



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN PLYMPTON

254 Main Street

P.O. Box 147

Plympton, MA 02367

Church Phone: (781) 585-5764

Pilgrim Association, Southern New England Conference, UCC

Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut, Area Conference Minister

kogutp@sneucc.org, (508) 244-4416

CHURCH PROFILE FOR PASTOR SEARCH

MISSION STATEMENT:

The First Congregational Church in Plympton is a Christian community of people who come together to share the love of God in an atmosphere of learning, discovery, and service. We are one body in Christ, acting both individually and in groups. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, and with mutual trust, our mission is to be a source of worship, education, service, and healing. We do this for ourselves, our church, our community, and the larger world, thereby increasing and celebrating the Glory of God.

MINISTRY GOALS: The First Congregational Church in Plympton is seeking to discern God's plan for our future. Though we had originally thought to pursue a relationship with a Designated Term Pastor, we don't want to limit our view and choose now to remain open to the options that God may put before us. First and foremost, we hope to find a minister who has strong worship leadership skills to provide us with a firm foundation of spiritual inspiration and encouragement for what lies ahead. Within the past twelve years we have had two ministers retire, had an interim minister serve in between, and have had a long-term relationship with a stated supply minister. We, like the rest of the world, have dealt with the added stress of COVID-19. This long period of change has strained our spiritual and financial stamina, but our stated supply minister has helped us maintain our faith and hope for our future. We are ready and committed to the challenge of maintaining a vibrant church in today's world. We believe that God will bring us together with a minister to help us meet that challenge.

BRIEF HISTORY: An in-depth history can be provided to final candidates upon request.

The First Congregational Church in Plympton has been a part of the Town of Plympton since its inception. By 1695 the number of families that had moved out from the original Plimoth Colony to this area had increased to 45. They petitioned the General Court for the creation of a new Western Precinct of Plimoth. In 1707, the Western Precinct was incorporated by the General Court into the Town of Plympton.

By 1827 the population of the town had grown, church attendance was no longer compulsory, and the parish assessment was difficult to collect. On April 16, 1827, the church reorganized as a body unto itself. For the first time the church congregation was solely responsible for the church expenses, payroll, and financial obligations.

In 1828, it was determined that the meeting house was beyond repair. The church accepted the gift of land from Jonathan Parker, son of Reverend Jonathan Parker. The present church building was completed in September 1830. For the first time the meeting house included a steeple and a bell. On September 29th, 800 people and 15 ministers gathered for the formal dedication. It was reported that 260 people attended the first "regular" service on October 3,

1830. Within the next thirty years the current parsonage was acquired, the “new” cemetery was laid out behind the church, and a chapel/church school was built adjoining the sanctuary.

The 20th century also brought about many changes. In 1961 the congregation voted to join the United Church of Christ denomination. In 1985 the parsonage building was rotated from facing the church to facing Main Street and put on a new foundation. During the 1990s the chapel was removed, and the church built the Christian education wing, an all-purpose fellowship hall, and a modern kitchen.

As in all human endeavors - even those dedicated to serving God - policy debate, financial burdens, and changes in size and make-up have been ever present in the Plympton congregation. Nonetheless, the church has survived and mostly thrived. The ebb and flow of religious fervor casts doubt on the need for organized religion. The call of sports and technology, the restrictions of time and the ongoing challenges of the current Covid-19 crises are somewhat daunting. Still, we are here and looking to serve God in Plympton. We are willing to be moved by God to remain a vibrant part of life in our community and beyond.

Over the years Plympton has embraced the ministries of many dedicated men and women. Whether this is the place for a young minister to get experience or an older minister to round out a career, the church is interested in welcoming and working with God’s choice for our congregation.

CHURCH STRENGTHS:

- A committed core group willing to support each other and the community and embrace the change necessary to regrow the church.
- We try to be friendly, compassionate, and caring.
- Community outreach: We work with the Plympton Council on Aging and the Dennett Elementary School at Thanksgiving and Christmas to support people and families in need. We have participated in local missions in conjunction with Father Bill’s and Mainspring, and more recently with Bethesda House. We are willing to embrace new mission projects.
- We have an excellent church choir, which draws people to special services.
- We care for the physical plant and systems. We have an historic sanctuary building and a modern fellowship hall, kitchen, and education wing.
- We have rental income from a day care tenant in the education wing and, until June of 2021, from our parsonage. We are holding off re-renting the parsonage until we know whether it will be needed for our minister. We have also rented the kitchen to a commercial chef, the fellowship hall for Yoga classes, and the sanctuary for music recitals. Using our buildings in this manner provides a good financial base until such time as those spaces are needed to serve the minister and the congregation and helps us stay connected with the community.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS: As described in our history, we have had significant building events and a change in denomination from traditional Congregational to the United Church of Christ. Other than that, most of our significant events involve special annual services and participation in the life of the surrounding community.

