

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who is
God
calling us
to become

?

The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. *All* congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!

Rachel Hackenberg

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

First Congregational Church of Woodstock
Woodstock, CT

Settled Pastor

Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ
Windham Association

[Validation Date]

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- Who Are We Now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
- References
- Consent and Validation

*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

INSTRUCTIONS

The new Local Church Profile supports the calling and discernment of United Church of Christ congregations with their current or future pastoral leadership.

For many congregations, the interim time between ministers is an intentional season that is guided in part by the preparation of a Local Church Profile. Using the Profile, the church can discover its data and express its story for the reliable discernment of a search committee and the beginning of a new pastorate. Searching ministers will want to see this document in its entirety.

The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – **WHO ARE WE NOW**, **WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR**, and **WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME** – are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. Known together as the “Discovery Document,” these three sections can be completed by a visioning group, a governing body, a transition team, or other group – not just the search committee – in order to draw forward the gifts and imaginative possibilities of a congregation. The church's engagement with the “Discovery Document” might not have the same sequence as the completed Local Church Profile that is read by candidates.

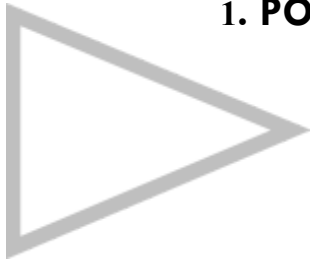
Some questions are easy to answer. Some are not so easy. Prompts are provided to stimulate narrative response if needed; these italicized prompts are merely examples from which to choose or to inspire your own. Efforts to answer the questions will prompt conversations and explorations and story-tellings and many prayers. As the Spirit moves throughout the process, congregations will shape a collective articulation of Christ's leading (**WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME**). This last question to be answered becomes the first section to be read by searching ministers in the Local Church Profile, and it is boldest and most actionable piece for faithful leadership into the future.

Your conference can provide materials referenced in the Local Church Profile, such as the 11-Year Report containing data as reported by your congregation annually to the UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite reports containing demographic information on your community. More information on types of pastorate in the United Church of Christ can be found in the Call Agreement Workbook. Be sure to use the Call Agreement Workbook's Scope of Work to describe in this Local Church Profile the position being sought.

When it is time for ministerial search, the conference can counsel you on posting the Local Church Profile together with your public listing at UCC Ministry Opportunities (<http://oppsearch.ucc.org>).

The last page of the Local Church Profile contains a statement that parallels the consent statement signed by ministers in the UCC Ministerial Profile. In keeping with the covenantal relationship between a church and those it seeks to call, this statement encourages an open, honest exchange of information. On behalf of the United Church of Christ, and on the basis of

the best knowledge available to them, your conference staff will validate your completed Local Church Profile when it is ready to be shared in relationship with prospective new leaders.



1. POSITION POSTING

- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: [First Congregational Church of Woodstock \(FCCW\)](#)

Street address: [543 Route 169](#)

Supplemental web links: <http://firstchurchwoodstock.org>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*):

Conference: [Southern New England United Church of Christ \(SNEUCC\)](#)

Association: [Windham Association](#)

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Name, Title, Phone, Email):

[Chuck Ericson](#)

[Interim Eastern Regional Minister](#)

ericsonc@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?

The church's Vision Statement states that we are seeking to embody God's grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, hope and joy and we want to do that in three areas: DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS within our congregation; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - to connect with our neighbors in new ways; and FAITH in ACTION - to broaden our work in our community and in the world. We seek a Shepherd who will lead us with creativity, compassion, wisdom and passion to achieve these goals.



Photographs:

Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc.

What we value about living in our area (2 - 3 sentences)

Located within “*The Quiet Corner*” of Northeast Connecticut, the Town of Woodstock is a beautiful, quiet, friendly rural town of winding roads and lush vegetation. Our meeting house stands at one end of the New England town green, within the town’s historic district. Woodstock is only minutes away from conveniences such as shopping, restaurants and entertainment and is centrally located to the major cities of Hartford, CT, Providence, RI and Boston, MA.

Current size of membership: 186

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): English only

Position Title: Settled (Preferred)

Position Duration (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

Our preference is for a Settled $\frac{3}{4}$ time position, but we are willing to consider a Designated Term position on a $\frac{3}{4}$ time basis.

Compensation Level:

$\frac{3}{4}$ Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

(add here the Scope of Work developed by your church using the Call Agreement Workbook)

THREE-QUARTER TIME PASTORAL POSITION (30-35 HOURS WEEKLY)

- **Sunday worship:** preparation and leadership, including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding and sometimes finding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc. **10 hours**
- **Continuing personal faith formation** through prayer, Bible study, and service, to improve skills for leading, teaching and preaching **4 hours**
- **Identifying helpful resources** for congregational and member enrichment helping the congregation and lay persons use these **2 hours**
- **Pastoral care** in collaboration with lay people (at least to those who are sick, elderly, in crisis or grieving) **3 hours**
- **Community engagement** and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love **1 hour**

- **Weddings and funerals** for participants in the worshipping community (as needed)
- **Strategic planning** for current and new directions in ministry **2 hours**
- **Church administration** including church meetings, staff support, oversight of church initiatives, preparation of reports and portions of newsletters, coordination with church lay leadership, etc **3 hours**
- **Participation in wider church activities** such as conference and association meetings as time permits **1 hour**
- **Guidance of financial development and stewardship** **1 hour**
- **Leadership of congregational education and spiritual development** **2 hours**
- **Being a faithful representative of the church** in the wider community **1 hour**

Core Competencies:

(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church. For example, a church seeking a pastoral care minister might hope to call someone who is caring, sensitive and sociable, while a church seeking an executive minister might want an organized, detail-oriented and time-conscious person.)

