

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. *All* congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

The First Parish of Bolton
Bolton, MA

Settled Minister – ¾ time

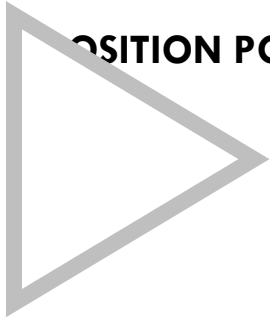
Federated: UCC, ABC and UUA

February 2023

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- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*



POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: The First Parish of Bolton

Street address: 673 Main Street, Bolton, MA 01740

Supplemental web links:

Website: www.firstparishofbolton.org

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/firstparishofbolton>

Email: admin@firstparishofbolton.org

Additional ecumenical affiliations: UUA and ABC

Conference: Southern New England

Association: Central Mass

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Rev. Carol Steinbrecher, Area Conference Minister, North Central Region

Email: steinbrecherc@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?

The First Parish of Bolton has worked to make God's love visible and real in the communities it serves since 1741. We cherish diversity and offer a progressive Christian perspective even as we honor important traditions and maintain a sense of continuity with the past. We are committed to the care of one another and the world we share. We seek a settled minister who can enhance the impact our congregation has locally, nationally, and globally by welcoming all. We, like so

many other churches, need a leader who can help increase the number of visitors and church members in order to increase our volume and variety of community-based activities.

The First Parish of Bolton celebrates, and is committed, to the diversity of its membership, the natural environment in which it's nestled, its role as the most iconic church in Bolton and its responsibility to support community. Our church has worked to make God's love visible and real in the communities it serves since 1741. We honor our Federated roots by cherishing diversity and offer a progressive Christian perspective that is unique in Bolton. Our members have included those with both Eastern and Western-based religious upbringings which reinforces and challenges our continual expansion of spiritual exploration as we honor important traditions and maintain a continuity with the past.

Our cohesive congregation is eager to partner with our next pastor in order to remain financially healthy and able to expand our mission of deep community engagement.

Photographs:

Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc.





Davis Hall where we hold weekly coffee hour, concerts, our church bazaar, and many other community functions.



Our altar at Christmas.

For additional pictures, see our facebook page. [First Parish of Bolton | Facebook](#)

What we value about living in our area:

Bolton maintains a rural character while being within approximately an hour of a number of cities including, Boston, Providence, Worcester, Springfield and Nashua. This proximity gives us a more vibrant cultural, economic and social mix that a town of 5,000 might not otherwise have.

Current size of membership: 65 Active members, 44 Active families

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): none

Position Title: Senior Pastor/Minister

Position Duration:

We are searching for a settled pastor who is called to long-term ministry. We are looking for a pastor who will join our church family to enliven our church membership and become an active member of the association.

Compensation Level:

$\frac{3}{4}$ Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

Based on congregational discussions, we've prioritized the following three core competencies that we seek in our next settled minister:

Preacher: Our ideal candidate will deliver educational and challenging sermons in an engaging and memorable way.

Pastor: We are looking for a pastor who is warm, personable and will lead our congregation through our next stage of development. While our church has a very involved Executive Committee, we are seeking an individual who is organizationally independent and will connect with people on a personal level.

Community Leader: We seek someone who is energized and committed to being engaged in both church sponsored events and also events within the broader Bolton Community.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis: See below for salary. Housing to be negotiated.

Salary \$38K -\$47K per annum. Plus Benefits

Support: One ¼ time minister – preaches one Sunday per month September through May. She also runs small group ministries and book club.

Executive committee and volunteers/Deacons who take care of some administrative tasks.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister? Housing to be negotiated

We'll want our minister to live close enough that they are able to participate in Bolton Community events but he/she is not required to live in town.

We have an associate minister, Bea Manning, who is committed to staying but is not interested in expanding beyond her current 20 hours/month. Our association has a pastor support group. Bea preaches 1 Sunday per month, giving the minister time off.

There are a number of ways we could approach allocating ¾ time with bi-vocational ministry. We are flexible to discussing all options.

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Working with our congregation, our new Minister will help us strategize on how we can expand our membership and member involvement in church services, activities, and mission. Working with our congregation our new minister will help strengthen our faith in God and provide sermons that demonstrate God's involvement in our daily lives.

We have a ¼ time associate minister with whom the pastor will share pastoral care.

