



Community Unitarian Church
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March 27, 2013

Dear Members and Friends of CUC,

The members of the Ministerial Search Committee are pleased to announce that Reverend Doctor Meredith Garmon has accepted our offer to be the final candidate for the next settled minister of CUC. Rev. Garmon will participate in candidating week at CUC from Saturday April 27 through Sunday May 5, and the legal members of the congregation will vote on his candidacy at a congregational meeting called for that purpose following the May 5 service.

Rev. Garmon more than meets this congregation's strongly expressed desire for a minister who is an inspirational preacher, deeply spiritual and intellectually rigorous. Rev. Garmon shines in the pulpit, engaging members of the congregation with his breadth of knowledge, spiritual centeredness, and sense of humor. Rev. Garmon's philosophy is that worship and celebration, religious education for children and adults, caring for each other, and engaging for social justice are the core functions of our UU congregations. He comes to us eager to work on greater spiritual deepening, for each of us as individuals, for the congregation, and in working for justice in the larger community. He has done substantial interfaith and social action work, regularly teaches adult RE, and is a strong facilitator in the church governance process.

A life-long Unitarian Universalist, in the UU humanist tradition, Rev. Garmon entered fellowship as a UU minister in 2004 and was ordained later that year. Since 2006 he has served as the minister at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at Gainesville, FL, first as co-minister with his spouse Rev. LoraKim Joyner from 2006-2010, and then as Senior Minister. Rev. Joyner, who is also a veterinarian and a certified trainer in Nonviolent Communication, is now a community minister focusing on compassionate communication and multispecies ministry. During his tenure in Gainesville, Rev. Garmon served as consulting minister to the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tarpon Springs and to the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Marion County. Prior to Gainesville, Rev. Garmon served as half-time minister in Midland, Texas while at the same time co-ministering with Rev. Joyner in El Paso. Rev. Garmon has two grown children, one of whom lives in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rev. Garmon has practiced Zen Buddhism since 2001, seeking to find and help others to find the peace within our hearts that results in compassion. At present, he runs the Dancing Crane Zen Center from the Gainesville Church, and attends Zen meditation retreats each year. He is a calm presence and a spiritually centered counselor, bringing his deep Buddhist spiritual practice to his ministry. This philosophical perspective informs his leadership style as a facilitator and enabler who helps individuals and groups pose questions, consider alternatives and come to workable conclusions.

Rev. Garmon holds masters' degrees in communication studies and philosophy, and a PhD. in government from the University of Virginia. From 1992-1996 he was Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Fisk University in Nashville, TN., a historically black institution, where he practiced his commitment to justice through empowerment and empowerment through education. He completed his theological studies at the Meadville-Lombard Theological Seminary in 2003.

Rev. Garmon understands church leadership and development from both the ministerial and congregational perspectives. As a layperson, Rev. Garmon served as President of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Waco, Texas, Vice-President of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church in Charlottesville, VA and Chair of Adult Religious Education at First UU in Nashville, TN.

In sum, Rev. Garmon is an experienced, inspiring minister who brings a wealth of talent, ability and insight to our congregation. We are delighted that our committee, as a result of an intense year-long search process, now presents this final candidate to you. We believe Rev. Garmon will inspire and lead us as we develop our mission and that he will be a tremendous asset in helping our congregation grow in size and spiritual depth.

Our work on the Ministerial Search Committee is now substantially complete, although of course we will be actively involved in introducing Rev. Garmon to you during candidating week, and we will continue on in other roles to support this transition. You will soon receive information on the schedule for candidating week (April 27-May 5). During that week, there will be various opportunities for Rev. Garmon and the congregational leadership and members to further explore the potential for our calling him, and he accepting the call, to be CUC's next settled minister. Rev. Garmon will present worship services on Sunday, April 28 and Sunday, May 5. (Only legal members of CUC for at least thirty days prior to the May 5 congregational meeting can vote on whether to extend the call to Rev. Garmon; if you would like to participate in this important congregational decision and are not yet a legal member, please contact Rev. Benjamin before April 5.)

We look forward to having the opportunity to introduce you to this extraordinary final candidate for CUC's next settled minister.

Sincerely,

Diana Echevarria
Emily Economou
Ted Kuczinski
Al Rocchi
Lori Saccardi
Janice Silverberg
Jeff Tomlinson