

# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Zwingli Mt. Vernon UCC  
1693 Washington St, Verona, WI 53593

Full Time Pastor

Wisconsin Conference, Southwest Association

3/11/21

### **1. WHO ARE WE NOW, WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR, and WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME**

#### 1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Zwingli Mt. Vernon UCC

Street address: 1693 Washington St. Verona, WI 53593-9119

Supplemental web links: church@mtvernonucc.org <http://www.mtvernonucc.org>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships): None

Conference: Wisconsin Conference Association: Southwest Association UCC

Conference or Association Staff Contact Person: Rev. Lorraine Cenicerros,, Associate

Conference Minister (608) 630-2992 or [lceniceros@wcucc.org](mailto:lceniceros@wcucc.org)

### Summary Ministry Description:

We are a small church with a large heart where the Scriptures are read carefully with eyes wide open to the world. **Our goal, following Jesus, is to be as generous in our welcome as he was**, breaking down every barrier that divides neighbor from neighbor. We are affirming of people of any sexual orientation or gender identity and we welcome people of every race, any political party, any religion, or no religion at all. We offer the bread and wine from Christ's table to everyone who comes through the door. **We recognize all people as children of God** and welcome all people to worship with us. We strive to look inward and outward as we continue to step prayerfully and courageously forward towards this goal. We will focus inwardly by honoring our newly written *Behavioral Covenant* that encourages us to create and sustain a congregational life of inclusiveness, respect, honesty, and safety. We are precious to one another and seek to build a beloved community in which we can build our faith, know God's love, and be whole. We are looking for a pastor who can encourage us to live in healthy and constructive relationships with one another. We will reach outwardly to build connections and community with our neighbors; working together to bring not only hope and love to the hurting and marginalized, but also renewal to the Earth. We are seeking someone who can challenge and inspire us through relevant/progressive minded worship, Bible study, fellowship, service, and shared experiences to follow Christ's radical example of love and care to each other. We are looking for a pastor who will help us move prayerfully together as we seek God's guidance in this important work.

*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? (see above paragraph)*

Photographs (see attached photos)

1) Remodeled church with solar panels



2) Congregational worship on Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



3) Eating Waffles during “Waffle Church”



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

We are lucky to have the church's backyard literally be Donald County Park (780 acres), where we can hike through restored oak savannah prairie to enjoy a scenic vista from a rock outcropping, take a dip in the pond, trout fish in the spring fed stream, and enjoy the beauty of God's Creation. The popularity of sustainable, organic agriculture in our area means we get to eat really well and know our food as well as our farmers. Living mostly in smaller communities we appreciate getting to know each other well through visits to the local cafes, parks, breweries, grocery store, school, and library but also value having city life a mere half hour away in Madison.

Current size of membership:

About 70 active members with another 40 less regularly engaged with many additional friends of the church. Approximately 50 people attend Sunday worship. Our pandemic Zoom worship has between 25 and 35 participants.

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*) None

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration: Settled, Full time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

#### 1b. SCOPE OF WORK

- Committing to and making time for your own spiritual growth/theological knowledge through study, prayer and meditation
- Building relationships and getting to know the members of our congregation
- Planning and leading of a creative Sunday worship service including selecting scripture, crafting of liturgy, bulletin, selecting hymns and working with musicians in determining music, and crafting audio-visuals; sermon preparation, preaching, involving congregation in worship in a way that allows people to use their unique gifts; offering of prayers and weekly communion.
- Guiding the faith formation and spiritual growth of our congregation through leading prayer, Bible studies, book clubs, service projects, retreats and mission opportunities as needed.
- Involving congregation in church leadership
- Guiding faithful financial development and stewardship

- Supporting Lay leadership within the congregation by working with leaders of various ministries and programs (ie. Christian Education and Youth ministry)
- Engaging in pastoral care, prayer, counseling, listening and providing referrals to congregants as needed.
- Supporting and further developing the various outreach missions of the church to the wider community as needed.
- Being active in the local community, as able.
- Participating in wider church activities, such as conference and association meetings.
- Conducting administrative responsibilities such as communications via e-mail, website, and Facebook page
- Supervising church staff (cleaning person and organist) and volunteers (youth director, musicians, treasurer, maintenance committee, etc.)
- Conducting baptisms, weddings, and funerals, for members of the congregation as well as those from the wider community as needed
- Becoming an active member of the Mt. Horeb Clergy Association

We identified the three main core competencies in a series of three visioning sessions led by our interim pastor this fall. These are the following:

Core Competencies:

Caring -- Sensitive not just to individuals and families in our community looking for spiritual guidance, but also aware of and concerned for the needs of the earth and God's people around the globe.

