

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

### Church Contact Information

Full Name: First Congregational Church, North Adams, UCC  
Address: 134 Main St., North Adams, MA 01247  
Website: <https://firstchurchnorthadams.org> (under redevelopment)

Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England  
Association: Berkshire  
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa  
ACM email: [OgawaTY@sneucc.org](mailto: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).*

In 2027 First Congregational Church, North Adams will celebrate its bicentennial. Although steeped in our history and tradition, we at FCCNA are more widely recognized for our abundant welcoming spirit. Our worship gives voice to all. Those present in the sanctuary, new members zooming in from the Midwest, and absent snowbirds worship and chat together each Sunday via our innovative, hybrid services. Although our once-thriving mill town has declined economically, North Adams is a charming and inventive city, nestled among beautiful mountains, and anchored by a world-class contemporary art museum and a small, public, and affordable liberal arts college. Our congregation, largely composed of retired professionals (medicine, education/academics, finance, social services, industry), values mission. In 2023, we succeeded in quadrupling our own resources through strategic fundraising campaigns to alleviate local hunger, provide Syrian relief, and mount a Juneteenth street fair to celebrate our neighbors of color. Since 1987, Berkshire Food Project has operated out of our fellowship hall, serving a total of 85,385 meals in 2023. Our music director organizes choral concerts 2–3 times a year, which draw their audiences from the community and whose freewill offerings benefit local social service agencies. Music is also central to our worship services, which tend toward the traditional. Periodic potlucks, women’s gatherings, mission activities, book discussion

groups, and after-church coffee time unite us in fellowship. To sustain our life as a congregation—our central intention—we sold our 10 Tiffany windows and an auxiliary building in 2018. In the future we seek to create a worship model that fully reflects our abundant spirit and offers flexibility to pastor and congregation alike; realize the potential of our historic property; strengthen our community outreach; and offer a space where all comers can feed their spiritual needs and curiosities.

2. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your DTP.
  - Preaching. A thoughtful, spiritual approach to preaching, based in scripture, that also addresses current issues.
  - Pastoral care. Pastoral care that extends to the entire congregation, not just the sick and bereaved.
  - Collaborative approach. A willingness, indeed eagerness, to work with our active laity to solve problems.
  
3. Position Scope: \_\_\_\_\_ Fulltime \_\_\_x\_\_\_ ¾ time      \_\_\_\_\_ ½ time      \_\_\_\_\_ ¼ time
  
4. Position Duration: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 years \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Is the DTP eligible for the settled position? \_\_\_x\_\_\_ Y      \_\_\_\_\_ N

If yes, how will that be discerned?

- The DTP will conduct an annual self-evaluation that articulates progress, identifies problems or the potential for problems, and states opportunities for growth for the DTP and for the congregation.
- The Council will conduct an annual evaluation of the DTP that articulates progress, identifies problems or the potential for problems, and states opportunities for growth for the DTP and for the congregation.
- One year before the DTP is scheduled to complete service to FCCNA, Council will develop a survey process with the entire congregation to determine levels of satisfaction, future goals, and if the DTP is a good fit for FCCNA.
- Communicate those findings with the DTP no later than 6 months prior to their defined departure date.

## **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.

Our current pastor, who has served in her position for 10 years, is part-time (20–25 hours per week). Due to our lack of awareness of shifting Conference guidelines regarding part-time ministry, we appeared uncaring and unyielding to our pastor. When tensions emerged, the Council engaged in an intensive, quarter-year discernment process, ending with a month-long engagement with the entire congregation, during which the pastor was invited to share her vision. Ultimately her vision and that of the congregation diverged, and she chose to retire one year before her already scheduled departure date. Our relationship with her remains convivial and mutually supportive. With the DTP, we hope to deepen our discernment process and begin to take action on a number of fronts. The areas we determined we need to explore and address are: our relationship with and expectations of our part-time pastor; our outreach to the community; new opportunities for worship; our capacity to support our church building; and our communication with the public (website; social media; press). We understand and seek to confront our fundamental reality: we are an aging congregation occupying an aging building. That said, we are a wonderfully vibrant body of worshipers and community activists who continue to attract and nurture new parishioners.

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

	<b>Goal:</b> with specificity, describe what you hope to accomplish during this time.	<b>Commitment:</b> describe how the congregation will prioritize and participate in reaching this goal?	<b>Assessment:</b> describe how the congregation will know the goal has been accomplished
1.	Develop a worship model with the DTP that looks toward the future, allows for flexibility for a part-time pastor’s priorities as well as opportunities for innovation, and that serves the congregation’s needs.	A committee has been established by the congregation to investigate alternative worship models. The Council and DTP will monitor the committee’s progress and arrange a quarterly or semiannual, post-service report and check-in for the entire congregation, perhaps sweetened by a potluck.	The congregation and pastor are demonstrably content and communicating well as new models are explored and tested.

