

## Local Church Profile for Mission and Ministry of the New England Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church has an open, itinerant appointment process. Appointments are made without regard to sex, race, ethnic origin, marital status, or age. They are made according to local church's missional needs and the gifts for ministry. While the Bishop appoints pastors to the churches, the local Church Pastor Parish Relations Committee is involved in a consultative process with the Bishop and Cabinet. The following information is important to this process. It will be used by the Cabinet and also be provided to the appointed pastor. (See "Point of Appointment Document" available at [www.neumc.org](http://www.neumc.org) )

Church:	United Parish of Auburndale ("UPA")	District:	Metro Boston HOPE
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### The Church's Community/Local Mission Field

1. Describe the neighborhood, community, area in which the church is located (i.e. urban, rural, racial/ethnic make-up, etc.)

The UPA is located in Auburndale, one of thirteen villages in the city of Newton. Newton's proximity to Boston, excellent school system, award-winning public library, historic character, strong civic involvement, cultural amenities, public safety, and educated population make it a highly desirable community in the metropolitan Boston area.

#### Population, Race, Religion and Politics

Newton has a population of 83,000. Although the city is 80% Caucasian, it has diversity. The population is 12% Asian, 2.5% African American, and the overall culture is increasingly international, with 22% of Newton households speaking a language other than English at home. Foreign-born nationals representing dozens of countries attend local schools and work in the Boston area. In 2009, Newton elected its first African-American mayor. It is an educated population with 44% holding a Graduate or professional degree, 28% holding a Bachelor's degree, and 11% with some college (including Associate degree).

In terms of religious affiliation, there is a significant but diminishing Catholic base. One third of the population is Jewish; and public schools observe both Jewish and Christian holidays. Like other parts of New England, membership at Protestant churches is in decline.

47% of registered Newton voters are Democrat, 8% are Republican and 45% unaffiliated.

#### Income, Wealth, and Cost of Living

Newton is a relatively wealthy community with average household income greater than twice the national average; the percentage of families living in poverty is less than half the national average, but still a significant 6%. A 2010 study by Bizjournal's *Portfolio.com* ranked Newton the second wealthiest urban area in the U.S. with a population over 75,000. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Newton was the nation's safest city during 1999, 2004 and 2005, and continues to have a very low crime rate.

Newton's median home price is \$644,000, and the cost of living is 94% higher than the national average. Auburndale is one of the less prestigious Newton villages, and the housing costs and wealth are probably somewhat lower, but still quite high by national standards.

Auburndale village has two neighborhood elementary schools, a small shopping area, parks, the Charles River, its own library and theatrical playhouse, 20 sites on the National Register of Historic Places, and the campus of Lasell College. Auburndale is host to a range of home/living styles – “fancy” single family, modest single family, two-family, condos, and apartments

2. [What trends are present in the community? \(growth, transition, decline, etc.\)](#)

- A continuing increase in land value and decrease in affordable housing.
- Ongoing development that increases density. In residential areas, tear-downs and multi-dwelling units or complexes are common. In commercial zones, the trend is toward large-scale developments that include office space, residential and commercial.
- A sharp increase in unemployment over the past three years.
- A high cost of childcare. Daycarematch.com cited Boston as having the second highest daycare costs in the country. Newton is comparable, with full-time daycare expenses often exceeding a family's housing expense.
- Older mothers. With 30% of babies born to mothers over 35, Massachusetts leads the nation in later-in-life motherhood. Newton, with its high cost of living and professional workforce, is likely higher than the state average.

3. [What are the pressing issues in the community?](#)

Newton Congregations, an interfaith coalition of Newton churches and synagogues, has identified three main areas of concern: societal pressures on teens, families sandwiched between caring for kids and elderly parents, and limited affordable housing.

Some of the other pressing issues are related to trends cited in question number 2:

- Financial stress – resulting from high cost of living, housing, daycare and higher unemployment.
- Congestion and load on public facilities – the density of development is taxing existing roads and schools, contributing to traffic congestion and a number of “temporary classrooms” in neighborhood schools.
- Strained city finances – There is general frustration about cuts in services, including schools, in such a well-off community.

