


# INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Who is  
God  
calling us  
to become

?

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

Rachel Hackenberg

**UNITED CHURCH**  
OF CHRIST



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

**Plymouth Church United Church of Christ  
Shaker Heights, Ohio**

**Senior Minister**

**Heartland Conference, Living Water Association**

[Validation Date April 30, 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)*

# 1. POSITION POSTING

a. LISTING INFORMATION

b. SCOPE OF WORK

c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

## 1 a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Plymouth Church, United Church of Christ

Street address: 2860 Coventry Road, Shaker Heights, OH 44120

Supplemental web links: [www.plymouthchurchucc.org](http://www.plymouthchurchucc.org)

Conference: Heartland Conference

Association: Living Water Association

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

Nayiri Karjian, General Minister

Living Water Association, ONE (Ohio NorthEast)

Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ

960 Portage Trail, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221

Office: 330.940.2220 x 102

Mobile: 203.722.9174

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

### **Summary Ministry Description:**

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

Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights seeks to call a senior minister who is a gifted preacher who brings to our weekly worship a gospel-centered, biblically informed message that applies to our lives today. We seek a strong and effective leader who can work collaboratively, recognizing and nurturing the gifts of our existing staff and lay leadership. We hope to call a strategic and innovative thinker who can lead our diverse congregation in ways that encourage us to grow in our faith and find new ways to reach out to our community in service.

### **Photographs:**

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







**What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences):**

Shaker Heights is known for its history of great public and private schools, racial and ethnic diversity, and beautiful green spaces. The greater Cleveland area offers world class cultural institutions, an extensive and well-maintained Metroparks system, a vibrant professional sports scene, and internationally recognized healthcare.

**Current size of membership:** 414

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

Predominantly English; we sometimes have special services, such as World Communion Sunday, where the prayers and other portions are spoken in other languages.

**Position Title:** Senior Minister

**Position Duration:**

Settled – a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves [his/her/their] church membership to the congregation and moves [his/her/their] standing to [the] related association.

**Compensation Level:** Full Time

**Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?** Yes

**1b. SCOPE OF WORK**

***Plymouth Church Shaker Heights Position Description***

**Title:** Senior Minister

**Hours:** Full time

**Supervisor:** Plymouth Church Council

**Purpose:** Responsible for the leadership and development of the ministry of the church, preaching and teaching the Word, providing pastoral care, managing all staff/paid employees of the congregation and overseeing administrative functions.

**Roles and Responsibilities:****1. Worship**

- a. Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship, utilizing the gifts of the Associate Minister and staff, including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, finding and guiding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with music staff, Minister of Music and the Arts, preaching, offering of prayers, and working with the Worship Department to create and design worship.
- b. Celebrate the sacraments according to the tradition of the United Church of Christ.
- c. Officiate at weddings, funerals, memorial services and other services as needed

**2. Pastoral Care**

- a. Provide pastoral care and visits to those who are hospitalized, recovering, or homebound, in collaboration with Associate Minister and lay members.
- b. Provide counseling, especially during wedding planning, and times of grief and loss, as requested.

- c. Welcome guests, visit potential members, and, in collaboration with lay leaders, conduct new member/inquirer classes.

### **3. Education and Faith Formation**

- a. Be a resource for faith development opportunities through prayer, service, leading Bible study and/or book studies, and other opportunities for spiritual development.

### **4. Mission**

- a. Revising church constitution/bylaws and church policies, if not revised prior to arrival, in order to facilitate efficient, mission aligned church governance.
- b. Reach out the wider Shaker Heights, and Cleveland community as a representative of the church as we seek to develop partnerships with other organizations and communities.
- c. In collaboration with lay leaders and volunteers, educate and engage the congregation in mission outside the doors of the church building.

### **5. Administration**

- a. As the head administrator, supervise all church staff, and with assistance from the Personnel Committee, guide personnel/staff relations, providing annual evaluations and reviews.
- b. Conduct staff meetings, preferably weekly, to coordinate congregational life and the ministries of the church and provide support to staff members.
- c. Attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership – in particular Church Council, Building & Grounds, Finance Committee and the Worship Department.
- d. Educating lay leaders in their roles of governance and ministry.
- e. Represent the congregation in the larger community of Shaker Heights, Cleveland, in the UCC and beyond.

### **Knowledge and Skills Required:**

1. Excellent at preaching, communicating, administrating and connecting with people.
2. Experienced at collaboration; prior work in a church large enough to require staff is a plus.
3. Attentive to his/her own personal health and spiritual development.

### **Education**

Master of Divinity from an accredited Seminary, preferably UCC.

### **Core Competencies:**

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

- Superior Preaching
- Excellent Leadership Skills
- Commitment to living out the Gospel through service

### **1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT**

**Plymouth Church Provides a generous compensation package which well exceeds conference guidelines. Salary is negotiable based on experience. Other benefits include:**

- - Social Security Offset
- - The Sr. Minister can designate a portion of the base pay as “housing Allowance” (no parsonage)
- - Professional Development Fund
- - Health Insurance (with optional dental/optical)
- - Retirement - UCC Pension contribution of 14%
- - UCC Life and Disability Insurance
- - Parental Leave
- - Sabbatical Leave after 5 years
- - Flex-spending pre-tax option for medical and dependent care
- - Vacation (5 weeks), Paid time off, education/study leave (2 weeks)
- - 12.5 paid holidays

**Benefits (*choose one*):**

Salary plus Benefits

**What is the expected living situation for your next minister?**

We expect the Senior Minister to live close enough to participate fully in the life of the church.

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



The Living Water Association offers Communities of Practice as well as support groups for ministers.