Spiritual-- Well-schooled in all facets of theology, familiar with multiple biblical interpretations, encouraging prayer and reflection

Relevant--Guided by progressive ideas, willing to be challenged and to challenge, inspiring the congregation to live our values everyday

## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis : \$45,965 (Cash salary plus housing allowance.)

Benefits:

In addition to salary and housing allowance, we provide dental, health insurance, life, and disability insurance as well as a set-aside for pension and a Social Security allowance. The church also pays moving expenses up to a determined amount.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

We prefer the minister live in our area of service (within ten to twenty miles of the church) and provide a housing allowance as part of the compensation package.

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

- 1) The Community of Practice (CoP) Group for UCC clergy, facilitated by a paid and trained person.
- 2) Support from Association Conference Minister, Lorraine Cenicerros (including weekly office hours)
- 3) Regular Boundary Training sessions. The Conference makes these sessions available once or twice a year. Currently the boundary training is provided by Convergence. It is an online learning available year round.

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

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

We envision a pastor who joins with us in building healthy relationships within the present church congregation, who expands our social presence within the immediate and approximate communities we serve, who appreciates and capitalizes on our unique appreciation of music and the arts, has a talent for identifying and drawing to our church the “unchurched” and disaffected persons who are uncomfortable in traditional or uncompromising religious settings.

We envision that our pastor will be an active and visible presence within our local community, through involvement in community organizations and events, as well as occasionally writing letters to the editor at the Mt. Horeb Mail. We envision a pastor that will enjoy engaging in natural evangelism through following the example of Jesus’ radical love and extravagant welcome in their interactions with the community. We also envision a

pastor that will help us identify the areas of need in our community and how our unique gifts and talents could meet those needs.

In this church we strive to follow Jesus and to imitate the open welcome and the unconditional acceptance he showed to every person he met.” (Mt Vernon UCC Constitution). Responding to the grace of God, the Mt Vernon Zwingli United Church of Christ is an Open and Affirming congregation. We welcome all persons, including those of all races, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures, faith backgrounds, abilities and economic circumstances. We recognize all people as children of God, welcome all people to worship and serve with us and consider all who come to be a necessary part of this fellowship. Our pastor should be comfortable in a rural setting.

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) Exhibiting a spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice 2) Building transformational leadership 3) Engaging sacred stories and traditions 4) Caring for all creation.

We seek a minister whose sermons engage the sacred stories and traditions; who exhibits knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. We value biblically based, yet theologically progressive sermons which are part of a beautifully crafted worship experience. We appreciate good, relevant storytelling and, especially, a sense of humor. We desire a minister who attempts to live a life of discipleship, loving God and following the tenets set for us by Jesus Christ. We seek a person who understands the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith. We desire to continue our practice of weekly communion, congregational prayer, and scripture reading. We are looking for a pastor who encourages our continued support of Neighbors Helping Neighbors, the Little Free Food Pantry, and other outreach for marginalized persons in our community. We hope to reinvigorate our outreach to young parishioners and renew a commitment to confirmation activities.

Our next minister should encourage leadership development by making congregants aware of opportunities, identifying special personal talents and suggesting important books and programs to nurture spiritual practices. Several members of our congregation have



participated in the Wisconsin Conference UCC Lay Academy. The lay leadership of our church have led book discussions, Adult Sunday School, and workshops such as meditation and yoga . Others have shared their artistic talents through music and the fine arts.

We expect our new minister to exhibit a commitment to the core values and beliefs of the UCC such as extravagant welcome and God is Still Speaking.

## 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)

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

This fall, we completed a three step visioning process which afforded the congregation opportunity to explore who we are and where we are going. Using Matthew 22:36-39 as our touchstone, we reaffirmed our mission statement which is, in summary, to **Wonder** with purpose--to ask questions, to celebrate differences, to examine scripture and embrace diversity; to **Welcome** our circle of neighbors, shower love and blessing throughout our community, to care for creation; and to **Worship** in all that we do, and in ways that help our hearts to sing, nourish bodies, minds and souls so that all are fed and none leave the table hungry. Through this process, we also identified our three core values: **Caring, Spiritual, and Relevant.**

Early in 2020, our church went through an unexpected conflict that arose during a time of transition to a new church council and the announcement of retirement of our former pastor. Because of what we learned from this experience and in order to better deal with conflict in the future, we wrote and adopted a “Behavioral Covenant” as a tool for handling, in Christian love, conflicts that may arise in unexpected and even threatening ways.

