

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.

Harold Carlson
Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

1/24/21
Date

First Congregational Church UCC
207 Main Street, Spencer, MA 01562-1738
Telephone: 508-885-2149, Fax: 508-885-5098
Email: office@spencerchurch.net
Website: <http://www.spencerchurch.org>

Date of vacancy: January 28th, 2022

Ministry flows from mission.

A time of transition in the life of a congregation is an opportunity to gain clarity on the church's mission. The MA Conference is living into this mission "Rooted in the grace of God, the mission of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ is to nurture local church vitality and the covenant among our churches to make God's love and justice real."

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

We the First Congregational Church of Spencer, UCC are a caring and compassionate family supporting each other and the community through strong faith and fellowship. We invite you to join our journey seeking Christ's love and grace.

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:

- Restructure our governance and bylaws to better fit our current church resources and future goals.***
- Continue to live within and to update our behavioral covenant***
- At First Congregational Church we are working toward a unified understanding and expression of mission***

work and becoming a relevant part of the larger community.

-In conjunction with the Massachusetts Conference of United Church of Christ we believe the church's mission is to change lives - a mission we express by saying, "Never place a period where God has placed a comma."

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

Brief History:

The first church was constructed at our present site in 1743. The church was known at the time as The Second Church of Leicester. In 1772 a larger church building was erected. The Church Society was formed May 17, 1774, with the signing of the covenant. The church's first Minister, Rev. Joshua Eaton, served for 27 years. A steeple and bell were added in 1802. In 1820 the church school was formed. It was considered one of the first in the nation. On January 1, 1862, the building was destroyed by fire. The present church was built and dedicated in 1863. Improvements were made in 1881 and 1885. In 1960 an extension was added on the east side with eight classrooms and a minister's study and secretary's office.

In 1968 church members voted to join the United Church of Christ. This merged the Congregational Church with the Evangelical and Reformed Churches. Further additions included an elevator and a handicapped accessible bathroom in 1993. In 1977, the Women's Fellowship opened a thrift shop, selling used clothing and other items to raise money to refurbish the organ. The thrift shop remains open today and serves the community with low priced clothing and goods to those in need.

Church Strengths:

-Our current core leaders have a vision of where we want to go moving forward

-We have a portfolio with significant restrictions.

-Our church is a historical grand church building situated in a central location.

-We have a fully integrated sound system, electronic console and integrated analog pipe organ, power sound installed HD video system with remote management.

Significant Events: *Recently celebrated our 275 Anniversary with several community events.*

Our Challenges: *Building maintenance, low in-person attendance, membership growth, diminished church school ministry.*

Our year-to-year budget is challenging, especially in light of the decrease in active members.

Is there unresolved Conflict in Church? Yes No

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

(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: *Conflict was inherited, which was unsuccessfully addressed in the past. This was brought to the forefront of the core leadership. Previous leader was involved in acknowledging and committing leaders to address and resolve conflict*

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

We are a healthier congregation. We should always have an open and honest discussion of issues and we all should be treated with understanding and respect

BASIC STATISTICS:

#Church Members	Average Worship Attendance	CE Participation	Adult Ed Participation
98	12 in person 166 remote	0	3

2020 Income	2021 Budget	2021 UCC Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowments	Compensation being offered
\$174,892	\$150,000	\$4,500	\$1,300,000	See below

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.

Cash Salary offered \$ negotiable, plus benefits

Conference Compensation Guidelines (salary range): \$ _

 Housing allowance only \$ _____

 Parsonage only

 X would offer either

 X Pension Contribution (14% of Base Salary plus housing)

 X Social Security Allowance

 X Health Insurance Individual Family

 X Dental Insurance Individual Family

 X Vacation (1 week per quarter for full time)

 X Meetings

 X 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 X

Is this full time or part time? $\frac{3}{4}$ time

The Interim Term Pastor will be selected by: Church Council

+ + +

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:	The Rev. Liz Garrigan-Byerly
Phone	508-244-4311
Email	Garrigan-byerly@sneucc.org

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 or 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.)

We are looking for transitional leadership to help us to move forward with positive energy and to share our vision into our community. We have a digital presence we want to continue, including social media and live streaming services. Although we have worked hard to learn healthier habits, our sustained conflict along with the pandemic have eroded our sense of Christian fellowship and spiritual connection. We need an interim who will help us strengthen our connections with each other. We're excited to see where God will take us on our church journey.

We are planning to update our church governance and bylaws with new refreshing ideas that work efficiently. Our church leaders are few, and we are open to discerning with a candidate which scope and compensation is the best fit for our mutual interim ministry in this transitional time. We also need to determine whether we should call a full or part time settled minister. We need guidance to finalize our "why".

We "kindle a new light on the hill, midway between the valley and the stars".