First Parish of Bolton is a journey church, meaning that we are grounded in tradition but continue to evolve. Our people strive to learn more about God's teachings. Many come from towns beyond the Bolton community to attend service and serve the congregation. The congregation is a melting pot of Central Mass residents, some of whom are longtime members and friends. Other committed friends come specifically for special services or events.

We serve our community and others in our state, nation, and world. As our congregation evolves, we continue to expand and reset our priorities.

Our people value nature and our environment. We take pride in the appearance of our church and grounds. We have a beautiful trail leading to a meditation area from the rear parking lot.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

Our church is a focal point in the center of town and therefore highly visible in our community. We would like our minister to be well known in the community and be involved in community services and events.

We have several outreach programs that we are engaged in and would envision our minister being an important part of these as well. We would like to expand these as possible and our new minister should have the desire to help us in these efforts and provide ideas for new opportunities. Our current activities are described and listed below.

Monthly meal preparation and ongoing food drives for WHEAT – (Wachusett Health Education Action Team - Food pantry, social services, education, etc.)

Monthly lunch preparation for the Worcester fellowship

Annual Gay Pride parade

Annual Town Halloween Parade

Memorial Day/Veterans Day/9/11 memorial services

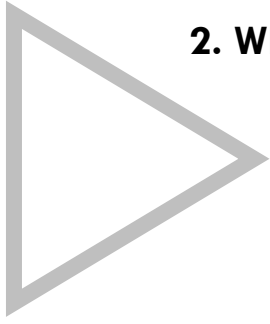
Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

We are seeking a minister who is a TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER. The minister will work collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity, encourage leadership development and lifelong learning within the congregation.

We are seeking a minister who is CARING FOR ALL CREATION. The minister will be nurturing caring and compassionate for God's creation.

We are seeking a minister who will work for JUSTICE AND MERCY in our community and world.

We are seeking a minister who will exhibit strong moral character, personal integrity, and who will respect the dignity of all people.



2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

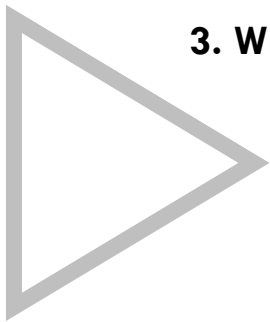
“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

God is calling us to become a stronger congregation. A congregation that will prosper in difficult times and continue to extend our hand to the community. A congregation that will help where needed. God is also calling us to nurture our own spiritual lives.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

God continues to call the First Parish of Bolton in many ways to strengthen our role as a fixture in the community. Recent examples of this include, the work we did in helping to settle and gather supplies for Afghan refugees settling in Bolton, and our participation in Love Your Neighbor campaign. Our church continues to support ministries we were called to long ago including support for Worcester Fellowship, donations of back packs and school supplies to immigrants in Lowell, donations of meals to Clinton Café, as well as supporting the town Halloween party and other town events.



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

As an interdenominational church, we value the many expressions of faith that exist in our community. Our worship is based on the Christian practices and traditions. Our special services include a Maundy Thursday service, Easter sunrise service, and one or two Christmas Eve services.

We are a fun-loving church family. We enjoy celebrating milestones such as graduations, special birthdays and anniversaries. We have a beautiful function hall where we gather after church for weekly coffee hours and fellowship.

As with all churches, the pandemic was challenging, although there were a few positive outcomes as well. We continue to broadcast our services via ZOOM, giving opportunity for shut ins or people who are out of town or have moved away to be able to attend virtually. Additionally, we had outdoor services over the warmer months and in the winter a solstice service with a fire and smores, which we have done every year since. We also got creative with our Bazaar that year and started taking online orders for pies, apple dumplings and even raffle tickets! We have continued to take online orders each year and it has really taken off.

We continue to encourage mask wearing during church service and social gatherings. While no longer required, the majority of our members continue to wear masks out of respect for each other's health.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Our congregation:

- Has a strong sense of its history as the parish most identified with Bolton. Our beautiful hilltop location is in the epicenter of our town.
- Is financially sound and well managed
- Shares its resources, we offer ample parking for town events and those who use many of Bolton's hiking trails in addition to our outreach and community activities
- Is committed: we have a dedicated core of individuals who are passionate about keeping the church running smoothly and offering beautiful weekly services that bring us into the presence of God
- Loves its music and has an oversized Hook and Hastings Pipe Organ that is masterfully played by our Music Director, Dr. Alexander Lane, PhD.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

The majority of worship takes place in our sanctuary. People come in and greet each other. Some people may chat with friends or discuss a little “church business.” When the organist begins the prelude, everyone falls silent and turns their attention to the music. People may continue to gather, and the music calls everyone to worship. The minister welcomes everyone attending in person and via Zoom and the service officially begins.