- Special events in the church year include the annual Christmas Cantata and the Christmas Eve service, which are widely attended by the community.
- We sounded our steeple bell every night for a week to honor those providing essential services during the Covid-19 crisis and participated in our local Black Lives Matter vigil on the town green.
- We have participated in the local Girl Scout Christmas fair, town Memorial Day events, the town 300th Anniversary celebration (2007). We have used our sanctuary for community concerts by the Pilgrim Festival Choir Chorus and other community gatherings (Christmas on the Green, Eagle Scout ceremonies).
- Over the years we have sponsored annual community dinners, spring teas, quilt shows (co-sponsored by the South Shore Quilters' Guild) and other similar events. The annual Apple Pie Sale, organized by the church's Ladies' Sewing Circle, is very successful, drawing pie helpers and buyers from within the church and the community.

CHALLENGES: We hope to find ways to increase and celebrate God's work in the world as a vital church, involved with and important to the local community. Some of the things we see as necessary to these goals include:

- Embracing social media, virtual giving, multi-media services, whatever is necessary to grow and forward the work of the church. We have received a small grant from the Pilgrim Association of the SNEUCC to help with a technology upgrade.
- Being open to the people and activities God places before and within us.
- Searching for and calling a new minister.
 - Determining the nature of that calling (Designated term, full/part time, vocation vs avocation, etc.).
 - Planning how that person can be a presence in the local community
- With the new minister's help:
 - Increasing family and youth ministries while continuing to serve our older parishioners.
 - Developing a model of worship that works in this time and place.
 - Redefining what a successful church looks like and how we can help meet the spiritual needs of a new cultural norm.

IS THERE UNRESOLVED CONFLICT IN CHURCH? No.

LEVEL OF CONFLICT IN YOUR CHURCH (Low 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 High): Low.

BASIC STATISTICS:

# Church Members	Average Worship Attendance	CE Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Approx. 50	20-25	0*	0*

*No programs offered at this time.

2022 Income*	2022 Budget	Reserves & Endowments	Compensation Being Offered
\$78,002	\$73,334	\$132,551	Up to \$37,300.

COMPENSATION PACKAGE: Up to \$37,300.00, based on part-time (20 hours)

COVENANT/CONTRACT WILL BE FOR: 3-5 years, to be negotiated

THE PASTOR WILL BE SELECTED BY: The Advisory Board (Church Officers plus Church Moderator as Chair, or other representative, of each active committee or board). This selection will be brought to the congregation for confirmation.

OUR SHARED EXPECTATIONS: Throughout scripture, God used the apparently small, weak, poor, and unexpected to serve His purposes. Through their faith and trust, and occasionally despite their lack thereof, God worked miracles and delivered His grace. It is our expectation that though we may be small we can be mighty to do God’s work. We believe that God will join us with the minister who shares our vision for His church in Plympton.

The pastoral and professional leadership provided by the Minister will amount to half time or approximately 20 hours per week. Should additional time be needed to provide pastoral services, the matter will be reviewed by the Advisory Board and Standing Committee; and either the members of the church will assist with the pastoral duties or additional compensation will be offered to the Minister for the additional time. The Minister will be responsible to the congregation at large, and specifically to the Advisory Board and Standing Committee. In all things we hope for open and fair conversation, and cooperative actions, to harmoniously achieve resolution to problems and promote the health and ministry of the church, the minister, and the membership.

We understand that the work of the church may be limited by the nature of part-time ministry, but we believe that through mutual guidance and cooperation much can be accomplished. Though we are a small congregation, it is our prayer that the Plympton Congregational Church will continue to be a vital part of the community. It is our desire to hold on to the best of traditional worship while being open to new forms of ministry that will help us to grow in our faith and in our membership.

The following are examples of Pastoral services that might be expected. We have ranked these from high to lower priority.

- Leadership of Sunday worship, administration of the sacraments, and special services as needed. We believe that the minister is the first point of contact with the congregation, guests, and potential members. It is essential that the content of the sermon be sufficiently engaging to encourage people to return for another Sunday service. It is our hope that the sermons, rooted in scripture but supported by more contemporary writings, will provide a Christian view for dealing with the moral and social issues facing us today. Relevant sermons supported appropriately by story and humor will draw people back to hear more and help encourage them to explore their Christian faith in this church community.
- Visitation, or other forms of personal contact, with hospitalized, ill, and other members of the parish needing pastoral care. Counseling in crisis situations and referral as necessary.
- Participation in the fellowship life of the church.
- Participation on behalf of this church in activities in this community. This may include town, school, ecumenical and interfaith events, and relationships.
- Providing leadership and training for members regarding congregational goals, future planning, membership outreach and stewardship.
- Attending and resourcing meetings of the church Advisory Board and Diaconate, as well as occasional attendance at meetings of other boards and committees as requested.
- Providing administrative oversight for the daily affairs of the church, including being “head of staff.”
- Serving as lead teacher and resource for the Confirmation program.
- Teacher/leaders of occasional adult education programs.
- Remaining active in the name of this church in the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The congregation will support and cooperate with the Minister in every way and will assume responsibility for:

- Regular attendance at worship and meetings.
- Continued financial support for the church and its mission and ministries.
- Support the Minister in the ministry of this church to the community.
- Sustained lay leadership and shared ministry. Though the minister is the first point of contact, the members also need to be welcoming, open, supportive, and willing to show Christ to the community. To this end we will need the guidance and support of the minister.
- Administrative support services.
- Staffing a Pastoral Relations committee, per our bylaws.
- Participation in the affairs of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.