

Search and Call Committee

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SEARCH AND CALL COMMITTEE

November 25, 2023

To say that we are surprised to be making our second annual report to our Congregation would not be that much of a stretch. When we started this journey in July, 2022, we certainly hoped to have found a settled pastor by now but, unfortunately, like with many journeys we could not anticipate some of the obstacles and detours we would encounter. Although we have been interviewing candidates, none of them turned out to be the answer to our quest. We had a bit of a hiatus this year while Amy went on her trip and what we did not realize while our tech person was wandering was that our profile with the Presbyterian Church USA “expired” and we had to redo it when she returned. We have since accomplished that and are anticipating receiving profiles from the Presbytery in the near future.

In the meantime, the UCC Conference office continues to send profiles and we have continued to follow up and interview interested candidates. Unfortunately, candidate profiles from both denominations “trickle in” as there just are not as many as there may have been in the past. All aspects of Church operations are struggling to recover from the pandemic as well as the shrinking numbers of parishioners. We continue to be optimistic that the right pastor is out there and waiting to be matched with our Church. As we continue our journey, we ask for your continued prayers and support.

We feel very fortunate to have Kurt Somsel as a Committee member since he was also a member of the last Search Committee and is able to provide invaluable guidance. We are also grateful for our technocrat, Amy Buse, who is able to not only arrange for virtual meetings when that is necessary, but also has created a computer file where we are able to work remotely on our profiles. Our other talented members, Chaplain Peter McHugh and Clerk/Organizer Carolyn Chipman, bring their invaluable gifts as well.

Our committee continues to be grateful for this opportunity to serve the United Church of Big Rapids as we seek a new Pastor to lead us into the future. As always, we will look to Micah 6 for our inspiration to: “Do justice; Love Kindness; and, Walk Humbly with God.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan H Grant, Chair Search and Call Committee

MEMBERS: Amy Buse; Carolyn Chipman; Peter McHugh, Chaplain; Kerri Cook Rouech; and Kurt Somsel