

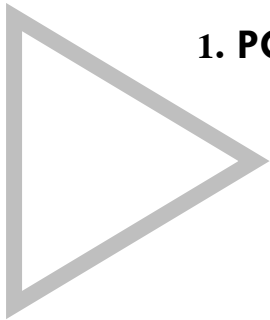
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**SUMMARY CHURCH PROFILE**

First Parish of Westwood  
Westwood, Massachusetts

Senior Minister

Southern New England Conference of the UCC

January 12, 2021



**1. POSITION POSTING**

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

**1a. LISTING INFORMATION**

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Church name: [First Parish of Westwood, United Church](#)

Street address: [252 Nahatan Street, Westwood, MA](#)

Supplemental web links: [www.firstparishwestwood.org](http://www.firstparishwestwood.org),

<https://www.facebook.com/First-Parish-of-Westwood-120302557982716>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*):

Conference: [Southern New England Conference](#)

Association: [Metropolitan Boston Association](#)

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):

The Rev. Holly MillerShank  
Interim Associate Conference Minister  
Phone: 781-369-1396  
Email: millershankh@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

*In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?*

Many years ago, First Parish of Westwood had a poster in its narthex with the quote "We cannot change unless we survive, but we will not survive unless we change". This quote is apropos because for a congregation that is 290 years old (First Parish was "gathered" in 1730 when Westwood was still a part of Dedham), we have been through many changes. Moving into the future, we are focused on the changes we need to make to not only survive, but to thrive.

Over the course of the past ten years, First Parish has accomplished many significant achievements. The congregation has made significant changes including the consolidation of our properties which previously included a separate Parish Hall on the opposite side of the street from our Meeting House, a major addition to our Meeting House that includes a Gathering Hall, kitchen, church offices, church school classrooms and a living room size meeting room, and the creation of a new mission statement. To realize the upside potential of these changes and thrive in the future, we are seeking a full-time minister possessing the energy and enthusiasm to help us expand our membership and church attendance, broaden offerings (i.e., Christian education for both children, youth and adults) and overcome challenges (e.g., outdated church governance and structure) so we can fully realize First Parish's mission statement which is "Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives"

Photographs:

*Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc.*



**Historic Meeting House (211 years young)**



**Gathering Hall in new addition**



**Fall 2020 Baptism on our outdoor patio**

What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences):

Westwood is a town of approximately 16,400 civic-minded residents who are committed to working together to improve the community. Westwood is conveniently located 12 miles southwest of Boston with easy access to Routes 95/128, Route 93 and public transportation (Amtrak trains to New York, commuter rail to Boston and Providence). *CNN/Money* and *Money Magazine* have ranked Westwood 13th on its list of the 100 Best Places to Live in the United States. *US News and World Report* ranked Westwood High School at #13 in its 2019 list of best Massachusetts high schools.

Current size of membership:

Current size of membership: The church rolls show 236 members, of which there are about 50-60 “engaged” members who regularly attend worship, volunteer on boards and at church events, and are committed to the spiritual life and fellowship of First Parish.

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): N/A

Position Title: Senior Minister

Position Duration (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association

Compensation Level (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

## **1b. SCOPE OF WORK**

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*(add here the Scope of Work developed by your church using the Call Agreement Workbook)*

- Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation and delivery, guiding and sometimes seeking out lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.
- Faith formation and vitality for both adults and children through prayer, Bible study, small groups, involvement in Christian Education and oversight of the church school.
- Leadership development by working with lay leaders in the church to redefine church governance (structure of boards & committees) and effectively organize and manage work in the following focus areas: worship, stewardship/finance/operations, spiritual life & fellowship, mission & outreach, and Christian education.
- Pastoral care in collaboration with lay people.
- Involvement in the community by serving on the Westwood Interfaith Council and Westwood Human Rights Commission and working with members for First Parish to be an ambassador of God’s love.

- Minister at baptisms, weddings, and funerals for participants in the worshipping community.
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings.
- Supervise staff (Church Administrator, Music Director, Church School Administrator Note: this position is currently vacant), Assistant Treasurer, Sexton).
- Involvement in Christian Education curriculum and connection to the congregation.
- Energize existing members and reach out to potential new members, especially young families, to grow the spiritual vitality of First Parish.

