



Name of Church
Plymouth Congregational Church of Belmont UCC
Address
582 Pleasant St Belmont, MA 02478
Conference:
Southern New England
Association:
Metropolitan Boston
Title
Plymouth Congregational Church Minister
Start Date
n/a
Description
Plymouth CC Belmont P Search

Church Contact Information

No contact information has been added to this profile.

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://plymouthchurch.net/>

Type: Professional

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

No response

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Katie Omberg

Title:

Bridge ACM for the Northeast Region

Phone:

508-244-4769

Email:

ombergk@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

Members of Plymouth Congregational Church have a strong, shared sense that our community is welcoming, caring, and open to all. We wish to continue on our path of inclusiveness and caring for each other by welcoming those who are new and those who wish to renew ties with us. We would like to draw more people, including singles and families in all configurations, into the church to experience the love we have to share. While we have an experienced lay leadership and are committed to being a teaching parish, we would like to partner with a pastor who provides spiritual grounding and guidance with leadership for more programming. Areas of particular interest are furthering Called to Care and pastoral care/senior care, small groups in various forms, and continued support for children's and youth ministry.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

Belmont has a small town feel with quality schools, green spaces, safety, and a high-level of community participation in government. Its proximity to Boston offers world-class medical care as well as sports, the arts, and the cultural opportunities of a major city. We also draw from several other communities including Arlington, Watertown, and Waltham, which vary in their size and affluence but are likewise attractive to families as well as younger and older residents. We also draw from a few more distant communities as some members have retired to them.

Current size of membership

196

Average in person attendance

70

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.

Video Conferencing

On average, how many devices are logged in per service?

15

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Plymouth Congregational Church Minister

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

<https://www.sneucc.org/compensation-guidelines>

Scope of Work

Some fields reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ](#).

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the [Call Agreement Workbook](#).

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

We hope to find a pastor who has personal spiritual life and practices, is inclusive, proficient at pastoral care and empowering laity, and is a strong worship leader as described in the bullets below:

Leadership and Visioning

- Ability to cast vision, set goals, and guide the congregation in living out its mission. Strong leadership skills to inspire, motivate, and empower others in ministry (i.e., as a teaching parish), including lay leaders and volunteers.
- Ability to navigate change, conflict, and growth within the church community.

Personal Spiritual Growth and Integrity

- Ongoing commitment to personal spiritual development, prayer, and study.
- Integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior in all aspects of ministry.

Second:

Pastoral Care and Counseling

- Ability to provide spiritual guidance, pastoral care, and counseling to individuals and families in the congregation.
- Empathy, active listening, and emotional intelligence to support members during times of crisis, grief, or joy.
- Competence in offering marriage, bereavement, and other life-cycle ministry.

Third:

Worship Leadership

- Expertise in planning, leading, and organizing worship services that are spiritually enriching and reflect UCC values of inclusivity and justice.
- Knowledge of liturgy, hymns, prayers, and sacraments.
- Ability to involve the congregation in worship and create meaningful, participatory experiences.

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the [Call Agreement Workbook](#), equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE (IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	52500	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 52500			
Pension/Annuity	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

In accordance with Conference Guidelines, the cash salary basis is a minimum of \$52,500 annually with a provided parsonage (a strong preference for housing).

The total settled pastor compensation package as negotiated will exceed the minimum conference guidelines. Plymouth Church is committed to offering fair and equitable compensation, negotiated to meet the needs of the pastor within the means of the church.

Pension, Family Health Insurance, Life/Disability Insurance will be provided through the UCC Pension Board plan in accordance with the pastor selections. The amount and percentage will vary by salary and the individual pastor's preference.

In addition, miscellaneous expenses related to the parsonage, education, sabbatical, automobile, mobile telephone, and other discretionary items are negotiated.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

The Parsonage: a well-maintained, 3-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath parsonage at 111 Farnham Street, Belmont, MA 02478.

