



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an Interim Pastor

Church Information

Full Name: First Congregational Church of Canton Center, CT
Address: P.O. Box 133, 184 Cherry Brook Road, Canton Center, CT.
Phone: 860-693-4581
Website: <http://www.cantoncenterchurch.org>

Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England
Association: Farmington Valley
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Isaac Lawson
ACM phone: 860-761-7188
ACM email: lawsoni@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**).*

The First Congregational Church of Canton Center is a beautiful church with a long history of faith and fellowship and a contemporary spirit. Surrounded by fields and historic homes that echo a time when farming was the occupation of much of the congregation, the church is looking to the future with the help of new technology and skills of the congregation. Canton is a suburban area that retains its small town feel and has many recreational and cultural opportunities. Our Missions and Outreach Committee oversees support for a wide variety of missions from a local all the way to a global level. Please see response below to question 3b for greater detail. Church pot luck suppers and events like the annual Strawberry Festival and Chicken Pie Dinner attract church members and a large number from the local community who look forward to them every year. We have thus earned the nickname “the church of the second helping”. People would describe fellow church members as their “church family” and are happy and eager to welcome new members. Membership is open to all and the church is Open and Affirming. We are currently seeking an interim pastor due to the retirement of our minister. We are looking for someone to help us through the process of finding a settled pastor, while undertaking the ministerial responsibilities of the

church, maintaining pastoral care, and helping the church leadership devise ways of attracting new families in order to continue the work of the church.

2. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your Interim Pastor.
 - a. Worship & leadership
 - b. Growth of the church
 - c. Pastoral care & outreach
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?
 - a. Heritage - Our heritage, built on over 200 years of history, is strong. We are committed to the UCC, active in our community, collaborative with fellow churches, and strong in our missions. We respect our history, which defines our heritage, and celebrate all of the eras, ministries and growth phases we have navigated. We learn from our heritage but try not to be constrained by it as we maintain an openness to adapt our bylaws, worship services and growth strategies to remain current and relevant. This is especially important and will be a catalyst as we look to meet the challenges we face in these changing times.
 - b. Mission – We are a faith-based community looking to embody Christ’s message, both within our church community, as well as the community beyond our four walls. There is so much need in our world that our missions and outreach ministry helps with every month. Locally, we support the Canton food bank, local soup kitchens, Hands of Grace in New Hartford, Brian’s Angels in Bristol (providing hot meals for the homeless), We support Wellmore by donating gift cards to local businesses. We have a different monthly mission each month, for example collecting school supplies or hats coats and gloves. We sell wreaths and other holiday items, and we hold cake auctions which have been wildly successful. Beyond our community, we support disaster relief wherever natural disasters occur, and our members have generously contributed to Ukraine humanitarian relief. We also sponsor refugee families as they settle in our state and help them with all their initial food shelter and clothing needs. We envision our church to continue to serve in these capacities and are always looking for ways to further grow missions and outreach opportunities.
 - c. Leadership - Church Leadership is solid, consisting of a Church Council, Deacons, Trustees, and other committees that allow the church to be an active vital part of the community. Going forward the council will work on selecting a Settled Search Committee. A nominating committee will work with the council to make sure critical leaderships skills continue to be met going forward.
 - d. Connections – We would expect the interim pastor to maintain our current connections, including our summer services with the Canton Community Baptist Church, but are not expecting the interim pastor to establish new connections; we feel this would be expected of the settled pastor.
 - e. Future - Since our future focus will be on survival and growth of the church, we will need an interim who is interested in helping us redefine and consolidate our vision in terms that will fit the needs of the congregation, addressing worship practices, attracting and welcoming new members, and using our physical space and talents of the congregation to fulfill the mission of the church. It is important to consider the culture of the church and

what this church and the “neighbors of the church” need in order to feel supported and to grow spiritually, while contributing to the greater Body of Christ and society in general.

