

Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking a Designated Term Pastor

Church Contact Information

Full Name: ***Canaan Congregational Church***
Address: **PO Box 66, Canaan NY 12029 (Mailing Address)**
1670 County Route 5, Canaan, NY (Physical Address)
Website: **<http://www.canaanucc.org>**

Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England
Association: Berkshire Association
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa
ACM email: ogawaty@sneucc.org
ACM phone: (860) 761-7192

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**).*

The Town of Canaan is in the lovely rural Berkshire Hills with many vacation homes, seasonal residents, and a vibrant arts community. Founded in 1785, our church has a long history of strong lay leadership and well-educated constituents. A series of events over the past seven years prompted us to envision a bold concept for our ministry for which we seek a designated term pastor. In January 2023 we began a deep and extensive discernment period. Meeting every month, we determined that our pastor will not only be our spiritual guide to encourage exploration and innovation as we connect with the sacred, but also will be our collaborator as we purposefully engage and partner with our wider community. While our median age and current finances point to the end of our worship life in perhaps five years, we are deliberately taking this time as an opportunity to live out the reimagination of our ministry. Of course, we are open to regeneration - to *whatever* may emerge from these new efforts - that would be a grace-filled outcome. This is a flexible, developing ministry. If it doesn't expand to a sustainable plan, we will be gratified that we have lived out our calling as servants to our broader community. Our vision entails redefining our church in our area as a social hub for organizations that serve our neighbors. As this plan evolves, the pastor's role may evolve as

well; that has yet to be determined. We've employed an Administrative Manager to coordinate and market to organizations and non-profits and have begun hosting a variety of programs, for example in association with the Office of the Aging, AARP and the Alzheimer's Association. Canaan only has two other public spaces, the town hall and the fire station. Our building, designed specifically as a flexible space without pews, can accommodate many groups for multiple purposes and activities. We are excited to live into this new ministry.

a. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your Designated Term Pastor.

- b. First, a deeply thoughtful, creative, innovative person in his/her/their theology.
- c. Second, a collaborative communicator and builder of consensus, who recognizes the stage of worship life our congregation is facing regarding possible ministry completion.
- d. Third, one who embraces an expansive vision of what church **is**, especially in the community.

2. **Position Scope:** _____ Fulltime _____ ¾ time _____ ½ time ___ 1/4 ___ X * see Compensation / Sunday Plus SNEUCC description

3. **Position Duration:** 2-5 years _____

4. **Is the Designated Term Pastor eligible for the settled position?** _____ Y _____ X N/A

If yes, how will that be discerned? By mutual discernment and agreement with the Church Council, we will continually review the position and the church's status and longevity. But it is not anticipated that this will result in a settled pastor 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, likely legacy.

1. Please choose all the reasons for choosing a Designated Term Pastor that applies to you.

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

In a paragraph or two, explain how you discerned that a Designated Term model is right for the church at this time.

Our 1829 brick church suffered a devastating fire in 2017 and the congregation made the difficult decision to take it down. We replaced it with an energy efficient multi-use facility that will serve us and future community needs. Our new building will likely outlast our congregation. We held our first service in the new facility in December 2019 and in March of 2020 the pandemic forced us to close the building. Sadly, we lost many members, including our pastor, during that time.

Following these events, we embarked upon a transitional period during which we determined our call to serve the communities of Canaan and New Lebanon, NY by opening and inviting outside agencies to use our facility and we opened it for rental. We hired an Administrative Manager to coordinate our communication strategy across multiple platforms, develop our community connections, and schedule and manage our rentals. During this discernment period, we took more responsibility for our own ministry by training in lay caregiving using the UCC’s Called to Care curriculum and strengthening our proficiency to create and lead worship. The latter entails both in-person and on-line services.

This work led us to recognize that we can be more intentional in the way we will engage a pastor and be more judicious in our expectations around the tasks of ministry. This is a (roughly) quarter-time position and the Sunday-plus model in the SNEUCC compensation guidelines is an appropriate description of the way we will engage a pastor’s time and talents. We see a designated term ministry as answering our desire to realize fully our new direction and balance a healthy relationship between pastor and congregation. This new model will evolve, it is flexible, and the compensation will be flexible as well, and we ask the potential pastor’s understanding.

2. Please explain your goals for this period using the table below.

	Goal: with specificity, describe what you hope to accomplish during 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.	Create a Legacy or impact goal. Determine what we want our ‘legacy’ in Canaan to be. How do we want to be remembered?	Through the gathering of our stories from our remembered and researched history, create an impact/legacy statement.	Completion of the statement.

