

## Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

# 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!

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,  
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Zion United Church of Christ  
Talmage, NE

Part-time Pastor

Nebraska Conference / Heartland Association

March 1, 2021

### LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- Who Are We Now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
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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)*

## INSTRUCTIONS

The new Local Church Profile supports the calling and discernment of United Church of Christ congregations with their current or future pastoral leadership.

For many congregations, the interim time between ministers is an intentional season that is guided in part by the preparation of a Local Church Profile. Using the Profile, the church can discover its data and express its story for the reliable discernment of a search committee and the beginning of a new pastorate. Searching ministers will want to see this document in its entirety.

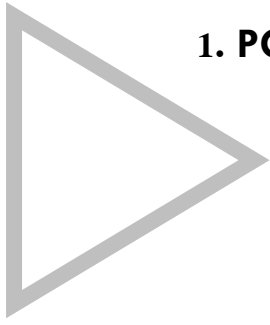
The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – **WHO ARE WE NOW**, **WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR**, and **WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME** – are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. Known together as the “Discovery Document,” these three sections can be completed by a visioning group, a governing body, a transition team, or other group – not just the search committee – in order to draw forward the gifts and imaginative possibilities of a congregation. The church's engagement with the “Discovery Document” might not have the same sequence as the completed Local Church Profile that is read by candidates.

Some questions are easy to answer. Some are not so easy. Prompts are provided to stimulate narrative response if needed; these italicized prompts are merely examples from which to choose or to inspire your own. Efforts to answer the questions will prompt conversations and explorations and story-tellings and many prayers. As the Spirit moves throughout the process, congregations will shape a collective articulation of Christ's leading (**WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME**). This last question to be answered becomes the first section to be read by searching ministers in the Local Church Profile, and it is boldest and most actionable piece for faithful leadership into the future.

Your conference can provide materials referenced in the Local Church Profile, such as the 11-Year Report containing data as reported by your congregation annually to the UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite reports containing demographic information on your community. More information on types of pastorate in the United Church of Christ can be found in the Call Agreement Workbook. Be sure to use the Call Agreement Workbook's Scope of Work to describe in this Local Church Profile the position being sought.

When it is time for ministerial search, the conference can counsel you on posting the Local Church Profile together with your public listing at UCC Ministry Opportunities (<http://oppsearch.ucc.org>).

The last page of the Local Church Profile contains a statement that parallels the consent statement signed by ministers in the UCC Ministerial Profile. In keeping with the covenantal relationship between a church and those it seeks to call, this statement encourages an open, honest exchange of information. On behalf of the United Church of Christ, and on the basis of the best knowledge available to them, your conference staff will validate your completed Local Church Profile when it is ready to be shared in relationship with prospective new leaders.



## 1. POSITION POSTING

- 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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Church name: Zion United Church of Christ

Street address: 302 Carol St., Talmage, NE 68448

Supplemental web links: NONE

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

Conference: Nebraska Conference

Association: Heartland Association

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

Rev. Samantha Houser, Assoc. Conference Minister, [Samantha@ucctcm.org](mailto:Samantha@ucctcm.org), 402-350-1714

Summary Ministry Description:

We are looking for a minister who will be welcoming and outgoing to the community as well as our members. We are a small rural congregation situated in a village of approx. 230 people in the southeast corner of Nebraska.

Photographs: See next page

**1Puppet Ministry Group**



**2Zion UCC Front Entrance**

3Zion UCC Sanctuary



What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences): Our community offers a laid-back lifestyle, with an easy commute to larger towns, quiet country living, with a network of community churches and pastors.

