

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE**

**Emmanuel Congregational Church UCC
Watertown, NY**

Settled Pastor

Black River/St Lawrence Association

3/31/2020

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*“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)*

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: **Emmanuel Congregational Church UCC**
Street Address: 119 S Hamilton St
Watertown, NY 13601

Contact Person: Mary Hampton-Cole
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Web link: <https://www.emmanuelchurchucc.org/>

Conference: New York State

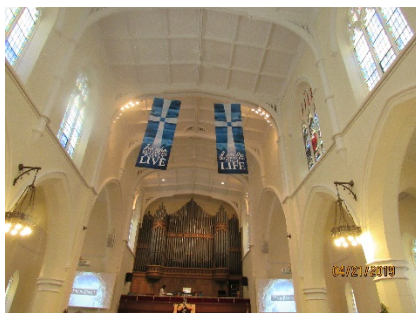
Association: Black River/St. Lawrence Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person: Rev Ryan W Henderson

Summary Ministry Description: In the last year, Emmanuel Church UCC has begun to reach out to the neighborhood and community in an attempt to get to know them, determine their needs and how we can help fulfill those needs.

We need an innovative and creative Pastor to help us reach out to draw in more families, become more racially diverse, and develop programs to deal with social justice issues, such as poverty, mental health, inequalities and discrimination.

Photographs of the church



What we value about living in this area: We value the close-knit feeling of a small city and the positive social and economic impact of the Fort Drum Army installation.

We also value our close proximity to Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, the Adirondack Mountains, , the Thousand Islands Region, Canada and nature in general with many small lakes and rivers nearby yet also close to three major cities (Syracuse, Ottawa and Montreal).

<http://www.visitnewyorkstate.net/regions/>

<http://www.211cny.com/>

In addition, we value being able to experience the change of seasons.

Current size of membership: 123

Current worship attendance: 65-70

Languages used in ministry (other than English): ASL available, as needed

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration: Settled

Compensation Level: Full time

Does the Support Package support conference guidelines? Yes

SCOPE OF WORK:

Sunday Worship: Prepare and lead Sunday worship; prepare and study readings for preaching (lectionary based at pastor's discretion); provide songs/hymns selections, readings and themes for worship to Worship Team in advance to allow them time to prepare accordingly; offer/prepare prayers for service.

Faith Formation and Vitality: Utilize biblical and theological resources; prepare a program in spring and fall to enhance Christ-centered and spiritual nourishment for lay members of congregation, energizing and deepening spiritual connections and faith understanding.

Leadership Development: Help identify talents and strengths of members of the congregation to encourage ministry, volunteerism and new initiatives.

Community Engagement: Continue to enable interactions begun to engage the neighborhood to assist in growing the congregation spiritually as well as financially. Become involved ecumenically with other denominations and be available for people to whom faith is important (e.g. funerals, weddings, special worship collaborations) and as a representative of the church to local organizations. Develop programs to deal with social justice issues, such as poverty, mental health, inequalities and discrimination.

Pastoral Leadership: Attend church meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs in collaboration with lay leadership.

Supervision of staff: Supervision of the day to day operations of the church, including the Office Administrator; assist with decisions made which impact various groups of the church – Trustees, Deacons, Worship Team and Stewardship Team.

Pastoral Care: Availability to actively listen, pray with and advise in spiritual matters when individuals seek assistance; in areas where concerns are beyond a spiritual/faith scope, refer to professional counselors; visit the sick and homebound.

UCC Identity: Participate in semi-annual association meetings, annual conference meetings; allowing us to more fully embrace the ONA stance of Emmanuel, helping to create a just world for all; encourage 5 for 5 giving through mission budget.

