

Prospectus

First Congregational Church of Waterville UCC

21 College Ave., Waterville, ME 04901



Who We Are



We are a joyous, hard-working group of 100+ souls with a lot of heart. We are a mission-focused Church, using what we have and who we are to minister to those on the margins of our communities. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve God through our service to the greater Waterville community. We believe God is calling us to be a more diverse Church — one that fully mirrors the diversity that surrounds us. Inviting those who are seeking a spiritual community, including the people we are now serving through our missions, will strengthen us as a Church.

God is calling us to reach out to the margins of our community, offering support and fellowship in an open and affirming environment filled with the living Spirit. We have done our best to spearhead programs that allow us to follow this mission, but we know that there are new challenges and opportunities that we can always pursue. We look forward to this future. God is still speaking and our congregation is doing its best to listen and act.

Our Mission

Mission is central to how we (Waterville UCC) are striving to walk in the way of Jesus, and we believe there is no better way to answer the question “Who is our neighbor?” than by looking at the mission ministries of our church – so let us start there:

The First Congregational Church of Waterville believes very strongly in expressing faith through loving, humble service to God’s whole creation. Our church has historically valued acts of service as important expressions of faith and the current congregation continues to build upon this sacred foundation. After prayerful reflection about hard choices and limited options for our future, we committed to more robust and practical approaches to serving the most vulnerable children of God -- the elderly, disabled, single parents, struggling families,



children, those battling addiction and mental illness, the homeless, hungry, members of groups such as LGBTQ+, Native, Black, Brown, and Immigrant communities. Meeting our neighbors where they are, and serving them as Jesus would, required rethinking the meaning of church and how that might translate into practical service. One of the first things we did was commit to remaining in Waterville and broadening our sense of neighborhood. Our choice about where to replant the physical church reflects our commitment to place and trust in God’s call to serve our neighbors.

Ideas about how to reimagine service to God were planted, nurtured, and encouraged by the leadership of our recent forward-thinking pastor.

The Missions Committee was recreated to serve as an incubator for new ministries and provide continuing support to both new and older missions and the pastor serves in an advisory role to the Committee. Members of the congregation

are encouraged to identify areas of need and propose a ministry to meet that need and bring their proposal to the Missions Committee. After the Committee determines a proposed ministry is compatible with the Mission Statement of the church, it helps launch that ministry. This ministry-creating process allowed for the birth of 5 ministries in the last 5 years: Laundry Quarters, Essentials Closet, Creation Care, Starfish Village (intensive homeless family support), and Faith Community Nursing. These ministries are all budgeted ministries but also derive support from additional donations, fundraisers, and sometimes grants. And they complement our longstanding ministries, such as the Evening Sandwich Program.



Colby students in the Civic Engagement Program (a class about faith in the community) created a web page that contains interviews with local clergy and lay people that memorializes the many important contributions the faith communities make in Waterville. This page includes Waterville UCC members of the congregation and their local missions: <http://web.colby.edu/faithinwaterville/>

Living our faith in loving community with our neighbors is important to us. We recognize the changing nature of congregations and the changing nature of communities and pray we always have the grace to know how to respond in Christ's name to both.

Our History

The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Waterville is a church not afraid to take risks and try new things. After our last long-term pastorate, we knew we needed to change to adapt to the challenges - and to celebrate the joys! - the new Waterville was bringing us. So instead of an Interim, we called a Designated Pastor to be with us. Together, we have been on a six-year journey of complete systemic change, perhaps best summed up in the idea that we moved from "the survival of the institution of the church" being our mission, to being a church in mission; an Open and Affirming church serving those on the margins of our community.

Our building was getting older and in constant need of repair. The congregation decided by a vote using a secret ballot that we did not want to



become a legacy church whereby we would stay where we were and use our endowment until it ran out. Instead we embraced the idea of selling the church building and using the proceeds and our endowment to expand our mission work in the local community to help those less fortunate. Toward this end, the congregation changed its by-laws to allow its Mission Committee to establish ministry teams to better help those on the margins of our community.



