

**UUA Transitions Office
Request for a Beyond Categorical Thinking Visit**

Please complete this form as thoroughly as possible after reviewing the [BCT information on the UUA website](#) and send it as an email attachment to transitions@uua.org. Cost is \$350 per congregation or \$300 if Fair Share; \$400 if more than two services or if worship at multiple sites. Send a check, payable to the UUA, with your congregation name on it and BCT in the memo. Please mail it to UUA Transitions Office, 24 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210-1409. Your check only partly covers the cost of the workshop; the UUA covers the remaining costs.

Application Deadline: 8 weeks prior to your requested visit dates. That gives us time to schedule trainers and gives the trainers time to find reasonably priced airfare.

***Indicates a required field.
Note that the input fields will expand as you type.**

Today's Date--7/30/15

- *Full Name of Congregation --First Parish in Milton Unitarian Universalist
- *City --Milton *ST/Province--MA
- *BCT Contact Name --Charles Franich
- *email --pemaquid@aol.com
- *Phone--617-821-4095

Visit Dates

Usually the facilitators meet with the search committee on Saturday evening, provide the sermon (and potentially more) for the Sunday morning service, and conduct the workshop following the Sunday service. If you determine that attendance will be stronger on Saturday you may request a Saturday workshop. You should allow approximately 3 hours for the workshop.

Please choose dates when the entire search committee and most of the church leadership can attend. We do our best to honor your first choice but we ask that you submit 2nd and 3rd choices as well.

- *1st Choice --Sunday,10/18/15 *2nd Choice--Sunday, 10/25/15 *3rd Choice--Sunday 9/27/15

Would you prefer a Saturday workshop? Or Sunday after worship? --X

Congregational Information

- *Interim minister (if applicable) --Rev. Hank Peirce
- *Other ministers serving congregation at present and list length of settlement to date--n/a

***Please list at least 3 but not more than 10 previous ministers with their dates of service and type of ministry.**

Rev. P. Parsa	2004--2014	Settled
Rev. J. Robinson	2002--2004	Interim
Rev. L. Bilyeau	1997--2002	Settled
Rev. J. Newman	1996--1997	Interim
Rev. M. Harris	1988--1996	Settled

- *Expected start date (month/year) for new minister --August, 2016
- *Size of congregation --191 members and ~ 30 friends
- *Number and time of Sunday services--1 service at 10:30am.
- *Average worship service attendance - if more than one service, feel free to list estimates for each service --80-100

The following information will be extremely valuable to the facilitators and will benefit both the search committee and the congregation. Some of this information might be available in the congregational survey and easy to find. In some cases it may not be, and you are free to estimate (preferred) or leave blank. Please note, if possible, where the information is from (survey, best estimate, other).

Size of search committee: --7

Does the search committee include anyone under the age of 40?--no

Does the search committee include any people who identify as people of color; Latino/Latina/Hispanic; gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender; people with a disability? Which one (s)? --Yes, one member who identifies as lesbian.

How many people in your congregation identify as people of color and/or Latino/Latina/Hispanic? (These figures may be given in a lump sum or broken down by different identities. Please note if the figures are for adults or for adults, youth, and children.) --Currently approximately 10 adults and several children.

How many people in the congregation identify as bisexual, gay, lesbian, and/or transgender? (These figures may be given in a lump sum or broken down by identity. Of particular use here if the figures are given in a lump sum is a notation of how many of these folks identify as transgender—transgender, transsexual, intersexual, cross-dressers, third gender.) --Currently approximately 13 adult members identify as gay or lesbian.

How many people in the congregation live with disabilities?--Some (number uncertain) who are visually and hearing impaired, and a few who qualify for handicapped parking, though none currently require the use of a wheelchair.

Are the above numbers from the congregational survey or an estimate? Please explain. --These numbers are estimated from review of our church directory.

The following questions may affect the way the congregation thinks in terms of calling a minister in both positive and negative ways. Taking a moment to answer these questions will offer invaluable information to the BCT training team.

Have any of your previous or current ministers (settled, interim, intern) identified as people of color - Latina/Latino/Hispanic; bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgender; and/or having some disability? Please list.