## 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

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

*For example, what beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation's purpose statement or membership vows? How is God most often described in worship liturgy? In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?*

God is most often simply called God or Creator God, from the pulpit. God is seen as a beneficent presence, visible in the natural world and in the artistry displayed within our worship--in poetry, in music, in the visual arts. Acts of kindness are considered manifestations of God in our midst. The Holy Spirit is present through our prayer and sharing each other's joys and concerns.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

We are warm, friendly, accepting, and caring. We have great music! We are an Open and Affirming Congregation. We maintain a very strong and active prayer chain that references not only members but also those anywhere in the world that are hurting or struggling and need to feel God's grace. We are social and enjoy fellowship always taking care to invite visitors to our substantial after-worship potluck.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

*For example, where does worship take place, and what is it based around? What was a recent baptism like? What are some words used to describe good preaching?*

Because of COVID, we now have an interactive service using Zoom which fosters participation and contribution by our members and contributes to a "family feeling". In pre-pandemic times we had creative, interactive, multimedia services, which, in addition to the normal liturgy and sermon, incorporated music, sharing, art and poetry. We have a large screen in the front of the sanctuary to display pictures, poetry, worship songs, and videos. We seek a pastor who is comfortable with this element of our worship.

Though our services tend to be informal, we follow a consistent order of worship. The sermons are sometimes based on the lectionary text but we often delve into other topics and sermon series. We prefer sermons that are biblically based but not predictable and might even challenge accepted conventional Christian doctrine. "Relevant, thought provoking and challenging" are words we use to describe "good" preaching. In the past several years we have invited both guest speakers and church members to give the

message in a series called "Stories you never expected to hear in church" in which they share their own personal experiences of God.

We share communion every Sunday and practice Open Communion where absolutely everyone is welcome, including children, in fact our children are always the first in line for communion. Fellowship after church extends to our "coffee hour" (which is actually a potluck) which we affectionately call church 2.0.

*Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church. For example, how are young people in leadership? How do people continue to form their faith over a lifetime? Name a topic studied or curriculum used recently; what was the impact of this study on those who attended?*

Adult Sunday School meets prior to the service and is well attended. It is an opportunity for attendees to discuss the scripture texts for that Sunday in greater depth. Adult Sunday school has become a community of people who can share openly and honestly with one another about their faith, their questioning, and their lives. It is a time when we can grapple and converse together about the challenging and inspiring issues presented in the scriptures and see how they relate to our lives and the world today. It is a place of respectful dialog even when we don't agree. In the past several years we have used a book called, Rehearsing Scripture: Discovering God's Word in Community by Anna Carter Florence who provides concrete and practical tools for reading and rehearsing scripture in groups. We also looked at all the verses in the Bible that referenced homosexuality before adopting ONA. This gave people a better understanding of how people in Bible times viewed the issue.

We have a very capable and enthusiastic Child and Youth Ministries leader, who is a Lay Academy graduate. We are in the process of developing our child and youth ministries to meet the needs of our households and community. Pre-pandemic for our Kindergarten through 5th graders we had Storybox time with the pastor and a twice monthly Children's Sunday School which followed the Godly Play curriculum. Since COVID, during warm weather, we have met outside around a campfire for s'mores and socializing.

In addition to our normal (pre-pandemic) Sunday morning church service, we also had: **Pizza Church**, a once a month gathering for middle and high schoolers to eat pizza together and talk about current issues and faith; and **Waffle Church**, a kid-centered, intergenerational, once-a-month evening that included storytelling, activities, and a shared meal of homemade waffles.

For the middle school and high schoolers, we have sponsored various activities such as a high ropes course, bowling, and a talent show at the local senior center. We are now meeting every three weeks via zoom to check-in, discuss Jason Reynolds' book Stamped Racism, Antiracism and You, as well as to play games. We are looking for a pastor who can help us develop a confirmation program for our current youth group.

Our Christmas Pageant includes kids interviewing adults about what Christmas was like when they were kids. We have also had the kids/youth share their talents for the church service on Mother's Day. Recently, the youth performed a rendition of the three magi story for our zoom worship service.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

*For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?*

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month? Council meets monthly for about two hours, and Christian Education monthly for about 1 hour.
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred.

