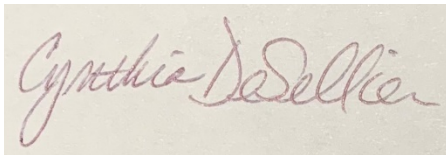


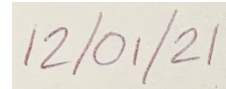
FOR LOCAL CHURCHES SEEKING LEADERSHIP FOR AN INTERIM TERM POSITION

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.



Signature of Search Committee Chairperson



Date



Church Name: The First Church of Monson

Address: 5 High Street, Monson, MA 01057

Telephone: 413-267-3312

Fax: 413-267-5293

Email: office@firstchurchmonson.org

Website: <http://firstchurchmonson.org>

Date of vacancy: November 8, 2021

Contact Person and information:

Rev. Terry Yasuko Ogawa, Area Conference
Minister, NW Region, SNE Conference
OgawaTY@sneucc.org 508-782-8593

Ministry flows from mission.

The interim time in the life of a congregation is an opportunity to gain clarity on the church's mission. The Southern New England Conference of the UCC declares these values essential to our shared ministry together:

- We understand the local church exists to make disciples of Jesus and we welcome all people unconditionally to share in this calling.
- We commit to making God's love and justice real by loving our neighbors, children, and all of creation through our collective work, such as seeking racial, economic, environmental, and LGBTQ justice.
- We believe God calls us to bring new life as agents of change and so we embrace and encourage adaptive and transformative leadership wherever the Body of Christ is gathered.
- We encourage local congregations and varied ministry settings, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, to form covenant partnerships with all who work for the common good in their local communities and throughout the world.

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

The mission of the First Church of Monson is to praise God through prayer, to share the word and love of God by promoting fellowship and community, and to serve as stewards of God's creation - all in a manner that glorifies God and emulates Christ.

The Church welcomes all persons, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people, and invites them to become covenant members and to participate fully in the life of the Church.

The Church welcomes all persons irrespective of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, or disability and invites them to become covenant members and to participate fully in the life of the Church.

As best as you are able, describe 3 to 5 goals you would like to address during your interim term and some ways you will know these goals have been met:

- *To establish a welcoming, open channel of communication between the pastor and the congregation*
- *To help re-stabilize the church baseline*
 - *Sunday Services (Christ centered sermons)*
 - *Christian Ed. (adults and children)*
 - *Community outreach*
 - *General church business*
- *To help complete the open and affirming process with our established task force*
- *To help church leadership become effective mediators while we refine our mutual respect and communication skills*

We will know that these have been met by observation and feedback from the congregation.

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

Brief History:

The First Church of Monson, or The Congregational Church, was organized on June 23, 1762 with 24 members. The present church building was dedicated on June 18, 1873 and was the third structure to house this congregation.

The First Church of Monson is a covenantal member of the United Church of Christ (UCC), a denomination of over 5,600 congregations with over 1.2 million members throughout North America. The UCC is both old and new in its history; it was formed in 1957 by the union of two merged faith traditions, the Congregation Christian Churches and the Evangelical Reformed Church. The First Church of Monson is also a member of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) and the Hampden Association of the Southern New England Conference.

Church Strengths:

- *Historic building with Johnson pipe organ*
- *A welcoming congregation*
- *Knowledgeable and dedicated people*
- *Adaptability and willingness to embrace new ideas*
- *Music - adult choir, community concerts, guest musicians*
- *Innovative children's program*
- *Committed committees*
- *Peaceful community*

Significant Events:

On June 1, 2011 a category EF-3 tornado tore through Monson and our church. The steeple was brought down as well as damage to the organ and building structure itself. Even in the face of this devastating event, our church became a hub of activity for volunteers and a donation center for food and clothing for the community.

In March 2020 the doors were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ways to stay connected needed to be established. Services were recorded in advance and uploaded to the church's Facebook page. They are now recorded live and can be viewed live on Facebook and on YouTube as well as two times a week on MPACT (one week behind). It took several months for meetings to be held remotely via zoom. Currently several committees meet in person, but some still choose to meet via zoom.

Our Challenges:

Guiding members with possible strong personalities to positively focus their strengths and talents. Keeping existing and attracting new members. Need for respectful communication within the congregation.

Is there unresolved Conflict in Church? Yes No

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

(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!" Emotions are escalating. Some folks are leaving. At this level it is wise to seek outside help!
4. The goal is "divorce," and getting people to quit. There are active attempts to manipulate or sabotage processes. Open communication is not being practiced.
5. Not only wanting others to leave but seeking to hurt others in revenge!