First Parish in Milton has not had a minister who identifies as a person of color, Latino/Latina/Hispanic, b/g/l/t, or have a disability. Our last two settled ministers, Rev. Laurinda Bilyeau and Rev. Parisa Parsa, were the first female settled ministers to serve at First Parish. However from 2010 to 2013 ministerial student Jamez Terry, who identifies as transgender, served as our part-time Religious Education Assistant and Membership Coordinator and organized a very stimulating educational panel discussion for the congregation on what it means to be transgender.

What work around anti-racism has the congregation done?

First Parish in Milton has participated actively in the UUA's initiative Standing on the Side of Love, has defended the Town of Milton's status as a No Place for Hate community before skeptical town leaders, and actively re-affirms the No Place for Hate commitment each year in January at the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Annual Memorial Celebration sponsored by the Milton Interfaith Clergy Association.

In addition, there are a number of panels and one-time events that we've hosted or participated in. For example, our most recent settled minister participated in a town-wide discussion on racism at the town library. However, few of these have led to sustained involvement by the congregation.

Is there a group for people of color/Latina/Latino/Hispanic concerns?--no

What work around disability issues has the congregation addressed?

Over the past 30 years and most recently in 2005, First Parish in Milton has made several accommodations to its building structure to increase accessibility, especially for those using wheelchairs. These include ramps into the meetinghouse and parish hall, wheelchair seating space and an access ramp in the sanctuary, a wheelchair lift between the meetinghouse and the office area in our "link," and handicapped-accessible restrooms. In addition we provide large-print orders of service for the visually impaired and listening devices for the hearing impaired.

What disability issues are currently being addressed?--Better signage for these accommodations.

What disability issues has the congregation said it needs to address but has not?--As far as the committee knows, none are currently identified.

Is there a group(s) for disability issues/concerns? --no

Are you officially recognized as a Welcoming Congregation? --yes

Is there an active Interweave or b/g/l/t group in the congregation? --no

Is there other anti-oppression/multicultural work that the congregation is doing that is not covered in the above questions?

For approximately 5 years, First Parish in Milton has been a member of the Jericho Road Roxbury project, a program of the UU Urban Ministry, which seeks to enhance community development by pairing volunteer professional consultants with non-profit organizations in the Roxbury, Mattapan, and Dorchester communities that are seeking to expand their capacity. This ministry serves a largely African-American and Latino population. First Parish has provided members to the steering committee as well as volunteers to work with the non-profits.

For approximately 12 years, First Parish has participated as a founding member of Milton Interfaith Refugee Assistance (formerly Refugee Immigration Ministry Milton), which has provided support for refugees seeking asylum and assistance to other immigrant groups in the Boston area, including AFAB in Dorchester (which assists Haitian refugees), and the Eritrean Community Center in Boston.

Each Mother's Day a large contingent of First Parish members participate in the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute's Mother's Day Walk for Peace to combat gun violence and support victims of gun violence in Greater Boston.

Every December for several years First Parish has hosted a Handcrafting Justice Crafts Sale sponsored by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd to provide Fair Trade marketing opportunities to craftswomen from developing countries.

Within Milton, several members of First Parish have participated in Celebrate Milton, a yearly community event in the fall that began over 20 years ago as an effort to celebrate diversity within the Milton community. In recent years First Parish has maintained an information table at this event.

Members of First Parish have also participated in Citizens for a Diverse Milton, another almost 20-year initiative that has engaged with the Milton School Department to diversify faculty and staff and make the school system a more welcoming place for racial/ethnic student minorities.

What challenge(s) have arisen for the congregation in the past surrounding categories of diversity (race, ethnicity, affectional orientation, transgender, ability) that may impact the readiness of the congregation for bringing in a new minister?

There has been a general sense among many members of the congregation that we would like to be more representative of all the different racial and ethnic populations around us, but it has never been successfully implemented. Also, issues of economic class have been challenging. Milton is a relatively affluent community, and we have not always addressed the issue in our church community.

Was a successful strategy implemented to address the challenge(s)?

We had a worship service that incorporated elements from United for a Fair Economy, as well as a workshop about economic justice, but it was not well attended and there was minimal follow-up.

The Wider Community

These questions may give some important context to the facilitators who may know little about the wider community you serve.

Where do the majority of your members live? (For example, they may all come from the suburbs to downtown or be primarily located between the town your congregation is in and a neighboring town or you may serve people in a 50-mile radius around your congregation.)

The large majority (just over 100) of our congregation's households are located in Milton, another 15 or so are located in Dorchester, 7 in Quincy, 3 in Hyde Park, 3 in Randolph, and a few others in surrounding communities.

