

# LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



**First Congregational United Church of Christ  
Appleton, Wisconsin**

**[Pastor For Congregational Care and Missions]**

**[NE Association/Wisconsin Conference]**

**[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**

***le to provide you with every blessing, so that  
n all sufficiency in all things at all times,  
u may abound in every good work."  
(2 Corinthians 9:8)***

## **POSITION POSTING**

LISTING INFORMATION

SCOPE OF WORK

COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

### **LISTING INFORMATION**

Church name:

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Street address:

724 E. South River St., Appleton, WI 54915

Supplemental web links:

[www.firstcongoappleton.org](http://www.firstcongoappleton.org)

Additional ecumenical affiliations:

None

Conference:

Wisconsin

Association:

NE

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:

Name: Rev. Franz Rigert

Title: Conference Minister

Phone: 608-846-7880

Email: [frigert@wcucc.org](mailto:frigert@wcucc.org)

Summary Ministry Description:

*What is going on and what it might  
be like to get there? Who are you  
on this faith journey?*

First Congregational United Church of Christ in Appleton, WI is a strong and dynamic, open-hearted and open-minded, Christ-centered fellowship

that offers a radical welcome for all. We seek a pastor who will serve as the primary staff resource for the ministry areas of Congregational Care and Mission and Service. As our church emphasizes deepening relationships within the congregation, this individual will be at the center of the loving heart of our faith community, binding us together in mutual respect and care. In partnership with a strong team of lay leaders, this pastor also will demonstrate a passion to continue and strengthen the vital local and larger church mission ministries that are long-standing commitments within our church life. This new leader will collaborate with our other two gifted pastors to support the congregation's determination to attract and engage the next generation in the life-changing work of Christian mission.

#### Photographs:







What we value about living in our area :

The Fox Cities, among which Appleton is the largest community, is a thriving region located along the scenic Fox River and Lake Winnebago. It blends city conveniences and small-town warmth, friendliness and safety; is the home of excellent school systems, colleges and healthcare systems; and features vibrant cultural venues and abundant outdoor recreation. Through their commitment to volunteering and philanthropy, people in the Fox Cities are known for creative solutions to community needs.

Current size of membership:

1,426

Languages used in ministry :

None

Position Title:

Pastor for Congregational Care and Missions

Position Duration:

Settled — A called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association

Compensation Level:

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

## **SCOPE OF WORK**

**Job Title:** Pastor for Congregational Care and Missions

**Reports To:** Senior Pastor

**Prepared By:** Human Resources Committee

**Effective Date:** December 2016

**Summary:** Act as the primary staff resource for the ministry areas of Congregational Care and Mission and Service. Serve as part of a pastoral team. Prepare and lead worship services. Perform other spiritual functions associated with beliefs and practices of the United Church of Christ as authorized, and provide spiritual and moral guidance and assistance to members including administering the Sacraments, teaching, preaching, healing and leading the congregation in their growth toward greater Christian discipleship.

**Essential Duties and Responsibilities:** Include but are not limited to the following:

### Congregational Care

- Direct and lead the overall Pastoral Care program for congregation members, including but not limited to the Stephen Ministry team, Friends in Christ program, and visiting the sick and homebound.
- Counsel those in spiritual need.

### Mission and Outreach

- Act as staff liaison to the Mission and Service Ministry team, guide and support the mission partnership teams in strengthening their ongoing ministries, and participate in partnership evaluations and in developing the Mission and Outreach budget.
- Facilitate the ongoing process of identifying new areas for mission within the life of the church.

### Pastoral Team

- Serve as part of the pastoral team, leading and participating in worship as needed, conducting wedding and funeral services, administering religious rites, visiting church members, and participating in weekly staff meetings.
- Represent the church through participation in community outreach, wider church and interfaith relationships.

### **Supervisory Responsibilities:**

- Supervise the Office Manager and Lay Ministry Coordinator
- Carry out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the organization's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring and training employees; planning, assigning and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and resolving problems.

### **Qualifications:**

- Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree
- Ordained UCC minister in good standing or privilege of call in the United Church of Christ
- Advanced training in pastoral care desired

### **Core Competencies:**

We seek someone who is:

- Accepting and affirming
- Collegial
- Passionate

## **COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT**

Salary Basis:

We follow Wisconsin Conference Compensation Guidelines

Benefits:

- Housing allowance
- Health and dental insurance
- Pension
- Continuing education time and monies
- Sabbatical
- Vacation

- Sick leave
- Holidays
- Personal days
- Life insurance and disability

What is the expected living situation for your next minister:  
Living nearby with a housing allowance

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister:  
We are a regional church — many members drive up to 30 minutes to attend. We would expect our pastor to live somewhere in the larger Fox Cities community.

State any incentives:  
Sabbatical offered after every 7 years of service

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:  
All of our clergy take part in a peer support group.

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

### **WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?**

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

Our Pastor for Congregational Care and Missions has primary responsibility for pastoral care within our congregation and thus operates at the center of the loving heart of our church, binding us together in mutual respect and care. In coordination with our other two clergy, this pastor will lead our strategic emphasis on deepening relationships within the congregation.

This focus includes leading, training and supporting our Stephen Ministry and Friends in Christ teams.



Stephen Ministry equips and empowers individuals, called Stephen Ministers, to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting. Stephen Ministers undergo 50 hours of training and make a two-year commitment to the program. During 2016, our eight Stephen Ministers served 13 care-receivers.

Currently, 18 caregivers and 31 care-receivers participate in the Friends in Christ program. Through weekly personal visits, Friends in Christ caregivers provide homebound and elderly individuals with friendship and connection to the larger church community.

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

Our Pastor for Congregational Care and Missions also will lead and coordinate the missions of our congregation. Working with a strong team of lay leaders, this pastor will strive to support and strengthen the vital community and larger church ministries that are long-standing commitments within the life of our church. We seek a leader whose vision for mission extends beyond the present to the future needs around us, with a particular emphasis on engaging young adults in our church and community in the life-changing work of Christian 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.

