

UNITED CHURCH OF DORSET & EAST RUPERT CHURCH PROFILE FOR AN INTERIM MINISTER 2024



Community

Dorset was a distinct part of the founding of Vermont. The church is very much a part of the town and vice versa. We are considered a “wealthy” town, but many people are not, and the church reflects both. The population tends to be well-educated and reflects the skills, history, and wide range of vocational experiences of the residents. We have, historically, as well as currently, been blessed with artists and writers. A number of our houses were rescued from the area in Massachusetts that was flooded by the Quabbin Reservoir, brought here in numbered pieces and reassembled. We, like much of Vermont, are low on affordable housing.

Dorset has a Historical District and a history of marble quarrying. Hiking trails go up to some of the quarries and the most prominent is the Norcross Quarry on Rte. 30, a famous swimming hole. The small town is divided in two by Morse Hill. Mad Tom Orchard is in East Dorset, as well as Emerald Lake, Wilson House, and currently, the Town offices. We have a well-regarded K-8 grade school and a choice of two top high schools. Long Trail (6-12) is a small private school that offers a unique vibe that fosters many teens. Burr & Burton Academy in Manchester is an independent high school with outstanding offerings, but functions as the public high school in the area.

The Town of Dorset pays tuition to either one for residents.

We have two amazing general stores (HN Williams and Dorset Union); three in-town restaurants, and two inns. The town has a library, a historical society with a museum, a chamber of commerce and a town staff member responsible for trail upkeep and recreational opportunities. Dorset Playhouse has plays year-round: Summer is Dorset Theatre Festival (professional) and the rest of the year we have the Dorset Players (talented amateurs). We have a year-round Farmer’s Market which meets in the JK Adams factory in the winter, using the grounds of HN Williams during the warmer months.

Many of our church members live in nearby Manchester Center, six miles down Rte. 30. A much bigger town, this is where we go for pharmacies, grocery stores, many restaurants, a shoe store, Epoch Artisans Gallery, Northshire Book Store, Orvis, many outlets, and much more. The Battenkill runs through it and has a nice River Walk.

One high point in our year is that we have the oldest continuing Memorial Day Service in the country. This is a defining town event. The name of every soldier from town who died in all wars starting with the Civil War is read during the service. This is followed by a parade to the cemetery, where a wreath is laid and Taps are played. Then everyone returns to the church for a town picnic. Our town is beautiful and historical, but residents tend to take care of each other and there are constantly new ideas and new opportunities that anyone can access.



Our Church

The United Church of Dorset and E. Rupert has a storied history, dating back to worship services in the homes of settlers in the 1770s. The church, which has burned down twice, has been at its current site since 1832. The current marble building (no more fires for us) was dedicated in 1910 and has 10 gorgeous stained-glass windows. We recently completed a successful capital campaign that added a chapel and more meeting rooms to house our growing list of programs. We also have a manse next door to the church that we are refurbishing for our next pastor.

The state of our church is strong and growing. We are the flagship church of the SW Vermont UCC Association, with strong membership growth, a \$550,000 annual budget, and endowment funds valued at \$2 million. We are a fully online church with services livestreamed and available on the web.

As our beloved pastor retires in the fall of 2024, we anticipate our interim pastor coming and hope to have a new permanent pastor on board, with the same youthful energy that our retiring pastor brought us 26 years ago. Reverend Gray brought us a pastoral care model, built on pastoral visitation and community outreach, that has tripled our membership and made our church an indispensable partner for local and international mission projects.

We have more than 400 active and inactive members, and more than 100 pledging households covering more than two-thirds of our annual budget. We are an open and affirming church with a commitment to congregational leadership and a vibrant committee structure to prove it. Our membership is intergenerational and highly engaged, with multiple Bible studies and reading groups at all times; our ranks include artists, educators, retired people, and an influx of new families each year; and we are committed to following Jesus with responsible stewardship in all that we do. Our staff includes a head pastor and an administrator, two part time pastoral assistants, music director, education director, bookkeeper, and sexton.

Our wide array of programs serves both our local community and missions across the globe. All programs are led by church members and will not miss a beat during our pastoral transition, though pastoral support will remain an important ingredient. Examples of programs include:

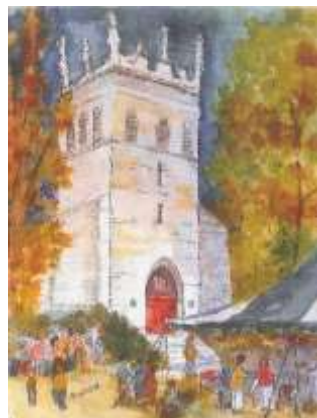
- Rummage sale – our spring and fall rummage sales attract hundreds of people looking for bargains on clothing, household items, and just about anything else that can be reused.
- Community sharing – we provide free suppers every winter and free meals throughout the year, a bountiful Christmas for more than 100 families, and our building is open to the community 24-7.
- Missions – we support a food cupboard, homeless shelter, and other local charities; a SERRV project that supports international artisans; sponsorships of immigrant families and international students; and green energy projects including the manse.
- Christian education – our calendar is full of adult and youth education classes, including an annual confirmation class, a spring Men’s Retreat, and a summer canoe trip.
- Dorset Church Counseling Center – we launched a spiritually-based counseling center last year and this year will offer counseling by a licensed professional to the community.