We are seeking a caring and forward-thinking leader, a creative shepherd, who inspires and influences others to use their energies and resources towards a common pursuit. She should be one who will communicate the vision in a clear and convincing manner; helping people move from current realities into new visions for church growth and health.

We seek a ministry style that is supportive and healing, revealing that loving relationships are the heart of a healthy, growing church and someone who provides intentional structures that are pastoral in nature, and is an effective pastoral visitor.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*): \$ 53,737.50

Benefits (*choose one*):

Salary plus Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (*e.g. parsonage, living elsewhere to commute as needed*)?

Living nearby, housing allowance provided.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

It is not a requirement to live in Woodstock, however, because of the rural nature of our community we believe a location that provides easy access to the church and members is best.

State any incentives (*e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position*):

Comprehensive Benefit Package, including funding for family leave and a funded sabbatical.

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:

- Windham Association Clergy
- Clergy Excellence groups
- Multiple programs and educational opportunities through Southern New England Conference (Tending the Fire, Super Saturday, Clergy Camp at Silver Lake, etc)

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

We understand the need to be flexible. Our church leadership team has had some recent experience working collaboratively with our bridge pastor (¾ time), who additionally works part-time in mission work in Haiti, and provides counseling and spiritual direction locally. This has been a positive and productive experience for the congregation and for the pastor. We believe with joint conversations, we can provide a structure that will work with both the ¾ time minister and other bi-vocational employment.

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

We hope that our next pastor will help us to focus more fully on our mission to build relationships, practice community engagement, and put faith in action.

We have a strong, committed, and intelligent group of lay leaders. We seek a pastor who will inspire and challenge us to dig deeper into our faith and grow in discipleship. Our congregation is creative and open to experimentation in worship and we seek a pastor who will explore new ways to express the gospel message and extend outreach to community members. We also hope to use technology more effectively as a way to help build relationships within the congregation and to share our message of inclusion.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

The pastor will assist us in both the internal life of the spirit and the external work of service and advocacy. He will assist members with discernment about their individual gifts as well as help the congregation evaluate programs and events through the lens of our vision statement. We hope that she will participate in and encourage one-on-one contacts with various community partners. Members, as well as our Director of Family Ministries, have relationships with groups such as Woodstock Academy's FRESH group, Greater Putnam Interfaith Community, NAACP, and Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG). The pastor is certainly not expected to lead all of our community initiatives, but will act as a catalyst to help in clarifying goals in expressing our faith in light of our mission.

Specify language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

While English is the primary language, we seek to expand a multi-cultural awareness and are open to liturgy and music from a variety of traditions. As an open and affirming congregation, we are also committed to using inclusive language in worship and in our gatherings. We hope that our new pastor will be 'bi-lingual' in terms of facility with social media, recognizing that this is a tool to share the Gospel with a wider audience.

Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that your next minister will display to further equip the

congregation's ministry in these areas.

We seek a pastor who is deeply connected to a **life of faith**, who prays actively and nurtures spiritual practices, and who continues to discern God's call, both for her own life and also the life of the community. We desire someone with a compassionate pastoral presence who can help our Parish Care team expand its current outreach.

We seek a pastor who has the **leadership skills** that will challenge us to go beyond technical fixes toward adaptive and transformational changes. The ideal pastor is a **good listener** who can lean in to ask probing, clarifying questions. He will be someone to **empower our capable and committed membership**, as well as someone who can build collaborative relationships in the community.

Our hope is for a pastoral leader who will join us in **extending radical hospitality to all**, especially those who are marginalized. She will preach the gospel message with courage and honesty, in an effort to **"comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."** The pastor will keep us steered toward mission and ministry above simply maintenance.

Finally, we seek a pastor who will lead in **caring for all creation**. This includes self-care, boundary setting, wellness, and balance, especially given that it is a three-quarter time position. Recognizing that our planet is in dire distress, the pastor will help us use our agency to protect God's creation.

2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

God is calling us to deepen and broaden our commitment to being a congregation of love and faith in action. We are called to be followers of the way of life Jesus embodied for us. We are being led to demonstrate this in our relationships with each other, as we share our truths and stories in a welcoming and open environment, and learn from and with one another what a faithful life means; and also in the larger community as we are called to extend our reach and serve our community in new ways. This means exploring new ways of connecting and

communicating with our neighbors, including utilizing technology more effectively as a way to engage people in their faith and in developing relationships. It also means a deep commitment to engaging with issues of justice through education and action.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?

We are a congregation that is open to change and trying new things. In the past few years, we have experimented with different ways to extend our reach in interesting ways, such as a weekday afternoon Bible study at a local restaurant; our “Prayground” in the sanctuary for children during Sunday service; and Pastor “office hours” at a local cafe.

One of our most recent experiments was hosting an alternative type of worship to Sunday morning service. This event was an intergenerational and experiential approach to worship, based on the Messy Church model (messychurchusa.org), and was held on a Sunday evening in December. The evening included 10 stations with activities for all ages to engage with the Christmas story. Following this, we had a short and informal worship service including song, prayer and story. The evening ended in sharing a meal together, prepared and served by church members. Although we had a number of families from our church attend the event, there was a lack of community participation. This was most likely due to timing that was close to Christmas and other events taking place in the community on the same evening. However, we still consider the event as a great practice run for exploring new ways to invite and welcome families to our church. One of the tables at the event included participants coloring a large banner that is now hanging from the balcony in the sanctuary, and is serving as an interesting conversation piece on Sundays.