Personal/Professional Growth: Study and prayer to increase faith and improve skills to lead, teach and preach; complete required ongoing study, instruction as required by Association Church & Ministry Committee; utilize the *Marks of Ministry for Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministers*.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis: Salary is based on UCC guidelines

Benefits: Salary plus Benefits

Expected Living Situation: living nearby with a housing allowance

Peer and Professional support:

- Church & Ministry Committee, which provides vocational support, consultations once every 3 years and is also available at any other time to provide encouragement, support, and assistance, both professionally and spiritually
- Communities of Practice through the Conference

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Our new pastor will keep encouraging us with spiritual truths to continue the path we feel God is calling us to travel.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our neighbors are and who God is calling us to become, we wish to move forward in unconditional love. The four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministers* that our next minister will display to further equip our congregation's ministry are:

- Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice
- Nurturing UCC Identity
- Building Transformational Leadership Skills
- Working Together for Justice and Mercy

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

God is calling us to become an active participant in our community, to attract new members as we share the love of God. These are some ways we are, and are dreaming of, accomplishing this!

In the past year, Emmanuel has begun reaching out to the community surrounding our church – our neighborhood. We have held two “dollar dinners” in conjunction with the Watertown Urban Mission, a Summer Church Camp for neighborhood children, a yard sale in the parking lot, which was free of charge to anyone who wanted to set up a table and sell their belongings, and a Trunk or Treat. Each activity has shown a growth in attendance from the neighborhood residents. We have an ongoing ministry with our Community Garden on the church grounds, where church members and friends grow fresh vegetables and deliver them to the Watertown Urban Mission food pantry. Several hundred pounds of produce have been donated over the years. We would like to continue this outreach to our local and city-wide community. Other initiatives to engage our neighborhood residents in the past year include the building of a new blessing box, where people can pick up or drop off dry or canned goods as needed in front of the church, as well as a prayer request box for people to drop in prayer needs to be included in Sunday worship and on our prayer chain. In order to reach people in our community, they need to know that we exist, know who we are, and know that we care.

This feeds into another desire to increase the number of individuals and families who attend our church and participate in ministry opportunities to and with these families. Growing numbers so the church will continue in the years ahead, while important, is secondary to spreading the Gospel of Jesus to those

who do not have a church home. We also desire to expand our Sunday School and enrich it with teachers who have been trained for quality Christian Formation.

There is also an interest within the congregation to learn more about the UCC initiatives on a denominational level and the possibility of future participation.

We would like to enter into an ecumenical/interfaith project with city churches/houses of worship to provide services in the form of a Neighborhood Community Center. Examples of how this could be utilized include: providing a place for senior gatherings, space for student study and healthy activities, an area for homeless (possibly Veterans) to sleep and eat breakfast, a social drop-in center, and informal peer-based counseling.

In conclusion, we desire to bring the Word and love of Jesus Christ to others through outreach to our neighborhood and city, as well as wider ministries through the UCC.

WHO ARE WE NOW?

Our Open and Affirming Statement:

“We are a Christian congregation that embraces our oneness in Christ in all our human diversity, expressing Christ’s spirit, openness, welcome, equality and unconditional love to all, without limit, regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, social class, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, political persuasion, theological position, physical or mental capacity or immigration status. This means we join hundreds of other United Church of Christ congregations across the country as a multi-racial, multi-cultural, open and affirming church.”

Membership vows:

L: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God. Do you believe in God?

P: I believe in God.

L: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

P: I believe in Jesus Christ.

L: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

P: I believe in the Holy Spirit.

L: By your baptism you were made one with us in the body of Christ, the church. Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place. We give thanks for every community of faith that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith.

Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God’s people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

New Members: I promise, with the help of God.

L: Let us, the members of Emmanuel Congregational Church, express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

P: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

How is God most often described in worship liturgy?

- God is most often described as a loving, welcoming, embracing, gender inclusive/neutral and forgiving God.

In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?

- The Holy Spirit exists through the loving, openness of our congregation to all those who enter our doors.

The strengths or positive qualities of our congregation include:

- Welcoming
- Accepting
- Loving
- Credo women (a group of 8-10 women in long-term drug and alcohol residential treatment who participate in current missions and spiritual programs of the church)
- Open & Affirming
- Mission oriented
- Shared leadership

When our congregation gathers to worship, it feels like home, where we, as a family, come to fill our cups each week in a peaceful and engaging environment.

