

**Now that Jodi has set April 9, 2023 as the final day of her ministry...**  
**some FAQs:**

**1. What do we do for ministers after April 9?**

- UU ministers in the district will be in the pulpit between April 9 and the end of June. Jodi will work with the Worship Associates on this.
- Worship Associates will be responsible for services in July.
- The interim minister will start on August 1. (more on the interim minister below)

**2. How should we behave in the final weeks of Jodi's ministry?**

Some advice from the UUA:

- Congregations experiencing the departure of a minister should focus on ending the ministry well, honoring the contract, expressing gratitude for the ministry, and reflecting on the accomplishments of the ministry.
- Civility, good manners, and fairness are expected of all members, and congregational leaders may have to exercise their leadership to encourage these.
- This is not the time to engage in antagonism, “intense truth-telling,” condescending instruction, or bullying with the departing minister.
- Even celebrated and appreciated endings can have complications. There is a difference between appreciation for a ministry and creating a “ghost”—a departing minister whose influence creates a standard that cannot be replicated and/or creates expectations that the next ministry must be exactly the same. Leaders will do well to reinforce the reality that the next ministry will be different and should be different than the current ministry, even if the current ministry is dearly beloved.

**3. What's Next?**

- The Board started the Interim Minister search process at its February 15 meeting. The process is clearly defined by the UUA.
- The process is centralized and compressed into a narrow time frame: mid-February to mid-May. The search is run entirely by an Interim Search Committee, composed of members of the Board. There is no opportunity for congregational input.
- **February 15:** The Board appointed the Interim Minister Search Committee (ISC): Anne Perron, Linda Greathouse, Jane Pentheny, Claire Hebert.

- **February 21:** ISC registered with the UUA Transitions Office.
- **March-April:** ISC submits the interim search application and a congregational profile to the Transitions Office. Transitions Office provides that information to ministers seeking an interim position.
- **Late April 2023:** List of interested ministers released to ISC.
- **Early-Mid May 2023:** ISC provides ranked choices to Transitions Office. Transitions Office makes match based on ranked choices by ISC and ministers. ISC and minister negotiate contract.
- **August 2023:** Start of interim ministry.

The interim ministry will run for 24 months, from August 2023 to August 2025. During that two year period, the congregation will engage in the formal search for a settled minister who will start in August 2025.

(Detailed information about the Interim Search process may be found in the [UUA Transitional Ministry Handbook](#))

#### 4. What is an interim ministry?

(From the UUA Handbook)

- Interim—a transitional ministry most commonly seen to help a congregation move from one settled ministry to the next settled ministry. Most often the duration is 24 months, though occasionally the ministry may be longer or shorter. The interim minister assists the congregation in moving beyond its last ministry and equipping itself for a new, different ministry. This preparation involves helping the congregation look at practices that may or may not be serving them well, assisting through the emotional process of transition, setting sights forward, and connecting the congregation to needed resources.

#### 5. Why a 24-month interim ministry?

(From the UUA Handbook)

- Congregations engaging at least a 24-month interim ministry period had a much greater success rate (90%) at calling a minister following their interim period than

congregations doing only a single year of interim ministry (56%), so the UUA no longer recommends one-year interim ministries for most congregations. Search committees have more time and seem to be more discerning and open when elected after the interim minister has arrived than during the end of the settled ministry. Search committees need a full year to do their work well. Search committees selected after an interim minister has arrived tend to be able to look forward and are more likely to see future needs. Search committees selected while a settled minister is still serving the congregation tend to gaze backwards and are more reactive (either positively or negatively, often overly so) and less open to a new and different minister and ministry.

**Summary:**

This process differs significantly from the one that some members may remember when Hank Peirce became our interim for the 1999-2000 church year. The timeline is short and intense, but the Transitions Office at the UUA will provide support and guidance throughout the process. Change can be disorienting and unnerving, but it can also offer us new opportunities and possibilities as we start to open a new chapter in the life of the First Universalist Church. After all, the first year of our new settled minister (2025-26) will overlap with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our building (1876).