As a congregation, we are also deeply committed to social justice and anti-racism education and action. Over the past few years we have had several members complete the racial justice training program through the Connecticut Conference. In February 2019, the Board of Outreach hosted a book club and discussion for the book “Waking Up White” by Debby Irving. The rich conversation during the meetings inspired courage to deepen our approach. This led to us working in collaboration with the Windham Willimantic branch of the NAACP to host the first of three films and dialogues at FCCW this past fall. We would like to explore opportunities to continue these types of conversations and collaborations in the future.

3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

For example, what beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation’s purpose statement or membership vows? How is God most often described in worship liturgy? In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?

We are a vibrant Christian community where we gather to worship God, to serve our neighbors and to grow in our faith through our relationships with one another and the larger community. We affirm our faith in God as our Creator, in Christ as our inspiration and in the Holy Spirit for our strength.

We believe that God’s love is for everyone – no matter who they are or where they are on life’s journey. As followers of Jesus, we seek to reach out to neighbors, friends and strangers, and to share a spirit of welcome with all who cross our threshold. We welcome those who are uncertain in their faith and those who are seeking to find meaning in their lives through God.

Led by Christ’s Spirit, we commit ourselves to caring for one another and for all creation. In all things we seek to embody God’s grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, hope and joy.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

We are a small, friendly congregation of members who care deeply about one another. Our concern and care extend to our larger regional community and the world. Our members are enthusiastic about our church and our mission as evidenced by the ready willingness exhibited by many of our members to volunteer significant time and effort throughout the year.

We have a lay leadership that has grown in strength and provides significant support to both interim and settled pastors. This strength is particularly important as we move from a full time to $\frac{3}{4}$ time ministerial position. A new pastor can expect the lay leadership to provide significant support and serve as a valuable resource.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

For example, where does worship take place, and what is it based around? What was a recent baptism like? What are some words used to describe good preaching?

Regular Sunday church services are held weekly beginning at 10 am during all but the summer months. During June, July and August services begin at 9 am. In both seasons, services last approximately one hour. During July and August services are joined with another local UCC congregation with each church hosting the services for one of the two months. Communion is held on the first Sunday of every month and is offered without restriction to all who wish to partake. Special recognition is provided during services including Boy Scout Recognition Sunday, Music Appreciation Sunday, and Children's Sunday.

Regular services include hymns, prayers, announcements, a children's message, a sermon and a special time for members to share joys and concerns with the congregation. In addition to the regular Sunday services, several special services are held each year. These include a beautiful Christmas Eve service and also a "blue service" for those who have suffered a loss, are experiencing trying times, or just need quiet time during the hectic holiday season. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are also held each year.

Sermons are typically about 15 to 20 minutes in length and we look forward to being inspired and challenged. A few times a year sermons are preceded by a member giving a brief faith story. On occasion when the pastor is not available, one of the lay leaders will provide a sermon or longer faith story.

Music is provided most Sundays by the Senior Choir and an organist/pianist. These services are preceded by a prelude which occasionally includes a member singing or playing an instrument while being accompanied by piano or organ. On special occasions the Bell Choir performs as well. Special musical performances are included in some services.

At the end of each service the entire congregation stands, joins hands in a circle and sings a brief Alleluia together. An organ or piano postlude follows the Alleluia. After each week's Sunday service a "Coffee Hour" is held where members and guests can enjoy light refreshments and socialize. Occasionally a special speaker or educational program is hosted after the service in what we call the Second Hour.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

For example, how are young people in leadership? How do people continue to form their faith over a lifetime? Name a topic studied or curriculum used recently; what was the impact of this study on those who attended?

Family Ministries of the Church seek balance in our four ministry areas: worship, education, fellowship and service, as well as new, creative and diverse ways to meet the spiritual needs of twenty-first century families— both inside and outside of the four walls of our church building. We follow Safe Conduct policies.

Children are welcome in our sanctuary at any time, but particularly during our intergenerational worship services, and are present and included in special blessings. Very young children and their parents are invited to experience worship in the *Pray-ground* located in the sanctuary and specially equipped with soft toys, books, games and activities or they may choose to listen live to the worship service in our family room, located on the lower level.

During church school the pre-school through middle school-aged children engage in lessons, with the theme: *Growing in and with Christ* through activities, music, arts, crafts, sign language, and *Godly Play* stories. Once per month we hold "*Church School in the Kitchen*"—where we cook, eat, and learn together, with the theme: *Bread for the Journey*.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?

Church Organization

Please refer to the church Bylaws, most recent Annual Report and the Organization Chart for detailed listings and descriptions of the church employees, officials, boards and commissions.

The Pastor has charge of the worship services of the Church and carries on a ministry of teaching, pastoral care and leadership. The Pastor is an ex officio, without vote on all boards and Committees and is entitled to attend any meeting of any church sanctioned group. The Pastor has a vote on the Church council, except in matters affecting his or her compensation.

The Pastor, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees or other appropriate church leadership, supervises the work of the paid employees of the church and prepares yearly performance reviews for those employees. The Pastor works closely with the diaconate and administers the sacraments and officiates at weddings and funerals.