What was a recent baptism like?

- Mother and child were baptized together in a moving ceremony where the children of the church helped bless the water

Words to describe good preaching:

- Challenging
- Spiritual
- Inspiring
- Engaging
- Children's message

Our educational and faith formation include adult bible study, Sunday School, mission/service work, youth provide nursery care assistance and Children's Sunday where children participate in reading scripture, providing music, and assisting with the weekly offering.

People continue to form faith over a lifetime through the following programs:

- Adult bible study
- Serendipity
- Alpha program
- Christianity Breakfast Group
- Periodic worship dramas, including The Trial of Judas Iscariot during Lent

The **Serendipity** group is currently working with a "Jesus Calling Bible Study" about living with God's courage. This study is to help each of us discover how to meet each day's challenges with the help of the Holy Spirit to strengthen us. We have questions to ponder and much discussion and sharing follows.

The **Alpha Program** is an evangelistic course which seeks to introduce the basics of the Christian faith through a series of talks and discussions. It is described by its organizers as “an opportunity to explore the meaning of life. One member said she found it a great opportunity to discover more about herself and her faith. Participants were able to share with each other their experiences and the foundations of their beliefs.

The **Christianity Breakfast Group** is a group that meets twice a month at 6:30 am to read and discuss various books on how to deal with the day-to-day challenges and problems in our workplaces and our world in a Christ-like manner while sharing breakfast together.

Our Mission Statement:

We seek to help people experience the unconditional love of God and become enthusiastic disciples of Christ. To fulfill this mission, we will actively:

- Help those within the church to nurture and deepen their faith.
- Help those beyond the church to discover the good news of Jesus.
- Build caring, prayerful Christian Community in which diversity is respected and the unconditional love of Jesus is expressed to all.
- Equip all members to discover their God-given gifts and carry out their unique ministries in home, school, workplace and community.
- Build a spiritual, biblical foundation in children, youth and adults that will sustain them throughout their lives.
- Care for the broken places and people of our world with the joy and compassion of Christ.

Ministry & Missions

Decisions are generally communicated through announcements, word of mouth and/or via weekly email bulletins.

Teams or committees are formed by the church by-laws or by need (i.e. Nominating Committee nominates people for various committees and the nominees are voted on by church members at the annual meeting.) We have Universal Board night once a month where committees come together to meet for 30 minutes to communicate what each committee is working on and then break for the individual committee meetings. Approximately 10-15 hours per month are spent in meetings, with each committee meeting lasting approximately 2 hours.

When a crisis or disaster occurs, our congregation mobilizes or rallies people who know how to handle the issue at hand. For example, when our church basement flooded, the Trustees were notified and called other church members and professionals to clean up. Another example is recently a member of our congregation had surgery and church members provided assistance renovating a room at her home to provide a safe, healthy environment for her recovery.

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Number of active members:	123	Yes
Number of active non-members:	29	Yes

total of church participants (sum of numbers above):	152	Yes
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Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
More than 10 years:	64%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	17%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	19%	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>Is this number an estimate?</i>
11	8	10	18	19	17	30	19	20	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Single adults under 35:	8%	Yes
Joint household with minors:	19%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	28%	Yes
Joint household with no minors:	27%	Yes
Single adults over 65:	18%	Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
High school:	65%	Yes
College:	15%	Yes
Graduate School:	10%	Yes
Specialty Training:	5%	Yes
Other (please specify): Developmentally disabled	5%	Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Adults who are employed:	64%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	15%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	21%	Yes

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

- We have laborers to professionals and everything in between.

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

- 99% white, 1% mixed

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future?