Current size of membership: 68 members with average Sunday attendance of 20

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): NONE

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

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 (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

½ Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? YES

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

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*(add here the Scope of Work developed by your church using the Call Agreement Workbook)*

The pastor will work a ½ time schedule with their main job responsibilities as follows:

- Lead Sunday morning worship and also any additional worship services that may be planned for the year with the church council, (Lent, Advent, etc.). This will include developing the worship bulletin for those services.
- Be available to provide pastoral care for the funerals, weddings, and baptisms of congregational members and their families.
- Make visits to congregational members who are hospitalized, home-bound, or residing in care facilities.
- Participate with other area pastors to plan and present ecumenical community worship services, (Thanksgiving).
- Administer the Sacraments of communion and baptism as planned with the church council and requested by congregational members.
- Develop a church newsletter.

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.)* Sociable, Caring, Organized

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

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Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*): \$19,500 to begin

Benefits (*choose one*): Salary includes Optional Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (*e.g., parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed*)? The minister would either live in our community or commute from a nearby community with paid mileage.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister. Most of the area hospitals and nursing homes are located within a 20-mile radius of Talmage in the communities of Auburn, Nebraska City, Syracuse, and Tecumseh, NE. Some members also seek medical treatment at larger facilities in the communities of Lincoln and Omaha, NE which are within 50 and 60 miles respectively of Talmage.

State any incentives (*e.g., school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position*): A retention bonus would be considered upon the successful completion of one year of service.

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference: The church council will assist our pastor to identify and contact any support available through the association or conference for their ministry. There are “shared conference resources” invitation to communities of practice that encompasses all the Tri-Conference area of Nebraska, Iowa, and South Dakota. In addition, all of our local pastors have a history of coordinating on matters of community concern and interest that involve the wider Christian Church.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister’s bi-vocational employment: We will work with the pastor to support their need for additional employment. Currently our church board members assist with worship setup, we utilize a “calling tree” to check on members and relay information, our puppet ministry is led by church members, and members also pitch in where and when needed to support the pastor and congregation.

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

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Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve. Our main goal is to develop outreach to the inactive members in the congregation and also to the surrounding community. As this goal is realized and regular attendance increases, we will need guidance to expand the programs and services we provide to the congregation and community.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls. As a small rural community, we have many residents who are not affiliated with a church. We envision outreach on the part of the minister to those residents, as well as the development of mission opportunities and service projects for our members, and also church-wide involvement in community organizations.



Specify language requirements or culturally specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling. Currently we have no specific requirements for our next minister in this area.

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. Nurturing UCC identity
3. Engaging sacred stories and traditions
4. Participating in theological praxis

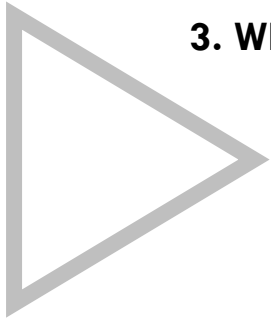


## 2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“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)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation? Our church has been blessed with good lay leadership. We are accustomed to taking responsibility, but appreciate the benefits that clergy can give us. We are at a point where we need leadership that is willing to help us reach out more to the community. We have been generous with our financial ability. Now we need to direct some of that money towards new programs that will help us grow both numerically and spiritually.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation. As our church and community changes, our outreach must change. Goal setting as a congregation, minister and people together may lead us towards meeting new needs. As a congregation we need to encourage all families to be active in the church, reach out to newcomers and the unchurched, especially children, in the community, and initiate new programming which might include a more regular fellowship opportunity for the whole church, and new ways of making biblical and faith learning a continuing process throughout life.



### **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**

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Describe your congregation’s life of faith. Our mission together, as pastor and people, is to strive to live the teachings of Jesus Christ and promote the unity of our Christian faith. We express our faith and obedience to God, our creator, to our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, through Christian worship, Christian fellowship, and the ongoing work of Christian learning and Christian witnessing.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation. We are a very friendly, cooperative, welcoming, and open congregation. In a practical sense we have members skilled in many areas such as cooking and baking, crocheting and quilting, lawn care, building maintenance, music ministry, and technology skills.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers. We have a traditional worship service in a very welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. Worship services are usually conducted in the church sanctuary. As a congregation we appreciate a sermon based on scripture but also relevant to present-day life. We are blessed with two excellent organists and appreciate the role music and song adds to worship.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

