

Local Church Profile for Ballard Vale United Church Seeking a Designated Term Pastor

Contact Information

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Denominational Information

Additional affiliations None

UCC conference Southern New England

Association Northeast

Area conference minister Alex Shea Will

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1. Position Details

We are seeking a half-time, Designated Term pastor for three years to work creatively and collaboratively with us as we explore our new identity as a small church with a big impact. We have a strong executive team and a streamlined model of governance which allows us to focus our energy on worship and our food missions. We are comfortable doing different things in worship and not afraid to experiment. We recently remodeled our building to allow us to bring in a mission partner, the Village Food Hub (VFH) to build on the success of our 24 hour food pantry. VFH rescues thousands of pounds of nutritious food each month which would otherwise go to waste and shares it with other local food ministries. We have a Transformation Team dedicated to exploring and implementing new ideas and a working partnership with another local UCC Church, West Parish, with whom we sometimes worship and engage in joint programming. We are proudly multi-generational, with members ranging from infants to those in their nineties. We have a strong commitment to LGBTQIA+ justice which is intrinsic to everything we do. We are poised to build on our identity as a church that cares for God's children, body and soul, and is as focused on serving those outside the church as we are on the worship that goes on within it. We are looking for a Pastor who shares our excitement that God is doing a new thing with our church. The half-time focus would be on leading worship most Sundays, helping us dream and explore new ideas, and providing pastoral care, especially for the most vulnerable in our congregation. You would be responsible for attending monthly Executive and Transformation Team meetings and any scheduled all-church meetings but would not be responsible for administrative tasks nor for running any programming outside of worship services.



2. Three core competencies we feel we will need in our Designated Term Pastor (DTP):

- ❖ *Solid preaching skills* which are theologically based and relevant to current life. Delivered with creativity and a willingness to try new things in worship.
- ❖ *Excellent interpersonal skills* in order to help build on our relationships with West Parish Church, Voices of Hope and the Village Food Hub. Collaboration is key!
- ❖ *A heart for meaningful Pastoral care*, especially for those most vulnerable in our congregation, the elders and children, as well as complete acceptance and celebration of all LGBTQIA+ persons within and outside our walls.

3. Position scope: Half time

4. Position duration: Three years

5. Is the DTP eligible for the settled position: Yes!

If yes, how will that be discerned?

- ❖ We hope that our new focus on food insecurity missions will draw like minded people to our church. If we are able to grow our congregation, we would definitely consider converting this position to a settled Pastor, and potentially increasing the scope. We will engage in regular mutual ministry evaluations, and we'll work with the ACM/conference to identify a structure for these evaluations and establish a healthy process for this decision.



Designated Term Ministry Goals

The focus of a designated term ministry is to work toward the church's declared purpose for a specific season. Whereas, the purpose of an Interim Pastor is to help a congregation prepare for their next Settled Pastor, a Designated Term Pastor is called to assist the church with meeting specific goals within a specific time period. These are the most common reasons that churches choose a Designated Term Ministry (DTM).

1. The reasons for choosing a DTM that apply to us:

- New ministry development, start or continuance
- Revitalization of current ministries and church vitality
- Legacy/hospice
- Reassessment of ministry, which may include
 - ❖ exploring merger, yoking or unification with another church
 - ❖ assessment of properties
 - ❖ staffing restructuring
- Major conflict/healing

2. How we discerned that a DTM was right for the church at this time:

- ❖ A DTM is appropriate for us because we are living into a future which does not have a predetermined outcome. At the end of the designated term, we may find ourselves to be a growing congregation with a long-term future ahead of us or we may be preparing to faithfully end our time as a separate worshiping community, while arranging to maintain our building as a mission hub.

3. Designated Term Goals for a half time Pastor of three years beginning September 2024:

First Goal

- ❖ To find our way to the most faithful future for our congregation. We see a potential future where our food missions are so successful that we attract new members and continue to be an independent worshiping community. We also see a possible future where our missions flourish, but our worshiping community continues to shrink, leading to the necessity of collectively or individually finding new places to worship.

