

## Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking an **Interim Pastor**

### **Church Information**

Full Name: Charlemont Federated Church  
Address: P.O. Box 248, 176 Main Street, Charlemont, MA 01339  
Website: <http://www.charlemontfederatedchurch.org>

Additional Denominational Affiliations: American Baptist

UCC Conference: Southern New England; Association: Franklin  
Area Conference Minister Name: Terry Yasuko Ogawa  
ACM phone: (860) 761-7192  
ACM email: [OgawaTY@sneucc.org](mailto:OgawaTY@sneucc.org)

### **Position Details**

1. The Charlemont Federated Church is a Congregational church located in the beautiful hills of Western Massachusetts. We hope to find someone who will appreciate our rural setting and who will be curious about us, about our area, and about the world. We have a unique structure that allows as many members as possible to participate in decision making. We are committed to social justice and to the idea of community – within our church, within our surrounding towns, and around the globe.

We seek someone to lead Sunday worship. We want someone at home in the pulpit, someone welcoming. We want someone who will become attuned to the congregation. We want someone who balances the pastoral and the prophetic, someone who can speak the demands of justice while appreciating the reality that we are all beloved children of God.

This position can be either half time or three-quarter time. The exact balance of preaching and pastoral care is negotiable and will depend on the applicant's skills and desires. Help with our interim tasks is necessary. We are looking for someone who will help us explore our current structure and our relationship to change. We also seek help renewing our outreach to members and others in the aftermath of the pandemic shutdown. We want someone to help us examine our strengths, our challenges, and our gifts for ministry as together we follow where the spirit leads.

2. *Name 3 core competencies that you feel you will need in your Interim Pastor.* We have more than that (sorry!): Communications skills: listening and responding, and facility with digital communications. Interpersonal skills, including a sense of humor, a genuine interest in the

people of the church, curiosity, and an ability to facilitate congregational conversation(s) and decision making. A sharing of our commitment to community, near and far. And love and a spirit of inquiry in the pulpit. Experience with other churches in transition would be helpful.

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?*

**Heritage/Leadership:** Review organizational structure, communication, and relationship to change. Review communication on all levels, within the church and with the larger community. Update our Safe Church Policy into a stronger, more living document, particularly in the light of an incident of assault almost a decade ago that involved a church member and the daughter of the tenant at our rental property. The Franklin Association Committee on Ministry has made recommendations about dealing with this issue. We hope our interim will help us consider how to heal and move forward on this and other issues.

**Mission/Connections:** Renew community outreach and membership, especially in relation to younger adults, children, and youth.

**Future:** Envision our role in the future, given changes in social and cultural attitudes toward church participation and changing demographics. Inspire us to look to the years ahead with faith, hope, and trust in God.

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

5. Position Duration: Other: 1 year, with annual review

## Who We Are

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

1. *Church's Mission Statement:* The Charlemont Federated Church is a gathering of people who seek to live out the word of God and the teachings of Jesus. We live by faith and love, work for peace and justice, and care for those in need. We are committed to community and believe in giving our congregants a great deal of theological elbow room.

2. *Brief Church History:* The first settled minister came to Charlemont in the 1760s, although a church building was not completed until 1804. Later, the town center moved west, and in 1845 our current church building (which has excellent acoustics) was built. In 1920, three different denominations in town – Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists – joined together to form the Federated Church. In 1961, the Congregational portion of the Charlemont Federated Church became part of the United Church of Christ. In the 1990s the Methodist affiliation was dissolved at the request of that denomination, although we still have a Methodist or two in our ranks.

The church recorded its greatest membership numbers in the mid-20th century. Since then, the community has dwindled and aged, and we have seen less participation, particularly since 2020 when the pandemic shut things down for a while. Still, we have made strides in

recent decades. In the 1970s, Mohawk Trail Concerts began, a summer music series that was and continues to be a partnership between the church, the community, and excellent musicians. In the 1980s, Good Neighbors, our food-distribution program, was formed. In the 1990s we widened our view of mission to include one-on-one relationships with communities in Central and South America, first in Nicaragua and now in Bolivia. In that decade, we also received a significant bequest that enables us to offer music lessons to children throughout the community. We have engaged in two very successful capital campaigns, one in 1994 to build a new organ and refurbish the building, and one in 2014. (See below.)

