

## Designated-Term Pastor Position Listing

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### Listing Information

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<b>Church name:</b>	First Congregational Church of Fresno
<b>Address:</b>	2131 North Van Ness Boulevard, Fresno, California 93704
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://bigredchurch.org/">https://bigredchurch.org/</a>
<b>Conference:</b>	Northern California Nevada
<b>Conference contact:</b>	Rev. Davena Jones, (510) 359-7208, <a href="mailto:davena@ncncucc.org">davena@ncncucc.org</a>
<b>Ministry description:</b>	<p>We are well known in our community as The Big Red Church. We are proud to be a community of spiritual seekers who welcome people who are searching and questioning. We have children's ministry, Bible study, prayer ministry, outreach serving the hungry and the unhoused, and a vibrant music program. We know there is much more to be done in our work toward justice.</p> <p>We are a congregation in transition and we seek a pastor who can help us navigate changes to renew and revitalize our people and our ministry. We are Open and Affirming. We see ourselves as a welcoming congregation. We seek a pastor who will assist us in living up to that image. We also need to work through issues of conflict within our congregation.</p> <p>A few years ago, after an outside assessment and a period of self-examination, we concluded that we needed to undertake a process of "mission redefinition." We did not undertake that process, but we see revisiting that work as a way of reigniting our passion. We seek a pastor who can help us discover the tools we need to accomplish this.</p> <p>Depending on how the relationship between the designated-term pastor and our congregation develops, we are open to the possibility of calling that person to be our settled pastor.</p>

## About the Position

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<b>Position title:</b>	Designated-Term Pastor for Renewal and Revitalization
<b>Preferred start date:</b>	September–October 2023
<b>Term:</b>	Two years
<b>Compensation level:</b>	Full time (40 hours per week)
<b>Cash salary:</b>	\$72,000 annually
<b>Benefits:</b>	Annuity contribution of \$10,080 annually (14% of cash salary); Social Security offset of \$5,508 annually (7.65% of cash salary); health, dental, and vision through UCC Plan A (\$7,591.50 annually); UCC Pension Board's Insurance Disability and Group Life (\$1,080 annually, 1.5% of cash salary)

**Does the total support package meet fair and just compensation guidelines?** Yes

### Qualification and Competency Requirements

We are seeking an ordained candidate who is in good standing with the United Church of Christ or an affiliated partner of the United Church of Christ.

### Who is God calling to minister with us?

We are seeking a renewal and revitalization pastor who can assist us through a process of mission redefinition. Through that process, we wish to seek a clear understanding of who we have been as a congregation, including both our shortcomings and our successes. We also wish to discover a shared, cohesive, and comprehensive vision of who we can become, and what it means to be the church within our community.

In several ways, we are a congregation in transition, and we need a pastor who can help us navigate these changes to renew and revitalize our people and our ministry:

- Our previous settled pastor resigned in November 2022. We need pastoral guidance to help our congregation process what happened and why.
- After 140 years of dedicated service in our community, we, like many congregations, are struggling to bring good news to people who have been cast off, both by religious institutions and by an unjust economy. We seek a pastor who can help us to discover a new vision of the “kingdom of heaven” for these times.
- We have been Open and Affirming for almost 30 years, but we need assistance to address the causes of people not feeling welcome in our congregation.
- Like many congregations, we are experiencing a generational shift in leadership. We need pastoral assistance in this process of passing the torch in a way that both honors our elders and empowers the next generation.

We are also seeking a pastor who, with kindness and strength, will help us to surface our conflicts and to address them in healthy ways.

Depending on how the relationship between the designated-term pastor and our congregation develops, we are open to the possibility of calling that person to be our settled pastor.

## About the Congregation

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### Who are we?

We are a community of spiritual seekers. Some of us were raised and married in this church, while others of us are more recent arrivals. We also have many spiritual refugees from other churches, including some who experienced religious trauma in those churches. Many of us discovered that we were finally able to participate in collective spiritual life when we found this congregation, and so we love our congregation dearly for that. We welcome people who are searching and questioning.