2.	<p>Keep our relationship with local community contacts vibrant and current. Partner with neighboring churches and local faith organizations for events. Continue developing our relationship with the Town Supervisors and other community leaders to keep our presence in people’s minds, and to keep us aware of ongoing needs of the community. Have an integrated communication program to keep the congregation and our wider community informed of events and programs in the church and in the community.</p>	<p>Network (part of the Admin Manager’s job) and encourage/open up building use for programs and community events. Invite neighborhood participation wherever possible. Table at events such as Canaan Day and other gatherings. Participate in Interfaith services and similar events and groups. The majority of this work is completed by congregational members and the Admin Manager and is well underway. The Pastor generally participates in Interfaith Services and advises. He/she/they may participate in some meetings and events.</p>	<p>We successfully stage two or three events a year (Community Sings, e.g.) as well as the on-going events. There is positive feedback from the congregation, community members and the local press.</p>
3.	<p>Sustain our own spiritual life and creativity in the remaining years of the church. Craft creative worship and offer community events such as Sings and or lectures and artistic events.</p>	<p>Lay worship leaders keep exploring new worship styles and resources; the Worship and Liturgy group is active and crafts lay liturgy that is inventive and meaningful. The Pastor helps build confidence in laity to create and lead worship.</p>	<p>Monitor building usage and types of events we’ve been able to host. Document increasing usage. Positive feedback from lay-led worship services. Lay members are willing to lead and encouraged to do so.</p>
4.	<p>Honor our traditions and celebrate our stories, especially through engaging our elders. Create a fellowship structure that encourages and welcomes participation of our elders as a joyful, if poignant, part of the ministry completion/legacy process. Encourage lay people to organize and structure this gathering of elders to meet the needs of the participants (timing,</p>	<p>Find ways to preserve the many contributions of the church to the community and to our lives. The members will engage in ensuring the record of the many contributions of the church to the community and group and individual accomplishments is recorded and preserved. The many “firsts” in our church will be noted and documented.</p>	<p>A record is created, perhaps video/audio/two-dimensional record. A location for this document/video or whatever shape it takes is established. It reflects both current and past members and becomes a valuable tool /historical document for remembrance.</p>

	<p>location, format, etc.). We value our elders, their memories and wisdom, and wish to have them/us fully involved. Create and record group and individual accomplishments and the many “firsts” in our church. Encourage elders to share the pain and difficulty of the ministry completion process and face together the practical reality without bitterness or misconceptions. Encourage the emergence of new ways of connection while preventing isolation.</p>		
5.	<p>Care for Each Other. Maintain a supportive and holistic relationship with the congregation that keeps us sustained through the legacy process and gives us life after ministry completion.</p>	<p>This is the work of the entire congregation and staff. Utilize supportive language. Help each other find the right words and attitudes. Define tasks and eliminate unnecessary and burdensome work. Later, begin to look for alternative worship venues so our worship life may continue after church closure, if that is the result of our discernment process.</p>	<p>We will know if this is successful if members continue to engage with the church until the legacy process is complete and they have developed worship opportunities for the post closure future.</p>
6.	<p>Make Wise Use of Assets. Assess our resources with financial professionals and make the necessary financial changes; continue to get our corporate documents in order. Fulfill legal and procedural obligations to the state and local governments, as well as to regional and national church authorities.</p>	<p>Assess the financial investments and make changes as necessary given the stage of life the church is in. Be sure deeds, surveys, rights-of-way, maps and all pertinent documents are current and available. (This is currently in process). Make a budget/timeline for the legacy process. Get the few restricted funds unrestricted, if possible.</p>	<p>Budget and timeline are complete, and paperwork is in order. We know the procedures and obligations necessary for ministry completion should that be our next steps.</p>

Who We Are

In a paragraph or two for each item, please provide the following.

Church's Mission Statement:

OUR STATEMENT OF MISSION

**To encourage spiritual exploration
and build inclusive community;
To share our talents and gifts
in service to our world;
Humbly following Christ's example.**

OPEN AND AFFIRMING STATEMENT

**Following the spirit and inclusive way of Jesus,
we embrace the diversity of God's creation.
We welcome people of any sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnic, cultural,
or economic background, and ability.
Everyone is invited to participate fully in our worship
and in the ministry of the Canaan Congregational Church.**

Brief Church History: The Canaan Congregational Church has a long history of strong lay leadership and relatively short-term pastorates since the late 1980s. The short length of these pastorates was positive in that we were a launching pad for newly ordained clergy who, in several cases, continue to serve with distinction in other ministry settings. Through these, we gained flexibility, playfulness and adaptability, which has contributed to our resiliency. Much of our congregation is comprised of well-educated, retired, or close-to-retirement professionals, including those with long careers in social work, education, finance, and engineering. We are generous and socially responsible, justice-minded people, liberal leaning and politically aware. Our vote to become Open and Affirming was unanimous.

Additionally, the Church has a commitment to environmental stewardship. We diligently worked to attain a "Green Congregation" (Level One) environmental status, which was conferred to us by Rev. Jim Antal, Conference President, in 2016, an admirable task in a (then) 185-year-old brick building. We undertook as a ministry publishing a Directory of Environmental Organizations, completed in 2017, held an Interfaith Celebration for the Earth, and hosted a controversial community-wide forum related to natural gas pipeline expansion.

