

Bridgewater Congregational Church
Bridgewater, Connecticut
United Church of Christ
Summary Church Profile

Part 1: POSITION POSTING

a. Listing Information

Bridgewater Congregational Church
10 Clapboard Road
Bridgewater, CT 06752
Web address: BwUCC.org

Southern New England Conference
Litchfield South Association
Association Staff Contact Person:
Rev. Dr. Michael Ciba, Senior Regional Minister,
(860)-921-8204, CibaM@sneucc.org

b. Summary Ministry Description

Theologically, we would describe ourselves as a main line protestant church focused in a liberal direction. Our lay leadership is extremely active as is our entire congregation. We are not aware of any disruptive individuals or factions. We are comfortable in who we are, at the same time believing we are open to change. Membership is not confined to Bridgewater, many members coming from the surrounding towns.

We are seeking a pastor to lead us in our journey to become a congregation dedicated to helping each member understand that he or she is called to ministry and is making a difference. We believe this can be achieved through working together to realize what each of our unique gifts are and how to best apply them in furthering the work of Christ in today's world. Providing more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation will be fundamental to our efforts going forward. This leader will also guide our efforts to expand our overall outreach ministries including working to revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners that share our vision and commitment.

The attributes and skills necessary to accomplish this work are presented in this document and in the accompanying position description and congregational survey report.

We are in the southwestern region of Connecticut and value the characteristics and benefits of small town, New England living with proximity to larger nearby Connecticut cities and to New York and Boston. Bridgewater is a friendly community with a cozy bistro for coffee klatches and a meeting place for townspeople. The town boasts a wonderful library, an award-winning elementary school, the only self-sufficient volunteer fire department in the state and easy access to the town hall. The church, parsonage and Friendship Hall are in walking distance of town center and all the above-mentioned places.

Our current church membership consists of 140 active members.

We are currently in the process of searching for a full-time minister.

Position duration: Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association.

c. Scope of Work

A detailed description of the position is in the Appendix.

A desirable candidate is one with:

- An ability and interest in excellent preaching, creating worship experiences that deepen members' relationship with God and one another.
- We are seeking a pastor who will embrace communicating and preaching in a hybrid model (in-person and virtual).
- An ability and interest in reshaping the ministries of the church to reach others and incorporating them into the life of the church, including creating a family ministry attracting parents, children and youth.
- A desire to seek out and welcome new church members.
- An ability and interest in calling and equipping members for ministry and leadership, helping members discern their gifts.
- An ability and interest in Christian education.
- An interest in and commitment to pastoral care of congregants and the wider community.

d. Compensation & Support

In 2019 our compensation package included: salary, soc. sec., pension, family insurance (health, etc.) and parsonage for a total compensation package value of \$102,000. The total support package for this position meets conference compensation guidelines.

The church provides a parsonage adjacent to the church. In addition, there is a caretaker's building housing the caretaker(s) for the church and grounds.

It is expected (but not required) that the minister will reside in the parsonage. In either event, active involvement in the town is highly desirable.

Peer and professional supports are available for ministers in our association/conference: These include:

- Lunch gatherings are held monthly for clergy in the Litchfield South Association.
- Regular support consultations with all Litchfield South clergy are provided by the Association's Committee on Church and Ministry.
- The Regional Minister is available to offer support and consultation whenever needed.
- Southern New England Conference resources are always available to the church and pastor.

e. Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

In collaboration with the congregation, our new minister will help us achieve our mission statement. Our new minister will:

- Work in close partnership with the deacons in the spiritual life of the church, supporting education programs for all ages in the church and developing community outreach.
- Support an already active music program.
- Participate in and support programs in the community.
- Connect with and participate in association and conference programs.
- Connect the Bridgewater Congregation Church with conference resources.

From our recent Congregation Assessment Tool Survey, the following goals were identified:

- Work to renew and revitalize the community around the church by building coalitions with partners.
- Make necessary changes to attract families with children and youth to our church.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people and incorporate them into the life of the church.

- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age and stage of life.

The current bible study program has been very successful and consistently well attended.

Generally speaking, increase opportunities to provide topics that are broader reaching to the general public.

We are seeking a Minister who will assist us in making an impact beyond our church walls. The minister will have the following attributes and capabilities:

- Preaching – Capacity to inspire and connect people to God’s word. An ability and interest in creating worship experiences that deepen members’ relationships with God and with one another.
- Pastoral Care – Capacity to engage people empathetically and care for persons in times of need.
- Strategic Leadership – Capacity to cast a vision and lead the Church toward realization of the vision. An ability and interest in calling and equipping members for ministry and leadership
- Teaching/Training – Capacity to deepen understanding, form character and equip members with new skills and an ability and interest in developing a Christian education and formation ministry that reaches people at every age and stage of life.
- Change management – Capacity to lead a church through a significant and necessary period of change. An ability and interest in being an agent of change who makes things happen.
- Community catalyst – Capacity to function on a larger stage beyond the Church and to rally a variety of individuals and groups to address critical issues. An ability and interest in reshaping the ministries of the Church to reach others and incorporate them into the life of the Church.

