

## Local Church Profile for Churches Seeking a Designated Term Pastor (DTP)

### Church Contact Information

Full Name: Edwards Church Northampton  
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Additional Denominational Affiliations: none

UCC Conference: Southern New England  
Association: Hampshire  
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### Position Details

1. Describe the ministry position for which you are seeking a pastor.

We invite you to consider our church for your next ministry setting! We are seeking a Designated Term Associate Minister of Faith Formation who will engage with our community, inside and outside our doors, while participating in all areas of ministry. We are a church with dedicated and supportive lay leaders, a commitment to social justice, and a desire to deepen our faith and demonstrate it through service. If called, an integral part of your ministry will be providing leadership in faith formation across the lifespan. We want someone to help us reimagine our programming for younger individuals and families, renewing our efforts with familiar approaches and exploring new ways of forming faith together.

Northampton is a vibrant small city of 30,000 people where diversity and the arts are celebrated. You will find an abundance of music, theater, and other arts venues, as well as a wide variety of shops and restaurants in Northampton and the surrounding area. Located next to the Connecticut River and the foothills of the Berkshires, we have easy access to outdoor activities from boating to hiking, camping and skiing. We are nestled among an array of farms, from small hillside farms to larger farms along the river. In season, farmers markets operate two days a week just blocks from the church. Northampton is home to Smith College, a member of the Five College Consortium, which also includes Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Education is valued in the area. Bradley Airport near Hartford, CT is a quick 40 minute drive, and Amtrak connects us to New York City and Montreal.

We invite you to join our community as a leader and a collaborator. We want to learn from you and will seek to nurture you. This opportunity is one where you will be called to use your learning and experience in faith formation across the lifespan. You will be called as a partner in worship planning and monthly preaching. We will seek to support you in challenging work. We are interested to learn what lights you up and brings you joy.

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

Natural Network Builder: Demonstrated success in cultivating relationships with others in relevant community settings, e.g., recruiting and training volunteers in church, or identifying and developing contacts with other houses of worship or other non-profits to increase impact on shared goals.

Effective Change Leader: Demonstrated ability to engage groups with shared goals and values to try new ways to pursue those goals and express those values.

Experienced Faith Former/Educator: Capable of preaching to comfort, challenge, uplift, and enlighten, with appropriate attention to scripture, the current context, the needs of the people, and the mission and ministry of the church. This includes leadership of a variety of faith-forming experiences for a range of age groups and intergenerational groups, with awareness of techniques for adjusting materials and programs for discreet age cohorts and mixed age groups.

3. Position Scope:  Fulltime     ¾ time     ½ time     ¼ time

We are open to candidates who would prefer a ¾ time commitment.

4. Position Duration: 3 years; with an option for longer

5. Is the DTP eligible for the settled position?  Y     N

If yes, how will that be discerned?

Moving from a DTP position into a settled position will be determined through prayerful discernment by our church and the DTP. An annual review will round out decision making. Assuming the DTP, the ECM, and the Senior Minister all agree, the ECM in consultation with the Senior Minister will formulate an offer for the DTP and a recommendation to the congregation. A vote of the congregation is required for the DTP to be called as an Associate Pastor for Faith Formation. This position reports to the Senior Minister.

Measurements may include but are not limited to the following:

1. the number of programs offered: an increase in current folks' engagement is what we are seeking and some growth in numbers is also good
2. networking with other churches: conversation nurtured in visioning future; programs offered to bring folks together from multiple churches. We currently have relationships and collaborations with First Churches, Congregation B'nai Israel, St John's Episcopal, and several others in and around our community. Continued development of relationships and programming will be expected as well as forging new relationships with churches in our area.