The service is based on a Lectionary or scriptural passage, or major news events, secular holidays, or issues within the church (ie. LGBTQ+ inclusion, etc). Hymns and music are selected to enhance the theme of the service. For example, on Mardi Gras Sunday, we sing “When the Saints go Marching In.” At the end of each service, the congregation sits and listens to the entire postlude and applauds in appreciation.

When we are not worshiping in the Sanctuary, we can be found in Davis Hall, on the front lawn and at our meditation area off one of the nature trails behind the church. We have had Brunch services where we share food and worship together. We have celebrated the Winter Solstice with a bonfire in the parking lot. We hold our July 4, Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day services at the town war memorial.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

We have a volunteer Religious Education coordinator and beautiful classrooms ready and available for when enough youth come to the church. The RE Coordinator has many ideas and is looking forward to working with the new minister.

Our Small Group Ministry is run by our associate minister and averages 5 members in 2 different sessions. They meet once a month to grapple with stimulating and important topics for our time.

We are committed to providing a range of opportunities for deeper education and exploration that evolves along with our congregation. For example, we have an experienced volunteer Religious Education coordinator ready to work with our new minister when we have enough youth to open the doors of our full complement of classrooms again.

Currently, our most active and ongoing enrichment opportunities are Small Group Ministry and FPB Book Club. Both are facilitated by our associate minister and attract church members and also those from our larger community. Each meeting averages about 10 attendees.

Meeting monthly, our Small Group Ministry’s goal is to sharpen our understanding of timely issues, theology, and personal challenges as well as deepening our connections to one another through discussion and turning our understanding into actions. Each meeting uses a reading or collection to highlight a specific topic like belonging, generosity and advent. Each discussion is guided by a series of questions on which members are invited to share their reflections, feelings and thoughts. There is no cross talk or offering of advice. Confidentiality is

observed. These groups also perform service projects for the church and wider community. The projects reflect the members thoughts on the topics discussed. Recent projects have included supplying diapers for a refugee family, setting up a book exchange, and writing notes to individuals for whom getting out has become difficult.

Our annual calendar of monthly book discussions is selected in September with open input and each discussion always includes the Unitarian Universalist common read. Beyond the "common read" another spiritual, religious, or church history book is read during the Lenten Season. Otherwise, the books cover a wide range of topics including local history, dealing with racism and historical and current problems. In recent years the group has partnered with Habitat for Humanity and held a community-wide presentation by an author or local expert on the topics in one of the books. The group has also visited sites of importance identified in our reading experiences, such as the mills of Lowell and boarding house where the young girls lived while working in the mills, or the first totally solar powered bookstore in New England. We'll be happy to provide our book list if you are interested.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our church is organized with a governing board and various subgroups focused on specific challenges or activities which may arise. All major decisions ultimately come before the governing board. A full church meeting is held each year to facilitate budget decisions. Activities are discussed in church, during services and coffee hours and at an annual planning meeting. Email/weekly updates are used for additional announcements and reminders.

We can provide interested candidates with a copy of our annual report, bylaws, organizational structure and other related documents.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	65	
Number of active non-members:	4	x
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	69	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	60%	x
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	40%	x
Less than 5 years:	0%	

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
2	0	2	0	5	5	25	20	10	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	0	
Households with minors:	10%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	10%	Yes
Joint households with no minors:	60%	Yes
Single adults over 65:	20%	Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	10%	Yes
College:	65%	Yes
Graduate School:	25%	Yes
Specialty Training:		

Other (please specify):		
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Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	60%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	40%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:		

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

We have a mix of current and former occupations represented within our congregation with a slant towards those involved in tech and healthcare industries. However, we have former surgeons, current environmental consultants, not-for-profit executives, etc.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

While our congregation is not ethnically diverse it mirrors the diversity of our town. It is a diverse mix of religious, economic and has had a mix of sexual orientations represented. We are also diverse when it comes to doctrine (oh, the resulting discussions when we changed trespasses to debts in the Lord’s prayer) and traditions (we celebrate the solstice as well as the major traditional religious holidays).

