

**Linden Ponds Community Church
203 Linden Ponds Way
Hingham, MA 02043**

Profile for Search for

Pastor

Start Date: January 1, 2025

**United Church of Christ
Southern New England Conference
Pilgrim Association
The Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut,
Area Conference Minister
kogutp@sneucc, 508-244-4416**

July 1, 2024

**Linden Ponds Community Church
203 Linden Ponds Way
Hingham, MA 02043
UCC Profile for Pastoral Search - 2024**

1. A short description of who you are as a church

We are a dynamic and unique church seeking to grow in faith and numbers, drawn from a diverse membership across many Christian denominations and multiple professions. We seek a creative and compassionate leader who will carry us forward, utilizing the wealth of religious experience and personal wisdom in our Linden Ponds community.

We are an Open and Affirming senior community that welcomes all, no matter where they are on their faith journey. We invite people to “Come as you are.” Our mission is to share God’s love and grace to all who seek a relationship through Christ’s message as found in Scripture. We are committed to hearing words of scripture interpreted for modern living and integrating them into our lives. We are excited about our call to be disciples, reaching into the community in ways that offer mission support to issues of justice and faith. We enjoy community worship, and gathering for fellowship. We recognize that while our bodies may be aging our spirits are still vital and growing in faith.





2. Short summary of the church's history

In November 2014, through a Community Engagement Fund grant from United Church of Christ, Norwell (UCC Norwell) a pastor was provided to the Linden Ponds community to offer a Sunday morning worship service for the Christian community on a trial basis. The gathered community decided it wanted more than just worship, it wanted to function as "Church." Within a year it became financially self-sustaining. We remain in relationship with UCC Norwell as a satellite campus using the name Linden Ponds Community Church. We are looking forward to celebrating our tenth anniversary in November of 2024.

Linden Ponds Community Church (LPCC) serves the spiritual needs of an elder population (62 - 100+ years of age) residing in the Linden Ponds Retirement Community in Hingham, Massachusetts which is part of Erickson Senior Living. Approximately 1400 residents live at Linden Ponds. The United Church of Christ in Norwell provides financial management services, timely reports, and assistance as needed. Linden Ponds Community Church is legally part of United Church of Christ Norwell and the LPCC pastor is considered to be a staff member of UCC Norwell. Occasionally there are opportunities for LPCC and UCC Norwell to collaborate. For example the UCC Norwell choir has given a Christmas concert at Linden Ponds and the LPCC pastor has arranged for Linden Ponds residents to attend activities at UCC Norwell. Linden Ponds Management provides space for Sunday morning worship in the Linden Ponds Performing Arts Center, and office space for the LPCC pastor. LPCC, in return, is expected to provide 10% of its annual budget to mission, and the pastor is asked to provide occasional service to the wider Linden Ponds community. We are very fortunate in the provision by Linden Ponds management to have use of a worship space with no overhead expense.

3. Statistical Summary

- Worship attendance: 50 - 60 (Average 55)
- Total reported membership: 50
- Bible Study participants: 7 - 8
- Members serving on Boards and Committees (not including ad hoc committees or small groups): 17 - 22

Many people who regularly worship and are active in LPCC programs have kept their memberships in their home churches and are not “members” of LPCC.

4. Missions Giving, average over 3 years

We are committed to budgeting 10% of our operating budget for Mission and Outreach, but often give more

- 2022: \$9000* (10% of budget) In addition, \$2000 to UCC denominational support, \$2000 to Ukrainian War Relief, \$700 for Linden Ponds piano benches, and \$1000 to Rose Conservatory in Brockton for music programs for underprivileged children. Total \$14,700.
- 2023: \$9000* (10% of budget) plus \$2000 for UCC denominational support, \$2000 to Linden Ponds Immigrant Support, \$1000 to Linden Ponds Scholarship Fund, \$2000 to Linden Ponds Staff Appreciation Fund. Additional smaller contributions resulted in a total \$17,505
- 2024 \$8500* (10% of budget) plus \$2000 to Linden Ponds Staff Appreciation Fund. It is likely that other missions will be supported. Total \$10,500 +
* 12-14 Grants to Local, Nat'l & International Missions.