The work of our faith community is typically done in English.

All of our pastors honor, value and accept individuals for whom God created them to be. In our recently adopted Church Identity Statement, we affirmed the following:

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 \_\_\_\_\_ that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

Our next minister will display:

- Commitment to lifelong spiritual growth and practice, individually and in community;
- A passion for the oneness of the body of Christ as expressed through commitment to ecumenism, justice and the full embrace of all persons in the radical hospitality of God;
- The ability to listen empathetically, communicate appropriately and keep appropriate confidences; and
- The ability to discern God's mission in the world and, in response, to lead ministries of compassion, nurture, justice and proclamation that support fullness of life for all people.

## **WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?**

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

First Congregational is an active, vital and inclusive church. We are an open-hearted, Christ-centered fellowship that offers a radical welcome for all. We practice an open-minded faith that embraces learning and reason. We provide an open-spirited environment in which each of us, and all of us together, can come into a transforming relationship with our still-speaking God.

Those who participate in our community find spiritually moving worship and music, a compelling message, an intergenerational congregation, opportunities for education and study for all ages, and a strong commitment to justice and mission in the community and the wider world. We celebrate that we are living into our 2014 Identity Statement, in which we describe ourselves as “a Christian community, called by God through the life and teachings of Jesus to grow in Spirit, to share our faith experiences, to serve others, to promote hope and peace in the world, and to welcome all God’s people.”

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

In 2014, a Long Range Planning Group comprised of church members conducted research to understand cultural trends affecting religious affiliations and activity and to make recommendations to influence the 10-year vision of our church. Understanding that recent national generational trends affecting church membership and participation could not be ignored, we recognized that we needed to look clear-eyed at the future and be proactive.

Subsequently, Church Council created the Horizon Ministry Team to explore further how findings from the Long Range Planning Group might be incorporated into the life of our church. Three aspirations have been identified as guiding principles for future work within our congregation to serve the needs of all in our community while keeping us faithful to the spirit of our church.

The aspirations are:

- Deepening Relationships with Each Other

We aspire to have a strong faith family that builds meaningful, supportive relationships among its members. We will create opportunities for fellowship and enhance engagement with new members to open ourselves to all the people of God.

- Serving the Church and Community

We aspire to be a congregation that serves others by sharing the gifts that God has provided us — time, passions and resources. We will grow a culture of service to develop new church leaders and increase our capacity to share God’s message inside and outside our church walls with particular emphasis on engaging with our neighboring community.

- Engaging the Next Generation

We aspire to attract and engage increasingly diverse youth, families and young adults in our church family. Meeting the spiritual needs of the next generation through varied music, worship and programming is critical to the vibrancy and long-term health of our congregation.

## **WHO ARE WE NOW?**

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### **CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS**

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

Honoring our United Church of Christ identity, we say this in worship every Sunday: "We are the Church of the Open Door; no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." Living out that Open Door commitment has brought a very diverse group of people into worship here at First Congo. We honor that diversity by living out the words of Augustine of Hippo: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity." Sitting in our pews are those who were deeply formed by Catholic or Lutheran traditions and whose faith journeys have led them here to our church. There are those who came from an Evangelical Christian tradition but were forced out or opted to leave for our more inclusive fellowship. There are many who might describe themselves as Unitarian or Atheist yet find deep meaning in the teachings and moral example of Jesus and great purpose in the mission of our church.

We are very much influenced by the Reformed Protestant focus on unity found in a living relationship with Christ rather than in any credal test or standard. We are proud of our Congregationalist heritage that lifts up the virtue of responsible freedom in membership, allowing each individual member to believe and act out of their own perception of God's will for their lives while also honoring the covenantal relationship we have with one another. And we joyfully celebrate a Still Speaking God, a restless Spirit moving among us, leading us into more light, truth, love and ministry.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Based on a recent survey of the congregation, three strengths were identified above all others:

1. Most notably, the sense of community within the congregation is valued, with focus on welcoming a diverse membership of all ages and places on their faith journeys. This is described by congregation members as “attempts to reach young and old,” “open and welcoming,” “friendly and open to all,” “sense of community,” “many children and families,” “great youth program,” “all-inclusiveness,” and “compassion, caring and understanding.”
2. Quality of worship also is valued and praised by the congregation. Again from the congregational survey, descriptions include “thought-provoking sermons and worship services,” “good leadership,” “amazing and meaningful music,” “spiritual/exploring faith groups,” and “upbeat, Christ-centered, and all-inclusive and progressive philosophy.”
3. Finally, our mission work is felt to be vitally important. This work includes “social justice awareness” as well as community outreach and mission work farther abroad from local needs.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Worship is at the heart of our life together. At First Congregational you will find:

- A lively blending of styles that evoke both laughter and tears and help worship speak equally to heart, soul and mind;
- Children’s sermons that speak to children of all ages;
- Music that stirs our souls, lifts our hearts and connects generations through a diversity of worship styles and musical traditions; and
- Worship services that are truly an inspiration for service, for carrying out our calling as servant people to our hurting families, community and world.

#### In Worship, We Embrace the Whole Gospel

We practice an open-minded faith that embraces spiritual growth and reason. We welcome the questions — and the doubts — that lead us toward deeper understanding, and we never shy away from truth by hiding in dogma. The preaching at First Congregational draws from the

Bible as a whole, in the context of its own time, and shows us ways in which these ancient lessons apply to our modern faith. Our worship is both relevant and timeless.

#### In Worship, We Embrace the Whole Person

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home here. We are committed to inclusiveness and acceptance; we acknowledge that everyone has unique blessings and needs; when we worship together, we support and guide each other toward making the most of our God-given gifts and talents.

#### In Worship, We Embrace the Whole People of God

We are open to the whole people of God, celebrating a world blessed with diversity of ethnicity, gender, orientation, age, creed and experience. We live widely, exploring our own community and the world, learning from the experiences of others and reaching out to those in need. We live out our faith daily, acting with compassion in a spirit of service and advocacy.

