

Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking a Designated Term Pastor (DTP)

Church Contact Information

Full Name: Belchertown United Church of Christ (BUCC)
Address: 18 Park Street, PO Box 603, Belchertown, MA 01007
Website: <http://www.belchertownucc.org>
Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England
Association: Hampshire
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa
ACM email: OgawaTY@sneucc.org
ACM phone: (508) 782-8593

Position Details

In a paragraph or two for each item, please answer the following prompts, or fill in the requested information.

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**).*

We are seeking a ½ time, 3-year term DTP to work with our fun, dynamic, O&A congregation in our rural, picturesque town. And although the BUCC is hard to define in 2000 characters, what we can say is that: In 2022 we heard the community's shock and sadness when Ukraine was attacked. And, in turn, organized and led a community wide peace vigil on the town common, where a majority of the 150 who attended were not BUCC folks. We are the church in town that offers a safe space for those seeking a baptism or wedding without prejudice, no exceptions. We are the church that offers groups like AA, NA and our own BUCC Food Pantry affordable space to do important work for those in need. And we, the BUCC is the church that has its own theatre group, its own Quilt Show, and a Relay for Life Ministry amongst many others. If you too lead by example, and strive to serve a community "without partiality," honoring a God who accepts and loves all, AND HAS FUN DOING IT, then perhaps the BUCC is for you! Your talents and guidance will be deeply welcomed here. In the absence of a pastor for some 5+ years our laity have sparkled with Spirit, if sometimes it has felt like a slog. Through hard work, perseverance, and the grace of God, church folk have offered meaningful worship and quality care for each other. Lay folks with something to say about their own faith, and retired clergy - in person, via ZOOM and over our very own radio waves during the height of COVID have joyfully kept us engaged as a faith community. We've learned so much about the rich tradition of providing a "Sunday Service" that is grounded in scripture and reflective of

our lived experience. We will want you to respect this and join us in this journey. You will also be our faceplate to the community. We believe not having a consistent presence in the pulpit and community has inhibited our numerical growth. We welcome someone who resonates with what we've written, and who has talents to shepherd us over the next 3 years.

2. *Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your DTP.*

1. Solid preaching skills reflecting healthy progressive theology, and that inspire engagement and change, delivered with creativity and a willingness to try new things in worship. We routinely use contemporary or folk song, and secular song, as well as hymns.
2. Excellent, outgoing, interpersonal skills used to deepen and expand our relationships beyond the church walls. Less homogeneity; more motley crew.
3. A good listener and leader. Join in our lively conversations by listening first, then craft with us a realistic revitalization path so that our congregation is less a well-kept secret and more like a block party. We are willing to fail in order to help us, together, succeed.

3. *Position Scope:* _____ Fulltime _____ ³/₄ time ___X___ ¹/₂ time _____ ¹/₄ time

4. Position Duration: 3 Years

5. Is the DTP eligible for the settled position? Yes - Y _____ N

If yes, how will that be discerned?

Moving from a designated term pastor position into a settled position with our pastor will be determined through prayerful discernment by our church and the pastor. When there is clear synergy, mutually agreed upon goals for our church's ministry, and general happiness among both our church and the pastor, the conclusion will be made to offer a settled position.

The BUCC Search team will utilize the following steps to help guide them through this time of discernment. The team will:

- a. Reflect on how well the church and DTP worked together;
- b. Consider other church processes and perspectives on the DTP's work and style (ex: annual reviews, conversation with PRC, governing body, etc.);
- c. Explore how the Settled Pastor role and expectations will differ from those of the DTP;
- d. Come to consensus on whether we want to invite the DTP to apply for the Settled position.

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.

1. *Please choose all the reasons for choosing a DTM that applies to you.*

- 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. *In a paragraph or two, explain how you discerned that a DTM was right for the church at this time.*

The BUCC has been in a bit of a “holding pattern” in that we have been very much focused, over the past few years (5+ years), on the persistence and vitality of our church. We have found creative ways to keep the church moving forward while feeding the spiritual needs of the congregation. But we do recognize that we have lost opportunity, due to limited people power, to better serve those in need in our church community and beyond.

By recognizing this shortcoming, we acknowledge the need for a DTM to provide new perspective, new thinking, and in some circumstances to simply provide more investment of time and energy to free us up to revitalize areas that may have suffered.

3. *Please explain your goals (three) for this Designated period.*

Designated Term Ministry Goal Setting

	Goal: with specificity, describe what you hope to accomplish in this time	Commitment: describe how the congregation will prioritize and participate in reaching this goal	Assessment: describe how the congregation will know the goal has been accomplished
1.	Continue the BUCC tradition of providing a “Sunday Service” that is well grounded in scripture, uplifting and reflective of our lived experience.	Our new minister would utilize their talents to work in concert with our Deacons and the Church Council to bring fresh ideas, inspiring resources, and perspectives to the pulpit.	Through periodic check-in meetings with the BUCC Leadership we would conduct constructive feedback conversation around our Sunday Services and request adjustments if needed.
2.	Develop increased connections to the community that reflect our unique church values and have a positive impact in our town.	<p>BUCC Church Council Members and the new pastor will discuss and discern new ways to “plug-in” and be more visible in our community.</p> <p>Achievement of this goal can be accomplished in various ways. In the past, BUCC’s pastors supported by members of the congregation, have connected to the Belchertown community and beyond by leading ecumenical services at the town fair and Easter Sunrise Service; by connecting with various area support groups including the Brookfield Institute (Veteran support group), SOAAR (Addiction support group) and by reaching out to our Town Police Department to better understand how best to partner.</p>	Our hope would be that our new minister could show leadership in 2 ecumenical, community, outreach programs per year.
3.	As needed, and as time allows, utilize the DTP’s knowledge of church mergers and unifications to help guide us in developing	BUCC Church Council Members and the new pastor, when time permits, will discuss and discern new ways for the BUCC to think	We would foresee our DTP being available for periodic conversations with the Church Council. We (BUCC) will be cognizant of

