

Unity Church-Unitarian Ministerial Search Team • November 2020



Gene Bard

It is my hope to contribute to the stability and the growth of Unity with the interest, skills and abilities I have available. If you judge that these will help Unity in a way you see important then I will be willing to serve with dedication in this position.

I came to Unity in the mid 60's, moved, and returned. 84 years of life, 50 years of marriage, 2 children, 4 grandchildren, now a widower. Recruited Michelle, my "significant other", into Unity and the Choir. Sermons, music, unified social voice and social action provided by Unity are important to me. I am usually an agnostic and determinist but aspire to have choice. I have done counseling and psychotherapy, been executive director of a nonprofit, and done program evaluation for a large social service agency. I have taken post graduate classes on management, team building, and other related fields.



Mary Baremore

In preparing to call new senior leadership, we engage in envisioning the future of our congregation, our faith community, our spiritual home. This is exciting work. Much has been given to my family and me over many years. It would be an honor to serve on the team.

I maintain identities similar to many in our church (white, middle class, well-educated). I would add to the team a consciousness around class, disability (Deaf Community), and personal addiction/recovery. I identify as lesbian. I enrich my spiritual life through personal practice, learning, and service. I am actively working to understand and address issues related to privilege, my own and systemic. I am a joyful member of several teams, learning groups, and a choir. I have been active in religious education, including Coming of Age. I practice deep listening and work well with others on teams. I follow through on commitments.



Don Brunnquell

I wish to be on the ministerial search committee to assist the congregation in making a choice to move us forward with our collective goals as expressed in the Ends Statements. I hope we can find a minister who can assist us in moving forward in all these areas.

I believe my Unity experiences, UUA work, professional work, and commitment to community will allow me to contribute to the search. At Unity I have been involved in a numerous ways, including as a member and chair of intern committees, as worship associate, music participant, music director search committee, and pilgrim to Bolivia, Boston, and Selma. I have served with many senior UU ministers and staff for four years on the UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee, which credentials new ministers (I've interviewed over a hundred ministerial candidates). My career as psychologist and bioethicist includes evaluation and mediation.



Shelley Butler

I would like to be on the Ministerial Search Committee because I am invested in the future of Unity Church, am grateful for all that Unity has given me, and I would appreciate the opportunity to be of service to the congregation. Thank you for considering me.

As a white, cisgender woman (she/her/hers), in minimization on the spectrum of intercultural development, I bring a common but valuable perspective when balanced on a diverse committee. Engagement with the work and people of the church in a variety of ways over the past ten years is an integral part of my spiritual growth. My first-hand experience, as well as study of Unity history, will add a depth of institutional knowledge that can be invaluable in looking to the future. My strengths that can contribute to this work are in research, writing, and organization of information.



Debbie Cushman

I will joyfully embrace the opportunity to serve on the search team as a significant long-term contribution to Unity. The selection of the next minister(s) is integral to how we move within, among and beyond – in service to individual spiritual growth, and throughout our congregation and Unity's intersections with communities.

My current engagement in Chalice Circle facilitation, the Teaching Associates cohort, Religious Education and Women's Ensemble – and previous involvement in the Children's Musical, Finding Yourself at Unity, Cairns, various committees and other music ministry – will all serve to inform my awareness of congregational perspectives. My professional experience of 25 years in human resources and organizational change also provides me with a skill set in support of the search team. Professionally, I'm a nonprofit leader working daily towards social justice – a direct intersection with Unity's Ends. I am adept at seeing the big picture and confident in voicing my perspective.



Pauline Eichten

I am committed to our aspirations to build a multicultural spiritual community as we dismantle dominant culture and work toward racial healing. I've seen how ministerial leadership can invite us to envision and live into new possibilities. I want that culture of shared leadership to continue and thrive.

