

FOR LOCAL CHURCHES SEEKING LEADERSHIP FOR AN INTERIM TERM POSITION

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.

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

Date

Church Name:	North Congregational Church
Address:	896 Main Street Woburn, MA 01801
Telephone:	(781) 933-1229
Fax:	
Email:	office@northchurchwoburn.org
Website:	northchurchwoburn.org
Date of vacancy:	1/31/22
Contact Person and information:	The Rev. Alex Shea Will Area Conference Minister, Northeast Region Southern New England Conference, UCC sheawilla@sneucc.org (781) 369-9917

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 of the UCC declares these values essential to our shared ministry together:

- We understand the local church exists to make disciples of Jesus and we welcome all people unconditionally to share in this calling.
- We commit to making God's love and justice real by loving our neighbors, children, and all of creation through our collective work, such as seeking racial, economic, environmental, and LGBTQ justice.
- We believe God calls us to bring new life as agents of change and so we embrace and encourage adaptive and transformative leadership wherever the Body of Christ is gathered.
- We encourage local congregations and varied ministry settings, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to form covenant partnerships with all who work for the common good in their local communities and throughout the world.

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

Our Mission Statement is embodied in our slogan "Feeding Body and Soul." Putting faith into action with time, talents and resources. We participate in mission projects which support the Woburn community, the Woburn Council of Social Concerns, state, national and the international community through the UCC. Hospitality is an important aspect in "feeding my sheep."

As best as you are able, describe 3 to 5 goals you would like to address during your interim term and some ways you will know these goals have been met:

Help us assess the financial viability for the future of the church. Thanks to the Payroll Protection Plan loans during Covid, which were forgiven, the church has made it thus far but unknown going forward.

Help us develop a strategy toward bringing new and diverse people to the church since the congregation currently consists of older members.

Help us keep walking in faith with God and to keep appreciating the liturgy of the word as our central spiritual journey.

Help us understand and adapt to what the church will look like after Covid.

Help us understand the place of the church in the community and to participate in missions and ways to help people in need.

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

Brief History:

The North Congregational Church in Woburn has been in continuous operation since the 1840s. It was first gathered in 1846 by the Reverend Samuel Sewell, beginning as a Sunday school held upstairs in the local fire station.

The original small, white church building was constructed on the corner of Main and Elm Streets. Deemed too cold and drafty, it was replaced with the current building at the same location. The dedication of the new building took place in 1884. At the time, it was comprised of the “chapel,” “lecture hall,” and “ladies’ parlor.”

Over time, the building was later expanded and renovated to enlarge the hall, install the kitchen, and add a stage, offices, bathrooms, and upstairs Sunday school rooms. Most of the interior and all of the exterior of the church has been recently painted. The current pipe-and-digital organ was installed about 25 years ago.

The congregation joined the UCC in 1957 and became Open and Affirming in 2011.

The church prides itself for having been the first (or one of the very first) among Metropolitan Boston Association congregations to call a woman as Pastor, the Reverend Nancy Classen in 1974.

Church Strengths:

The church is a welcoming, safe environment with no conflict. We love being together (though Covid has made that difficult). We are Open and Affirming. Church members express welcome and generosity in a variety of ways. (for example, our recent fundraiser for RIP Medical Debt).

Members of the church are greatly appreciative of our worship services and have been receptive in adapting to remote worship during Covid. Our organist of 48 years is a fine musician and a beloved member of the congregation. His background is in classical music, but he is agreeable to finding and playing music in other styles (children’s songs, songs from movie soundtracks, popular songs, folk songs, etc.). We like our hymnal, *Worship & Rejoice*, from Hope Publishing.

The church has a reputation for hospitality through coffee hours (not held during Covid), fundraising dinners, the Thursday night free suppers, the community soup kitchen, and other events. Our Pastor has been an asset in showing friendship and welcome to all who come to the church whether for religious or social events. This has merged into our mission of “Feeding Body and Soul” and feeling welcome.

We use a disciple-making approach for youth. Highlights are the mission component in Sunday School, where each month the youth do a project benefitting others, as well as the inclusion of youth in worship leadership.

Members of the church have a strong appreciation for the liturgy of the word. We enjoy a variety of special services in the course of the year (for example, Celtic Advent, hymn sings, and the Blessing of the Animals). Deacons perform a multitude of duties including staying in touch with shut-ins and participating in worship leadership.

The church owns the building and has no mortgage. The building and grounds are well maintained by our Prudential Committee. The building has been recently painted inside and out. New signage was installed in 2020. The side entrance is wheelchair accessible. The first floor is wheelchair accessible except for the chancel, stage and one of the bathrooms.

