

Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an Interim Pastor

Church Information

Full Name: First Congregational Church of Milford
Address: 4 Congress Street Milford, MA 01757
Phone: 508-473-5259
Email: milfordcongregational@gmail.com
Website: <https://www.milfordcongregational.org>

Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England
Association: Central MA Association
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Carol Steinbrecher
ACM email: steinbrecher@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. *(This will be the first impression most candidates have of you. Highlight your gifts and graces as well as your needs so that candidates have the best sense of connection to and curiosity about your position. Include keywords that will help candidates search. It must be **no more than 2,000 characters, including punctuation and spaces, and in a single, unformatted paragraph**).*

We seek an interim pastor to guide our 282-year-old congregation as we prepare for a settled pastor. Our congregation is friendly and we like each other! The church has a recent history of intentional self-reflection. Ten years ago, the congregation went through the Crossroads visioning process in order to identify our mission. We agreed on the concept of a church without walls, a “gazebo” open to the community, and emerged with a strong mission that has guided us for a decade. Our membership has declined and we are looking to reposition ourselves as a thriving small church that owns a large building in a community with many needs. We open our building to community groups (AA, Girl Scouts) and rent to 2 nested churches (Brazilian Portuguese and Spanish) for their worship, education and fellowship. We see these nested congregations as part of our future. Right now, we are trying to develop a social relationship with them that could grow into joint programming. Having a pastor who is comfortable with immigrant communities would be a benefit, and familiarity with Brazilian Portuguese and/or Spanish would be a bonus. Our focus is on the needs of our community. We want

help in thinking differently and seek a pastor who will help us create a multi-cultural community of faith.

2. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your Interim Pastor.

- Compassionate and caring
- Enthusiastic, upbeat and positive
- Able to make the Word of God relevant to our lives

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?

Considering the 5 tasks of interim ministry, we want the focus of our interim to be on leadership and the future. We would like help in re-imagining our current Governing Board structure to allow for wider participation that would also improve communication. We would like help in defining our future, seeking ways to meet the changing demands of our community and our church. We have had some excellent programs within our community which could be revived, or new ones imagined. Our youth programming should be reviewed to determine if and how we can better address the needs of our kids. We would like an interim pastor who likes us as much as we like each other; someone who will celebrate our victories, suffer with us on our losses, and help us to be better people

4. Position Scope: 1/2 time

5. Position Duration: Until search for settled Pastor is complete

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*):

Doing God's Work by Filling Needs in our Community

2. Brief Church History:

The history of the First Congregational Church of Milford is not "brief" since it was founded in 1741 when 26 members of the Mendon Church petitioned the colonial government to start a new town. Within 2 days of the granted petition's deadline, the men called Amariah Frost as our first minister and the rich history continued. The church has had many landmark moments—and among them are the following:

April 15, 1741	Founding of the Church
1743	First Meeting House built
1819	Second, and present, Meeting House built
1820	First Sabbath School established by Roxanna Rawson (First Sunday School in Massachusetts, we are told)

1867-68	Major restoration of Meeting House
1971	Call of Reverend Phyllis Ingram, first woman pastor of the Church
1972	Dissolution of the Church Parish with all functions carried on by the Church
2005	Dedication of the Amariah Frost Education Building addition
2007	Failed Pastor Call followed by two additional Interim Ministers
2011-2012	Visioning Experience using Crossroads (aka New Beginnings) reaching the Bold Decision to move forward as a faith community open to serving the needs of the Milford area.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

- 1972 Consolidated Parish and Town Finances
- 2005 Dedication of Christian Education wing and spent approximately \$750,000 for oil leak reparation, thus depleting our \$1,000,000 endowment
- 2012 Self-discovery via Crossroads: Identification of the Church's mission. Facilitators were trained in early 2012 and home discussions began in the spring. Began renting the church building to other congregations

4. Church Strengths:

- We persevere.
- We rise to the occasion.
- We like each other and are a warm, friendly, caring congregation. We want to extend that warmth beyond our walls.
- We share our facility with local immigrant congregations.

5. Church Challenges:

- An old building
- Declining membership
- Nurturing the relationship with our nested congregations

6. Experience of Conflict:

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

We think we are at Level 1: "Problem to Solve"

2. Please explain why you chose this level.

We have identified problems and generally agree on what they are.

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

We tend to procrastinate on solving some of our problems. We also have learned that having a “Coffee and Conversation” time after the worship helps us to clarify a problem and discuss ways to resolve the issue. Most recently, a member of the Finance Team explained the importance of moving away from deficit budgets—a habit we had for many years. After his clear presentation, more members fully understood the issue. The Treasurer’s annual reports indicate that congregational giving has increased since the Coffee and Conversation on our financial future. We don’t always pursue a resolution to a contentious issue to its final resolution; as an example, we talked about going through the Open and Affirming process about 15 years ago, with some members being concerned about it. However, we have become “Welcoming in Action”, having had a gay couple worship with us for several years. We also had a convicted pedophile wanting to worship with us after his release from prison. Working with the minister, the conference and the Deacons, we were able to set guidelines which gave him the opportunity to worship with us while at the same time keeping our members safe.

Basic Church Statistics *Yearly average*

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	93	33	19	0
Current year	91	22	12	0

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves& Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$141,735	\$186,000	\$2,000	\$133,000
Current year	\$205,700	\$203,900	\$2,000	\$133,000

Note: In 2020 the congregation committed to balanced budgets from that point on.

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$65,000 annually

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

Housing:

- Housing allowance only (Part of the \$65k. Candidate can determine how to allocate)
- Parsonage only
- Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

Compensation was determined in conversation with the Finance Team and the area minister.
 We sought guidance from the Conference.

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is: The Governing Board

+ + +

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.

Dwight Watson
Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

February 7, 2023
Date

Submitted by Barbara Low, Clerk