

# Westminster Unitarian Church Ministerial Search

## Congregational Survey Results

October 2004

### Methodology:

254 Surveys were distributed to active Members, friends (non-members), and youth group members

184 surveys were returned, or 72%, which indicates high levels of interest by the membership

For each question (or choice within a question), the number of respondents is indicated. Each choice is also shown in percentage terms. In many instances, total respondents for a question or choice within a question will total less than 184, indicating how many people did not respond to answer that question or choice.

Please note question 7-10 will have far fewer respondents, as we asked only one survey per household to respond to these questions in order to avoid duplicating certain answers.

For questions where we asked multiple items to be ranked as Extremely Important, Important, Somewhat Important or Not Important, we have assigned respective scores of 4, 3, 2 and 1 in order to translate these indications into a mean score. As such a mean of 4.0 indicates total agreement that something is Extremely Important, and a mean of 1.0 indicates total agreement that something is Not Important. While these items were presented alphabetically in the distributed survey (to avoid bias), they are presented here in order of strength (highest mean score listed first, lowest mean score listed last.) Scores above 3.0 are Important, above 3.5 Quite Important. Scores below 2.5 indicate areas of relative unimportance.

Several other questions have been re-ordered based on numbers of responses a choice received. Exceptions are questions where the choices given represented a gradation of responses and we felt it more important to maintain the gradation in posting the results – in these cases there are relatively few choices, so there should be no difficulty grasping at a glance the ranking of the choices.

We sincerely hope you will find this information to be both informative as well as fuel for future discussions on the direction we choose to take as a church.

### Your Ministerial Search Committee:

|                     |          |                           |
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## SECTION 1: PERSONAL DATA

### 1. Please check your membership status.

Member 87% (157) friend 13% (24)

### 2. What is your gender?

female 66% (121) male 34% (61)

### 3. What is your current age?

|                 |                  |                    |
|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| under 16 1% (1) | 35 – 49 28% (50) | 80 or above 3% (6) |
| 16 – 21 3% (6)  | 50 – 64 41% (75) |                    |
| 22 – 34 3% (5)  | 65 – 79 21% (38) |                    |

### 4. What is your current marital status?

|  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| single 8% (14)                           | separated or divorced 9% (16) |
| committed relationship/married 80% (143) | widowed 3% (6)                |

### 5. Please check the highest level of formal education you have achieved.

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| grade school 3% (6)                          | college degree 34% (61)  |
| high school degree or GED 2% (3)             | masters degree 41% (74)  |
| trade sch., assoc. deg., some coll. 10% (18) | doctoral degree 10% (19) |

### 6. What describes your present employment status (Check one or more options)

|                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Professional 20% (40.5)             | Administrative/clerical 4% (8) |
| Retired 18% (36.5)                  | Business owner 4% (7.5)        |
| Self-employed/free lance 10% (19.5) | Manager 4% (7.5)               |
| Homemaker 9% (17.5)                 | Other 3% (6.5)                 |
| Academic 8% (17)                    | Not employed 2% (4)            |
| Artist/creator 6% (13)              | Skilled labor or trade 1% (3)  |
| Social services 6% (13)             |                                |
| Student 4% (8.5)                    |                                |

### 7. Number of children in each age range:

| Current Age | Number in family | Number in RE program |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 0-3         | 16               | 5 (31%)              |
| 4-6         | 17               | 17 (100%)            |
| 7-11        | 27               | 18 (67%)             |
| 12-18       | 36               | 14 (39%)             |

**96 total**

**54 total (56%)**

### 8. Please indicate family income before taxes last year.

|                              |                                |                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| less than \$20,000 7% (8)    | \$60,000 - \$80,000 21% (25)   | more than \$200,000 1% (1) |
| \$20,000 - \$40,000 15% (18) | \$80,000 - \$100,000 14% (16)  |                            |
| \$40,000 - \$60,000 19% (22) | \$100,000 - \$200,000 23% (27) |                            |

### 9. What was the total annual pledge of your family for 2004?

|                          |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| less than \$250 11% (14) | \$751 - \$1000 17% (21)  | \$2001 - \$3000 6% (7)  |
| \$250 - \$500 24% (29)   | \$1001 - \$1500 25% (30) | \$3001 - \$4000 1% (1)  |
| \$501 - \$750 11% (13)   | \$1501 - \$2000 5% (6)   | more than \$4000 1% (1) |