When the church had to meet virtually because of COVID, we quickly moved to having services remotely. Our pastor consulted the church council to determine the appropriate path forward.

- Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance?

Yes. We have governing documents: the constitution and the bylaws and a governing body: the church council. A church council is the central governing body of the church, meeting once a month. Standing committees include: Church Council, Nominating Committee, Christian Education, Memorial, Endowment. The volunteer committees are: Caregivers, Maintenance, Pastoral Relations, Women's Guild. They meet as needed.

### 3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

Membership is not a formal process.		
Number of active members:	70	Estimate
Number of active non-members:	20	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	70-90	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	50%	x
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	35%	x
Less than 5 years:	15%	x

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) x</i>
8	15	5	10	6	9	8	18	32	x

Number of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	3	x
Households with minors:	12	x
Single adults age 35-65:	5	x
Joint households with no minors:	26	x
Single adults over 65:	14	x

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	32%	x
College:(includes Grad school)	40 %	x
Graduate School (subset of college):	23 %	x
Specialty Training:	29 %	x
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	63%	X Includes part-time
Adults who are retired:	37%	x
Adults who are not fully employed:		

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

A variety from farmers, blue collar workers, and self-employed business owners, to teachers, doctors, counselors and nurses, to government and university employees.

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?

If we did a DNA test for our congregation we would likely find more than 95 percent of us to be of Northern European descent. This reflects the predominant, though changing, demographics of our area. Our church is a welcoming congregation to all people.

### 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? ( <i>list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff</i> )
Adult Sunday School	12	Ruth Dobson, Pastor, Rotating lay leaders
Baptisms ( <i>number last year</i> )	0	
Children's Groups or Classes	4 on average	Mary Penninga, Judy Hale
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	145	Pastor and musicians
Church-wide Meals (Easter pancake breakfast)	80	Church Members
Choirs and Music Groups (2nd Chance Band)	10	Musicians, Steve and Kelly Brumm
Adult Groups: Wednesday night simple suppers during Lent, Advent Book study, other book studies	Varies 6 to 15	Pastor, church members
Communion ( <i>served how often?</i> )	<i>Every week</i>	Pastor and church members serve communion
Community Meals (Cloth Napkin Potlucks)	40	Church members, Jeff Jenkins
Confirmation ( <i>number confirmed last year</i> )	0	<i>Don't have formal confirmation at this time</i>
Drama (Christmas Pageant)	15 to 20 participants	Church members, pastor, Judy Hale, Mary Penninga, Kelly and Steve Brumm, Julie Von Eschen
Funerals ( <i>number last year</i> )	1	
Intergenerational Groups (Waffle Church)	15	Mary Penninga, Judy Hale, Beth Albert, Margy Murray, Justina Harvey, Kelly Brumm - music,

		Pastor
Outdoor Worship	N/A	Have only done this a couple of times.
Prayer Chain	20	Ruth Dobson, Mary Lou Kollath
Public Advocacy Work	N/A	
Knock Knock Retreat in 2018 (youth)	3 youth	At Pilgrim Center Retreat Center
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	Theology on Tap in the past but not currently
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	0	
Worship (time slot: 9:30 in summer and 10:15 in winter)	55	
Black Lives Matter March in Mt. Horeb	6	Mt Horeb community members
Young Adult Groups or Classes	N/A	
Youth Groups or Classes	8 youth	Mary Penninga, Lori Burns
Church 2.0 potlucks (after Sunday Service)	30	Church members

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)
<i>Tisha Brown</i>	4	<i>Wisconsin Conference, UCC</i>	<i>Lay Academy/Damas Project</i>	No

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: None

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff. Paid staff: Pianist, Housekeeper

Staff Position	Head of Staff	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Child/Youth Ministries Director	Mary Penninga	Part-time volunteer	Pastor, Christian Education Committee	4 years
Pianist	Julie Von Eschen	Part-time paid	Pastor	30+ years
Housekeeper	Deb Gilden	Part-time paid	Pastor	30+ years
Song Leaders	Steve and Kelly Brumm	Volunteers	Pastor	9 years

