

## MINISTERIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE NEWS

*[The task before this church in the coming year] will be the selection of a minister who can meet the major expectations of our people and not wilt in the shadow of the previous minister. To do that you will need to select carefully, making sure that he or she has the strengths and abilities you need. To do that you will have to take the time to discover just what those strengths and abilities are. In the final analysis, you will have to be patient with the search process, loyal to the church in the transition and supportive of whomever you choose. To do less than that would be to negate everything we have done together over the years.*

The above is excerpted from the annual report of Max Coots in 1977. The fact that Max was planning to leave Canton for another church 17 years or so into his ministry here may be a surprise to you. It was to me. Reading some of those old reports also made me realize (surprise, surprise) that it was not always smooth sailing with our beloved Max. His ministry was not 34 years of congregational bliss. There were bumps, missteps, disappointments, wrong turns and disaffections. But he stuck with us, we stuck with him, we all worked hard, and we all grew together in spirit and in love. What we mostly remember, because in the end it's what mattered most, is the good stuff.

It's probably fair to say we experienced some bumps and missteps on both sides with Anne and Wade, as well. But once again, the spirit of this wonderful and imperfect church community, in partnership with committed, talented, beloved and imperfect ministers enabled us to negotiate the missteps and smooth out the bumps so that we could grow spiritually, financially, programmatically, and as a beacon of liberal religion and social justice in the wider community. We worked hard, laughed a lot, and in the end what we remember is all the good stuff.

We'll have a few bumps and missteps in this transition year and probably in the course of our time with our next settled minister...no matter how fantastic a minister that person is. But let's heed Max's 30-year-old advice to "take the time to discover...those strengths and abilities" we need in a new minister. Let's "be patient with the search process." Let's remain "loyal to the church in the transition" and be supportive of the person we eventually choose. Because, as Max said, "To do less than that would be to negate everything we have done together over the years." In the end, we all have confidence that there will be lots and lots of good stuff, and that's what will matter the most.

- † **Thank you** to the 60+ people who attended and participated thoughtfully in the Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop. It was a very long day on one of the last beautiful days of summer. We are grateful to be serving a congregation willing to commit that kind of time to ensuring that hidden fears and biases with respect to race, sexual orientation, physical ability or a host of other "categories" don't stand in the way of bringing us together with the best possible minister for our church. We hope to provide opportunities down the road to constructively engage with some of the things that surfaced during that conversation.
- † **Listening Circles** are coming up. There will be at least one almost every day from September 27 through October 4. **Please** sign up to attend one of these. We know we've been asking for a lot of participation from you these last couple of months with the survey, strategic interviews, the BCT workshop, and now Listening Circles. But we want you to know that the Listening Circles are the last organized opportunity you will have to contribute ideas and concerns to the search until we bring a candidate before you next spring. We will always be open to your questions and concerns on an individual basis, but this is the last search "event." In small Listening Circles you will have an opportunity to talk about what you see as the challenges facing our church and the strengths we have to meet them, the most important goals for the next few years, and what is important for *you* that we find in a new settled minister.
- † We could use some help with **The Packet**. If you would like to help create the packet that will describe our church to potential ministers, here are a couple of ways you can do that.
  - We need some good photos that convey the life and spirit of our church. If you have some you'd like to submit, contact Laura Foster at [lafopearl@gmail.com](mailto:lafopearl@gmail.com).

- We need **short** statements from some of you describing what this church means to you. Please submit your statement to Laura Foster. We may not be able to include all submissions, and we may need to edit for space, but don't let that deter you! Dig deep and let the creative juices flow. Deadline is October 15.
- † **Survey results** will be shared with you just as soon as we get them compiled. We're sure you will find them interesting and, in some cases, quite thought provoking.
- † **What's coming up?** By the end of October, our Congregational Record will be ready to go live, and our packet will be completed. In November we will begin to receive names of ministers who have expressed interest in our church. We'll exchange packets with them, conduct phone interviews and reference checks and, ultimately, set up pre-candidating dates in February and March. During this time, you will not hear much from us, but don't let that stop you from continuing to feed us your thoughts and ideas. We want to hear from you, and we will make sure you are as informed about what's happening as we can.
- † **How else can you help?** Stay actively involved in the life of the church during this transition. Volunteer for those "one-time" jobs when you can. Contribute your ideas and constructive feedback to Myron, Church Council, the Transition Team and us. And, of course, come to church on Sunday whenever you can. **WE** are the church and always have been. It's up to us to keep it vibrant and forward moving.
- † **Talk to us! And thanks for all of your support. It means a great deal to the entire Search Committee.**

Laura Foster  
315-386-5775  
[lafopearl@gmail.com](mailto:lafopearl@gmail.com)

Todd Moe (treasurer)  
315-353-2389  
[todd@ncpr.org](mailto:todd@ncpr.org)

Doug Rubio  
315-265-1083  
[drubio@twcny.rr.com](mailto:drubio@twcny.rr.com)

Judy Gibson  
315-386-4643  
[jcgibson@twcny.rr.com](mailto:jcgibson@twcny.rr.com)

Carol Pynchon (Chair)  
315-379-0949  
[tpynchon@twcny.rr.com](mailto:tpynchon@twcny.rr.com)

Tom Sokol  
315-265-6748  
[tsokol@twcny.rr.com](mailto:tsokol@twcny.rr.com)

Valerie Ingram (secretary)  
315-854-4023  
[vingram@stlawu.edu](mailto:vingram@stlawu.edu)