

Sunday October 26, 2008

To our Hope Church community:

We present to you this document reflecting the Responsibilities and Charges of those who serve on the Search Committee for Hope Church's next pastor. This is a "living document," imperfect as we are, so please feel free to share with us your comments or suggestions. We are looking to put forward a slate of 6-8 Search Committee members, plus a member of the Leadership Circle serving ex-officio. We anticipate the commitment for Search Committee members will begin in December and extend through the welcoming of our new pastor (in other congregations this process has lasted between 9-18 months) **We invite you to prayerfully consider if you or someone you know is equipped and willing to be nominated. Please contact any one of the Nominating Committee members to suggest yourself, a friend, or simply discuss how your time and talents can be used to help our Church.** Nominations are open as of Sunday October 26, 2008 and will remain open for three weeks, ending on **Sunday November 16, 2008.** To ensure that everyone in our community is aware of this process, this document will be available at worship on Sundays, posted on the website and emailed to the congregation. We hope these multiple forms of communication demonstrate our commitment to open and shared process for guiding our common life at Hope.

Thank you for considering this.

In Peace,

The Nominating Committee of Hope Church.

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with adaptations from *The United Church of Christ's Search and Call resources:*

<http://www.ucc.org/ministers/search-and-call/section-3-the-search-and-call-process-in-the-ucc.pdf>

### **The Search Committee for Hope Church Responsibilities and Charges**

**“I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion...” Philippians 1:6a**

**Gifts to share for the building up the Church:** God has started a good work among us at Hope Church and now we are seeking the pastor who can help us travel faithfully along the way. Just as our local church is not exclusively ‘our’ church but rather God’s, so too the Search Committee is really God’s. A search for a new pastor is one of the most spiritual ministries in the Church. Serving on the Search Committee for our next pastor is a charge of great faith and responsibility. The Search Committee is charged with praying and discerning where God may be calling us and who God might be sending to shepherd us. Hope Church Covenant Partners on the Search Committee are serving on behalf of the entire congregation. It involves entering into deep relationship with other Covenant Partners to grow in faith and discern together who is called to be Hope’s pastor. The congregation authorizes and empowers the Search Committee to do their work on behalf of the entire congregation, keeping the best interests of the congregation at the fore and listening for where the Spirit may be leading us.

Serving on the Search Committee is a gift to our congregation and the entire Church, as we seek to find a pastor who can lead our community into the next stages of our life together. As you consider whether to serve or nominate someone to participate in this process, we ask that you consider the following qualities as necessary for this task:

- dedication to the mission and vision of Hope Church as expressed in our welcoming statement
- regular prayer for the life and work of Hope Church
- gifts of time, talent and treasure for the good of the Church
- a passionate commitment to the whole of Christ’s Church
- a positive attitude, releasing grudges or malice for past experiences in the Church
- a capacity to approach the task with openness rather than a pre-determined agenda
- a sense of integrity and respect for others
- a willingness to think holistically about the needs of the whole congregation
- an ability to keep absolute confidences
- a capacity to listen, to participate well in a group, and to come to consensus
- active support of the Church as demonstrated by worship attendance
- the trust and respect of the congregation
- the willingness and ability to make this responsibility a very high priority
- the patience to wait for the movements of the Holy Spirit and an eagerness to manifest God’s love
- an openness to working with both the denominational staff from both the Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ

**Charges to the Search Committee:** As the entire Hope Church community entrusts this sacred work to the Search Committee, we ask that the Search Committee make and honor the following five commitments:

**1. A Faith Commitment:** This work is holy. These Covenant Partners will form themselves to be a faith centered, prayerful people of God, seeking to listen to God as they search for a new pastor. They will honor their relationships with the Holy Spirit, the entire Hope Church community, the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ, and any prospective pastor.

**2. A Time Commitment:** This work is powerful. Search Committee members make a commitment to give of their time in faithfully attending worship, Search Committee meetings and working in between meetings. By the time the search process is completed (from first organizational meeting to the calling of a new pastor) the committee may have been working together for as little as 9 months or as long as 18 months. Initially most Search Committees meet weekly. Once committees begin considering pastoral profiles and scheduling interviews, the intensity of the work may increase. At times the Search Committee must travel to hear prospective pastors preach. All in all, it is a significant time commitment. We trust that the Search Committee will work intensely and diligently.

**3. A Commitment to Confidentiality:** This work is tender. Search Committee members make a commitment to confidentiality. Members must not talk about the content of their work. That is to say, the sharing of names of individuals under consideration is a serious breach of process. Even by speaking in generalities about location or experience or gender, there is a risk of individuals guessing who the committee is considering. The congregation must be kept informed at every step of the process. Sharing where the Search Committee is in the process is critical. However, until a final candidate is presented, all conversation about candidates is closely guarded.

**4. A Commitment to Openness:** This work is surprising. Search Committee members make a commitment to genuine consideration of all candidates, holding each pastoral profile with open hands. The commitment involves understanding that the gifts, skills, and experience of candidates are primary in determining their ability to serve the congregation. Any applicant could be our next pastor!

**5. A Commitment to Consensus:** This work is transformative. Search Committee members make a commitment to consensus. Members need to be of one mind in recommending their prospective pastor to the congregation. Everyone must be able, with a clear and positive conscience, to support and endorse the individual presented before the congregation.

**Responsibilities of the Search Committee:** The Search Committee is responsible for praying together for the good of the Church, creating our Church Profile, publicizing our pastoral vacancy, reading ministerial profiles, preparing for interviews, attending worship, discerning the recommended candidate and presenting the candidate to the whole Church. The Search Committee as a whole is responsible to maintain good contact with the Leadership Circle and the congregation on how the Search Process is going. The Search Committee is responsible for working closely with the United Church of Christ Metro Boston Association Minister, Rev. Wendy Vander Hart and the Disciples of Christ Northeast Region Transitional Minister, Rev. Mary Ann Glover. The Search Committee shall be comprised of 6-8 committee members, with a Leadership Circle member present as ex-officio. There shall be specific leadership posts on the Search Committee, including the Chairperson, the Recording Secretary, and the Chaplain. The responsibilities and charges for these leadership posts are available in the UCC Handbook for Search Committees "Search and Call: A Pilgrimage through Transitions and New Beginnings."

**Responsibilities of the Congregation:** In empowering the Search Committee to follow where the Spirit is leading and to act on our behalf, the entire congregation also has responsibilities. Covenant Partners and other parishioners commit to:

- Pray for the Search Committee and their holy work
- Attend all-church meetings or other gatherings as called by the Search Committee
- Stay up to date with the developments of the search process
- Communicate joys and concerns directly to the Search Committee in a timely manner
- Respect the confidentiality of the search process
- Tend to the building up of our Church community in this transitional time
- Pray for the new pastor who will be sent to lead us
- Prepare a space in our hearts and our common life for our new pastor

We pray for the faithful work of the Search Committee, the leadings of our interim pastor, the witness of our community of faith and the next pastor who has already been appointed by God to walk with us. May we be faithful, discerning and holy in all things. *Amen.*