- Ongoing discussion (refer to ONA statement)

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Ways of Gathering:	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings?
Adult Groups or Classes	30	Members w/guidance of pastor
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	3	Pastor w/family
Children's Groups or Classes	20	Sunday School teachers w/Christian Education Team
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	200	Pastor w/Worship Team
Church-wide Meals	70	Deacons/volunteers
Choirs and Music Groups	7-20	Worship Team
Church-based Bible Study	15	Members w/guidance of pastor
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	65-70	Monthly / pastor
Community Meals	70-100	Volunteers
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	7-10	Drama Director w/pastor
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	8	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	15-20	Varies
Outdoor Worship	80	Pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups	1-5	Self-guided/individual
Public Advocacy Work	0	
Retreats	15	Pastor
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	1	Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:45-12:00)	65-70	Pastor / Worship Team
Young Adult Groups or Classes	5	Rejoice Group Leader(s)
Youth Groups or Classes	5	Youth Leader

Members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers.

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
David Van Epps	No	BRS� Association	Supply preacher, Church & Ministries liaison	Y
Jane Wagner	No	BRS� Association	Interim Pastor	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:

- Rev. David Van Epps was ordained at Emmanuel 50+ years ago and serves as a supply preacher when needed.

Current staff:

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Admin Assistant	No	\$17,170	Pastor	3 years
Nursery Director	No	\$3,800	Church Review Team	2 months
Choir Director	No	\$7,500	Church Review Team	6 years
Organist	No	\$8,000	Church Review Team	<1 year
Tech Coordinator	No	\$5,000	Worship Team	4 years

CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (from 2019):

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$161,286
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy)	\$25,463
Endowment Draw (beyond what is permitted by spending policy)	\$4,412
Fundraising Events	\$3,019
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose (Missions)	\$22,114
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$400
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations	\$0

Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Total	\$216,694

Current annual expenses (from 2019 budget attached): \$216,694

<https://www.emmanuelchurchucc.org/emmanuel-congregational-church-2019-annual-report-1>

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 40%

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

Is your church a 5-for-5? Yes

- ✓ 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? 10% of Mission budget

What is the church's current indebtedness? \$0

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.

- Spring of 2020 Verizon will install a cell tower attached to the steeple, generating an annual income of \$21,000, guaranteed for 20 years with increases every 5 years
- Continued maintenance of a 114-year-old building

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2010-2011	Church pointing	\$60,000	Fully funded	Pointing was done to protect the church
2019	Hand bells for a New Bell Choir	\$6,700	Fully funded	25 Bells were purchased in memory or honor of loved ones

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

- The hand bells were played for the first time during our 2019 Christmas Eve Service and the inscription on each bell (the names of those in memory/honor of and the donor's name) were read aloud prior to the bells being played. These hand bells have enhanced our worship service.

Does your church have an endowment? Yes, we have two

What is the market value of the assets? \$247,109 and \$309,422 as of 12/31/2019

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

- A percentage from each endowment's interest is drawn as part of the annual budgeted amounts and as needed for cash flow during the year and at year end, if necessary to balance the books.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year compared to 5 years ago)?

- 1%-3% of fund balances

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

- Nothing in 2018, less than 1% of fund balances for 2019. Higher and lower for previous 3 years before 2018 at maximum 3% of fund balances to balance the year's expenses.

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

- Based on the percentage allocated to annual budget expenses, we envision the endowments will support the church for many decades to come.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

- We have managed the funds to use toward current and mission budgets and some capital projects over the last few decades with annual dividends and fund management to regularly stay above the principle donations. We have an account called the Pooled Income account that carries year to year balances of funds collected from memorials, donated to mission projects, youth group fundraisers, choir fundraisers and Sunday school fundraisers over the last few years. These funds support the listed entities for special projects or expenses outside of the regular current expense church budget. The balance ranges between \$12,000 to \$15,000 and is like a savings account but managed for various groups to use as reported at each annual meeting or upon request.