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

Yes

A home equity allowance is negotiated with the pastor's input based on particular needs and total compensation.

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

N/A

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Other:

As described above, these are negotiable elements of the compensation package.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

See the link below for a listing of resources available:
<https://www.sneucc.org/clergy-resources>

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

We are looking for a pastor who is able to translate their faith and spirituality into member care of the congregation, who can provide leadership to empower and equip lay leaders, and who wants to bring joy and enthusiasm as we seek to bring new members into our community.

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

We would like the minister to continue to support strong mission, action, and service opportunities that are already a part of the life of the church. The minister, through weekly services, will endeavor to inspire the congregation to go out into the community refreshed to serve.

Language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

The congregation is a tapestry of people from varied heritage and cultural backgrounds, although our congregation is predominantly White. Many of our members grew up in different faith traditions, from other protestant denominations to Catholic to non-Christian. We are a committed Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, these are four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that our next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

Our hopes for our new pastor include competence in spiritual foundation and faith, pastoral care, caring for creation, and collaboratively empowering lay leadership.

The four marks of ministry that are important to Plymouth Congregational Church include:

- Exhibiting a spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice
- Engaging sacred stories and traditions
- Caring for all creation
- Strengthening inter- and intra- personal assets

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

God is calling us to continue to grow as a community that is inclusive, open, and welcoming, where each person feels valued and embraced for their unique qualities and supported on their faith journey. God invites us to create stronger connections with one another, both within Belmont and beyond, and we would like to expand small group fellowship, youth programming, and service opportunities.

We approach our next era with a firm commitment to continue our loving and welcoming ways, to avoid complacency, and in humility, seek to hear how we can be Christ's hands and feet on earth.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

During the Covid pandemic, our church made the decision to temporarily pause in-person services and worship interactively via Zoom. It was important to Deacons and Church Council that our online worship be based on a platform that allowed for real-time interaction among congregants. As the pandemic progressed, we transitioned to a hybrid style of worship where online participation continued to be possible through installation of a camera and upgrades to the sound system in the sanctuary. We found that we had a new way to reach people who were not attending previously. Now our in-person services are

approaching pre-pandemic numbers, and we still minister to a group of parishioners who appreciate being able to attend online. Together, in-person and on-line attendance currently exceeds pre-pandemic numbers.

Most recently, Christian Education has implemented two new initiatives outside of Sunday morning for youth and adults to further explore our Christian faith. First, our interim pastor assisted the Committee to initiate the first mid-week, evening adult Bible study we have had in some years. It has been well-attended (both in-person and via Zoom) and appreciated. Next steps are to continue small group Bible studies and perhaps expand them to meetings in people's homes (similar to small group dinners that were popular activities pre-COVID). Second, the Committee has continued to enhance its popular "Kids' Night Out" series in partnership with another UCC church, and these nights now focus on introducing our children to the rewarding nature of mission-related activities that benefit the community around us.

Plymouth Congregational last performed strategic planning and visioning in 2012 by participation in the New Beginnings program and in 2016 when we undertook the process to become a UCC Open and Affirming Congregation. We believe there is an opportunity for our next pastor to re-engage the congregation in shaping the short- and long-term future of PCC.

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

God is good. All the time. We acknowledge God as the trinity expressed as: Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit.

Following the example of Jesus Christ, we declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming (ONA) church. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we welcome everyone of any age, race, culture, family configuration, sexual orientations, gender identity and expression, economic circumstance, faith background, education level and ability. All persons seeking a Christian community are invited to share and participate in the leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, blessings, joys, and responsibilities of our church community.

Membership vows include: a promise to bring one's presence, gifts, and service to this community of faith and to grow in Christ together.

We believe worship should inspire and motivate us to live our faith authentically every day. Our church welcomes all people in ministry, and we know families come in all shapes and sizes. If you are interested in serving your neighbor and growing in Christ, we want to be your community and friends on that journey. We are a church of all ages, races, orientations, economic, and prior faith backgrounds, and you are welcome here!

