

East Shore Unitarian Church
Questions about Developmental Ministry
2/2018

Q: What is Developmental Ministry?

A: Developmental Ministry is a type of transitional ministry that occurs between two long-term called/settled ministries over a period of 3-7 years. It's ideal for a congregation that has specific goals it wants to work on before calling its next long-term minister.

The goals are set by the congregational leadership and approved by the Pacific Northwest Region staff. Based on those specific goals, the congregation is matched with a minister who can help them achieve their goals.

The minister is hired by the congregation's board of directors and has a contract with them. The Regional Staff is also in constant communication with the board president and developmental minister to ensure the congregation is on track with their developmental goals. In other words, there is in essence a three-way relationship between the congregation, the developmental minister, and the Pacific Western Region.

Q: Why is East Shore looking for a developmental minister instead of a settled minister?

A: Following the evaluation and report by the Reverends Christine Robinson and Jonipher Kwong, it is apparent that we have work to be done as a congregation to become a healthier beloved community. This type of congregational transformation is ideally suited for a developmental minister specifically trained to work with congregations needing help with change and trained to help achieve goals set by the congregation and leadership. Our current minister agrees that a developmental minister would be the best choice for East Shore right now.

At the February 20th board meeting, the board voted to proceed with the application process to hire a developmental minister.

Q: What goals would Eastshore designate for a developmental ministry?

A: The board is currently working on a set of goals to present to the congregation, using input from the congregation, the recommendations from Christine and Jonipher, and current board goals.

Q: What is our timeline?

A: A task force has been set up by the board to work on the application for a developmental minister and is currently working on the details. Although we have missed the typical deadlines for an application, the Pacific Northwest District is working with us to expedite the process. If all goes well, we are aiming to have a developmental minister in the latter half of 2018. The task force is working on a specific timeline.

Q: What are the costs associated with developmental ministry?

A: Transitional costs aside (interview and moving expenses), the annual costs for a developmental/interim/settled minister are the same (salary plus housing allowance and benefits).

Q: What is the track record for developmental ministers accomplishing the articulated goals?

A: The Pacific Western Region led the way in 2008 to help challenging congregations engage in cultural change. To date, anecdotal data is strong and very favorable. Most developmental ministries appear to accomplish their objectives, which is why this option is gaining in popularity. While formal data is not available, there is an article in the UU World article which details some success stories. The article is by Elaine McArdle in the 9/15/2014 issue.

Q: How many Sundays will the developmental minister be in the pulpit? Who will lead worship on the Sundays when the developmental minister is not in the pulpit?

A: Our standard ministerial contract designates that the minister is in the pulpit three Sundays each month. When not in the pulpit, the developmental minister is still accountable for worship.

Q: Will the developmental minister lead the church staff? Provide pastoral care?

A: The developmental minister will manage congregational ministry, including management of church staff and providing pastoral care. But the minister's primary professional objectives beyond day-to-day work are to help our congregation address the systems that will enable greater health.

Q: How will you involve/inform the congregation along the way?

A: The Board of Trustees is committed to transparency and congregational buy-in as we move through this process. The current e-blast will be followed with updates as we reach each milestone. The March 3 Saturday Coffee and Conversation will be devoted to this topic. At that time, Board members and Developmental Minister Task Force members will be present to answer questions and receive input. A March 4 Town Hall after the service will provide another opportunity for questions and input with Board and Task Force members. Because the application is due soon, the Board of Trustees and the Task Force request that members communicate with them as soon as possible.

We welcome your questions, comments, and concerns. You may email members of the Board at any time.