## REFLECTION

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

Though our membership is mostly middle-aged and retired, we are an active, intergenerational congregation. We value service to our community and outreach to our youth. We are a welcoming, friendly church that feels like a family. Many new members have heard about us from personal invitation from a friend, participation in community events/outreach, or articles in the local paper. Our congregation is small enough so that everyone receives individual attention and a feeling of belonging and support. Our church is a true respite and a sanctuary. It is a community in which we all feel cared for and can contribute to. It is a place where we are encouraged to grow in our faith and use our gifts. In order to continue to thrive, we need to continue to be active in the community.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual ( budget for FY2021)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$97,310
Endowment Proceeds <i>(as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)</i>	Not included in budget
Endowment Draw <i>(beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")</i>	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$7,500
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants (PPP Program)	\$11,300
Rentals of Church Building	\$0
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations <i>(e.g. Women's Group)</i>	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$115,519</b>

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$115,487

*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.*

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 operating budget, what is that percentage? *\$700 quarterly*

What is the church's current indebtedness? \$58,191.00

Total amount of loan debt: \$58,191.00

Reason for debt: Interior and exterior improvements to church building

Are capital and other payments current? Yes.

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

In 2019, we authorized reserved funds to repair water damage to our foundation and outside walls, install a rainwater diversion system, remodel our fellowship hall, install a handicap accessible bathroom, and replace old ramps and stairs to make our church more handicap accessible. At this time we also installed solar panels on the church roof, a project that both helps lower our electricity bills substantially and demonstrates our commitment to environmental awareness. This expense was covered by grants.

Does your church have an endowment? yes

What is the market value of the assets?

\$59,860

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

As needed with guidelines.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year

and the past five years.

A draw was made in 2019 for critical structural improvements in the church building.

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

The fund cannot be expended below its donated base (\$53,091.97) as specified in the church constitution.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates.

There have been no principal contributions to the fund from its inception. To keep the endowment viable, the Endowment Committee has recommended encouraging contributions and not relying solely on market forces. The church is actively working with Rev. Andrew Warner, President of the UCC Foundation of Wisconsin, on maintaining and growing the endowment.

Other Assets

We have two CD's in the 1001 General Fund Checking:

1080GF CD 52099 10/5/19 = \$4,717.25

1081GF CD 52100 3/5/20 = \$2,437.75

Does your church have a parsonage?

No

Describe all buildings owned by the church.

Our church building and equipment shed

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

none

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

We have invested in ramps and chair lift to make the sanctuary and fellowship hall accessible. We also have a wheelchair accessible bathroom off the fellowship hall in the lower level. At present we have three church members who regularly require accessible facilities.

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

At present our financial plan is to continue funding a full-time pastor, maintaining our 108-year-old church building and to fully fund initiatives that our pastor proposes for the church at large in cooperation with the desires and vision of the congregation.

### 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.

- 1) The vote to become open and affirming occurred on November 25, 2015 with nearly unanimous support. Three years prior to this vote, we established an Open and Affirming Study Group which helped to well prepare the church for the vote through engaging in education, relevant scripture study, and prayer.
- 2) More recently the retirement of our long-time pastor and Covid 19 restrictions may have long-lasting effects on the congregation, but not necessarily bad ones. We look at these events as opportunities to change for the better. Our *Behavioral Covenant* and familiarity with Zoom technology, etc. came out of these events. We also held a workshop with the UCC Conflict Resolution team this fall called Blessed are the Peacemakers that helped us gain the tools to better deal with conflict.

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

- 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.

An unexpected congregational conflict arose upon the retirement of our previous pastor. This prompted the creation of our *Behavioral Covenant* which gives our congregation a "map" for dealing with conflict. Our covenant has already been requested by other conference churches to study and perhaps to implement.

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

Our Pastors	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
-------------	------------------	--------------------

<i>Fred Hoernemann</i>	<i>1912-1913</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Walter Grosshuesch</i>	<i>1914-1922</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>George Grether</i>	<i>1923-1928</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Herman Lehman</i>	<i>1929-1941</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Walter Clausing</i>	<i>1941-1951</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Zane Pautz</i>	<i>1951-1965</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>George Bahner</i>	<i>1965-1973</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Terry Williams</i>	<i>1973-1977</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Paul Scheele</i>	<i>1977-1980</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>James Eckblad</i>	<i>1981-1984</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Brooke Wickliffe</i>	<i>1985-1986</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Doug Pierce</i>	<i>1987-1992</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Barbara Rudolph</i>	<i>1992-1993</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Jeff Sartain</i>	<i>1994-1998</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Glenn Danz</i>	<i>1998-2004</i>	<i>Y</i>
<i>Brad Brookins</i>	<i>2004-2020</i>	<i>Y</i>

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

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

No

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?

