



## The Rev. Gretchen Haley - Our Candidate

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We are thrilled to recommend a candidate who is such a perfect match for our congregation's future.



## **From the Ministerial Search Committee's Announcement**

### **10/18/15**

We join you this morning to reflect on the amazing process that we, as a congregation, have been through these past few months. You opened your hearts to us about how you treasure the congregational life we share together. You took our survey, you gave us incredible feedback, you came to our discovery sessions and talked passionately about your hopes and dreams for a new senior ministry. Intensive interviews with lay leaders created a blueprint of our leadership and administrative needs.

We spent hours distilling your input as we wrote the congregational record - a picture of us as we are now and our best attempt to reflect your hopes and desires for our common future. All through this time we tried to stay as objective as we possibly could.

As that portrait of our congregation became clearer, brighter, and deeper, the image of our future senior minister became obvious to us all. We are thrilled to recommend to you The Rev. Gretchen Haley as our new senior minister, and we will each share why:

### **Sue Ferguson**

When you asked me to serve on this search committee, I committed myself to being as objective as I possibly could be. I listened to you and worked with the team to create a profile of our best match in a minister. When I stepped back and looked at that profile, it was immediately apparent to me that we already had with us the person who was the best match.

We have seen Gretchen in action. She has served as second in command with 3 different ministers since she came to us. She's served each of them and us with professionalism, exceptional skill and grace. She has lovingly helped us, as a congregation, through some difficult times. I can only begin to imagine what will happen when she takes the lead.

She is a person with the talent and ability to help us clarify a shared congregational vision. She's got the drive and commitment to help us turn that vision into a realistic plan. And most importantly, she has the administrative ability to help turn our plan into collective action and to inspire us to achieve the future we want together.

In the website she created and the hours we spent in dialogue during her interviews, I saw a gifted spiritual leader with commitment to our UU principles, a dedication to cherishing

our diversity of beliefs, and a true desire to accompany us through the good times and the bad.

She's innovative and creative, she's funny and easy to work with, and I love her sermons. Frankly, we would be fools if we let any other congregation have her as their senior minister.

### **Ed Beers**

I was one of those who questioned if Gretchen had the experience and tested wisdom to be our senior minister. After all, she is younger than my youngest daughter. I knew she was a very capable and effective leader. I had a lot of respect for her, but I was skeptical that she could be senior minister – not now, but maybe in a couple of years.

However, it was pointed out to me that Gretchen is about the same age as Marc Salkin when we called him as senior minister. I also learned that Gretchen had started a company from the ground floor and grew it from one employee to 1200 employees in three states in a seven-year period. In conversation with the CEO and owner of several companies that included Gretchen's company, he praised her leadership, strategic planning, and people development skills and told me we were lucky to have her. In fact, he said he hired her part time while she was in divinity school to develop and train leaders and executives in all his companies.

I got the same kind of feedback from UUA people in the Mountain Desert District. I could go on and on, but Howell only gave us three and one-half minutes.

Needless to say, I have changed my mind. I am convinced beyond any doubt that Gretchen is the right person to be our senior minister – not later, but now.

### **Judy Gates**

I didn't know Gretchen very well before our discernment process. I agreed with many of you that she and Marc made a great, complimentary ministry team.

During the discernment process, I discovered her deep commitment to our church. She intends to stay with us for the long term and deepen our wider community relationships.

I was impressed with Gretchen's willingness to learn, take risks, and adapt her ministry as well as her system-level view of church life, all skills we will take greater advantage of when

she is senior minister. She enjoys brainstorming ideas in groups and then helping to make the most exciting ones a reality. She has clearly spent countless hours imagining the possibilities for Foothills.

Gretchen is realistic about her ministry and the needs of our church. She is committed to a big picture vision of a ministry team that, through complimentary skills and charismatic Sunday services, will enrich us all.

Finally, I am very happy that we will continue our tradition of having senior ministers who appreciate our diversity of beliefs and enjoy a good conversation.

### **Steve Herbener**

During one of her interviews with the search committee, Gretchen stated, “I am a religious person.” I found myself thinking, “Now here’s a topic that the congregation would be very much interested in hearing more about.”

I then asked Gretchen to give more details about her statement. What happened next was amazing. Gretchen started speaking with a passion that I hadn’t seen in her before. She talked about how she loved her church and the UU faith. Then about how the UU movement was the best vehicle for reaching out and touching others. It became crystal clear that Gretchen’s purpose of being is not centered around any particular theology nor to evangelize the UU faith, rather it is to make a positive difference in the lives of people, from the individual level to the whole world community.

The conviction with which Gretchen spoke convinced me that she will fulfill this purpose, and it will be in no small manner! How fortunate I thought that we, a congregation full of people who want to make a difference, have the opportunity to choose a minister who is so well equipped to lead us in this endeavor.

### **Julie Thomas**

Over the past six months, as we have worked together in service of the congregation, I kept an open mind and reserved all judgment as to who our candidate would be.

Of course, I knew all along that we might have an internal candidate, but I actually didn’t even consider whether Gretchen would be the right fit. I needed to hear your thoughts about what Foothills means to you, your needs, your dreams for the future.

