



Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church

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January 7, 2015

Dear BBUUC Members:

Last spring, we were presented with an opportunity to hire Rev. Jack Ford, a long-time member of our congregation, monthly speaker, chaplain and Unitarian Universalist Minister as a half-time consulting minister. We entered into a process of reviewing our needs and ability to afford professional ministry with a series of town hall meetings and forums, a survey and then a pledge drive which fell short of sustaining a minister's half-time salary—particularly after recovering from the budgetary shortfall that we had experienced the previous year. Rev. Ford had withdrawn his offer prior to our annual meeting in light of the budgetary situation, but agreed, at our request, to keep options open to us until this month. Our survey last year indicated a majority of members were in favor of hiring Rev. Ford as a half-time professional UU minister, but we did not have, at the time, sufficient indications that we could support the salary.

After the realization that we were unable to move ahead from a sound financial perspective, we received an anonymous donation in the form of a \$30,000 challenge grant, earmarked for professional ministry – intended initially for the hiring of Rev. Ford, but with the stipulation that if we were unable to make financial progress to meet his schedule, this Ministerial Support Fund could continue to grow and be utilized for professional ministry at BBUUC with a different hire down the road. That would give us, when matched, a total of \$60,000 in this very generous fund.

Since June 1, we have raised a total of \$24,254 (as of 1/4/15, including the matching fund). The Board has continued to examine the feasibility of bringing Rev. Ford on board as a half-time consulting minister by taking a discerning look at our needs and resources. We assembled a Task Force with knowledge and understanding of church finances, dynamics, ministry and systems to evaluate the opportunity and our ability to support and manage this ministry. This group included Dale Crawford, Don DeStephano, Pam Richards, Tara Crisp, Don Repass, and me. We came up with a plan and met with Rev. Ford, who agreed to the terms we were able to offer. Jack is seeking to complete the requirements to receive final fellowship status with the UUA, which requires a minimum three years of half-time professional ministry in a UU congregation. However, he understands that the renewal of his contract each year is contingent on the church's financial position. The Board then voted to recommend to the congregation that we move forward with hiring Rev. Jack Ford beginning in March 2015. We will take the month of January to offer opportunities for further education and discussion about the impact of this hiring, and will **call for a vote on the matter at a congregational meeting scheduled for February 8th, after the service.**



A member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Attached you will find a financial analysis that was prepared by Pam Richards of the Ministerial Task Force, outlining the plan we are putting forward to enable a decision regarding Rev. Ford's ministry. We will be asking the congregation to approve a 3-year window for this hire, with the actual agreement set up to be renewed annually by the Board. This would eliminate the need for a congregational vote each year, until the third year, when we would have another congregational decision about a continued consulting ministry or a called one. Jack would be eligible to be considered for a call at that time, or we could decide to enlist the UUA's process for reviewing other candidates.

It is important to understand that consulting ministry is not the same as the traditional "calling" of a minister. The process for preparation is not as intense, and a consulting minister is considered a transitional minister, helping a congregation to develop in specific ways such as growth, faith development and learning. At some point, most lay led churches find themselves at a crossroads, where volunteers are no longer able to effectively govern the congregation along with handling its increasing ministerial needs. Professional ministry is the next step, and we feel that the opportunity that we have with Rev. Ford is a good match for us, and a good way to transition to the next level. We will be working on the contract in the coming days before the congregational meeting, and will share that with the members as it is finalized. We are currently looking at having Rev. Ford in the pulpit two Sundays a month, in addition to his other duties, and will continue having guest speakers for the other 2-3 Sundays each month.

Please look over the enclosed Next Step Summary, financial analysis and the notes on consulting ministry. We will conduct a Town Hall meeting on January 18th for continued discussion before the vote, along with discussion about proposed Bylaw Amendments which will also be presented by the Bylaw Task Force.

I encourage you to talk with members of the Board about your thoughts and concerns, and to take part in further conversations and shared information about this important issue. Please plan on attending the meeting scheduled after the service on February 8th so that we can have as many members as possible checked in to vote.