4. [In what ways is the church providing ministry/outreach to the needs of the community?](#)

In addition to a significant financial commitment to Outreach, explained in section 4c under “The Church's Ministry and Mission” (below), our members participate locally with thirteen community service organizations and send a crew of volunteers to northern Maine for a week each year to assist low-income families with home repair. These ministry/outreach activities include, but are not limited to:

- Bristol Lodge cooking - monthly meal preparation/delivery for 80 guests at nearby soup kitchen
- Roxbury Food Pantry - weekly food collection for Boston-area pantry
- Families Feeding Families - twice-yearly food/goods collection for Failure to Thrive clinic at Boston Medical Center
- Mitten Tree - Christmas gifts to families affected by domestic violence
- HomeStart - contributing apartment furnishings to a homeless veteran family
- Newton Serves participation - yearly community service day

Many community groups also use the church building on a regular basis – including several Alcoholics Anonymous groups, a Post-Polio Support group, the Burr Cooperative Nursery School, and a singing group for a special needs population.

The UPA is also responsible for managing the distribution of two-thirds of the interest income from the Clark Harwood Charity Fund. The fund's mandate is to dispense its income "for the care, support, and welfare of poor and needy people" in Auburndale. In 2011, the UPA distributed \$70,000 in Harwood Fund monies to Auburndale residents. The Harwood Funds are not controlled by the church, and the income distributed is not included in the UPA's Outreach giving.

#### 5. [How many of the members live within the church's neighborhood/mission area?](#)

A majority of new members in the last few years have been from Auburndale and other western Newton villages. The current estimate of our membership households, by geography, is:

<u>Geography</u>	<u>Number of Households</u>	<u>% of Total Households</u>
Auburndale & West Newton	70	43%
Rest of Newton	30	18%
Waltham	10	6%
Other Nearby Suburbs	28	17%
Other Towns, Villages, Cities	24	16%

#### 6. [Other comments regarding the community:](#)

Auburndale has a college, and a proposed development, that present opportunities and challenges for the UPA:

The UPA is located one block from Lasell College. Lasell has achieved steady growth in recent years. Its campus growth has been a challenge for some Auburndale-residing UPA members, and, in an indirect way, for the UPA. Regarding the latter, concerns over Lasell's growth led to the creation of the Auburndale Historical District -- a designation which is now making it difficult for the UPA to dispose of two buildings on its property (see page 9). Lasell's population growth is an opportunity for the UPA, though. There are more than 1,600 undergraduate students, as well as 225 residents at Lasell Village, a seniors "learning" community which includes some UPA members. Recently, the UPA has reached out to new leadership at Lasell, with the intent of exploring ways to move beyond occasional programs and create deeper, more sustained ties.

Development at the nearby Riverside MBTA station is also dualistic in nature. It is a proposed mixed-use development of roughly 225,000 sq. ft of office space in one office building and 290 residential units. The UPA recognizes that new residents present an opportunity for ministry and membership cultivation. The challenge is that long-term residents are concerned about the project's impact on traffic in the area and strain on the Williams Elementary School.

### [The Church's Ministry and Mission](#)

1. [Write a brief statement that describes the congregation - its ministry, mission to the community, worship, history, theological outlook, and events that have had significant impact on its history.](#)

#### History

In 1980, the Centenary United Methodist Church in Auburndale and the Auburndale Congregational Church federated to create the United Parish of Auburndale. At the time of federation, the Articles of

Organization stated the following purpose of corporation: "to maintain and promote the public and private worship of God; to advance the teachings and spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of faith; to develop Christian fellowship and to minister to and in the world; and to support and enable members in their individual ministries." These principles continue to guide the life of the UPA.