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

We have not had a recent conversation. We struggled to get a group large enough to complete the requirements to certify ourselves as open and affirming, in large part because we felt we were already affirming and congregants were committed to doing other things in the community.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	15	Associate Pastor
Baptisms <i>(1 last year)</i>	20+	Pastor/Associate Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	0	Volunteer RE Coordinator
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	50	Minister, Associate Pastor, Deacons, Music Director
Church-wide Meals	25	Deacons, Lay leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	7	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study (Small Group Ministry)	15	Associate Pastor
Communion		Served monthly by Minister, Associate Pastor, Deacons
Community Meals	10	We prepare a meal served monthly at WHEAT's Community café We also prepare lunches for Worcester Fellowship
Confirmation <i>(0)</i>		
Funerals <i>(0)</i>		
Intergenerational Groups	15	Book club and small group ministries.
Outdoor Worship	15	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	15	Small group ministries
Public Advocacy Work	20	Townwide Halloween parade, Love

		Your Neighbor, Habitat for Humanity, Veterans' Breakfast, Pride Parade
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	
Weddings (0)	4	In typical times, there are 2-3 per year.
Worship (time slot: _10 a.m._)	25	Minister, Associate Pastor, Deacons, Music and Choir Director
Young Adult Groups or Classes		No young adults as regular members at this time
Youth Groups or Classes		No age appropriate members at this time
Other		

Additional comments:

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev. Jerrie Shepard Matney	No	First Parish	Interim pastor	N
Rev. Bea Manning	Yes	First Parish	Associate Pastor	N
Rev. Jay Mulligan	No	First Parish	Lay Member	Y (ABC)

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Rev. Jerrie Shepard Matney	Yes	¾ time	Governing Board	18 months
Rev. Beatrice Manning	No	¼ time	Minister	8 years

REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation’s overall ministry?

Our church family is a welcoming one. Our ministry is to “Love one another” no matter who you are, what you believe, or who you love. We welcome everyone into our family. Our Christian values are important to us, as well as our fellowship with one another and the broader community.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 115,984
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$0
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$3,900

Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$ 2,007
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$ 1,000
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$ 7,700
Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women's Group) Amazon Smile	\$30
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$ 134,275

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$ 152,400.

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

ATTACH ANNUAL REPORT

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 30% +/-

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year) No

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$68,899

Reason for debt: mortgage on Parsonage which is currently on the market.

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? Endowment as of January 2023 \$188,981.72

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? special circumstances only. (Restricted use)

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? 0

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: there has been no draw on the endowment. We have ben able to maintain a balanced budget.

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? No major draw in last 4 years

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: We will draw down for septic system to be installed in Parsonage we are selling. Some of the funds are for that purpose

Other Assets

Does your church have a parsonage? In the process of selling

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: \$469,000

How is the parsonage used?

Street / City / State / Zip:

Finished square footage:

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:

Assessed real estate value:

Available for minister residence: Y/N No

Expected minister residence: Y/N No

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Describe all buildings owned by the church: Church connected to hall and Parsonage. Several Sunday school classrooms under the hall and a vestry under the church.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*Worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*) *Main floor – Worship, hall, bathroom, Kitchen are all handicapped accessible. Altar area and pulpit are accessed by 3 steps.*

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry? We are financially stable and are able to make improvements on our inclusivity of our church (accessible ramp and bathroom installed within the past 10 years). Our contribution to our community is outsized compared to our membership. We are passionate about our outreach.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

In 1930, The First Church of Christ and Bolton's other two churches (Quaker and Baptist) were struggling. In 1931, the three churches "federated," maintaining separate bylaws and budgets, but supporting one minister and program. The First Church of Christ became the home of this "new" church, which was called The Federated Church.

In 1984, Bolton's Unitarian Universalists and American Baptists agreed to give up their individual identities and the federation was dissolved by an act of the state legislature. While maintaining relationships with the UUA and American Baptist Conference, the Federated Church now had one budget, one set of bylaws and church officers, and one membership list.

Our previous minister was called in 1995. In the years since, the church voted to revert to its historic name, "The First Parish of Bolton," and added an affiliation with the United Church of Christ. Most significantly, he left our congregation in 2020.

In 1999, The First Parish of Bolton purchased nine acres of land immediately behind church buildings to preserve valuable green space in the center of town and allow for future expansion of the church. And, in 2007, the first capital campaign since 1956 provided funds to restore the church steeple, create a new parking area, and increase accessibility to the sanctuary and Davis Hall, our community space.

