



Southern New England Conference
United Church of Christ
Living the Love & Justice of Jesus

Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an Interim Pastor

Church Information

Full Name: Old South Church in Boston
Address: 645 Boylston St. Boston, MA, 02116
Phone: 617-536-1970
Email: info@oldsouth.org
Website: <http://www.oldsouth.org/>

Additional Denominational Affiliations:

UCC Conference: Southern New England
Association: Metropolitan Boston
Area Conference Minister Name: Rev. Alex Shea Will
ACM phone: (508) 244-4769
ACM email: SheaWillA@sneucc.org

*** Preferential attention will be given to applications received by April 22, 2022.***
Candidate profiles will be evaluated on a bi-weekly basis.

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**).*

We seek a dynamic, engaging interim senior minister to guide us through a transition following the retirement of our long-time Senior Minister. This person will be the spiritual leader and chief executive of a historic 450+ member, socially liberal, financially robust, UCC congregation. The interim senior minister will lead a large, successful team including: two experienced interim associate ministers, a minister of music, a Christian education director, ministerial interns from Harvard and BU, several adjunct clergy, an administrative manager, building manager, financial administrator, and two full-time sextons. This person is expected to attend a variety of committee meetings (mostly via Zoom) each month. They will confront a decline in membership fostered by pandemic departures from the city, and may face some staff turnover. Old South's annual budget is over \$2 million, half from an annual pledge drive and half from endowment income and building use, and is in a position to pay well above Conference guidelines for the right candidate.

Old South Church is 353 years old, and housed in a 150-year old national-historic-landmark, Gothic-style building located in the heart of Boston. We hold three weekly hybrid worship services: *Thursday 6 p.m. Jazz; Sunday 9 a.m. informal family worship and 11 a.m. traditional service aided by professional choir (subject to change due to Covid pandemic concerns)*. Sermons are normally short – less than 12 minutes; hymns are sung all the way through. The congregation is diverse and inclusive, warm and welcoming. We have active and accomplished lay leaders from fields such as law, the arts, healthcare, finance, and education. Members come from local neighborhoods, the greater Boston region, and beyond drawn by preaching, music, and an open and affirming community. We have long played a leadership role in LGBTQ issues, strive to confront racism, and engage actively in ministries of social and environmental justice.

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

Executive and change management experience to coordinate and support a large, talented team during a period of transition;

Spiritual and social justice leadership; and,

Inspiring preaching.

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?

During the interim time, the congregation will benefit from prayerful and enthusiastic support for its current, established programs to fulfill Christ's radical agenda for racial, social, and environmental justice and preparation to welcome and embrace new spiritual leadership after having been so lovingly shepherded over the last sixteen years.

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

5. Position Duration: 12 months 18 months other

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*):

WELCOMING

As recipients of God's radical love, our doors are open to everyone. Bearing God's Good News we welcome all ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, classes, marital statuses, physical or mental abilities — we believe that all people are made in the image of God.

WORSHIPING

We believe that worship is no benign activity. It is intended to radicalize us, change and form us into the followers of Jesus. Worship is our most elemental and formative work, renewing us, challenging us, and creating space for the rituals that mark the seasons of our lives.

GROWING

Whether through sacred text, searching conversations, book groups, or listening from the pews, we nourish learning and growth at every age. We are curious and open, exploring big questions together while remembering that no one has all the answers.

SERVING

As an urban church, we minister at the intersections of great affluence and even greater need. From here, we take our faith into our community and the world. We welcome all who enter, offering resources for doing justice, practicing kindness and walking humbly with God.

2. Brief Church History:

Founded in 1669, the third church in Boston, we baptized Benjamin Franklin, Phillis Wheatley and Samuel Adams, and hosted the meeting that turned into the Boston Tea Party. Through the centuries, members and pastors have been active in anti-witchcraft-trial, anti-slavery, Civil War, Civil Rights, anti-apartheid, affordable housing and Gay rights movements. The current building, our third, was completed in 1875 and houses one of Boston's largest organs. In 1953-54 Martin Luther King sometimes worshiped here when he was a divinity student and his future wife Coretta sang in the choir. In the 1990s the senior minister led the national committee that rewrote the UCC hymnbook for racial and gender inclusivity. Although Old South had ministered to gay people since the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, recognizing same-sex marriage provoked some dissent and departures in 2004. Shortly after that, Old South hired its first female senior minister and then its first openly gay associate minister.