### 10. How many miles do you travel one way to get to church?

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Less than 5 miles 33% (44)              | 5 miles to less than 10 miles 30% (40) |
| 10 miles to less than 25 miles 31% (41) | 25 or more miles 7% (9)                |

**11. In what religious or spiritual tradition, if any, were you raised?**

|                        |            |                  |         |       |        |
|------------------------|------------|------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Protestant             | 39% (70.5) | Jewish           | 7% (13) | Other | 2% (3) |
| Catholic               | 30% (55)   | None             | 3% (6)  |       |        |
| Unitarian Universalist | 17% (30.5) | Atheist/Agnostic | 2% (3)  |       |        |

**12. How long have you been a U.U.?**

|                              |          |                               |          |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| less than 2 years            | 3% (6)   | from 10 to less than 20 years | 27% (49) |
| from 2 to less than 5 years  | 13% (23) | more than 20 years            | 36% (64) |
| from 5 to less than 10 years | 17% (31) | not a UU                      | 4% (7)   |

**13. How long have you been associated with Westminster Unitarian Church?**

|                              |          |                               |          |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|----------|
| less than 2 years            | 5% (10)  | from 10 to less than 20 years | 33% (60) |
| from 2 to less than 5 years  | 17% (32) | 20 or more years              | 20% (37) |
| from 5 to less than 10 years | 24% (44) |                               |          |

**14. Which one of the following best describes your religious orientation?**

|   | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |
|---|----------|--------------|
| Humanism-Human experience is the basis of all religion and ethics             | 22%      | (38)         |
| Earth Centered Spirituality, Naturalism, Paganism                             | 18%      | (31.5)       |
| Ethical Christianity-Jesus as a great moral teacher                           | 15%      | (25.5)       |
| Agnosticism – Unsure about the existence of God or Higher Power               | 11%      | (18.4)       |
| Mysticism – Feeling of oneness or connection to the universe                  | 9%       | (16)         |
| Theism – God is a person, force or power                                      | 9%       | (14.7)       |
| Atheism or Non-Theism- Do not believe in the existence of God or Higher Power | 6%       | (9.6)        |
| Theological Christianity-Jesus as revelation of the divine                    | 4%       | (6.9)        |
| Other   | 4%       | (6.1)        |
| Non Western Religions – Buddhism, Confucianism, etc.                          | 3%       | (4.3)        |

**Section 2: Congregational life**

**15. Please indicate why you have attended this congregation. (Check all that apply)**

|                                      | <u>Weighted Avg.</u> | <u>I first attended because of:</u> | <u>I continue to attend because of:</u> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Unitarian Universalist Beliefs       | 70%                  | 63%                                 | 76%                                     |
| Fellowship/Community                 | 61%                  | 52%                                 | 70%                                     |
| Worship Services                     | 50%                  | 47%                                 | 53%                                     |
| Children’s Religious education       | 35%                  | 37%                                 | 34%                                     |
| Minister                             | 33%                  | 40%                                 | 25%                                     |
| Family Connection                    | 23%                  | 21%                                 | 25%                                     |
| Choir                                | 21%                  | 19%                                 | 24%                                     |
| Women's/Men's Group                  | 18%                  | 12%                                 | 25%                                     |
| Building/physical plant/architecture | 14%                  | 11%                                 | 16%                                     |
| Adult programs                       | 12%                  | 9%                                  | 16%                                     |
| Social Action/Responsibility Program | 11%                  | 5%                                  | 16%                                     |
| Artist potluck                       | 10%                  | 3%                                  | 16%                                     |
| Other                                | 7%                   | 4%                                  | 10%                                     |

**16. Please rate the following aspects of congregational life. (Check all that apply)**

|   | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| Worship/Sunday services                                     | 3.70        | 166          |
| Minister  | 3.64        | 176          |
| Safe and caring community                                   | 3.57        | 169          |
| Spiritual growth/inspiration                                | 3.52        | 171          |
| Celebrating common values                                   | 3.50        | 170          |
| Intellectual stimulation                                    | 3.45        | 172          |
| Ethical concerns  | 3.41        | 168          |
| Religious education   | 3.39        | 159          |
| Fellowship (coffee hour/potlucks, etc.)                     | 3.34        | 174          |
| Music/aesthetic satisfaction                                | 3.27        | 173          |
| Welcoming congregation                                      | 3.25        | 164          |
| Social justice/responsibility                               | 3.11        | 164          |
| Meditation/prayer   | 2.95        | 165          |
| Fund raising activities                                     | 2.89        | 157          |
| Women's group   | 2.73        | 130          |
| Special events (Thanksgiving dinners/Seder/Christmas party) | 2.67        | 159          |
| Adult programs  | 2.65        | 162          |
| Denominational involvement                                  | 2.57        | 147          |
| Artist pot lucks  | 2.17        | 151          |
| Men's group   | 2.12        | 139          |
| Book discussion groups                                      | 2.09        | 152          |
| Friday Night Flicks   | 1.49        | 152          |

