

Senior Minister Transition

Progress Report to the Membership

March 2026 Annual Membership Meeting

Center for Spiritual Living Santa Rosa

Executive Summary

The Senior Minister Transition Project is proceeding on schedule and with strong community engagement. This report provides an update on our progress through the Initial Phase (2025) and outlines our path forward as we enter the Preparation Phase (2026).

Key Accomplishments to Date:

- Dr. Edward announced his retirement timeline at the May 2025 Annual Membership Meeting
- Board secured guidance from CSL Home Office through Rev. Nan Bankston
- Visioning Group established under Angel's leadership
- Community survey completed with 89 responses across all stakeholder groups
- Spiritual support teams committed (two Practitioner Prayer Circles)
- Comprehensive FAQ document created and distributed
- Communication strategy launched with video and written materials

Current Status:

We are on track with our timeline. Dr. Edward's extended contract runs through December 31, 2027, giving us ample time for a thorough and thoughtful selection process. The Board will form the Search Committee in Q2 2026 and begin the formal recruitment process.

Timeline Overview

2025 - Initial Phase (Completed)

- Q1-2: Preliminary announcement and contract extension
- Q3: Home Office consultation and visioning group formation
- Q4: Community engagement planning and FAQ development

2026 - Preparation Phase (Current)

- Q1: Finalize vision statement, job description, and remuneration package
- Q2: Form Search Committee
- Q3: Begin informal outreach to potential candidates
- Q4: Plan initial application review process

2027-8 - Recruitment, Selection & Transition Phases

- Q1: Officially open recruitment through CSL Home Office
- Q2: Conduct interviews and competency assessments
- Q3-Q4:
 - Invite finalists to speak and conduct workshops
 - Board makes final selection and extends offer
 - Incoming minister installed and begins service

Community Survey Insights

Understanding the Aspirational Composite

In Fall 2025, we invited the community to share their vision for the qualities and characteristics they hope to see in our next Senior Minister. We received 89 thoughtful responses from Official Members, Practitioners, Staff, Stewardship Team members, and other engaged participants.

These responses paint a beautiful, comprehensive picture—what we call an "aspirational composite." This composite represents the collective hopes and dreams of our community. It includes qualities such as:

- Kindness, compassion, and emotional intelligence
- Strong spiritual maturity and daily practice
- Excellent leadership and administrative competencies
- Inspiring public speaking abilities
- Financial acumen and nonprofit experience
- Collaborative spirit and openness to innovation
- Deep commitment to inclusivity and community building

It is important to understand that this aspirational composite serves as a guide and compass for our search, but no single human being will embody every quality mentioned by every member of our community. The Search Committee will use this valuable input to identify candidates who demonstrate strength across these dimensions, while recognizing that each minister brings their own unique gifts, experiences, and leadership style.

Key Themes Across Groups

Official Members (56 responses):

Emphasized balanced leadership—spiritually grounded yet organizationally capable—with a stable and inclusive presence. Desire for someone who can maintain continuity while gradually introducing fresh perspectives.

Practitioners (11 responses):

Called for authenticity, spiritual depth, and a prayer-centered life. Emphasized the importance of a minister who leads from spiritual maturity and invites others into deeper practice.

Staff (7 responses):

Highlighted the need for wisdom, courage, transparency, and strong internal leadership. Desire for a minister who supports and empowers the team while modeling clarity and kindness.

Stewardship and Giving Teams (6 responses):

Prioritized mission-driven outreach, financial responsibility, and celebratory spirituality. Want a minister who embodies joyful presence while ensuring the Center's sustainability.

Our Evaluation Framework

The Search Committee will evaluate candidates using a comprehensive framework that goes far beyond a single Sunday presentation. While public speaking is important, the Committee recognizes that a compelling 30-minute talk does not equate to sustainable ministerial excellence or long-term organizational leadership.

Evaluation Components

1. Ministerial Experience and Track Record

- Years of ministerial service and leadership roles held
- Demonstrated outcomes in previous ministries
- History of community growth and engagement

2. Leadership and Administrative Competencies

- Nonprofit management experience
- Financial literacy and budgetary responsibility
- Strategic planning and organizational development skills
- Team building and staff development capabilities

3. Theological Alignment and Spiritual Maturity

- Deep understanding of Science of Mind principles
- Personal spiritual practices and daily disciplines
- Ability to teach and transmit spiritual principles effectively

4. Professional References and Reputation

- Feedback from previous congregations and colleagues
- Standing within the Centers for Spiritual Living movement
- Professional conduct and ethical standards

5. Sunday Presentation and Workshop

- Public speaking effectiveness and presence
- Ability to connect with and inspire the community
- Teaching style and workshop facilitation skills

6. Community Feedback

- Member impressions and responses (via Google Forms)
- Congregation's sense of alignment and connection

The Search Committee will weigh ministerial history, professional qualifications, and proven leadership capabilities with as much—if not more—

importance as the community's feedback on a single Sunday presentation. This ensures we select a minister who will thrive in the role long-term and lead CSLSR with excellence for years to come.

Presenting Multiple Qualified Candidates

The Search Committee plans to present three qualified candidates to the community. This approach serves several important purposes:

- **Perspective:** Seeing multiple candidates helps the community understand the range of gifts and strengths available, and recognize that different ministers bring different combinations of talents.
- **Understanding Trade-offs:** One candidate may be exceptionally strong in administration and fiscal management, another may excel in community building and pastoral care, while a third may bring remarkable teaching gifts and innovative programming. Each represents a different path forward for CSLSR.
- **Informed Feedback:** By experiencing multiple candidates, members can provide more thoughtful and comparative feedback that goes beyond initial impressions.
- **Comprehensive Information:** Each candidate will provide detailed information including resume, professional history, recorded messages, and qualifications. This allows the community to base feedback on substance, not just Sunday charisma.

The goal is to help the community—and ourselves—remain open to the diverse ways spiritual leadership can manifest, and to make a decision based on the totality of each candidate's gifts rather than a narrow set of expectations.

A Note on Demographics and Openness

The Search Committee is committed to evaluating all qualified candidates fairly and holistically. We ask the entire community to approach this process with open hearts and minds, focusing on spiritual leadership qualities, ministerial competence, and alignment with our core values.

While some members may have preferences regarding specific demographic characteristics—such as age, gender, ethnicity, or other factors—the Committee will prioritize the candidate's proven ability to lead, inspire, teach, and serve our community with excellence. We recognize that transformational spiritual leadership comes in many forms, and we remain committed to selecting the minister who can best guide CSLSR into our future.

We invite everyone to reflect on the qualities that truly matter: compassion, wisdom, integrity, spiritual depth, administrative skill, and the capacity to help our community thrive. These transcend any single demographic profile and reflect the universal principles we teach and practice.

In Closing

This transition represents a significant milestone in the life of our spiritual community. The Board of Trustees, guided by the vision and values of CSLSR, is committed to conducting a thorough, transparent, and spiritually-grounded process.

We are grateful for Dr. Edward's three decades of leadership and his willingness to support this transition with grace and generosity of spirit. We are equally grateful for the engaged participation of our community members, whose thoughtful input continues to guide our path forward.

As we enter this next phase, we ask for your continued patience, open-heartedness, and faith in the unfolding process. Together, we will welcome the minister who is meant to lead CSLSR into our next chapter of growth, service, and spiritual awakening.

*In Love and Light,
The Board of Trustees
Center for Spiritual Living Santa Rosa*