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

Our congregation is known for being a welcoming and inclusive community, where everyone feels valued and embraced. There is a high level of lay participation, with many opportunities for individuals to get involved in various aspects of church life. Our worship services and activities are intergenerational, bringing together people of all ages, with cheerful fellowship, and caring for each other (members have described "an avalanche" of care when going through a difficult time).

We are deeply mission-driven, actively engaged in both local and global outreach. Our congregation is motivated by a strong desire to make a difference through service and action. Additionally, we have a culture of strong individual stewardship, where members generously give of their time, money, and talents to support the church's mission and ministries.

A standout feature of our congregation is our commitment to a spiritually enriching and artistically inspiring music program, led by a remarkably talented music director. The music ministry is a highlight, with a rich blend of classical and contemporary pieces performed on the organ and piano, and sung by our choir.

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

Growing edges for our congregation may be literally finding ways to grow our congregation, while continuing to nurture the spiritual and communal needs of members. In this time when people can feel isolated, lonely, and disconnected from others, we would like to extend the hand of Christian fellowship, offering a place where people feel welcomed in their authentic selves and encouraged to find ways to know and serve Christ. We would like to strengthen and expand our programmatic offerings in ways that fit with the gifts and talents in the congregation and minister to our surrounding community.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Worship takes place Sundays at 10:30 AM (9:30 in Summer) in a hybrid format, in our sanctuary or via Zoom, following a traditional liturgy. The service is biblically based and built around the liturgical seasons. We incorporate a children's message, youth and adult congregational participation through unison prayers, responsive readings, sharing joys and concerns, and hymn singing. There is a prepared sermon, as well as musical offerings on piano and organ including prelude, postlude, and weekly anthems sung by the choir.

Special services are also offered: on Christmas Eve we hold a family service when the youth serve as lay readers in the early evening and a later candlelight service when young adults lay read; we have also experimented with a Longest Night service. During Lent we hold services in collaboration with Payson Park Congregational Church: Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Communion, and Good Friday service. In the past we have had annual Youth and Children's Sunday services where the children and youth lead the congregation. Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month. Seasonal services often incorporate guest musicians.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Plymouth is an intergenerational church where we believe adults and children have unique roles in God's kingdom. Children are more than future adults: in the present they are beloved and complete children of God. They have as much to teach us about faith as adults. Plymouth Church strives to foster healthy families and seeks to include children fully in the life of the church.

- Nursery: Plymouth has a nursery for children age 5 and under.
- Sunday School: Children in kindergarten through 8th grade attend the beginning of worship service, and each week one reads a short scripture and leads the congregation in the Lord's Prayer. We have a weekly "Time with Children" during service when children are invited to the front of church for a special children's story. Following the story, children may leave the sanctuary with their teachers to follow a curriculum that combines Bible study, activities and messages to bring home.
- Adult Education: Many adults desire additional biblical and spiritual education beyond what is offered in Sunday morning worship. Adult education opportunities have been offered occasionally by the minister and lay leaders.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Church Council meets approximately once per month for about two hours. Trustees and Deacons meet similarly. The pastor generally attends Council, Trustees, Deacons, and Christian Education meetings. Other committees such as Mission and Action, Fellowship, Music, etc. meet less often and/or for shorter durations, and the pastor attends occasionally.

Committees offer updates periodically in the monthly newsletter describing their vision, focus and activities. Sunday morning announcements are also a time when committees communicate with the congregation. Church Council provides a place where representatives from various committees hear from each other. It is a deliberative body where larger issues are explored and framed for congregation-wide discussions as necessary. The nominating committee brings a slate of committee memberships for approval by the congregation at the annual meeting in June.

When it comes to decision-making, 8 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

In early 2024, our furnace failed and the repair was estimated at \$50,000, a sum greater than Trustees were allowed to access from our endowment at that time. The building committee chair, who reports to Trustees, and the Trustees in conversation with the pastor, brought a repair proposal to the congregation for approval at a special meeting the next Sunday after worship. Here, the congregation voted in favor of drawing from the endowment to fund this major expense.

