

## FOR LOCAL CHURCHES SEEKING LEADERSHIP IN AN INTERIM TIME

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.

*Lorraine A Russell*

Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

January 8, 2025

Date

Name: Hope Congregational Church UCC

Address: 120 Wampanoag Trail, East Providence, RI 02914

Telephone: (401) 434-2415

Website: <https://afosterri.org/hopecongr/>

Date of Vacancy: September 7, 2024



Ministry flows from mission. The interim time in the life of a congregation is an opportunity to gain clarity on the church's mission.

**What is your local church's mission? (Please share your church's mission statement here or name that one needs to be developed):**

***Hope doesn't have a current mission statement. We started the process of rewriting our ByLaws a few years ago, and planned to include a mission statement, but that process remains incomplete.***

To test or develop the mission, the interim time can be guided by three questions:

1. Who are we now?

***We are a church in need of healing, leadership and development of our mission.***

2. Who is our neighbor? Or who are we uniquely equipped to serve?

***Our neighbors are our community and other local Congregational Churches. We are not uniquely equipped to serve any specific population, we serve the entire population as best we can. Previously we held AA meetings, parenting classes, Girl Scouts, NA meetings, Mothers of Twins, Sunshine Boys, and community bible study. We are currently servicing children and families at Trailside Daycare, and have for over 40 years.***

3. Who is God calling us to be?

***God is calling us to be better than we are. We have much growth to do, and are ready for that challenge. We need to increase participation and encourage church members to fulfill leadership roles at church and on committees, we frequently have the same people volunteering for these.***

In addition to asking and responding to the three questions above, what are your Expectations/Primary Goals/Needs for the interim time: (Push yourselves to be precise...this is crucial for your work and ongoing conversation of the assessment/evaluation of the interim time)

***Our expectations, primary goals and needs for the interim time are simplistic: we need to begin the healing process, address the issues that challenge us, and go back to the unity and cooperative work that is Hope Church.***

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

Brief History of the Congregation:

***Hope Congregational Church UCC evolved from the Union Sunday School, which was established in East Providence in 1892. Its members, who included both children and adults, met in the little schoolhouse at the corner of Vincent and Pawtucket Avenues. In 1896, the Ladies Aid Society of Willing Helpers was founded and in May 1899, the Congregational Society of Armington's Corners was formed with twenty-two members signing the Covenant. They met in the schoolhouse, but later moved to the larger Roger Williams Grange Hall on Pawtucket Avenue. A council of Congregational Churches, held in June 1906 granted permission for the organization of a church to be called Hope Congregational. The first Hope Church building on Hazard Avenue was completed and dedicated in 1912. Church members worshiped there until it became inadequate for a growing church school in the early 1950's, and plans for a new building now containing the present Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall were drawn up. Land given to the church on the Wampanoag Trail***

*became the site of a new church built in 1956. In 1967, a large educational wing was added, making possible an even greater outreach of service to the community.*

*The Trailside Preschool and Daycare has been run in partnership with the church for several decades. In May 2020, the Daycare was incorporated as a separate entity, run by a board of directors.*

*Also in 2020, the world was affected by the Covid 19 pandemic. The church was closed from mid March 2020 until May 16, 2021 for in-person worship. Our pastor and music director recorded and posted taped services online during this time. We participated in Zoom coffee hour which gave us opportunities to interact with other church members and friends. Most functions of the church, including Sunday School, committee meetings and annual functions were also shut down. Church members formed a Re-opening Task Force and a Digital Task Force to address the unprecedented effects of the pandemic.*

*The history of Hope Church runs deep in East Providence. We are proud of our church and her history. We have had problems over the years, but have always found peace and love to resolve them. We have a wonderful opportunity to be involved in many community activities and have a positive effect on families, due to the non-profit daycare operating inside the building. This daycare is also part of our history, as it's been operating for several decades.*

**Hope Church members work to continue their Christian leadership in the years to come with prayers, faith and action.**

#### **Church Strengths:**

*One of our major strengths is our diversity; relating to age, race, life choices, and demographics. Our experiences have taught us over the years that we can learn from each other, adding to our own personal growth and our Christian growth. This is an important factor for us, as it makes us better equipped to do God's work here on Earth.*