5. Results of most recent stewardship campaign compared with previous year:

2022: \$61,527 pledged (and \$18,177 loose offering) against a budget of \$90,595

2023: \$76,825 pledged (and \$14,215 loose offering) against a budget of \$97,430

2024: \$67,475 pledged (and \$14,500 budget loose offering) against a budget of \$97,731

There are 45 pledging units for 2024 and additional income will come by way of loose offering.

6. Numbers Involved in Volunteer Ministries of the Church

- Standing Committee: 9
- Finance Team: 2
- Missions Team: 5
- Ushers/Greeters: 4
- Hospitality/membership: 2
- Altar Guild: 3
- Audio-visual: 3
- Small Fellowship Group leaders: 10

7. Staff members (including the position you are seeking):

- Pastor - Rev. Deborah M. Spratley
- Minister of Music - Joan Nahigian (non-contracted)

8. Describe the mission and or purpose of your church:

Mission Statement: We are a senior, Christ-centered, faith-based community church that welcomes all. Our purpose is to provide opportunities for worship, for mission outreach, for fellowship, and for strengthening our personal faith.

The Linden Ponds Community Church is a multi-denominational church that provides the opportunity for senior-community residents to engage in weekly worship and Bible study on campus, and mission opportunities both on and off campus. While some who move to the community may maintain relationships with previous churches, many are also grateful they can attend Sunday morning worship on campus. We are here to share our faith journeys and transitions in supportive ways. We are committed to pastoral and spiritual support for those who are experiencing events that come with aging such as declining health, failing memories, loss of loved ones and transitions to other living arrangements. We see ourselves as part of the spiritual ethos of service and commitment to kindness that infuses the entire Linden Ponds community - staff and residents alike.

9. Describe the ongoing pastoral responsibilities of the pastor you are seeking:

This is a 25 hour/week position for a pastor who enjoys worship leadership and a pastoral ministry. A survey taken by the Search Committee (58 respondents) indicates that, by far, the major activities of an incoming pastor will be “pastoral care of individuals” and “sermon preparation.” The ministry is focused on guiding and walking with an aged population in faith, supporting issues related to aging with compassion, honesty and a sense of humor.

Ongoing pastoral responsibilities include:

- Sermon preparation and preaching
- Planning worship and coordination with the Minister of Music
- Visiting LPCC members at their apartments, hospitals, and advanced care facilities
- Supporting our efforts to build the congregation; possibly expanding activities at times and places other than the Performing Arts Center on Sunday mornings.
- Working co-operatively with the Linden Ponds Pastoral Ministries Coordinator and participating in spiritual offerings in the Linden Ponds community.
- Maintaining ongoing staff relationships and communication with leadership at UCC Norwell (One staff meeting/month, 3 - 4 Council meetings/year, ongoing updating with Lead Pastor at UCC - Norwell.)
- Leading weekly Bible Study
- Meeting monthly with the Standing Committee
- Meeting with and providing resources for lay leadership
- Attending to administrative functions

10. Describe the challenges you are facing as a church and how you hope your pastor will work with you to meet these challenges.

We seek a pastor who will enjoy the challenge and excitement of working with a diverse and aging group of people who are spiritually hungry, faithful and faith-filled, and rejoicing in community worship. We seek a pastor who will build upon our needs, dreams, and wisdom. We seek a pastor who will help us discern where our gifts might still be used - in the church and in the community. We have an undercurrent of yearning for community. Our greatest strength is caring for others.