We have utilized adult bible studies which met on a monthly basis with a meal followed by a study period. Our congregation has also had a puppet ministry as an ongoing project which involves all generations in the congregation and brings our faith to the wider community.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission. As a small rural church most of our formal organization and ministry decisions rest with the church council and pastor. Ideas and concerns are communicated to the council and pastor from individual members, and if the need for committees arises these are also organized by the council. We utilize a “calling

tree” when needed for quick communication with members, such as cancelling worship due to inclement weather.

When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month? 2 hours

- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished? We are a small community and congregation which allows communication to be quick and easy. We utilize a “calling tree” to pass information around to the congregation.
- 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

### 3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

The 11-Year Report may be found at the end of the Profile on Page 29.

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

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Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	27	YES
Number of active non-members:	0	YES
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	27	YES

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	96%	YES
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	0%	YES
Less than 5 years:	4%	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>
		2	1	2	0	7	3	12	YES

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	13%	YES
Households with minors:	0%	YES
Single adults age 35-65:	17%	YES
Joint households with no minors:	49%	YES
Single adults over 65:	21%	YES

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	45%	YES
College:	25%	YES
Graduate School:	0%	YES
Specialty Training:	30%	YES
Other (please specify):	-----	-----

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	52%	YES
Adults who are retired:	48%	YES
Adults who are not fully employed:	-----	-----

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation: Agriculture, teaching, nursing, administrative support, flight dispatcher, small business owner, and waitress

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? This congregation is historically of German heritage. In the past 10 years our membership has included families of Hispanic heritage as well. We recognize and respect all viewpoints without judgment, believing everyone is a unique individual and a child of God.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise: We consider ourselves to be welcoming to the point that discussing the need for diversity is not an issue.

### 3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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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 Groups or Classes	14	Pastor and participants
Baptisms ( <i>number last year</i> )	0	-----
Children’s Groups or Classes	0	-----
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	50 each	Pastor
Church-wide Meals	45	Congregation and Council
Choirs and Music Groups	12	Choir director
Church-based Bible Study	14	Pastor and participants
Communion ( <i>served how often?</i> )	23	The pastor and council.
Community Meals	250	These are community functions.
Confirmation ( <i>number confirmed last year</i> )	0	-----

Drama or Dance Program	100	Puppet Ministry audience attendance
Funerals ( <i>number last year</i> )	0	Pastor and family of deceased
Intergenerational Groups	-----	All gatherings are inter-generational
Outdoor Worship	-----	-----
Prayer or Meditation Groups	-----	-----
Public Advocacy Work	-----	-----
Retreats	-----	-----
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	-----	-----
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	20	Pastor/Bride/Groom
Worship (time slot: 9:00am)	20	Pastor/Council/Organists
Worship (time slot: _____)	-----	Only one worship service
Young Adult Groups or Classes	-----	-----
Youth Groups or Classes	-----	-----
Other	-----	-----

Additional comments: NONE

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). NONE

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation: They are not active although still members. 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	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Janitor	Trisha Grooms	Part-time	Church Council	20 years
Grounds Keeper	Taylor Gerdes	Part-time	Church Council	10 years
Organists	Glenis Hopp Joyce Nowack	Volunteer	Church Council	50+ years

### REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation’s overall ministry? We provide weekly worship for our congregation, and minister to their needs. We also provide opportunities for participation in additional devotions, mission, and community outreach as we are able.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 17,596
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	\$ 1,449
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i> )	\$ 4,000
Fundraising Events	\$ 0
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$ 0
Grants – Paycheck Protection Program	\$ 4245
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
Other (specify): Insurance Payment for Fire Damage in 2019	\$ 2,930
Other (specify): Operating Fund Balance carry-over from 2019	\$ 1,831
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 32,051</b>

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$ 25,816

*Attach 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.* The 2021 budget is attached.

