

## **Interim Ministry References for Rev. David F. Jarvis**

### **Barbara M. Calabro**

Pelham, NH  
May 8, 2007

As members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Pelham, New Hampshire, we highly recommend Rev. David F. Jarvis as an interim minister. He has led us through a tough transition period after our long-term pastor left suddenly.

Rev. Jarvis has worked diligently with all the committees of the Church to empower the lay people to become actively involved in Worship, Missions, Christian Education, Pastor Parish Relations and rewriting of the Church By-Laws.

He presents us with great ideas, causing us to think more deeply about what lies ahead. He is very friendly and a man of deep faith.

His sermons are strong and delivered with passion, forcing all who attend to think about his message as we return to our day-to-day activities.

Rev. Jarvis' musical abilities are awesome. He brings a portable keyboard to local hospitals and nursing homes he visits, leading them in singing songs they love. The residents always look forward to his visits. He has been very good at visiting the sick and those experiencing the death of a loved one.

His leadership in two confirmation classes has been outstanding. He has taught them much about faith, loving and serving others, how to deal with grief and accepting Christ as their savior. The confirmation classes has ended with the students leading worship, causing those in attendance tears, as the class spoke about what they have learned.

Again, we would recommend Rev. Jarvis to any church searching for an Interim who will provide a passion for God's word as well as push the congregation down the path that is right for them.

Barbara M. Calabro, Deacon  
Deborah F. Calabro, Member-at-large  
Joseph J. Calabro, Treasurer

## **John Dozet & Richard Tharp**

North Hampton, NH

July 24, 2005

It has been our pleasure to work with Rev. David Jarvis over the last eighteen months in his role as Interim Pastor at the United Church of Christ in North Hampton. Rev. Jarvis was the first intentional interim that our church has ever hired, and as we prepare for calling a permanent pastor, we feel certain that Rev. Jarvis leading us through the interim has prepared us better than ever before for our permanent pastor.

Rev. Jarvis brings many, many gifts to his ministry as well as a wealth of experience from his twenty-five plus years in the ministry. One of his most obvious gifts is his music, which he has continuously shared during his tenure. His ministry at local nursing homes is especially noteworthy. Through his music he is able to minister to all of the nursing home residents, not just those that are connected to our church.

Early in his interim ministry at North Hampton, Rev. Jarvis began to prepare us for the process that would lead to our calling a permanent pastor. He brought his skills and experience as an intentional interim pastor to bear, and that has made a tremendous difference in our search process and in our preparation. Rev. Jarvis held workshops for our congregation, which were heavily attended, and he asked us tough questions, forcing us to think about ourselves as a church and what we wanted in a permanent pastor. His ongoing work with our Search Committee has been a tremendous help and made their job much easier than in the past.

In the past we have had difficulty dealing with conflict, but during the last year we have grown significantly as we dealt with unwanted publicity and issues of diversity rising out of that publicity. We are now dealing with conflict in more constructive ways, including the creation of a Diversity Committee, and Rev. Jarvis has helped us along this better, more constructive path.

We are also very pleased with the financial stability that Rev. Jarvis has helped us to achieve. He has personally sought out opportunities to insure that we stay on solid financial footing during the interim period, and through Rev. Jarvis' effort 2004 was one of the best fiscal years in memory.

Rev. Jarvis has also been very active in our various ministries. From leading adult education classes to participating in our knitting ministry and to joining our Senior High mission trip to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, Rev. Jarvis made sure all of our ministries see their importance to our wider church during the interim period.

In retrospect, we feel certain that our church made a very wise decision in hiring an intentional interim, and Rev. David Jarvis was a great fit for our church. His experience, energy and intentional interim expertise have contributed greatly to our church during his eighteen-month tenure, and we would highly recommend Rev. Jarvis to other churches.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

John Dozet, Current Co-Moderator  
Richard Tharp, Former Co-Moderator

## **Karl Phillippi (Ret. Conference Minister)**

Madison, CT

David served as the Interim Associate Pastor of our Church here in Madison, CT several years ago, and his presence is still very favorably felt among us. He offered us many gifts:

- He has a natural gift for Pastoral care and concern. The shut-ins and ill looked forward to his visits with joy and anticipation, and he never failed them. They were his top priority.
- He related very well to the boards and committees that fell within his domain. He offered a style of leadership that recognized needs and found solutions that were more often welcomed than resisted.
- Theologically I found him to be close to what I would describe as the center but with a tilt a bit more perhaps to the left than the right. God is a god of justice, mercy and peace; and Jesus offers us the perfect example of what that means to us who are human. His preaching is well grounded in scripture and I doubt if anyone would ever find it dull. He takes his preaching very seriously and prepares very carefully, and to this very day he will call me when he feels he is onto something he is excited about.
- He worked with youth choir and he had them singing their hearts out.
- He has administrative skills that too many pastors seem to lack.