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

We have a robust educational program for all ages in the congregation. As part of the progressive Christian movement, the theme "The Church of the Open Door" guides our educational programming. The ethos of the program revolves around "The way of being a faithful Christian in modern times." The program is unique in that all staff are involved in educational planning and implementation. They meet monthly to assure appropriate, quality programming is provided at all ages that reflects both our mission statement (p 41) and Guiding Vision.

First Congregational is devoted to educational ministries that nurture children and youth, encouraging them to explore their developing faith in a warm and accepting environment. More than 230 children and 250 volunteers are active participants in the education program for children from birth to sixth grade. Children are engaged through a variety of activities and multi-sensory experiences that awaken their curiosity in spirituality and in God.

All seventh- and eighth-grade youth are looking to grow in their relationships with God, our community, our church and each other. These

relationships are nurtured through four key components of our middle school ministry: devotional time, stewardship/service, education and fellowship. With these building blocks, the youth prepare themselves to become members of our family of faith through Confirmation.

In the High School Ministry at First Congo we have many opportunities to challenge faith, strengthen friendships and deepen our commitment to one another and to God. Through worship, fellowship, education and service, we aim to engage our youth through a variety of activities so that they may experience Christ's love in a multitude of ways. Our great hope is for our youth not only to grow more deeply in their own individual faiths but also to grow more deeply as a collective Christian community.

Both middle and high school programs have strong mission and service components. The activities range from baking apple crisp and cookies, to preparing cards for members who are homebound or reside in nursing homes, to helping at local emergency shelters. Youth in both programs are active in worship services and participate annually in week-long mission projects.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Church bylaws call for governance by our members, specifically by the Church Council, which includes officers (moderator, vice-moderator, secretary, treasurer and vice-treasurer), co-councilors for ministry areas (Facilities, Congregational Life, Children/Youth/Families, Horizon Team, Mission and Service, Stewardship, and Worship and Music) and standing committees (Communications, Finance, Human Resources and Technology). The work of ministry and mission is accomplished through lay leadership in ministry areas and standing committees, each of which has an assigned staff member/resource person. Issues of significance within each ministry area may come before Church Council for input, review and decision making. Annual budgets are created by the finance committee and approved by Council and the congregation. Meeting minutes for ministry areas, standing committees and Church Council are readily available for those who are interested.

Long-range planning occurs periodically to provide strategic focus for our various ministries. Aspirations identified by our Horizon Team to focus



future work are described in the “Who Is God Calling Us to Become?” section of the Church Profile (p 11).

A current vision challenge identified by our Horizon Team is to develop new lay leadership, allowing us to increase our capacity to share God’s message inside and outside our church walls. At present, our creative ideas sometimes outpace our lay leadership capacity to carry out those ideas. We also would benefit from carving out additional time to obtain feedback, celebrate and reflect on our accomplishments.

When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?

Our decision-making style is very collaborative. Church Council, finance and communications standing committees and ministry areas typically meet once each month. Subcommittees meet as needed. Clergy meet with each other weekly and also with all staff twice monthly for a total of about six to eight hours per month in formal 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?

- a. When the condemnation of a local trailer park occurred several years ago causing an immediate need to relocate a number of individuals and families, our church’s offer of \$5,000 made us the lead congregation assisting in the relocation effort.
- b. When the church boiler required emergency repair, we trusted our Facilities Ministry Area to arrange for timely repair.
- c. When our clergy sensed the need for pastoral care after the recent divisive presidential election, they quickly organized a post-election Christian prayer vigil open to the broader community.

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

# 11-YEAR REPORT



## UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church#:	860070	Schedule:	0	First Congregational UCC		Appleton		WI	54916
Assoc:	824								
YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2005	1607	435	430	47	6	61	23	80	11
2006	1641	444	782	38	5	50	18	41	34
2007	1618	397	513	36	3	38	28	70	-23
2008	1578	430	441	28	2	50	19	101	-40
2009	1606	414	458	19	2	55	11	37	28
2010	1637	421	487	27	10	22	17	11	31
2011	1667	421	487	18	0	47	30	5	30
2012	1697	421	487	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	1723 *	422	534	24	0	50	14	4	56
2014	1345	399	498	23	7	39	20	427	-378
2015	1366	346	475	16	3	34	32	0	21
YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	SPECIAL SUPPORT	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPPLY%	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2005	\$929,121	\$0	\$98,242	\$101,663	\$199,905	\$44,532	\$244,437	10.57	\$1,173,558
2006	\$968,048	\$0	\$101,189	\$26,110	\$127,299	\$44,110	\$171,409	10.46	\$1,139,457
2007	\$1,003,752	\$0	\$107,499	\$132,660	\$240,159	\$23,960	\$264,109	10.71	\$1,267,861
2008	\$1,007,910	\$0	\$107,499	\$6,601	\$114,100	\$45,830	\$159,930	10.67	\$1,167,840
2009	\$1,057,643	\$0	\$87,500	\$18,790	\$106,290	\$30,240	\$136,530	8.27	\$1,194,173
2010	\$1,121,900	\$0	\$90,000	\$11,646	\$101,646	\$69,023	\$160,659	8.02	\$1,282,569
2011	\$1,121,900	\$0	\$90,000	\$8,786	\$98,786	\$0	\$98,786	8.02	\$1,220,686
2012	\$1,121,900	\$0	\$90,000	\$5,222	\$85,222	\$0	\$85,222	7.13	\$1,207,122
2013	\$1,068,055	\$0	\$80,010	\$7,231	\$87,241	\$58,324	\$146,565	7.49	\$1,213,620
2014	\$671,916	\$0	\$60,200	\$109,094	\$189,294	\$32,758	\$222,052	9.20	\$1,093,968
2015	\$1,108,450	\$0	\$80,000	\$2,909	\$82,909	\$0	\$82,909	7.22	\$1,191,359
% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	TOTAL
2010-2015	-16.55	-17.81	-2.46	-10.17	14.29	-1.20	-18.43	-7.11	
2005-2015	-15.00	-20.46	10.47	-53.51	-68.93	19.30	-58.53	1.52	

\* Please note: After 10-15 years without a thorough membership analysis, membership records were carefully reviewed and brought up-to-date in 2013-14. As a result, 378 individuals (many of whom had moved out of the area or had duplicate records) were removed from membership.

