



**First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Saco, ME
Prospectus**

Seeking: Settled Pastor

Describe our community. What is special about our community? What distinguishes it from surrounding communities?

Saco is a fabulous oceanfront community located at the mouth of the Saco River and adjoins the seaside communities of Ocean Park, Old Orchard Beach, Biddeford, and Scarborough. By car, we are 20 minutes from Portland, two hours from Boston, and two hours from the White Mountains in New Hampshire; all of which are attractive areas for families, retirees, and young people. Transportation options include the Amtrak DownEaster, which runs from Brunswick, ME to Boston, MA and has a stop in downtown Saco, and the Portland International Jetport, just 20 minutes away by car. Our community has excellent schools which include Thornton Academy, a private/public institution with an international boarding program, that provides excellent intermediate and secondary education curricula. The city of Saco is governed through the management of the mayor and city council in coordination with an active and involved

citizenry. There is a lot happening in our community, as evidenced by the activity on display within our vibrant downtown.

Description of our congregation, including buildings. What is characteristic about the members of our congregation? What do we value most about our faith community? What are our congregation's greatest challenges?

While most congregations will describe themselves as welcoming, it is taken to a higher degree at First Parish. It is the one quality that the majority of new people provide as their reason for joining.

The members of our congregation are dedicated and extremely welcoming to one and all. Many strong friendships have been formed at First Parish. Our faith community is known for our outreach to community members who may have fallen on hard times. We are dedicated to service and this is shown through our many ministries. We hope to grow in this area as we always feel we could do more to help those less fortunate.

Our greatest challenge is how to organize and expand our ministries in the face of declining attendance and volunteerism. We are excited to have a leader to help us grow in this area. With a little direction the wonderful work of First Parish will reach even further into the larger community.

The First Parish church building is simply amazing. One benefit from a church fire in 2000 was the ability of the congregation to participate in designing a church for the 21st century, literally from the ground up. In addition to a spacious and light sanctuary our church hosts a full size commercial kitchen, a large fellowship hall that can be sectioned off, offices and meeting rooms for any occasion and a wonderful lower-level, multi-classroom church school. First Parish also has a parsonage, currently used as rental income.

Description of the pastoral needs of the congregation and community. What are the top gifts and/or skills we are looking for in a new pastor? What do we hope the new pastor will accomplish?

First Parish is seeking to call a strong collaborative leader who can help move us into the future and create an overarching vision for years to come. Our congregation has expressed a desire to expand our missions and ministry further into the community and we are ready to be challenged in the area of social justice for all. We are hoping for a minister who can blend the history of our bible with the topics of today's world in order to inspire us all to reach the potential God sees in us, individually and as a congregation. By strengthening the solid base we already have First Parish seeks to move from being a good, solid, well-attended church to an outstanding, bursting-at-the-seams church.

Helpful websites for learning about the local area:

First Parish web presence:

First Parish Website: <http://firstparishsaco.org/ci/mf/pages/view/church3343>
First Parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-Saco-UCC-136510359702558/>

Local schools and universities:

Saco Schools: <http://www.sacoschools.org/>
Thornton Academy: <http://www.thorntonacademy.org/>
University of Southern Maine: <https://usm.maine.edu/>
University of New England: <http://www.une.edu/>

City government & organizations:

City of Saco: <http://www.sacomaine.org/>
Saco & Biddeford Chamber of Commerce: <https://biddefordsacochamber.org/>
Saco Main Street Organization: <https://www.sacomainstreet.org/>

Outdoor activities:

Ferry Beach State Park: http://www.maine.gov/cgi-bin/online/doc/parksearch/details.pl?park_id=8
Saco Bay Trails: <http://www.sacobaytrails.org/>
Eastern Trails: <http://www.eastertrail.org/>

Contact information for more information:

Maine Conference Staff: **Rev. Deborah J. Blood, Conference Minister**
207-622-3100 (office)
207- 530-0429 (cell) *best number
Email: djblood@maineucc.org