

## Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an Interim Pastor

### Church Information

Full Name: The United Parish of Lunenburg  
Address: 16 Main Street Lunenburg MA 01462  
Website: [unitedparishlunenburg@weebly.com](mailto:unitedparishlunenburg@weebly.com)

Additional Denominational Affiliations: United Methodist Church

UCC Conference: Southern New England  
Association: Central MA Association  
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Carol Steinbrecher  
ACM phone: (508) 244-4887  
ACM email: [steinbrecherc@sneucc.org](mailto:steinbrecherc@sneucc.org)

### Position Details

*In a paragraph or two for each item, please answer the following prompts.*

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 United Parish of Lunenburg (UPL) is located in North Central Massachusetts and is welcoming and accepting to all. UPL alternates between United Methodist and UCC pastors. We support a number of missions and activities: we have a strong music program with a choir director and organist; we support NorthStar Family Services in their mission to provide family shelter and transition services in Leominster; we participate in the North Central Massachusetts Faith Based Community Coalition, which provides meals to the homeless in Fitchburg; and we collaborate with the local Boys & Girls Club on activities such as a victory garden planted on the church's front lawn. Our volunteer-run Faith Formation program puts faith into action climbing a mountain to worship, baking apple crisps for UNICEF, hosting fellowship and game night, and flipping pancakes for Heifer International. Our building is also used by various groups such as the Boy Scouts (we are their sponsor organization), YMCA Aerobics and AA. We run a successful annual gifts and services auction, with 10% of the proceeds donated to North Star Family Services. We have prepared and delivered flood buckets, and contributed to denominational drives, such as One Great Hour of Sharing. We are looking for a pastoral leader who has the ability to work between our two main denominations and who can empower us to journey into the new land where God is calling us.

2. Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your Interim Pastor.

- A well-prepared and inspirational worship leader
- Pastoral care for all members of the congregation, especially the sick and homebound
- Flexibility – A pastor who is open to change as our needs change.

3. What aspects of the 5 tasks of interim ministry (listed in the instructions sheet) do you anticipate being the focus of your interim time?

- Help us obtain the correct mindset for hiring a new pastor.
- Help us determine the near-term goals and needs of our church.

4. Position Scope: ☐ Fulltime ☒ 3/4 time ☐ 1/2 time ☐ 1/4 time

We have budgeted for a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time position. It is important to note we have experience with  $\frac{3}{4}$  time pastors, and work with the pastor regarding setting boundaries so it is truly a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time position. It is important to us that the pastor has time for self-care.

5. Position Duration: ☐ 12 months ☐ 18 months ☐ other 2 – 3 years

We hope to have a new seated pastor in approximately 2 years but willing to take more time if needed.

### **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*):

The United Parish of Lunenburg is a community learning to follow Jesus, growing in faith, love, and service, and welcoming and accepting all regardless of race, sexual orientation, or gender identity. We are an Open and Affirming UCC church and a Reconciling Methodist church.

Our congregation is affiliated with two Protestant denominations: the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church. People in the congregation usually join one of these two denominations when they become members, although some choose to become members simply of the United Parish. Our connections with the UCC and the UMC make us a part of two worldwide churches, diverse in membership and powerful in mission. We are proud to be an ecumenical shared ministry.

2. Brief Church History:

The United Parish of Lunenburg was created in 1949 by yoking two thriving UCC and UMC congregations under what has become known as the "Lunenburg Plan." Under this plan, the churches later agreed to alternate between the two denominational pastors. Our church building is located prominently in the center of Lunenburg. It is a colonial New England structure of the early

meetinghouse style, built in 1844, and owned by our UCC congregation. The sanctuary conveys an atmosphere of beauty, simplicity, and welcome.

Typically, we alternate between UCC and UMC pastors approximately every 7-10 years. (This is a historical pattern, and not a written rule.) We have had two UMC pastors over the past 10 years. The church membership has voted to change from the current UMC pastor to a UCC pastor.

We own a parsonage that would be available to an interim if needed for housing or hosting church meetings/functions. It is a two-story home located on the same street as the church with four bedrooms, one and one-half bathrooms, and a two-car garage situated on a large grassy lot.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

- a. In response to COVID we were able to offer worship services online, encouraging continued participation and attracting new members. This has resulted in ongoing online participation for those who are unable to attend worship in person.
- b. We made the unanimous decision to sell our Parish Building, which held our offices, function hall, kitchen, classrooms, and a small chapel. We moved the offices to the lower level of the church and rearranged our sanctuary to allow more flexibility in building use.
- c. We made a significant long-term financial commitment to North Star Family Services in support of the construction of 15 units for homeless families in transition.

4. Church Strengths:

- Strong lay leadership
- Strong music program
- Strong community outreach programs
- Both denominations work well together
- The church is in a strong and growing community
- Our church building is part of the identity of the Town of Lunenburg
- A balanced budget and reserve funds to cover unexpected or large capital expenses

5. Church Challenges:

- The congregation is aging and getting smaller. We have few young families and youth participation has diminished over the last few years.
- The need for pastoral care is growing as our membership ages.
- We lack diversity. However, our membership does mirror the community's demographics.
- We would like to better understand how we can make more meaningful connections in the community. What are we not seeing? Who are we not serving? How can we do more?
- We invite assistance in developing our vision for the present and near future.

6. Experience of Conflict:

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.

Like any group of any size, we sometimes disagree. However, we have found success in discussing issues openly and striving for consensus.

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

We value and respect each other's opinions. Although we may agree to disagree sometimes, we are able to come to a compromise or consensus. For example, when the members voted to move from our current UMC pastor to a UCC pastor, a meeting was held, church members had a healthy discussion, and a vote was taken. Everyone accepted the decision and agreed to move forward in a spirit of unity.

## Basic Church Statistics

### *Yearly average*

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	168	54	16	No record
Actuals 2024 FYE	148	35-50 in person 5-15 online	No record	No record

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$197,804	\$197,804	\$21,368	\$429,475
Actuals 2024 FYE	\$193,178	\$190,863	\$33,090	\$522,340*

\* Growth in reserves was due to sale of building.

## Compensation

**Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$70,161.00 estimated**

Package offered: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered  
(choose only one) ☒ Total Package includes optional benefits to be negotiated (if you wish, list here what those optional benefits may be)

- Cash salary & Social Security Offset
- 14% annuity
- Health & Dental Insurance (negotiable)
- Life & Disability Insurance
- Continuing Education (negotiable)
- Parsonage for Settled Pastor is available. Open to housing allowance for Interim Pastor if parsonage not needed.
- Professional Expenses (negotiable)

Operating Expenses covered by United Parish of Lunenburg, **NOT** included in the above \$70,161 estimated total compensation range are:

- Phone, Internet & Cable
- Auto Allowance
- Repairs and maintenance for the parsonage
- Utilities for the parsonage

Housing:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Housing allowance only  
\_\_\_\_\_ Parsonage only  
☒ Either Parsonage or Housing Allowance (negotiable)

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

Our current process for discerning compensation is based on current church budget appropriations. We are flexible/negotiable.

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is: The Council on Mission (COM)

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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.

LuAnn F Longenecker & Ellen Gale  
Signatures of Search Committee Co-Chairpersons  
*(typed or Jpeg is sufficient)*

Date: April 28, 2025