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?
2 hours in Mega Meeting (Boards of Deacons, Trustees and Outreach meet simultaneously), 2 hours in Church Council, bi-weekly staff meetings
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

Several years ago, two members of the congregation were involved in a serious automobile accident. One died and the other was seriously injured. Both were long time members and were serving in important positions in the Church. As soon as the pastor heard the news, word spread rapidly through the congregation. By evening a special service of prayer and remembrance was held so the congregation could come together, share grief and be comforted.

● Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church’s activity and governance? **Yes**

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

(add here the 11-Year Report developed with the help of your conference staff, UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite)

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION
2008	322	100	135	8	0
2009	324	100	135	0	3
2010	324	67	55	0	0
2011	324	67	55	0	0
2012	324	67	55	0	0
2013	324	67	55	0	0
2014	232	75	50	6	0
2015	227	62	39	0	0
2016	220	58	37	0	7
2017	213	56	10	0	9
2018	186	57	7	0	3

YEAR	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	ET MEMS ADDS-REMOVED

2008	5	2	0	11
2009	0	1	0	2
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0
2014	6	12	92	-92
2015	8	11	1	-4
2016	0	4	10	-7
2017	0	9	7	-7
2018	0	6	19	-22

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING
2008	\$244,148	\$37,348	\$7,368	\$2,996
2009	\$205,527	\$105,000	\$8,549	\$4,717
2010	\$205,527	\$0	\$4,800	\$4,486
2011	\$228,122	\$0	\$3,902	\$16,417
2012	\$228,122	\$0	\$8,036	\$5,004
2013	\$228,122	\$0	\$7,167	\$4,106
2014	\$228,122	\$0	\$6,724	\$10,600
2015	\$155,977	\$0	\$8,135	\$84,824
2016	\$242,087	\$15,788	\$7,900	\$3,939

2017	\$242,087	\$0	\$7,446	\$620
------	-----------	-----	---------	-------

2018	\$219,031	\$1,000	\$7,518	\$2,070
------	-----------	---------	---------	---------

YEAR	TOTAL OCW			BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
	M GIFTS	OTHER WIDER MISSION				
2008	\$10,364	\$5,100	\$15,464	3.02	\$296,960	\$233,794
2009	\$13,266	\$5,200	\$18,466	4.16	\$328,993	\$249,468
2010	\$9,286	\$0	\$9,286	2.34	\$214,813	0
2011	\$20,319	\$903	\$21,222	1.71	\$249,344	\$129,785
2012	\$13,040	\$0	\$13,040	3.52	\$241,162	0
2013	\$11,273	\$0	\$11,273	3.14	\$239,395	0
2014	\$17,324	\$0	\$17,324	2.95	\$245,446	0
2015	\$92,959	\$2,309	\$95,268	5.22	\$251,245	\$166,072
2016	\$11,839	\$10,562	\$22,401	3.26	\$280,276	\$157,570
2017	\$8,066	\$0	\$8,066	3.08	\$250,153	0
2018	\$9,588	\$3,454	\$13,042	3.43	\$232,073	\$166,884

% CHANGE	AVG WEEKLY		CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS
	MEMBERS	ATTENDANCE		

2013-2018	-42.59	-14.93	-87.27	0.00
2008-2018	-42.24	-43.00	-94.81	-76.92

	TOTAL	CURR LOCAL	TOTAL	TOTAL
%	REMOVALS	EXPENSES	OCW	EXPENDITURE
CHANGE			M	
2013-2018	0.00	-3.99	-14.95	-3.06
2008-2018	1150.00	-10.29	-7.49	-21.85

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	171	yes
Number of active non-members:	15	yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	186	yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	62%	yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	12%	yes
Less than 5 years:	26%	yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
2%	1%	1%	2%	18%	25%	25%	23%	3%	yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	2%	yes
Households with minors:	20%	yes
Single adults age 35-65:	3%	yes
Joint households with no minors:	72%	yes
Single adults over 65:	3%	yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	1%	yes
College:	36%	yes
Graduate School:	46%	yes
Specialty Training:	<17%	yes
Other (please specify):	<17%	yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	70%	yes

Adults who are retired:	29%	yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	1%	yes

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Our church does not collect this information from congregants however, we have several members who are teachers, business people, doctors and nurses, sales folks, carpenters, plumbers, etc.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

While we are predominantly white, we consider ourselves to be a diverse congregation with all the benefits that diversity brings. We are an open and affirming community and welcome people of all races and ethnic backgrounds, previous religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and political views. As a congregation we represent various ethnic backgrounds and diverse life journeys that lead us to the same destination, our church.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future (perhaps using, for example, the ‘Welcoming Diversity Inventory’)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

While we did not have a formal process of reviewing the Welcoming Diversity Inventory, our former pastor was committed to extravagant hospitality and that was reflected in liturgy, multicultural music selections, and recent anti-racism work.

We often hold 2nd hour conversations regarding diversity issues such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. For example, we invited and welcomed gender diverse guest speakers, sponsored documentaries, discussions, and conversation circles.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	15	“Waking up White”book study/ Outreach team
Baptisms (number last year)	4	Pastor and Deacons
Children’s Groups or Classes	3-10 children	Family Ministries Director and one lay volunteer per week
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	100+	Pastor, Deacons, and Music Director and Organist.
Church-wide Meals	50 Annual Mtg 30 Brunch church	We have an active catering team which organizes events and preps food
Choirs and Music Groups	Sr Choir: 8-12 Bell choir: 7-9 Hillbillies Bluegrass: 4-12	Music Director and Organist Music Director Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	8-10	Pastor
Communion (served how often?)	first Sunday	Pastor and Deacons
Community Meals	80-100	Annual Italian Dinner/church members
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	0	no class last year
Drama, Dance, or Music Program		A Christmas Carol 2014 Christmas Revels 2018 Shape Note Singing 2019 Soup and Silent film 2019
Funerals (number last year)		