Other Assets: None

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

- Stone Sanctuary (114 years old) with an Educational Wing (60 years old)

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

- Sanctuary (*except chancel*)
- Fellowship space
- Educational wing

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

- Endowments remain strong and healthy, managed by a committee comprised of church members whose business is finance
- Major decrease in the budgeted expenses due to going from 1½ pastors to one pastor

- Budgeting process is generally done by the Treasurer and other financial experts and voted on at the church's Annual Meeting

New initiatives financed by our church to enhance the worship experience:

- Installed a new audio/visual system
- Painting of sanctuary
- New carpeting in sanctuary
- New flooring in Anderson Hall

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Describe one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that has shaped the identity of your congregation:

- Joining the UCC
- Becoming open and affirming

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

- The loss of our pastors after 28½ years

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

- Our values and practices when it comes to conflict include prayer, listening, discussion, more prayer, thought and time. We attempt to resolve the conflict between the parties involved and, if more intervention is necessary, involve the pastor, then to the Church Review Team, when necessary, involve the entire congregation and if it still cannot be resolved, go to the Church & Ministry Committee.

Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well.

- Some members of the congregation are interested in our church becoming more active with social justice and possibly becoming a Sanctuary Church, but some members are strongly opposed to the idea. We are currently holding on-going discussions regarding what social justice means in order to educate those who do not understand all that it entails so that a faithfully determined outcome can be reached.

Ministerial History:

Staff member's name	Years of Service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Ronald Farr	28 1/2	Y
Patricia Farr	28 1/2	Y
Gerald Loche	9	Y

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

- We have been empowered to become lay leaders through our relationship with the most recent pastors.

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

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 – it was going to happen, but he chose to resign.

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

COMMUNITY VISION

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

- The members of our congregation build relationships through Sunday worship, Sunday coffee hour, Stone Soup luncheons, Parables course, Circle 4, Serendipity, Christianity Breakfast Group, Upper Room devotionals, Alpha Program, working in the community garden and other ministries, prayers for each other during worship and through the prayer chain, and annually decorating a float for the local Christmas Parade.
- We have recently begun to reach out to the neighborhood with activities such as:
 - Trunk or Treat
 - Dollar Dinners
 - Yard sale space in our parking lot at no charge
 - Summer Vacation Bible School
- Our outreach to the greater community includes:
 - Community Garden (all vegetables grown are donated to local food pantry)
 - Mitten tree (mittens and hats are collected and distributed to local schools for children)
 - Heifer Project
 - School and hygiene kits
 - Sponsoring Haiti Children
 - India mission trip
 - A Blessing Box and Prayer Box in front of the church

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

- We have members on the BRSL Association Board
- We have members who attend the NYS Women's Conference
- We have members on the Church & Ministries Committee
- We send representatives to the State Annual Meeting
- We have members who attend Immigration programs

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 congregations. The following statements apply to our church:

- ✓ Accessible to All (A2A)
- ✓ God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- ✓ Open and Affirming (ONA)
- ✓ Church World Services

Describe your congregation's participating in ecumenical and interfaith activities.

- Stations of the Cross Walk on Good Friday
- Hosted another local church's Bell Choir
- Interim Pastor attends monthly Women Pastor's gatherings
- Hosted another church's Mystery Players performance of "The Way of the Cross"

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?

- The majority of our mission statement is fulfilled through our gathering together, however, we are striving to increase our outreach to the community.

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?

- There should be a balance of time spent between community ministry and the wider church. Our congregation would benefit from more education about the denomination in general.

MISSION INSITE

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

Based on the concerns in the InSite reports, we see an opportunity to offer:

- Financial Peace University to help alleviate financial stress
- Weight Loss Program to assist those concerned with weight/health issues
- Time Management course to help people better manage their time
- Trainings on other topics that can be pertinent to our lives today

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?

- The neighborhood seems to be more racially and ethnically diverse than our congregation.
- The income of our church members appears to be significantly higher than that of our neighborhood as well as the education level.
- With the stress on time/family life, many of the of those who participate in our church's ministry activities have no children and/or are retired people who have more time to devote to these activities.
- Also, a high number of members of our community are short term as we are near a military installation.