Goals and Expectations for our Interim Minister

We are looking for an Interim Minister who will use their expertise and experience to guide us through a successful transition after the lengthy employment of our beloved minister of 27 years. Some of the specific tasks we envision include:

- Coordinate a meaningful worship experience
- Address emergent issues
- Guide the congregation through this period with an attitude of moving forward rather than “stuck in the mud”.
- Guide members through the grief of the loss of our retired pastor and excite them about the future
- Assist in maintaining our outreach programs, both within the church and the wider community
- Assist/support church leaders in facilitating an all church process of self-reflection and discussion to generate input for the Church Profile
- Strengthen the Pastoral Relations Committee and assist them in setting goals and understanding their value especially as related to an Interim and newly hired minister
- Review our “systems” and provide feedback
- Provide/guide regular staff meetings & opportunities for staff development
- Expand our thinking and suggest new ideas
- Prepare a welcome guide for the new minister
- Provide an exit interview with the Personnel Committee



COVENANT FOR INTERIM PASTOR

This is a covenant between _____ (the Church) and _____, Interim Pastor. In keeping with the guidelines for ministry in the United Church of Christ (UCC), and with the guidelines described in "The Interim Ministry Handbook" of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ, and in order to set forth clearly the agreement for Interim Pastoral Services, the parties covenant as follows:

1. _____ will begin their ministry as Interim Pastor of the Church on _____, 2024. It is acknowledged _____ is an authorized minister with the UCC. In this covenant agreement, the Interim Pastor is not an independent contractor but will join the Church as employee/staff.
2. The position is full-time, understood to be approximately 40-50 hours per week.
3. The Interim Pastor will be responsible to the Cabinet.
4. The Interim Pastor will be the pastor of the church during the interim period and shall have sole responsibility for all pastoral and administrative functions of the position to which they have been called, and include the following responsibilities/duties:
 - a. Officiate at regular and special worship services of the church, including the administration of the sacraments.
 - b. Provide pastoral services and officiate at weddings and funerals held at the church.
 - c. Lead Christian Education programs as needed.
 - d. Visit persons related to the church who are hospitalized or otherwise in need of pastoral services.
 - e. Visit home-bound members.
 - f. Respond to pastoral emergencies such as severe illness, death, etc.
 - g. Participate in and provide pastoral consultation at the Cabinet and governing boards.
 - h. Guide and support the congregation through the grief of the loss of our retired pastor and excite them about the future.
 - i. Participate with the church delegates in the Annual Meeting of the Vermont Conference UCC and meetings of the Southwest Association.
 - j. Participate in the programs and activities of the local Interfaith Council, the Southwest Association and the Vermont Conference, including the Interim Ministers' Group (if one exists).
 - k. Participate in evaluation of the Interim Pastorate at the conclusion of the Interim period.
5. The Church will support the Interim Pastor and will assume responsibility for:
 - a. Regular participation in worship services and meetings.
 - b. Continuing financial support for the Church and its mission and ministries.
 - c. Encouragement and support of lay leadership.
 - d. Self-study and engagement in a goal-setting process.
 - e. Participation in Conference and Association meetings, programs, and activities.
 - f. Provision of a support and evaluation process for the Interim Pastor through the Personnel Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee
 - g. Participation in evaluation at the conclusion of the interim pastorate.
6. The Church agrees to provide the following compensation within the Vermont Conference guidelines and expense reimbursement to the Interim Pastor:

- a. Base Salary will be _____ per pay period; to be paid bi-weekly, based on experience and training.
 - b. Housing Allowance or use of the church manse to be negotiated.
 - c. Annuity and Life Insurance and Disability Income Benefit Plan payment to be negotiated.
 - d. Health insurance stipend to be negotiated.
 - e. Paid vacation to be negotiated.
 - f. Paid holidays will be the same for all staff.
 - g. Travel reimbursement at current IRS business rate for travel done on church business.
7. This covenant is based on mutual trust and good faith of the parties to it. It will be reviewed and revised as necessary and may be renewed.
8. Either the Church or the Interim Pastor may terminate the covenant relationship according to the by-laws of the Church regarding Pastoral Ministry, with sixty days' notice.
9. The Interim Pastor agrees that their name will not be submitted as a candidate for the position of the called Pastor; the Church also agrees that the Interim Pastor will not be considered. The Interim Pastor and the Church agree that this stipulation will be communicated to the whole congregation.
10. The Church and the Interim Pastor will provide copies of this covenant to the following:
- a. The Church
 - b. The Interim Pastor
 - c. The Southwest Association Committee on Church and Ministry
 - d. The Vermont Conference

We accept the terms of this Covenant.

Chair of Trustees

Date

Interim Pastor

Date

Treasurer

Date