11. Every congregation has conflict. Describe how your congregation has dealt with conflict.

During its ten year history Linden Ponds Community Church has been fortunate to avoid any significant conflict. Occasionally people join us for worship and decide that our theological stance is not what they are seeking. A few people have left because they disagree with a position that the pastor has taken in a sermon. During the early years of LPCC there was conflict over the financial relationship between LPCC and UCC-Norwell. For example, the Opportunity Fund* grew substantially the first few years and UCC-Norwell questioned it. LPCC members perceived this questioning negatively. (As the UCC-Norwell pastor explained, in meeting with the Standing Committee, the UCC-Norwell concern was that there should not be a large sum of money that was not being used.) The UCC moderators and the LPCC treasurer met and agreed that the Opportunity Fund would be capped at \$50,000. However it was perfectly appropriate for the Standing Committee to spend funds (such as a contribution to Linden Ponds philanthropies) so that amount never went over \$50,000. Since that time the LPCC Treasurer and the UCC-Norwell Director of Finance and Operations have worked together very cooperatively and collaboratively.

*The Opportunity Fund is essentially an “excess and deficiency” fund. In years when LPCC takes in more money than it spends, the excess goes to the Opportunity Fund. Additionally members have made bequests to LPCC and these funds have gone into the Opportunity Fund. In years when expenses exceed income, the deficiency comes from the Opportunity Fund.

12. Describe the gifts, talents, and skills and leadership style you are looking for in your next pastor.

This is a one-of-a-kind, pastoral experience which will require a unique set of gifts and skills. We are searching for someone to lead and inspire a membership with the spiritual and emotional needs of an aging Christian population. These are our hopes for the right candidate:

- The candidate will be a gifted, inspiring Biblical preacher of Christ’s message who is able to relate God’s word to modern times. Good story telling skills will be a plus. The most important quality expected of a prospective pastor, according to our survey, is “a good preacher.”
- The candidate will have an adaptive personality with a flexible, informal ministerial approach able to meet a senior population’s needs.
- The candidate will possess a leadership vision for the future to sustain and grow the membership.
- The candidate may be at a ministry point in life where a “full, formal, church experience” is no longer necessary and would celebrate not having to attend evening meetings.

- The candidate will be able to empathize with the concerns of an aging population. The person will have open, patient, nonjudgemental pastoral listening skills infused with a sense of humor. The candidate will be sensitive to those experiencing difficult health, life, relationship, disability and transition issues.
- The candidate will be comfortable with life and death issues.
- The candidate should be able to successfully interact with staff in two communities, UCC Norwell, and the Leadership staff of Linden Ponds management.
- The candidate should be willing to commit to a term of ministry that allows for the development of strong ongoing relationships with the community.

Our survey asked what might disqualify a pastor. The responses consistently showed that we value open-minded leaders who are understanding of people who are different.

13. Describe the compensation you are offering. If less than full-time, specify the hours to be worked:

Annual Compensation for this 25 hour position includes the following components which the Pastor will allocate as appropriate: Salary, Housing Allowance, Pension (14% of S & HA), SECA Allowance (SS Offset). Compensation is offered at \$55,000 - \$59,000 based upon background and relevant pastoral experience.

14. References

Rev. Leanne S. Walt (781-659-2887 Ext.12) lwalt@uccnorwell.org
Leanne is Lead Pastor of United Church of Christ Norwell

Becky Mokos (781-534-7280) becky.mokos@erickson.com
Becky is Linden Ponds Pastoral Ministries Manager

Rev. Chuck Wildman (781-385-7678) chuckwildman329@gmail.com
Chuck is a resident of Linden Ponds and member of United Church of Christ Norwell. He is a retired UCC church pastor and area conference minister

15. Summary

We are a community of individuals, each with our own story, seeking to celebrate our lives while at the same time reaching out to family, friends, and Linden Ponds neighbors to bring richness to the time yet available to us. Nonetheless we are dreamers, holding dear to the future, and search for a pastor able to speak of God's will with enthusiasm, touch us as individuals, and always remind us of God's forgiveness through Christ.