In the past 10 years, we have made many enhancements to our building, making the main hall and church completely handicapped accessible by adding a bridge from the parking lot to our fellowship hall and installing a main floor bathroom. In addition to physically enhancing the accessibility of our church buildings, we have expanded both worship and fellowship opportunities. We successfully maintained our attendance through Covid by shifting all activities online and we continue to conduct our weekly services on a hybrid basis. Even prior to Covid, our Associate Minister started a small group ministry and book club which now meets online to allow a greater number of attendees to participate regularly. We've also embraced a hybrid component to our biggest annual fundraiser, the Holiday Bazaar by having orders placed online for our homemade pies and apple dumplings.

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...." Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We encourage open and honest communication during weekly coffee hour after church, church meetings and frequent meals together. This allows us to help identify and address any conflicts before they become a significant issue. We encourage our pastor to be available and considerate of everyone's input.

Ministerial History *(include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years)*

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Jerrie Shepard Matney	1	N
Rev. Bea Manning	8	Y
Rev. Patience Stoddard	1	N
Rev. Richard Jones	25	Y
Rev. Donald Fonda	5	N

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership: It is important for ministers to have boundaries between themselves and the congregation. We have learned that ministers need to have their own support system outside of the church. It is important for us to have a pastor relations committee to ensure that the pastor/congregation relationship is healthy.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

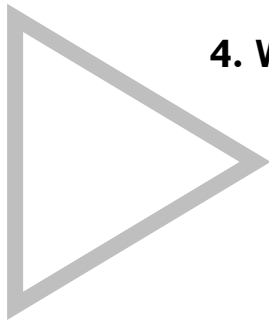
Our previous pastor had a robust ministry for 2 decades. In the last few years of his ministry, he experienced personal challenges and health issues which led to events affecting his interactions with the congregation. He had changes in behavior which led the Executive Board to ask for the help of the UCC in determining his continued ministry at First Parish of Bolton. The UCC advised that his tenure with the church come to an end. He subsequently resigned.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Yes

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church’s engagement with neighbors near or far?

First Parish of Bolton participates monthly in 2 local outreach programs. Members and friends volunteer to purchase supplies and prepare 80-100 bagged lunches each month for Worcester Fellowship. The lunches are delivered to Worcester. In the winter the church collects socks, hats, gloves, and items of need.

We also make a meal for the Community Café located in Clinton MA. Volunteers prepare a main dish, salad, and dessert for about 60 people. The food is delivered to the café location on the afternoon before the meal.

Our small group ministries (2) each do a service project each year. Past projects have included purchasing and filling backpacks for school children, creating a “book nook” beside the church, helping an Afghan family with baby supplies, hygiene kits for the homeless.

Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice?

This year, instead of purchasing Easter flowers, donations went to support World Central Kitchen for Ukrainian relief.

- We donated well over one thousand dollars to WCK.
- Participating in the Bolton Pride parade since its inception 2 years ago.
- Supporting LGBTQ+ persons and issues of justice within the LGBTQ+ community

What is currently transformational in your church's engagement with neighbors near or far?

Providing meeting space for Men's and Women's AA groups, Bolton Seniors Exercise classes, Girl Scouts and Boy Scout meetings and events

Describe your congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.)

Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M) | <input type="checkbox"/> None |

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

We would be open to discussion about these with the new minister.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

Love your neighbor

Pride parade

Memorial Day service

Quaker service – Sturbridge village

Shared services with local churches – Lancaster and Stow

Our church participates in more local activities than regional. We have had joint services with neighboring towns of Lancaster and Stow. Most years we have a Quaker service at Old Sturbridge Village in the original Friends Meetinghouse that is from Bolton. Parishioners enjoyed the history and quiet reflection. The First Parish of Bolton was also present at the Love Your Neighbor and Pride Parade, both held in town. Our Memorial Day service which normally starts at the church and everyone walks to Memorial Park for the remembrance service.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

The First Parish of Boltons mission statement is: Building Faith in Community.