The church has a cell tower in the belfry of the building.

Significant Events:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2004 | Reverend Ingrid Barrett resigns during a period of conflict. (Note: There is no longer conflict in the Church). |
| 2005 | Reverend Mark Welch serves as Interim Pastor. |
| 2006 | Reverend Marian Williams is called as Pastor. |
| 2007 | Work is done to make the building more accessible (pew cuts created for wheelchairs, a bathroom made accessible, diaper changing table installed, etc.) |
| 2011 | We become Open and Affirming by congregational vote. |
| 2012 | The fellowship hall, stage, kitchen, offices, Sunday school room, stairway, bathrooms, and vestibules are painted in fresh colors. |
| 2013 | The nursery is refurbished. |
| 2013 | We participate in the Crossroads program. Out of that comes our focus of "Feeding Body and Soul." |
| 2015-2017 | We cook and serve free, weekly Thursday night suppers for anyone from the community who wishes to come. Guests number 25-60 for each dinner. |
| 2016 | The congregation approves the Pastor's request to become half-time. |
| 2017-2018 | We successfully share our building with a Brazilian congregation called Jesus for All (Jesus para todos). They move to their own space when they are financially able to do so. |
| 2019 | The exterior of the church is painted, paid for by a special fundraising campaign. |
| 2020 | Our fundraising for RIP Medical Debt results in approximately \$185,000 of medical debt forgiven. |

2020 Covid strikes.

Fundraising dinners become takeout. (These are different from the free dinners mentioned above).

Prayer gatherings are held in Zoom.

The annual Christmas Fair is held out of doors.

For the first 15 months (through June 2021), the church building is closed, except for staff and certain volunteers. Worship services are pre-recorded and made available online.

Starting in July 2021, hybrid worship services are held. Covid precautions are used for the in-person service, including open windows. A recording is made available later in the day.

Starting in December 2021, when it is too cold for open windows, worship services will be held on ZOOM, with recordings posted later in the day.

2021 Reverend Williams announces her retirement, to be effective January 31, 2022. An Interim Profile Committee is formed for the purpose of calling an Interim Pastor

Our Challenges:

Future of the church:

Envisioning what the church will look like after Covid.

Assessing the financial viability of the church going forward. The church has some savings and no debt. We had Payroll Protection Plan forgivable loans during 2020 and 2021, but that program is over.

Engaging current participants more deeply.

Attracting new and diverse participants to join our ministries.

Staffing:

Because we have not had an administrative assistant (though a volunteer has helped out two hours per week), the organization of church records has suffered and the current pastor has been preparing bulletins and newsletters herself.

Safety and Accessibility:

It is challenging to ventilate the sanctuary during Covid wintertime.

The chancel, stage, one of the bathrooms, and the second floor are not wheelchair accessible.

Transportation:

We have no parking lot. Parking is on the street or at a public parking nearby.
The local bus does not run on Sundays.

Is there unresolved Conflict in Church? No

Was the previous leader a contributor to the conflict? No

BASIC STATISTICS

#Church Members	Average Worship Attendance (in-person and virtual)	CE Participation	Adult Ed Participation
100	30	None during Covid	Few during Covid

Last Fiscal Year Actual Income	Last Fiscal Year Budgeted Income	Last Fiscal Year UCC Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowments	Compensation being offered
\$123,700	\$109,521	\$1,480	Investment account \$147,814.28, Memorial account \$63,381.53 and Faith Fund \$29,528.24	\$41,000 includes salary and housing

COMPENSATION

Generally, the starting place of negotiation for the Compensation Package offered to the Interim Term Pastor is the same as that of the most recent pastor.

Cash Salary Offered \$ \$18,930

Housing Offered

- Housing allowance only \$ 22,140
- Parsonage only
- would offer either

Benefits Offered

- Pension Contribution (14% of Base Salary plus housing)
- Social Security Offset (7.65% of Base Salary)
- Life Insurance and Disability (1.5% of Base Salary)
- Health Insurance Individual Family
- Dental Insurance Individual Family
- Vacation (1 week per quarter for full time)
- Continuing Education Time and Fund

Expense Reimbursements

- Meetings
- Business Mileage Reimbursed (IRS Rate)
- One-time Criminal Background Check fee of \$160 reimbursed to the Interim Pastor

Covenant/Contract will be for: 12 months 18 months or other _____

Is this full time or part time? (¾ time ½ time ¼ time)

The Interim Term Pastor will be selected by: interim selection committee.

+ + +