What are the racial/ethnic communities that are in the area served/close to your congregation?

Milton borders on Mattapan, Dorchester, Hyde Park, Quincy, and Randolph, each of which have sizable racial/ethnic communities. These communities include significant Haitian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cape Verdean, Latino, Indian, Middle-Eastern and African-American populations.

How does the congregation interact with these communities/groups?

Please see "other anti-oppression/multicultural work..." above regarding our congregation's work with Jericho Road Roxbury; Milton Interfaith Refugee Assistance; the Louis D. Brown Mother's Day Walk for Peace; Handcrafting Justice; Celebrate Milton; and Citizens for a Diverse Milton.

How do issues of race and ethnicity surface in the wider community?

Boston and surrounding communities tend to continue to be organized geographically around racial and ethnic groups. Issues of violence often concentrate in local ethnic and racial communities and seem to continue on in cyclic form.

In the 1970's, some Milton-area real estate companies were accused of "redlining" or "steering" homebuyers of color away from or into certain neighborhoods within Milton. To this day, while neighborhoods are not sharply segregated, people of color and less affluent families are more densely concentrated on the west side of town, nearer to Mattapan Square.

In the early 1990's, a basketball court at Kelly Field was torn out over the objections of several community residents because youth from Mattapan were coming to the court to play and apparently disturbing the neighbors living nearby.

How accessible to people with disabilities is the wider community of which you are a part?

Like many communities, Milton has made progress in recent years but still has more work to do. Milton's history as a "tree-lined, green oasis" has meant for instance that for years many streets did not have sidewalks, though most now have a sidewalk on at least one side. Public transportation is somewhat limited, especially for those who do not live along Milton's northern border with Boston. Milton has very limited commercial areas of the sort that would otherwise drive increased accessibility.

Has your wider community undertaken any work to make your community more accessible to people with disabilities that you are aware of?

All major town building projects within the past 20-25 years have been ADA compliant.

Sidewalks have been sloped at most intersections. Some crosswalks have been installed with sounds for the visually impaired; a wheelchair path has been installed around Turners Pond.

The Milton Library renovation, finished ~6 years ago completely transformed the accessibility of that community resource.

Also in recent years, several of Milton's schools have undergone massive renovations that have made them much more accessible.

It is not clear to the committee what work if any has been done in the community regarding less obvious forms of disability, such as, for example, for people suffering from mental illness.

Is there a disability rights group in your community?

The Town of Milton has a 7-member Commission on Disability, established in 1986. We are not aware of any other disability rights group functioning in Milton.

How has the congregation engaged in this issue in the wider community?

The congregation is leading by example with its facilities, but is not at this time actively engaged with the wider community on this issue.

What activities and services in your community are there for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people/concerns?

We are not aware of any activities or services specifically directed to the LGBT community in Milton. However, there are services in the greater Boston and Cambridge community.

Do you have people who are out in the congregation but not able to be out in the wider community?

Some teens have come out in First Parish's youth group but not at their schools.

How does the congregation interact with the local bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender community (ies)?

We are a Welcoming Congregation but do not currently have any formal working relationships with any groups from the b/g/l/t community.

Does the congregation have a relationship with another congregation that serves primarily people of color or b/g/l/t people?--No

In some congregations, issues of gender, age, and class would warrant some time as part of the BCT training. For example, one congregation that was several hundred years old had never had a female minister. Another example is calling a minister from a working class background in a congregation of primarily upper class congregants and there being strife over many issues. If there is a reason why you feel that part of the BCT time should be spent addressing one of these areas due to congregational history, please give a short history of why that should happen below.

We are not aware of any notable history but see below about economic diversity.

What else should we know about your congregation that we haven't asked?

Economic diversity continues to be an unaddressed issue for this congregation. Questions about the use of the endowment and stewardship shortfalls and the care of the aging and historic facilities are perennial.

For many years First Parish's Board of Trustees has employed a part-time social worker to oversee and disburse resources from two funds within our church endowment that provide financial assistance to congregation members and to town residents in need.

For many years, First Parish's Social Action Committee has regularly organized congregation members and their families to provide meals at Father Bill's Place, a homeless shelter in Quincy.

A number of our members either work professionally for or volunteer for non-profits that serve disadvantaged communities.

If we need clarification on any part of this form, should we direct questions to the contact person or to someone else (please list name and contact)? --Contact Person, Charles Franich