In terms of crises external to Plymouth, the Mission and Action Committee regularly brings appeals for special offerings to the congregation when there are unexpected community, national, or world needs such as the recent wildfires in Los Angeles where over \$2,000 in additional donations were matched by \$2,000 from the Mission and Action budget equating to a total donation of over \$4,000.

On a very local level, the church maintains a small fund from which the Deacons can rapidly authorize expenditures when there are emergency financial needs within the church and local community (these funds are primarily dispersed to individuals in need).

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[PCC Bylaws.docx.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	126
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	69
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	195

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	51%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	9%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	40%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	24
12-17	14
18-24	8
25-34	10
35-44	26
45-54	20
55-64	42
65-74	27
75+	25

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	7%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	41%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	6%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	39%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	7%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	16%
COLLEGE:	30%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	51%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	0%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL: did not graduate HS	3%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	66%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	32%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	2%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Occupations include government employees (town, police, fire, state), service professions (teaching from elementary through university, medical, chaplaincy, and social work), researchers (humanities and science), and other professionals.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Plymouth Church is majority White and tends to reflect a more traditional church service.

At times we have included people born in Asia, the Caribbean, and Europe, as well as African Americans though we do not have consistent membership from any particular group. Our chosen hymnal, Hymns of Truth and Light, draws from multiple traditions and sources, and our congregation enjoys choices across its breadth of offerings.

What diversity means in our context?

Plymouth Church is dedicated to openness interpersonally - it is an incredibly accepting congregation. Plymouth hosts a diversity of individuals across the political spectrum and, very importantly to us, across theological heritage, understanding, and practice. Having a strong intergenerational presence, Plymouth is diverse across age. Further, our ONA covenant has brought several people who have found it to be accepting and inclusive.

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

Yes

Comment after the exercise:

We have not used the Welcoming Diversity Inventory nor had a formal conversation about welcoming diversity. However, in congregational meetings, the subject has come up (including continuing to make our physical space more accessible), and the congregation would be open to ways to welcome more diversity.

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	16	Christian Education with pastor, at times
Baptisms (number last year)	1	Deacons and pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	20	Christian Education
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	100	Deacons with pastor and music director
Church-wide Meals	50	Hospitality and Ad-hoc committees
Choirs and Music Groups	13	Music Director and Music Committee
Church-based Bible Study	16	Christian Education / pastor
Communion (served how often?)	50	once / month
Intergenerational Groups	50	coffee hour
Outdoor Worship	15	Easter Sunrise Service
Prayer or Meditation Groups	15	Seminarian
Youth Groups or Classes	25	Christian Education

Worship Times

No Response

Additional comments:

Summer Worship (time slot: 9:30am)

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Diana Donahue	none	Hospital	Chaplaincy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Betsy Draper	none	University	Chaplaincy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Heather Lucas	4	Hospital	Chaplaincy	<input type="checkbox"/>

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

Diana Donahue is willing to lead funerals and perform communion as a substitute during clergy absences. She participates in missions and is one of the leaders of our yearly rummage sale. She has deep interpersonal connections with many congregants and performs pastoral care in communication with the minister.

Betsy Draper currently serves on the music committee and sings in the choir. Betsy has previously served as a deacon, provided pastoral care, and conducted lay-led services and now serves on the search committee.

Heather Lucas at times has led small group Bible studies on Sunday mornings.