Community service is a deeply held value for our church. We enjoy working and serving together. Below is a sampling of some of the service and outreach activities that we have engaged in over the years:

- Caregivers Committee: Coordinates distribution of fruit baskets, cards to those going through difficult times, gift cards for students, care packages for veterans
- Fair trade coffee: served for coffee hour and sold as youth fundraiser
- Woman's guild: provides meals for weddings and funerals
- Missionary support: Jon and Marijane Beutler, Children of one of our church members (They are part of Shepherd's Staff ministries in Africa. They support other missionaries and the local church of Southern Africa in practical, hands on ways).
- Support of Sharing Resources Worldwide, co-founded by one of our church members. (SRW delivers medical/surgical care and supplies to areas where there is great need.)
- Youth service events: Ingleside Manor talent show, participation in Madison "Plunge" weekend, to learn about homelessness and poverty in Madison - met and heard stories from homeless people, served and shared community meals, worked at downtown food pantry/food distribution, etc.
- Volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank
- Community Meals: Waffle Church - included a free meal of waffles to whoever came.
- Outreach to families: waffle church, pizza church, "cloth napkin" community potlucks, transformed laundry baskets into Easter meal baskets for families of the Badger Prairie Needs Network
- Blanket drive, School Supplies drive, Coat Drive, Underwear drive, and Love offering for Neighbors helping Neighbors
- Community local food potlucks, dinners and farmers markets
- Little Free Pantry in our parking lot
- A Theology on Tap Chapter was started in Mt. Horeb by prior pastor
- Mt Horeb chapter of PFLAG was founded by many of our members

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

We solicit and send delegates to the state and association conferences. We have three graduates and two others who have participated in Wisconsin Conference

UCC Lay Academy classes. Youth have participated in the UCC National Youth Event and youth camp retreats.

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. (Find more information as desired at [ucc.org](http://ucc.org).) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A)           | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming            | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations:               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M) | <input type="checkbox"/> 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?

Being designated as an ONA congregation is consistent with our value of recognizing all people as children of God and are welcome to worship and fellowship with us. We have a strong interest in creation justice and are in the preliminary stages of forming a “green team”.

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

- The pastor of our church is part of the Mt Horeb Clergy Association which organizes ecumenical services and events such as the community-wide worship services on Thanksgiving and Good Friday and a public vigil after the Pulse NightClub shooting in 2016



- During the Madison-plunge, youth helped serve meals and distribute food with First United Methodist Church
- Our church hosted a series in which we invited local Muslims to share food with us and talk about their religion and experience in this country
- We have volunteered for Habitat for Humanity work projects
- We have prepared and served meals for The Crossing (The Crossing is a progressive interdenominational Christian campus ministry at UW-Madison sponsored by the United Methodist, United Church of Christ, and American Baptist Churches of Wisconsin)

## 4b. MISSION InSite

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

Mt. Vernon, where the church is located, is quite small and sparsely populated. Once a bustling, mill town with a water grist mill for processing grain, Mt. Vernon had a colorful history and was home to one of Wisconsin's most notable politicians, Robert LaFollette, a Progressive Republican and presidential candidate on the Progressive Ticket. The Mt. Vernon Swiss Reformed Church was formed in 1888 and met at various locations. Renamed Zwingli the present church was built at its current location in 1913. After several denominational mergers, the church became known in 1957 as the Zwingli United Church of Christ (MVUCC). The MissionInsite Report indicates the MVUCC area of influence includes west Madison, the town of Middleton, and Verona. However, our members also live in Mt. Horeb, Blue Mounds, Fitchburg, Cross Plains, Belleville, and New Glarus. The demographics of these areas, especially Verona and West Madison (Fitchburg) suggest a population considerably more white collar, educated and wealthier than the area immediately surrounding the church. The population is also shown to be more skeptical of organized denominational religion and those surveyed for the report list "no time" as the primary reason for not attending church. This represents both a challenge and a big opportunity for our church and a willing and capable pastor. Indeed, two recent newspaper special reports featured these headlines: "Boom in housing, explosion of growth in Verona" and "Perfect Storm: Mount Horeb is Rapidly Redeveloping," with a high-tech health data company (Epic Systems) and millions of dollars invested in a growing tourism industry and downtown redevelopment for Mount Horeb as engines of growth. Population and household formation growth is forecast to exceed the statewide average.