Intergenerational Groups	32	Messy Church Pilot in Dec 2019
Outdoor Worship	45-50	Earth Day
Prayer or Meditation Groups	2-4	Newly-Formed Centering Prayer Group
Public Advocacy Work	40 congregations make up QCRR 40 attendees from wider community	Refugee Resettlement- Pastor hosted initial meeting. Lay leaders conducted fundraisers, organized collections, and assisted with placement. Dreamer's Second Hour- Lay Leader
Retreats	12-15	Half day leadership retreat for Church Council
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	8-12	Pastor
Weddings (number last year)		
Worship (time slot: _10 am_)	55-60	
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes		none
Youth Groups or Classes		not active at this time
Other Newly formed centering prayer		

Additional comments:

Church Fundraisers are all organized and led by lay members, engage many members and friends, and attract up to hundreds from the community. These include Pick-a-Party (home gatherings), Woodstock Fair Chicken BBQ (offsite), Fall Craft Fair, Christmas on the Hill (90 volunteers), and Rummage Sale.

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev. Dr. James S. Harrison	No		Support settled minister and preaches on occasion only if requested	Y (Pastor Emeritus)
Rev. Dr. Doe West, Ph. D.	No		Preaches only if requested	N
Rev. Debbie Pallatto-Fontaine, Ph. D.	3	Current transitional minister through April 2020	Has significant mission obligations outside of congregation and is unable to serve as a transitional minister after April 2020 and has no interest in a permanent parish ministry position	N

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Transitional minister	Head	compensation per service	Congregation	6 months (?)
Family Ministry Director	Staff	\$17,816 (half time)	Pastor	6 months
Choir Director	Staff	\$6,454 (PT)	Pastor	25 years
Organist	Staff	\$7,762(PT)	Pastor	25 years
Handbell Director	Staff	\$1,714(PT)	Pastor	25 years
Clerk	Staff	\$ 300(stipend)	Council	2 years, appointed
Administrative Assistant	Staff	\$18,843 (half time)	Pastor	20 years
Sexton	Staff	\$11,219 (PT)	Pastor	25 years
Bookkeeper	Staff	\$5000 (PT)	Trustees	to be hired in 2020

REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's overall ministry?

We are committed, striving, and actively working toward inclusivity, diversity, and openness to all in our community and beyond. One of the important priorities of our congregation is commitment to and investment in family ministry growth into the future.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$173,253
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	5% (\$9,400/2019)
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	
Fundraising Events	\$39,702
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$1,500*
Grants CT Trust for Historical Preservation - matching grant for roof	\$9,400*
Rentals of Church Building	\$2,276
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$15,600
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$
Other (specify): * These amounts are not reflected in the total as they	\$
Other (specify): are pass-through items	\$
TOTAL	\$249,631

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$201,223

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? Our pastor left in June so the amounts shown in the budget are not an accurate annual assessment. We have also converted to ¾ time for the pastor, therefore the percentage of a ¾ time minister for a full year would be approximately \$80,000 or 39.7% of total budgeted expenses.

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? **No**

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? *(indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)*

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

One Great Hour of Sharing

Strengthen the Church

Neighbors in Need

Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? *(recommended 10%)*

OCWM giving is now at 6.2% of the overall pledge amount. This is a line item in the budget.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: **-0-**

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments current?

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget. **N/A**

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

In 2008, FWCC embarked on its most recent capital campaign raising over \$300,000 **during the economic down turn**. Funds were used to paint the church, rebuild the steeple, complete drainage improvements, design and construct improvements in the basement for church school classrooms and a significant contribution to Silver Lake. Clearly members and supporters of the FCCW came together to provide the necessary funding for this collaborative effort.

Does your church have an endowment? **Yes**

What is the market value of the assets? **\$217,604**

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? **Regularly**

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? **3 - 5%**

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: **Our draw is calculated on a draw of 3 - 5%, depending on the need, from a 3 year rolling average**

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? **Charitable gifts are channeled to the New Century Endowment Fund sporadically, typically through estate planning. The fund's performance varies due to market rates. However, the current by-laws for the fund administration are designed to promote fund growth in perpetuity. We do not draw off more funds than have been realized during the current year.**

We also continue to explore new Planned Giving options and regularly offer a Second Hour discussion, led by a local investment professional.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): **\$40,000**

Investments (other than endowment): **\$N/A**

Does your church have a parsonage? **Yes**

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: **\$11,100. per year**

How is the parsonage used? **Rental for a family**

Street / City / State / Zip: **Adjacent to the church - 539 Route 169**

Finished square footage: **2,934 sq ft**

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: **4 bedrooms, 1 ½ bathrooms**

Assessed real estate value: **\$179,900**

Available for minister residence: **No**

Expected minister residence: **No**

Condition of structure, systems and appliances **Mechanical systems are in fair to good condition. Both the exterior and interior are in need of maintenance, which the Board of Trustees are addressing.**

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs **Board of Trustees**

Describe all buildings owned by the church: **The Main Church building includes the sanctuary, a fellowship hall, church offices, a library, commercial grade kitchen, dining room, 5 bathrooms, 3 classrooms and a nursery as well as the parsonage as described above.**

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: **None**

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*) **Our sanctuary, fellowship hall, library and church offices reside on the main level and the dining room, kitchen and classrooms are on the lower level. Both levels are served by an elevator directly off the fellowship hall and dining room.**

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry?

