

Application to the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ

Request for Interim Pastor

United Church of Northfield

Profile of the Community of Northfield

Northfield is a town in central Vermont, the heart of the Green Mountains, Washington County. Northfield has a population of approximately 6,000 with about half of that number living in the village.

Farming, quarrying, the railroad and mills have played a large role in the economic growth of Northfield since its founding. Today the main employer and community partner of the town is Norwich University, which moved from Norwich, Vermont to Northfield in 1886. The enrollment at Norwich University in 2021, both undergraduate and graduate, was 7,344 students. The full-time enrollment at Norwich University is 6,170 and the part-time enrollment is 1,174.

Another important employer and community partner for Northfield is the Cabot Hosiery Mill, made famous by their world renowned, Darn Tough Socks brand. They not only employ 260 people from the region, they also have been responsible for rehabbing several older buildings in town for use by their growing business. Darn Tough's annual Sock Sale brings thousands of sock seekers to the community each year in November.

The Common is located in Northfield's Historic Downtown District. It is ringed by businesses, town offices, the public library and overlooked by the United Church of Northfield. The businesses include 4 restaurants, a pharmacy, coffee shop, brew pub, hardware store, and an active weekly farmers market.

Northfield has been the recipient of several state and federal grants to enhance its support of young children which resulted in the construction of two new playgrounds, and an ongoing commitment to the health and well being of children living in the community.

This summer the community came together with the Vermont Council on Rural Development to produce a vision for Northfield's Future. Areas needing improvement were identified, priorities identified, Task Force groups were formed and have begun work to take action on the items. See [Northfield: Our Common Future, Community Visit Report and Action Plan, July 2023](#) available in the town library.

Because of this commitment, our excellent educational system, and vibrant downtown many young families are choosing to live in Northfield.

Profile of the United Church of Northfield

The United Church of Northfield was built in 1835 by Charles Paine, a Northfield entrepreneur and Governor of Vermont from 1841-1843. He built what was then known as Paine's Meeting House. The Meeting House served his mill workers as a place to worship, and a place to hold work related meetings. The building has been in continuous use as a place of worship since its dedication in 1836.

The beautiful one-story, white clapboard, Greek Revival building with its prominent clock tower stands overlooking Northfield's Depot Square Historic District. The tower also contains a brass bell cast by George H. Holbrook of East Medway, Mass. in 1839. The Medway Foundry produced what was said to be the finest church bells in the country.

In the early 1850's the church building was purchased from the Paine estate by the Congregationalist Society. Soon after the purchase the building became too small for the growing congregation. The building was cut in half crosswise and enlarged to accommodate another 16 pews. In the 1920's the Universalist Church on the Common was lost to a fire. It was soon after that the two congregations, Congregationalists and Universalists, merged. Today the United Church of Northfield is a federation of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

Another major change was the addition of a community space below the church. Prior to 1858 there appears to have been only a crawl space below the building. The building was raised by Isaac Howe, and a hall was built beneath to rent out for community events. The hall has been known as Howe's Hall since its construction.

Today Howe's Hall continues to function as a space for congregational and community events. The United Church of Northfield is a symbol of religious freedom and community spirit, and continues to be an anchor to Northfield's Historic Downtown.

One of our church's missions is to increase our community ties by supporting activities, organizations and community groups. A variety of community groups and organizations use our church on a regular basis, many at no charge to the group or individuals.

In 2018, church members voted to support a major project to revitalize Howe's Hall in order to create a more comfortable and efficient space. The Hall is regularly in use most days of the week. Our work represents a commitment to the environment through reduction of our carbon footprint, and at the same time preserving the historic character of the building.

Expectations and Duties of the Interim Pastor and Congregation

Duties of The Interim Pastor (¾ time, 30 hours/week) and estimated minimum time allotment :

Worship preparation (~ 8 hrs.)

Sunday Worship/coffee hour (~2 hrs.)

Assist and guide church in transitioning to call of a permanent Pastor; explore church identity; consider church direction and growth; help identify barriers, strengths, and shortcomings. (~ 3 hrs.)

Administration and Communication (newsletter, website, social media) (~3 hrs.)

Meetings (~4 hrs.)

UCC/UUA Associations, (~1 hrs.)

Counseling, Weddings, Funerals (~1 hr.)

Community Chaplaincy and Visitations – nursing home, hospital, etc. (~ 4)

Roles and Expectations for the Interim Pastor and Congregation:

- Commit to a process of self-identity exploration and past lessons learned.
- Work with the Council and Interim Pastor to re-evaluate “Our Story” and make changes as needed.
- To be involved with the process to identify and hire a settled pastor.
- Implement and prioritize, short and long term policies.
- Consider implementing programs and or policies and guidance documents suggested by the Interim Pastor.
- Assist interim pastor with visitation of homebound, and nursing home residents.
- Maintain education, mission, music, stewardship, diaconate, and other ministries of the congregation.

- Support the involvement of the Interim Pastor in denominational activities, clergy associations, and Interim Ministers' Support Groups.
- Provide resources for professional consultation with specialists, when needed, in order to assist the Interim Pastor in accomplishing the goals of interim ministry.
- Establish a committee (previously Pastoral Relations Committee) to serve as a confidential support and advisory panel for the interim and settled pastor, and to act as a link between the pastor and the congregation.

Accountability

The Interim Pastor shall:

- 1) Be accountable to the United Church of Northfield's Church Council and ultimately to the congregation for the successful completion of duties
- 2) Maintain ministerial standing in his/her denomination.
- 3) Maintain contact with his or her Association and home congregation.
- 4) Be professionally trained with 3 or more years of experience and knowledge at a higher level with interim/transitional ministry.

The congregation shall:

- 1) Support the leadership of the Interim Pastor in the congregation and community
- 2) Inform the Interim Pastor regularly of the progress of the Pastoral Search Committee in preparing to call a settled pastor.
- 3) Actively participate in the church identification/clarification process and direction.
- 4) Provide administrative direction and support of the work of the Church Council, the Deacons, Stewardship, and Missions Committees.

Compensation Package

Salary and Benefits (3/4 time)

For all services rendered by the interim pastor under this agreement, the United Church of Northfield agrees to provide the following annual compensation:

\$35,000	Cash Salary (paid every two weeks)
\$12,000	Parsonage (heat, utilities and ½ internet cost provided)
\$ 6,580	Pension Board Annuity (prorated)
\$ 705	Pension Board Term Life and Disability Insurance (prorated)
\$ 7,650	Annual Medical Insurance (one person, Plan B)
\$ 200	Pastoral Ministry Expenses
\$62,135	TOTAL COMPENSATION