

## Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an Interim Pastor

### Church Information

Full Name: Wilbraham United Church  
Address: 500 Main Street, Wilbraham MA 01095  
Phone: (413) 596-2511  
Website: <https://www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org/>

Additional Denominational Affiliations: United Methodist Church

UCC Conference: Southern New England  
Association: Hampden County/Northwest region  
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa  
ACM phone: (860) 761-7192  
ACM email: [ogawaty@sneucc.org](mailto:ogawaty@sneucc.org)

### Position Details

*In a paragraph or two for each item, please answer the following prompts.*

1. Describe the ministry position for which you are seeking a pastor.

Wilbraham United Church sits in the center of a typical New England town. We have a beautiful building, and our congregation has been worshipping in Wilbraham for nearly 300 years. In a post-COVID world we are looking to discern our path forward. We are looking for help from an interim in renewing and making new connections in a post-COVID world. Our congregation loves to be together, and we work to ensure that all people are welcome here. We hold several community events throughout the year and are the location of other community events. For example, our annual Holly Fair is a part of the holiday season for hundreds in our community. Each summer we host over a hundred children, and almost as many committed volunteers, to our popular Vacation Bible Camp. We are looking for our interim to support renewing and revitalizing events such as these, and to help us continue to be a place where all are welcome. Since the beginning of COVID we have had almost a complete turnover of staff, for joyous reasons. However, this change has obviously had an impact on our congregation. Over the past 5-10 years we have

also seen a marked change in the makeup of our congregation – from an aging congregation, to one that is made up largely of young families. We hope our interim will help us identify who we are after this amount of change and what our congregation’s mission is going forward. Our building is aging, and we are looking to determine how we go forward with repairs that respect our history while keeping an eye on making improvements that are environmentally and handicapped friendly. We are in the process of discerning the right time to move forward with a Capital Campaign. We anticipate our interim acting as a supportive cheerleader during this process and who will be supportive during the Capital Campaign itself. We are committed to serving all people in the service which God calls us to. We are seeking a pastor who can work with us to increase our faith, to help us grow our presence and service in our community, and to assist us in discerning what our congregation will look like in a post-COVID world.

2. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your Interim Pastor.
  - Faith Formation – both young & adult learners
  - Pastoral Care - for our aging & ill parishioners
  - Community Engagement – we are looking to increase our presence in our community
3. What aspects of the 5 tasks of interim ministry (listed in the instructions sheet) do you anticipate being the focus of your interim time?
  - Renewing Linkages – we are looking to reconnect with members lost during the pandemic. We would also like to increase our opportunities to connect with the wider community
  - Exploring identity & direction – We would like to explore our post-COVID identity. How do we resume or modify our programs and outreach? We have also seen a turnover of staff since COVID. We are working to discern what our staffing model should look like going forward.
4. Position Scope:   X   Fulltime        3/4 time        1/2 time        1/4 time
5. Position Duration:        12 months   X   18 months other

## **Who We Are**

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

1. Church's Mission Statement *(or name that one needs to be developed):*

Wilbraham United Church is an open and caring community of Christians who gather to hear and share the word of God. In the spirit of Christ, we minister to one another through worship, prayer, education, and fellowship. We seek to live our faith by example and action in service to the larger community. We welcome all who wish to attend our services, participate in our various Christian educational offerings, and join in our fellowship.

2. Brief Church History:

The First Congregational Church of Wilbraham has served for more than 280 years, while our Methodist Church has served for more than 230 years. These two congregations came together in 1912 to form the current Wilbraham United Church. Currently Wilbraham United is known in our community for our Holly Fair and Vacation Bible Camp. We are also a place where several groups meet regularly including the Boy Scouts, Al-Anon, and the Wilbraham United Players. We are proud to be a place where all members of our community can feel safe and at home.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

Over the past year we have lost our Music Director, Associate Pastor/Christian Ed Director, Church Administrator, Bookkeeper and now our settled Pastor. All these departures have been for joyous reasons, but in totality it has had an affect our membership and programming. We are so grateful to have welcomed a new Music Director and Church Administrator/Bookkeeper. The makeup of our congregation has changed many times over our rich history. Most recently, within the past decade, we have seen a shift from being an aging congregation, to one with many young families.

4. Church Strengths:

Wilbraham United Church is a welcoming and loving congregation. We are open to change. During COVID, and other times of uncertainty, we accepted change with flexibility and open hearts. Our congregation fosters and empowers new leadership through many avenues, including a dedicated Pastoral Care Team.

5. Church Challenges:

During COVID we lost members. We are searching for ways to reconnect with lost members, as well as attract new members and families. We have an aging building

in need of many repairs. To fulfill this need we are exploring beginning a Capital Campaign. We, like many other congregations, face an aging membership. However, we have attracted many young families during the previous several years. We need to stay connected with our older members while continuing to attract young members and families.

6. Experience of Conflict:

Like many other congregations, we have many different groups. While we strive to meet conflict respectfully in the spirit of Christ's teachings, this time of disparate political views in our nation affects our congregation as well from time to time. We must continue to face change as a unified body of Christ.

1. Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. On a scale of 1-5, where would you rank your church's level of conflict? 1

*(Based on this work by Speed Leas 1. Problem to solve 2. Disagreement 3. Contest 4. Fight or Flight 5. Intractable)*

2. Please explain why you chose this level.

We believe that we do a very good job facing conflict with respectful discourse. We prefer to hear the voice of all members and friends when facing difficult decisions. Our leadership recognizes the points of view of all members and attempts to be representative of the entire congregation in their decision making. We recognize that we are all God's children, and that we must respect all views when facing conflict and listen to every voice.

3. Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

During times of conflict, we ask for the Lord's help in coming together to help lead us in the direction God is calling. We practice this by listening and respecting the opinions of all members and coming together to discern our path forward.

### Basic Church Statistics

*Yearly average*

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	252	80	37	12

Current year *a "clean-up" of membership rolls occurred this year	138*	60	25	10
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	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves& Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$320,820	\$320,820	\$27,222	\$1,153,191
Current year *as of Sept 30th	\$216, 641	\$216, 641	\$8,455	\$928,607

## Compensation

**Total Compensation Package Amount or Range:** \$112,420 - \$123,662

Package offered:        Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered  
**(choose only one)**   X   Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)

- Medical, Dental, Vision, Travel/Professional Expenses & Housing Allowance.

Housing:

  X   Housing allowance only  
       Parsonage only  
       Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation:  
 We used the UCC compensation guidelines to discern our compensation.

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is: Church Council appoints Interim Search Committee.

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## Statement of Consent

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.

*April Beston, Interim Search Committee Chairperson*

*January 5, 2023*

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Signature of Search Committee Chairperson  
(typed or Jpeg is sufficient)

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Date