Please note: Zero values ("0" or "\$0") may reflect missing information in some years. Christian Education/Faith Formation refers to Church School Enrollment for all figures before 2007.

## **CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

Describe those who participate in your church.

Number of active members:	1,426	
Number of active non-members:	24	➤ Yes, this is an estimate. We do not formally track participating non-members
<b>Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):</b>	<b>1,450</b>	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

More than 10 years:	60%	
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	18%	
Less than 5 years:	22%	

Number of total participants by age:

1-11 years	12-17 years	18-24 years	25-34 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75+ years	
317	180	125	173	206	303	211	142	N

Percentage of adults in various household types:

Single adults under 35:	18%	
Joint household with minors:	27%	
Single adults age 35-65:	19%	
Joint household with no minors:	28%	
Single adults over 65:	8%	

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

High school:	18%	
College:	45%	
Graduate school:	15%	
Specialty training:	5%	
Other (education withheld):	17%	

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

Adults who are employed:	72%	√
Adults who are retired:	10%	√
Adults who are not fully employed:	18%	√

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

While there is a wide range of occupations represented in our congregation, we estimate that our occupations tend to reflect the higher level of education that our members enjoy compared to the local community at large. We have many health care professionals, educators from preschool to college levels, management executives, office administrators, attorneys, accountants, bankers, leaders in not-for-profit organizations and musicians. We also have folks who work in retail sales, food service, maintenance, construction and personal service. Our talented and committed laity are generous in serving our church with their professional skills.

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?

Wisconsin is comparatively less racially diverse than the United States as a whole, with minority populations making up 17.8% of the total population, compared to 37.9% nationwide. In 2014, the percentage of minority populations in the three-county area from which our congregation draws its members ranged from 8.5 to 11.6% (from the ).

Over the years, a variety of nationalities represented have created a rich cultural flavor in the Fox Cities. Many residents are descended from New Englanders, who settled much of the region. By the turn of the 20th century, Dutch, German, Scandinavian and Polish immigrants also had established themselves here, and Hmong-Laotian refugees arrived after the end of the Vietnam War.

While there are not many people of color attending First Congregational:

- Our new members have for many years come from very religiously diverse backgrounds.
- We have a healthy mix of ages among our members, and we are very intentional about our commitment to intergenerational programming.
- We received Open and Affirming designation after devoting a year to exploring the diversity of our multifaceted congregation. This process

culminated in the September 2014 adoption of our Identity Statement, which welcomes “into full participation people of every race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, creed, background, life experience, and physical or mental health, and capability.”

List the date your congregation has had or will have a conversation using a resource such as the Welcoming Diversity Inventory. Comment on the results.

We have not had a conversation using the Welcoming Diversity Inventory. However, diversity and especially how we relate to the larger local community, is always part of church planning discussions.

## **PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING**

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

Ways of gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings?
Adult Groups or Classes	1,159	Pastoral staff, musical staff, lay staff
Baptisms	21	Pastoral staff
Children's Groups or Classes	533	Pastoral staff, musical staff, lay staff
Christmas Eve (2015: 964) and Easter (2016: 841) Worship	2,045	Pastoral staff, musical staff, lay staff
Churchwide Meals	1,069	Pastoral staff, musical staff, lay staff
Choirs and Music Groups	97	Music director John Albrecht, Organist Jon Riehle, Bell Choir director Beth Vercooteran, Percussion ensemble director Vicki Daniel
Church-Based Bible Study	65	Pastoral Staff and Volunteers
Communion	450	Pastoral staff, musical staff, lay staff
Community Meals	270	Pastoral staff, lay staff
Confirmation	16	Pastoral staff, lay staff, volunteers
Drama or Dance Program	45	Pastoral staff, volunteers
Funerals ( )	23	Pastoral staff

Intergenerational Groups	59	Pastoral & Lay staff & volunteers & Musical Staff
Outdoor Worship	110	Pastoral staff, lay staff, musical staff, volunteers
Prayer or Meditation Groups	137	Pastoral staff, lay staff
Public Advocacy Work	66	Pastoral staff, lay staff
Retreats	122	Pastoral staff, lay staff
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community,	15	Pastoral staff, volunteers
Weddings ( )	10	Pastoral staff
Worship (time slot: 8:45 & 10:30 a.m.) Average 2016 Monthly attendance	1,393	Pastoral staff, volunteers
Young Adult Groups or Classes	15	Pastoral staff, volunteers
Youth Groups or Classes	96	Pastoral staff, volunteers
Other	94	Pastoral staff, volunteers

Additional comments:



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-Way or Four-Way Covenant?	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired?
Rev. Maynard Beemer	No			Y
Rev. John McFadden	No			Y
Rev. Jane Anderson	4	Wisconsin Conference UCC	Assoc. Conference Minister	N
Rev. Mark Holmes	4	Children's Hospital, Austin, TX	Chaplain	N
Betty Masaros	No			Y

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:

Rev. Maynard Beemer, retired and longtime Associate Pastor, is an active and wonderful member of our church and holds the title of Pastor Emeritus. Maynard is particularly active in the mission activities of the church, serving on our Mission and Service Team.

Rev. John McFadden, retired and former Senior Pastor, is a treasured and active member of our church. John also regularly attends another church in our community. He is present in our worship about half the time. Since his retirement, John has been very active in the larger community, providing leadership in the area of aging and dementia, and in the Faith Community.

Rev. Jane Anderson, former Pastor of Congregational Life, serves as Associate Conference Minister in the Wisconsin Conference UCC. Jane continues to belong to our church but has not attended since transitioning to conference ministry. Per clergy ethical standards in the conference, she will not attend until our new called Pastor for Congregational Care and Missions has served our church for at least one year.

