



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: United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough

Address: 723 Massachusetts Avenue, Boxborough, MA 01719

Phone: 978-263-7387 (UCCB church office)

Email: boxborochurch@verizon.net

Website: <http://www.boxboroughucc.org/>

Additional Denominational Affiliations: None

UCC Conference: Southern New England

Association: Central MA

Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Carol Steinbrecher

ACM phone: 508-244-4887

ACM email: steinbrecherc@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**).*

At UCC Boxborough, we are grateful for all the strengths and gifts of our church and for the opportunity to live out our shared vision of “Welcoming All, Caring for the World, Growing in the Spirit.” In this time of transition, we are also keenly aware of our need to keep learning, growing, and responding to change. We seek an interim pastor who will help us process our grief and not-knowing, frame a discernment process with us, guide us through the Search-and-Call process, and lead us in worship and faith while continuing the community outreach that has become a strength. Our beloved pastor’s 11 years with us was

a period of growth, challenge and change, and our congregation will need help grieving her loss and opening ourselves up to the journey of Search-and-Call. We are looking for a collaborative minister who can juggle the competing demands of these important interim areas and other tasks of leading a church: providing loving pastoral care, practical administrative leadership, and inspiring faith formation through hybrid worship. Along with a full-time pastor, the church employs an administrative assistant, a custodian, a choir director, and a church musician – all on a part-time basis. In addition, ministry teams and lay leaders actively participate in the ongoing work and upkeep of the church.

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

We seek a minister to guide us through our transition process and accompany us on our visioning journey.

Faith Leadership – We seek an interim minister who can lead us forward with their faith as we navigate the Search-and-Call process. We seek a minister who will work closely with our Deacons ministry team to create relevant spiritual worship that inspires thought-provoking conversation and action. Our minister needs to be approachable, with the ability to connect with a wide variety of people in different settings.

Pastoral Leadership – We seek a minister who can help us identify innovative strategies for ensuring that all of our parishioners feel connected with our church during this time between settled pastors. We hope that our interim minister can guide our ministry teams and help us reach out further to those in our community, including those who are sick, searching for connection and purpose, or are in some way marginalized.

Organizational Leadership – We seek a minister with strong organizational skills, one comfortable with guiding staff and lay leadership while working closely with the Moderator/Church Council and Treasurer/Finance Team while they manage the church's assets. We hope our interim minister will have strong skills in collaborative problem-solving and occasional conflict resolution that are a part of a transition period.

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?

While we have ideas of what we need, we are also aware that we don't know what we don't know, and there will be work to do that we have not yet anticipated. We look forward to working collaboratively to identify our greatest areas of need.

Heritage: Exploring your past and patterns: What does your history reveal? What remains unresolved?

We have a history of rising to the challenge that comes with the unexpected – local events such as the Boxborough Fire of 2021 and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of our Open Doors campaign of 2018-2022, we now bring our church work out of our church building and into the community. As the only church with a building in a small town, we are a unique center-point of the community. Our old “Fellowship Hall” is now named the “Boxborough Community Center.” Many in the town consider themselves

connected to our church, although they're not parishioners in the pews. Our heritage is one of a traditional New England Congregationalist church that is evolving.

Mission: With crystal clarity and based on the three questions from the beginning of this document what is your identity, mission, purpose, vision, etc.?

A strength of this church is our faith in action, and our involvement in the community. We recently created a visioning team and engaged a consultant to define where we want the church to be in five to ten years. We imagine our interim pastor will work with us towards understanding our overall vision and how that vision would inform a search process.

Leadership: What church leadership structure is needed moving forward and how do you identify the gifts, skills and competencies you need?

This will be part of our focus in the next year as we write our profile and look for a new pastor. We seek a minister to guide us through the Search-and-Call process while managing a small staff of part-time employees. Over the past eleven years we have adopted a new set of Bylaws and put in place a new administrative structure for our church operations that is working well.

Connections: Drawing from the insight and best practices provided through your partnership with your denomination and networking and building relationships with the community around you.

Thanks to the efforts of our recent pastor and lay leadership, we have strong working relationships with the town, volunteer organizations, neighboring faith communities, and our denomination, which we would like to continue, including:

- We have a long-standing relationship with South Acton Congregational Church, with whom we share summer worship and pastoral coverage. In the past few years, UCCB parishioners have joined South Acton's Mission Movers program, which helps people with need move from one home to another.*
- Through outreach by our choir director, last year the choirs from First Parish of Berlin (MA) and UCCB came together to sing for special worship services attended by both churches.*
- Parishioners and our pastor have continued to take an active role in the Free Bee Market and Glean Team (see Church History below) which is regularly hosted on our grounds.*
- After working together with Congregation Beth Elohim (Acton) at several points to address antisemitism and racism, we partnered in 2021 with CBE to support a family of evacuees from Afghanistan. In addition to financial donations, individuals from both congregations have welcomed and supported the family with furniture, food, transportation, advice, and advocacy, supporting them step-by-step toward self-sufficiency.*
- Town connections have included working with the Boxborough Council on Aging, attending monthly Boxborough town Well-Being meetings with the town's Community Services Coordinator, leading funerals for non-parishioners, and maintaining connections with the Acton/Boxborough Regional School District. The church has also overseen the distribution of Community Support Funds.*

Since we will want our settled pastor to continue to nurture these community connections, we would like our interim pastor to maintain or grow these connections during the interim period as well.

