



Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an **Interim Pastor**

Church Information

Full Name: East Woodstock Congregational Church

Address: 220 Woodstock Rd, Woodstock, CT

Phone: 860-928-7449

Website: www.eastwoodstockchurch.org

Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England Association:

Area Conference Minister Name: Carol Steinbrecher

ACM phone: 508-244-4887

ACM email: steinbrecher@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**).*

EWCC is an active church in a pastoral village in rural Northeastern CT. Known as the "Quiet Corner" of CT, Woodstock serves as a bedroom community to Providence, Worcester, Boston and Hartford. Sunday services are held at 10:00 with Sunday School occurring mid-way through the service. Average attendance is 75-90 in person. Services are also broadcast live online to a regular audience of 10-20 viewers. The church is very engaged with the surrounding communities, as well as other congregations, through covenants with area shelters, food and

assistance programs and social justice issues and events. The church employs 5 employees: pastor, secretary, Christian Ed. Director, Handbell Choir director and Music Director. Current projects include a sanctuary, narthex and balcony refurbishment plan and efforts to rebuild Sunday School attendance back to the pre-pandemic robust numbers. Currently, SS attendance is between 10-15 children and is held “one room schoolhouse style”. EWCC enjoys hosting many activities throughout the year both within the congregation and for the greater community i.e. dinners, Jazz Sunday, “Quiet Christmas”, a christmas fair, book club, bible study, confirmation class, Pride events, and prayer shawl ministry. The fiscal health of the church is aided by an annual 4th of July Jamboree held on the “common” next to the church. For 66 years, visitors have enjoyed a full day of music, fellowship, games and old-fashioned family fun which includes a water polo competition between the 3 area fire departments! With profound gratitude the church bids farewell to our pastor of the past 36 years. While we acknowledge our sadness at her leaving, we also embrace the opportunity to learn and grow in new ways. Our strengths of positivity, relational health, responsiveness and flexibility will aid us in this endeavor. EWCC is known for the warmth and welcome it offers to all and we look forward to working with pastors and the greater UCC as we explore and embrace the future.

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

1. Leading Worship services (sermon, selecting elements of each area of worship services i.e., hymns, scripture, litanies, calls to worship)
2. Response to congregational needs i.e. funerals, emergencies including visitation to those who are homebound and in care facilities
3. Leading the search committee and congregation through the search and call process to find a settled pastor.

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?

5. 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

4. Position Scope: X Fulltime 3/4 time 1/2 time 1/4 time

- Full time preferred but $\frac{3}{4}$ time would also be considered if an interim candidate would desire less than full time.

5. Position Duration: 12 months 18 months other

A duration of 1 - 2 years is anticipated yet not a firm expectation. After 36 years of a settled pastor, we recognize the value in an extended interim in which to learn about ourselves and to reimagine our future.

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*):

We gather as a people of God to worship and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We strive to carry on his teachings of love through our support and compassion for all people in our community and throughout the world.

2. Brief Church History:

The church that stands today was dedicated in 1834. Prior to that there were two big congregational splits – one in 1760, moving part of the congregation from what is now the First Congregational Church of Woodstock to East Woodstock, and in 1831, where members of the congregation left to start the North Woodstock Congregational Church (now the Crossroads Church).

In 1961, the congregation voted to become a member of the United Church of Christ. In 2010, the congregation voted to become an open and affirming church.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

1. The hurricane of 1938 required valiant efforts of the congregation to rebuild the church building.
2. The Jamboree began as a small, thought to be a one time event 67 years ago and has become a community wide (and beyond) anticipated event. The primary goal of the Jamboree is to offer fellowship and welcome to the greater community in an affordable, multi-generational, fun, 4th of July celebration. The second goal is as a fundraiser - the largest contribution to our budget each year (approx. \$10,000 - \$15,000). It requires the dedicated work of dozens of volunteers over the course of several months.
3. Facebook/You Tube broadcasts of all Sunday services and most special services. (Some services, such as “Quiet Christmas” have been discussed and deliberately chosen not to be broadcast) on social media. We have a consistently strong Facebook/You tube viewing audience across the U.S. as well as some international viewers!

4. Church Strengths:

1. Response to need - whether the need is from within the greater church population or from the community. Whenever a call is expressed i.e. via the Outreach community, the need is quickly fulfilled. Examples: Refugee resettlement, covenants with the various shelters and community organizations

(TEEG).