I came into Unity Church in the 70s through the choir. From the choir loft to the chancel as a worship associate, to the Anti-Racism Leadership Team and then serving on the Board of Trustees, I've felt the power of shared ministry. I'm a thoughtful, curious person open to new ideas and respectful of the past. I listen more than I speak, but am not afraid to speak up when it matters. To engage in a ministerial search with fellow church members offers the opportunity to help shape our future as a multicultural spiritual community. I'm excited by the prospect.



Kevin Ely

I would like to be on the Ministerial Search Team to assist in finding ministers that will help make Unity a more welcoming place for LGBTQ Unity members, or soon to be members.

I have been actively coming to Unity since 2008. I have worked Rainbow Chalice Alliance (RCA), the Pi(e) day fundraiser, and as a Death & Dying conversation facilitator. RCA worked to create a network of people to support the Minnesota School Outreach Coalition, and GSAs at the middle/high school level. Over time, RCA members greatly appreciated how Unity helped support the LGBTQ community outside of church but acknowledged not always feeling a sense of LGBTQ community within Unity. I believe our ministerial search should consider how gender can inform conversations around spirituality, our outreach efforts, and community building within Unity.



Morgan France-Ramirez

“Si quieres cambio verdadero, camina distinto.” If you want true change, walk differently. I want to be on the ministerial search team to help myself and my church embody the change I want to see in the world; namely, to create a multicultural community rooted in empathy and transcendent love.

As a Puerto-Rican, French American who grew up in catholic schools in St. Paul, my life is characterized by multiculturalism. Formerly agnostic, a spiritual connection in my 20's led me to a mindfulness practice and then to Unity. As a public defender in Minneapolis, I have a critical eye for institutional inequality and have experience advocating and interviewing. As a Puerto-Rican, French American who grew up in catholic schools in St. Paul, my life is characterized by multiculturalism. Formerly agnostic, a spiritual connection in my 20's led me to a mindfulness practice and then to Unity. As a public defender in Minneapolis, I have a critical eye for institutional inequality and have experience advocating and interviewing. I am married with two young boys and live in an intergenerational family. I am on the Religious-Education-Ministry-Team and believe in raising children who feel connected to the universe, who know all creation is divine, and who stand up for that truth.



Rich Hamer

This is critical to the future of the church. I want to find the best spiritual leader. 30 years at Unity tells me that worship services and spiritual programs benefit the largest set of our congregation; the new minister must be exceptionally good at this if the church is to thrive.

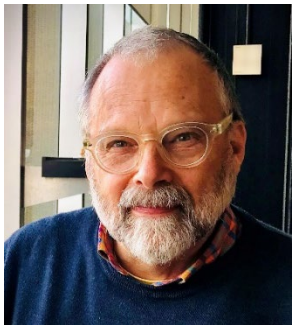
My vision for the church is growth as a spiritual center. It comes from my experience as parent, fundraiser, religious education teacher/team, Partner Church Team leader, mentor, anti-racism worker, board member. Work with current ministers leads me to appreciate the professionalism and caliber required by the job. My spirituality is driven by the twin practices of authentic listening and focus on the “out here” rather than the “in here”. As a search team member, I will set aside frameworks, preconceptions, etc, to allow me to fully hear others. Married 30 years to Donna Gies, two children (OWL/COA), founder of Deft Research.



Betsy Hearn

From joining as a young single woman in 1994, to bringing my boyfriend, Drew, to raising our family within the embrace of Unity, this has been our church and spiritual home. I want to serve on the Ministerial Search team and have a lasting positive impact on this sacred place that has given me and my family so much.

Identities while a member at Unity: Single woman, newly married, parent of two UU teens, non-profit worker, corporate employee, unemployed professional, Cisgender straight woman, White, Anti-Racist, UU, liberal, environmentalist, RE volunteer, human being. Perspectives: Long-term UU, Board of Trustees, founding member of UU Families, 14 year RE volunteer, 2 term RE Ministry Teammember, parent of kids participating in youth programming, anti-racist human. Expertise: Long term UU, teacher of UU Curriculum for 14 years, IDI Qualified Facilitator, HR professional for 20+ years. I will bring all that lies behind these words to bear in my role as a member of the Ministerial Search Team. (I'd say more – but 100 words goes really quick!)