Future: what do you need to do to prepare for a successful partnership with your next pastor to accomplish the mission God has given your church in the next 3,5, 10, etc years. (Loren B. Mead Critical Moments of Ministry: A Change of Pastors, chapter IV)

With the new visioning team we are undertaking a process to determine who we are called to be as a church. We understand the landscape is dramatically changing for mainline Protestant churches in the United States. We hope that our interim minister will work with our visioning team and consultant and guide us as we prepare for a settled minister who will work beside us as we walk that journey together over the next several years.

4. Position Scope: Full-time 3/4 time 1/2 time 1/4 time

5. Position Duration: 12 months 18 months other (until settled pastor is found)

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):

Welcoming All, Caring for the World, Growing in the Spirit

2. Brief Church History: *The United Church of Christ, Congregational, of Boxborough (UCCB) is a mature (established 1784), financially stable church of mostly older parishioners, along with a small number of younger families. Our church facilities include a historical (1833) building and Community Center (both recently renovated). An additional wing on the historical building was built in 2001, which includes our Sanctuary. Our Community Center is leased to the Town of Boxborough's Council on Aging and is available for church functions during evenings and weekends. The church's additional wing also houses child care facilities that are leased to the Boxboro Children Center, a private daycare enterprise. We have been an Open and Affirming congregation since completing that process in 2013.*

During the 2018-2022 time, our church completed a successful capital campaign and renovation project, named our “Open Doors” campaign. The visioning and discernment that accompanied this campaign revealed to us a desire to be a church that opens our doors to welcome all, to deeply connect with each other, to step out and inspire faith in action, to create fellowship with other community groups, and to open our doors to an outdoor common gathering space.

In the spring of 2020, just as we completed the restoration and were reopening our renovated spaces, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged and completely transformed the way we “do church.” UCCB staff and lay leaders matched residents for support and assistance, and we started a fund (Community Support Fund) to provide financial support for those struggling during the pandemic. In 2021, UCCB, as the only faith community in Boxborough, became a local source of support after a dramatic 4-alarm fire displaced dozens of residents of the town. The church and members of the local community came together to respond to the needs of the families, providing clothing, furniture, food, and emotional support. Out of this event emerged Boxborough’s Free Bee Market, a food gleaning, sharing, and community-building endeavor, which takes place regularly in our church’s outdoor gathering space. During the last 3 years we have also transitioned to hybrid worship and remain committed to this model of worship.

In 2023, we created a visioning team and hired a consultant to help us discern who we want to be as a church, over the long term, while the landscape of predominantly white, mainline Protestant churches rapidly changes.

Ours is a church of inspiring worship, active social outreach, and musical programming with parishioners throughout the north Middlesex County area, about 45 minutes northwest of Boston, Massachusetts with people attending hybrid worship from all over the world.

UCC Boxborough is decidedly progressive in theology. We embrace people in the congregation who name themselves as Buddhist and Unitarian, for example. We include both Biblical and non-Biblical readings at many services and tend to use contemporary language to describe Biblical words. On the other hand, we tend to be cautious about direct preaching on social justice issues as we learn to make our way forward balancing consensus with action. Our worship style is rather informal, sometimes including play and lively interaction in worship. As we transition to new pastoral leadership, we know there may be changes in style, but remain committed to staying within a progressive, “God is still speaking” framework.

2-3 Significant Events:

2013: Open & Affirming unanimous vote

2018-2022: Open Doors \$1.7M Capital Campaign and Renovation project

2021: Boxborough Fire support

2021: First Free Bee Market

2020-present: Successfully adapting all church operations during COVID-19 to hybrid worship and operations

3. Church Strengths:

Rallying community members to work together to address social injustice and respond to crises/needs (2021 fire, rallying support for local Jewish community during time of anti-Semitic activity in Acton-Boxborough area, supporting LGBTQ+ community, collaborative relationship with Town of Boxborough, dementia-friendly worship, co-sponsoring Afghan refugee support)

Active engagement with local community and the variety of communities of faith

Music programming

Creative hybrid worship

Strong financial position

Faith in action/mission work

Engaged lay leadership

Modern (recently renovated) facilities in a historic building

4. Church Challenges:

Aging congregation and declining membership

Over-reliance on a handful of lay leaders and parishioners

No youth or Spiritual Nurture programming at this time

Living out our vision to welcome all (especially including more racial and cultural diversity)

5. 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?

1.5 *(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.

In general, while we might be addressing the same issues that affect many UCC churches, our issues tend to be problem-oriented and not personal conflicts between parishioners. Information is shared openly (no back-room deals). We utilize a collaborative style and move toward unanimous decision-making as much as possible.

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

When conflict arises, we try to direct our attention as quickly as possible toward the issue itself, and not the personalities involved. We strive for open communication with clear and specific language (no back-room deals). As much as possible we strive for unanimous agreement with a collaborative style. Parishioners who have an issue are encouraged to address their concerns directly (and with support, if needed) with the relevant party.

Basic Church Statistics Yearly average

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	191	78	13	20
Current year	180	43+23(online) = 66	3	7

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$322,690(*)	\$326,237(*)	\$20,438	\$648,327(*)/\$721,434(#)
Current year	\$323,560	\$334,309	\$25,329	\$636,930/\$693,007(#)

(*) excludes \$750K Income/\$795K Budget/\$90K Reserves related to Capital

Campaign/Renovation

(#) includes Unrestricted Fund Balances

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$100k-\$125k/year

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.

This amount closely matches the compensation package of our departing minister and closely matches the compensation of area full-time ministers of similar size congregations.

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is: *Church Council*

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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.

Peter Senghas - Moderator
Signature of Search Committee Chairperson
(typed or Jpeg is sufficient)

08/01/2023
Date