In love and faith,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda K. Mowers". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Linda Mowers
President
Buckman Bridge Unitarian Universalist Church

"The Next Step" Summary

BBUUC Ministerial Task Force

Prepared by Don Repass

BBUUC will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2015. The Ministerial Task Force recommends a combination of the anniversary celebration and the hiring of Rev. Jack Ford as half-time consulting minister effective March 2015.

THE PLAN:

- A. **Contract** - Prepare a contract for Rev. Jack Ford as half-time minister for one year at a time, with renewable second year and renewable third year, depending on the funds available in years to come. Rather than trying to achieve the goal of \$60,000 for a three-year period, achieving smaller amounts in each of the three years is more manageable.

Jack has agreed to the following package for the first year:

\$33,000 NET (includes Salary, Housing Allowance and \$3K in Professional Expenses)

The contract will be drafted with expectations of office hours, two Sundays per month in the pulpit, and involvement in the following areas:

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Mission/vision development | • Social justice advocacy |
| • Worship | • Right relations |
| • Religious Education | • Limited counseling |
| • Denominational representation | • Pastoral care |
| • Membership and growth | • Stewardship development |
| • New member orientation | • Spiritual practice |
| • Representation to greater community | • Weddings/funerals/ceremonies |
| • Public Outreach | • Working with the Board, Committees and Ministries |

- B. **Funds Available** – See the following Financial Analysis

C. **Time Frame** –

- a. December 17, 2014 - Task Force met with Rev. Jack Ford to discuss terms
- b. January 2015 - Every member canvass
- c. February 8, 2015 - Membership vote on proposal to hire Rev. Jack Ford
- d. March (1st or 15th, to be negotiated), 2015 - Start date for Rev. Jack Ford
- e. March & April 2015 - Pledge drive with Rev. Jack Ford on board
- f. March, April, May 2015 - Expanded classes and activities
- g. Welcome new members, celebrate 25th year, and utilize half-time minister
- h. March – September 2015 – Prepare a Five Year progress plan for church structure, personnel structure, and member structure with potential of hiring a full-time minister after five years

Ministerial Task Force Financial Analysis

(Prepared by Pam Richards)

Summary:

We now have sufficient funds accumulated in the Ministerial Support Fund (MSF) to hire Jack for his first year. Review of our overall financial position from a conservative perspective shows that we have an acceptable level of financial risk. Our mortgage holders are protected, we have enough unrestricted cash to cover our other ongoing operating expenses, and our Capital Repair and Replacement Fund can be funded in next year's budget.

If we maintain the same rate of contributions to the MSF over the next year, along with matching funds from the Challenge Grant, we will be able to pay for Jack's second year.

By the time the Challenge Grant is exhausted, we will need to double our contributions to pay for Jack's third year: through increased pledges from members and friends, increased members and friends who pledge, and FUNdraisers.

Financial analysis:

Initial question: How much money do we need to be able to hire Jack?

\$30,000 in the MSF covers first year net expenses (\$33K salary + housing allowance, etc. less \$3K savings from Jack's monthly speaker fees)

Short term goal: \$30,000

-24,254	MSF balance (1/4/15)
\$ 5,746	needed towards goal
\$ 2,873	contributions needed to reach goal

Reframed: What would our financial position need to be in order to have an acceptable level of risk in hiring Jack?

Reviewing our complete financial position with respect to risk:

1) Mortgage payments

- \$42K / year 2014/15 will decrease to \$27K / year 2015/16
- Risk to mortgage holders is protected by \$50K mortgage reserve

2) Other operating expenses

- Average current expenses are ~ \$7K / month
- Unrestricted cash on hand is ~ \$60K = over 8 months expenses covered
- An acceptable level of risk is 3-6 months cash on hand
- An operating reserve of ~3 months expenses may be designated by the Board to further assure our level of risk is acceptable
- Our projected net income for this fiscal year is ~\$10K (before any FUNdraising)

3) Capital Repair and Replacement Fund

- CR&R balance is \$63K
- Sufficient to cover our Insurance deductible.
- Reduction of \$15K in mortgage payments can be budgeted toward \$18K/yr funding at recommended level of 2% / year of building cost.