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

If yes, please explain:

No, the previous leader was not a direct contributor to the conflict. However, the pastor wasn't an effective conflict mediator. The conflict was complex and had many contributors. The conflict centered around very strong opinions of how various aspects of the church should be run. Unfortunately, when tensions escalated, participants began acting in a very unchristian like manner. The conflict was more than the pastor could (or should be expected to) handle. Coaching sessions were arranged and conducted. A very delicate foundation of healing was laid, but not all participants were ready to take the next appropriate steps.

What has the congregation and leadership learned about its role in the creation and resolution of the conflict?

Leadership needs to adopt a stronger, open-minded position in conflict resolution. Leadership also needs to be more transparent in informing the congregation when necessary. The congregation has not been made aware of conflicts, therefore has not played a significant role in resolution.

BASIC STATISTICS:

#Church Members	Average Worship Attendance	CE Participation	Adult Ed Participation
189	40	10	0 (No programs offered)

2020 Income	2020 Budget	2020 UCC Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowments	Compensation being offered
\$183,458	\$160,261	\$4,850 (SNEC)		\$58,000 – 68,000

Generally, the starting place of negotiation for the Compensation Package offered to the Interim Term Pastor is the same as that of the most recent pastor.

Total Package offered: \$ 58,000 – 68,000 Benefits can be negotiated as part of the total package

Conference Compensation Guidelines (salary range): \$ _____

Housing

- Housing allowance only \$ _____
- Parsonage only
- would offer either

- _____ Pension Contribution (14% of Base Salary plus housing)
- _____ Social Security Allowance
- _____ Health Insurance Individual Family
- _____ Dental Insurance Individual Family
- Vacation (1 week per quarter for full time)
- Meetings
- Business Mileage Reimbursed (IRS Rate)

One-time Criminal Background Check fee of \$140 reimbursed to the Interim Pastor.

Covenant/Contract will be for: 12 months _____ 18 months or other _____

Is this full time or part time? *Part time (3/4)*

The Interim Term Pastor will be selected by: *Interim Pastor Search Committee*

+ + +

Once an Interim Term Pastor has been chosen and a covenant has been signed, please forward the following documents to the Framingham Office (Deb Holmes – holmesd@sneucc.org)

- Copies of the Interim Covenant/Contract
- Documents outlining the conditions for terminating the covenant/contract.

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

Associate Conference Minister:	<i>Terry Yasuko Ogawa</i>
Phone	<i>(508) 782-8593</i>
Email	<i>OgawaTY@sneucc.org</i>

Suggested Supplemental Materials to send to a candidate:

1. Newsletter
2. Worship bulletin
3. Annual Report

Position Listing for the National UCC Employment Opportunities:

(In 2000 characters of less, please describe your church and your goals for the Interim Ministry. This will be posted on our National UCC website for up to one month if together you and your Associate Conference Minister think it appropriate.)

The First Church of Monson, Congregational

Part-time Interim Pastor

Our church is made up of both long time members and new friends. We enjoy our traditions but are willing to accept change. We are currently in the process of becoming an Open and Affirming church. We have always believed in this ideology and are now taking steps to make it official. We are looking for a strong, compassionate, and empathetic pastor. Our goal is to find an interim leader that will help us reassert our Christian values and shore up our foundational principles, and who is willing to focus on the following: worship services; guidance to committees; general ministerial services - weddings, baptisms, funerals, confirmation; church community outreach; general community outreach; coaching on open communications; guidance for church growth initiatives. We are hoping our interim pastor exhibits the following traits: people person (approachable with both members and visitors); good communicator with other church employees; conflict resolution (able to help diffuse issues due to possible strong personalities); open and affirming process; Christ centered sermons and involved in adult/youth Christian education; innovative with committees and the congregation. The town of Monson is a typical rural western MA community conveniently located near Springfield MA. It includes rolling hills, scenic vistas, and a casual atmosphere. Monson offers a variety of activities such as hiking on Peaked Mountain trails, visiting local attractions including the Keep Museum, or any of our numerous apple orchards. Local restaurants satisfy your cravings from Pizza to Home style cooking. Activities like Summer Fest bring the community out for an old fashion Fourth of July parade and carnival atmosphere. The town wide tag sale brings visitors into the town looking for bargains. Monson is a safe, welcoming, and friendly community. While shopping at Adams (our local supermarket) you will soon be recognized as a local.