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
Senior Pastor	Yes	Full time	Moderator	9 years
Pastor for Family Life	No	Full time	Senior Pastor	5 years
Director for Music Ministry	No	Full time	Senior Pastor	5 years
Director for Mission and Service	No	Part time	Senior Pastor	14 years
Director for Children's Ministry	No	Full time	Pastor for Family Life	2 years
Office Manager	No	Full time	Pastor for Family Life	13 years
Communications Specialist	No	Full time	Office Manager	1 year
Administrative Assistant	No	Part time	Office Manager	1 year
Church Technology Coordinator	No	Part time	Senior Pastor	2 years
CYF Coordinator	No	Part time	Office Manager	1 year
Bookkeeper	No	Part time	Office Manager	1 year
Organist	No	Part time	Director for Music Ministry	9 years
Facilities Manager	No	Part time	Pastor for Family Life	1 year
Head Custodian	No	Part time	Facilities Manager	14 years

Church Custodian	No	Part time	Head Custodian	6 years
Church Custodian	No	Part time	Head custodian	1 year
Infant/Toddler Childcare Provider	No	Part time	Director for Children's Ministry	2 years
Infant/Toddler Childcare Provider	No	Part time	Director for Children's Ministry	2 years

REFLECTION

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

We are a generationally diverse church with the bulk of our active membership in the age range of 40-65. However, there is an effort to address the challenges of aging and renewal by intentional focus on becoming more intergenerational. There are various activities for all ages and families to participate in which are perceived as fun and enriching by those involved. Although we are demographically a predominantly Caucasian church, there are initiatives in place to actively foster diversity in the congregation that more closely mirrors that of the community. These initiatives demonstrate the forward-thinking, positive attitude of the congregation.

We are a congregation blessed with many talented people who serve to promote intelligent and stimulating opportunities for discussion, education and exceptional music. In all aspects of the church's life there is an expectation for excellence, which supports achieving the highest quality programming for the benefit of congregational life. As a whole, we are a compassionate, dedicated and giving congregation that supports local and global mission and service.

## **CHURCH FINANCES**

Current annual operating income (as per most recent fiscal year ended June 30, 2016)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$1,006,900
Endowment Proceeds	\$123,943
Endowment Draw	\$0
Fundraising Events	
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$3,885
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$5,506
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Other (specify): Interest	\$2,183
Other (specify): Misc	\$7,816
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,150,233</b>

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

Annual operating expenses for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016 totaled \$1,145,441.

On June 26, 2016, the congregation approved the following expense budget for the year beginning July 1, 2016:

Worship and Music Ministry Area	\$20,365
Mission and Service Ministry Area	\$125,474

Congregational Life Ministry Area	\$10,405
Children, Youth & Family Ministry Area	\$20,336
Facilities Ministry Area	\$168,699
State/National UCC Support	\$27,000
Stewardship Ministry Area	\$9,168
Communication/Outreach	\$12,172
Human Resources	\$842,203
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,235,824</b>

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

29%

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?

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM — Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

Our church has created seven local mission partnerships within the local community and has concluded that to add the three unmarked ones above would overload the congregation with mission messages and hamper support for our ongoing local partnerships.

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

The recommended 10% remains a target for our congregation; however, since the "Great Recession," we have been unable to reach that level of support. In recent budgets, we have successfully contributed \$80,000 to OCWM, just about 7% of our annual expenses.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

None

Total amount of loan debt:

\$0

Reason for debt:

N/A

Are capital and other payments current?

N/A

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.

No current building project; no capital campaigns within past 10 years

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last 10 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.

N/A

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

\$5.4 million

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

After requested by Church Council, funds are released by the Endowment Trust Board twice/year.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to five years ago)?

Over the past five years, the percentage draw has remained consistent at 2.5% net of fees.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

Semi-annual distributions are based on earned income only (interest and dividends) as determined by the Endowment Trust Board. Five years ago, the distribution was \$83,569. In the year ending June 30, 2016, the distribution was \$123,943. In any given year, the income distributed to the church from the Endowment Trust represents about 10-15% of the typical annual operating budget.

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

The Endowment Trust is invested conservatively, and the distribution policy also is conservative. There is no expectation that the policy affecting distribution will change. At the current rate of draw, the endowment should last in perpetuity.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

In addition to the Endowment Trust, there are three small endowment funds invested at the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region (CFFVR) and governed by the CFFVR's spending policy that allows a 5% annual distribution based upon a three-year average of the fund's overall value. Those three funds support the annual professional maintenance of First Congregational's Memorial Garden, building maintenance and expenses for Lawrence University choir scholars. The three funds total about \$105,000 and generate about \$5,000 annually.

The Community Foundation also holds about \$41,000 in a non-endowed Organ Preservation Fund.

Other assets:

Reserves (savings): \$864,021 (of this amount, \$308,919 is temporarily or permanently restricted; remainder unrestricted)

Claire Langstadt Gehin Trust: This non-endowed trust, with a current asset value of over \$1 million, was created in 1997 after the death of Claire Gehin. The distribution policy guidelines specify support for mission, children's, and music ministries. The trust generates approximately \$50,000 annually.

Investments (other than endowment): \$0

Does your church have a parsonage?

No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

The church building, constructed in 1968, bridges a beautiful natural ravine that runs into the Fox River. The property is bordered on one side by Lawrence University buildings and on the other sides by an established residential neighborhood. The church sanctuary seats 500, has clean, simple lines and is filled with light from clerestory and additional windows. The sanctuary building also includes the narthex, offices, library, youth lounge, kitchen, choir rehearsal room, fellowship hall, youth coffee lounge and meeting rooms. A "bridge" over the ravine has large windows with wooden seats on both sides and a view down the ravine to the river. This bridge connects the church school building to the sanctuary building. The church school building has six classrooms on two floors, a kitchen, meeting room and offices. As part of our transition several years ago to a rotational model for church school, the classrooms were remodeled to include a theater, "jungle," computer room, play village and tented storytelling room.