2.	Make significant progress toward selling the church building or dedicating it to community use.	A committee has been established by the congregation to investigate opportunities for using, renting, and/or selling the building. The Council and DTP will monitor the committee's progress and arrange a quarterly or semiannual, post-service report and check-in for the entire congregation, perhaps sweetened by a potluck.	We will have a partner(s) who helps us maintain the building, or we will have sold it and moved to a new space.
3.	Use our financial, personal, and spiritual resources for the betterment of our community.	Our mission activity is admirable, but it is finance-centered, not people-centered. We hope to build congregational support for a long-term, hands-on project that directly serves our community, however that community is defined.	We will have developed a relationship that is ongoing and attracts individuals from beyond our congregation to perpetuate its vision.

## 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 are an open community seeking to grow into Christ's common life of love and service to the world. We covenant to grow in love of God with heart and mind; deepen our prayer with energy and faithfulness; and widen our embrace in Christ's name as we seek God's peace for ourselves, our church, our community, and the world.

2. Brief Church History:

FCCNA can trace its Congregational heritage to the original settlement of East Hoosuck. There, at Hodges Crossroad, which divided the northern and southern areas of the township, Congregationalists built a modest meetinghouse in the 1760s. By 1778, the same year in which East Hoosuck was incorporated as Adams (named for Revolutionary patriot Samuel Adams), the pastor was dismissed. The residents of Adams's north and south villages would remain without a Congregational church for almost 50 years.

Prosperity, it seems, stirred the spirit. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, Adams was building mills and attracting immigrants. Churches of all denominations were

being established and housed in buildings of varying degrees of opulence. FCCNA was formed in 1827 (a Congregational church would form in south village in 1840); our current building, built under the direction of a committee and furnished with gifts from wealthy mill owners, was dedicated in 1865. Our beautiful Rose Window was installed that year. The current pipe organ, an Aeolian-Skinner instrument, was donated by the James Hunter family. Church membership was comprised of those aforementioned mill owners and their workers. In 1878, the two villages that originally formed East Hoosuck voted to split, and North Adams was separately incorporated as a town that year, then reincorporated as a city in 1895. Our church sits at Monument Square, the heart of Steeple City, as North Adams has long been called.

Each pastor through the years has lent their own personality and theological perspective to the congregants. Perhaps most noted among them was Rev. Washington Gladden (1866–71), author of the hymn “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee,” who was strongly committed to social justice. For the next century, the church thrived, responding to world events and local issues. In 1960, an Education Building was built to accommodate the large number of children who were attending church.

Now, almost two centuries on, our church is again at a crossroad. With declining interest in organized religion and an aging membership, we must continue our discernment process and decide how to move forward into the future. With assistance from the DTP, we seek to become “the best little church we can be.”

### 3. 2-3 Significant Events:

- Selling assets to perpetuate our existence.—In 2018, FCCNA sold a significant part of its legacy—its 10 Tiffany windows and its Christian Education Building—to prolong its existence as a caring, welcoming, and community-focused group of faithful Christians. The funds resulting from those sales now comprise our endowment, from which we must draw each year to help fund operations. We need to determine how to balance our frugality (our desire to preserve our funds and, thus, our longevity) with our call to serve and to adequately compensate our staff.
- Creating community via Zoom.—When Covid hit, talented and dedicated members of our congregation stepped up. Soon one member, then two, then three developed power-point presentations featuring compelling and inspiring images to enhance scripture and hymns. When we returned to the sanctuary, the challenge was how to bring off-site attendees, accustomed to participating equally via a Zoom-only service, into the full life of the church, especially our prayers of joy and concern, a crucial element in our worship together. Our talented team made it work, and we are the better for it. Each Sunday, in-church parishioners and folks zooming from their homes all get to share what is on their hearts, which binds us together as a faithful community grateful for the blessings of Christ.
- Building capacity for mission.—In 2022, we introduced a separate allocation for missions on annual pledge cards. Of the total in the years then to now, pledging for missions has climbed from 8% to 12%. Each year, the Missions Ministry attempts to leverage the funds entrusted to it to attract additional monies to donate to local agencies like the Berkshire Food Project (our primary mission for over 35 years), Louison House (which serves houseless individuals), and the Friendship Center Food Pantry, as well as international initiatives like World Central Kitchen and Syrian relief. We have also strived to increase our visibility around matters that energize us, including racial justice, Pride, and the preservation of our democracy.

### 4. Church Strengths:

- All are welcome; all are cared for.—We understand that the burden to adapt is on us! After welcome comes care, and finding ways to do that is not always easy. During the isolation of

Covid, we recognized the necessity of community. We divided the congregation into “pods” of 8–10 persons and encouraged each individual, insofar as they were able, to perform an act of kindness from time to time for others in their pod: drop off a batch of cookies, send a card, make a call, or visit from afar. That strategy helped us feel connected and supported during a time of national emergency.