List of all current staff:

No Response

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

In general, Plymouth tends to match the demographics of the larger town of Belmont. The demographics reports do reveal potential areas of ministry opportunities. Further, having conversations about diversity could be helpful in exploring how to meet the needs of varying age groups and people at different developmental stages of life.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	327680
Endowment Draw (beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")	12178
Rentals of Church Building	88370
Total	428228

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

432228

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download church budget](#)

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

27

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

We follow the SNEUCC proportional giving guidelines that include OCWM. Our giving in 2024 was \$15,072.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

No response

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

n/a

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

No response

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

No response

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

1005849

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

Withdrawn as needed. Currently any withdrawal over \$50,000 requires approval from the congregation.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

4% in 2024 vs 2% in 2021

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

2024 - \$106,000 - cover budgeted shortfall and extraordinary building expenses 2023 - \$40,000 - cover budgeted shortfall 2022 - \$25,000 - cover budgeted shortfall 2021 - \$20,000 - cover budgeted shortfall

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

indefinitely

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

estimates, based on market

Other Assets

No response

Reserves (savings):

60465

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

5000

How is the parsonage used?

pastoral residence

Street

111 Farnham Street

City

Belmont

State

MA

Zip

2478

Finished square footage:

2200

Number of Bedrooms:

3

Number of Bathrooms:

2

Assessed real estate value:

1289000

Available for minister residence?

Yes

Expected minister residence?

Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Good working order

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Chair of the Building Committee in cooperation with the Trustees and the Sexton.

Parsonage pictures



Description of all buildings owned by the church:

- Church building, assessed at \$4,977,000
- Sanctuary with pew seating (capacity approx. 250, renovated 2002-2003)
- Wissinger tracker pipe organ (installed 1988, renovated 2009)
- Parish Hall with commercial kitchen (Hall and kitchen renovated 2000)
- Parlor with adjacent kitchenette
- 3 offices
- 8 classrooms (across 3 floors of educational wing)
- Fire alarm system (installed 2000)
- Elevator (installed 2000) making our building ADA compliant except for 2nd-floor classrooms
- Nursery School (4 classrooms, office, additional activity rooms)
- Playground (replaced 2021)
- Off-street parking for 6 cars

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

None

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Wheelchair access in bathrooms

"Quiet room" with worship viewing and listening availability
Handrails on all stairs
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Accessible bathroom on each floor
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

Our sanctuary, fellowship (parlor, Gardner Hall), and office areas are accessible via an outside ramp and indoor elevator. Within the sanctuary, we have room for at least one wheelchair. Our pulpit and chancel choir area is only accessible via stairs as are the second floor classrooms. Our kitchen is not ADA-compliant. We have had preliminary conversations about improving accessibility in conjunction with a future capital campaign.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Trustees bring the annual budget to the congregation for discussion and approval every year. The treasurer prepares the budget. The financial secretary is responsible for paying bills and maintaining payroll. There is a financial committee that includes members who count the received Sunday offering.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

When the church decided to allow cell phone equipment in the steeple, we committed 20% of the income to Mission and Action to supplement the 10% from our general offering. Stewardship drives over the last five to eight years have aimed at covering our operating expenses without reliance on the endowment. The endowment has benefitted from the favorable investment climate of recent years. The congregation as a whole looks forward to conversations about how to best use our abundant resources in the coming years, including those raised from a possible capital campaign.

Historical Information

Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

Significant events in our church history include a fire in 1941 that prompted a move to our current location, committing to a Communications Covenant that came out of work during a difficult pastorate, and reifying our legacy of inclusion by becoming Open and Affirming.

First, and perhaps most importantly, we are one of more than 1,300 churches in the United Church of Christ that has made a public and explicit welcome to the LGBTQ community and beyond through an Open and Affirming covenant. Through prayer, dialogue, and congregational affirmation, in 2016 we adopted the covenant.

