



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF AKRON

Rooted in Christ • Fostering Justice • Celebrating Diversity

First Congregational Church of Akron is seeking an Associate Minister who is eager to join with the Senior Minister, staff, and laity to take this 184-year-old congregation to the next level of ministry and service.

As Associate Minister, you will join a team that believes in working collaboratively and creatively. You will serve full-time, with special emphasis on faith formation for children, youth, and young adults. In addition, you will work with the Senior Minister to provide pastoral care to a faithful congregation, help diversify its membership, lead worship, and strengthen its ministries to neighbors in Akron and beyond.



We are seeking a passionate Christian minister with an entrepreneurial spirit who is willing to take chances in the quest to keep Akron's oldest church at the forefront of ministry and addressing the physical, social, and spiritual needs of the congregation and the wider Akron community.

Inquiries and applications should be directed to search@akronfcc.org



ASSOCIATE MINISTER JOB DESCRIPTION

The Associate Minister shares in ordained ministry at First Church. Provides pastoral leadership for the spiritual development of children, youth, and young adults; and pastoral care visitation and support to the Congregational Care Team to promote the integration of faith, health, and healing among its members and attendees. Reports to the Senior Minister.

Duties and Responsibilities

- 1) Faith Formation:
 - a) Serve as primary staff liaison to the Board of Christian Education.
 - b) Provide leadership in the faith formation of children.
 - i) With the Board of Christian Education, coordinate the congregation's Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and/or similar programming as may evolve.
 - ii) Supervise the Sunday and special event childcare offerings and associated staff.
 - iii) With the Board of Christian Education, coordinate recruitment, training, and support of teachers for Sunday School and other faith formation activities.
 - iv) Serve as point person on Sunday mornings to ensure teachers are present and materials are available. Trouble-shoot any issues that arise, including stepping in to fill vacancies if the need arises.
 - c) Provide leadership in the faith formation of youth.
 - i) With the Board of Christian Education and Senior Minister, develop a strategic, creative, and comprehensive program for youth and oversee the implementation of ministry for and with youth.
 - ii) Prepare and train volunteers needed to achieve youth ministry goals.
 - iii) Provide primary oversight to all volunteer leadership of the congregation's youth groups, and provide resources and support to these leaders as needed.
 - iv) Be available to serve among the leaders of the congregation's youth groups as may be dictated by the overall constellation of youth group leaders at any given time.
 - d) Sharing in leading adult faith formation offerings as time and inclination allow.
 - e) Collaborate with the Senior Minister in planning a Confirmation process. Coordinate this process with the families and be available to share in teaching and leading the program.
 - f) Lead Children's Messages during Sunday worship on a rotating basis with the Senior Minister and lay members.
 - g) With the Board of Christian Education and/or other bodies, coordinate intergenerational activities oriented toward faith formation objectives.
 - h) Partner with the Senior Minister in visioning and coordination of ministries with and among university students, taking particular responsibility for coordination of possible faith formation programming directed toward young adults.
 - i) Keep abreast of current trends, methods, and materials available in shaping First Congregational Church's faith formation curricula.

2) Pastoral Care and Visitation:

- a) Visit homebound, elderly, and hospitalized individuals at the direction and in coordination with the Senior Minister.
- b) Coordinate the visitation and service of Holy Communion to homebound members by the pastoral staff and members of the Congregational Care Team.
- c) Share emergency “on call” responsibilities with the Senior Minister.
- d) Create and maintain a confidential Pastoral Care Report to be shared with the Senior Minister.
- e) Coordinate and lead small group pastoral care opportunities such as bereavement and support groups and educational opportunities as they relate to health, healing, and spirituality, as need and time allow.
- f) Serve as liaison to the Congregational Care Team, providing leadership alongside Senior Minister to encourage and support this lay ministry. Assist the Congregational Care Team in developing an annual budget.

3) Perform other ministerial duties:

- a) Together with Senior Minister, ensure pastoral support for all boards, committees, and ministry teams, including attending meetings.
- b) Lead worship as scheduled by the Senior Minister including, as circumstances warrant, weddings, baptisms, and memorial services and in the Senior Minister’s absence
- c) Participate in weekly meetings with the Senior Minister as well as all staff meetings.

4) Other duties as assigned.



Qualifications and Requirements

- 1) Is a person of strong and evident Christian faith.
- 2) Has relevant work experience in a church or educational setting, including demonstrated ability to communicate clearly, listen effectively, work with and motivate volunteers while creating an atmosphere of cooperation and community. Has relevant work experience in pastoral care, visitation, and small group facilitation.
- 3) Strong interpersonal communication skills with empathy to meet people where they are as they encounter significant life events.
- 4) The ability to protect the reputation and integrity of others through strict confidentiality. Refraining from indiscriminate sharing of personal information is essential.
- 5) Strong passion, innovative spirit, visionary, energetic, and creative, with a desire to serve. Entrepreneurial – thrives in a creative, outside the box environment; is not afraid to learn from failure, adapt to new models, and has successfully taken a vision from design to implementation.
- 6) Possesses standing as an ordained minister / ordained pending call in the United Church of Christ or an equivalent denomination.
- 7) Possesses a Master of Divinity degree from a seminary accredited by the Association of Theological Schools or equivalent training.
- 8) Abides by the Ordained Minister’s Code of the United Church of Christ or an equivalent denomination.
- 9) Relevant pastoral and/or non-profit experience, including demonstrated ability to communicate clearly, listen effectively, work with and motivate volunteers while creating an atmosphere of cooperation and community.
- 10) Effective administration skills and working knowledge of Microsoft Office Professional. Adept in the use of social media tools.
- 11) Able to work effectively with diverse cultures and ethnicities, all levels of socioeconomic status, gender identities, and sexual orientation.