People in our congregation do many different and wonderful things, including:

- Providing Sunday School for children of four different age groups, including ages 2 through 5 years, first and second grades, third through sixth grades, and middle and high school, with about 20 children each week
- Facilitating children's participation in worship through an acolyte program
- Providing leadership and resources for youth and adult Northern California Nevada Conference summer camps in the High Sierras
- Running various food programs, including a pantry, partnering with the Central California Food Bank to give away groceries once a month, and preparing and distributing home-cooked meals to unhoused people locally
- Preparing backpacks with toiletries and other personal supplies to be given away annually at Naomi's House, a local shelter for single, unhoused women
- Coordinating a dedicated prayer team
- Preparing music with our Chancel Choir, Bell Choir, and Youth Bell Choir, or as soloists and small ensembles, to be performed for worship and other special events in our acoustically pleasing sanctuary, which was specifically designed for great music
- Coordinating and hosting musical concerts that are open to the wider community
- Facilitating inclusive Bible study to help connect people with the scriptural roots of our tradition
- Participating—for 33 years now!—in the local annual Pride parade
- Serving in the Northern California Nevada Conference
- Serving on various committees, both in the church and in the community

But we know that we also have things to work on:

- We need help to address lingering wounds from how and why our prior settled pastor departed.
- We all desire to be part of a thriving and vibrant community of faith, but we need help to articulate what we stand for as a congregation, and what our work is in this community. We need help to develop a shared vision of what it means for us to be the church in our community that fully incorporates all the people and activities of our congregation. We recognize that means we might not be doing things in the future the way that we have usually done them in the past.
- We need assistance to address the causes of people not feeling welcome in our congregation. People have departed our congregation or shifted to the margins over the past few decades, and we need help in learning how to reach out to them in healthy ways.
- Like many congregations, we need help learning how to talk about and address our conflicts in healthy ways.

We undertook a New Beginnings assessment in early 2016, prepared by an assessor from Hope Partnerships. After a process of self-examination in small house group conversations after the New Beginnings assessment, we concluded that we needed to undertake a process of “mission redefinition.” This was described to us in the New Beginnings assessment as “establish[ing] a whole new way of being church,” and work that “requires of the congregation significant energy, ingenuity, creativity and spirituality.” We did not undertake that process. We wish to take up that work again, and we seek leadership to re-ignite our passion for this work, and to help us discover the tools we need to accomplish it.

### **Statistical and Demographic Information**

Our official current membership is 277 (as of our January 2023 Annual Meeting), but our current average weekly in-person Sunday worship attendance for the past year (June 2022 through May 2023) is 82. We also provide a livestream via Facebook Live and YouTube, with an average of about 100 views per month (June 2022 through May 2023).

Although we pride ourselves on diversity, our congregation, and especially the leadership, is mostly white. English is generally the only language used in our worship services and in our ministry.

### **Current Staffing**

We currently employ a Music Director and an Office Manager. We have a Caretaker who is compensated mainly by her housing on our campus. We pay video technicians for our livestreamed worship services. We also pay for cleaning service and groundskeeping service. We are in the process of transitioning from a volunteer accountant who is also a member of the congregation to paying for an independent bookkeeping service.

## **Community**

Our church is in an older, but vibrant and resurgent, residential neighborhood. We are half a block north of Fresno High School and within walking distance of Fresno City College. The Tower District, a dynamic and culturally diverse neighborhood that is known for its inclusion of marginalized people, especially the LGBTQIA community, is not far to the south.

We are not a “neighborhood church” in the strict sense of the term. People in our congregation come from all over the greater Fresno area. A major reason for that is that most of the churches in Fresno are theologically and politically conservative and not affirming, while people are drawn to our church to participate in a Christian faith that is different from what they have experienced in those churches.