Our institutional history includes the traumatic loss of our building. The congregation expresses its memory and healing in two salient ways. In our care for each other, we recognize that the church is truly made of its people; an awareness of the blessing of having a sanctuary and building in which to worship, gather, teach, and learn guides our use, of them such as being open to AA or others beyond our doors.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

We previously mentioned the move from an in-person service to a hybrid model. For a congregation of our size, transitioning to an interactive format is no small undertaking. We required a Zoom "host" who can admit people to the service as well as welcome them; make sure they are muted, lest background conversation is transmitted to the sanctuary; help online congregants voice announcements or prayer concerns; share the bulletin on screen for collective prayers and hymns; and host a virtual coffee hour after the service when the pastor or seminarian can "drop by." Meanwhile, we needed better microphones, camera, and internet installed so that Zoom participants could see and hear what was happening while also preserving our screen-free sanctuary. We committed to all of this after we began to resume in-person services because real-time interaction with members who did not feel safe or simply could not attend is important to us.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Since developing the Communications Covenant, we have not had conflicts that have escalated beyond committee or full-congregational meetings. Deciding to accept the changes to the balcony rooms so that the cell phone equipment could be installed in the steeple was managed through congregational discussion and voting. Likewise, we discussed our obligations and relationship with our neighbors who worried about the health effects of the cellular equipment to be housed there. While there was widespread support for becoming an Open and Affirming congregation, there were still questions about what that meant and how to word our affirmation, which were discussed in congregational meetings. Our previous pastor, in both these situations, was open to hearing congregants' concerns which is also an important role and one we expect future pastors to embrace.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

Our Communications Covenant, grew out of the congregation's and Pastor Baughcum's growing awareness of a misfit between the church and his ministry. In 2009, the congregation decided to engage in a program called "Walking in the Way of Peace" designed to lead the congregation through the experience of discussing difficult issues and to engage in challenging dialog. Working through the program, the congregation developed better understandings of how to listen and speak to each other in truthful and loving ways. We continue to invoke the Covenant at the beginning of meetings and rely on the institutional wisdom contained in its crafting.

Ministerial History:

<i>Name:</i> Rev. Joe Zarro	<i>Years of service:</i> 10	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. David Stryker (interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 2	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Alan Baughcum	<i>Years of service:</i> 5	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Marian Williams (interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 1	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Jonathan J Morgan	<i>Years of service:</i> 14	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Rev. Wayne Earl (current interim)	<i>Years of service:</i> 0	UCC Standing

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

We are a church with strong lay leadership that welcomes the guidance, organization, and vision of a spiritually and emotionally mature head pastor who values collaboration and will partner with us, showing us how we can build on our strengths and work on our weaknesses. We value open communication with a pastor who is able to speak the truth in love to us and hear when we attempt to do the same. We appreciate a leader who can listen to and affirm disparate viewpoints, reframe discussions productively, and help negotiate compromises where necessary.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

Our church's Missions work focuses on different issues and areas at different levels. Some of our service is in the form of financial support and in-kind donations. We also have direct congregational involvement in many of the projects below.

Belmont & surrounding towns:

- Waltham House and On the Rise (focusing on LGBTQ youth and adults)
- Belmont Food Pantry, City Mission, Household Goods, Cradles to Crayons, Home for Little Wanderers, Belmont Serves
- Building rentals - Plymouth Nursery School, a Chinese School, Girl Scouts, etc.

State, National, & International:

- Habitat for Humanity (build projects as a group in the Boston area, but also in other states as a missions trip)
- Relief efforts for specific events and needs (eg California wildfire relief)
- Bikes not Bombs
- Little Children of the World (Philippines)
- Ukraine humanitarian needs
- Refugee Protection International
- Belmont Religious Council service service trips
- Walk for Hunger (Project Bread) Teams on occasion

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

One of the key ways we support our denomination is by being a "teaching congregation" that often helps train ministers through year-long internships. Dozens of serving ministers in the UCC all around the country have been seminarians at Plymouth! We also support the denomination by giving to its global ministries, participating at the association and conference level, and the "One Great Hour of Sharing" offering. We are supportive of our pastor's time and commitment to UCC committees and work.