### **Designated Term Ministry Goals**

*The focus of a designated term ministry is to work toward the church's declared purpose for a specific season. Whereas, the purpose of an Interim Pastor is to help a congregation prepare for their next Settled Pastor, a Designated Term Pastor is called to assist the church with meeting specific goals within a specific time period. These are the most common reasons that churches choose a Designated Term Ministry.*

1. Please choose all the reasons for choosing a DTM that applies to you.

- New ministry development, start or continuance
- Revitalization of current ministries and church vitality
- Legacy/hospice
- Reassessment of ministry, which may include:
  - exploring merger, yoking or unification with another church
  - assessment of properties
  - Staffing restructuring
- Major conflict/healing

2. In a paragraph or two, explain how you discerned that a DTM was right for the church at this time.

Our church received notice in the fall of 2023 that our long-term Faith Formation Minister was ready to retire at the end of the calendar year. At that point, our Elected Core Ministry (church council) reviewed with our Senior Minister the options for short-term coverage and longer-term ideas for filling the position. Upon reflection, it was noted that the Faith Formation Minister had moved over the years to fulfilling a role most often understood as an Associate Pastor. In the past five years, we also shifted our church structure from a hierarchical committee/council model to a circle model of collaborative teaming of folks in ministry circles. With these recent changes in mind, the Elected Core Ministry recommended to the congregation that we seek a Designated Term Minister to focus on three to five initiatives to aid us in figuring out where we are now (post-pandemic) as a congregation and what we might look like in a few years (structure, membership, staffing). The congregation voted to approve the recommendation of the Elected Core Ministry.

3. Please explain your goals for this Designated period using the table below.

	<b>Goal:</b> with specificity, describe what you hope to accomplish during this time.	<b>Commitment:</b> describe how the congregation will prioritize and participate in reaching this goal?	<b>Assessment:</b> describe how the congregation will know the goal has been accomplished
1.	Revitalize Programming in Which to Engage Children, Youth, and Young Adults: A. Restore and maintain staff for childcare B. Recruit and equip (with training. curriculum, materials) adults from congregation to lead/accompany children and youth in faith-forming activities C. Resume, reimagine, and redesign teen and young adult programming D. Collaborate with local agencies in outreach to	A. Provide budget, leads to sources for hiring childcare staff and, if required, identify volunteers B. Provide budget, support, in recruiting volunteers or volunteering C. Identify former participants still considered potential to re-engage and reach out for new participants or those who have not been involved recently D. Provide leads/introductions to relevant program personnel who could	A. Increase in the number of Sundays childcare is staffed B. Increase in positive feedback from children and parents on the Sunday programs designed to engage children and youth C. Individual outreach conducted to explore re-engagement and nurture connection while exploring new possibilities and valuing past successful engagements D. The congregation will embrace the phrase “it takes a

	underserved youth and young adults E. Seek guidance from SNEUCC Faith formation team to understand trends in ministry	refer/identify youth and young adults E. Attend conferences or workshops to understand trends in ministry, and then experiment and innovate using that learning	village” and will report on outreach conducted E. Regularly reflect on past year to examine what has taken place and what has worked well vs not working so well, refocusing energy as indicated
2.	Expand intergenerational opportunities in mission work: A. Develop strategies to encourage friendships between youth and adults B. Implement specific mission events throughout the year; including one-time and ones that could recur annually C. Support and assist ideas of mission work from congregants	A. Participate in opportunities to deepen bonds between our youth and adults B. Commit to participate in mission events offered C. Agree to brainstorm and participate in the planning process of upcoming and potential mission events	A. Survey the congregation on whether they feel more intergenerational bonding B. Keep records of each event and the number of participants, and seek feedback from participants C. Review mission events every year for engagement and impact
3.	Explore practical and visionary collaboration with other churches A. Support development of combined services B. Special events at our church that are specifically designed to include other congregations C. Plan mission work in collaboration with other congregations D. Create opportunities to learn about other faiths and practices	A. Commit to attending combined services in our sanctuary and elsewhere B. Help develop and participate in special events/practices/services that include other congregations C. Help plan and attend mission work opportunities D. Attend and participate in educational opportunities surrounding faiths and practices	A. Track participants in combined services and impact B. Seek feedback on special events and provide follow up discussion or written synopses to church newsletters C. Track participation in combined mission work and impact D. Survey participants to gain insight into experience in interfaith learning

## 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*):

The purpose of this Church, in all its programs and activities, shall be to bind together followers of Jesus Christ for sharing in the praise and worship of God and in seeking and serving God. As Christians, it is our mission to respond to all God's creation with the love Christ directs, through collective and individual worship, prayer, support, and action.