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

- We recognize the demographic differences between our members and our neighbors and because of that we have begun new initiatives (mentioned previously) to try and draw our neighbors into the church.

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

- We are ONA
- They are familiar with our annual Lasagna Dinner

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

- The most common response from new people is that they feel so welcomed at our church, that they feel something special here when they come in. They are greeted warmly and invited to continue to attend.

REFERENCES

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315-782-8440

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Samaritan Medical Center
830 Washington St
Watertown, NY 13601
315-786-4948
(see letter attached)



Department of Pastoral Care

January 28, 2020

Mary Hampton-Cole
Chairperson, Emmanuel Search Team
Emmanuel Congregational United Church of Christ
119 S. Hamilton Street
Watertown, New York 13601

Dear Mary,

I am writing in response to your recent request for a "letter of reference" for Emmanuel. While I am pleased to have been asked I feel it is important for me to begin by acknowledging that I have had no real direct or ongoing contact with Emmanuel in the past two years. The volunteer and employee with whom I had regular contact and who were members are no longer in touch and, aside from the occasional parishioner who comes to the hospital for services, I know little about the current status of the church or its programs. I will, however, attempt to respond from my experience in the past.

For the benefit of the persons who may be reading this document, I am the Director of Pastoral Care at Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown, New York. We are the second largest employer in Jefferson County, apart from Fort Drum, which is a military installation housing the Tenth Mountain Division of the US Army. We employ about 2500 employees among an acute care hospital, two long term care facilities, and an array of outpatient services. My relationship with Emmanuel, apart from the contacts I may have from time to time with members of the congregation, is largely from the perspective of having been asked to provide fairly regular pulpit supply which ended about two years ago with the retirement of their previous pastors.

830 Washington Street • Watertown, NY 13601
tel: 315-785-4000 • www.samaritanhealth.com

In response to the request for my perspective, I have been asked to address four areas: strengths, areas for improvement, a significant experience I have had of this church's ministry, and "anything else" I might wish to share.

First, I would describe what is to me the greatest strength of the church's ministry and that would be its inclusiveness. There is represented among this congregation a spectrum of persons who are able to worship there and participate as leaders in this church without discrimination. Members of the L,G,B,T, Q Community are well integrated into the church's programs and ministry. They are also able to serve persons challenged by and in recovery from chemical dependency and those with behavioral health issues as well. Another of this church's strengths has been its music ministry. Again, there has been a diversity of musical talent that has graced the worship experience over the years which is always welcome and refreshing. In addition, they have created a strong audio visual system into their sanctuary which greatly facilitates communication in its large and vaulted sanctuary.

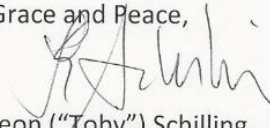
One of the challenges that I observed during my experience in this church is one that is relatively common and that is the dwindling number of children and youth who attend and participate in the programs of the church. The largest portion of the congregation who worshiped at Emmanuel when I was preaching there was middle aged or older and I saw few children attending and participating in religious education services.

What comes immediately to mind when I think of a significant experience I have had of this church's ministry was at a time when I was recovering from surgery myself. I had recently been discharged from the hospital and a member of the congregation stopped by to deliver a "prayer shall". At the time I was deeply touched by their compassion and concern for my recovery. I was neither staff in the traditional sense of that word, nor a parishioner, but we had developed a special relationship which was graciously acknowledged in this act of kindness. That prayer shall is still draped over the arm of "my chair" in our home and each time I sit there I am reminded of that experience and what it has meant to me.

I understand that the congregation at Emmanuel is now searching for a "settled pastor". It is my sense that whoever that may be will find a welcome home and the love and support of persons who gather to, worship, learn, and work together in ministry.

If there are further questions or concerns with which I may be of assistance, please feel free to contact me. My phone is 315-786-4948 and my email is tschilling@shsny.com.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Toby Schilling', written over the printed name.

Rev. Leon ("Toby") Schilling