4) Adding Rev. Jack Ford

- 8 months of Jack's first year's expense is covered by the current balance in the MSF:
 - \$33,000 / yr = \$2,750 / mo
 - \$24,254 MSF balance = 9 months
- Maintaining the same rate of contributions throughout the next year, plus the matching Challenge Grant, will cover Jack's second year's expense
- Once the Challenge Grant is depleted, we will need to double our contribution rate to cover Jack's third year's expense, through a combination of increased pledges from members, increased members who pledge, and fundraising.

What is Consulting Ministry?

Professional Congregational Ministry that is:

- formally contracted rather than called,
- not an Interim Ministry (as recognized by the UUA Transitions Office),
- more than regular supply preaching,
- defined to serve at least quarter-time.

Consulting Minister

- A Minister who is contracted to serve a congregation for a limited time period, often renewable, typically a year-to-year service agreement.
- Consulting ministers are occasionally full-time, but are more usually part-time (two-thirds or less).
- A Consulting Minister may serve more than one congregation, may also work as a Community Minister, or may be bi-vocational (work outside of UU ministry).
- A Consulting Minister is considered a Transitional Minister, helping a congregation develop in specific ways after a professional ministry has ended, as a first minister, or to focus on special growth or learning opportunities.
- Consulting Ministers may be called to settlement with the congregation

Is a consulting minister an employee?

- While your Consulting Minister will indeed be an employee of the congregation, UU Ministers have a special relationship with their congregation which is covenantal in nature. The Board or personnel committee does not supervise the Minister on behalf of the congregation – rather, Minister and Board work together in covenant as peers and equal partners. It is very important for all congregational members to understand the interplay between *employment and covenant*, as *this will* support the success of your ministerial relationship.
- Ordained ministers have special IRS status which recognizes the independent nature of the relationship between Minister and congregation. Ministers are considered employees for the purposes of income tax, but self-employed for the purposes of Social Security. Ministers may also receive a portion of their compensation as a “housing allowance,” which is not taxable.

What does a consulting minister do?

Consulting Ministers, like all Ministers, serve their own calls to ministry as they serve your congregation. They will strive to be with you fully and faithfully as they perform the spiritual and ministerial functions you mutually determine. They are pastoral counselors. They seek to preach thoughtful and inspiring sermons. They provide prudent listening and wise counseling to the board and the committees and members of the congregation. They are cheerleaders, supporters, caring advisors, and non-anxious leaders in times of crisis or difficulty. They have received education and practical training as part of the requirements for being in UUA Ministerial Fellowship. Almost every congregation notices a real difference between “before” and “after” during Consulting Ministry.

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Because your Consulting Minister is not serving you full-time, it is critical that both Minister and congregation agree that the Minister will have specific and particular work priorities during the limited time they spend with the congregation. Among those priorities that Minister and congregation may consider are:

- Preaching for an agreed upon number of Sundays each month
- Pastoral care and counseling
- Officiating at wedding ceremonies, memorial services, child dedications and other life celebrations and rites-of-passage
- Teaching adult religious education classes.
- Teaching the “New UU” class or leading newcomer orientations
- Writing a newsletter column
- Meeting with the Board
- Meeting with specifically designated committees, such as the Membership Committee, or the Sunday Services Committee or Adult Education Committee
- Becoming acquainted with the community
- Serving as a spokesperson for the congregation
- Helping to support social justice efforts
- Fundraising and budgeting advice; working with the Finance and Stewardship Committees

Mutually agreed duties vary from congregation to congregation. It is important to realize that the Consulting Minister has a prescribed number of days to spend with the congregation. Both Minister and members will need to pick and choose how the Minister will spend time with the congregation, and support one another in honoring the agreed upon time commitment.