Let us share a bit about ourselves through the lens of our Vision Statement (in italics below). Although adopted in 2015, it still serves to inspire and guide us.

*Gathering at the crossroads of ancient faith and contemporary culture, we are a Christian church asking God to open us to a new way.*

Our church is grounded in the Christian faith and is located in downtown Northampton, a progressive community in western Massachusetts. Our city is home to Smith College, a community hospital, and a vibrant downtown with a city-owned community theater just across the street.

*Knowing that the road is long, we choose to walk together.*

Our staff and congregation work collaboratively to bring the church to life for its members, and the wider community. We hold each other through the grief and joy life brings and strive to stay connected through conflict.

*Finding strength in our diversity, we call on all our talents to worship and serve.*

Members of our church create comfort and assurance by weaving prayer shawls and stitching quilts to give to friends, families, and foster children entering young adulthood. Members rewrote our Welcoming Statement to be more gender inclusive. Members serve on financial teams to steward our resources.

*Encountering the world's joys and suffering, we offer ourselves as instruments of love and justice.*

Our community gives of itself and its resources. Through ongoing programs and one-time efforts, we strive to meet the persistent and emerging needs of our community.

*Longing to find the holy in ourselves and others, we listen for God's still-speaking voice.*

Our congregation listens to one another and works to understand different perspectives with patience and grace. We worship and seek to create multiple avenues for folks to lean into the word of God. Team meetings include prayer. We bring artwork to our bulletins and chancel.

### 2. Brief Church History:

Edwards Church began in 1833. It was called the Edwards Society and was started primarily by some of the younger people from the First Church of Northampton. The First Church had grown to over 700 members and was straining the resources of the current pastor. Ninety-nine parishioners struck out to start a new church with the good wishes of their parent church. The First Church showed its love for the new church by giving them a silver communion serving set. It was

presented to the Edwards Society in 1834 and is the same communion silver we still use every month.

And so began Edwards Church. We have been through many changes since that time. Each new pastor has brought a different perspective, and the church has often reflected the times in which it found itself. The Edwards Church you see at 297 Main Street is the third building to house its congregation. Many things have changed since the Edwards Society began. We have been the church for Calvin Coolidge and his family. We have watched Main Street in Northampton change from a center of industry to the eclectic town of today. During the life of Edwards Church, we have seen dirt streets become water canals, which became trolley tracks, and then paved roads. Through it all, we have remained an inviting church to all who seek to find God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Our great glass wall covered with crosses allows all in our community to look in and see who we are and allows us to look out and be reminded that our calling is to go out and help our community as Jesus would ask us to do.

### 3. 2-3 Significant Events:

**Transition Musical Leadership:** Music has always been a large part of our experience of the divine, and we have historically had a strong music program. Our previous Minister of Music was asked to step down in 2022, and our church has worked hard to manage the many emotions of our congregants, to listen to each other's' concerns, and to find a way to move forward. Our new Music Director, Adam Simon, started in September 2023 and has energized us in so many ways! The choir is gaining members, and he is encouraging members of the congregation to participate not only in the choir, but in concerts and other musical offerings. We used to pay 7 soloists to act as section leaders in the choir and provide special music during the service. Adam has inspired many of us to rethink the necessity of this, and to rely instead on the participation of volunteers.