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

The members of Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights through reflection, conversation, and prayer believe that our next senior minister will be a gifted preacher who is able to bring to our weekly worship a gospel-centered, biblically informed message that applies to our lives today. Our next senior minister will share our conviction that the Bible is to be taken seriously, but not literally. We seek sermons that inspire and challenge us to live out more fully the teachings of Jesus in our community and the world. We are also looking for a strong and effective leader who can work collaboratively, recognizing and nurturing the gifts of our existing staff and lay leadership. We seek a senior minister who can contribute to the spiritual growth of the members of our congregation through visitation and other forms of personal engagement. We hope to call a minister who is committed to and enthusiastic about expanding our congregation's service outreach to the surrounding neighborhoods where income and educational disparities have created communities in need of help. Finally, we expect our next senior minister to coordinate and participate in ministering to a multi-generational congregation that includes single people, young families, children and youth, retired folks, and those who are homebound or have limited mobility.

We would like to continue to attract new members. Excellent preaching anchors a meaningful worship experience, which in turn nurtures our existing congregation and causes visitors to return and ultimately decide to join.

We are blessed and believe that our next senior minister will be blessed with a high-functioning, talented, ministerial staff that is already reaching out to the Cleveland community through music, visitation, food assistance programs and the like. We want our next senior minister to lead this team in a way that allows for the full expression of their gifts.

Plymouth Church literally stands at a crossroad between Shaker Heights and the City of Cleveland. We recognize that God is calling us to build relationships with people who live in the economically stressed parts of Cleveland and to collaborate with those communities to seek the common good. The right minister will be able to provide leadership that faithfully directs the considerable resources of this congregation – time, money, and talents – to impactful service opportunities and community-building ventures.

Plymouth Church welcomes diverse relationships and families while embracing culturally relevant and sensitive communication. We value inclusive theological language while working with ongoing growth and change. We make an effort to value the implementation and support of inclusion.

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

1. Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
2. Bringing to life sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation and witness.
3. Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament.
4. (tie). Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression.
4. (tie). Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.

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

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

When we think about who God is calling us to become, we do not imagine a radical shift from who we are now. Instead, we want to build on our strengths and challenge ourselves to live out more fully the calling to be a community of faith rooted in the gospel call to love God, love our neighbors, and to pursue justice and mercy for all of creation.

We celebrate the diversity within our church community that includes people of different denominational backgrounds, economic means, races and ethnicities, gender and sexual identities, political viewpoints, and educational levels. This diversity reflects the evolution of Plymouth from a church perceived as the spiritual home of Cleveland's elite, to a church extending a broad welcome to all. We feel called to sustain the health of this diverse body of

Christ while embracing newcomers who would add to the diversity of our congregation. We have just celebrated 15 years as an open and affirming congregation. We are proud of this achievement and continue to look for additional opportunities to build bridges within our church and community, and to provide a supportive, welcoming, and safe congregational home to all people.

We are called to provide a spiritual Christian home for people of diverse theological beliefs. As a thoughtful and reflective congregation, we want to be challenged both spiritually and intellectually. We desire thoughtful, probing, theologically challenging sermons that are not only moving, but motivate us to grow as Christians.

We have a vibrant children and youth program led by a well-loved and energetic Associate Minister and a talented Director of Christian Education. Throughout the many youth group outings and Mitchell's Ice Cream trips, the youth of Plymouth are included and active in the church community. Moving forward, we feel called to bring our children and youth even more fully into our worship services, religious education, and service opportunities. We want to grow by engaging young families. We want to foster more intergenerational activities so that children, families, singles, and seniors all feel more valued as an integral part of our church community. Our recent talent show, which raised more than \$5,200 for our youth service trip, proved to be an excellent opportunity for creative cross-generational interaction.

We feel called to address the needs of a beautiful and historic building, finding innovative ways to cover maintenance costs and increase usage of the space. We need to encourage a new generation of church members to join the Building and Grounds Department to supplement our long-term members who have served in this Department for many years.

Music and the Arts are a very important component of Plymouth Church. We celebrate our tremendous music program and our outstanding Minister of Music and the Arts. From Bach Chorales to folk music, we see music as an integral part of our worship and faith expression. The voices of the Plymouth Choir, bells of the Plymouth Ringers, melodies of the Plymouth Folk Revival and recessional organ selections enhance our service. The choir sings a wide variety of music including compositions by some of our own members. Our musicians are diverse and talented, with some performing with the world renowned Cleveland Orchestra. We currently serve our church community and the broader Cleveland community in multiple ways. We feel called to build on this record of service, devising more ways to bring support to shut-ins and those who are hospitalized, to sustain and even increase our outreach to the underprivileged, the hungry, the LGBTQ community, the formerly incarcerated, and the

homeless. We want to advocate social justice and positive change in our community and the world.

Here are two examples of successful programming in the last year that have involved a level of congregational risk-taking and openness to growth:

1. Last year in honor of Transgender Remembrance Day, Plymouth invited The Cleveland Transgender Choir to join us at Sunday service. They sang a piece by themselves during worship and joined the Plymouth Choir in another piece. After worship, they held a talk-back session attended by 40 Plymouth folks. The time was challenging as several of the members had strong emotions about their stories. Overall, the congregation enjoyed having them and look forward to sharing worship with them again in the future.
2. We are a very diverse church and knew that coming together to search for a new minister would be a challenge. Our Transition Committee created a plan to gather the church members' thoughts about Plymouth and, at the same time, bring us together in fellowship. The team planned and hosted four brunches at which we had an overwhelming response from Plymouth members. We had at least 182 people attend the brunches. The team gathered information about what brought people to Plymouth, what kept them here, and what was important to them at Plymouth. Despite our diverse demographics, we were gratified to find that we are unified in what we value about Plymouth and our current faith, and indeed the luncheons brought us closer together as a congregation in our search for a new minister.