For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?

Our budgeting process is done by the Board of Trustees. They receive budget requests from each board and income information from the Stewardship Committee. Our history reflects that we have had a decline in the total number of stewardship pledges and our annual amount of pledging has decreased. Therefore, for the first time in our history, we are seeking a ¾ time pastor and our finances reflects that initiative.

New ministry: Commitment to family ministries. Council voted in 2018 and again in 2019 to fund this position, recognizing the need to offer faith formation for all ages and to explore intergenerational worship experiences. Our new Director of FM has initiated pilot programs, made contacts with community partners (such as Woodstock Academy, Scouts groups, and other congregations) as well as SNE Conference enrichment programs. She is involved in a community of practice with other local Faith Formation leaders.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

The first significant happening would also have to be the most important event in the life of our church in the past 10 years, and that would be the strong lay leadership that has developed in our congregation. Eight years ago, our minister of 35 years retired and thus many in the congregation rose to the task of planning and executing the spiritual life of the church. Once we had a new pastor, that lay leadership did not stop, but instead continued to grow. Deacons and Trustees and members of Outreach took active roles in developing the life of the church along with our pastor. Upon her leaving, we did not skip a beat. Congregants readily volunteered to tell their own personal spiritual journeys in our morning worship services and lay leaders have preached. According to the CAT Survey which was done a year ago, we have a very energetic and adaptable congregation and this has been demonstrated time and time again in this beloved community.

The church's involvement in Community Kitchens of Northeastern Connecticut, Inc. is a powerful endeavor in the life of our church. Five years ago our church was asked to be the host for Monday meals that are served to residents of Northeastern CT. We took on that task, actually cooking the Monday meal for one Monday a month, but hosting the event every Monday of the month. Four other local churches are in charge of cooking the other weekly meals (East Woodstock Congregational, South Woodstock Baptist, Christ Church in Pomfret and Pomfret Congregational). For each year the participation has grown, both from the standpoint of those who come for the meals and from our participating members who help with the serving, cooking, and clean-up each week. During 2019 we served meals on 47 Mondays to a total of

3,768 guests, averaging 80 guests per meal. This has been a tremendous blessing to the community and to us as a church.

Lastly, our commitment to be an Open and Affirming Congregation is of particular note. We became ONA seventeen (17) years ago and during each of those years we strived to do more to deepen our commitment to this inclusive ministry. We have hosted special worship services, invited guest speakers, and placed a welcome banner and other ONA branding inside our church. We recently hosted a second hour discussion on transgender identity with a guest speaker. Members are involved as volunteers at True Colors event at UConn in March. On Earth Day 2019 we created planters in rainbow flower pots and placed them on the front steps to offer a visible witness. Since we began displaying it in front of the church in January 2019, the rainbow flag has been stolen and replaced several times. This has prompted much discussion at Council and in the community. It has been an opportunity for us to fully state our Open and Affirming status, both through Facebook posts and letters to the editor in the local paper. We have a reserve of flags and a dedicated volunteer who replaces them as necessary!

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past.

The most recent change in the life of our church was the departure of our pastor after a six year stay with us and how our congregation has continued to bond together to fill the void that has been created with her departure. We had intended that we would follow the path of most UCC churches: our Deacons would still be in charge of the spiritual life of the congregation and they would then post and search for an Interim Minister with the intent that after one was secured, Council would appoint a Search Committee to find a settled minister. Sounded easy enough, but the Diaconate did not find this to be true. Our pastor's departure occurred at a time when several other UCC churches in our area were also looking for interim assistance, there were fewer pastors looking for interim work, and our church had decided that we needed to change over to a $\frac{3}{4}$ time minister rather than full-time. In a five month period, we received only two applicants. However, we are very blessed to have three members of our church who are ordained ministers, who helped with services and it appeared that God was telling us that we had a very qualified individual among those three, who was also seeking guidance as to where God wanted to use her at this time. She is not available long-term but readily agreed to accept a "Bridge" position with us until June, 2020. In the meantime, once again our lay leaders have led meetings, formerly led by the pastor and led Sunday services. Nothing is more meaningful than when we all join hands at the end of our Sunday worship and sing together Allelujah, Allelujah.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)

As a congregation we do our best to respect and listen to each other without divisiveness, while recognizing that conflict is natural. Our church uses the Deacons and the three members of the Pastoral Support Team to be additional “eyes and ears” for our pastor. We meet regularly with the pastor and are always asked what is happening within our body of which he is not aware. The purpose of this is to advise and inform of any potential conflict that may be at work so we can address it as soon as possible. We encourage people to listen to each other and to use “I” statements when in conflict with one another. We also encourage those who have an issue to go to the source of the conflict. We have a specific section in our By-laws that provide protocols for dealing with conflict, and refer you to that document.

An example of a recent conflict in our congregation would be related to the election of Donald Trump as President. While our previous minister never took a political stance in the pulpit, she would call out behavior that was not Christ-like. A specific example of this is when she stated that it is never appropriate for someone who claims to be a follower of Christ to exhibit locker-room mentality to denigrate women. She encouraged us not to judge other people but to love them as Christ loves. There were some in the congregation who thought her comments were “too political” and not welcoming of all viewpoints. In every circumstance when this happened, she asked to meet personally with the one(s) who voiced these opinions. Most agreed to do this and she met with them with the Moderator of the Church also present. Generally, the parties agreed to disagree but it did result in 6 families leaving our congregation.