**17. Which of the following positions best describes your attitude toward social/political action in our church? (Check only one)**

|   | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp</u> |
|---|----------|-------------|
| I believe that the individual and not the church should take a position on social/political concerns                | 23%      | 41          |
| I believe the church should help me clarify my position of social/political concerns through sermons and discussion | 28%      | 49.5        |
| I believe on occasion the church could take a position on a social /political concerns.                             | 32%      | 58          |
| I believe the church should regularly debate and take clear positions on social/political concerns                  | 14%      | 25.5        |
| Other   | 3%       | 6           |

**18. How often would you like the minister to be in the pulpit?**

Three times a month 51% (91)                      Nearly every Sunday 47% (84)                      Other 2% (4)

**19. The follow specific items are currently part of our worship service practice. Please express how you feel about them.**

|  | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Respondents</u> |
|--|-------------|--------------------|
| Sermons  | 3.76        | 176                |
| Chalice lighting   | 3.44        | 179                |
| Readings   | 3.42        | 177                |
| Opening words  | 3.37        | 172                |
| Silent Meditation  | 3.35        | 173                |
| Choir  | 3.36        | 179                |
| Offertory  | 3.32        | 175                |
| Instrumental music                                       | 3.21        | 179                |
| Recognizing visitors                                     | 3.07        | 172                |
| Sharing Joys and Concerns <u>with</u> candle lighting    | 3.06        | 177                |
| Congregational participation in weekly service           | 2.99        | 167                |
| Prayer   | 2.97        | 174                |
| Announcements  | 2.95        | 176                |
| Responsive readings                                      | 2.87        | 174                |
| Guest speakers   | 2.79        | 172                |
| Lay service leaders                                      | 2.71        | 174                |
| Singing 3 hymns  | 2.64        | 160                |
| Sharing Joys and Concerns <u>without</u> candle lighting | 2.64        | 132                |
| Monthly intergenerational service                        | 2.63        | 168                |
| Guided meditation  | 2.54        | 163                |
| Floral Displays  | 2.43        | 174                |
| Sing into meditation                                     | 2.26        | 146                |

**20. How do you feel about these other topics or experiences that are or have been part of our Sunday mornings?**

|   | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Respondents</u> |
|---|-------------|--------------------|
| Child dedications                                       | 3.47        | 175                |
| Coffee hour   | 3.38        | 177                |
| New Member Ceremony                                     | 3.35        | 177                |
| Celebrating religious holidays                          | 3.25        | 178                |
| Christian Traditions                                    | 3.02        | 173                |
| Earth centered Traditions                               | 2.99        | 169                |
| Jewish Traditions                                       | 2.99        | 174                |
| Non-western Traditions                                  | 2.98        | 173                |
| Communion services<br>(i.e. Water, Bread, Fire, Flower) | 2.86        | 176                |



**24. Is there anything about our current worship service you would like to change/add/delete to make the experience more meaningful to you?**

- Limit, eliminate or control Joys and Concerns 11 responses
- Better manners in the sanctuary (no cell phones, coffee, food, better dress) 11 responses
- Involve the Congregation More
- Minimize announcements
- No singing into meditation
- Less politics
- More lovely music
- More spirituality.....3 responses each