### Theological Outlook

The UPA is a theologically liberal Christian church. Although there is a wide range of Christology at the UPA, most members believe strongly in the importance of Jesus's social justice teachings. We are often challenged by the Bible's teachings but endeavor to live our lives as best we can. Recognizing that we often fall short, we come together in worship and fellowship to renew our efforts, restore our spirit, and reaffirm our desire to improve. We need a pastor who can make the Bible's teachings relevant to our modern life and support us as we struggle together with our belief and non-belief.

### Mission to the Community

To live out our faith, the UPA has a significant ministry in outreach and social justice. In addition to our denominational apportionments and members' volunteer efforts, the UPA annually distributes \$70,000 directly to nonprofit organizations – through both good times and bad. We require a pastor who has experience leading volunteers and a passion for mission projects who can help us in our efforts to bring the teachings and spirit of Jesus to life. (For more information, see page 7.)

### Worship

The UPA is a community of caring individuals who come together seeking fellowship and support in a complex and demanding world. As a supportive community, we value the intimacy that our size allows. At the same time, we desire a variety of programs to enrich our families and spiritual lives. The UPA is committed to ministering to the congregation and providing programs to strengthen our community and foster our spiritual growth. We need a pastor to support our community and work with us to help us find ways to strengthen it.

In recent years, the UPA's family ministry has been a magnet for new members. Our Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs, vibrant children's choir, women's and moms' group, Confirmation Class, and "First Fridays for Families" help families give their children a Christian education and find fellowship. We require a pastor who understands the pressures that today's world places on families and can walk with us as we address those pressures.

### Open and Affirming Congregation

A fundamental pillar of the UPA is our commitment to welcoming all people, no matter who they are or where they are on their believer's journey. In 2000, after a year-long period of discernment, the UPA adopted the following Open and Affirming Statement:

*Recognizing that the church historically has not always welcomed all persons, we affirm the God-given worth and dignity of every individual as our sister or brother, and we welcome all persons, including those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered to the full life and ministry of the United Parish of Auburndale. We celebrate all relationships founded on the principles of God's love, compassion and faithfulness and embrace the responsibility to work against all forms of discrimination.*

For more than a decade, the UPA has had an active Open and Affirming Committee demonstrating our commitment to the GLBT community. Our pastor must share this commitment.

## 2. [What is God's church's vision/mission statement? \(Attach any written statements\)](#)

Our vision/mission statement (below) was adopted in 1997 and revised in 2002:

*Responding to God's love as revealed through Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to be a worshipping, welcoming, open and affirming, and caring fellowship that nurtures our individual and communal relationships with God, empowering us to share each other's burdens and joys and to reach out in love with justice to our local and world communities.*

### 3. What are the key goals for the church in the next 1-3 years? If the church has a strategic plan, what are the key elements/goals of the plan and how is it being implemented?

The church has not had an active Strategic Plan since 2007. At that time, after a series of meetings with key church leaders and the congregation, the UPA decided to address the following major initiatives:

- reforming corporate governance
- revising financial contribution requirements to Outreach giving
- creating a long-range building maintenance plan

To meet these goals, the UPA consolidated two boards and made revisions to the church by-laws. In addition, the formula for calculating the Outreach budget was altered so that Outreach giving was tied to new income (pledges, plate offerings and fundraising) rather than be a percentage of the entire budget (which includes endowment income). Finally, the Property Committee created a 25-year plan for future maintenance and capital needs. Due to budget constraints, this plan has not been fully implemented but offers a guide for the maintenance of our physical plant.

Recently, the UPA surveyed the congregation and committees to determine our top three priorities for the coming years. While we received a variety of responses (more youth programs, more programs aimed at individual spiritual growth, find a great pastor, concerns about volunteer fatigue, increase membership, address buildings and ground issues, etc.), the following issues were clearly top concerns for the membership. We will need the support and guidance of our pastor in addressing these issues:

#### Increasing the Strength of Our Membership

The UPA is a vital congregation that provides support to its members and outreach to the community around us. We are maintaining our population numbers because of an influx of families with young children. But, supporting our programs and performing outreach, as well as managing the church, takes significant volunteer time and effort. We worry about exhausting our volunteers who help bring the church to life. Therefore, one of our goals is to strengthen our membership so that the work of the church is shouldered by more people. In addition, we hope that our programs and spirit will draw new members to join us. As a vital and exciting congregation, we would like to open our doors and share our spirit with an even greater number of people in our community. It is our hope that strengthening our current membership and growing our membership will allow us to increase our spiritual growth and programs without losing the intimacy that we love in our congregation.