In the 2000s, we reorganized our church structure to involve more people in decision-making and ensure that all church members felt they were part of the church by joining one of our ministries. These include Buildings and Grounds, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Worship and Music, and Missions and Outreach. Each ministry has a representative to the Deacons, our main decision-making body. In 2005, our minister of 18 years retired. He was replaced by an outreach-oriented pastor who expanded our membership and our profile in the community. We have lost people since her retirement in 2018 (COVID didn't help!), but we hope to reverse that trend. In recent years, we have made our commitment to social justice more visible with a weekly vigil outside the church.

3. *2-3 Significant Recent Events:* In 2010, the Charlemont Forum began to bring community members to the church to discuss local, national, and international issues of the day with experts from around the country. In 2011, the church began serving as an emergency shelter. In 2014 we held a second capital campaign to restore our stained glass windows, renovate the kitchen, and improve accessibility. In 2018, our last full-time settled minister retired. As recently as 2019 we worked on long-range planning in brainstorming group sessions, including two discussions with millennials. During the lockdown we had a short-term interim and some valiant supply ministers. In 2021, we sold our parsonage; the last minister to live there was in 1978. We also welcomed a new minister in 2021; she departed in 2023.

4. *Church Strengths:* We welcome a diversity of religious backgrounds, perspectives, and practices. We care for one another and the larger community. We serve as a center for the community beyond our congregants. We have an excellent music program, including a music-education program open to all children in the community. We are progressive and committed to social justice. We are in a beautiful rural area.

5. *Church Challenges:* We are an aging population in a rural setting. Our financial resources need bolstering. Our members and community come from a variety of economic strata. Over the past five years, we have experienced many transitions in the pulpit, including short-term and interim ministers as well as a settled pastor.. And, like many other congregations, we have lost membership (particularly young members) during the pandemic.

On the other hand, we have a shared wisdom and experience, and our area draws many people for outdoor recreation from skiing in the winter to rafting and kayaking in the summer. Despite our lack of a consistent ministry, we have remained a strong congregation with a rich volunteer base.

We experienced conflict with our most recent minister, a combination of the lockdown (which upended the getting-to-know-you process) and conflicting expectations. We need to work on communication as we move forward. We hope that the interim process will help us understand some of the issues we have had in recent years so that we can be on a firmer footing with future settled ministers. We want to define the role and expectations of our minister better--taking into account in particular the fact that we will probably have a less than full-time pastor in a small town--and to institute structures for personnel assessment and negotiation.

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? \_\_\_\_2*

2. *Please explain why you chose this level. We care deeply for each other and do our best to support each other. We sometimes tend to avoid conflict, which can lead us to put off difficult and challenging conversations. In general, we are unified on the challenges facing us, however.*

3. *Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict. We try to be mindful of all perspectives and have brought in helpful outsiders if needed as mediators. Even when conflict arises. we stay connected and remind ourselves that our commonalities outweigh our differences. Our basic model of trying to achieve consensus and compromise has for the most part served us well; however, we need to expand our resources in terms of conflict resolution so that when consensus and compromise do not work, we have other methods to help us move forward.*

### Basic Church Statistics

*Yearly average*

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	127	55	2 to 6 weekly; 15 for special events	10
Current year	114	35	0	10

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves & Endowment
Pre-pandemic (2019)	\$133,355	\$130,935	\$10,500	\$1,200,000 & parsonage
Current year	\$134,000	\$169,165	\$12,000	\$1,488,000

				as of 11/30/2023**
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\* Parsonage sold in 2022 with most of proceeds added to reserves

\*\*Balance includes \$312,000 restricted for community food bank and \$305,000 restricted for community music education program.

## Compensation

**Total Compensation Package Amount or Range: \$42,500 - \$63,500 (depending on whether the person works half time or three-quarter time); plus up to 15 percent more, depending on experience**

Package offered:     **Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered**

Housing:        **Housing allowance only**

*Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.* Used median income in Charlemont area per the UCC; added 30% for benefits; multiplied by proportion of full-time position (that is, by 50% and by 75%).

Church body responsible for hiring the Interim Pastor is the Diaconate.

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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.

Tinky Weisblat

4 March 2024

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Search Committee Chairperson  
(typed or Jpeg is sufficient)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date