**Section 3: Preferences for our New Minister**

**25. How much importance do you place on each of the following ministerial roles/functions?**

|                                  | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |  | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Resp</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| Preaching                        | 3.64        | (177)        | Participation in the social life of the church | 3.05        | (173)       |
| Presiding at services/ceremonies | 3.61        | (175)        | Developing lay leadership                      | 3.04        | (171)       |
| Pastoral care                    | 3.54        | (171)        | Providing liaison with other religious grps.   | 2.99        | (171)       |
| Spiritual guidance               | 3.49        | (175)        | Denominational affairs                         | 2.90        | (165)       |
| Welcoming new families           | 3.49        | (175)        | Increasing church visibility                   | 2.88        | (169)       |
| Community building               | 3.31        | (168)        | Membership growth                              | 2.86        | (167)       |
| Personal counseling              | 3.29        | (174)        | Promoting social responsibility of members     | 2.68        | (165)       |
| Children’s religious education   | 3.28        | (174)        | Facilitating committee work                    | 2.65        | (170)       |
| Adult religious education        | 3.20        | (171)        | Active role in fundraising                     | 2.62        | (170)       |
| Outreach to young adults (18+)   | 3.16        | (170)        | Community activism outside the church          | 2.57        | (169)       |
| Youth work                       | 3.15        | (164)        |  |             |             |

**26. Please select the ministerial skills and enthusiasms most needed by the congregation:**

|                                |      |       |                           |      |       |
|--------------------------------|------|-------|---------------------------|------|-------|
| Worship                        | 3.63 | (168) | Youth work                | 3.06 | (155) |
| Preaching                      | 3.59 | (170) | Membership Growth         | 3.03 | (169) |
| Leadership                     | 3.58 | (162) | Administration            | 2.94 | (162) |
| Spiritual guidance             | 3.41 | (167) | Scholarship               | 2.95 | (159) |
| Staff relations                | 3.31 | (164) | Fund Raising              | 2.77 | (158) |
| Children’s religious education | 3.26 | (163) | Denominational affairs    | 2.67 | (152) |
| Community building             | 3.21 | (152) | Home visitation           | 2.65 | (162) |
| Adult religious education      | 3.12 | (162) | Music and liturgical arts | 2.64 | (157) |
| Facilitation                   | 3.11 | (147) | Committee work            | 2.63 | (159) |
| Personal counseling            | 3.09 | (164) | Social action             | 2.57 | (155) |
| Hospital Calling               | 3.08 | (167) |                           |      |       |

**27. Leadership style: Which leadership style would you most prefer in your next minister? (Select one)**

|  | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp</u> |
|--|----------|-------------|
| An in-charge, charismatic leader with clear objectives                                       | 8%       | (13.5)      |
| A facilitative leader whose objective is to aid the congregation in reaching its objectives  | 31%      | (55)        |
| A leader who manifests flexibility in leadership styles to meet a variety of different needs | 57%      | (99.5)      |
| No preference/Other  | 4%       | (7)         |

**28. Regarding administration the minister should: (Select one)**

|   | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp</u> |
|---|----------|-------------|
| Have a major, active role in the administration of the church | 26%      | (45)        |
| Have a facilitative role                                      | 68%      | (116.5)     |
| Have a minor role   | 6%       | (10.5)      |

**29. Which of these services would you expect the minister to provide to children: (Check all that apply)**

|  | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |
|--|----------|--------------|
| Working closely with Director of Religious Education                             | 73%      | (133)        |
| Leading child dedication services  | 69%      | (125)        |
| Providing spiritual/ethical guidance to youth                                    | 64%      | (115)        |
| Including children in an occasional Sunday service                               | 62%      | (113)        |
| Interacts with Youth Group on a regular basis                                    | 60%      | (109)        |
| Leading occasional youth services when not preaching                             | 58%      | (105)        |
| Spiritual leader   | 52%      | (94)         |
| Pastoral care to children, i.e., getting to know the children and their families | 52%      | (94)         |
| Working with the Coming of Age class   | 50%      | (91)         |
| Meeting with families new to Religious Education program                         | 47%      | (85)         |
| Leading child friendly all-generational service                                  | 41%      | (74)         |
| Co-leads intergenerational services with Director of RE on a monthly basis       | 40%      | (72)         |
| Lead children's chapel once per month  | 35%      | (64)         |
| Leading youth community action projects  | 19%      | (34)         |
| Including children in a portion of each Sunday service                           | 13%      | (23)         |
| Other  | 2%       | (3)          |