We have parking on both sides of the ravine and a meditation labyrinth on the far edge of the parking lot on the church school side.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

None



Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

An elevator in the sanctuary building allows accessibility to the sanctuary, offices, fellowship space, kitchen, youth lounge, choir rehearsal room and meeting rooms. Building design on the ravine causes accessibility challenges in the church school building. A second elevator would be needed to ensure accessibility throughout the church school building. While this improvement is not in the immediate forecast, it is being considered in the 10-year facilities maintenance plan.

## REFLECTION

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

We have been blessed with a generous membership who supports the mission of our church. Legacy gifts have been very important in sustaining our ministry and have provided a growing and diverse group of endowed funds.

Our annual budget process includes input from all ministry teams, the Finance Committee and Church Council. A proposed budget is submitted to the congregation for approval prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1. Opportunities to improve the process are always welcomed.

Staff reorganization has been the focus of budget changes over the past several years. A commitment to upgrading our youth programming led to a budget expansion. We have been blessed with bequests that help supplement annual operating revenue during the transition.

## **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.

In the mid-1960s, we made a decision to build a new church building in the center of Appleton. This was a confirmation of our commitment to community engagement in our city, and enabled us to start the Community Child Care Center, the first day care in the Fox Valley. This commitment to our local community remains an ongoing strength of our church through our partnerships with local non-profit organizations and local and national mission groups.

The decision to declare ourselves an Open and Affirming congregation — — was another significant event. Our church had performed same gender marriages and relationship blessings for over 25 years, but we had not made a public statement of our position. Declaring ourselves in 2014 to be an Open and Affirming church “committed to tolerance, justice, service and exploration” made it possible for church members and others in our community to identify us explicitly in that way and feel welcomed “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey.”

About 10 years ago, the church engaged in a search to find a new senior pastor to replace a pastor who had been in that position for 23 years. At about the same time, we also needed to find a new music director to replace one who had served us for a similar length of time. Even though our congregation had a strong attachment to the people who had held these positions, the transitions were handled well, with no change in the vibrancy and engagement of our congregation.

In the last 10 years, the most important event was hiring a youth pastor. In the decade prior to the hiring, the church had made a concerted effort to revitalize our youth program, remodeling the Sunday school wing of the building and launching the Pathways Church School and a new youth curriculum. Hiring a youth pastor was the culmination of our ongoing priority to serve our younger generation.

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

One of our biggest changes was restructuring and strengthening our youth program. In partnership with Youth Ministry Architects, we totally reimagined how we minister to our youth, creating a warm and accepting environment and having them engage in activities and multi-sensory experiences that awaken their curiosity about spirituality and God. As they mature, their questions are welcomed as signs of an actively growing faith, and they are exposed to new perspectives and cultures, giving them a solid foundation for living as Christians in the context of a diverse and ever-changing world.

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.

Over the last few years, our church leadership saw the need to restructure staff roles and responsibilities to deal with some areas of persistent dysfunction. Staff and lay leadership engaged in difficult and sometimes emotional conversations about how that restructuring should happen. Those conversations resulted in new policies, changes in staff roles and duties and the elimination of the role of church administrator. During these transitions, we learned better ways for staff and lay leaders to work together to solve problems and address individual and church needs. Throughout the process, we were guided by the conflict resolution policies in our Employee Handbook. Moving forward, when dealing with conflicts and difficulties, we see the positive partnership between lay leadership and staff as one of our strengths in resolving issues.

### Ministerial History

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
John T. McFadden, Senior Minister	1983-2006	Y
Vicki Kessler, Minister Program & Administration	1991-1994	Y
Maynard Beemer, Minister Program & Administration	1994-1999	Y

Jane Terry, Minister of Parish Life	1984-1994	Y
Jane Anderson, Minister of Pastoral Care	1994-2015	Y
Kevin Gregory, Minister of Program & Administration	1999-2007	Y

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

We value the energy of clergy who can lead, support and encourage our members to pursue new ideas and actions to serve our congregation and the wider community. When the results of those pursuits require change, we have learned with gratitude that our pastors are open to revised roles and responsibilities.

Ministers and staff leaders have helped us experience that strong and active commitment to local, national and international mission project attracts individuals and families to our church, enriches our individual and collective lives and makes real our professed belief in the model of Jesus Christ.

We have also learned that we appreciate and miss the special qualities that a long-term minister of pastoral care brings to our congregation — a heart filled with compassion for individuals and especially a commitment to older members and the traditions they value.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?  
45 years ago, a pastor resigned under pressure.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?  
There was a time in the mid-1980s when a consultant from Alban Institute helped staff work through some interpersonal conflicts.

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?  
The pastor who resigned under pressure 45 years ago may have been the subject of review.

# WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION INSITE

## COMMUNITY VISION

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

The person serving as Pastor for Congregational Care and Missions will join a team of people who are passionate about mission and service. The Mission and Service Ministry Team provides strong lay leadership as it oversees 18 different mission projects. This condensed listing of the mission activities showcases how our congregation extends outward in service and advocacy.

In our fifth annual **Service Sunday**, more than 180 people:

- Made 26 fleece blankets for Project NOAHH bunk beds, 30 dozen cookies for random acts of kindness in the community and welcome bags for refugees;
- Performed garden maintenance in our Plant-A-Row and labyrinth gardens;
- Built and donated butterfly and bird houses;
- Handed out quarters and detergent at local laundromats; and
- Sang at nursing homes.

Through a **partnership (Project NOAHH) between our church and the county Department of Social Services**, we donate household goods, furniture and bunk beds for struggling families.

Even before the Wisconsin Conference declared itself “Immigrant Welcoming,” more than 20 very committed individuals from this church formed **The Good Neighbor Team** to welcome and support the first, large Congolese refugee family to arrive in our community. Team members:

- Furnished apartments, enrolled children in school and drove family members to countless medical appointments;

- Taught grocery shopping, budgeting and household management skills;
- Provided advocacy and support around transportation and employment issues; and
- Celebrated family events and welcomed the family to our congregation.