Plymouth also has a longstanding relationship with Payson Park UCC in Belmont. We offer a joint Easter Sunrise service and often share summer worship services for 4-6 weeks, alternating between the parishes. Further, Plymouth and Payson often host "Kid's Nights In" events where we offer children's activities and allow parents to have a free evening.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

Informally. Many of our members are active in the community and bring opportunities to participate before the congregation. Furthermore, we actively participate in the Belmont Religious Council, an interfaith organization.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through [Just World Covenants](#) or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Open and Affirming (ONA).

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

We don't generally describe our church using UCC shared language or terms directly, but a major exception is Open and Affirming. Our church went through the ONA process and we feature that language directly in our witness.

Many of the other ideas are present in our witness and consistent points of emphasis in our efforts in the broader community: accessible building, belief that God is still speaking, care of environment in mission giving, attention to immigrants and refugees, economic justice (e.g. by supporting the Belmont Food Pantry), immigrant justice (e.g. advocating for refugees) and environmental justice. In addition, through participation in local events like the summer farmer's market, the previous pastor gave our church exposure by bringing (guitar and song) music to this activity. At this time, we do not have a specific focus to obtain additional UCC designations.

Our congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

We participate consistently with efforts done by the Belmont Religious Council (BRC). The BRC provides yearly opportunities to participate in interfaith activities such as "Belmont Serves" day in October and the annual Community Thanksgiving Service. Traditionally, every other year, the BRC had sponsored a youth mission trip during February vacation to underserved areas around the country; last year they sponsored a service trip for adults to Ecuador. Plymouth adults and youth have led and participated in all of these activities.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

Our Mission Statement according to Plymouth's Bylaws:

"We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace and the realization of human brotherhood."

Reflecting on this statement, our members respect a variety of ways of understanding and approaching God and each person's faith journey. Promoting justice, spreading loving kindness, unity, and peace are beliefs that Plymouth's congregation holds close and strives to live into, generally preferring to proclaim the gospel through action. From the pulpit and through our personal interactions, we hope to receive and instill the Hope of the Gospel, spreading the peace of Christ.

The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.

Outward ministry makes up some part of the pastor's time, but is not a major focus of it. For example, past pastors have attended missions committee meetings ex officio and offered ideas about mission opportunities. They have led or participated in the Belmont Religious Council activities, like the interfaith Thanksgiving services and Belmont Serves. Generally, lay persons within the congregation lead and maintain missions beyond the physical church.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

Belmont is a highly educated and affluent town in Massachusetts. 51% of residents hold advanced graduate or professional degrees and 26% hold bachelor's degrees. The median family household being \$183,000. There are roughly 7,000 households and nearly half do not have children. Across all households, approximately 6% of the population, live below the poverty line. The largest industries employing residents include educational services, entertainment services, real estate, manufacturing, "professional services," and wholesale retail

How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.

Without having specific data on the demographics of the church, we believe that Plymouth Church's demographics match the community surrounding our church ethnically, financially, and educationally.

How the demographics of the community are currently shaping ministry, or not.

Much like the larger town of Belmont, Plymouth has many young families and people over 55. Some of our primary ministry focuses beyond Sunday Morning Worship are events such as Food for Thought, programming for retirement-aged people, and events aimed at either young children, their parents, or both - Pumpkin Glow, Kid's Night In/Parent's Night Out, Sunday School.

Every fourth Sunday of the month, Plymouth Church takes charge of the Belmont Food Pantry to distribute goods to those with financial need. Each year we run a rummage sale, well-attended by the community.

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

In the community, Plymouth Church is known for our rainbow doors. Each spring, we place rainbow colored doors in front of the church which declares our dedication to being ONA and to act as a welcoming message that we are a safe, accepting, and inclusive community. These doors, and our sentiments behind them, are well known within our community.

We are also known as being good partners to community organizations and a resource for individuals in need.

What new people in the church say when asked what got them involved.

New church members often talk about how kind the people are at Plymouth. Many parishioners intentionally engage with newcomers and welcome them to coffee hour where we can begin to get to know them. New attendees are invited to join activities that might match their talents or joys – perhaps the choir – and some have found individual relationships, the missions of the church, or other volunteer opportunities to get engaged.