3. 2-3 Significant Events:

2013 – Sale of Bay Psalm Book. The sale of one of the church's two copies of the first book printed in America for \$14.16 million at Sotheby's set a world record for book value. It followed extensive debate and a Congregational vote. The sale, coupled with the sale of some church silver and a \$4 million fund drive, more than doubled the church endowment and allowed creation of a reserve fund for preserving the building, Old South's most important legacy asset. It also caused some strife amongst members and departure of some opposed to its sale.

2013 – Boston Marathon Bombing. As "the church of the finish line," we celebrate the Boston Marathon every year with hundreds of out of town runners and supporters. The terrorist bombing, which killed three and injured more than 20 people, shut down the church for two weeks and led to numerous remembrance activities. Our service on the Sunday before the Boston Marathon is as well attended as our Christmas Eve and Easter services.

2019 – Celebrated our 350th anniversary. Began reckoning with the nation's and Old South's role in racism with research on enslavers among church founders; creating a memorial tree for early enslaved members; wide reading and structured discussion of Ibram X. Kendi's "How to be an Anti-Racist," and creation of (G)RACE Speaks as a permanent church committee to promote examination of racism.

2020 – Pandemic. With the onset of a worldwide pandemic, we explored and created our own online worship services which deliver our message and ministry to the world.

4. Church Strengths:

As the "Church of the Open Door", Old South is genuinely welcoming to all. Diverse congregation including collegians, young families, seniors, same-sex couples and parents, and unhoused neighbors. We have a strong lay organization with general agreement and few major disputes. Long tradition and member appreciation of history. Excellent music. Committed advocate for LGBTQ+ community. Participants in the New Sanctuary Movement to help immigrants in need of sanctuary. Provide more than \$130,000 in mission funding. Concerned about the climate crisis, we have reached level three status (so far) in the SNEUCC Environmental Ministries Team's "Green Congregation Challenge," which includes greening our church and advocating for effective policies. Actively involved in social justice initiatives/organizations such as GBIO (Greater Boston Interfaith Organization) and an occasional mobile soup kitchen.

5. Church Challenges:

Like many churches, Old South struggles to attract new members. We have considerable turnover as students and young couples move away for work. Although Boston is a magnet for newcomers, it can be difficult to reach them. Another challenge is addressing racial issues in society and reckoning with our imperfect past. Finally, there is a great need to provide support and energy to a staff that has become weary from the challenges presented by the pandemic.

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. Problem to solve.

(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.

Our level of conflict is quite low. We occasionally wrestle with how to prioritize congregational goals. We hope to ameliorate any conflict that may arise during this period of transition.

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

Church members can be opinionated, but we are always respectful, and disagreements are explored until all perspectives are examined in the hopes of reaching consensus, sometimes over multiple monthly meetings. Governance is regulated by the church by-laws, and solutions to most issues are by the ministers and relevant committees before being brought to Council or the wider church.

Basic Church Statistics

Yearly average

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	474	375		
Current year	434	250 includes online		

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	2,200,000	2,150,000	130,000	47,100,000
Current year	2,607,000	2,320,000	135,000	51,000,000

Compensation

Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: above conference guidelines.

Package offered: ___ Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered
(choose only one) ___X___ Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)
 health insurance, pension contribution

Housing:
 ___X___ Housing allowance only. Recognizing that housing around Boston is expensive, we will try to find an acceptable solution.
 ___ Parsonage only
 ___ Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation. Compensation will be based on the candidate’s experience, our budget process, and the retiring minister’s compensation.

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is: Interim Search Committee

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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.

Kristi Geary and Randolph W. Billings
Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

March 4, 2022
Date