It is important for our minister to have a presence in the community, participate in activities when possible and be accessible to people in the broader community as a representative of our church. Acting as a conduit of need and concern will support our overall mission of addressing needs within our community and providing support beyond, but also including, our church member base.

- Expand outreach ministries that provide direct services to those living on the margins of society and those broken by life's circumstances
- Develop new ideas for projects outside our walls.
- Adapt the opportunities provided by the church making them more accessible given the pace and schedule of our lives
- Be open and inviting to diversity and difference.
- Have an ability and interest in developing the financial generosity of members in their giving to the work of God.

We have no specific language requirements or culturally specific capacities required at this time.

From the document “Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministers,” we have identified the following areas of excellence that our next Minister will display to further equip the congregation’s ministry:

- Excellence in preaching by engaging sacred stories and traditions,
- Ability to teach and build leadership skills,
- Competence in pastoral care, and caring for all creation,
- Strong community relations skills by working together for justice and mercy.

Appendix: POSITION OF MINISTER: DESCRIPTION

Reports to: Officers, Boards, Committees, the congregation

Supervises/Manages: Office Administrator

Position Summary: Provide for the spiritual welfare of the church members. The Minister is responsible for:

Worship - Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship, including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding lay liturgists planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.

Pastoral Care - Provide pastoral care for members and families in collaboration with lay people at least to those who are sick, elderly, in crisis or grieving) and provide counseling, listening and referrals as appropriate.

Faith Nurturing - Leadership of congregational education and spiritual development for children, youth and adults. Assist the Board of Christian Education and other lay leaders.

Outreach - Provide leadership in the areas of congregational growth and vitality, including work with the Board of Deacons and other relevant partners to promote community awareness of the Church. With the Board of Mission and Outreach encourage, develop and implement outreach to the local area and participate in the national and international outreach of the United Church of Christ and other ecumenical and interfaith organizations.

Administration, Equipment, Buildings and Grounds – Oversee and maintain day-to-day administration of church operations and facilities. Coordinate with Board/Committee Chairs and Moderator in support of their accountabilities under the bylaws.

Key Responsibilities/Objectives:

Worship

- Prepare and lead Sunday worship and special services including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.
- Conduct worship; administer sacraments and rites; preach the Gospel.
- Ensure material for services are completed/prepared in time for service/event.
- Assist the Choir Director and Organist/Pianist with coordination of music for worship services.
- Review quarterly at a minimum the worship life of the church and the minister's leadership with a designated group.

Pastoral Care

- Provide pastoral care through pastoral visits in homes, hospitals and other places of need.
- Assist families/members in crisis; provide counseling or counseling referrals as appropriate.
- Provide education/counseling before weddings, baptisms and funerals.
- Meet with Board/ Committee Chairs and Moderator prior to each meeting to set meeting agenda and deliverables.
- Ensure a system of review is in place to assess performance and to apprise congregation how to seek pastoral care.
- Review subject with Board of Deacons throughout the year.

Faith Nurturing

- Develop faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities and helping lay persons take advantage of them
- Provide the Board of Christian Education with an awareness of resources (persons and published) that can assist them in fulfilling their mission. (i.e.- assistance in dealing with declining Sunday school enrollment/participation.)
- Assess interest in adult programming annually with recommendation prior to the start of the program year.
- Conduct Confirmation class as needed.
- Energize and deepen the spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do.
- Study and pray to increase faith and to improve skills so as to lead, teach, preach better.

Outreach – Engaging the community and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love.

- Welcome and “on-board” new members
- Develop leadership by working with people in the church to create ministry and programming.
- Represent the church as an active and involved leader both in the church-wide and local communities. Be available to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations.
- Develop and coordinate activities to promote community awareness of the church and to increase participation by church members.
- Ensure Board of Mission and Outreach (BMO) keep the congregation informed about the work of the United Church of Christ and offers opportunities to engage in that work.

Administration

- Provide strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry
- Attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings
- Conduct/oversee administrative responsibilities such as email, website, church supply purchasing, record maintenance, supervise Office Administrator, coordinate with other staff (Choir Director, Organist/Pianist and Caretaker.)
- Meet with Board/ Committee Chairs and Moderator as needed to set meeting agenda and deliverables.
- Promote faithful financial development and stewardship.

Required Competencies

- Ordained ministerial standing in the United Church of Christ
- Five to ten years pastoral leadership experience is desirable in a church of 100-300 members
- Demonstrated ability to promote and foster teamwork among various groups, non-ordained paid staff and volunteers within the church for the purpose of achieving the stated mission and goals of the church.