**30. One aspect of choosing a new minister is finding out what this new person will be like. Please rate the following personality and style characteristics.**

|                        | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |                     | <u>Mean</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Empathetic/caring      | 3.79        | (178)        | Forward looking     | 3.36        | (168)        |
| Articulate             | 3.75        | (181)        | Organized           | 3.35        | (172)        |
| Sense of humor         | 3.70        | (174)        | Big Picture Thinker | 3.35        | (169)        |
| Socially skilled       | 3.65        | (172)        | Reflective          | 3.25        | (165)        |
| Spiritual              | 3.61        | (170)        | Intuitive           | 3.23        | (166)        |
| Self-motivated         | 3.59        | (167)        | Scholarly           | 3.05        | (167)        |
| Intellectually curious | 3.58        | (178)        | Aesthetic sense     | 2.81        | (164)        |
| Flexible               | 3.56        | (177)        | Musical             | 2.24        | (174)        |

## Section 4: OUR FUTURE

**31. Which best describes how you became aware of Westminster Unitarian Church? (Please select one.)**

|   | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |
|---|----------|--------------|
| Deliberately sought out a Unitarian Universalist church | 45%      | (81)         |
| Introduced by a friend                                  | 24%      | (43.5)       |
| Introduced by a family member                           | 14%      | (25)         |
| Other   | 9%       | (17)         |
| Drove by and noticed the church                         | 3%       | (6)          |
| Newspaper ad  | 2%       | (3)          |
| Internet  | 2%       | (3)          |
| Telephone book/Yellow Pages                             | 1%       | (2)          |

**32. What is your attitude toward membership growth? (Please select one.)**

|  | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp.</u> |
|--|----------|--------------|
| Growth is good as long as we maintain our feeling of community | 83%      | (150)        |
| Growth should become a major goal of our church                | 11%      | (20.5)       |
| Growth may be inevitable, but we should be hesitant to expand  | 4%       | (8)          |
| Growth should not be pursued at present                        | 1%       | (1.5)        |

**33. What is your attitude toward our facilities? (Please select one.)**

|   | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp</u> |
|---|----------|-------------|
| We should upgrade and maintain our current facilities                     | 69%      | (116)       |
| Other   | 11%      | (18)        |
| We should construct a new, larger Fellowship Hall/Church school facility  | 10%      | (17.5)      |
| We should construct both a new sanctuary and a Fell. Hall / Church school | 8%       | (14)        |
| We should construct a new larger facility for worship                     | 2%       | (3.5)       |

**34. What would increase your participation in the life of the church? (Check all that apply)**

|  | <u>%</u> | <u>Resp</u> |
|--|----------|-------------|
| Focus on spiritual growth                                      | 50%      | (91)        |
| Programs with intellectual stimulation                         | 49%      | (89)        |
| Disc. groups led by the minister on spiritual/religious topics | 39%      | (70)        |
| Satisfying social activities                                   | 37%      | (67)        |
| Personal growth programs                                       | 27%      | (49)        |
| Need to have more fun activities                               | 19%      | (35)        |
| Help with emotional stress                                     | 18%      | (32)        |
| More family oriented activities                                | 18%      | (32)        |
| More activities focused on social justice and outreach         | 17%      | (30)        |
| More special interest groups:                                  |          |             |
| Singles/ Support group for caregivers of adult family members  | 12%      | (21)        |
| Other  | 6%       | (10)        |

**35. What are Westminster's greatest strengths? (Please list up to three.)**

(1) It's people / our community (124 responses) (4) Our UU Principles (24 responses)

(2) Children's RE Program (47 responses)

(3) Sanctuary / Grounds / Architecture (28 responses)

**36. What are Westminster's greatest weaknesses? (Please list up to three.)**

(1) Money / Financial Issues (57 responses)

(2) Facilities (Fellowship Hall, Classroom Space, Gen'l Maint.Needs, Parking, etc.) (36 responses)

(3) Lack of Volunteers (28 responses)

**37. What are Westminster's great challenges over the next 3 -5 years? (Please list up to three.)**

(1) Money / Financial Issues (69 responses) (4) Facilities Issues (41 responses)

(2) Adjusting to New Minister (42 responses)

(3) Growth Issues (41 responses)

**38. What are the three main things you would like to see the congregation accomplish in the next 3-5 years?**

(1) Improve finances (38 responses) (4) Strong Minister (23 responses)

(2) Improve facilities (32 responses) (5) More Caring Community (20 responses)

(3) Growth of membership (31 responses)

**39. What else would you like the search committee to know in regard to the ministerial search?**

(1) Comments regarding non-worship-related traits desired in a minister (29 responses)

(2) Comments regarding worship-related traits desired in a new minister (11 responses)

(3) Comments regarding the desired experience of the new minister (5 responses)