

Williamstown United Church

Where is our church?

At a crossroads! In 2019 we began the careful process of rewriting the Articles of Federation of the United Federated Church in Williamstown to the new by-laws for the Williamstown United Church. We were a week away from approving the by-laws in March of 2020 when everything shut down from Covid 19. The next year consisted of recorded worship services and prayer concerns by email. In April of 2021, less than a week before we would return to in-person worship, the church we were to return to burned in a devastating fire. We were blessed in having another church building that we could move to and further blessed by the outpouring of support from our community, other faith communities around the state and even other parts of New England. But we are still dealing with the aftermath of the fire; how to best use the property where the church was and how to accomplish the much needed improvements to the church we are now using.

Like many other churches in rural Vermont, our congregation is a small one and an aging one. Nonetheless we are an active congregation. We have a few young families and a small Sunday school, we have an active women's group, we put on community dinners, we house and support the Williamstown Community Food Shelf and we support other outreach projects (CWS kits, backpacks for the local schools, Christmas Child boxes).

We do not currently have a choir. We have two members who provide music, one on piano and the other at the organ. The hymns and other readings are projected on a screen and we are preparing the way for live-streaming.

Where is our church? In uncharted territory, which is both exciting and daunting.

What is our community like?

Williamstown is a community with a population of approximately 3500 located in Orange County. Because of the proximity to Barre and Montpelier, the town is often served by organizations in Washington County as well as Orange. It is not very racially or ethnically diverse with a population that is about 99% white. The median income for a family in Williamstown is approximately \$78,000. Political affiliation ranges from very conservative to very liberal and everywhere in between. Williamstown has an elementary school and a middle/high school and is part of the Paine Mountain School District with the town of Northfield. The town has its own fire department and emergency medical service but does not have a police department, it is served by the Orange County Sheriff's office. The town is not without its problems. There is a significant amount of substance abuse and related crime issues. Williamstown has held

the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of reported domestic abuse cases in the state. Although many residents work and associate outside of town, there is a strong core of community members who volunteer in a number of organizations (library, historical society, food shelf, youth sports, town beautification and many more). In general the Williamstown community is very generous with their time and donations.

What are we looking for in a pastor?

We need someone who can provide leadership at a very challenging time, someone who is comfortable with technology, someone who enjoys working with people of all ages. We would appreciate a pastor who can refrain from bringing politics into worship, addressing the greater issues of love, respect and kindness. In addition to the challenges previously mentioned, some upcoming needs in our church are rekindling a music program, creating a safe church policy and finding creative ways to reach out to the community.

Hours and Compensation

We are looking for a half time pastor. Salary would be \$27,000 to \$30,000 per year with four weeks vacation. These terms are not set in stone.