Twelve years ago, members of this congregation were instrumental in the formation of **ESTHER**, a grassroots, interfaith social justice organization working to transform communities by dissolving boundaries of race, creed, and social and economic divides. In addition to financial support through our annual budget, our members continue to serve in active task forces dedicated to: transportation issues, reform of the criminal justice system, civil rights of immigrants, leadership development and restorative justice prison ministry

We support two local **homeless shelters** with volunteer hours and donations of approximately 1,000 meals annually through our innovative E2F (“empty to full”) pans project.

**LEAVEN** (Limited Emergency Assistance Valley Ecumenical Network), a local interfaith nonprofit organization that works through volunteers to meet the basic needs of people in crisis, receives many volunteer hours and financial support from us.

For the past five years we have partnered with **Feed My Starving Children** by fundraising and packing food.

**Plant a Row for the Hungry**, our garden project, has donated hundreds of pounds of produce each summer to needy people in the community.

Local and national **housing mission partners** include:

- Habitat for Humanity, through which we partner annually with other local communities of faith to build an affordable home;
- Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, MS, a partner for more than 20 years and the site of a 2016 intergenerational work trip with more than 60 teens and adults;
- ASP, Appalachia Service Project, in Jonesville, VA, where our church members have worked to repair inadequate housing in depressed coal

mining areas and recently in Rainelle, WV, where severe flooding put people out of their homes; and

- Re-Member, a non-profit organization that works with the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

In 1970, our church founded the **Samaritan Counseling Center**, a state-licensed outpatient mental health and AODA clinic that specializes in cost-effective counseling. We continue to provide financial support and board representation.

Within our own congregation we have active **Stephen** and **Prayer Shawl Ministries**.

Our nearly 20-year partnership with **churches in the Kerio Valley in Kenya** has been truly transformational for us and our Kenyan friends. The partnership, based on relationships and mutual prayer, focuses on improving life for persons in this very remote area of Africa. Current key projects include:

- A Student sponsorship program, whereby approximately 65 families from our congregation are sponsoring 51 high school and 5 university students, making it possible for them to get an education;
- A women's micro loan program, enabling women to start small businesses in order to support their families and keep their children in school; and
- The Makini Pad Project, providing washable reusable sanitary pads for young women so they can attend school all month.

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

There is regular participation and service to the NE Association, including chairmanship of the Board of Directors. We also serve on Lakeland University's Board, the Conference Board and Executive Council, the Conference Health Insurance Board and Camp Board. First Congregational has hosted NE Association Annual Meetings and provided worship leadership through drama skits for the Conference Annual Meeting.

Check all of the following “statements of witness” that apply to your UCC faith community. (Find more information on these statements at [ucc.org](http://ucc.org).)

- Accessible to All (A2A)
- Creation Justice
- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- Immigrant Welcoming
- Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M)
- Just Peace
- Global Mission Church
- Open and Affirming (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- Other UCC designations:
- Other similar designations in affiliated denominations
- None

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?

We are actively engaging in a study around becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Church as one of the lead congregations participating in a wider Wisconsin Conference initiative. This study involves the large immigrant refugee Congolese family our congregation sponsored and a team of over 20 lay leaders spent two years shepherding through the resettlement process. We anticipate formally voting on becoming an Immigrant Welcoming Church sometime in 2017.

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

In addition to our work with the interfaith organizations of Habitat for Humanity, LEAVEN and ESTHER described previously, we are also active participants in Common Ground, an interfaith clergy group in the Fox Valley gathered around issues of concern to the community’s health. Major subjects of concern over the past few years have been end of life care and planning, racial diversity in the Fox Valley, child and infant health care and teen suicide in the LGBTQ community. We engage in



interfaith worship on Thanksgiving Eve, ecumenical worship on Good Friday and community celebration on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

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.

Our church's mission statement is a good summary of our activities and commitments as a congregation: "Celebrating the blessing of God's love, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, and trusting the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we strive to grow as disciples in Christian Faith and service — building a world fit for all God's children." Worship is the beating heart of this church and this congregation makes great efforts to keep worship vital, relevant, moving, multi-generational and meaningful. We have an equally vigorous commitment to Christian education and spiritual development, offering a wide array of opportunities from theological book study groups, to Yoga classes, Bible studies, support and fellowship groups, meditation and centering sessions, and retreat weekends. Finally, this congregation is very mission-minded, acting together as a church to support mission efforts that range from local to global, denominational to civic, interfaith to secular. And our mission efforts only begin there. Each of our members look for ways in which they can make a difference in the community. We understand that we are carrying out our call to discipleship through our work and volunteering in the community. We are not Sunday morning Christians but follow our calling throughout the week and throughout our lives.

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?

Our church has been blessed with the resources and commitment to support three pastoral leaders in the congregation. Our three pastors act as true partners in ministry, each honoring the gifts and calling of each other to function as a true pastoral team. Each has primary responsibility and authority within their ministry areas but all three are pastor to the whole congregation, sharing worship responsibilities, weddings, baptisms and funerals and faithfully attending to pastoral needs of members. Each

pastor also is expected to be active in community and wider church ministry as interest and calling lead. We have had long-term stability among the pastoral staff because of their ability to work as a team. They have each shared their gifts and blessings with the whole congregation and therefore have pastoral authority that comes from the whole congregation. Within the staff structure, the Senior Pastor supervises the Pastor of Youth and Family Ministries and the Pastor of Congregational Care and Missions. All three pastors assume supervisory responsibilities for other staff members.

## **MissionInSite**

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

First Congregational United Church of Christ is geographically located in northeastern Wisconsin in the city of Appleton. Our area is often described as "the Fox Cities," a collection of cities and towns along the Fox River from Oshkosh to Green Bay. In September 2016, Money Magazine ranked Appleton as the 24th best place to live in the country, citing its affordable housing, low crime rate, Lawrence University, public schools, a regional performing arts center and family-friendly activities such as a children's museum. Riverfront properties near our church have been developed to include restaurants, apartments and lofts, housing for seniors, Section 8 low income housing, and a business, residential and hotel project.