As we created the congregational record and a profile of the minister we seek, based on the input we received from all of you, we recognized that Gretchen might be that person and invited her to enter into the interview process.

As I read the information Gretchen shared on her candidating website, I saw the possibilities of the new and exciting ministry that she envisions at Foothills. Over many hours in the interview process, we asked the hard questions, discussed our needs and dreams, and developed a more complete understanding of her experience, skills, knowledge and passion for Unitarian Universalism and for our congregation.

Honestly, I am blown away. Gretchen has what we need and shares our hopes and dreams. She's demonstrated many of her skills and abilities, and as senior minister she will journey with us as we develop and live into our mission and future.

With enthusiasm I join in recommending The Rev. Gretchen Haley as our candidate!

### **Lyndy Latta**

Throughout the intensive, eye-opening process that was "The Big Listen," my focus, our focus, was on developing a deep understanding of our congregation.

I believe our commitment to that objective is well reflected in the process we engaged in and in the Congregational Record which summarizes it all.

I was blown away by the incredible, dynamic website Gretchen presented for our consideration, but what captivated me as hour after hour of our intensive interviews went by was the picture that began to form of who she would become in this new role.

It was quickly clear how Gretchen's ability in growing a business to 1200 employees isn't just impressive. It also reveals an exceedingly rare capacity for adaptation, a rare and impressive ability to evolve and develop new skills as our congregation will, inevitably, evolve and change over time.

These are just a few of the many reasons why I join with my fellow search committee members, today, in whole-heartedly recommending The Reverend Gretchen Haley as our next Senior Minister. The depth of our process and the clarity of understanding attained as a result make it clear that she is, indeed, "The One."

# Shining a Light on Our Future

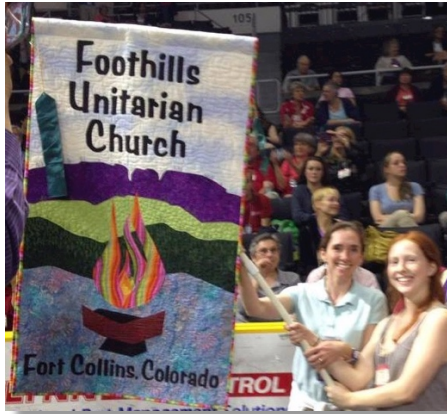
## a summary of our Congregational Record

### Who are we?

- We are a vibrant, interconnected, committed and caring community.
- We are independent thinkers with diverse opinions and beliefs.
- We have many with a high level of education (65% of us have graduate degrees).
- We value inspiring and thoughtful sermons.
- We like to voice our opinions, listen to others and arrive at acceptable solutions.
- We value our RE and music programs.
- We want input on major church changes and initiatives.
- We are optimistic for our future and feel we have a greater potential.
- We are a compassionate community that values being challenged.

### We want a senior minister who:

- Works collaboratively.
- Can facilitate jointly developing and implementing a vision of who we want to be.
- Can provide thought-provoking, challenging and inspiring sermons.
- Can bridge diverse beliefs and draw lessons from all the major wisdom traditions.
- Embraces and strengthens our culture of collaboration and empowerment.
- Will see communication as a vital part of maintaining and enhancing our community.
- Is visionary and has an intellectual interest.
- Has an approachable manner, with sincere concern for others.
- Has large-church and change-management skills.
- Is open minded and flexible.
- Has a sense of humor and humility.



### **Our Strengths:**

- Strong community of dedicated lay leaders and congregants who care deeply about their church.
- A committed congregation with strong support systems, such as a Caring Committee and a parish visitor program.
- Although we are independent thinkers, we are willing to participate in working through our disagreements.
- Outstanding programs, including RE, Music, small group ministry, and social justice initiatives.
- Passionate, knowledgeable and dedicated clergy and staff.

### **Our challenges:**

- Settling and supporting our new senior minister.
- Growing with grace and determining our best path forward.
- Taking a thoughtful approach to growth so far, as well as in the future. Paying attention to facilities, resources, and our sense of connection and intimacy.
- Develop a mission and a new five-year plan.
- Define our required organization changes, including bylaws and governance.
- Raising the funds we need to do what we want to do.
- Creating a more effective communication process.
- Effectively bridging the diversity of beliefs with respect and tolerance for all.

## Our Ministerial Profile

These are exciting times at Foothills Unitarian Church. We are a vibrant, interconnected, and caring community just beginning to realize the possibilities in being a large congregation in a growing university town. Our senior minister of over 20 years recently retired, our most recent long-range plans have completed their course, and we recognize our numbers have outgrown both our organizational structure and physical facilities. Our members are exceptionally committed to their church and maintaining a strong sense of community.

Our new senior minister will enjoy working collaboratively with a large and engaged network of lay leaders who are eager to share our culture and traditions and then explore in partnership many possible new directions. As a congregation, we look forward to a new minister who possesses the broad skill set required to facilitate jointly developing and implementing a vision of who we want to be.