#### Continue Ministering to the Entire Parish

The UPA prides itself on caring for its members and providing a place for spiritual and emotional support in the face of a complex and challenging world. We have a diversified congregation who come from differing faith backgrounds and find themselves at different points on a spiritual journey. A clear concern of the membership is to provide a variety of programs for spiritual growth to address the needs of our varied congregation. We need to minister to all of these people, make them feel welcome, and engage their minds and spirits. In addition, we need to minister to all age groups. While we have a robust children's program that attracts families with young children, we struggle to find programs that are relevant and exciting to our youth (middle and high school students) and want a more robust program to challenge and encourage their participation. We want to continue programs and home visits for our seniors who have spent their lives caring for the UPA. We seek a pastor who can help us

shape and organize our youth program, continue our programs for adults and families, and support our senior ministries.

### Corporate Governance

The members of the UPA take seriously the stewardship that we provide this wonderful institution. While focusing on the spiritual community is our priority, we recognize the importance of keeping the lights and heat on and a roof over our heads. To that end, we continually are challenged to support our desire for Outreach, plan for long-term capital needs, provide for our staff, and maintain our current property. The UPA needs to address the current budget process and determine if we are allocating our resources in a responsible manner to balance our strong commitment to Outreach and the other programs we care about. Further, we need to discuss how we value our in-kind donations and our volunteer time so that our total Outreach budget reflects not just financial donations but all the support we provide the community.

A second factor of corporate governance is the fact that the UPA, as a federated church, is actually three "legal entities". Each year, there is a UCC annual meeting, a UMC charge conference, and a UPA congregational meeting. We would like to streamline the three-church structure while still maintaining our connection to both denominations.

We are a process-oriented church and make deliberate decisions after much discussion and analysis. We seek consensus, not majority rule. Our boards, committees, and the parish council take their responsibilities very seriously; and congregation meetings with formal votes are held on all important matters. We need a pastor who appreciates process and who can help us grapple with these issues, obtain consensus, and move forward.

#### 4. [In order to achieve God's church's vision and mission what significant ministries and programs are being used in the following areas?](#)

The UPA views its music programs as a significant ministry. Many of us feel the presence of the Holy Spirit through our music program, and we firmly believe the music program calls to people and nurtures their souls. Our music program involves an adult choir, a youth choir, a soprano soloist, guest musicians, guest choirs, a children's musical each spring, and inspiring music every Sunday.

In addition, the UPA and its Boards coordinate events and programs throughout the year, as listed below:

- a. [Calling People to Christ \(i.e. what are we doing to bring people in to our church?\)](#)
  - **Occasional programs:** Adult Forums, Companions in Christ, Lenten Series, Confirmation process (every other year), Women's Retreat
  - **Special programs:** Children's Sunday, Christmas pageant (UPA & local children), Vacation Bible School (UPA & local children), Welcome Back Picnic, Ash Wednesday and Tenebrae services
  - **Communication Activities:** We advertise regular and special events at the UPA in print and online media. Word of mouth marketing to parents of school-aged children has also been successful.
  
- b. [Nurturing Disciples \(i.e. what are we doing to take care of those already active in the church?\)](#)
  - **Regular programs:** Adult Choir & Children's Choir, Bible Study, Pastor visitation, Book Group, First Friday for Families (dinner/discussion for parents, childcare provided), Gals/Moms After Dark, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Youth Group, weekly email of our newsletter - *Together*.