	the “future state” of our church.	about the vitality and look of the future state of our church.	the DTP’s overall responsibilities and related time constraints and will plan these discussions for timeframes that best fit the DTP’s schedule.
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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 resolve to be a church that seeks to strengthen and glorify the Body of Christ as it realizes itself in the world by Identifying, Equipping, Encouraging and Evaluating any individual’s gifts and visions for Christian Discipleship and action anytime anywhere.

2. *Brief Church History:*

The Belchertown United Church of Christ (BUCC) has a long and proud 280+ year history. The church was organized in 1737 as The Congregational Church in Belchertown, was incorporated on March 16, 1891, and became part of the United Church of Christ in 1961. We became a UCC Open & Affirming church on February 6, 2005.

3. *2-3 Significant Events:*

Becoming and being an Open & Affirming Church: In 2001, the Board of Deacons proposed a vision to become Open and Affirming. After much discussion, discernment and searching for the words to put to paper the final draft was presented for congregational vote during the February 2005 annual meeting and received a unanimous vote to adopt. We (BUCC) have been proudly living out this affirmation by inviting, welcoming, and accommodating, without limitations, all that enter our doors.

Persevering through 5+ Years without a Pastor: As previously stated, we’ve been without a pastor for some 5+ years. While we are proud of this achievement and have certainly grown in ways that we would have never anticipated. We, the congregation, would like to be freed up to serve our congregation and community in ways *other than* planning and leading worship. We also hope that this piece of our recent past/current will be interpreted as a positive and unique attribute of our church as we are able to offer our DTM the flexibility to pursue their own career objectives on a given Sunday or Sundays. We anticipate further definition of “flexibility” to be developed based on a given candidate’s desires and career objectives.

4. *Church Strengths:*

BUCC’s greatest strength is found in our community of dedicated worshippers. As a group, we are open to new ideas, willing to work hard, and hopeful about our future even in the face of adversity. Our spirit is reflected in our values. We value:

- The welcoming nature of our church;

- The full and welcome inclusion of all people as expressed through our Open and Affirming statement;
- The warm fellowship and strong sense of community that flourishes here;
- We give room for faith to breathe; informed questions and scrabbling with troubling scripture texts are joyous opportunities.
- Kids are here, and they participate!
- The practice of walking our talk with integrity;
- Loving leadership;
- The music program and choir;
- The diversity of missions this church supports;
- The various gifts and abilities of this congregation and the ways they are put to use;
- and the church building as a living resource to the community.

We also find strength in our mission work that currently gets expressed through our Helping Hands Food Cupboard, our team participation in the Quaboag Valley Relay for Life, our Loaves and Fishes ministry and by providing free or reduced rate meeting space for local support groups like SOAAR (Speaking Out About Addiction & Recovery), AA, NA, Umbrella for Wellness and Community Options to meet in our parish house.

5. *Church Challenges:*

Our most important challenge, today, is to find the right person to lead our services and reposition us in the community. Secondary challenges are as follows:

- We have a small membership and low attendance on Sunday Morning.
- We are unable to afford a full-time pastor.

6. *Experience of Conflict: N/A*

1. Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. On a scale of 1-5, where would you rank your church's level of conflict? 1

(Based on this work by Speed Leas 1. Problem to solve 2. Disagreement 3. Contest 4. Fight or Flight 5. Intractable)

2. *Please explain why you chose this level.*

The BUCC is not dealing with any conflict that we (search committee / church council) are aware of at this time. In the absence of a Pastor, we have leaned into each other to create a more cohesive congregation.

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

Our most recent conflict occurred back in 2003. The 20+ year old conflict dealt with a former minister wishing to introduce new music, against the performance desires of the music director, the congregation moving toward O&A, and rumors about that minister. With shepherding from a conference conflict resolution team, the issue was resolved with most of the choir and the music director leaving this church for another and BUCC adopting the Relational Covenant which we, to this date, read before all church meetings as reminder and resolve.

Basic Church Statistics
Yearly average

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	94	40	10	0
Current year	94	25 (2-4 via Zoom)	6	0

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic				
Current year (2023)	\$84,810	Total \$118K	Approximately \$4000/yr	Approximately \$300,000

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: 35,000 – 45,000 (1/2 time, inclusive of benefits)

Package offered: Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered
(choose only one) Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)
 Social Security Allowance
 Vacation (2 week)
 Meetings
 Business Mileage Reimbursed (IRS Rate)

Housing:

- Housing allowance only
 Parsonage only
 Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

After consulting the Conference Compensation Guidelines, we feel that this is the most comprehensive compensation package that we can realistically afford and perpetuate over the three-year designated term period and beyond. The final negotiated salary will be commensurate with agreed upon hours and responsibilities.

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.

David Crutchfield

6/11/2024

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson
(typed is sufficient)

Date