### **3. WHO ARE WE NOW?**

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

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

#### **3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS**

Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights is a part of the United Church of Christ, as well as the Living Water Association (in Northeast Ohio). As a community church comprised of people with diverse denominational backgrounds, Plymouth, pursuant to its Constitution, “requires adherence to no creedal statement.”<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, Plymouth’s Covenant of Membership is an articulation of our congregation’s life of faith:

- Nurtured by God’s grace, challenged by Christ’s witness, emboldened by the Holy Spirit, we are creating a true community, each of us a diverse expression of One God.
- Acknowledging our role in God’s mission, through our faith and amidst our doubts, we explore our call to live the Gospel.
- Opening our hearts to God’s ongoing revelation, we steward our gifts in faithful discipleship.
- Leading lives of compassion, sharing and celebration, we join with God in building a world of peace, justice and liberation.

What we see in these covenantal affirmations is a statement of our values: Christian faith; attention to the power of the Holy Spirit; diversity within community; the sense that faith is an ongoing journey that can include doubts; a commitment to living out our faith in service to others. We understand God as present and acting in multiple ways. Our Covenant of Membership begins with an affirmation of the triune God, expressed inclusively as God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Children and adults alike are baptized “In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, Mother of us all.” We are comfortable using multiple metaphors to try and understand the workings of God in our world.

The Holy Spirit is present in our congregation in multiple ways; we have already noted that outstanding preaching, a rich and diverse music program, and thoughtfully planned worship services bring a sense of the Holy Spirit’s presence into our worship every week.<sup>2</sup> To this we might add that our time for shared prayers, during which members lift up their concerns and celebrations, are also a time when the Holy Spirit is present. The passing of the peace has become increasingly vibrant as members and visitors alike leave their pews to greet each other and share the peace of Christ as one family.

The work of the Holy Spirit, however, is in no way limited to Sunday morning. For the many members who participate in programs and service opportunities that occur throughout the week both in the church and in the larger community, the Holy Spirit becomes tangibly present. Whether it is through filling a bag with groceries for the hungry, delivering flowers to the sick

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<sup>1</sup> The Plymouth Church Constitution is included as Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> Worship services are held every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary, September through May, and 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel, June through August.



and homebound members, working with formerly incarcerated adults at Edwin's thrift store, or marching in the Cleveland Pride Parade, our members gather in Christ's name, and the Holy Spirit blesses us with its presence.

We are a dynamic, healthy congregation. Our membership is diverse and multi-talented, and our existing staff is highly competent and committed to the work of the church. In other words, our new senior minister will find plenty of support from members and staff alike. We see the diversity within our congregation as one of our core strengths. Amidst our different backgrounds, viewpoints, and commitments, we work hard to hear each other, welcome and understand one another, and see within our multi-hued faces, the image of Christ.

We also have a beautiful physical plant that we have stewarded faithfully. We are blessed to have a thoughtfully managed Foundation Fund, which provides financial stability in times of stress and makes a range of programming and ministry possible. Like many Mainline Protestant congregations with large historic buildings, we are facing some challenges with how best to maintain and make fuller use of our beautiful facility. We would welcome leadership and creative ideas on this issue.

Educational programming is another strength of Plymouth Church. We have already described our strong programs in music and the arts and for children and youth. Adult Faith and Life offers a variety of opportunities at Plymouth church to engage our faith lives and apply it to the real world. These faith formation opportunities are not afraid to lean into some difficult topics because we want our community to be able to think theologically through their faith when they interact with the world. Adult education programs are normally scheduled directly after worship and coffee hour. Topics often center around what is going on in the world today while asking "how does our faith call us to respond to those opportunities?" Examples of some of those topics include: gun violence conversation, gardening and green initiatives for your home, how to talk about death with loved ones, and conversations with Richard Rohr (videos). We will admit that, overall, the shape and programming of our Adult Faith and Life opportunities has not remained consistent year to year as different leaders take charge of the department. We could also broaden and deepen the ways we study the Bible, faith topics, spiritual growth and development, and books that focus directly on our faith.



Our faithful Monday Evening Bible Study is one of our long-standing weekly faith formation opportunities for Plymouth members. While this group usually meets on a weekly basis to discuss the upcoming sermon text, recently they have been meeting to discuss the Rachel Held Evans book *Inspired*. People have enjoyed using this book to examine how the Bible has been used to shape and form their understanding of the world and how the Bible has, in some cases, been used to highlight beliefs that are not necessarily biblical or for the purpose intended. The people engaged in this study have thoroughly enjoyed this book and perhaps represent a larger interest in the church for more of these opportunities.

### **Congregational Organization for Ministry and Mission**

Pursuant to Section V1 of the Plymouth Constitution, “all corporate powers, property, affairs and religious services of the church shall be exercised, controlled and conducted by the church council.” Council members are elected by the congregation at the annual meeting as Officers, the Chairs of the eight Departments (Building and Grounds; Caring, Children and Youth; Evangelism and Growth; Partnership and Service; Giving; Adult Faith and Life; and Worship), the Chairs of the Personnel Committee and the Plymouth Foundation, and up to five Members-at-Large (which may include youth members)—all of whom are elected for one-year terms. The Senior Minister and all other ministerial employees of the Church serve as non voting members. (See Appendix A - Plymouth Constitution).

