

Local Church Profile
Lancaster Congregational United Church of Christ
Lancaster, NH

Search for Settled Pastor

CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
- Who Are We Now?
- Statistics
- References
- Statement of Consent
- Validation by Conference/Association

*"God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work."
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*



POSITION POSTING

- Listing Information
- Our Search Process
- Who is God Calling to Minister with us
- Compensation & Support

Listing Information

Lancaster Congregational UCC, 142 Main Street, Lancaster, NH 03584
lcuccnh@gmail.com

Lancaster Congregational UCC Moderator, Linda Hutchins, 603-788-4681
riffsflower@yahoo.com

New Hampshire Conference of the UCC
 North Country Association of the NHUCC

UCC New Hampshire Conference contact Rev Richard Slater, 603-715-9525
rslater@nhcucc.org

Position Title: Settled Pastor
 Compensation Level: 3/4 Time

Our Search Process

The Lancaster Congregational Church began our search with a process to understand who we are, and where we want to be. To this end, our pastoral search committee designed and distributed a questionnaire to the church members. Their response was enlightening and encouraging. While we all hail from different cultures and communities, the answers and insights provided us with a snapshot of our church.

So why *do* we walk through the doors of our church each week? First and foremost, this is a sanctuary where we can open our hearts and minds heavenward, and worship in thought, words, and song. While we acknowledge that one may speak to God in every place and time – sitting here alongside our friends and neighbors makes our hearts sing. This theme of fellowship and community is echoed in each response to our questionnaire. Our congregation cares deeply for every member of our church – we truly have a sense of family here. And our family loves to sing! What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved? - Fellowship and a welcoming attitude.

Who is God Calling to Minister with us?

What do we seek in a pastor? Members responded with several common themes to the questions of what we are looking for in a pastor to join us in our journey of faith. We visualize our new minister as someone approachable and people-oriented and who is committed to pastoral care. We seek someone who can inspire *and* challenge us. We look for scripture and words from the pulpit that can provide us with spiritual nourishment. We enjoy hearing ideas of how we can apply the Word to our everyday life. We desire someone who will enjoy working with other churches in our community. Most of all, we hope for a pastor who can help us add new members to our church family and bring past members back. We want to "scoot over" in our pews and share our love of Christ, our sense of community, and our love for neighbors. We pray that God will provide us the shepherd to meet our needs, both known and unknown.

Compensation and Support

Compensation Level $\frac{3}{4}$ time (30 hours per week)

Flexible Scheduling

Total Budgeted Compensation \$49,000 with suggested line details below

- Base Salary \$28,000
- Housing Allowance \$12,000
- Social Security Offset \$3,500
- Health Insurance Allowance \$4,000
- Mileage Reimbursement \$1,500

Additional ~ \$2,000 per year special fund for pastor's personal discretionary use

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."

(Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Our church has a long history of community involvement. Within the last two years, we have become an open and affirming church by a nearly unanimous vote. We have been a "five for five" church with the United Church of Christ. We have several members who individually give of their time and energy to local charitable endeavors. However, since COVID has hit and we were forced to shut down, we

have been distracted and uncertain as to who God is calling us to become. We are hopeful that new leadership and a new vision focus will help us to regain our footing and breathe new life into our church family. We are at a crossroads and need someone who can help us more clearly define our church's wider mission and vision. We seek a pastor as a partner who is willing to become invested in us as a congregation and as individuals. Someone who cares about each of us as demonstrated by actions.

WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
(Matthew 22:39)

Our Church

Our church serves as a spiritual anchor in our lives and plays a prominent role in our children's lives and the life of our community. Standing near the center of town, surrounded by the county courthouse, town park and public library, the Lancaster Congregational United Church of Christ is a welcoming home for our church family and members of the community. While our white New England structure is over 100 years old, our congregation has a 200-year history in Lancaster.

Our spacious sanctuary serves as a true sanctuary for those of us who gather there for worship and for spiritual renewal as we each follow our own paths in the world. Beautiful stained glass windows surround us, and it is difficult not to be inspired on a Sunday morning when the early day's light streams through the windows into the pews.



We have a large fellowship hall where we gather for a time of informal greeting after worship, and a spacious and bright pastor's office which is available for meetings. Our longtime dream of a kitchen off the fellowship hall has been realized, giving us the opportunity to easily host functions such as our annual Easter pancake breakfast open to the community, funeral receptions, birthday parties, potluck suppers, and other gatherings.

At a gathering of our church family, whether for a time of worship or fellowship, the joy, positive energy and caring love shared among us is clearly evident. As a congregation, our members come from a wide range of religious backgrounds, but we have found common ground here. We are proud to be an Open and Affirming congregation. We are conscious of our diversity and see it as both a strength and a resource.