We are certainly not alone in Sunday services being the core of our community. Our new minister will continue our long history of thought-provoking, challenging, and inspiring sermons that draw lessons from all the major wisdom traditions and celebrate the congregation's common values and large diversity of beliefs. Our highly intellectual tendencies are balanced by our great appreciation for services that emphasize spiritual growth, music, and humor.

On a personal level, we expect all of our ministers to be warm and approachable, able to relate effectively with all generations, and communicate in an open conversational style. We want to feel as connected to our minister as we do to each other.

Our new minister will embrace and strengthen our culture of collaboration and empowerment of the congregation, lay leaders, staff, and clergy. Ours is a highly participatory culture, and we are comfortable taking initiative, whether in our church leadership and committee roles or engaging in justice work. As we further embrace our large-church identity, we expect our new senior minister will help us retain this collaborative core while developing new ways to communicate and work in partnership.

We need a visionary leader for the short and long term to get to know us and our values, to help us define our future, and to inspire us to pursue it. She/he will help us complete and



institutionalize the transition we have begun toward a culture of generosity and volunteerism that reaps the rewards of accomplishing our goals. Some specific tasks will be governance changes and mission articulation, as well as addressing issues related to growth, generation of a new long-range plan, and moving toward more efficient and effective communication models.

Foothills provides an exciting opportunity for a visionary spiritual leader energized by working with a variety of thinking, engaged individuals combining diverse perspectives and a passionate commitment to our community.

A summary of the characteristics we are seeking:

- Intellectual and visionary
- Collaborative and empowering leadership style
- Approachable manner, with sincere concern for others
- Large-church and change management skills that reinforce our deep sense of connection
- Open minded and flexible
- Sense of humor and humility
- Ability to bridge diverse belief systems



## Our Congregational Profile

Above all, the people of Foothills Unitarian Church are a compassionate community that values being challenged to pursue spiritual growth and engage in meaningful justice work. We are independent thinkers with diverse opinions and beliefs who strive to work through our differences in order to maintain our strong sense of community.

We actively promote individual spiritual growth without demanding common beliefs and enjoy close relationships with each other. Our beliefs are diverse, with as many people who relate to traditional religious concepts such as “God” as who are uncomfortable with such language. Beyond Unitarian Universalism, the primary religious traditions that influence us are Humanism and Buddhism, but we are eager to explore lessons from all wisdom traditions.

Our high level of education (56% of us have post-graduate degrees) at least partially explains our thoughtful approach to spiritual journeys. We value services that include inspiring and intellectually challenging lessons from the pulpit, a large component of music, and a diverse array of spiritual practices.

Launching children and youth on their spiritual journeys is very important to us, as evidenced by high enrollment and our congregation-wide support of RE programs, including a recent elimination of fees.

We also appreciate the many new avenues for adult religious education and spiritual growth available as a result of increases to our highly regarded staff and clergy over the past several years.

Being empowered and impactful are strong values within our community. In our recent survey, the most important reasons for volunteering were having a “sense there is a real need to be met” and “feeling my ideas would be welcome” (96% each).

Our staff and clergy are capable professionals, effectively managing the programs they develop while collaborating with other staff and lay leaders. In addition, there are also numerous lay leaders and congregants who enjoy working across committee and task group boundaries. We are accustomed to voicing our opinions, hearing those of others, and arriving at acceptable conclusions.

We have begun a journey to implement more effective organizational structure and systems that can better support the needs and desires of our large congregation, while maintaining small-church feelings of connectedness in community. Although we want to make this transition, we have struggled with the process, particularly with regard to adequately communicating with and considering the opinions of many individuals.

Our experiences over the first year of interim ministry highlighted the importance of open and respectful communication surrounding organizational changes, combined with consistent efforts to encourage congregational input and buy-in. Having such a highly participatory and engaged congregation makes this process both exciting and challenging. We are looking forward to continued growth in these areas with guidance from our new senior minister.

The members and friends of Foothills Unitarian Church are very proud of our caring community and optimistic for its future. This is a congregation that wants to make a difference and have even greater impact in the wider community. We look to our new minister to work in partnership with us as we experience together the inevitable future changes required in becoming the church we want to be.



## Ministerial Search Committee Forums

Attend a forum to learn more about our excitement with Gretchen's candidacy, answer questions about our recommendation, learn about candidating week, and prepare for our congregational vote on Sunday, November 15.

*Open to all - No registration - Just come - Child Care will be provided for each forum*

Saturday, October 24	10:00 am
Sunday, October 25	12:30 pm
Monday, October 26	3:00 pm
Thursday, October 29	6:00 pm
Saturday, October 31	1:00 pm
Tuesday, November 3	7:00 pm
Friday, November 6	1:00 pm



**Candidating Week    November 8 – 15**

**Congregational Meeting and Vote    November 15, 10:30 a.m.**

Foothills Ministerial Search Committee

Blog [bit.ly/foothillssearch](http://bit.ly/foothillssearch)

E-mail [searchcommittee@foothillsuu.org](mailto:searchcommittee@foothillsuu.org)

This is our covenant,  
to dwell together in peace,  
to seek the truth in love,  
and to help one another.

**Foothills Unitarian Church**

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