### 3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS										
<div>  <div> Church#: 524830  Assoc: 566      Schedule: 0      Plymouth Church UCC      Shaker Heights      OH      44120 </div> <div>  </div> </div>										
YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED	
2008	720	155	109	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2009	663	191	173	4	7	17	13	72	-57	
2010	669	192	183	3	4	9	9	1	6	
2011	676	196	227	6	9	8	10	6	7	
2012	582	204	231	0	15	25	13	121	-94	
2013	598	230	239	9	10	8	11	0	16	
2014	608	259	230	8	10	9	11	6	10	
2015	613	225	230	7	0	11	13	0	5	
2016	619	201	100	3	9	8	11	3	6	
2017	619	201	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2018	619	201	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	
YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2008	\$811,438	\$0	\$44,000	\$10,283	\$54,283	\$0	\$54,283	5.42	\$865,721	\$0
2009	\$800,766	\$147,058	\$33,750	\$11,830	\$45,580	\$124,109	\$169,689	4.21	\$1,117,513	\$803,212
2010	\$791,084	\$101,528	\$56,250	\$10,350	\$66,600	\$119,632	\$186,232	7.11	\$1,078,844	\$755,093
2011	\$865,370	\$1,466	\$45,000	\$5,929	\$50,929	\$71,575	\$122,504	5.20	\$989,340	\$726,777
2012	\$852,746	\$26,347	\$45,000	\$8,670	\$53,670	\$72,286	\$125,956	5.28	\$1,005,049	\$655,427
2013	\$877,566	\$85,452	\$35,241	\$7,800	\$43,041	\$79,191	\$122,232	4.02	\$1,085,250	\$930,050
2014	\$864,658	\$36	\$47,741	\$6,452	\$54,193	\$38,420	\$92,613	5.52	\$957,307	\$978,885
2015	\$920,617	\$1,969	\$32,000	\$29,744	\$61,744	\$28,235	\$89,979	3.48	\$1,012,565	\$957,667
2016	\$886,954	\$0	\$33,000	\$34,531	\$67,531	\$75,550	\$143,081	3.72	\$1,030,035	\$686,188
2017	\$886,954	\$0	\$31,000	\$6,403	\$37,403	\$477	\$37,880	3.50	\$924,834	\$0
2018	\$886,954	\$0	\$24,000	\$4,578	\$28,578	\$6,495	\$35,073	2.71	\$922,027	\$0
% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		
2013-2018	3.51	-12.61	-58.16	-100.00	-100.00	1.07	-33.60	-15.04		
2008-2018	-14.03	29.68	-8.26	0.00	0.00	9.31	-47.35	6.50		

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.

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

#### **Describe those who participate in your church.**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	414	Yes
Number of active non-members:	46	Yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	460	As of November 10, 2019

#### **Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	49%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	11%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	29%	Yes

#### **Number of total participants by age:**

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
7%	8%	10%	12%	10%	12%	13%	12%	15%	Yes

#### **Number of adults in various household types:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	153	Yes
Households with minors:	65	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	73	Yes
Joint households with no minors:	165	Yes

Single adults over 65:	15	Yes
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**Education level of adult participants by percentage:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	10%	Yes
College:	70%	Yes
Graduate School:	20%	Yes
Specialty Training:	N/A	N/A
Other (please specify):	NA	N/A

**Percentage of adults in various employment types:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	70%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	20%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	10%	Yes

The majority of Plymouth Church members are employed, active adults who are professionals with a healthy-representation of those in law, medicine, education, and the arts.

**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?**

Plymouth Church is diverse in education, age, gender, sexual preference, political preferences and religious beliefs. The congregation is approx. 10-15% people of color and more than 30% of our Sunday School would identify as non-white. Our diversity has increased in recent years, and we are committed to continuing that trend.

**Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)?**

Plymouth Church has had ongoing conversations regarding many types of diversity and continues to do so.

In 2014, following the death of Tamir Rice, Plymouth engaged in the White Privilege/Sacred Conversations on Race study.

Following the Trayvon Martin ruling in August, 2013, and the not guilty verdict, Plymouth Church members set up a civic discourse meeting. This dialogue concluded that underserved youth deserved and needed new forms of support to be empowered. Therefore, Plymouth members created EYEJ: Empowering Youth, Exploring Justice, a stand-alone 501(c)(3) that focuses on amplifying youth voices for those that are silent. EYEJ has served 1,500 youth through their programming, and Plymouth supports the organization both financially and by volunteering. EYEJ is also funded by the Living Water Association and the United Church of Christ. EYEJ is a bridge for the community to further racial equity, criminal justice reform, D.E.I. (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) to achieve social justice.

### 3d. 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? (list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)
Adult Groups or Classes	15-20	Adult Faith & Life Department
Baptisms (number last year)	7 baptisms	Sr. Minister & Associate Minister – Plan 3 per year
Children’s Groups or Classes	25	Director of Christian Education, Associate Minister & Children and Youth Department
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	350 Christmas Eve., 400 Easter	Planned by Staff & Volunteers



Church-wide Meals	110	Planned by Lay People – 2 Members
Choirs and Music Groups	50	Led by Music Minister and Plymouth Folk Revival
Church-based Bible Study	15	Led by Ministers
Communion (served how often?)	1/Mo.	Plus, weekly during Lenten Dinners, planned by ministers
Community Meals	N/A	
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	3 Confirmands	Associate Minister
Drama or Dance Program	N/A	
Funerals (number last year)	6 Funerals	Planned by Ministers and Staff
Intergenerational Groups	N/A	
Outdoor Worship	N/A	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	30	Planned & led by Ministers, Labyrinth Walk planned by Member and ArtsPlymouth
Public Advocacy Work	N/A	
Retreats	N/A	Planned by Ministers
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	2 Programs	Monday Bible Study and Theology on Tap, led by Sr. Minister, and 2 Members
Weddings (number last year)	2 Weddings	Planned by Ministers and Staff
Worship (time slot: 10:30AM fall-winter-spring; 10:00 AM summer)	140 Avg.	Planned by Ministers and Worship Department
Young Adult Groups or Classes	N/A	
Youth Groups or Classes	20	Between Middle & High School by Associate Minister, Our Whole Lives Class led by Director of Christian Education and Member
Other: Concerts	4,000+	Minister of Music, Facilities Manager + Volunteers

**Additional comments:**

This chart doesn't cover all events and happenings at Plymouth Church. The entire staff normally gets involved with most events and the planning of them. Furthermore, there are events that volunteers may spearhead such as Transition Lunches, Mardi Gras, Sugar Plum Workshops, Church Annual Picnic, Parents and Youth Workshops and many more. Plymouth Church, since it is a community church, also hosts events not run by Plymouth including AA, Cleveland Institute of Music, and more. Finally, members of Plymouth Church are widely involved in the planning of all events.