Dan Huelster

As a life-long member of Unity Church I would bring a sense of its institutional history to the team. However, looking towards the future, I'd find it an honor and privilege to help call the minister(s) who will guide us as we actualize our values and ends.

Unity is integral in my life. I'm nourished by the words, music, and community on Sundays, but also inspired beyond our walls by my identity as a UU. At Unity I've volunteered for the religious education program; on a Welcome Team since the inception of the 4:30 service; chaired the Adult Library committee; led a pledge drive; chaired two Ministerial Intern Support Teams, served on a third; was a member of the Board of Trustees during the early years of policy governance. As a Tower Club member, I was the youth representative on the ministerial search committee, some 50 years ago!



Terry Linskey

As we search for new ministerial leadership, we face a challenge of considering a candidate who appreciates our deeply held traditions and embraces the vision we hope to grow into. I offer an open, inquiring, problem-solving, mature perspective to these sometimes-conflicting interests and would be honored to help prepare Unity Church for this next stage.

The diverse and meaningful experiences I've had at Unity Church for more than 30 years have led to a deeper understanding of our congregation and my own spiritual growth. As a board trustee, I was challenged to articulate my convictions, find ways to compromise, and speak with one voice. As a worship associate, I discovered how to reveal my vulnerabilities. As a religious education teacher and Our Whole Lives facilitator, I learned to listen and validate. Through workshops on racial equity, I am becoming aware of how to use my identity as an ally and active follower. Professionally, I have led groups with diverse agendas, often facing short timelines and limited resources. I respectfully offer these skills and my wholehearted commitment to the work of the Ministerial Search Team.



Ann Mabbott

I treasure Unity. We need to grow to address the end statement of creating a multicultural spiritual home built on authentic relationships. I know how important it is to listen to all voices and trust others' expertise and good intentions. This approach will help us find the right ministerial leadership.

I am a biracial immigrant who came to the U.S. as a child refugee. As an adult, I spent my career preparing teachers to meet the linguistic and cultural needs of immigrants. I was the Director of the Center for Second Language Teaching and Learning at Hamline University for many years. In that role, I participated in hiring committees, interviewed faculty and staff, managed numerous education initiatives and changes, and dealt with conflicts among students and staff. My greatest strength was recruiting and supporting teachers. I feel that these skills will transfer well to ministerial search committee work.



Angela Newhouse

My love of Unity church drives my desire to be on this team. Over the past 20 years, I've seen a transformation in our connections to each other within the church and to the community. I hope to help us find a minister that will lead us in strengthening these relationships.

I have been a member of Unity for about 30 years and have experienced many aspects of the life and work of the church. I've been on the Board of Trustees, I sing in the Unity Singers, and have been a Coming of Age mentor and Our Whole Lives facilitator. Each of these experiences has given me a new perspective on what it takes to make our church a vital place that serves its community. And I've gained valuable experiences working with teams where I've learned that trust and an open heart are key to forming relationships that help move the work forward.



Helen Pohlig

During my 11 years at Unity I have participated in various activities and volunteer opportunities, most of which have fallen into the categories of "within" (for my own spiritual growth) or "beyond" (service to the greater community). I see serving on the Ministerial Search Team to be an opportunity to contribute to the "among" part of Unity's mission.

As a single, middle-aged, straight white woman my perspective is not unique but it does reflect a certain portion of Unity's membership. I grew up with a traditional protestant religious orientation. As an adult I have explored a variety of belief systems and practices. Unity allows me to refine my own individual spiritual beliefs. Two additional aspects of Unity that I value and think are critical to the church's identity are its work toward social justice and its religious education program. These are all things I want to see carried forward under new ministerial leadership.



