

Southwest Harbor Congregational Church

Residency Rational

Vision & Purpose:

In keeping with and building upon SWHCC's vision of helping to expand the Kingdom of God in Maine, Southwest Harbor Congregational Church will prayerfully hire and financially support a pastoral Resident.

The Resident would be hired by the church for an intentional period of time (up to 2 years). During this time, He would work and study in an apprenticeship-type manner alongside the pastor and elders and among this body for the express purpose of hands-on ministry study and training. At the end of the residency, the church will aid in releasing him for ministry in a Maine church (with an eye toward revitalization). The residency would consist of both practical ministry (Preaching, teaching, visiting, caring, administration, etc.) as well as a study aspect (reading books on practical ministry as well as theological training as needed) to be organized by the Pastor with help from the elders.

The reason for this approach is the following:

- *There is a severe gap between Seminary / Bible College and real ministry.* Although both institutions are valuable for learning, they simply do not have the capacity to teach men to do the work of pastoral ministry. It is not unusual for men to graduate and find themselves ill-equipped for the work of church ministry. The local church is the institution that God created to train pastors.
- *Culturally and geographically Maine is a Mission field.* Pastors tend to come to Maine thinking that ministry is going to be like the rest of the country, but it isn't. Maine is a tough place to minister. The winters are long and cold. The state is predominantly rural. Churches are small. For those reasons and others many pastors come and go at a startling rate. The residency approach would allow for a gentler adjustment period and wisdom to be spoken into the man's life.
- *There are many towns and geographic areas where a Gospel-preaching, Christ-centered church does not exist.* The residency would target those areas and intentionally fill those pulpits with the Gospel.
- *Many Maine churches are, for the most part, small and cannot support a full-time pastor.* Thus, as part of the residency, than man will be responsible for fundraising during the residency so that as they transition to a small church, they will not be forced into a 'tentmaking' situation.

The Elders of SWHCC believe that God wants to reach those that live in this state and that it is time for a different approach. We want to walk with future pastors, enable them to adjust to the culture, aid them in their growth and practice of ministry and trust that God will bless this effort. God's people are here to be used by him in a way that honors and glorifies Him.