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

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev. Brian Shields	No	Cleveland Clinic	Chaplin	N
Rev. Mendle Adams	No	Ordained Minister	Available for visitation	Y
Rev. Brooks Berndt	No	Ordained, Serves in National Setting	UCC Environmental Justice Minister	N
Andy Lang	No	In ordination process	O&A Coalition Minister	N
Rev. Ruth Garwood	No	Ordained, not currently serving a church	Minister	Y
Rev. Bill Green	No	Ordained, served in National Setting	Volunteer	Y
Robb Forward	4	Commissioned	Visitation w/	N

		Prison Minister	inmates	
Rev. Cynthia Barnard-Shelton	No	Ordained, Disciples Church	Volunteer	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:**

We have a couple of retired ministers who volunteer with visitation and/or are asked to serve as pulpit supply.

**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	Date Hired
Interim Senior Minister		Full-time – 32 Hours+/Wk.	Council	11/2019
Associate Minister		Full-time – 40+ Hours/Wk.	Senior Minister	8/2017
Minister of Music and the Arts	Yes	Full-time – 40+ Hours/Wk.	Senior Minister	6/1998
Director of Christian Education		30 Hours/Wk.	Senior Minister	5/2015
Finance Administrator		30 Hours/Wk.	Senior Minister	1/2019
Facilities Manager		Full-time – 40+ Hours/Wk.	Senior Minister	9/2018
Custodian		Subcontractor	Facilities Manager	2006
Housekeeper		Subcontractor	Facilities Manager	2008
Communications/Office		Full-time – 40 Hours/Wk.	Senior Minister	4/2018

Childcare Provider		3+ Hours/Wk.	Director of Christian Education	1996
Childcare Provider		3+ Hours/Wk.	Director of Christian Education	1999
Organ Scholar		10+ Hours/Wk.	Minister of Music and the Arts	8/2018
Aggregate Compensation Total		\$519,000		

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

The staff is an outstanding team, each bringing their full self, expertise, new ideas, compassion and love for Plymouth Church, the community and its members.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$579,774
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	\$249,069
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i> )	\$88,948
Fundraising Events	\$N/A
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$-0-
Grants	\$-0-
Rentals of Church Building	\$19,660
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$N/A

Support from Related Organizations (e.g. <i>Women's Group</i> )	\$-0-
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$13,881
Other (specify):	\$8,647
Other (specify):	\$11,342
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$971,321</b>

**Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):** \$974,001

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

**Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?** 27.8%

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

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

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

☒ One Great Hour of Sharing

☒ Strengthen the Church

☒ Neighbors in Need

☒ Christmas Fund

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

Partnerships & Service = 10% of Budget

OCWM = 2.6% of Budget

**What is the church's current indebtedness?** None

**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.**

Ongoing maintenance of a historic building built in 1916



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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2015	Elevator	\$705,317	\$660,000	New Main Entrance with elevator and increased accessibility

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

The “Open Doors” Campaign started almost immediately when the original elevator failed in 2012. From 2012-2015, members pledged contributions to cover the cost of a new, relocated elevator. From an original estimate of \$855,000, the final cost was \$705,317 to move and replace the old elevator, and rework the main entry to include a second floor atrium that connects the education wing with the second floor of the Sanctuary. This has allowed accessibility to as many areas of the building as possible.

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

**What is the market value of the assets?** \$5,723,676 (valuation date 12-31-19)

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

5% Rolling 3-year average plus additional draws if needed and approved by Foundation Committee and Council

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

See above

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

See above

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

Unknown at this time

**Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:**

The major focus of the foundation in 2020 and going forward is to discipline the congregation to stick with the 5% draw only.

**Describe all buildings owned by the church:**

There are three connected buildings - the main building with sanctuary, offices and choir room on the second floor and fellowship hall on the lower level; the education wing with offices and library on the first floor and classrooms on the second floor; the Chapel wing, with the youth/shared space on the lower level.

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

None

**Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*)**

Everything is accessible except the second floor sanctuary balcony, the sanctuary chancel and chapel stage, and the fellowship hall stage and bathrooms

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

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

Plymouth Church strives to be a careful steward of financial resources and tends to be conservative when it comes to investing and budgeting. However, we are committed to sharing what we have and in particular, through the Partnerships & Service Department, we give 10% of our annual pledged amounts to organizations and programs in and around the Cleveland-area.

The budgeting process is as follows: each September/October, the departments are given a report with their spending to date and budget numbers for the year. During those months, they carefully review each expenditure to determine exactly how best to spend funds and what would be needed for the following year. At the October and November Finance Department and Council meetings, the budgets submitted by the departments are reviewed and revised if necessary, and at December's Council meeting, the budget is finalized, voted on and given to the departments.

**3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

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

1850 – 30 members of Old Stone Presbyterian Church withdrew from Old Stone because the Senior Pastor refused to house a fugitive slave, and they named themselves the Free Presbyterian Church of Cleveland.

1852 – The Free Presbyterian Church renamed themselves the Plymouth Society. The name was suggested by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

1913 – The Plymouth Society disbanded because of declining membership and financial resources.

1916 – The Plymouth Society revived and received a parcel of land from the Van Sweringen brothers. The Plymouth Society became the Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights, a community-based congregation, and became part of the Congregational Union.

1961 – Plymouth Church voted to become part of the United Church of Christ

2005 – Plymouth Church voted to become an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation

2007 – Plymouth Church called its first female Senior Minister

2016 – Plymouth Church celebrated its Centennial

2016 – Plymouth Church voted to become a Just Peace Congregation

### **Most Important Event in Church Life Over the Last Ten Years**

In 2016, Plymouth celebrated its Centennial, an important moment in the past 10 years of the church. We celebrated our life of faith, our service to God and our ongoing journey of living out the spirit and Covenant of our founding members. We celebrated all that we have accomplished over the years, as we more fully embraced diversity by becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation, by calling our first female Senior Minister and by welcoming all people to join us in worship in a safe and supportive congregational home. We held a series of celebratory meetings of the congregation, and erected a plaque-embedded stone to honor the Centennial.