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?

We have similar demographics to the area immediately surrounding the church (rural Mt. Vernon area), but with a greater percentage of seniors (45% of us being 65 years of age and older). Like the community in which we are located, our church members are mostly white and solidly middle class with a wide range of income and education levels. We tend to attract people who either were raised in this church or those who had been raised in a different denomination and had become disaffected with organized religion before discovering us. The present demographics of the area immediately surrounding the church does not reflect the changes being experienced in Mt. Horeb and Verona. The demographics of our immediate neighborhood reflect an area gradually becoming more affluent as well.

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

We reach out to our community through non-traditional outreach activities (such as "Waffle Church" and community potlucks) or inviting community leaders from diverse backgrounds who are doing good work to give the sermon or talk to us about their faith journeys and work.

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

Our church is warm, friendly, accepting, and caring. We are known for our hospitality, amazing pie, great music and fabulous services, especially on Christmas Eve and Easter! We are also known for progressive, thought provoking editorials in the local paper (Mt. Horeb Mail).

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

Dedicated efforts by the former pastor and direct invitation by members who sense a shared interest in progressive theology.

## **5. REFERENCES**

REFERENCE 1 Mary Gafner, UCC lay pastor and Friend of Congregation)

Mary Gafner / Retired lay Pastor / Monticello, WI

(608-938-4400 /mgafner@wekz.net)

REFERENCE 2 Sue Huntenberg (she, her, hers), (President, PFLAG Mt. Horeb, Friend of Congregation)

(608-345-1605/shuntenburg@mhtc.net)

REFERENCE 3 Mary Reinders, Friend, neighbor, and occasional church participant)

(414-531-4093 / 8730 Oak Grove Rd, Mt Horeb, WI 53572

## **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.*

Dear Candidates, thank you for your ministry and interest in our church. Please listen to this song of blessing (written and performed by Steve and Kelly Brumm, members of our church) before going on with your day and may you have a truly blessed day.

[Blessings](#)

## 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.

1. 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.)*

This profile was prepared by a Search and Call Committee appointed by the Church Council and working in covenant with the congregation. They are: Margy Murray, Beth Albert, Chaplain, Judy Hale, Kelly Brumm, Secretary, Mary Penninga and Steve Slack, chair.

Signed:

Steve Slack, Chair, MVUCC Search and Call Committee, March 11, 2021

## 6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:



Name / Title: Rev. Lorraine Cenicerros/Associate Conference Minister

Email: lcenicerros@wcucc.org

Phone: 608-630-2992

Date: March 11, 2021



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***

## Reference Letter—Search Committee at Mt. Vernon UCC, Verona, WI

To Whom it may Concern,

It is a privilege to be asked to write a letter of reference for Mt. Vernon Zwingli UCC, Verona WI. I am Mary Gafner, retired licensed lay pastor for the Wisconsin Conference of the UCC and the Southwest Association. I was the full-time pastor for Washington Reformation UCC outside the village of Monticello, WI for 18 years, retiring in August 2017. We attended Mt. Vernon UCC frequently after my retirement.

### **Strengths:**

This congregation is a delightful mix of folks from all walks of life. It is comprised of professionals, rural and city folk, retired folk, long time members and newly arrived. AND children! They were always important and often in attendance. Communion is offered every Sunday and the children always came up from Sunday school to participate in that sacrament. They set the mood for reverence and acceptance.

People with disabilities from all age groups, attend and are loved into the warm acceptance of the community. The welcome by the members is warm and inviting. There were many avenues and invitations for participation within the body of the church, which included everything from the home-cooked brunch every Sunday after worship with the members taking turns at feeding the flock and doing the dishes complete with good coffee and great conversation. There were always Book Studies or Bible studies offered, and Christian Education offered.

During Lent we participated in Wednesday evening Bible study which began with supper and was followed by worship in the sanctuary. It was a nice sized group, much larger than I expected. The Bible study was lively and the discussion engaging. The conversation was one of sharing without fear of offending folks with differing opinions or views.

This is a congregation that supports not only the WI conference and National Church but it consistently supports and celebrates the local farmers and businesses. It is one of the things that drew us to that congregation. The fundraisers for the church involved the community members and locally grown produce.

