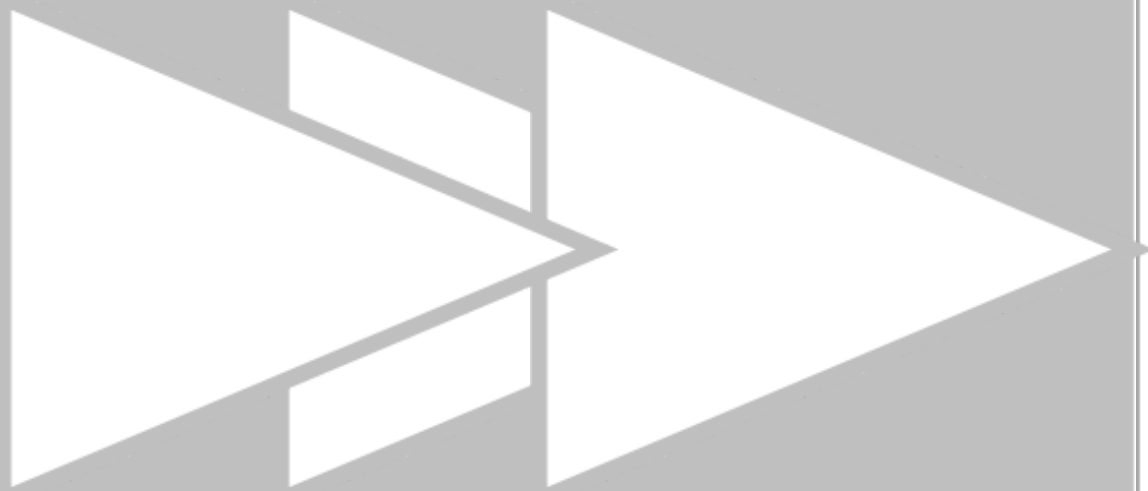


# INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



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

First United Church of Christ  
Northfield, Minnesota

Settled Senior Minister

Minnesota Conference

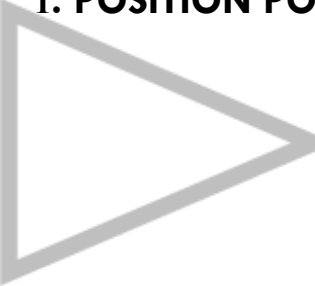
[Validated 3-19-21 Rev. Sheresa Simpson-Rice]

### LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- ☐ Position Posting
- ☐ Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- ☐ Who Are We Now?
- ☐ Who Is Our Neighbor?
- ☐ References
- ☐ Consent and Validation

*“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

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- a. LISTING INFORMATION
  - b. SCOPE OF WORK
  - c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
  - d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

### 1a. LISTING INFORMATION

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First United Church of Christ (First UCC)  
300 Union Street  
Northfield MN 55057  
<http://firstucc.org>

Conference: Minnesota

Association: N/A

UCC Conference Staff: Sheresa Simpson-Rice, Interim Associate Conference Minister,  
717-318-6865, [sheresar@uccmn.org](mailto:sheresar@uccmn.org)

No additional ecumenical affiliations, denominations or fellowships.

### Summary Ministry Description

Our church's covenant reads: "We covenant together with God and one another, trusting in God's continuing guidance, to seek to understand and do God's will, to explore the mystery of Christ, and to witness to God's reconciling love."

First UCC Northfield is being called to challenge ourselves and our ministry to practice our church's covenant more deeply, more widely, and more inclusively.

We have a history of practicing our faith together in our commitments to our youth, social and racial justice, environmental stewardship, Open and Affirming and Just Peace pledges, and our extravagant welcome. We are being called to expand our definition of "together" to include a wider community in Northfield and the world beyond through traditional and innovative ways.

Our church history is closely tied to the founding of Carleton College, a 4-year liberal arts college. Many members have connections with both Carleton and St. Olaf College, more have college and graduate degrees, most are working professionals. In short, we use our heads a lot.

Now we are being called urgently and humbly to move deeply into our hearts as we seek to understand and do God's will and explore the mystery of Christ. We are being called to practice the courageous love and justice of Jesus. Practicing because we want to be better at it. Love because it is who God is and the way Jesus called us to live. Justice because our practice should "comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable," to quote Reinhold Neibuhr.

First UCC has a long history of witnessing our faith through community engagement and personal connections. Members laid the foundation for the Community Action Center. We were one of the first churches in Northfield to become Open and Affirming. Our members are instrumental in Northfield's Climate Action Coalition. We are active in ISAIAH, a faith-based community organizing group, locally and statewide.

First UCC is known to be engaged, open, welcoming, inclusive, and progressive. We are a safe haven for those seeking to be inspired, challenged and nurtured, in the same way that we are inspired, challenged and nurtured by one another. We seek to open our doors even wider and invite others to gather at our communion table, even when we differ in understanding, expression and action.