He is truly excited about Parish Ministry. He finds it challenging and rewarding. His style is to be careful in every detail, very innovative. He is truly a people person. He has a deep concern that the folk in his care should have god and a love of neighbor in their hearts.

And finally he has great talent musically which he offered to us in so many interesting and beautiful ways. It was for all of us a beautiful part of his ministry.

I can say, without reservation, that I would be extremely pleased and privileged to have "Jarv" as my Pastor.

## **Mr. Stephen Thomson, Deacon**

Waterbury, CT

Dave Jarvis (Jarv, as he's known here) arrived at First Church when our communal spirit was at a low ebb, having just passed through a period of administration irregularities that left a degree of dissension in its wake, as well as a bad taste in the mouths of those who had anything to say on either side of the issues. We had learned to practice the usual forms of denial, repression, and evasion, along with a certain amount of passive-aggressive behavior, otherwise known (in KJV terminology) as backbiting. We were, corporately, run-down, spiritually anemic, and mildly demoralized. We were badly in need of a boost.

It was at this moment that Jarv dropped in on us, much like - as one of our members put - a male Mary Poppins, umbrella open, feet ready to hit the ground running, with a bag full of just the medicine we needed. Medicine sometimes bitter, often surprising in its effect, usually served with at least a spoonful of sugar. And healing followed. Before we were even fully aware of what was happening, Jarv had infused our worship, our prayer and praise, with a strong shot of energy that had been sorely needed for a long, long time. He made us aware, first, of our (often hidden) strengths, what "tasted good" about us, and then gently led us to see how we needed to rediscover and recondition those strengths in order to re-commission ourselves for God's service.

He helped us to see our selves as what we are-a church in the city. Not an inner city church, with all that that phrase entails, but a church downtown, closely surrounded by neighborhoods made up of people often very different from ourselves, with backgrounds and cultures unlike anything we were familiar with or comfortable around. Jarv brought us into closer contact with the larger community, in particular through association with The Naugatuck Valley Project, an organization concerned with housing, employment, and youth issues. At Jarv's urging, our church invited the NVP into our fellowship hall and later into our sanctuary, bringing together hundreds of people representing dozens of organizations-churches of various denominations, housing co-ops, youth and labor groups-to discuss what could be done to improve our cities, our schools, our lives, and how we could work together to accomplish our goals.

He helped make our worship more musical, as well as more "flavorful," by exercising his own considerable gifts as a pianist and a singer. Having had a jazz background (on top of his classical training), Jarv knows how to improvise a hymn medley with the same ease with which he can improvise a homily when the situation calls for it. He has taught a normally reserved congregation to sing unreservedly, and to have fun while offering praise and thanks.

With his energy, his incisiveness, his panache, Jarv is ideally equipped for interim pastoral ministry. He knows what problems need to be addressed, he sees how they might be resolved, and he is unafraid of letting people know what he thinks. He has always been open about himself, and he is equally open about his thoughts concerning us. His integrity is unquestioned, as is his respect for confidentiality. Though some of us at times may disagree with a particular opinion or disapprove of a liturgical innovation, I think I can safely say that almost no one doubts Jarv's sincerity, honesty, intelligence, or passion. We know that he loves us, and more importantly, that he loves the God he seeks to serve.

## **Marcy Burke, Moderator**

Lido Beach, NY

In March of 1998 God sent our church a gift...an interim minister by the name of David F. Jarvis. Our church had been severely divided over the circumstances surrounding our previous minister leaving. We had hired a mediator and were working hard to find our way. There were serious questions with respect to whether or not our church would survive at all. Shortly after Jarv, as he likes to be called, arrived, things started to turn around. He put us through a program that made us ask ourselves some tough questions and refused to let us use the "we've always done it that way" answer. Although not everyone in church loves everything he does, they respect him for his openness and ability to get people to see what God's mission is for them individually and for our church as a whole. As past president of the church, I am convinced that his being called as our interim minister was part of God's plan. He will be sorely missed.

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## **Peggy and Don Wallace**

Sarasota, FL

When David Jarvis arrived as our interim minister in the spring of 1998, the spirits of our congregation, individually and collectively, were at a very low ebb. It seemed that nothing could save our beloved Community Church of Syosset. But almost from the first day he spent in our midst, David lifted our spirits, reminded us that all things are possible with the help of our Lord, and set us on our feet again.

He accomplished this by a variety of means: by his inspirational preaching, by the many innovative ideas he injected into our worship and our fellowship—but most of all, by his own example. His words and actions were always positive ones, showing us that beam at the end of the tunnel of our despair—until now, we have emerged into the light again, full of God's grace and hopeful for the future.

David will be sorely missed when he leaves us, but we can console ourselves in the knowledge that he is surely going to do for some other congregation what he has done for us.