2. Financial health. Although as of the annual meeting in Jan. 2024, we had a few less pledges than in the prior year, we did not lose pledges over COVID and our budget is in a sound state.
3. Social/Relational health of the congregation. The church body has a long standing pattern of working well with each other and between committees. There are not currently any “riffs” or dysfunction or disagreements within the relationships of the congregation.
4. Location - The church is located in a beautiful pastoral setting with a ole time New England feel. Hiking trails, rivers and lakes for recreation are plentiful. Conveniences are not far (within 5 miles, but a car is very necessary) and cities of Boston (2.5 hours), Providence (1 hour) and Hartford (45 mins) are within reach. The shoreline of Southeastern CT and Southern R.I is a one hour drive. (Beaches, tidal areas, State Parks and scenic coastal towns to explore).
5. The Woodstock school district contains 2 schools and 790 students, and includes a pre-k program. Woodstock Academy is a regional semi-private high school with approximately 1100 students. It has excellent academic programs, a dedicated faculty, and a vibrant campus life.
6. EWCC is made up of a large, active group of volunteers
7. EWCC is very well thought of in the larger community for both its community involvement and its mission work.

5. Church Challenges:

1. Attracting young families and restoring Sunday School attendance to the robust levels that we enjoyed before the pandemic.
2. Reintroducing programming and/or a social group for older youth (HS).
3. Expanding committee work to include more individuals from within the congregation.
4. Limited rental housing is available within the town of Woodstock. Rental housing is more available in some neighboring towns. (Parsonage available if needed Aug.1, 2024)
5. Our long time office manager will also be retiring July 1, 2024.

6. Experience of Conflict:

1. In the past 20 years, the greatest conflict that the church faced was the decision to become an official Open and Affirming church. While the church congregation always looked at itself as open and affirming, the process had dissenters and eventually some active members left the church – though only a few. The ONA process was a thoughtful and deliberate journey over a two year period and involved both large and small focus groups, including LGBT+ and non LGBT+ congregants with spirited, respectful debate.
2. Pre-Sue there were other conflicts. (over 36 years ago) and it is noteworthy that as a collective body, the transition team cannot recall any other conflicts with the congregation.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger.

On a scale of 1-5, where would you rank your church's level of conflict?

(Based on this work by Speed Leas)

1. Problem to solve 2. Disagreement 3. Contest 4. Fight or Flight 5. Intractable)

1

2. Please explain why you chose this level.

Like with any other large group of people, our congregation has many personalities, leadership styles, and degrees of involvement. But what has been successful is the understanding that everyone brings a unique knowledge/gift to the table, and everyone deserves to be heard.

Committee members don't always agree on how to proceed solving a problem, and sometimes feelings get hurt. But our dedicated group of committee members are always looking for the best outcome for the church and its members and know that sometimes that means letting go of one's convictions.

We haven't been challenged by any issues or conflicts of late so we don't really have a recent litmus test for this, but based on our general "climate" of discussion, respect and cooperation, a 1 is a vote based in the confidence of the members working together to resolve issues from the above mentioned characteristics.

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

In addition to #2 above, we have not experienced a point of major issue or conflict in the last twenty years. When we have needed to make decisions i.e. projects and priorities of the church we have established sub committees, gathered and presented the information to the congregation, given members time to be informed and consider each item and then held a vote.

Basic Church Statistics

Yearly average

	Church Member ship	Weekly Attendance	Children Worship Participation	Adult Ed & Youth Participation
Pre-pandemic		110	30	5-13 8th graders in Confirmation
Current year		75-90	10	6 8th graders in Confirmation 8-10 for weekly morning Bible Study

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$215,331	\$215,331	\$11,400	\$72,346
Current year	\$208,863	\$208,863	\$17,200	\$83,828

Updated 1/2022

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range:

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)

Total package of: \$5,000/mo plus mileage @ .67/mi.

Parsonage is a possibility if needed. Parsonage can be available after Aug. 1, 2024 or 2 mos from the date of hire (to give the current tenants 2 mos. notice.) Renovation of the parsonage kitchen will begin within the next few weeks and will be completed this summer.

Start date: 9/1/24 for congregational coverage and “settling in” (pulpit is covered for 9/1/24 = preaching start date of 9/8/24)

Housing:

Housing allowance only

Parsonage only Parsonage can be made available if needed.

Either Parsonage or Housing Allowance Provided

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

The compensation is reflective of the current pastor base salary minus health ins and other benefits. This package is designed for the remainder of the 2024 fiscal year (thru Jan. 2025) hence is listed as per month.

After the annual meeting held in late January, the salary will be listed as per annual (\$5,000/mo x 12 mos = \$60,000/yr).

If health insurance is needed the church and candidate can negotiate options copay percentage options towards a health plan.

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is:

The Transition Team

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.

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson Date *(typed or Jpeg is sufficient)*

Amy Hiller-White 4/3/24

Updated 1/2022