrea's last service and farewell event was set for Sunday, Jan 1, 2017.

In September of 2016 trustees announced that a decline in contributions and other financial considerations would make it impossible to maintain the assistance pastor position, which Chris Mereschuk then held. The congregation faced a difficult choice: to let Chris go and accept an interim pastor from UCC or make Chris the acting pastor during the search and transition to a new settled pastor.

On Sept. 20 the Transition Leadership Team held an open meeting attended by about 50 people. The two options forward were spelled out. The pros and cons debated. There were many questions and a lot of comments on how to proceed. (See minutes in Transition Documents.)

The transition team also solicited opinions by email and in person over the next few weeks. An all-congregation meeting was called following Sunday services Oct. 16. On behalf of the transition team, trustee Alice Barber made the case for why Chris should be the acting pastor. (See Transition Documents.) While acknowledging congregational concerns with that approach, Alice noted the "potential risk of an unknown Interim Pastor, who may or may not understand or embrace our welcoming, justice seeking, diverse community." The congregation voted 64-25 to offer Chris the acting pastor position, which he accepted.

In March a Profile Writing Committee was appointed by Church Council. Members met regularly throughout the spring and summer to complete the profile template from the Massachusetts United Church of Christ. They were asked to consider and answer a number of questions as we explore where we have been as a church, who we are today, and what our vision is for the future. Serving on the Profile Writing Team were Fred Goodhue, Pat James, Jan Varnon, Mariel Addis, Nancy Winninger and, for several months, Anne Warner. They were guided by Rev. Peter Wells, a former Area Minister for the Massachusetts UCC.

On Sept. 10 the completed profile was accepted by Church Council with expressions of deep gratitude for all the work and thoughtful deliberations that went into it. The same Council meeting also appointed the Search Committee.

In prayer and peace

Your Transition Leadership Team

Jim Foudy, Jo Cannon, Carolyn DuBois, Sam Icklan