

## **Interim Minister Position**

### **Bethany UCC, Randolph, VT**

#### **Description of Randolph, VT**

Randolph, a small town of 4,849 in the heart of Vermont, is a well-connected, forward-looking community, home to Vermont State University, a vibrant cultural life, multi-ethnic dining, and close highway and rail links to much more. With all it has to offer, Randolph “punches above its weight” for a community its size.

You know you are entering Randolph as you pass the famous Whales Dance sculpture created by a local artist and look west to the hills of the Green Mountains.

As you come into town, you will pass Bethany Church, Chandler Center for the Arts and Kimball Public Library all built in the early 1900s and still relevant to community life. Downtown Randolph hosts several new restaurants, banks, a bike shop, a craft center, a clothing store, and the oldest continuing operating movie theater in the state of Vermont.

Randolph is home to Gifford Medical Center, a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital and a federally qualified health center. Founded in 1903, Gifford is the largest employer in Randolph and is known for a wide range of patient care options including its cutting edge birthing center. In 2015, Gifford created Morgan Orchards, a senior living community in Randolph Center which is composed of an independent living facility and an award winning nursing home.

The Orange Southwest Supervisory Union oversees three elementary schools and the Randolph Union High School and Technical Career Center. There is also an active homeschool community. Vermont Technical College, part of Vermont State University, is located in Randolph Center and provides both employment and recreational facilities for Randolph residents.

Randolph has always been a center for the arts, with Chandler Music Hall providing space for concerts, musicals, plays, and community gatherings. With the White River Craft Center, an Arts Bus dedicated to children’s art experiences, art galleries and stores, and several artists and composers in residence here, there is an abundance of art and music to be found in town.

Finally, the scenic location of Randolph lends itself to multiple outdoor activities in all seasons. The Ridgeline Outdoor Collective maintains trails for biking and skiing, with VAST snowmobile trails and hiking trails nearby. The Randolph Recreation Department supervises tennis courts, a swimming pool, a skating rink, and provides summer camps for local youth.

In sum, Randolph is a classic, close-knit and welcoming community with strong local institutions and where people care for each other and enjoy a satisfying quality of life.

## **Description of Bethany Church**

Established in 1905, Bethany UCC is an open and affirming church that welcomes all, no matter who they are or where they might be on their faith journey. In 2024, Bethany members adopted a Just Peace Covenant and officially became a Just Peace Church.

Bethany has a history of being active in the community of Randolph with a vibrant ministry of music, volunteerism, and outreach. We were founding members or participants in the Randolph Area Food Shelf, REECH (an ecumenical emergency housing organization), the Chaplaincy program at Gifford Medical Center, and Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity.

We welcome and host community groups and discussions on subjects such as affordable housing, support for LGBTQ+ youth, immigration, and the conflict in Gaza. Our Peace and Justice committee hosts an annual lecture series, the last one featuring Sister Simone from Nuns on the Bus speaking about economic justice.

Recently, we have downsized our physical space for the good of our community. In 2021, a Bethany member reacted to the lack of temporary, emergency housing in Randolph and led the way to create an apartment space in Bethany House, adjacent to the church. Working in conjunction with local social service agencies, this space has become the primary shelter for the unhoused in the Randolph area.

Bethany also recognized the lack of affordable child care in Randolph. Through the hard work of Bethany members, a new, independent child care center was created on the ground floor of Bethany House in 2024. This required Bethany to move all of its operations into the main church building. Rent from the childcare center helps Bethany to maintain a balanced budget.

When Ukraine was invaded by Russia in 2022, members and friends of Bethany Church and our local Rotary Club rekindled the relationship with our sister city, Myrhorod, Ukraine. A request for medical supplies, clothing, and toys for displaced children was made and the response was incredible. In all, Bethany members and the Randolph community have sent three cargo shipments of supplies, toys and money to our Ukrainian friends who have lost so much.

Our spiritual life is rich and deep, with members taking on key parts of the worship service and connecting the teachings of Jesus to the challenges we face today. And we like to have fun! We hold several fundraisers each year, share meals together, enjoy various group activities, and enjoy fellowship times.

Bethany currently has a membership of 150, with an average in-person worship attendance of 40-50 and an additional 12-20 people watching the service streamed on Zoom. As with many churches in the last decade, Bethany has seen its membership age while finding that fewer young people are interested in attending church. We have had to make tough decisions about what we can afford in our youth ministries and music program. However, we have never lost sight of our core belief to make visible the face of God. That belief and the dedication of Bethany members to the church makes us more than ready to face the future with gratitude and optimism.

## **Expectations of an Interim Pastor**

Bethany Church seeks an interim pastor who will walk with us through our time of pastoral transition and guide us as we envision both our short and long-term future as people who aspire to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

We look forward to welcoming a worship leader who will help us deepen our connection to each other and to God. We view our worship services as a time to use the liturgy to help us connect with the challenges of our day, and value a pastor who can touch the spirit within us. Our members contribute to each service as well, by sharing prayers, scripture, and stories reflecting our faith. Being open to lay participation in worship is appreciated.

Pastoral care is an important aspect of ministry and our interim pastor will provide pastoral care to the church including those who are home bound, those in hospital, and members in the local nursing home. In these challenging times, it is important to both listen and to offer reassurance in responding to the anxiety and isolation that some are experiencing.

Bethany is active in community outreach, so an interim pastor should be willing to be aware of community needs and help us address those needs. We would also welcome guidance in helping us discern the best way forward in working with youth and opening our doors to those currently without a church community.

We expect our interim to attend monthly Council and committee meetings and to help church leaders move forward in productive ways.

Since we offer our services through Zoom and have other meetings and gatherings via Zoom and communicate weekly through an online newsletter, we hope an interim pastor will be comfortable with or open to learning about these forms of communication.

In sum, we hope our interim pastor will help us navigate unsettled times in both our church and our nation and help us to live into our commitment as a Just Peace Church and an Open and Affirming congregation.

## **Compensation**

Our hope is to find a full time Interim Pastor to see us through the search and call process. We would plan to offer a full time interim the same salary and benefits that we offer our current pastor, taking into account different needs for housing and health care.

Our 2023-2024 budget total for Pastoral Ministry is \$95,824.

This includes:

Salary \$38,700

Housing \$32,760

Continuing education \$1000

FICA Tax reimburse \$5460

Health life disability \$7400

Pension \$10,004

Professional Expenses \$500

TOTAL. \$95,824