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 50%

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? *(recommended 10%)* Our OCWM contribution is gathered with a special offering each year and also any additional donations taken during the year. There is no set percentage of the budget designated as a goal for this offering.

What is the church's current indebtedness? NONE

Total amount of loan debt: N/A

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? N/A

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. We currently have no building project.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe: NONE

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
----	-----	\$ ----	\$ ----	-----
----	-----	\$ ----	\$ ----	-----

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe: NONE

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
----	-----	\$ ----	\$ ----	-----
----	-----	\$ ----	\$ ----	-----

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign. There is no recent or current capital campaign.

Does your church have an endowment? YES

What is the market value of the assets? \$134,872.57

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Funds are drawn as needed; however, dividends and interest are direct deposited into our checking account as they are earned.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? 3%

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: This past year we withdrew \$9000 to help cover expenses associated with the church building fire, however we later redeposited \$5000 back into the account.

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

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: This is our current situation but it is subject to change.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): Memorial Fund - \$3,844/ Youth Outreach - \$1263.57/  
Puppet Ministry - \$3275.81

Investments (other than endowment): NONE

Does your church have a parsonage? NO

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: N/A

How is the parsonage used? N/A

Street / City / State / Zip: N/A

Finished square footage: N/A

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: N/A

Assessed real estate value: N/A

Available for minister residence: Y/N NO

Expected minister residence: Y/N NO

Condition of structure, systems and appliances N/A

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs N/A

Describe all buildings owned by the church: NONE

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: The church owns two additional lots for parking and playground area.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*) Worship space, Fellowship space (basement), restrooms. We are willing to make the pulpit space accessible as needed.

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?* The budget process is completed by the church council with approval of the congregation. Our endowment is 30 years old and was funded by bequeath from a deceased member. Our most recent new financial undertaking was the puppet ministry which is about 10 years old.

### **3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

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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. In the past 30 years we have celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> and 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our congregation. Within the past 10 years we have undertaken the formation of a puppet ministry, performed several live dramas, formed a hand chime choir, and dealt with the consequences and after-math of a sanctuary fire.

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past. In September of 2019 we had to deal with a lightning strike and subsequent fire which left water, smoke and fire damage to the sanctuary.

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. When we have disagreements we try to have open discussion about the differing viewpoints, and then work towards a consensus on how to proceed. Sometimes this process takes longer than we would like, but it generally leads to the best conclusion.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Denise Lagueux	2018 - 2020	YES
Carla Patterson	2010 - 2018	YES
Charlene Wozny	2002 - 2008	YES
Gwen Hurst	1999 - 2002	YES
Barbara Thursby	1994 - 1999	YES
Dale Sallens	1990 - 1994	YES
Roy Orr	1983 - 1990	YES

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership: We need to have a written contract to pin down expectations; also we need to do a better job of communicating with our pastor so that there are fewer misunderstandings.

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

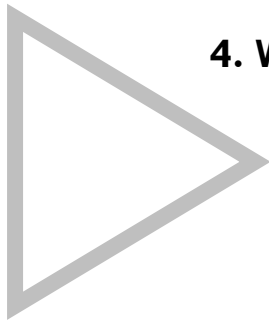
Y/N/Ask us YES, our last minister left after completing a 2-year agreement because we did not feel she was a good fit for our congregation.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us NO

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

Y/N/Ask us 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

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How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy? Our congregation has been active in the local area food pantry, and our local community mission, “Hands Helping Hands.” We have had an active prayer shawl ministry, and our puppet ministry has served as an outreach tool to both the local community and the greater southeast Nebraska area. We support local, regional, and national children’s ministries with special Christmas offerings.

Describe your congregation’s participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting). Through the years our congregation has had regular representation at association meetings, and also some conference meetings. We have also had members serve on association committees. Our church has hosted two association meetings in the last 30 years.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming                  | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health   |
| <input checked="" 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? Our congregation would be interested in learning more about some of the other statements.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional). We participate in a community-wide ecumenical Thanksgiving service each year. Our puppet ministry has reached out to the wider community and other denominations with performances and plays.