**Creation of New Way Funds:** In order to provide more financial support to organizations that align with our values and help us create a more socially just world, without undermining our own long-term stability, lay leaders consulted with our financial advisor and developed a formula that tells us, on an annual basis, how much we can withdraw from our investment account to give away. Using this formula, we have substantially increased financial giving to other organizations and our connections to others doing work we feel needs to be supported.

### 4. Church Strengths:

We are open to change and innovation while we celebrate our deep spirituality. We invite a diversity of perspectives and strive to be a community in which diverse people can be at ease. We are a well-resourced church and care about outreach fund distribution as well as outreach activities; our resources run deep in our congregation with skill sets that run the gamut from gardening to cooking to public speaking and a generosity in lending the skills. We value intergenerational faith formation and music. Our location in the heart of the city drives aspects of our ministry. Social justice is valued and acted upon. Many church members are highly engaged in more than one church ministry and the recent revitalizing of the organizational church structure. Our vision statement drafted in 2015 still holds the congregations in good stead.

### 5. Church Challenges:

Although we were seeing slow but measurable decline in total membership and average attendance before the pandemic, coming out of the pandemic attendance declined by approximately half and participation by children and youth dropped even more.

Our congregation has weathered two challenging staff situations in the past twenty years. We are continuing to heal from the more recent conflict in 2022. Membership declined due to that conflict, with approximately 20 members and friends of Edwards leaving the church, taking approximately 5 children and youth with them. Current membership skews to the older generation. Teams such as the ECM and children’s programming leadership have strong members, although the number of volunteers is low.

**Experience of Conflict:**

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 current level:    Over the years we have experienced all levels, including 5 ; however, we currently are enjoying no discernible level of conflict. Some members are healing from the 2022 personnel issue and we care for each other with respect and patience.

*(Based on this work by Speed Leas 1. Problem to solve 2. Disagreement 3. Contest 4. Fight or Flight 5. Intractable)*

1. Please explain why you chose this level.

We feel conflicts and disagreements are very case-based and that we have experienced all of these levels at different times. These have ranged from discussions over how best to use our investment funds, to harder issues such as when nearly twenty years ago a staff member was arrested, and two years ago, when a long serving musical leader was let go.

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

We strive to be respectful and patient and seek outside support when necessary to resolve issues. To help us process the conflict in 2022, we engaged a church conflict consultant who led a series of listening circles. Our congregants value transparency whenever possible, while maintaining rights of privacy when appropriate. When addressed, conflicts can be resolved and bridged as we meet on the other side, closer for the experiences and stronger in our resolve to let God guide us through challenging times.

**Basic Church Statistics**  
*Yearly average*

	Church Membership	Weekly Worship Attendance	Children & Youth Participation	Adult Ed Participation
Pre-pandemic	237	90	22	83
Current year	219	53 in person 6 online	7	21

	Income	Overall Budget	Mission Giving	Reserves& Endowment Principals
Pre-pandemic	\$471,785	\$459,621	\$46,200	\$7,631,257
Current year	\$580,006	\$560,535	\$50,400	\$7,987,470

## Compensation

**Total Compensation Package Amount or Range:** \$78-88,000, depending on experience, for a full-time position. We are open to candidates who would prefer a ¾ time commitment, with compensation adjusted accordingly.

Package offered:      Total Package, no additional monetary benefits offered  
 (choose only one)     Total Package Includes Benefits (please list the benefits that are offered)

Housing:

- Housing allowance only
- Parsonage only
- Can offer either

Please explain briefly your process in discerning your compensation.

We reviewed the conference compensation guidelines as if our current Senior Minister were our only ministerial staff member and believe that compensation is in line with the guidelines. We then calculated a range of compensation for this position at 80% of the Senior Minister 's level for a person of comparable experience and lower for less experience. We understand this is consistent with the guidelines, though the formula used for a multi-staff church would produce a different indication. We still believe the compensation is quite fair.

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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.

Laura Frogameni  
 Signature of Search Committee Chairperson

April 2, 2024  
 Date (typed is sufficient)



