



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF KENT
ESTABLISHED 1866

April 2018

Dear Ministerial Candidates,

During the months of January to March of 2018, I had the opportunity to work with the UU Church of Kent as part of the new UUA program for retired ministers called The Targeted Ministry Program. As a Targeted Minister, I worked with the congregation four days per month.

In this capacity, the Board and I decided that our primary work was to help get the congregation ready for a new minister. In the aftermath of conflict and eventual termination of the Interim Minister, we decided to:

- a) create a Targeted Ministry Committee made up of Board members and Chairs of some key committees. The Moderator would chair the TMC.
- b) deal with the fallout from the termination of the Interim Minister that included meeting with individuals, groups and the whole congregation.
- c) support the staff in the absence of a minister
- d) meet with select committees that included Worship, Membership, Pastoral Care, Search Committee, and Stewardship

Eventually, it was decided that I would especially support the Stewardship effort and when I returned in March that was my focus.

As a result of interactions both on site in Kent and over the phone during these months, I offer the following observations:

- a) This congregation has real strength in its people, organization and programs. There is a high commitment of time, talent and treasure.
- b) The conflict with Interim Minister was based on a mismatch, but it also revealed power dynamics in the congregation that needed to be addressed with the Board, Targeted Ministry Team and Leadership Development Committee.
- c) Without a Minister at the hub, communications needed to be improved, especially relating to the Ministerial Search and the New Building
- d) In the committees or groups where the conflict was deepest, Restorative Circles were encouraged

During this period, we named the concerns, developed plans of action and healing occurred.



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The most important observation is that the congregation had the courage to acknowledge what had happened and what was still alive in the present. It admitted the messiness of it all. But in spite of what occurred, the core of this congregation is strong.

Also, the UU Church of Kent is on the edge of a new era with the coming of the new building, new minister and the nurturing of new leadership to work with established leaders. The congregation is also in the process of moving from a pastoral to a program style which will require a special kind of ministerial leadership.

If you are lucky enough to be called as the congregation's new minister, you will need to be comfortable with change and conflict as you help the congregation move into this new phase of being.

If you would like to talk with me more about the congregation. Please feel free to call me at 518-392-0114 or email at Tchulak@aol.com.

My best to you in your search,

Rev. Dr. Tom Chulak