

## BEYOND CATEGORICAL THINKING

“Will the new minister hear me? Will my concerns and needs be met? Will the minister understand what I’m living with? How will the community respond to our minister?”

In answering these questions, a picture of the “ideal minister” (categorized by age, gender identity, nationality, physical or cognitive ability, race, sexual orientation, etc.) comes to mind. With this picture in place, it can be easy to unintentionally exclude ministers who fall into other categories. At times, as we get caught up in comparing candidates to our “picture,” we can even forget what it is we hoped for in a minister.

On Sunday, September 29, UUSG will participate in the Beyond Categorical Thinking (BCT) workshop offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for congregations involved in the search for a new minister. The UUSG Search Team invites all congregational leaders, members, and friends to participate in this workshop.

**Childcare will be provided.**

The Beyond Categorical Thinking program is designed to promote inclusive thinking and help prevent unfair discrimination in the search process for a new minister. This program includes a three hour BCT workshop and Sunday morning services with facilitators trained by the UUA. In the workshop, UUSG members will:

- Consider the hopes, expectations, and concerns they have for a new minister
- Learn more about the ministerial search process, and
- Explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate.

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Come to UUSG on Sunday, September 29, to participate in this UUA-sponsored workshop, led by **Amanda Schuber**. Please put this on your calendar.

The selection of a minister is so important. The Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop is another opportunity for everyone in our congregation to be a part of that process. More information will be provided.

**Please sign up at [uusg.org/bct](http://uusg.org/bct) and let us know you can attend. Childcare will be available.**

**About Amanda:** Amanda Schuber has been a UU for 26 years, serving in various capacities at the UU Church of Tuscaloosa, AL as a former Director of Religious Education and Social Action Coordinator, and for two years at UUA headquarters in Boston as the Administrator of the Office of Congregational Fundraising. She has also served as a board member for Interweave Continental and EqUUal Access. She and her family are currently members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Huntsville.

Amanda started her Masters of Divinity at Starr King School for the Ministry in 2018; she focused on Oppression Studies while studying at the University of Alabama, and is an advocate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights along with spending many years leading workshops on accessibility and diversity. Parent, wife and avid gardener, in her “spare” time she travels the country working with UU congregations as a Beyond Categorical Thinking Facilitator, assisting congregations in examining biases in the ministerial search process.

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