The town of Canaan is situated in the Berkshire-Taconic range within a 2-hour drive from both New York City and Boston. More than half the homes in Canaan are second homes. Of the full-time residents, many are aging and are retired. There are few families with children, but in the summer the population increases by 50%, including many families with children.

Creating Space Arts and Spirituality Collective, a ministry of the Canaan Congregational Church, was a spirituality and arts collective, which cultivated an openness to

the sacred and encouraged people to communicate with one another through the medium of artistic expression, has been suspended for now.

1. 2-3 Significant Events:

- The most significant event in recent years was the *devastating fire of November 2017*, when our 1829 brick church burned due to faulty electrical wiring. Eventually, it was determined that structurally it could not be rebuilt, and we voted to have it demolished and build a new facility. Working closely with our architect, we built a flexible, adaptable, energy-efficient building with the insurance proceeds. We opened the building for worship two weeks before Christmas 2019 but shut our doors at the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. Virtual worship began, and we reopened with hybrid worship in mid-2021, which continues to this day.
- From June 2019 through December 2020, we suffered the *loss of many members from death*, including the death of our pastor, Rev. Dr. Charles Close. Of our 44 members, 9 died during that time period. Several other members have moved. Totally, we lost one third of the congregation in a short time, and many more simply have not returned to attend church since the pandemic.
- *We are once again in transition.* After the death of Rev. Close and the departure of Rev. Fox, our designated term pastor following him, we entered into a period of discernment under transitional pastor Rev. Quentin Chin. It has been a time of developing lay-led worship and strengthening leadership of the core group in pastoral care and in management. We have begun talking about ministry completion and legacy, although we are open to new directions as well.

Church Strengths:

- We have resilient, competent, and intelligent lay leadership.
- We are adaptable and agile in management style and worship, and continually adjust ourselves to our reality.
- Our building is beautiful, energy-efficient, and flexible. We worked closely with our architect to create a sacred space that is acoustically and aesthetically uplifting and welcoming and has flexibility for the future.
- We welcome varied worship. For example, our annual Poetry Sunday (where we share poems at an outdoor picnic), a water communion (where we bring waters that have meaning to us—perhaps from summer travels—and mingle them), and occasionally hold Taizé meditations, *lectio divina*, and similar contemplative and meditative sessions.
- We have no mortgage or debt.
- We are realistic about our status.

Church Challenges:

- Our membership is small and getting smaller.
- The majority of our members are 60 years and older.

- We have few people to fill volunteer jobs and need to be flexible and creative to manage effectively.
- We rely on volunteers for many things, but must employ people for certain tasks for which we cannot find volunteers: management, bookkeeping, cleaning, etc. This is an additional strain on our budget.
- While we have been financially stable because of favorable investment returns, we are heavily dependent on our reserves, which is not sustainable for more than a few years.

Experience of Conflict:

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)

Please explain why you chose this level.

We value our shared history and have a commitment to democratic and shared decision making. We make every effort to address problems in a timely and constructive manner. We do not let differences remain. We recognize that our church consists of individuals who may not always have the same approach. We value our differences and see that as a strength.

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

Major decisions are made by the congregation at annual and/or special congregational meetings which may be called to address critical concerns (e.g., next steps after the 2017 building fire). This process allows for individual expression of concerns and disagreement, constructive discussion, discernment, and consensual resolution. Mutual respect, willingness to listen, and exercise of prayerful patience allow our congregation to minimize conflict and personal disappointment.

Basic Church Statistics
Yearly average

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	44	19–20	1	6–8
Current year	37	10	0	8

	Income	Overall Budget Expense	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	51,853	60,753	4,236	205,394

Current year	34,170	79,634	2,500	230,392*
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* As of December 31, 2023

Compensation

Expectation: Prepare and lead worship two Sundays a month (plus whatever special services we mutually agree upon) at \$300 per service, plus per-hour services at \$50/hour for the following (approx. 15-25 hours per month):

- Working with the Church Council and congregation in our Ministry completion and orderly conclusion including monthly evening Church Council Meetings via Zoom and/or discernment sessions after worship services
- Advising and guiding the lay Called to Care and Worship and Liturgy groups in their work via evening Zoom meetings generally once a month
- Occasional Pastoral Care
- Attend Berkshire Association and SNEUCC meetings or events
- Other duties as agreed including attending local and regional Interfaith and ecumenical events, and/or conducting study or specialized groups

The Canaan Congregational Church pays the Employer’s portion of FICA, and carries a Disability and Workers’ Compensation policy for all employees.

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation. We based this on an hourly figure that was close to a full-time salary according to the Clergy Compensation Guidelines, and more than what Supply Pastors in our area are currently being paid. Given the recommendation that churches in Ministry Completion / Legacy consideration keep between \$50-60,000 in reserve for “closing costs” and given that our income is less than half our anticipated expenditures since the pre-pandemic years, we cannot guarantee a higher income at this time. We believe this would give us three to five years to work on our goals.

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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.

 Susan W. Bues
 Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

May 28, 2024
 Date