



# UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST NORWELL

March 27, 2024

Dear UCC Norwell Community,

In May of 2023, Church Council appointed an Associate Pastor Search Committee to fill the position as defined by our strategic plan. The Search Committee has been meeting on a regular basis since that time to develop the job description, write our church profile, gather resources from the denomination to support our search process, and thoughtfully consider applicants. The committee has appreciated your interest, prayers, and patience over the months as we have worked through this very important process, and we are happy to now share exciting news with you!

With the approval of Council, we are unanimously and enthusiastically recommending we call Reverend Peter Strobel as our next Associate Pastor. A graduate of the Yale Divinity School and Andover Newton Seminary, Peter is an ordained minister and was granted full standing in the United Church of Christ in 2022. He is currently serving as a TiM (Transition into Ministry) Associate Minister with the Plymouth Congregational Church UCC, in Des Moines, Iowa. During his time at Plymouth Church, Peter has created and taught a confirmation curriculum, planned and led the 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation retreat, created a LEGO ministry program to supplement children and family ministry activities, and revived and led the Young Adult program.

An essential focus of the Associate Pastor's role at UCCN will be to supervise, coordinate and expand our children's and youth ministries, including our youth groups for middle and high school youth. The Associate Pastor will also create programs that appeal and minister to young adults and coordinate the work of Jenny Healy and Bob Caldeira, and accordingly our Youth and Family Ministry Teams. Peter's experience in and sense of call for working with children and youth in the church make him especially qualified to join us in ministry as our Associate Pastor.

Other Associate Pastor duties will include occasional preaching on Sunday mornings and at special services and assisting with pastoral care responsibilities. The committee has had opportunities to hear some of Peter's sermons, both virtually and in person when he visited last month and preached at a neutral UCC pulpit in the area. Peter's sermons are spiritually thought-provoking, insightful, and sincere, enriched with storytelling and humor, and reflect a degree of maturity and self-insight beyond his years. Peter is comfortable providing pastoral care to individuals of all ages and has had experience supporting both struggling teens and adults at the Plymouth UCC and while serving as a CPE chaplain at the Research Medical Center in Kansas City, Missouri.

Rev. Leanne S. Walt, Lead Pastor  
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While fewer divinity school graduates are applying for associate pastor positions than in the past, opting instead to apply for senior pastor positions, over the months since our search committee first convened, we have read through the profiles of all candidates who have expressed interest in our position and have interviewed or followed up with the references of each applicant. When we received Peter's profile, we were immediately impressed with the depth, intelligence, and humility of his responses and the synchrony of his experience with the needs of UCCN. We have held five individual and/or group virtual interviews with Peter and met with him both socially and for an in-person interview in February when he and his wife, Allison (Allie), spent a weekend exploring the Norwell area, visiting UCCN, and meeting with our committee. Throughout this process, Peter has displayed what one of his references noted as a "pastor's heart." We have also been impressed with Allie, whose experience includes tutoring students with significant learning challenges and providing counseling at a teen crisis center.

Our Search Committee is confident and excited to recommend UCCN extend a call to Peter Strobel to become our next Associate Pastor. Deeply spiritual and compassionate, Peter is a profound thinker, a creative problem-solver, and a believer in transforming the world in accordance with the word of God and Jesus Christ. In his profile, Peter stated, "I want to minister with a church that is not content with the world we have been handed, because that world is not God's world." What an apt description of UCCN!

A Candidating Sunday will be held on Sunday, April 28, 2024, when Peter will preach at our 10:00 a.m. worship service, after which all church members in attendance will be invited to vote on his candidacy. We hope you will make every effort to join us on April 28<sup>th</sup> to share in this momentous decision for our church family.

The Associate Pastor Search Committee,

Chris Julian, Chairperson  
Brianna Benedict  
Valerie Donaldson  
Erin Griffith  
Andy Martinson  
Alex Neefus  
Jane Shanny  
Chuck Wildman