

## **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.

\_\_\_\_Cindy Cayer\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Transition Team Chairperson

February 18, 2022  
Date



Church Name: Plantsville Congregational United  
Church of Christ

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Date of vacancy: March 7, 2022

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 United Church of Christ has a vision and mission of "Living the love and justice of Jesus" which is made manifest in partnership with God, through making disciples, creating ministry and service partnerships, and encouraging adaptive change and innovation in these changing times.

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

The purpose of this Church (Plantsville Congregational United Church of Christ) shall be to worship God, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to celebrate the Sacraments; to realize Christian fellowship and unity within this church and the Church Universal; to render loving service toward humankind; and to strive for righteousness, justice and peace.

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

1. Who are we now?

We are an established congregation steeped in tradition and history with a desire to move forward living out our mission statement. We have long standing members, active lay leadership, and a strong sense of community. However, we are a congregation, like many, that is feeling the effects of the pandemic and an overall decline in churchgoing. As such, we are an older congregation that has remained active during the pandemic, never missing worship either online, in the parking lot, in person, whatever the situation demanded. We have continued, in scaled down versions, the major programs of our church: Bible study, knitting ministry, special music, church fair and a musical production.

2. Who is our neighbor? Or who are we uniquely equipped to serve?

We truly believe that "All are Welcome" at Plantsville Church.

We serve those who engage with the weekly worship, bible study, and other programs.

We serve our community through missions, the UCC through participation and the wider world through disaster relief.

3. Who is God calling us to be?

We believe that God is calling Plantsville Church to see beyond the next couple of years; to revitalize our ministry in service of individuals, families and engaging the wider community.

We want to continue our Open & Affirming mission, identify the next phase, and update our covenant.

We believe that we need to explore partnerships with area UCC congregations to allow for meaningful dialogue and expansion of missions. Create opportunities to learn from one another, share resources and build stronger communities.

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)

Guide us through the process of selection for the next leader for our ministry and determine how we are uniquely positioned to serve God, this church and our community.

Prepare and deliver weekly services and sermons in person and online.

Technologically proficient to manage business in today's virtual environment.

Respond to individual congregational needs.

Engage with lay leadership with boards and committees to ensure that all groups are focused on mission centered goals.

Engage with church school and youth.

Oversee staff and daily operations.

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

**Brief History of the Congregation:**

The pandemic has reshaped not only how we "do business" but also brought to the light new attitudes of church participation. This description of our history is a combination of our roots and our current operations.

Plantsville Congregational Church was founded in 1865, in the center of Plantsville, Connecticut. The building is one of the state's finest examples of Gothic Revival architecture, designed by Josiah Cleveland Cady. We are a member of the United Church of Christ. We are an Open and Affirming congregation, having received this designation in 2021.

In recent history the church has had two pastors. Before our current pastor, the minister was in place for 22 years. Our most recent pastor came to us as an interim and was hired as the settled pastor spending a total of 7 years until his retirement in March 2022. We are a member of the Central Association.

Historically, we have enjoyed a vibrant church school and youth engagement. However, the church school and youth programs were on a decline pre-pandemic and have suffered a further decline with virtual, hybrid and minimal in-person gatherings.

Pre-pandemic, the annual church fair held in November and the mystery dinner were two events that involved many church members and friends and reached out to the wider community. During the pandemic, these events have been scaled back to adhere to safety protocols and have continued to provide fellowship opportunities and support for property enhancement and missions. Plantsville has a history of an active music program which traditionally provides Christmas and Easter Cantatas, a jazz service, hand bell and chancel choirs. During the pandemic, the choirs continued to meet safely and either recorded music for broadcast or performed live during worship. The annual weekly Lenten program was offered online.

The church grounds host a beautiful memorial garden that is well-kept and provides a serene space for contemplation. There is an active knitting ministry and weekly bible study program. For fifty years, the church housed an independent nursery school. Through the Christian Action board, the church continues food drives, participates in disaster relief, and is a 5 for 5 participant in UCC missions.

There are 292 members of record. Weekly attendance in person averages 50 and approximately 100 Facebook views.

### **Church Strengths:**

Plantsville Congregational Church has been described as a friendly, playful, joyful, and loving community where people feel like they belong to an extended family.

Our church has a strong history of volunteer participation and lay leadership.

A strong and vibrant music program.

A busy knitting ministry for prayer shawls, lap blankets and knitted knockers.

A beautiful Memorial Garden, ideal for baptisms and dedications, a welcome and quiet respite for individual reflection.

### **Significant Events:**

Plantsville Church became an Open and Affirming Congregation in 2021.

Significant programs are the church fair and mystery dinner that provide funds for missions and capital improvements. Most importantly, these events offer meaningful fellowship and engagement opportunities for members, “seekers”, and the community.

The Church recently updated the sanctuary and parsonage.

### **Our Challenges:**

Defining our ministry in the pandemic and post-pandemic world.

Creating meaningful ministry to spread the Word to an increasingly secular population.

Reinvigorating the Church School and Youth Program.

Engaging young families.

Providing service to those who in need.

Is there unresolved Conflict in Church? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_X\_\_ No

Level of Conflict in Your Church (Low 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 High): \_\_\_\_\_1\_\_\_\_\_

(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 \_\_X\_\_ 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 \$ 42,000

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

☒ Dental Insurance ☒ Individual ☒ Family

☒ Vacation (1 week after 6 months. Then two weeks after full year)

☒ Meetings (aprox. 5 monthly)

☒ Business Mileage Reimbursed (IRS Rate)

On 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: Transition 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