- **Occasional programs:** Adult Forums, Companions in Christ, Senior Ministries, Women's Retreat
- **Special programs:** Advent craft fair & luncheon, Golf Tournament, Ice Cream Social, Welcome Back Picnic
- c. **Reaching out to the Community (i.e. what are we doing to support and interact with the community?)**

Arising from our study of Jesus's teachings, the UPA has a deep commitment to community outreach. By vote of the congregation, the church donates 35% of the income from plate offerings, pledges and fundraising to denominational support and nonprofit organizations. In 2010, \$72,000 was donated to 35 local, national and international organizations dedicated to peace, justice, freedom and human dignity. This is in addition to \$52,000 sent to the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ. Additionally, we always seem to find ways to give above and beyond what our charter requires: in 2010 we donated an additional \$13,225 with help from the church school, Youth Group and individual fund-raising projects outside the Outreach budget.

Above and beyond our Outreach giving, the UPA supports many non-profit organizations locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. In addition to the program examples cited above (e.g., pp. 2 & 6), some of the other activities offered by our boards and committees to reach out to our community include:

- **Pumpkin Patch:** The UPA has become known as the "Pumpkin Church" because, for the past 5 years, we have spent the month of October selling pumpkins raised by Native Americans in the Southwest. Our pumpkin patch draws people to our property and introduces them to the UPA; some customers have even become members. Staffing can be a challenge, but the program does succeed in building community among church members and with the local community.
- **Occasional programs:** Heifer Project, Outreach Fair, Walk for Hunger participation
- **Special programs:** UPA Auction & UPA Yard Sale (alternate years), Christmas caroling, Christmas pageant, Christmas wreath fundraiser purchased to support our Mission projects in Maine.
- **Other:** Offering space in our church to other organizations like Stambandet & Tremble Clefs (regional choral groups who practice at UPA),

## Church Organization

### 2. **List and describe all church staff positions (i.e. title, hours, etc.)**

The following is a listing of the UPA's current staff positions and duties. It's important to point out that we're open to a restructuring of the current split of duties between the Pastor and Youth Minister so that the Pastor can provide more guidance and leadership on staffing models for youth programs. We would expect that this would be considered only after the new Pastor has had sufficient time to become familiar with the UPA.

#### Pastor – full-time

- Reasonable hours as needed including evenings and weekends
- Four weeks (24 days) non-accumulating vacation each 12 months
- Two weeks non-accumulating study leave each year
- Reports to SPRC and Parish Council

#### Youth Minister – part-time

- 12 - 15 Hours per week, September through June
- Plan and run a one-week Vacation Bible School in July or August
- Reports to Pastor and Board of Christian Education

Director of Music – part-time

- 15 - 18 hours per week
- Four weeks non-accumulating vacation each year
- Leads Adult Choir – September through June
  - Weekly practice
  - Weekly contribution to Worship
- Responsible for music at 'special services'
- Responsible for Director of Children's Choir and Soprano Section Leader
- Reports to Pastor and Board of Worship

Director of Children's Choir – part-time, September through June

- Lead Children's Choir
- Weekly rehearsal
- Monthly contribution to Worship
- Reports to Director of Music and Board of Christian Education

Administrative Assistant – part-time

- 30 hours per week, September - June
- 15 hours per week, July and August
- Manage day-to-day administrative needs of the Parish
- 30 hours non-accumulating paid vacation annually
- Reports to Pastor

Sexton – part-time

- 15 hours per week
- Maintain physical plant
- Weekly (or as needed) cleaning public spaces
- Reports to Pastor and Board of Property
- One week of non-accumulating paid vacation annually

Soprano Section Leader – part-time

- Participate in Choir during weekly service (September through June)
- Sing occasional Solo
- Participate in all choir rehearsals
- Reports to Director of Music and Board of Worship

2. Describe the church's administrative structure (i.e. Council, etc. Do not include required Discipline groups).

The UPA is a federated UMC/UCC church. As such, our pastor is expected to support and be involved in activities of both denominations including the conference events and annual meetings of each denomination. UPA membership is open to any person seeking to deepen his or her relationship with God as part of a Christian faith community that encourages us to live more fully in Christ's image. A new member joins as a member of the UMC or UCC denomination.