We look to Sunday worship as the center of our faith and our lives. Our services inspire us, renew us and bring us together as a family of faith. We experience a real sense that we are placing ourselves in each other's care. When we pass the peace on Communion Sundays and symbolically make peace with our neighbors before participating in communion, there are handshakes and hugs and greetings which continue for several minutes.

Music is an important part of our worship service. There are few more inspiring moments to experience than listening to the meaningful words of an anthem. We are known in town as "the church with the amazing choir."

Each Sunday members of the congregation serve as greeters, readers and Sunday School teachers. Our weekly "family moment" is often led by a member of the congregation and provides us with an original, often humorous, reflection of their faith.

The Lancaster Congregational UCC is a family-oriented church with a cross section of ages, professions and occupations represented. We have had an active Sunday School, and although currently we have very few children, we hope to grow this number in the future, as we are especially mindful of our youth. We feel a strong sense of responsibility for providing them with leadership and guidance as they develop in their faith and relationship with God. The longtime church members especially enjoy the children.

We are a congregation that enjoys each other's company. We see each other outside of church through our jobs and various roles in the community, and our spirits are

lifted when we have the opportunity to check in with each other at the ballfield, the town hall or grocery store. We are grateful for the many chances we have to be a part of each other's lives, the chance to support each other through prayer, with our very active prayer chain, or with a home-cooked meal, or the chance to share our faith by words or acts of kindness. LCUCC's outreach and fellowship has expended our mission donations locally across denominations and world wide. The "Deacons Fund" which is funded by special offering is used to provide emergency assistance to our local community. During the pandemic a special focus was placed on the "over 80" population of our congregation. A small group of church members personally delivers homemade cookies to them monthly. This kindness not only provides delicious cookies, but also companionship to our elders that are often homebound. Each Christmas season, our church selects a family or two that are in need to purchase Christmas packages for the every family member.

We are active participants in the North Country Association. Members are currently and have in the past served on conference boards. We have sent youth to regional camps as well as delegates who have attended national youth meetings. We generally have representation at the UCC annual conference.

As committed members of our local communities, LCUCC members have provided or prepared food for the local ecumenical monthly free meal events. We have participated in annual ecumenical Pentecost parades which culminate in a joint coffee hour. We have participated in ecumenical Baccalaureate services for our high school seniors. We have hosted community Christmas carol sing-alongs. We have provided a series on Death and Dying with local community participation. We have hosted community choral concerts combining singers from many towns and churches into one large choir. We are eager and willing to partner with other churches to support our community.

Our Town

Those of us who moved to Lancaster have a distinct memory of the first time we drove over Corrigan Hill, and our new hometown appeared. Pastures and woodlands lead down into Lancaster with the Kilkenny Mountains as a backdrop. The red roofs of the fairgrounds are visible in the distance, several church steeples point skyward, rooftops of some Main Street businesses can be picked out along with some of the homes in the hilly streets on the east side of Main Street. No matter where we've been or how long we've been away, we still appreciate this serene view as we head down Corrigan Hill and return to our lives in Lancaster.



With a population of 3,200, Lancaster is in rural northern New Hampshire, an area often referred to as the North Country. The town is bordered by the Connecticut River on the west and stretches out to mountains in the east. Our downtown includes a bakery, art gallery, craft brewery, gourmet coffee shop, organic grocery, public library, town hall, county courthouse, four churches, and a classic movie theater among several other businesses. We are the only town in New Hampshire with a working farm on Main Street. The residential streets of Lancaster lead to stately older Victorian homes and newly constructed contemporaries. Many people live "out east," along the back roads of Lancaster, where homes and farms sit on several acres with expanding views of the nearby mountains. Our beautiful church, with the square steeple is near the center of town next to Centennial Park, home of the Lancaster Farmers' Market with its bandstand and ice-skating rink.



Lancaster is the seat of Coös County, and church members come from several area towns - Jefferson, Dalton, Groveton, and from across the river in Vermont. Jefferson boasts the oldest (and prettiest) golf course in New Hampshire, and also the ever-popular amusement park, Santa's Village.

Choosing to live in Lancaster means choosing to live a certain lifestyle. Our town does not boast of mega-malls or multiplex cinemas - but we are proud of that. If you can't find something here in town, a 30-minute drive will bring you to Walmart and Home Depot in Littleton. Concord and Manchester are only a couple of hours away, with Boston an hour beyond. Head north, and you can be walking the streets of Montreal in three hours.