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. We believe that we are doing our best to fulfill the goals of our mission statement. However, our weakest areas of the mission statement may currently be in "the ongoing work of Christian learning and Christian witnessing.

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 would expect our minister to participate in ecumenical community services and investigate ways to become involved in the wider community and church.

#### **4b. MISSION InSite**

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Comment on your congregation's MissionInSite report with data for your neighborhood or area. What trends and opportunities are shown? There have been a number of new families move into our community in recent years and there is an opportunity for us to invite those families to worship and become members of our congregation.

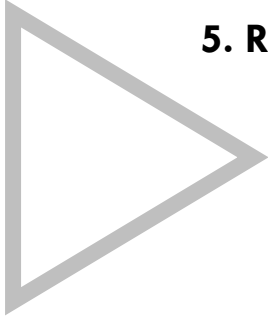
How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects? Our internal demographics may not be as diverse as the community around us; however, we have made progress toward becoming more diverse, and welcome anyone in our community and/or area who may want to join us in Christian fellowship.

How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not? In the recent past our congregation has welcomed new members from the community who changed our demographics as a congregation. There is additional work to do in that regard to continue reaching out to the community around us to encourage and welcome new members.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for? It has been stated that we are “A Caring Community within a Caring Community”.

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved? We hear from new members and attendees that our congregation is welcoming and kind.





## 5. REFERENCES

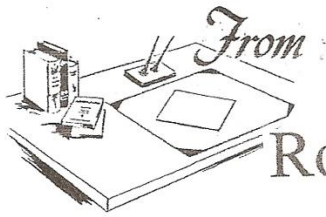
Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: “The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions.”

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

Name / Position / Setting Rev. Roger Hoffman, Retired Lutheran minister  
(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

402-269-2201 / [rkHoffman36@gmail.com](mailto:rkHoffman36@gmail.com) / Pastor Hoffman has served as supply pastor for our church in the recent past and is currently “on call” for needed pastoral care.



P A S T O R

3/01/2021

Roger Hoffman

230 Elm St., Syracuse, Ne. 68446-9614

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart..." Proverbs 3:5*

REFERECE TO ZION U.C.C, TALMAGE, NEBRASKA

I, pastor Roger Hoffman (a rostered retired Lutheran Pastor served interim at Zion U.C.C. from 1/28/2018 through 5/31/2018. Below are some thoughts relative to the parish:

- fine facilies, neat and worshipful
- active, friendly parish members
- ideal location from Nebraska City, Syracuse, Auburn, Tecumseh and a reasonable distance from Lincoln and Omaha
- parish is known for it's annual puppet ministry show
- the members are faithful stewards with their outreach ministry through theU.C.C.
- probably typical in membership attendance similiar to other current congregations
- as are many parishes their is need for pastoral leadership in evangelism
- worship for the active members was a high point
- while serving as interim there was no study group sessions
- birthdays were celebrated monthly with a fellowship after worship
- members are well respected community folks and take community serious

Zion U.C.C. at Talmage could well become a favorite parish within a small town setting whereby there would be less Pastoral load than a larger church membership.

I, Roger Hoffman, appreciated my service with the members and their parish!

*Pastor Hoffman*



*"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." --*

*Psalm 51:10*

**1 Corinthians 1: 18**

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

## REFERENCE 2

Name / Position / Setting Pastor Rev. Kathy Rahorst

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

402-798-2166 / [krahorst@gmail.com](mailto:krahorst@gmail.com) / Kathy is a UCC pastor in Nebraska and has had a relationship and knowledge of our congregation through the Heartland Association of the UCC.