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

In 2003, a staff member suggested that Plymouth Church begin to consider becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation (ONA). The Church Council agreed that Plymouth Church should begin a process of Discernment by appointing a task force.

Over the next two years, the Task Force led the congregation through a variety of activities – creating a mission statement, lectures, discussions, etc. These activities culminated in 2005 when the congregation voted to become an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation.

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

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

The Candy Circle was a group founded in 1913 that made and sold chocolate candy at Easter and Christmas. Profits supported the Christian Mission of Plymouth Church. In 2008, the Candy Circle disbanded because of declining membership and dwindling financial resources.

Many people were very upset when the Candy Circle disbanded. A potential conflict was avoided when a first-floor room was converted into the “Candy Circle Conference Room,” as a way to honor the contributions of this group to Plymouth for nearly a century. What could have ended in a negative way instead culminated in a positive celebration of a Plymouth Church legacy.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsey	2019 to present	Y
Rev. Matthew Bauhof	2017 to present	N (PCUSA)
Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe, Senior Minister	2008 to 2019	Y
Rev. Adam Hange, Associate Minister	2009 to 2016	Y
Rev. Lois Annich, PT Associate Minister	2008 to 2012	N (PCUSA)
Rev. Stephen Adams, Designated Associate (FT)	2007-2008	Y
Rev. Dr. David Powers, Interim Senior Minister	2007	Y
Rev. Joe Blotz, Acting Associate Minister	2007-2010	Y

Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Senior Minister	1996-2006	Y
Rev. Matt Brown, Associate Minister	1999 – 2006	Y
Rev. Patty Walker, PT Associate Minister	1996 – 2005	Y
Rev. Sally Wile, PT Associate Minister	1996 – 2005	Y
Rev. Dr. Skip Holliday	1984-1994	Y
Rev. Will Green, Associate Minister	1989-1995	Y

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

Over the years Plymouth Church has had a number of excellent Senior and Associate Ministers. What we have collectively learned is that we appreciate learned and well-researched motivational sermons and eulogies, warm personal outreach to our parishioners, and sound management skills. The Senior Ministers who have been most successful here have demonstrated inspirational calling from the pulpit, empathy for those in need, fellowship and outreach for our members and guests, and effectiveness in relating to Council and its Departments and Committees and in managing our relatively small Staff.

In short, we have learned that such a person as Senior Minister is in effect a dynamic and caring Chief Executive Officer of a spiritual organization.

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

Yes, one in the 1970s

**Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?**

No

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

No

**4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?**

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

a. COMMUNITY VISION

b. MISSION InSite



## 4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

Plymouth Church is known for its service to the wider community. Our five target areas are: homelessness, hunger, education, environmental justice, and LGBTQ issues.

We actively volunteer our time and money with the Cleveland Food Bank, Shaker Heights Hunger Center, Thea Bowman Center, Habitat for Humanity, Edwins Leadership and Restaurant Institute, Doan Brook Cleanup, EYEJ: Empowering Youth, Exploring Justice, and the UCC ONA to list a few.

Our Partnerships and Service Department distribute 10% of our annual pledges to a number of agencies, 12 in 2019.

We host events that draw in members of the community at large especially families, in particular our Sugar Plum Workshop and Trunk or Treat.

Our Children and Youth Department is constantly engaging with the community through service trips, fundraising drives, and other initiatives.

While music nurtures our own church community, ArtsPlymouth allows us to reach out and minister to the broader Cleveland community. Last year, Plymouth hosted programs performed by The Cleveland Chamber Music Society, The Cleveland Classical Guitar Society, The Blue Water Chamber Orchestra, and Les Delices. Collectively, these programs were attended by over 4,000 friends in our community and church members.

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

Plymouth Church includes members of the National Staff, who keep us engaged in the work of the national setting. Plymouth has hosted the WRA (now Living Water) annual meeting and was instrumental in supporting the 2015 General Synod meeting.

☐ Accessible to All (A2A)

☐ Creation Justice

☐ Economic Justice

☐ Faithful and Welcoming

☒ God Is Still Speaking (GISS)

☐ Border and Immigrant Justice

☐ Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)

X Just Peace

\_\_\_ Global Mission Church

X Open and Affirming (ONA)

\_\_\_ WISE Congregation for Mental Health

\_\_\_ Other UCC designations:

\_\_\_ Designations from other 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?**

God is Still Speaking is part of fundamental theological underpinning of the church.

We just celebrated 15 years of our commitment to being ONA. Our commitment is an essential part of the church's identity, and a significant reason people come to Plymouth

In 2016 we became a Just Peace church. Our congregation maintains an active awareness of international issues and supports denomination wide initiatives in this area.

Our own Green Initiative works with our Building and Grounds Department to promote environmentally aware policies.

Our hearts and minds are open to the needs of the community and the wider denomination however they may be defined.

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

Plymouth has a history of doing interfaith activities in the Shaker Heights area. Some examples include:

1. Our music program joins with musicians at other area churches for programs during the year.
2. Youth groups and confirmation classes visit other houses of worship as part of our programming for Children and Youth.
3. Our senior minister has participated in an annual interdenominational Good Friday service every year.
4. The 2018 trip to the Holy Land is an example of our connection with our Jewish Neighbors

**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 mission statement reads:

Plymouth is a Christ-centered community led by the Holy Spirit that supports the spiritual journey of all who strive to boldly live out their faith in the world. We are committed to diversity, spiritual growth, and putting our faith into action locally and throughout the world.

Our members are actively engaged in the governance of the church staffing multiple departments and committees, and also with groups outside Plymouth including the Thea Bowman Center, Cleveland Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity, and Edwins, among others, implementing our mission while still engaging in weekly fellowship activities. In the last few years, we have not tracked the actual number of hours spent by volunteers.

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

We have always allowed our ministers to determine how involved they will be in community and denominational activities. For any pastor, there are certain things that must be done. Care for the local congregation is paramount. But beyond those essential tasks, we encourage our ministers to live out their particular sense of call to the wider community consistent with the mission of our church.