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

This is a $\frac{3}{4}$ time ministry with an associate minister at $\frac{1}{4}$ time. Besides Sunday worship, visitations and small group ministries, we would ask that our new minister be involved in the community in whatever ways their gifts allow.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's Mission Insite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

Population 5,660

89.8% white

28% under 18

13% over 65

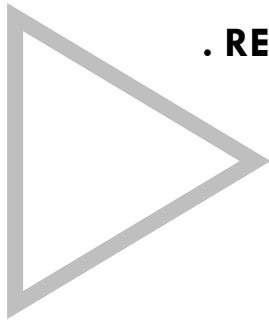
Median value of owner-occupied house - \$578K

The overall population has grown by 1K over the past 10 years. With 28% under 18 years old, we see an opportunity to attract young families.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects? Our church members are of the older generation. We have many young adults with their parents.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for? Our annual Bazaar, Senior luncheons, Scout support, central meeting place. We are known as a welcoming church, open to all.

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved? The sense of community we have. We are an inclusive group. We're always willing to extend a helping hand and are open to new ideas.



. REFERENCES

Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: "The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions."

Make sure they are not members of your church but are persons who know your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Request a letter from each reference in answer to the four prompts below. Attach the letters (up to three) as desired.

REFERENCE 1

Rev Zach Kerzee Associate Pastor, First Parish of Sterling Ma. and also serves Worcester fellowship, a church for the homeless in Worcester Ma.
email: zachkerzee@gmail.com
cell phone number: 325-428-9266

Hello potential candidates,

My name is Rev. Zachary Kerzee and I'm the pastor of Worcester Fellowship, an outdoor church

in Worcester, MA that serves the homeless. We are a UCC church that has served our parishioners on the streets of Worcester for 15 years. Our work is primarily that of spiritual companionship. We aren't trying "fix" anyone, but instead to walk with those who look and find that they have no one left. We joyfully serve them spiritually, and we do our best to provide for their many physical needs as well.

We rely on many congregations to support our work, but the First Parish in Bolton comes front

of mind when it comes to our true blue friends. The congregation has been a steady supplier of bagged lunches, socks, toiletries, winter coats and boots, along with countless hours of prayer and many thousands of dollars in financial support through their donations.

We are picky about the churches that we let help us. We don't just take any help that's offered, and if I ever sense that a church is trying to help us for their own gratification, or out of a sense of judgment or pity, we don't accept their help. Bolton is a friend that we trust and continue to rely on.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. I'd be happy to brag on them over the phone.

Pastor Zach Kerzee

325-428-9266

zachkerzee@gmail.com

REFERENCE 2

Ed Sterling

978-779-6057 –

Bolton Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts volunteer for numerous years, sponsored by First Parish of Bolton.

REFERENCE 3

Jodi Briedel (WHEAT) / Executive Director

508-370-4943

Executive Director at WHEAT Community Connections, a charity that is supported by First Parish of Bolton.

Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry.

The strength of the church's ministry is that it connects parishioners with WHEAT's Community Café and other programs and services we offer. This helps individuals in need access programs and services they may need, and it also provides others with opportunities to volunteer in our organization.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.

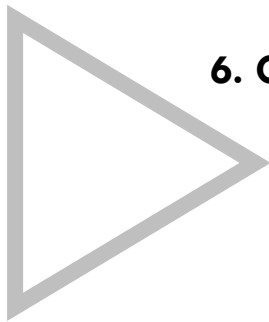
It would be great if there were more regular communications between WHEAT and the church's ministry about the needs of people within the communities we serve. I think that's an area of improvement for all of us not just the church's ministry.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry.

The significant experience we've had with the church's ministry spans over years in our Community Café. Each month the ministry provides a homecooked meal for our clients and a few times a year we benefit from food drives that are held.

Anything else you wish to share.

First Parish of Bolton is an important community partner. We love them!



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, we are grateful that you have guided this congregation through so many generations of the faithful, during times of joy and sorrow, celebration and grief. Your Spirit moves among us in these days, inspiring us to worship and serve others in Jesus' name. We ask you now to stir up your Spirit in the heart of the pastor you have chosen, so that he or she may be moved to seek a place of leadership at First Parish. Thank you for guiding and inspiring the work of those who serve on the Search Committee, as they move forward with their work during this time of transition. Give us patience in this new stage of our journey - keep us faithful and loving and strong as we wait. Thank you, God!

In the power of your Spirit, we pray. AMEN

6b. 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 profile 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 suitable new minister 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.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)*

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Holly Ventura, Chair – Pastoral Search Committee
First Parish of Bolton

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: Rev. Samantha Houser

Name / Title: Bridge Area Conference Minister, SNE Conference, UCC

Email: housers@sneucc.org

Phone: (860) 761-7198

Date: February 24, 2023

This document is created
Church's Wider Mission

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



through support to Our
(OCWM) and is only

possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22