At the UPA, the Parish Council is responsible for the overall supervision and coordination of programs, projects, and services developed in Boards and committees. The Parish Council is composed of a Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Pastor(s), and the Board Chairs.

The following Boards/Committees are responsible for planning and overseeing the day-to-day life of the UPA:

- Board of Worship: works with Pastor(s) to plan and evaluate worship life of the Parish
- Board of Stewardship: manages annual pledge drive and, with an Investment Committee, oversees the endowment
- Board of Property: oversees the use and maintenance of physical plant
- Board of Christian Education: coordinates youth and adult Christian education
- Board of Membership Cultivation: oversees efforts to attract and welcome new members
- Board of Community: coordinates group activities that build a sense of community at UPA
- Board of Outreach: allocates the UPA's financial outreach commitment and plans volunteer events that minister to human needs beyond the UPA
- Staff Parish Relations Committee: is responsible for hiring, oversight, and evaluation of staff and interfaces with denominational representatives on matters related to staff
- Open & Affirming/Reconciling Ministries Committee: organizes the UPA's support of, and outreach to, the GLBT community

All Board chairs and officers are elected in February at annual meeting.

1. [Church functions as:](#)

Family		Pastor Centered	X	Program	
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The UPA is Pastor-Centered by size and some activities, but operates like a Program church in other ways, with many facets of administration and ministry being led by laity. This may have contributed to the volunteer fatigue that is mentioned elsewhere in this document.

Many members have expressed their desire to continue operating in the pastor-centered model and are concerned about being identified as a program-oriented church. Please see the discussion on the last two pages related to prioritization of qualities we expect our new pastor to embody.

[Other Issues](#)

1. [List any future building plans:](#)

Our church building is on the Historic Register and is the oldest wooden church in Newton. It is in a beautiful setting in the historic district of Auburndale. We aspire to preserve and protect it.

The UPA property includes the church, as well as a parsonage and a carriage house/small parsonage. In the past, these buildings have been used for pastor housing, community meeting space, group homes for people with special needs, and non-profit office space. Despite the UPA's desire to devote these buildings to Outreach purposes, and an unsuccessful attempt to find a partner to develop them into affordable housing, we have not been able to find a feasible financial solution to maintain the buildings properly. Both building require repair in excess of one million dollars to make them habitable. Therefore, the UPA is working with the City of Newton to obtain permission to demolish the buildings and implement a landscaping plan for the entire property.

Addressing the problems of maintaining and using these buildings has taken significant time over the years and the UPA hopes to complete this project in the next 12-18 months. The congregation is struggling with this decision and many are sorry to tear down the buildings. Unfortunately, at present, we see no other alternative. With the two structures removed, the UPA will have the ability to make the grounds around the church more welcoming, reduce our impact on the surrounding community by

moving some street parking onto our property, and continue focusing on the upkeep of our historic church.

2. [List any issues/concerns facing the congregation:](#)

We have listed three issues that need our focus in section 3 under “The Church’s Mission and Ministry.” In short, these issues are to increase the strength and size of the laity so that our volunteers can do the church’s work without becoming exhausted; continue and increase programs for all groups in our diverse congregation; and help us find the right balance in our budget and programs so that we can support our desire for ministry, outreach, and additional programs while also taking care of our historic church property. We will look to our new pastor to be in conversation with us and help us address these issues once he or she becomes more familiar with our congregation.

[Demographics](#)

1. [The Conference will attach statistical data and local church service record as found in the conference journal which can be found on the conference web site \(neumc.org\).](#)

1. [What percentage of worshipping congregation is:](#)

ages 0-18	<u>24%</u>	ages 19-34	<u>18%</u>
ages 35-50	<u>21%</u>	ages 50-60	<u>14%</u>
ages 60-74	<u>17%</u>	ages 75+	<u>6%</u>

2. [What is the racial/ethnic make-up of the congregation?](#)

The congregation is predominantly Caucasian, with a relatively small number of Asian and African-American members and participants. Several members have emigrated from other countries.