Making your home in Lancaster means that you will know your children's teachers by their first names, and maybe see their children playing in the soccer game. You will recognize the mail carrier as the umpire at the youth baseball game and see your banker at the post office. The salesman from the car dealership dressed in his firefighter's uniform marches in the Fourth of July parade. Lancaster is a small town where neighbors know each other and are involved in their community, sitting on town boards, coaching youth teams, and serving in the volunteer fire department and ambulance corps. In a small community like Lancaster, people often play many roles and serve the community with whatever gifts and talents they possess.

In Lancaster we are blessed to be surrounded by the natural beauty of the North Country and the grandeur of the White Mountains. The National Forest borders Lancaster to the east, providing access to numerous trailheads for hiking, cross country skiing or snowshoeing. The Connecticut River and local ponds and streams provide ample waterways for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing. Snowmobile and ATV trails lead through town, connecting riders to an extensive system of trails throughout New Hampshire and Vermont. Lancaster's Mount Prospect Rope Tow, and other nearby ski resorts provide challenges for beginning and seasoned skiers and snowboarders.



Our children attend the Lancaster School from kindergarten through eighth grade, then join youths from four nearby towns to attend White Mountains Regional High School in the neighboring town of Whitefield. The Sunnybrook Montessori School is housed in the lower level of our church building.

Many activities for our youths are provided by the Colonel Town Recreation Department, which offers organized sports, community Pilates/yoga classes, and exercise programs for senior citizens. Col Town provides tennis courts, baseball & soccer fields, and a camp "out east" for picnics and gatherings.

Lancaster's Weeks Medical Center contains a hospital and clinic and is a member of the North Country Healthcare Alliance. This association with two other local hospitals provides residents with access to primary care, specialists, and emergency services.

Whether we've chosen to relocate to Lancaster or to remain after growing up here, we've made a decision to be a part of this community. We might have to drive a bit to see the Red Sox, and travel a tad to shop in Montreal, but that's okay. Because we can walk down to Centennial Park on a summer night and watch our kids play around the bandstand while we listen to the town band. And we'll have a piece of homemade pie, because that's what our church sells during band concerts - and nobody makes better pies than we do. This is our town. Lancaster is home.

STATISTICS

Congregational Demographics

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Number of active members:	55	yes
Number of active non-members:	20	yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	75	yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
More than 10 years:	70	yes

Less than 10, more than 5 years:	20	yes
Less than 5 years:	10	yes

Participation and Staffing

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	6	Minister
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	0	Minister
Children's Groups or Classes	2	Minister
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	50	Minister & Deacons
Church-wide Meals	50	Outreach & Fellowship Committee
Choirs and Music Groups	12	Choir Dir., Organist, Minister
Church-based Bible Study	6	Minister
Communion <i>(monthly)</i>	30	Minister & Deacons
Community Meals		Participate ecumenically at other churches
Confirmation	2	Minister & Lay Teacher
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	0	Minister

Church Finances

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$62,018

Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy</i>)	\$10,000
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	0
Fundraising Events	\$3,198
Rentals of Church Building	\$8,300
Total	\$83,516

Current annual expenses (dollars used during most recent fiscal year) | **\$80,054**

Is your church 5-for-5?

We have in the past but did not meet them all in 2020 due to COVID

Does it include each of the following contributions during the church year?

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Collected with offering envelopes.

What is the church's current indebtedness? Total amount of loan debt:

\$0

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

\$586,000

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

As needed

Does your church have a parsonage?

No

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

Sanctuary, Pastor's office & Fellowship Hall

Historical Information

Ministerial History

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Sharon van der Laan	10	Yes
Rev. Virginia Alvarez	6	No

REFERENCES

Rev. Richard Slater, NHUCC Conference
rslater@nhucc.org 603-715-9525

Rev. Tim Brooks, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Lancaster NH
timstpaulslancasternh@gmail.com 603-788-4654

Abby Pollander, Former member and friend of Lancaster Congregational UCC
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Linda Hutchins, Lancaster Congregational UCC Moderator
riffsflower@yahoo.com 603-788-4681



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 profile 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 suitable new minister 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.

The following individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile:

*Pastoral Search Committee
Church Membership via survey*

Signed: *Linda E. Hutchins*

Name / Title: *Linda E. HUTCHINS, MODERATOR*

Date: *June 15, 2021*

*"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'"
Mark 11:22*

Validation by Conference/Association

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment: **The Lancaster Congregational Church is a member in good standing in the North Country Association of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ.**

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment: **To the best of my knowledge, the ministerial history is complete.**

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment: **To the best of my knowledge, the church's financial information is presented accurately and thoroughly.**

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:	<i>Rev. Richard N. Slater</i>
Name / Title:	Rev. Richard N. Slater, Assoc. Conference Minister
Email:	<u>rslater@nhcucc.org</u>
Phone:	603-715-9525
Date:	June 1, 2021