Each week we begin our worship with this welcome:

*Welcome to First United Church of Christ. We are an Open and Affirming, Just Peace congregation of the United Church of Christ. Welcome to you if you are an elder or tween or a little bit of each. Welcome to you if you are queer or straight or a little bit of each. Welcome to people of all ages, races, genders, gender expressions, meat-eaters, vegetarians and vegans. Whether you believe a whole lot or have faith the size of a mustard seed, you are welcome here. Because you showed up, this Body is whole and perfect.*

We acknowledge that we live imperfectly into this welcome. As we search for our new leader, we enthusiastically welcome a diversity of candidates who will help us live more fully into the welcome we express and to reflect the diversity in the Body of Christ. That includes people from all racial and cultural groups, abilities, sexual orientations, gender expressions, and economic backgrounds.

Our practice of love and justice needs to infuse everything we do as a congregation. We seek a Senior Minister who will join us in helping us live into our covenant more fully and more faithfully.





Solar Panels installed on the south roof of our historic building



Children's Musical Performance





Online Worship each week



Time with children during in person worship





First UCC folks supporting the Black Lives Matter demonstration



Fall Gathering at Valley Grove Church in nearby Nerstrand, MN - Living in HOPE!

## **What we value about living in our area**

First UCC members are fully engaged in this small town of 25,000 residents. We volunteer our time and talents in numerous non-profit organizations, service clubs, municipal boards and commissions, and schools in addition to our church. Our town motto, “Cows, colleges, and contentment” could be amended to be “Cows, colleges, and collaboration.”

Three-fourths of our members have college or graduate degrees, and half of us are retired, both reflecting the fact that Northfield is home to two liberal arts colleges and is a magnet for retirees.

The 2020 general election confirmed that Northfield is a blue island in a red sea in exurban and rural southern Minnesota. We envision our church as a home for neighbors near and not so near who may be looking for an extravagant welcome into an inclusive congregation.

Our location just 40 miles south of the Twin Cities allows quick access to the airport and the rich cultural and art and music scenes of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Rochester.

**Current size of membership:** 425

**Languages used in ministry:** semi-monthly American Sign Language; Spanish would be helpful.

**Position Title:** Senior Minister

**Position Duration:**

Settled; a called position intended for longer-term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association.

**Compensation Level:**

Full Time; 40-50 hours weekly. Our support package meets Minnesota conference compensation guidelines.

## **1b. SCOPE OF WORK**

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The Senior Minister joins a staff team of seven people at First UCC. As a community we live into this covenant: “We covenant together with God and one another, trusting in God’s continuing guidance, to seek to understand and do God’s will, to explore the mystery of Christ, and to witness to God’s reconciling love.” As a gathered body, we are being called to challenge ourselves and our ministry to practice this covenant more deeply, more widely, and more inclusively.

In this context we are also being called to practice the courageous love and justice of Jesus. The Senior Minister will be vital in leading the staff as we live out this calling both inside and outside our walls.

**In this role, the Senior Minister will be:**

Ministering to First UCC

- Preparing and leading worship, which includes engaging in scripture study, crafting liturgy and the bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding (and sometimes finding) lay liturgists, planning music in coordination with musical staff and/or volunteers, preaching, offering prayers, etc.
- Offering pastoral care in collaboration with lay people.
- Offering skills as a counselor and listener and referring individuals on for further care.
- Energizing and deepening the spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do.
- Engaging in study, prayer, and ritual to increase faith and to continuously improve teaching, preaching, and leadership skills.
- Enhancing faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, and service and by identifying helpful resources and opportunities and helping lay persons take advantage of them.
- Engaging in leadership development by working with people in the church to create and improve ministry and programs.

Ministering to the Community

- Officiating at weddings and funerals for participants in the worshipping community.
- Offering availability to the wider community for funerals, weddings, and special worship programs and acting as a representative of the church to local organizations.
- Acting as a leader in community engagement and finding ways for the church to be an ambassador of God's love.
- Participating in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings, as well as local interfaith organizations such as ISIAH and NAIA (Northfield Area Interfaith Association).

Ministering to the Wider World

- Engaging the congregation in the transforming work of social justice.
- Guiding strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry.

### Ministering to the Operation of the Church

- Attending standing committee meetings regularly and providing leadership to task forces and programs, in collaboration with lay leadership when needed.
- Providing leadership in faithful financial development and stewardship.
- Performing administrative responsibilities, unless delegated, like email correspondence, website maintenance, church supply purchasing, etc.
- Serving as Head of Staff and, as such, assisting in the hiring/calling processes for additional staff.
- Performing other duties as they arise.

\*We estimate that approximately 20% of the senior minister's time will be spent on Ministering to the Community and Ministering to the Wider World.