[Parsonage Life](#)

1. [Please describe the parsonage \(i.e. style, rooms, handicapped accessibility, neighborhood\)](#)

The UPA does not have a parsonage.

2. [What is the school district like?](#)

High quality education is a defining characteristic of the City of Newton. From pre-school opportunities, to rigorous graduate level studies, to an array of adult education courses, people of all ages have a variety of educational choices. The centerpiece of Newton’s educational efforts is its public school system. The public schools serve an increasingly diverse population of nearly 12,000 students. The public schools include: fifteen K-5 elementary schools, four 6-8 middle schools, two 9-12 comprehensive high schools, and one alternative high school. All of the schools provide opportunities for students to participate in art, music and physical education classes, and provide special education and language support programs for students in need of such services. The success of the Newton schools is indicated by the nearly 100% passing rate for high school sophomores on the state-mandated MCAS tests (required for graduation), and by the more than 89% of students who consistently plan to continue their educations beyond high school.

3. [Other information you feel is important:](#)

Rhythm of Parish Life: An incoming pastor should know that the rhythm of parish life changes according to the season. The fully-programmed church calendar lasts from the first Sunday after Labor Day until the end of June. During this period, Sunday School is available for children, the Youth Program is in full swing, adult and children's choirs rehearse weekly, Boards and Committees meet monthly, worship is in the sanctuary, and everyone looks forward to bountiful Coffee Hour spreads and conversation after church. July and August have historically been slower at the UPA – as a busy parish takes time to travel, retreat to vacation homes, and generally enjoy the New England summer. Worship moves to the Fellowship Hall – which is cooler and more intimate than the sanctuary – and most committee and board work ceases. The other notable rhythm of parish life is the winter leaving and returning of a handful of “snow birds.”

Evening Commitments: To minimize the pastor's evening commitments, we have tried to limit Board and Committee work to about 2 nights/month. The first Monday of each month is “Common Meeting” night for Boards and Committees, and the third Wednesday of each month is “Parish Council.” The current pastor reports she attends meetings or is out on church business approximately two nights a week.

Housing Considerations: The UPA would be delighted for the new pastor to live in Newton. If that is not feasible – either due to the cost of housing or the need to co-locate for a dual-career family – the church is well-sited to support commuting. Auburndale is easily accessible from both I-90 and I-95; however, a newcomer to the area should factor general commuter traffic patterns and weather conditions into his/her overall travel time.

Pastoral Needs: Realizing that all roles of a pastor are important, please choose the top eight areas to which you feel your pastor needs to give priority. Rank only the top eight with #1 being the highest ranking.

- 1 Preaching**
- 2 Vision – Leading Congregation**
- 3 Church Administration**
- 4 Spiritual Growth of Members**
- 5 Youth Ministry
- 6 Membership Growth
- 7 Visitation (Congregation & Community)
- 8 Leading & Designing Worship

## 2. Other comments regarding pastoral needs: Consolidate, edit all input for additional words

As a congregation, we have taken this appointment process seriously. We have had tremendous participation among members, young and old, in providing input and feedback to ensure that we are providing a complete and accurate profile of the UPA. Our process has included an online, quantitative survey (completed by 108 members), qualitative discussions in the form of House Parties (more than 60 members participated), and input from UPA boards and committees. All eight, and more, of the roles are obviously important for a church family to thrive. However, we are elevating the top 4 as “must-haves.” In other words, our next pastor must have demonstrated abilities and achievements in each these four roles. More information about how we interpret the roles, and why we are elevating them, follows.