## **4b. MissionInsite**

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

To answer the questions in this section, we looked at data for the population within a one mile radius of the church including portions of both the city of Shaker Heights and of Cleveland's Buckeye Shaker Square neighborhood. Looking at the MissionInsite data, we see a predicted growth in single parent families as well as slight increases in average population age, and number of young children, and a slight decrease in average household income.

In terms of the MissionInSite ministry preferences data, respondents marked these items as important at a rate significantly above the national average (ranked by percentage of importance above national average):

- Bible and scripture study/prayer groups
- Cultural programs (music, drama, art, etc.)
- Spiritual discussion groups
- Quality of sermons
- Youth social activities
- Social justice advocacy
- Warm and friendly encounters

- Crisis support groups
- Family support and intervention services
- Opportunities for volunteering

Taken together, the data suggests that Plymouth can meet some community needs through the expansion or promotion of existing programming such as weekly Bible Study, ArtsPlymouth events, engaging Sunday sermons, and an active youth group. However, Plymouth could do more to develop new programming serving families seeking support and resources, particularly single parents with young children.

**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?**

Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights straddles the boundary between Shaker Heights and Cleveland and was founded to be a community church serving the former. As such, we provide demographic comparisons to the population within a one mile radius of the church (including parts of both Shaker Heights and Cleveland's Buckeye Shaker Square neighborhood) and to the City of Shaker Heights as a whole.

	Plymouth	Population in a One Mile Radius	City of Shaker Heights
Percentage White	85-90%	27%	54%
Percentage with Bachelor's or Graduate Degree	90%	38%	63%
Percentage under 35	37%	43%	43%

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

The changing demographics of Shaker Heights and Buckeye Shaker Square are shaping the future of Plymouth's ministry. We are an engaged, dynamic, spiritual church community, aligned with the mission of service. The data reveals our neighbors are experiencing changes, with more single parent families, an increase in the number of early school age children, and the increase in age of the adult population. There are tremendous differences in the level of education of our neighbors, those not living in Shaker Heights, yet living close to the Plymouth community.

We are reaching our neighbors through wonderful programs and service projects, but God is asking us to do more. We are tasked with developing stronger connections with our surrounding community, in order to provide our neighbors with additional support and services. We need to form partnerships with our area schools and reach out to our young families through tutoring and mentoring programs. We need to find innovative ways in which to repurpose the underutilized space at Plymouth, to better meet the needs of our congregation and those of the surrounding community. We are tasked with developing additional support programs to reach out to single parent families. We need to develop programs to assist neighboring youth in achieving their full educational potential, through mentoring programs and through forming connections with programs such as College Now. Finally, we need to reach out to our aging population, to better meet their growing needs. Working together, we can meet God's calling and make a difference.

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

- Plymouth is a church that welcomes everyone.
- Plymouth is more than a church; it is like a community center.
- Plymouth cares about the issues of the inner-city.

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

According to data gathered at a series of transition brunches, the top draws are the Church's tie to the UCC, proximity, children and youth programming, diversity, inspiring music, preaching style and content, and the generally friendly and welcoming community.

## **5. REFERENCES**

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

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

### **REFERENCE 1**

**Deborah Vesy/** President and CEO Deaconess Foundation  
(216) 749-8234/ [dvesy@deaconessfdn.org](mailto:dvesy@deaconessfdn.org)/

*Deborah heads the Deaconess Foundation whose mission is to help people in need build careers that sustain them and their families. As noted in her letter, Plymouth members have taken on numerous leadership roles with Deaconess.*

**1. What do you see as Plymouth’s areas of strength?**

I think Plymouth’s strengths are many. Plymouth is a congregation that is incredibly engaged in the community and they definitely “walk the talk”. Plymouth was extremely engaged in the work of Deaconess Foundation, being active members of Deaconess’s Board of Trustees and the Delegate Assembly for two decades. We currently have a member of Plymouth Church on our Board. I have always admired Plymouth’s authentic commitment to being an “open and affirming” place of worship, as well as the diversity of the congregation. During a time when many UCC churches were losing members or closing, Plymouth continued to attract new members and remain a “thriving” UCC congregation.

**2. What do you see as Plymouth’s areas for improvement?**

From my perspective as a community leader, I really have nothing to name. Plymouth has always and to this day maintains a stellar reputation.

**3. What is a significant experience you have had with Plymouth?**

I have had the pleasure of working with many members of Plymouth Church that have volunteered to be Trustees of Deaconess Foundation. Each one was incredibly engaged, committed tremendous passion and time, and contributed greatly to the mission of our Foundation. Our community is better because of Plymouth Church.

Thank you for reaching out to me.

Deborah

**REFERENCE 2**

**Debra Nagy/** Artistic Director, Les Délices  
[debra@lesdelices.org](mailto:debra@lesdelices.org)

*Debra directs a critically acclaimed early music ensemble for which Plymouth provides performance and office space as well as other support.*

Thanks so much for your message. I'm happy to provide a statement about my experience/perspective as a member of the community-at-large that's involved at Plymouth.

I find Plymouth Church to be a very inclusive place. I've had the pleasure and great fortune to make music at Plymouth for over 10 years. Over that time, the music and art program expanded significantly and Plymouth became a beloved home for many arts and classical music organizations in Cleveland. Artists, staff, audience members of every stripe are all made to feel welcome and can enjoy the beautiful acoustics of Plymouth facilities. Furthermore, Plymouth Church and the support of the ArtsPlymouth committee directly supported the early years of my ensemble Les Délices through donated rehearsal and performance space, and by extension, fostered my personal artistic growth. The staff (whether Music, Administrative, or Custodial) has consistently and uniformly been a pleasure to work with. They represent the values of the Church beautifully, caring about what we need and helping us to share our art most effectively with the community.