The worship at Zwingli was always fresh. Sometimes challenging, always current and infused with poetry and music and great use of the screen. The Screen use was both for engaging the congregation with modern technology and creative worship and it also gave a nod to those for whom bulletin reading was difficult. The music in worship was amazing another highlight for me. The Piano interludes and solo work on the guitar and by the soloist were wonderful. It made

the worship experience both a strength and one the reasons we often worshipped in Mt. Vernon. The Christmas Eve Service was the best we ever attended.

### **Areas For Improvement:**

This is much harder for me to write about. I was a visitor for those two years and didn't get involved in the under-belly of congregational difficulties. But the truth of the matter is that there are always areas of improvement for all churches. I think the congregation knows both it's own strengths and it's weaknesses. From my observation, the congregation and the consistory seemed to learn from the mistakes it has made and has taken steps to do things differently. In the pursuit of "doing better" they are looking, I think, constitutionally, at what membership needs to be, or how to define it. What are the first steps one should take when dealing with members who are not contributing in a positive way? Or perhaps, acting negatively? Where does mental health fit into the mix? Where does grace and mercy apply when examining all of those things in the context of the pandemic, the needs of the community and what will the church look like going into the future. What traditions need to stay and which ones need to go? What are the newly seen strengths that need to be kept and which ones need to go? What a delightful tension within the church. Zwingli is up to the challenge.

Blessings and Peace,

*Mary Gafner*

W3676 Purinton Road  
Monticello, WI 53570



March 2, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

Two years ago, Pastor Brad Brookins of the Mount Vernon Zwingli United Church of Christ, invited me to come to the church to tell my story about growing up gay. The church was already Open and Affirming church community, but Brad wanted LGBTQ folks to come tell their personal stories in order to foster understanding in the congregation. While I was nervous sharing my journey with a large group of strangers, I was immediately welcomed. After speaking, I was overwhelmed by the response of the congregation.....a standing ovation! There is nothing that helps affirm one's story more than this. And after speaking, my partner and I were invited to share a meal with the folks in the congregation. While I walked away from the Catholic Church years ago, because of the messages I received there, I know that if I ever changed my mind and was looking for a place to worship, I would not hesitate to attend services at the Mt. Vernon UCC.

I was not the only person from the LGBTQ community invited to talk at the Mt. Vernon Church. One of my transgender friends was invited as well. She received the same reception from the community as I did. And again, the parents of a transgender son came to speak and the reception was positive for them as well.

In addition to these gestures of acceptance and kindness, a number of congregation members have attended our PFLAG meetings and two members of the congregation have been PFLAG Board Members since the inception of PFLAG in the Mount Horeb community.

It is so nice to know there is a church in the area that completely welcomes folks from the LGBTQ community. Not every space is safe for us, but I know if I needed a safe space, I would find it here.

Sincerely,

**Sue Huntenburg**

Sue Huntensburg (she, her, hers)

President, PFLAG Mt. Horeb

[shuntensburg@mhtc.net](mailto:shuntensburg@mhtc.net)

608-345-1605

March 3, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

My family and I live within a four-mile radius of the Mt. Vernon Church, in Primrose. After moving here six years ago, we were warmly welcomed by Pastor Brad and our neighbor, and lay leader, Mary Penninga. Coming from the East side of Milwaukee, we were unaccustomed to such community hospitality and credit the church and the civically minded culture that Pastor Brad helped to instill.

During our time in the community, we have participated in many picnics, cookouts, holiday plays, and of course, our favorite – Waffle Church. Our 8 year old daughter, Vivienne’s absolute favorite. During these events – she participates in bible story telling, crafts, and the ever-popular delicious home cooked waffle feast, prepared by church members and served in the basement. These events have helped us get to know and bond with Pastor Brad, congregation members, and other children our daughter’s age – many of whom are now playmates.

We are not overtly religious or dedicated church goers. But that has never been a barrier to interacting with the Mt. Vernon Church or its members. This is why the Church is so much more than a religious center to our area.

In these trying times of turmoil, anxiety and loss – it offers the ever-important social and spiritual support that small communities need. Since our small town offers little in the way of institutions or even businesses – the Church has become “everything” to many residents. This includes a place to break bread with a neighbor or even get food supplementation if you are running low on funds to feed your family.

Said in short – we love “our” little church and have no recommendations for improvement. We only wish to see it continue to thrive as a shining community asset. Here’s hoping that the next pastor will be as thoughtful, brilliant, and community focused as the last.

Yours truly,

*Mary Reinders*

Mary Reinders

8730 Oak Grove Road  
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572  
414 531 4093