- Worship is expansive.—Once we developed our Zoom worship model, we attracted participants at a distance. While not wanting to overstate our reach, we have attracted new members who have enhanced our community in many, many ways.
- Mission is ongoing and vital.—Despite our best intentions, mission spending and activities had fallen off in the 2010s. The needs are great, and so revitalizing our role in the community and in the world was embraced as a priority in the aftermath of Covid. Once a request was made to allocate a portion of one’s pledge to mission, over half of the congregation (despite ongoing concerns about funding our operating budget) did so.
- Music grounds worship and delights our community.—Our gifted music director brings spiritual, musical, and intellectual depth to our Sunday services, and he has identified musicians outside of the congregation to build a program for the community at large. The chorale enlivens our presence in North Adams and brings recognition to community needs at each performance by promoting a particular social service agency, which then receives the concert’s freewill offering.

#### 5. Church Challenges:

- Our church building is draining our financial resources.—However beloved it may be, our church building is costly to maintain, and it is underutilized. That said, it is also home to our key mission partner, Berkshire Food Project. We hope to find a way to square our needs and commitments.
- Our expectations for pastoral leadership have not kept pace with the times.—We have been told that our expectations for ministry are unrealistic. That may well be so, but the Church Council has worked assiduously to find ways to support our part-time pastor. We clearly need a new model, one that will be carefully articulated, broadly disseminated, and universally embraced.
- Our mission activities are largely driven by finances, not by people.—While we are proud of what we have accomplished and understand that money *can* make problems go away, we long for a commitment that is hands-on, consistent, demonstrably helpful, and integrated into the life of our congregation.
- We are aging but remain vibrant.—There is much we did before that we no longer can do: holiday bazaars, plant sales, weekly church school, beautifying the church grounds with our own labor. But we are smart, gifted, and eager to contribute to our church, community, and world. How do we tap our potential? We hope that the DTP will inspire and energize us.

#### 6. Experience of Conflict:

- As we entered the 2010s, the congregation struggled with how to fund its operations. Selling the 10 Tiffany windows that graced our sanctuary had been contemplated but was a contentious idea. In 2017, an art agent approached the church with an offer. An independent appraisal confirmed the significant value of our asset. Throughout 2017, the congregation conducted meetings, open to the public, in which we debated this life-changing decision. A formal vote passed with a 2/3 majority, but some long-time church members were upset. Because the decision-making process was robust, democratic, and transparent and because the pastor and moderator reached out to unhappy congregants with understanding and compassion, no one left the church over this difficult issue. In a gesture of honor and care,

professional photographs of all windows were taken; large-scale images, which congregants were invited to underwrite, were then created and hung in the sanctuary, each with its own placard that provides the original memorial inscription.

- In late 2022, our pastor began to express some serious dissatisfaction with her position. Communication broke down between her and the Council. The Council entered into an intense discernment process in which we attempted to come to terms with the needs of and expectations concerning part-time ministry and, over a 4-week process, to assess the congregation's needs and wants. As stated above, the pastor decided and the congregation understood that her position at FCCNA no longer fulfills her professionally, and so we are parting ways with respect, abiding gratitude for her time with and service to us, and good wishes that she find a new, gratifying means of sharing her considerable talents.

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.

Our congregation is skilled at and committed to building consensus in addressing the problems we face.

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

Our process can be described as follows:

- Identify the problem.
- Research, analyze, and frame the problem.
- Hold forums to discuss possible solutions and invite input.
- Determine what decisions need to be made and when.
- Submit proposed decision(s) to a democratic vote.
- Follow up with grace to bring dissenters back into the fold.

### **Basic Church Statistics** *Yearly average*

	Church Membership (Covenant only)	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	64	c. 45	7 children; 1 youth	10
Current year	62	c. 45	6 children; 3 youth	15

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$188,990	\$186,257	\$500	\$1,638,353

Current year	\$245,436	\$240,918	\$5,775, leveraged to \$24,923	\$1,530,617
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\*Note: We have defined pre-pandemic as 2019.

## Compensation

**Total Compensation Package Amount or Range:** \_\_\_\_\_ \$50,000–60,000 range \_\_\_\_\_

Package offered: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered  
**(choose only one)**     Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)\*  
 \*Benefits—experience increment, housing allowance, health insurance, vacation, protected time off—are negotiated with the candidate.

Housing:  
 Housing allowance only  
 Parsonage only  
 Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

We prepared a compensation worksheet as supplied by the SNEUCC, but also prepared a second worksheet to reflect the economic circumstances of our community. The annual baseline household income for Berkshire County is \$69,744, while that of the City of North Adams is almost \$20,000 lower: \$49,884. To calculate what we consider to be a fair wage for a 3/4 time position in our community, we propose using an adjusted median annual income of \$59,800 (which falls midway between the county and city medians). Preparing an SNEUCC compensation worksheet from that baseline (\$59,800), a pastoral salary of \$55,000 annually would amount to 71 percent of a full-time salary (\$77,740), according to SNEUCC guidelines, with an expected commitment of 25–32 hours a week. We have not included an “experience increment” but are willing to negotiate that benefit in addition to others such as health insurance, vacation time, and protected weekly time off.

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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.

Anne Urban, Moderator, FCCNA

June 23, 2024

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Signature of Search Committee Chairperson  
*(typed is sufficient)*

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Date