Lia Rivamonte

My desire to be a part of the Ministerial Search Team is rooted in my deep love for Unity—its values, its dreams, and its constant striving towards embodying the Beloved Community. I want to ensure that Unity remains strong and able to connect meaningfully with the broader community.

My identity as a woman, a person of color, and a cultural worker figures greatly in my desire to serve on the ministerial search team. I am committed to the larger vision of this community to welcome people from a multiplicity of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences and in identifying and taking down the barriers that prevent participation from more people. For over 20 years, I've engaged in a myriad of groups and activities at Unity. This engagement has increased my understanding of how to create a welcoming church environment that is not merely inclusive but truly nurturing, and that offers many paths forward to discovering the meaning and value we all yearn for.



Jack Rossmann

Marty and I became members in the 1970s, Unity Church has played a significant role in my life. As a member of the Ministerial Search Team, I would like to help ensure Unity has the leadership needed to respond to the needs and aspirations of an ever-changing congregation.

As board member, welcome team member, participant on a ministerial intern support team, a mentor for new members, a Boston pilgrimage participant, and a participant in the Team Dynamics Equity and Justice series, I have become aware of the great talent among the staff and members of Unity Church. I would hope that I could use my experience as a former Provost and Department Chair at Macalester College, and former chair of a search committee for the president of United Theological Seminary, to work effectively with other Ministerial Search Team members to attract an excellent applicant pool and reach consensus about the person(s) we would recommend to the congregation for approval.



Jake Rueter

Our congregation and community finds itself imagining and taking action to cultivate a multicultural congregation rooted in earnest relationships. Calling our next minister(s) is a critical step forward; I hope to be part of the team who shares our congregation's vision with candidates on the path to selection.

As a worship associate I have a deep appreciation for the role that our shared spiritual practice plays in building community and fostering interpersonal connections. Experience in this role has also afforded me the chance to work with a number of different ministers and to develop an understanding for different ministerial styles and practices. I am both a younger, and newer member of the congregation and will bring both my appreciation for the traditions and patterns that helped make Unity feel like home, along with a vision for how our congregation can continue to work towards our ends statements.



Stephanie Steel

I will be retiring at the end of 2020 and will be able to fully participate in this important work. One of my goals in retirement is to become more involved in organizations that make a real difference in people's lives. Unity is such an organization.

I approach life through the lens of a cisgender white woman in her mid-60s. My lived experiences have shaped me, how I interact with the world and how I live in the world. I seek opportunities for spiritual growth that take me out of my comfort zone; that challenge me to ask myself some hard questions. My expertise (skills/knowledge) that I might bring to the Ministerial Search Team from my day job in the insurance industry include understanding the need for defined process and procedures which support an underwriting decision which in the case is the search for our next called ministers.



Avi Viswanathan

I want to be part of this team because I want to contribute to the future of the church. I want to ensure that our church understands the different perspectives in our congregation and that our church will speak to people of color and future generations.

My experiences as a person of color, the child of immigrants, and as a parent, provide me a perspective that I will bring to this team. These experiences are not widely represented in our congregation but are important in helping understand who we are and who we want to be. I have worked to bring that perspective to many aspects of the church including as a worship associate. In addition, I am highly skilled in facilitation and engagement. I understand how to represent different voices and interests and to bring people together for a common goal and vision.



Margaret Walker

This is a crucial hinge moment in the life of our church, our nation, and beyond. My hope is that the changes will disrupt us in productive ways, causing us to re-imagine who we can become. I want to help guide our church into a shared, creative, and energizing future.

I entered the life of Unity Church through the choir portal twenty years ago, and have continued in music ministries as a choir member, Unity Singers alto, and collaborating writer for Foote Sundays. I've served in several other volunteer roles. The most meaningful were that of worship associate and board member. Engaging the congregation fully and creatively during the Ends Renewal process in 2013, when I was board chair, remains a highlight of my time at Unity. From my career in organizational development and current life as a poet, I can offer project management, planning, deep listening, and writing skills.