In addition to the Scope of Work outlined above, our Search Team reviewed the many interviews and surveys the Transition Team had gathered from the entire congregation to highlight the Core Competencies we are seeking in our next Senior Minister.

### **Three Core Competencies:**

*An inspiring preacher and thoughtful leader who can guide our many ways of worship.*

*A seasoned administrator who can work collaboratively with lay leaders (and staff) to develop and carry out our vision and mission.*

*A strong advocate for social justice who relishes diversity and can help the congregation put our faith into action.*



## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

The compensation package at First UCC of Northfield Minnesota is consistent with the Conference guidelines.

First UCC does not have a parsonage. Our preference is that our Senior minister would live in Northfield.

State any incentives: Three months of sabbatical after 5 years of service. (MN Conference guidelines suggest after 4 – 6 years).

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference: Gatherings on Zoom with Conference staff for support, Leaderwise development programs.

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

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- Advocate for social/racial justice in our community

First UCC has a long history of advocating for social justice in our community. First UCC members have taken leadership roles to address housing, workforce issues, mental health, poverty, and racism. First UCC continues to be active in social, racial and environmental justice issues through the local Climate Action Coalition and the statewide ISAIAH organization. We have recently pledged with six other Northfield congregations to engage Racial Justice to bridge racial inequities and address systemic racism. We will journey with the Senior Minister to advance our efforts and effectiveness in these areas.

- Build bonds across generations

In the past nine years children and youth have become fully engaged in our congregational life. Faith Formation programs, the Sunday morning worship service, intergenerational activities, children's choirs, confirmation programs, the Our Whole Lives/OWL program, youth groups, and service learning trips have built bonds across generations and fostered spiritual growth throughout the congregation. We will work with the Senior Minister to continue to support children and youth in every aspect of our church life.

- Develop practices that connect our faith to our actions

First UCC adult members and friends are life-long learners. Numerous adult faith formation groups support our interest in and need for spiritual development and growth. As a community of faith, we long for language and practices that ground us in the courageous love and justice of Jesus. We will work together with the Senior Minister to connect head and heart.

- Strengthen our model of governance and ministry

We streamlined our governance system nine years ago, informed by the model established by Dan Hotchkiss in *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership*. While the governance system has served us well, it is time to review the governance model to more fully support our practice of courageous love and justice. We will conduct that revision with the help and insights of our Senior Minister.

## **Our Ministry to the Community and the Wider World**

We are known as a “progressive Christian voice in Northfield.” As we open our hearts and our doors to the wider community, we seek to become compassionate listeners even as we continue to give voice to our testament that “God is still speaking.” We want to use our privilege consciously to listen first, co-create solutions with partners, and to show up humbly while also acting boldly.

We are a committed Just Peace congregation. We will explore with the Senior Minister ways to more boldly practice that commitment in the wider Northfield area. First UCC is also known as being an inclusive, open and affirming safe place for youth and adults. We seek to extend our extravagant welcome to those who feel disadvantaged, afflicted or marginalized.

We seek a Senior Minister who is willing to listen, vision and lead us as we reflect on what we have learned in the past nine years, who we are now, and how we are being called to move forward. Staffing changes and the pandemic have given our congregation an opportunity to pause. In this space we can see that deeper relationships among members lead to more effective community partnerships.

We will support community members in anti-racism efforts and social and environmental justice. Together with the Senior Minister we will continue to support Northfield area youth through programs like the OWL program, Northfield’s Union of Youth, the Healthy Community Initiative’s Northfield Promise Council of Champions, and ISAIAH.



## **Cultural competencies**

First UCC flies a rainbow-colored flag outside our front door. Our minister must be someone who is unapologetically Open and Affirming, comfortable with identity issues and supportive of all.

Our congregation identifies as 94% white in a town that is 89% white with a growing Latino population. As we partner with other churches and organizations to more effectively practice racial and social justice, it would be helpful if our Senior Minister is proficient or fluent in Spanish to help us build bridges in the community. We desire someone who will work with our congregation to understand white privilege and grapple with racial justice on both individual and systemic levels.

## **Our Four Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry**

### **Working Together for Justice and Mercy**

- Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression
- Practicing the radical hospitality of God
- Identifying and working to overcome explicit and implicit bias in the life of the Church
- Understanding community context and navigating change with a community
- Engaging in mission and outreach
- Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence.

### **Building Transformational Leadership Skills**

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit
- Strategically creating the future of God's Church
- Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power
- Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks
- Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity
- Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

## **Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions**

- Exhibiting knowledge, understanding and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament
- Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching
- Understanding the history of the Christian Church, from biblical times forward
- Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness
- Leading faith formation effectively across generations
- Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments.

## **Participating in Theological Praxis**

- Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity
- Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching and ecclesial and community leadership
- Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry
- Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC
- Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives
- Embodying the UCC Ministerial Code.