Ministerial History (*include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years*)

Rev. Jocelyn Spencer-Gardner 6 Years

Rev. Dr. James Harrison 35 Year

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

We have learned that while we value our minister greatly, he or she cannot, and should not, be all things to all people. While we lean on our minister for spiritual leadership, we also understand that we each have a responsibility and role to play in embodying the mission of our church. We value the talents, gifts, and service of each of our congregants just as much as those of our minister. We have learned that the church is not just about one person leading, but the coming together of many people with the shared purpose of being in service to God, to each other, and to the community.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

During our prior transitional period, our Interim Pastor was replaced with another Interim Pastor whose methods better aligned with the congregation.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No



4 WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

Our congregation has a strong relationship with TEEG, Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group, an active local non-profit agency. Each month TEEG identifies items that are needed for that month such as soups, breakfast items, personal hygiene products, etc. Our congregants then donate the designated items during the month and the items are displayed in the sanctuary on the last Sunday. The congregation blesses the items before a member of the Board of Outreach delivers the donations to TEEG for distribution. We are able to amplify our support and raise awareness about these organizations by sponsoring fundraisers.

The Community Kitchens project is successful because it is a collaboration between many entities including the larger Community Kitchen non-profit of which FCCW is a part. Some food is provided by the CT food bank and other local churches, mentioned in 3f. TEEG and the FCCW site have an ongoing relationship with input from TEEG’s director and monthly visits from a caseworker who meets with guests as needed on the second Monday of every month. Community Kitchen receives regular assistance from clients at Center of Hope, a local agency for adults with developmental disabilities. Their job-coach brings several clients each week to assist with clean-up for the meal.

Other community activities in 2019 included the Crop Walk to raise money and awareness about hunger. Our group contributed \$1300 dollars to a \$5000 total raised by local church participants.

We also partnered with Woodstock Academy to contribute \$400 to provide local families in need with supplemental weekend groceries to elementary and middle school students. Annually, members of our congregation host a bed and breakfast endeavor in their homes for artists who participate in the Roseland Cottage Fine Arts and Crafts Festival. Catering also offers meals and we host some crafters on-site in cooperation with Roseland Cottage.

Describe your congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

Our congregation is active in the Windham Association. We send delegates to Conference Annual meetings and to Super Saturday. We often invite conference staff to preach and to provide programming for our congregation. We are proud to note that the moderator of the Southern New England Conference was our last pastor and that our meeting house is often the site for SNEUCC meetings. Additionally, one of our young adults currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Silver Lake Conference Center.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregation:

- Open and Affirming (ONA)
- Level 1 Green Church

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

There is flexibility and energy in our congregation and responsiveness to members' needs. One of our members is a veterinarian who has recently taken on learning more about suicide prevention, others are educators who are working with mental health and recovery issues with a variety of age groups. It is possible that we would be open to working toward additional statements above in the future.

Another member is active with Quiet Corner Cares, a new sober house for women dealing with addiction.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

FCCW participates in activities in collaboration with the Greater Putnam Interfaith Council and programs and services with Congregation B'nai Shalom in Putnam. There is a long history of collaboration with East Woodstock in Summer Union Service, Ash Wednesday, and Good Friday programs and services.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

A hallmark of our community is the energy and emphasis devoted to developing and nurturing Caring Relationships in our congregation and in the community around us.

As described above, our church is dedicated to Community Engagement in a variety of ways:

The Bed and Breakfast and Craft Fair mentioned above are examples of community engagement. Also our church is the local meeting site for weekly AA meetings and weekly Boy Scout meetings.

Our Faith is expressed in Action through Weekly Community Kitchens and regularly occurring anti-racist education. We have a Deacon's Fund that provides gift cards for community kitchen attendees who may be in need and for people who might come in needing gas, groceries or medical expenses. We send letters of support to survivors of violence in synagogues and churches. We support the Quiet Corner Refugee Resettlement, held a Vigil for victims and survivors of Sandy Hook, and the Deacons held a work day this fall to provide service projects for friends in need.

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

We anticipate that our pastor would spend 3 to 4 hours weekly in this area of ministry. We expect that the pastor will use time and energy to help develop a communication plan using tools including our website and social media and relevant connections throughout the community to spread the church's message of love. We expect that she will spend some time cultivating relationships with faith leaders and agencies in the area to foster collaborative relationships that enhance our church's ability to be generous, caring, loving and effective stewards of energy and money to help assuage needs in our community and beyond.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's MissionInsite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

We are a rural town of approximately 7,300, full of open spaces, farmland and countryside. The projections into the future have this changing very little over the next 10 years. People age 55 and older comprise approximately 40% of our town and will remain our town's foundation over the next 10 years. There are opportunities to build on that foundation that are exciting. People ages 25-54, with their families, currently comprise 33% of the population. In addition to these families, are the many opportunities available to partner in service with the local High School, Woodstock Academy, whose students are not only from Woodstock, but from 7 neighboring towns, as well as across the globe through the Academy's unique foreign exchange program.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

Our church reflects the town and it's area neighborhoods. We currently have the bulk of our membership in the phases of life between empty nesters to retirees and over 50% of Woodstock's population have associates, bachelors and graduate degrees. Other congregational churches in our area have similar demographics.

How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not?