#### Core Competencies:

*(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church. For example, a church seeking a pastoral care minister might hope to call someone who is caring, sensitive and sociable, while a church seeking an executive minister might want an organized, detail-oriented and time-conscious person.)*

- Thoughtful and pastoral
- Honest and trustworthy
- Outgoing and extroverted

### 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*): \$76,451 (Guideline Midpoint of Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance for mid-pastor) - \$80,888 (Guideline Midpoint of Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance for very experienced pastor)

Benefits (*choose one*):

Salary plus Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (*e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed*)? Parsonage

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

State any incentives (*e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position*):

First Parish owns a parsonage which has been home to our past settled ministers. The parsonage is a 4-bedroom, two-bathroom home that is located right next to the Meeting House. The parsonage is centrally located in Westwood and is a ten-minute walk to the town center or a five-minute drive to Norwood center.

If the next minister chooses to take a housing allowance and does not live in the parsonage, we expect that they would live in a surrounding community within 5-15 miles and be involved in community events and organizations such as town meeting, Westwood Day, Westwood Interfaith Council, and Westwood Human Rights Commission. There may be occasions calling for attendance at evening meetings.

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:

The Southern New England Conference offers Together We Thrive (<http://www.togetherwethrivegrant.org/>), a ministry focused on clergy leadership and development and Tending the Fire (<http://www.togetherwethrivegrant.org/tending-the-fire>), a retreat series focused on understanding church & organizations through the lens of systems theory. Additionally, First Parish of Westwood has financially supported the pastor's travel expenses and attendance at the Church Ministries Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

## 1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

- Inspire spiritual development and pastoral care of current members to increase retention, increase participation by infrequent/lapsed members (especially seniors or those who have not attended virtual worship services during Covid-19 pandemic, and attract new members.
- Help us live into an Open and Affirming (ONA) covenant by guiding us in making decisions on publicizing (e.g., do we include a rainbow on our sign and website since our

welcome will extend beyond the LGBT community?) and discerning new opportunities for mission, ministry, and evangelism. Please note that in November 2020, we had a nearly unanimous vote to adopt an Open and Affirming (ONA) covenant.

- Lead the process for an examination of church governance including structure of boards and committees for effective management of the spiritual life (worship & fellowship), mission & outreach, finance & operations of First Parish.
- Hire and manage Church School Administrator and maintain involvement in Christian Education and its connection to First Parish's growth. There is an opportunity to engage more young families with a more welcoming approach and to revitalize a program for middle school and high school students. Christian Education should also extend beyond children and provide mission & outreach opportunities for adults, and the vision on how Christian Education fits into the spiritual life of First Parish should be articulated.
- Support inclusion of music in worship services and beyond.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

First Parish of Westwood has always been inextricably linked to the needs of the Westwood community. For example, Lifeworks (formerly The Arc of South Norfolk) was founded in 1954 by a group of First Parish parents who were looking to advocate for services for their children with developmental disabilities. First Parish "adopts" families served by Lifeworks and parishioners donate Christmas presents. There is an opportunity to do more to strengthen our relationship and explore ways to support them.

Additionally, the town of Westwood has an annual Roy London Humanitarian Award which is presented to citizens of Westwood who by their actions embody the spirit of a long-time member of First Parish, Roy London. Through his compassionate and charitable actions, Roy improved the lives of others and made Westwood a better community. First Parish members serve in town government roles (e.g., Select Board, School Committee, Planning Board, Finance Committee) and have been the recipient of the Roy London Humanitarian Award. We hope the settled minister inspires parishioners to live their Christian faith and make an impact beyond our walls. Additionally, participation in the Westwood Interfaith Council and Westwood Human Rights Commission are ways that a future minister can make an impact beyond First Parish.

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

First Parish is currently not an ethnically diverse congregation but Westwood and the surrounding communities (e.g., Norwood) have multicultural families of Asian origin (e.g., origin of China or India). We want to serve the needs of these communities through mission & outreach. For example, there are Muslim students at Westwood High School which is a five minute walk from our Meeting House who do not have place to pray during the day and there could be an opportunity to open our doors for worship space.

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

Based on a congregational survey that asked respondents to rank priorities, the four areas of excellence that the next minister will display are as follows:

1. Building Transformational Leadership Skills
2. Working Together for Justice and Mercy
3. Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets
4. Exhibiting a Strong Spiritual Foundation