

Congregational Record Excerpt - Primary Areas of Focus for the Minister*

**These were developed by the 2021-22 Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) based on congregational input gathered from surveys, cottage meetings, town halls, interviews, etc.*

1. We would like our next settled minister to help us discover our common purposes. We have a history of ministers who either point the way, tell us where we should be going, and ask us to follow, or don't really get involved with who we are beyond preaching to us on Sunday mornings. This has left a vacuum in our understanding of what binds us, of our congregational identity, and the impact we want to have in the world. The work we need to do is deeper than coming up with a new mission and vision statement. We would like our next minister to help us connect to one another more deeply, and to help us discover our common purposes before attempting to define it and put it into words.

2. We need help creating a culture around healthy conflict. It's not that we do conflict badly – we don't acknowledge that conflict exists. On three occasions congregation-wide conflicts have led to devastating splits and the exodus of large numbers of our community. This history has understandably left us averse to conflict. This conflict avoidance is at every level of our community – institutionally between the board and the minister, with individuals and the minister, and between individual congregants. We would like our new settled minister to guide us in this important developmental work, so that we can truly lean into the part of our covenant that states “speak the truth in love”.

3. While members who've been coming to All Souls for a long time feel a deep sense of community, that community is beneath the surface and not openly accessible. Newcomers regularly return and often stay for an extended period of time, however, we struggle to turn these returning newcomers into long-term members who feel they belong and are invested at All Souls. We would like our new minister to help us become a more open community that makes room for new members to feel like they belong.

4. We would like to be welcoming to a more diverse group of people: particularly young adults and BIPOC. We would like to understand why we are not attracting and/or retaining more diversity to our congregation so that we can be more welcoming to all who are seeking a spiritual home. We would like our next settled minister to help us become the beloved community that we aspire to be.