4. Position Scope: Fulltime _____ 3/4 time _____ 1/2 time _____ 1/4 time

5. Position Duration: _____ 12 months 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*):

We gather as a welcoming community in worship, learning, service and fellowship, to embody Christ's message of love, compassion and justice. Joining faith with action, both within and beyond our church, we strive to build a community that serves all.

2. Brief Church History:

Canton Center Congregational was established in 1750, and the first meeting house built in 1763. By 1814 the congregation had out grown the original building and a new building was built on the present site. Our church school began in 1819. We have had some very long-term pastors throughout our almost 275 years - 3 serving between 35 and 40 years each. Our sanctuary has gone from a colonial meeting house to gothic design and back to its present contemporary colonial design. We became a UCC church in 1968 and in 2019 became an Open And Affirming congregation.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

The First Congregational Church of Canton Center has a rich history as a spiritual institution and in the life of the local community at large. Church historians have done a wonderful job chronicling events and milestones during our 273 years of existence.

In the year 2000, our church celebrated its 250th anniversary with worship, fellowship and appreciation for the significant events of our past. And in the year 2014, our current meeting house reached its 200th birthday. Our trustees continue to be proactive in maintaining its integrity and beauty. It is truly a New England meeting house with its simple yet bright and welcoming spiritual character.

Our church has always been open and welcoming to all. And in the year 2019, we made this an official and permanent tenet of our identity by becoming an open and affirming congregation. By doing this we have reaffirmed that our doors are open to all and that inclusivity to the full spectrum of creation is a core value. And in doing so we honor and embrace Jesus' teachings of acceptance.

When COVID hit in 2020, our church stepped up and was proactive in addressing the new reality of this virus. We were determined to remain open, active and as vibrant as we could be. A state of the art live streaming system was installed, and select members including our minister, music director, and the diaconate, committed to pre-recording a Sunday service each week on a weekday, and making it available to all at our regular Sunday morning worship time of 10:00. This was so well received by our members. When we were able to gradually reopen, we did so with careful protocols in place to follow state and conference guidelines. Now, with restrictions lifted, we continue to live stream every service on Sunday morning, as well as memorial services, which has proved to be a godsend to members and friends who may be out of state, unable to travel, or just prefer to participate from home. Access is easy, right from our website.

4. Church Strengths:

The church has a long history and is a vital part of the community. For example, annual events such as the Strawberry Festival and Chicken Pie Supper/Harvest Fair are traditional town wide events. We partner with the Canton Baptist church for summer shared services. We have worked with local schools to sponsor “senior breakfasts” to honor high school graduates.

5. Church Challenges:

The church has a membership that is trending older, and we are challenged to find new and creative ways to be more relevant to younger adults and families. This is a regular topic with our church leadership and we are open to exploring opportunities to improve. In addition, we face annual budget challenges and seek creative ways to better manage pledging and investments.

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? 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 do not have any significant conflict at this time. We do, however, have both folks in the traditionalist and progressive leanings, so there is a bit of a balancing act to satisfy all of them as best we can.

3. Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.
 We try to treat our fellow members with compassion and respect. We consider the church to be our family.

Basic Church Statistics
Yearly average

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	265 (1/1/20)	89	22	Ranges from 5 - 8
Current year	253 (1/1/23)	60	Ranges from 2 - 7	Ranges from 5 - 8

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$198,716	\$278,731	\$6,650+ Congregational donations	\$933,841
Current year	\$187,965	\$273,094	\$6,490+ Congregational donations	\$756,331

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$70,000 - \$80,000

Package offered: Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered
(choose only one) Total Package includes optional benefits to be negotiated (if you wish

List here what those optional benefits may be)

Housing:

- Housing allowance only
 Parsonage only
 Either Parsonage or Housing Allowance Provided

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.
Based on the current settled pastor's compensation package.


Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is:
Interim Search Committee which is comprised of the Church President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Senior Deacon and chair of the Board of Trustees.

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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.



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

4/20/2023
Date