The MissionInSite Executive Report estimates that the current Fox Cities area population of 283,330 will grow by 4.7%, outpacing the statewide projection of 2.8%. Although the percentage of minority populations in our area grew over 2% between 2006 and 2014, our county is still about 88% White/Non-Hispanic. There is a substantial Hmong population, and growth is occurring in Hispanic-Latino, Middle Eastern, East Asian and Black/African-American populations.

While the majority of the Fox Cities' 25 largest employers are still manufacturers, the reduction in manufacturing jobs in our area mirrors that seen nationally. The area's largest employer is the ThedaCare health and medical system.

Our church has a long history in Appleton dating back to 1850, and some families have been members for generations. Our current church building was built in the 1960s along the Fox River on East South River Street. The immediate neighborhood is primarily residential and mixed income, with a nearby elementary school, public golf course and a walking trail along the river. Adjacent to church property and across the river is Lawrence University, with a broadly diverse population of students, faculty and staff, a number of whom attend our church. Our church music program benefits from the skilled singers and musicians from the Lawrence

Conservatory of Music, and for over 50 years, our church's Lawrence University Scholars program has provided students with stipends to support their educational expenses.

There are many opportunities for ministry in our area. The 2016 Fox Cities LIFE Study ([www.foxcitieslifestudy.org](http://www.foxcitieslifestudy.org)) identifies issues such as poverty (with a steady increase in Wisconsin Works (W-2) program participants and an increase in those receiving food stamps), food uncertainty, a higher than average percentage of suicide attempts and reports of bullying among high school students, limits to public transportation and other areas of concern.

A number of programs and groups affiliated with our church respond to our neighbors in need. In addition to those described previously (see Community Vision, p 37-42), our church members and staff are also active participants with:

- The Prison Ministry Project's Restorative Justice Program, based at First Congregational Church in Madison. Our church members and staff involved with this program serve at the Redgranite Correctional Institution, about 45 miles away.
- Harbor House, a shelter for women dealing with domestic violence, abuse and sexual assault. We are also leaders with Fox Valley Voices of Men ([www.voicesofmen.com](http://www.voicesofmen.com)), whose mission is to engage men in ending violence against women.
- Refugee families who have come to Appleton from the Democratic Republic of Congo and elsewhere; and many others.
- And many others.

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 membership data indicates that we roughly reflect the diversity present in our community, but with somewhat lower representation of minority groups. We are currently a regional church more than a neighborhood church, and members are drawn to our programs, missions and our commitment to being open and affirming. For example, students from approximately eight of our area high schools participate in

our congregation's youth groups and activities, and since there are only three high schools in Appleton, this reflects participation from the surrounding Fox Cities communities. Even so, we have a substantial number of members from nearby neighborhoods in Appleton and Lawrence University. We hold an annual Service Sunday that reaches out to support local residents and nonprofit groups, and we welcome neighborhood residents to free music events where food is served.

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

Our community demographics are slowly evolving to include a greater percentage of minorities. As the Church of the Open Door, we welcome minorities, the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, refugees and others looking for a church home. As the Fox Cities become more diverse, our congregation and ministers are committed to make the changes necessary to welcome members from all groups and identities into our church family.

As part of our ministry that reflects our community's current demographics and needs, our church building is used for ongoing but non-UCC activities such as AA and Al Anon, Aging and Disability Resource Center wellness classes, ESTHER, Scouts, SOAR TnT (a program for teens with and without cognitive disabilities), NAMI, Appleton Boychoir rehearsals and other activities as well.

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

Community leaders tell us that First Congregational has a long tradition of being a "flagship church" with a liberal stance in the Fox Cities. It is seen as part of a network of churches joining together in ecumenical ways that build community. Our members are known for their active involvement in many nonprofit and service organizations, and our music program for children and adults is recognized as outstanding.

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

In a 2016 congregational survey, individuals who have been part of First Congregational for five years or less most often reported that it is the

“open door” of our church that particularly encourages their involvement. They used words like open-mindedness, inclusivity, acceptance of all and diversity to describe what “open door” means to them.

Also frequently mentioned were:

- The beautiful music program;
- A welcoming, warm and friendly community of faith;
- Dynamic and meaningful worship, interesting and thought-provoking sermons and strong pastoral leadership;
- Active mission and service opportunities and commitment to social justice; and
- Family focus and programs for children and youth.

## REFERENCES

Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. 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.

### REFERENCE 1

Rev. Franz Rigert/Conference Minister/WI Conf UCC  
608-846-7880/frigert@wcucc.org /Conference Minister for First  
Congregational

### REFERENCE 2

Rev. Art Wille  
(920-727-1899/ahw-csw@athenet.net/ former Association and  
Associate Conference Minister for First Congregational)

### REFERENCE 3

Mary Parsons/Executive Director/LEAVEN  
920-738-9635/maryparsons@new.rr.com /Mission Partner with  
First Congregational

# **CLOSING THOUGHTS**

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Mark 3:35

Beloved Christ,  
as we complete this task  
of telling the world who we are  
and what we need...

Let us humbly acknowledge  
that you know us better  
than we know ourselves –  
what we are as a church,  
who we need for our new pastor,  
where we are going  
as a church family.

Guide us on our path.

Bless our new pastor,  
our new sister or brother,  
who you are making ready  
to step through our door.

As we find each other  
let us also find you –  
listening and loving  
inspiring and comforting.

Let us welcome each other home.

In Jesus' name, Amen.



## **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?

This profile was prepared by the Search Committee for First Congregational UCC in Appleton, WI in consultation with current and previous church moderators, treasurers, pastors and staff. In addition, more than 200 church members completed a congregational survey. Responses from the survey informed the Scope of Work and answers to a number of profile questions.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

None

Signed: Name / Title / Date:

*Susan Detienne*

Susan Detienne, Chair, Search Committee, 1-10-2017

## VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: *Yes*

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

Staff Comment: *Yes*

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

Staff Comment: *Yes*

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

*Franz Riger*

*Franz Riger, Conference Minister*

*friger@wcucc.org*

*414-704-2625*

*1/23/17*

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