#### **Significant Events:**

*Hope Church is proud of our history and traditions. We have a yearly Bazaar, which brings out both active and inactive members.*

*We enjoy hosting Conference events, such as the Ordination of The Rev. Cleo Graham, the first person of color to be ordained in the RI conference of the United Church of Christ (2013).*

*We had a wonderful music ministry that lined us with occasional events and soloists from the Providence Gay Men's Choir, under the leadership of Kim Kuda, our Music Director. Kim retired from church music ministry on Sunday, June 25, 2023 to pursue a better work-life balance. On August 20, 2023, we hired Austin Burns as the Music Director for Hope Church.*

Our Challenges:

***One of our challenges is the energy needed to follow through on our plans. We seem to discuss things repeatedly, before taking any action. Once action has begun, there is a wide time gap between action and execution. This is where strong and able leadership will hopefully benefit us. We are spread thin with too many boards and committees, with the same few people to serve. When and if we resume rewriting our ByLaws, we can hopefully streamline these boards and committees, making them both more functional and less time consuming for the members.***

Is there unresolved Conflict in the Church? ☒ Yes    ☐ No

Level of Conflict in Your Church (Low 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 High): 2 \_\_\_\_\_

(As identified by Speed Leas, in a Leadership Magazine article in 1989:

1. **"We have problems to solve, but we can do it!"**
2. **"We're not communicating. There seems to be a low level of trust...but we are talking!"**
3. The focus has changed to "winners/losers!"
4. The goal is "divorce," and getting people to quit. At this level it is wise to seek outside help!
5. Not only wanting others to leave, but seeking revenge!

Was the previous leader a contributor to the conflict? ☒ Yes    ☐ No

If yes, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

***There are a wide range of feelings toward our last leader, some highly negative, while others are highly positive. This is an issue we want to move past during the interim process. We are a family and continue to strive for that feeling of continuity among our membership.***

Generally, the starting place of negotiation for the Compensation Package offered to the Interim Pastor is the same as that of the most recent pastor or what you anticipate offering your new Called Pastor.

Cash Salary offered    **\$28,196**

Conference Compensation Guidelines (salary range): \$ See Conference Guidelines for salary range  
Housing:

☒ Housing allowance only **\$9,304**

☐ Parsonage only

☐ would offer either

☒ Pension Contribution (14% of Base Salary plus housing(\$3) **\$5,250**

☒ Social Security Allowance **\$2,869**

☒ Health Insurance    ☒ Individual    ☐ Family

☒ Dental Insurance    ☒ Individual    ☐ Family

☒ Vacation (1 week per quarter for full time Interim)

☒ Meetings

☒ Business Mileage Reimbursed (IRS Rate)

One time Criminal Background Check fee of **\$160** reimbursed to the Interim Pastor.

Renewable Covenant/Contract will be for:

\_\_\_ 12 months \_\_\_ **X** 18 months \_\_\_ 24 months

Is this full time or part time? part time **(1/2)**

Interim Pastor will be selected by: **Deacon Interim Search Committee**

Once an Interim Pastor has been chosen and a covenant has been signed, please forward the following documents to the MACUCC, Central Association/Western Regional Office, 1 Badger Road, Framingham, MA 01702:

Copies of the Interim Covenant/Contract

Documents outlining the conditions for terminating the covenant/contract.

It is customary that the church or Interim Pastor may terminate the contract only after 60 days notice of such intent.

Suggested Supplemental Materials to send to a candidate:

1. Newsletter [Hope Happenings](#)
2. Worship bulletin [Hope Church Bulletins 2024](#)
3. Annual Report [Hope Congregational Church UCC 2023 Annual Reports](#)
4. Church website [Home - Hope Congregational Church UCC \(afosterri.org\)](#)
5. Church YouTube [Hope Church YouTube](#)
6. Church Facebook [Hope Church Facebook](#)