Photographs





## Consent and Validation

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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 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 a suitable interim 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 Position Listing?

This document was prepared by a Pastoral Search Committee, including Georgette Carillo, Hank Delcore, Pete Moe, Judy Oftedal, Mary Stegall, Gayle Thornton, Peter Wall (Chair), and Jeannie Hobson (ex officio Council representative, nonvoting). A draft of this document was presented to the Congregation for a 12-day comment period. During the comment period, the Committee held two in-person Listening Sessions at church to receive live comments. The Committee also received comments via email. All commenters were asked to identify themselves by name, and all did. The Committee received comments from 15 people in total. The Committee considered all comments carefully and revised the draft. The final draft was then presented to the Council for approval before publication.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: None.

Signed:  Dated: July 11, 2023

### Validation by Conference

This congregation is currently in good standing with the Northern California Nevada Conference, as attested by my signature below.

Signed: Rev. Davena Jones Dated: 7/17/2023

Name: Rev. Davena Jones  
 Title: Bridge Conference Minister  
 Telephone: (510) 359-7208  
 Email: davena@ncncucc.org

## **Job Description**

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**Position Title:** Designated-Term Pastor for Renewal and Revitalization

**Term:** Two years

**Job Status:** Full Time

**Reports To:** Church Council

### **Job Summary:**

The designated-term pastor serves as minister, teacher, and mentor to members and friends of the congregation. The designated-term pastor for renewal and revitalization also leads the congregation in the work of discovering a clear understanding of who and what it has been and done and of discovering a shared, cohesive, and comprehensive vision of what it means to be the church within its community.

### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

#### **1. Worship**

- a. In collaboration with the Ministry of Worship and the Music Director, plan and lead worship services, including celebration of sacraments
- b. Provide practical teaching and spiritual leadership in sermons
- c. Lead special worship services, including for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Holy Week, and Thanksgiving
- d. Officiate at special services, including weddings, funerals, memorials, and other important events in the life of the congregation and its members and friends

#### **2. Leadership**

- a. Attend, participate, and provide encouragement and spiritual leadership for:
  - i. Congregational meetings
  - ii. Church Council meetings
  - iii. Elders meetings
- b. Serve as an ex officio member and attend meetings as needed to participate and provide encouragement and spiritual leadership for each of the five ministries:
  - i. Ministry of Christian Education
  - ii. Ministry of Church Life
  - iii. Ministry of Community Outreach
  - iv. Ministry of Resources
  - v. Ministry of Worship

#### **3. Church Administration**

- a. Supervise, support, manage, and, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, evaluate all church staff
- b. Participate in the screening and hiring of staff
- c. Hold regular staff meetings to facilitate communication
- d. Ensure effective administration of church business by coordinating work among staff and the five Ministries
- e. Timely respond to telephone and email communications



**4. Pastoral Care**

- a. Maintain regularly scheduled office hours and be available for appointments as needed outside of office hours
- b. Visit and give comfort to the sick, those in crisis, and confined congregants
- c. Provide pastoral counseling and support to congregants

**5. Spiritual Growth and Religious Education**

- a. Promote and facilitate opportunities for spiritual growth and religious education for congregants
- b. Encourage, provide leadership for, and support lay leaders in, spiritual growth and religious education work

**6. Renewal and Revitalization Ministry**

- a. Assist the congregation to process the departure of our previous settled pastor, including to address lingering wounds from how and why that happened
- b. Assist the congregation to discover a new vision of the “kingdom of heaven” for these times, including to develop a shared, cohesive, and comprehensive vision of what it means for us to be the church in our community
- c. Assist the congregation to address the causes of people not feeling welcome and to learn how to reach out in healthy ways to those who have left or been marginalized
- d. Assist the congregation in navigating a generational shift in leadership in a way that both honors our elders and empowers the next generation
- e. Assist the congregation to talk about and address internal conflicts in healthy ways