With thanks and best wishes,  
Debra

### REFERENCE 3

**Chris Keeney**, Director of Development EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute  
216.401.5195

*Chris represents EDWINS Leadership & Restaurant Institute which is a unique approach at giving formerly-incarcerated adults a foundation in the hospitality industry while providing a support network necessary for a successful reentry. EDWINS is located on Shaker Square, a short distance from Plymouth.*

Plymouth Church has been one of our most significant faith partners since the beginning at EDWINS. We are fortunate to have their support as volunteers, donors, patrons and friends. The financial support helps EDWINS to continue its mission providing career pathways for people who were formerly incarcerated. But the parishioners of Plymouth don't just contribute financially, a group consistently visits our Second Chance Life Skills Center's thrift store to ensure our in-kind donations are clean, organized and able to be easily distributed to our

students and alumni. Plymouth also helps with the promotion of our events, specials and other EDWINS news. The congregation at Plymouth are some of our most loyal guests at the Restaurant, Butcher Shop and Bakery.

It's hard to ask for more from a faith partner and their alignment with our mission. We are thankful for our relationship with Plymouth Church.

Thanks,  
Chris

#### REFERENCE 4

**Rev. Adam Hange**/ Pastor, First Congregational Church of Christ, Hillsborough, Oregon  
(216) 372-7129/[adam@hillsboro-ucc.org](mailto:adam@hillsboro-ucc.org)

*Adam was Associate Minister at Plymouth from 2009-2016.*

Plymouth UCC had a profound impact on me and my ministry, and I will be forever indebted to the congregation and its leadership for helping me explore my call to ministry, pursue ordination in the UCC, and grow in my skills and gifts. I count myself blessed to have been a part of the community and served on the staff as Associate Minister for Youth and Children, and then Associate Minister.

Plymouth has so many, many strengths: its incredible music and arts programs, the depth of theological understanding and reflection, and a strong culture of community engagement, to name just a few. Above all, I think it's the people of Plymouth who make it so special - so many intelligent, talented, thoughtful, and faithful people. The church is blessed with a robust and creative staff team, a beautiful building, and the resources to support them. With these gifts, it is well-positioned for a bright future!

Plymouth faces many of the same challenges faced by the city of Shaker Heights: particularly the challenge of addressing disparities, bridging divides, and truly embracing diversity in all forms. Plymouth is also geographically situated in a place of stark-contrast between those of privilege and those in poverty. It also faces the same challenge that so many of our churches face across this country - which is responding to the question of how to "Be the Church" in today's fast-changing world, while at the same time remaining grounded and rooted in its history and tradition.



One of the things I remember about my time there was the way the church began to embrace racial diversity in a new and deeper way. I remember being there in 2012, shortly after Trayvon Martin was shot and killed in Florida, and then in 2014 after Tamir Rice was shot on Cleveland's westside. Around that time, the congregation engaged in a study on White Privilege/Sacred Conversations on Race - and, I'll admit, it was challenging work for those of us who participated. It was uncomfortable naming our privilege and seeing the systemic ways that racism was subtly and not-so-subtly at work all around us.

At almost the same time, a young man from Cleveland found his way to the church, and then to our youth group. Tony shared about his experience growing up, just blocks away, and we were astounded at how his experience was so unlike that of a typical Shaker teen. I felt that his perspective living as a young black man in our city revealed to me the depth of the racial divide in our country. Sadly, some time into the first year of my current call, I heard the tragic news that Tony was killed in a motorbike accident.

I confess, it was hard for me not to be able to be there with the youth and members of the church during that time - but what I heard of that service brought joy and pride to my heart. I heard about the way the congregation opened its doors and embraced Tony's grieving family and friends during that service - even though their ways of grieving were so different from Plymouth's. I'm truly proud of the way the church embraced Tony, in life and in death. I hope and pray that the congregation will continue to make relationship-building a focus of its ministry.

In closing, Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights is an incredible congregation, blessed in beauty and in spirit, and I would heartily recommend it to any who feels called to lead it into this new and exciting chapter of its story.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions - [adam@hillsboro-ucc.org](mailto:adam@hillsboro-ucc.org) and 216.372.7129.

## **6. CLOSING THOUGHTS**

a. CLOSING PRAYER

b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

### **6a. CLOSING PRAYER**

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

We realize we have much to achieve as we move forward into the next 100 years. Our world has been upended, as we are faced with fear, uncertainty and the presence of a disease that will touch us all. We call on God to give us strength to open our hearts to our community, to move forward with care and compassion, and to share our resources and protect our most vulnerable. God is calling us to be emboldened with the Holy Spirit and to rise to these challenges as we live out our lives of Christian faith.

## **6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending a 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.

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

Pulpit Committee: Devan Bhatia (Youth Member), Cindy Chapman, Andrew Cleminshaw, Thomas Cullinan, Ann Eberhard, Amy Grube, Kate Molyneaux (Youth Member), Mai Moore, Dick Pogue, Beth Sanborn, Gloria Sturghill, David Turner, Robert Woolfrey

TransitionTeam: Christine Bretz, Jeannie Clarkson, Tracy Williams, Lee Makela, Janet Neary

Plymouth Church Staff: Rev. Matthew Bauhof, Associate Minister; James Riggs, Minister of Music and the Arts; Brian Grube, President of Council; Kathryn Kundrat, Finance Administrator; Nicole Whitcomb, Communications Coordinator

Signed: ***Gloria J.Sturghill, Chair, Pulpit Committee, April 30, 2020***

Name / Title / Date:

## 6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: Plymouth UCC is a multigenerational, multicultural congregation with a firm commitment to the path of Jesus, in compassion, justice and peace. Plymouth boasts a living and vibrant ministry, touching the lives of those who enter its building or live in the wider community and beyond. The Plymouth church community is used to excellent preaching, excellent music, as well as excellence in all ministry.

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: Association General Minister

Email: [nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org](mailto:nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org)

Phone: 330.940.2220 x 102

Date: April 30, 2020

**UNITED CHURCH**  
OF CHRIST



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

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