Our Commitment

- ❖ We will engage with people outside our congregation and encourage them to join us at BVUC. At the same time, we will continue to work on deepening our connection to West Parish through joint programming and combined worship experiences so that anyone who wishes to go there will have established relationships.

Assessment

- ❖ By the end of three years, we will have made a decision about whether to continue as an independent worshipping community, join our congregation with another or dissolve into multiple worshipping communities.

Second Goal

- ❖ To live into our future as a mission hub. We are working toward the goal of being one part of a thriving multi-use building. At the end of three years, we hope for the building to be substantially self-sustaining through rental income from the non-profits who share our building, while our congregation pays our fair share for our use.

Our Commitment

- ❖ We will continue to work with our renters as mission partners, finding ways to collaborate for the benefit of each organization. We will be open about the challenges we face, and the steps we need to take to ensure a sustainable future at 23 Clark Road.

Assessment

- ❖ If we are successful, our mission partners will be able to continue their work at 23 Clark Road whether or not we continue to worship there on a regular basis.

Third Goal

- ❖ To engage members of all ages as active participants in the life of the church and its missions. Our children should feel welcome in worship, with regular Children's Sermons and opportunities to participate whenever possible. Our older youth and teens should be encouraged to share their ideas and take the lead on initiatives which are meaningful to them. Adults of all ages should be able to find purposeful ways to share their gifts.

Elders should be supported through failing health with pastoral visits, and never have cause to doubt their importance and continuing connection to the church.

Our Commitment

- ❖ We are committed to ensuring that our growing focus on Food Missions doesn't cause us to lose track of the needs of our current members. We have a Transformation Team whose focus will be on meeting people where they are and finding ways to make certain we have something to offer all of our generations.

Assessment

- ❖ If we succeed, more members will be actively participating in the life of the church. They will report feeling important to the community, cared for and connected to the life of the church.



Who We Are

1. Church's Mission Statement:

Our Mission Statement needs to be updated to reflect our commitment to share our space with other non-profits who are caring for God's children. We would like to work on this with our DTP.

Current Mission Statement from 1992: We are Christians earnestly seeking God's will in the world. As an inclusive community, we strive to develop our Christianity through worship, study, prayer, love, and celebration. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we witness to our faith through caring, nurturing, justice-making, and stewardship. Our vision is to help realize, in partnership with God, the Kingdom on Earth.

2. Brief church history:

Ballard Vale United Church was formed in 1955, when two 100-year-old churches, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Union Congregational church, decided to merge. The bylaws of the new congregation called for the Pastor to be supplied by the United Methodist Church (UMC), but in January of 2020, we voted to change them to allow us to call Pastors from the United Church of Christ as well. Our first UCC pastor joined us in September of that year. In 2023, we officially disaffiliated from the UMC due to their prejudicial stance on issues of human sexuality, leaving us a strictly UCC congregation.

3. Significant events in our church history:

Our Commitment to Social Justice:

- ❖ In 1994, We voted to become "Open and Affirming" in the UCC tradition, and "Reconciling" in the United Methodist tradition. Our continuing commitment to LGBTQIA+ justice led us to officially disaffiliate from the UMC in June of 2023.

Our Food Ministries:

- ❖ In 2005, we began donating Christmas food baskets through Neighbors in Need (NIN). Our first year, we donated 30 baskets and now provide 100 complete meals each year. In 2006, we began collecting cereal each Sunday at Worship, and now donate 1000+ pounds of cereal to NIN every year. In 2022, we built a 24-hour Food Pantry, and began working with the greater community to keep it stocked.

Our Mission Partners:

- ❖ In 2021, we began renting to Voices of Hope, an organization which raises funds for Cancer Research “One song at a time” through musical theater productions. We have a mutually supportive relationship with them and enjoy the energy and enthusiasm they bring to the building!
- ❖ In 2023, we renovated portions of our building in order to make space for a new mission partner, the Village Food Hub (VFH). VFH, which was founded by two members of our congregation, works to strengthen our community food system and make it more equitable. They rescue thousands of pounds of delicious and nutritious food each month, getting it to those who need it, while reducing waste and promoting environmental sustainability.