ABOUT AKRON AND FIRST CHURCH

First Congregational Church of Akron (First Church) is situated in the heart of Akron, Ohio. Located 30 miles south of Cleveland, Akron is a historic industrial city that was once the rubber and tire capital of the world but is now an eco-rich region featuring the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Ohio & Erie Canalways. Akron has reinvented itself into a center for polymer research and biomedical devices. Over the past 15 years, the city has been rebuilding its aging 22 school buildings with assistance from a state bond program and an income tax voters approved for that purpose. The church is located between the University of Akron and the Stark State Community College's Akron Campus and is within easy driving distance of more than 30 institutions of higher education, including two medical schools. Akron boasts an array of locally-owned restaurants from the vegan Ms. Julie's Kitchen to Blu Jazz Restaurant and Bar, lively arts and entertainment offerings from the Akron Civic Theatre to the outdoor Lock 3 concert venue, as well as close proximity to world-renowned Cleveland Art Museum and the Cleveland Orchestra. Akron's population is about 198,000. Our church community draws from the city and from the many suburbs in the Greater Akron area.

Through a congregation-wide discernment process in 2014, the members developed and affirmed the following core values:

- **Acceptance:** First Church seeks to be a safe place where all are welcomed regardless of human or social distinction. Having been accepted as we are, we are open to others.
- **Spirituality:** First Church seeks greater understanding and connection, individually and collectively, with God and with one another.
- **Community:** First Church seeks to unite individuals and families into a network of fellowship and compassion within the congregation and beyond.

Those core values revealed these bedrock beliefs:

- **God is love:** We believe that God extends unconditional acceptance, forgiveness, concern, and care to all.
- **Mission:** We believe God is the cause and mission is the effect. We receive God's love and extend that love to others, in word and deed, within and beyond the congregation.
- **Spiritual Growth:** We believe that faith is not static but dynamic. We seek, through prayer, study, worship, service, and life experience to deepen and broaden our individual and collective understandings of, and reliance upon, God.
- **Worship:** We believe that through worship, whether personal devotional time or within the gathered community, we connect with God. The acts of worship bring us comfort, challenge, and courage to discover, nurture, and live out our individual and corporate spirituality.

In 2016, the congregation voted to become Open and Affirming, formalizing our identity as a welcoming community. Our current ministries as well as our history are a source of pride among members of the congregation and wider community. We host annual community events such as Breakfast with the Bunny and Santa, and numerous community groups throughout the course of each program year.

Our weekly Food Pantry provides for those who are experiencing food insecurity and is augmented by our Feed My Sheep garden which promotes a micro-business project with gardeners from a neighboring women's shelter, Harvest Home.

We have an ongoing and close relationship with the elementary school in our neighborhood, Mason Community Learning Center, which has existed for more than 10 years. We provide tutoring, incentives for good grades and attendance and, at the holidays we adopt families and provide the children with coats, hats, gloves, and toys.

First Church has an even older relationship with an indigenous village in Ecuador, Agualongo, which began in the early '80s. Agualongo's children benefit from First Church scholarships to high school, college, and even medical school. These graduates then return to provide Agualongo with services it would otherwise do without.

We have had Stephen Ministry at First Church since 2008. It has been a transformative experience for the members who have completed the 20-week training. They have committed to walking with a care receiver who is experiencing a significant life challenge. The experiences have been very rewarding both to the many care-receivers and the caregivers.

Through our Prayer Blanket Ministry, we provide warm blankets to patients undergoing cancer treatment, children experiencing illness or trauma, or anyone who might find comfort in a blanket imbued with the prayers of our members.

We have a vibrant music program for all ages that includes appreciation of various musical styles and types of instruments. There are several small groups that enable members to interact socially, creating strong bonds. Our weekly adult faith formation program is robust, creating opportunities for exploration and spiritual growth across the lifespan.

Two Sunday services allow for different expressions of praise and worship. Our church is open to groups in the community for meetings, conferences, meals, and classes, making First Church an asset to the near-downtown area.



ABOUT OUR SENIOR MINISTER



The Rev. Nanette Pitt began her ministry with First Church in September 2015. A native of South Africa, she has skillfully woven her grounding in theater and theology into a ministry of presence and passion for social justice and congregational care.

She is a graduate of Andover Newton Theological School (Newton, MA) and brings a wealth of experience in innovative church leadership, emergent worship, and urban ministry.

Nanette is guiding our congregation into a new season of bold ministry and mission in Akron and the world beyond.

We are excited about all that God is doing here at First Church and are looking forward to welcoming our new Associate Minister. As we anticipate this match, please know that we are praying for you and for our mutual discernment. We thank you for your interest in this position.