1. **Preaching**: The congregation has universally requested a great preacher who challenges our minds and makes the Bible relevant to our lives today. We are a congregation that places high value on the quality of sermons. We feel that a strong preacher not only keeps existing members engaged, but also brings in new members. We'd like a pastor who is well read – keeps current, is smart and grounded in the Bible. Specifically, we seek someone whose sermons are inspiring, engaging, intellectually stimulating, motivating, thoughtful, and sprinkled with timely humor. We are looking to be challenged,

but not “preached at.” We need someone who recognizes all of the various levels of faith that we have in the congregation and can effectively reach us.

- 2. Vision - Leading Congregation:** The UPA seeks a pastor who can help us continue to refine our vision of who we are and who can excite us to achieve our goals. We seek someone who is positive, upbeat, and smart, with a sense of humor. Our new pastor’s experience level should have equipped him or her to connect – and minister to – families, singles, senior members, and, importantly, be supportive of our open & affirming and reconciling position. Our new pastor should have personal experience in and be deeply committed to social justice and supportive of our significant outreach programs and activities.

We are looking for someone who is able to use authority but does not grasp it aggressively, who is challenging and not easily intimidated, strong and able to lead prudently and thoughtfully. Attributes mentioned by our congregation that would be very important include: effective communicator, approachable, warm, friendly, social, someone who comes with perspective, who is able to keep the Church relevant in this challenging modern world. We are not seeking someone to make sweeping changes right away. And ideally, he or she would be technically savvy and have social media experience. Lastly, we seek someone who will be visible and present. Our desire is not for a leader who tells us what to think or do, but a leader who helps our conversations and can guide us in finding the common ground in our diverse visions for UPA.

- 3. Church Administration:** We believe there is a strong role for the pastor in overseeing church administration. Our church, while pastor-centered, has many activities and programs led by laity that need active management. Coordination of secretarial and other church staff as well as interaction with a supporting minister(s) will be critical for our church to function successfully. Clearly, congregational communication is a key part of this role. The church has a website, a Facebook page and each week sends out a newsletter called the *Together* -- mostly by email. This newsletter has improved contact with our members and has greatly assisted the pastor in reaching out to everyone in the UPA family.

In addition, because we are a federated church, our pastor maintains standing in both the UMC and UCC denominations. The pastor is the UPA’s primary link with both denominations. He or she would want to attend local meetings and annual conferences of both denominations.

- 4. Spiritual Growth of Members:** We come from a variety of spiritual backgrounds, including very different church experiences. We need a pastor sensitive to the differences, secure in his or her own belief system, and able to deliver sermons and programs responsive to the belief continuum at the UPA. We need a pastor who can be a companion in our faith journey. Regarding spiritual growth programs, some of the UPA’s adult members look to the church for spiritual growth and renewal amidst increasingly hectic lives. Others are seeking spiritual growth as they move within a quieter phase of life. Many members are heavily involved in UPA committee work and are seeking opportunities for spiritual growth and renewal as a reminder of what the church can add to their lives to offset “volunteer fatigue.” Programs that have worked well at UPA have included pastor-led programs (weekly Bible study, Lenten Series, Companions in Christ, Women’s Retreat) as well as lay-led programs (series on preparing for death and dying). An ongoing challenge for members is finding time to focus on spiritual growth, so scheduling is a key factor.

Additional Comments:

**Youth and Children’s Ministry:** Several of our new member families have been drawn to the UPA because of our strong children’s programs (Sunday school, children’s choir, special performances, etc.) However, as in most churches, we struggle to engage our older youth. Once the children are confirmed, they often reduce their involvement at UPA. We want to engage them at worship and in other programs. UPA has traditionally had an assistant or youth minister working with the young

people. This position, in recent years, has had significant turnover, and we are concerned that a lack of continuity has hurt our youth programming. As this issue is not yet resolved, we are seeking a pastor who has had experience with youth programming. We would want our new pastor to work with the Board of Christian Education, Sunday School teachers, parents, and others to build on our successful children's ministry and help us determine if we have the right balance in priorities and staffing levels to effectively provide Christian Education classes, activities, and programs for all our children and youth.

This report was prepared by:	UPA Mission and Ministry Profile Committee
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(Name/Title)

Date	11 December 2011
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