

FOR LOCAL CHURCHES SEEKING LEADERSHIP IN AN INTERIM TIME

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this document that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates. As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending a suitable leader for the interim time for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates.

We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

Charles W. McSorley, Moderator

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

Date 9/27/21



Church Name:

First Church of Christ in Saybrook,
Congregational, United Church of Christ

Address:

366 Main Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475

Telephone: 860-388-3008

Email: Moderator@firstchurchsaybrook.org

Website: <http://firstchurchsaybrook.org>

Facebook: [first church of christ in saybrook](https://www.facebook.com/firstchurchofchristinsaybrook)

Date of vacancy: 12/15/21 +/-

For more information:

Rev. Isaac Lawson, Area Conference Minister
Southern New England Conference
lawsoni@sneucc.org
860-837-0077 mobile

Ministry flows from mission. The interim time in the life of a congregation is an opportunity to gain clarity on the church's mission. The Southern New England Conference is living into this mission "United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all."

What is your local church's mission? (Please share your church's mission statement here or name that one needs to be developed):

MISSION STATEMENT:

We, The First Church of Christ in Saybrook (Congregational) Journey together

To Celebrate God's love through worship

To share God's love through nurture and service

To reflect God's grace by following the way of Jesus Christ,

We welcome all who seek to walk with us in Christian Faith.

(Revised and voted September 18, 2011)

To test or develop the mission, the interim time can be guided by three questions:

1. Who are we now?
2. Who is our neighbor? Or who are we uniquely equipped to serve?
3. Who is God calling us to be?

In addition to asking and responding to the three questions above, what are your Expectations/Primary Goals/Needs for the interim time: (Push yourselves to be precise...this is crucial for your work and ongoing conversation of the assessment/evaluation of the interim time)

With the unprecedented need in our community for a positive voice of faith; we look toward the Holy Spirit to guide us during this interim time. We seek to strengthen our own church family, organize our church structure to include those who seek to serve and grow our numbers of new members significantly. We are looking for a dynamic engaging energetic pastor to shepherd us into the future while continuing our on-line ministry and expanding our presence with social media, as well as leading us in Sunday worship. While Old Saybrook is a homogeneous community, we do talk about diversity, but because our church population mirrors the community, we have little chance to practice what we preach.

In a paragraph or two for each item, please provide the following:

Brief History of the Congregation:

Brief history

First Church of Christ in Saybrook is one of the oldest Congregational churches in the country. It was established in 1646, before tea arrived in England and before Isaac Newton discovered gravity. Always strong believers in education, Reverend Thomas Buckingham and colonial pastors founded the Collegiate School in Saybrook which is now known as Yale University. Our fourth meetinghouse, which is the current church, was built in 1840 in classic New England style.

We are also one of the youngest churches. Although we have been members of the Middlesex Association for a couple of centuries, after debating off and on since 1957, on September 12, 2021, we finally joined the UCC in a joyful welcoming service.

We have supported our congregation and the community through the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Civil War, world Wars I and II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Iraq War, and the War in Afghanistan. We have been here through the Spanish Flu, the Twin Towers and Covid-19. In all, we put our trust in God and endured, and we are strong and hopeful for the future. May God bless our church.

Church Strengths:

When we have a specific project or mission to accomplish, we generally get a good response people willing to get involved with the task, by offering to work, supply money, etc. However, we struggle to fill ongoing teams and committees to keep the organization functioning smoothly. The select group that volunteer for the ongoing committee work do a great job but are becoming over worked and need some fresh blood to help.

We see ourselves as “the community church” that is there when people need us. Whether for food, shelter, spiritual guidance, or a place to meet. This past year during the pandemic we saw a marked increase in non-members requesting funerals and/or memorial services which we have been able to accommodate, because we open our doors to the community.

Since we are a community centered congregation, our ideal interim candidate will be one who believes in the church being a center for community service.

Significant Events:

This past year we held an exploration and discernment process to gather and disseminate information about the UCC, to our Congregation. In May we voted to join the UCC, after having been members of the Middlesex Association for hundreds of years. This has caused some ruffled feathers within the congregation. We have had 4 settled pastors and 6 interim pastors in the past 30 years. Each time there was turnover in pastors, we lost more members than we gained. Part of that was due to the changes in society and part due to turnover. We are looking forward to making a smooth transition with Ed’

We lost our minister of Youth and Family in a bitter parting (3 years ago) that further fractured our congregation. Add to that Covid and the UCC vote, we need some rebuilding.

On the positive side we have a stable and growing “endowment” which enables us to weather the rough times. We have a beautiful sanctuary, recently painted, and roofed and are in the process of adding solar panels to the roof of our CE building. We Survived the pandemic! In 2018 we started a Jazz service which met with both excitement and apprehension, we also added an early 8 am meditative service. In the time between services, we held a bible study and youth faith formation. We also offered health and wellness programs, through the Parish Care Team. All three were moving along well before the pandemic hit. When the pandemic hit, we pivoted to streaming on Facebook Live. First, we tried to blend the services together but ran into some push back. We reverted to streaming both services separately for the 9:00 am jazz service and 10:30 and cancelled the 8 am. Recently we pivoted again and moved to hybrid for both 9 and 10:30 (in-person & live streaming) services. During the pandemic, our commitment to mission has continued with an increase in distribution at the food pantry, increased the frequency of the blood drives, hosting the Chamber of Commerce meetings when they were locked out of the town library and housing Amy’s Creative Learning Center, pre-school. We have not only survived the pandemic but have grown in service to the community.

Our Challenges:

Establishing a stronger Faith Formation Ministry, adult, children & teens (youth),

Rebuilding our C E and Youth programs, attracting more new members, increasing the number of members who faithfully pledge.

Is there unresolved Conflict in Church? Yes No

Level of Conflict in Your Church (Low 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 High): 2+

(As identified by Speed Leas, in a Leadership Magazine article in 1989:

1. “We have problems to solve, but we can do it!”
2. “We’re not communicating. There seems to be a low level of trust...but we are talking!”
3. The focus has changed to “winners/losers!”
4. The goal is “divorce,” and getting people to quit. At this level it is wise to seek outside help!
5. Not only wanting others to leave but seeking revenge!

Was the previous leader a contributor to the conflict? Yes No

If yes, please explain: _____

Generally, the starting place of negotiation for the Compensation Package offered to the Interim Pastor is the same as that of the most recent pastor or what you anticipate offering your new Called Pastor.

Cash Salary offered \$ 90,000.00 total package

Conference Compensation Guidelines (salary range): \$ See Conference Guidelines for salary range

Housing:

Housing allowance only \$ _____
 Parsonage only
 would offer either

Pension Contribution (14% of Base Salary plus housing)
 Social Security Allowance
 Health Insurance Individual Family **Negotiable**
 Dental Insurance Individual Family **Negotiable**
 Vacation (1 week per quarter for full time Interim) **Negotiable**
 Meetings
 Business Mileage Reimbursed (IRS Rate)

One time Criminal Background Check fee of \$140 reimbursed to the Interim Pastor.

Renewable Covenant/Contract will be for: 12 months 18 months 24 months

Is this full time or part time? **Full time**

Interim Pastor will be selected by: Leadership Board & Diaconate search team

Once an Interim Pastor has been chosen and a covenant has been signed, please forward the following documents to your Area Conference Minister:

Copies of the Interim Covenant/Contract
Documents outlining the conditions for terminating the covenant/contract.

It is customary that the church or Interim Pastor may terminate the contract only after 60 days' notice of such intent.

Suggested Supplemental Materials to send to a candidate:

1. Newsletter
2. Worship bulletin
3. Annual Report