References



☒ Holly Stratford

Completed: Friday, May 16, 2025

private indiv

Ex-Member of Plymouth Congregational Church [moved to Chicago in July 2022 to be near a daughter]

Was active and on many church committees

Primary Email Address: Stratford.holly@gmail.com

Personal: 8722087246

Reference Response

Some areas of strength

church commitment to give 10% of their church expenses [a kind of tithe] to mission groups and activities.

A welcoming attitude to visitors.

Being a Teaching Parish church.

An effort to include children and young adults in the service.

Music and the choir is a strong enhancement to Sunday service.

Areas for improvement in the church's ministry.

Continue to attract and support families.

In-person mission activities with people of different backgrounds.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry.

One of the best experiences I had was a Women's Retreat many years ago. I was working fulltime and this retreat gave me a chance to get to know some of the other

women in the church in a very spiritual and loving environment. I think that retreat overall helped me re-think my perspective on my work/life balance

☒ Joseph Greene

Completed: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Past member, 1994–2020

Primary Email Address: jagreene586@gmail.com

Personal Cell: 617-413-4694

Reference Response

My family and I were members of Plymouth Church from the early 1990s until 2020, when I retired and we moved away. I write from my experience of three decades at Plymouth, though necessarily in retrospect and after five years' absence. Over the years at Plymouth, I held various roles as a member (or chair) of Deacons, of Trustees, in addition to serving as Moderator. Plymouth's greatest strength is the breadth, depth and spiritual commitment of its lay leadership, which in my time led the congregation through two significant changes in pastoral leadership as well as in facing the challenges of a small, exurban church in metropolitan Boston: to attract and retain membership, to support itself financially, and to embody its call to Christ in meaningful, practical ways. I am confident that Plymouth Church will again recruit the right pastoral leader as it faces the challenges ahead.

☒ Rabbi Jonathan Kraus

Completed: Wednesday, May 28, 2025

As a rabbi in Belmont for 30 years, I've had the blessing to work alongside and come to know Plymouth's ministers, some members, and lay leaders.

Primary Email Address: RabbiKraus@BethElTempleCenter.org

Church Primary Phone: 617-484-6668

Reference Response

Plymouth's community outreach is a consistent strength, reflected in our town's interfaith work, and an intentional commitment to serve beyond Belmont. Along with their ministers, gifted and devoted lay leaders have been instrumental in making this possible.

The community's core identity is a lovely, down-to-earth warmth. Ministers with significant intellectual, programmatic, spiritual, and leadership gifts have never stood on ceremony. I believe their competent, caring, and smart lay leaders would point to kindness, service, and generosity as the gifts of which they are most proud.

The congregation is willing to think in new ways and try new things. Like all congregations, I have the impression that this willingness can create discomfort and a need for skillful relational work. Yet that challenge has not undercut the congregation's willingness to reimagine itself and its shared life

Closing Prayer

Loving and all powerful creator, we come to thee with adoration and expectation that you will work through the Holy Spirit to guide this congregation in its search for our next minister of the word and sacraments. We pray that you will direct to our attention those who feel called to lead a loving congregation. We pray that those seeking a pulpit will see in us a congregation worth leading. We pray that together with our new minister, we can even more humbly and steadfastly follow in the footsteps of Jesus, and be implementers of your work in our community and beyond.

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

The "Settled Pastor Search Committee" has nine church members who represent a cross-section of the larger church membership.

At a fall congregational potluck celebrating our 125th year, we facilitated a look at our church's history in anticipation of two subsequent, all-church meetings. There, committee members led small round table discussions and collected common themes and disparate thoughts about who we are and who we wish to become as a congregation. We also surveyed the congregation about hopes and needs for our next pastor.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We look forward to conversations with candidates as we prayerfully anticipate our next chapter with our new settled pastor!