We donated our pipe organ to a sister UCC church, leased our Sunday School wing to a local daycare, and, finally, sold our church building to the Children's Discovery Museum of Maine. We now lease space in the former American Legion building (now, The Elm), the space recently renovated to our specifications. The new location of the church will bring the congregation closer to the people on the margins of our community and will allow the congregation to better work to serve their needs. Also, this move eliminates our charge to care for a building that had become too large for us. Long-term, our greatest challenge is sustainability. The sale of our building provided us with a financial cushion, but our goal is to grow our missions.

After this extended period of wilderness time and change, soul searching and evolution, we are now in our new home and are looking for a pastor to sabbath with us, to help us celebrate and enjoy the fruits of our labor, and the

blessings of being this Body of Christ. We are looking for someone who is solid, dependable, and who will settle in the community, be known in the community. We value good preaching. We are going to need good pastoral care.

Our Great Location

Waterville is a former mill town, which, after a period of decline, has now turned the corner, and is alive and vibrant again. Our former mill buildings are being redeveloped into office, residential, and retail space. Anchored by Colby College, Thomas College, and the Kennebec Valley Community College, Waterville is thriving in a new way as an education and arts destination, medical service center, and retail hub for the region. Colby College, in particular, is making a significant investment in the revitalization of downtown Waterville: remodeling many buildings downtown, building a dorm, and offering free access to the world-class Colby College Art Museum and many free lectures and



concerts. Waterville's national award-winning Public Library, the Waterville Opera House, and Railroad Square Cinema are local educational, arts, and music venues.

Waterville also offers many miles of walking, hiking, and bike trails. Our newly-developed Riverwalk at the Head of Falls is a beautiful, open space along the Kennebec River. Quarry Road remains a popular local destination for hiking and cross country skiing. The Alford Youth Center offers a healthy, community-based place for our children to gather and grow together. We even have a municipal pool and water slide! We are also close to other recreational activities, such

as fishing in the Belgrade Lakes, and skiing at Sugarloaf Ski Resort, just over an hour away. The Atlantic Ocean is an hour to the east and beautiful mountains are an hour to the west.

Church and Community Information

Waterville UCC - www.watervilleucc.org

Waterville UCC Facebook - www.facebook.com/watervilleucc

City of Waterville - <http://www.waterville-me.gov>

Mid Maine Chamber - <https://midmainechamber.com>

Colby College - www.colby.edu

Colby College Museum of Art - <http://www.colby.edu/museum/>

Thomas College - www.thomas.edu

Kennebec Valley Community College - www.kvcc.me.edu

Waterville Creates - <https://www.watervillecreates.org>

Waterville Opera House - www.operahouse.org

(The award winning) Waterville Public Library - www.watervillelibrary.org

Waterville Boys and Girls Club/Alford Youth Center - <https://www.clubaycc.org>

Railroad Square Cinema - <https://www.railroadsquarecinema.com>

MIFF (Maine International Film Festival) - <https://miff.org>

REM (Revitalizing the Energy in Maine) - <https://rem1.org>

Our Settled Pastor

We seek someone to lead relevant, topical worship services; support motivated congregants in local mission work; and be an ambassador for the church in our community.

We've accomplished a lot these last six years, so we seek a pastor who will call forth the deeper gifts we have found within ourselves. We are looking for a pastor who will guide and support motivated parishioners as they pursue the church's many missions. We need someone who will help find additional community connections in the context of helping us reach our mission goals; who will join us in our vibrant future. Our Open and Affirming stance is very important to us, so we seek a pastor who will help us live out this covenant, and who will themselves come from an Open and Affirming place.

Contact Information

Mike Muir, Chair
mikemuir@me.com
207-330-0450

Rev. Deb Jenks, Interim Associate Conference Minister
djenks@maineucc.org
207-622-3100