4. Church strengths:

- ❖ We are a multi-generational community.
- ❖ We have engaged and experienced lay leadership including active LGBTQ members.
- ❖ Our facilities are in good condition.
- ❖ We have streamlined by-laws and a modern updated budgeting process.
- ❖ Our building is fully occupied by renters who complement our values.
- ❖ We recently removed our pews and are dedicated outside the box thinkers.
- ❖ We have a talented A/V team and livestream our services on Facebook.
- ❖ We have a mutually supportive working relationship with West Parish Church.
- ❖ We have approximately \$50,000 in unrestricted Trust funds to help with cash flow.
- ❖ Our name is becoming well known in the greater Andover Community.
- ❖ We have a cantor and an excellent accompanist who collaborate on music together.
- ❖ We have a proven record of willingness to make sacrifices for our mission priorities.



5. Church challenges:

- ❖ We have a small membership and low attendance on Sunday Morning.
- ❖ We have not had a balanced budget for many years.
- ❖ We are unable to afford a full time pastor.
- ❖ We don't currently have programming for our pre-teens and teenagers.
- ❖ Our only other paid staff position is our worship accompanist.

6. Experience of conflict. Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. On this scale, where would you rank your church's level of conflict?

- ❖ 1. Problem to solve - **2. Disagreement** - 3. Contest - 4. Fight or Flight - 5. Intractable

2. Please explain why you chose this level:

Coming to our decision to invest money to make space for the Village Food Hub was very stressful. Some members were already ready to close our church and merge with West Parish. Others believed that we could successfully regenerate our congregation on the strength of our growing food ministries. The renovations needed to make our building ready to house the Food Hub, including removing the pews, and taking up our carpet in the Sanctuary, were hard for some people, for whom it now feels less like a worship space. Having made the decision to move forward with a unanimous vote, we now need to come together and care for each other's feelings.

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

We have learned that communication is key in successfully dealing with conflict. We understand that any decisions about our future as a church must be made deliberately with plenty of time for people to understand both the situation which we are facing and each other's point of view. We have begun holding an extra informational gathering at least a week before any meeting which will include a vote. We have had good success with this model over the past year.

Basic Church Statistics

Yearly average

Church Membership

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	141	50	5	4
Current year	119	29	8	0

Income

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving *	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	115,000	150,000	0 to UCC	93,000
Current year	132,000	170,000	6,410 UCC	50,000

* We do not have a budget line item for Mission. Instead, we collect cereal, donate Christmas Meals, provide fuel for a kitchen in Nicaragua, and designate half of our Easter and Christmas donations to a different non-profit organization. We also donate to keep our pantry stocked and collect clothing twice a year to take to the United Methodist Economic Ministry in Maine.

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$40,000

Package offered (*choose only one*):

- ✓ Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered

Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)

Housing (*choose only one*):

- ✓ Housing allowance only

Parsonage only

Can offer either

We are hoping to find a candidate for whom the flexibility we can offer will help to compensate for the lower pay. We are open to structuring the position to suit the candidate in terms of which weeks to have off from leading worship, and whether they be grouped together or spread out throughout the year. Additionally, for ten weeks in the summer, the pastor has traditionally led worship in the evening instead of Sunday morning; this would allow a pastor to supplement their income with Bridge ministry or pulpit fill work on Sunday mornings if desired. We are adept at zoom meetings and would welcome a candidate who lives at a bit of a distance and wishes to travel into Andover as few days as possible. One day a week for pastoral care and in person meetings should be fine most weeks, along with Sundays for worship.

1. Explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation:

We simply don't have a lot of money and are offering what we can afford. If and when church finances improve, we are open to increasing compensation.

We are planning over the next three years to increase our rental rates to cover most of our building expenses. In the meantime, we will be operating at a loss at least through 2025 and perhaps through 2026 even with our admittedly low compensation. We can withstand this because of our trust funds but cannot risk having them depleted before we get to a place of stability.

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.

Wendy deLemos

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

(Typed is sufficient)

3/5/2024

Date