We are challenged as a community by our lack of racial and ethnic diversity, with over 96% of the population white (non Hispanic). We take seriously God's command to stand in solidarity with the underrepresented and oppressed and have long been a church that values and affirms our LGBTQ neighbors with clear action and intent. We're taking this same clarity of focus and applying it to the issues of race and ethnicity by exploring our many privileges and becoming better listeners in order to become more effective voices for justice in our world. Forming book clubs, hosting film series and engaging speakers that challenge us to look at things differently are some of the steps we've taken along the way.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

Approximately 4% of the population lives below the poverty line. First Church is known for its generosity and faithful care of others. For instance, we have been involved for many years in consistently funding, loving, serving and creating fellowship through sponsoring the area's Community Kitchen once weekly. Community leaders value this service to our residents, as do the regular group of people that get together to grow and establish friendships there.

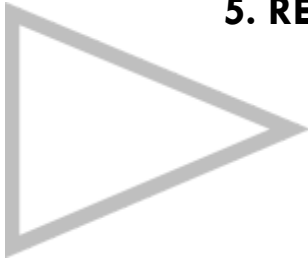
What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

“I love the inclusive nature of the services.”

“I was impressed by how the whole congregation welcomes children and shows how much they are valued in many small ways, such as establishing a ‘Prayground’ for parents of young children to engage in quiet activities with their child and still be a part of the worship community.”

“My family and I have been attending for the last 18 months or so as “active non-members” of this wonderful community of faith. The people are gracious and warm and welcoming. But even beyond that, there is a deep love for God and each other and for God's people. And, for me, beyond even these qualities, there is an acceptance and embracing of our faith as a beautiful mystery that I find refreshing and lovely - a place to serve and grow with each other in joyful love of God.”

5. REFERENCES



Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: “The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions.”

Make sure they are not members of your church but are persons who know your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Request a letter from each reference in answer to the four prompts below. Attach the letters (up to three) as desired.

REFERENCE 1

Rev. Dr. Susan J. Foster

Pastor of neighboring East Woodstock Congregational Church

ewccpastor@gmail.com

Church phone: (860) 928-7449

Cell Phone: (860) 420-6212

We have partnered with East Woodstock for many years for worship, pulpit exchange, outreach projects, and a variety of faith formation projects.

REFERENCE 2

Rev. Robert (Bob) Beckwith

Pastor of South Woodstock Baptist Church

southwoodstockbaptist@gmail.com

Church phone: 860-928-9341

Bob is a life-long Woodstock resident and his congregation helps with the Monday Community Kitchen meals here at our church..

REFERENCE 3

Anne Miller

Executive Director of Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group (TEEG)

annem@teegonline.org

15 Thatcher Rd, North Grosvenor Dale, CT 06255

Office Phone: (860) 923-3458

Our congregation has a long-standing partnership with TEEG to support families in need in Northeastern CT and Anne has come to know our congregation well.

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

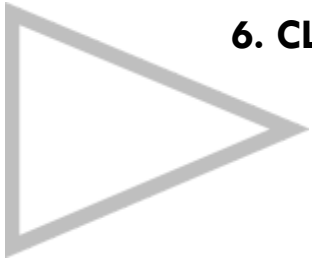
PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry.

Anything else you wish to share.



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

Dear God,

We open our hearts in gratitude for your constant love and guidance. Thank you for blessing us with such a spiritually vibrant church community and for walking with us on this journey of finding a Pastor whose heart and ministry is aligned with our own.

As Jesus says in Matthew 7:7 “Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you.” We have asked in prayer for a Pastor whose heart feels aligned with the heart of our congregation. Someone who can lead and support us in the ministry we envision for the future of our church and in service to our community.

We trust you know our hearts and needs even more fully than we know our own. And you know the heart and needs of our future Pastor. We have faith in your divine timing and hold a space of joyful expectancy for the moment these two paths align.

“Therefore I say to you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you will receive it, and it will be so for you.” Mark 11:24

Amen

CONTINUE: a poem

By Maya Angelou

My wish for you
Is that you continue

Continue

To be who and how you are
To astonish a mean world
With your acts of kindness

Continue

To allow humor to lighten the burden
Of your tender heart

Continue

In a society dark with cruelty
To let the people hear the grandeur
Of God in the peals of your laughter

Continue

To let your eloquence
Elevate the people to heights
They had only imagined

Continue

To remind the people that
Each is as good as the other
And that no one is beneath
Nor above you

Continue

To remember your own young years
And look with favor upon the lost
And the least and the lonely

Continue

To put the mantle of your protection
Around the bodies of
The young and defenseless

Continue

To take the hand of the despised
And diseased and walk proudly with them
In the high street
Some might see you and
Be encouraged to do likewise

Continue

To plant a public kiss of concern
On the cheek of the sick
And the aged and infirm
And count that as a

Natural action to be expected

Continue

To let gratitude be the pillow

Upon which you kneel to

Say your nightly prayer

And let faith be the bridge

You build to overcome evil

And welcome good

Continue

To ignore no vision

Which comes to enlarge your range

And increase your spirit

Continue

To dare to love deeply

And risk everything

For the good thing

Continue

To float

Happily in the sea of infinite substance

Which set aside riches for you

Before you had a name

Continue

And by doing so

You and your work

Will be able to continue

Eternally

6b. 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 profile 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 suitable new minister 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.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)*

Church Moderator and Assistant Moderator; Church Office Manager; Church Treasurer, Deacons; Trustees; Search Committee Members

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We are confident that God has already chosen God's special man or woman to lead our congregation. We love our beloved community of Faith and look forward to meeting our new pastor.

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

Charlene Swanson / Search Committee Co-Chair/ February 11, 2020

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION _____

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment:

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



This document is created through support to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22