



# FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERLIN

1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin, VT 05602 ~ 802-229-0338

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." ☩ That they may all be one. ~ John 17:21

## **Application to the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ Request for Interim Pastor**

The First Congregational Church of Berlin was founded in 1798, and many generations have enjoyed warm fellowship. We are a congregation of many voices, of many histories, of many experiences who are united in love for one another, in reverent and joyful worship, and in service to others.

*The vision of First Congregational Church of Berlin is to be a friendly, inviting spiritual home that practices the deep caring of Jesus within the congregation and in the wider community.*

The deep caring called out in our vision statement is a primary value for us. It is expressed in generous donations to a broad range of UCC missions, including One Great Hour of Sharing, Blanket Sunday, Tools of Hope and Veterans of the Cross. We give monthly donations to Tatum's Totes, a United Way program in support of foster children, and maintain a Deacons' Fund for emergency assistance to the needy in our community. Most recently we have made space in our parish/community hall for the Barre District DCF Free Foster Closet, where DCF or foster parents can access clean, used clothes and some basic supplies for children in care.

The vitality and strength of our church community was fostered by having the same minister from 1990 to 2015. During those years our congregation included some forty families; our church school was typically ten or more children. But since 2015, during interim ministry and two settled pastors, we have faced the challenge of maintaining our membership that so many UCC churches have faced. We now have about 50 members and 15 associate members; typically our Sunday services have 25-35 people in attendance, with few children. However, the church is full during our special services for Christmas, Easter, and special events such as concerts held in the sanctuary, memorial services and weddings.

Our church, though not the only one in Berlin, has always had a special relationship with the town. As already indicated, our church buildings and grounds are an important resource for community events. The church building is beloved by many Berlin residents who have supported the church both in our annual fund-raiser events and also in special fund drives. Though the town of Berlin is relatively small (current population about 3,000), the church benefits from being close to both Barre and Montpelier (the state capital) in terms of opportunities for shared ministry with other churches; in fact, the spouse of our minister from 1990 to 2015 was the minister of the UCC church in Barre. The church also benefits from the rich cultural life of the region, in which our church members are very active, as well as the economic vitality provided by the Central Vermont Medical Center complex in Berlin.

Our worship services are very important to us. Grounded in UCC practices, Sunday services follow a traditional format and services are enriched by lay participation in readings and prayer leadership, by the contributions of our music director, choir, and by special musicians. We welcome not only sermons delivered by our pastor but also meditations given by members and visitors, often celebrating the beauty and wisdom of other spiritual traditions.

As a congregation deeply engaged in our community, we are seeking a part-time interim minister for whom that community engagement is also a priority. We are looking for someone who will balance these five major areas of activity and responsibility:

1. **Energize our worship and the life of the church.**
2. **Empower and appreciate working together with the laity**, including getting to know the individuals in the church family and using their gifts for the church's ministry.
3. **Relate well to children** and interact with them both on Sunday and at other times.
4. **Visit the ill, the infirm and the troubled**, especially those most in need.
5. **Be a public face and voice for the church**, especially at church events but also outside the church and with neighboring churches.

We realize that this is a challenging task. We believe it will also be a rewarding one that will provide personal and professional growth for our minister, as well as inspiration for our congregation.

We are very excited about the future of our church, and hope you feel that our church may be the right place for you. We are committed to supporting you with an active and engaged church family, with an active and engaged church leadership and with an increasingly engaged wider community:

**Our church family** is committed to supporting you by enthusiastic participation in the church, by ongoing development of our knowledge and skills (such as visitation training and Bible study) and by providing compensation that represents remuneration which follows the UCC ministerial compensation guidelines.

**Our Church Council** is committed to supporting you by effective leadership in the ongoing life of the church, effective management of church business and effective engagement with the UCC Vermont conference and sister churches.

**Our Pastoral Relations Committee** is committed to supporting you by regular and on-going discussion of your goals, activities and concerns, confident that we can resolve issues and questions through mutual openness, trust and love.

**Our Trustees and Treasurer** are committed to supporting you by maintaining the financial health of FCCB and the integrity of our physical resources.

Thank you for your interest in the First Congregational Church of Berlin.

**Salary and Benefits (part-time)**

For all services rendered by the interim pastor under this agreement, the First Congregational Church of Berlin agrees to provide the following compensation:

\$3,000 per month      Benefits/allowances within this salary are negotiable.