March 13, 2021

To: Mark Nowack

Re: Letter of Recommendation  
Zion UCC, Talmage, Nebraska

Strengths:

Let me begin by saying that I have known this congregation and its pastors for the past 38 years. It is a small, yet mighty congregation. The folk there have always been open to new ideas and ways to minister in their community. This by far is an awesome strength. They have given some incredibly positive lasting hope and growth to young people in their community that otherwise were unchurched. They work hard to support their pastor financially but more importantly give support to their pastor when the pastor's bucket needs to be filled.

Improvements:

An improvement might be to work on better communication when conflict arises between the people and the Pastor.

The most significant experience

A few years ago, under the leadership of Pastor Carla P's ministry I witnessed something that truly changed this congregation to think outside the box and to bring the mission of Christ into the community. It involved every member of the church. The *hard work and dedication to its Puppet Ministry touched not only the hearts of the congregation but also the unchurched in the community; the ministry grew and was brought to other congregations and even our Association and Conference. I have been told that they are still meeting, sharing the Gospel through the puppets and hope there is someone who could bring more gifts in teaching of Christ's mission in all the world.*

Peace and Blessings,

The Rev. Kathy Rahorst

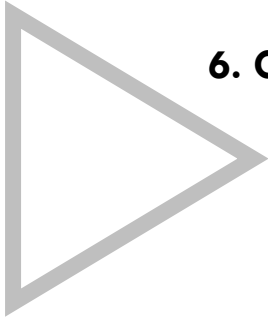
## PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry.

Anything else you wish to share.



## 6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

### 6a. CLOSING PRAYER

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*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 believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to His deeds we testify:

He calls the worlds into being, creates man in His own image and sets before him the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

He judges men and nations by His righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to Himself.

He bestows upon us His Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

He calls us into His Church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be His servants in the service of men, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

He promises to all who trust him, forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the Struggle for justice and peace, His presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in His kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto Him. Amen.

## 6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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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 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.*)  
The church council completed the profile.
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed: Mark Nowack, Treasurer, 03/21/2021

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: Y

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

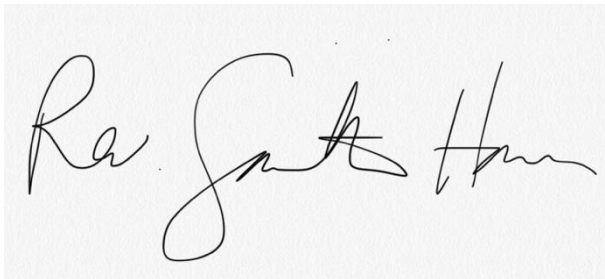
Staff Comment: Y

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

Staff Comment: Y

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Rev. Samantha Houser".

Name / Title: Rev. Samantha Houser Associate Conference Minister

Email: samantha@ucctcm.org

Phone: 402-350-1714

Date: 4-15-21



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS**



Church#: 421300

Assoc: 460      Schedule: 0      Zion UCC      Talmage      NE      68448

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2009	41	20	0	1	0	0	2	0	-1
2010	41	25	0	0	0	2	2	0	0
2011	40	30	23	0	0	2	3	0	-1
2012	63	50	20	0	0	24	1	0	23
2013	71	48	12	0	0	8	0	0	8
2014	73	40	38	4	0	1	3	0	2
2015	73	45	13	3	0	0	3	0	0
2016	72	34	0	0	0	0	1	0	-1
2017	72	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	72	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	72	34	0	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
2009	\$49,959	\$0	\$1,100	\$2,120	\$3,220	\$0	\$3,220	2.20	\$53,179	\$0
2010	\$27,453	\$0	\$1,100	\$936	\$2,036	\$0	\$2,036	4.01	\$29,489	\$20,623
2011	\$30,193	\$0	\$900	\$1,475	\$2,375	\$0	\$2,375	2.98	\$32,568	\$27,246
2012	\$30,217	\$0	\$1,036	\$989	\$2,025	\$303	\$2,328	3.43	\$32,545	\$0
2013	\$30,217	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,278	\$2,278	\$0	\$2,278	3.31	\$32,495	\$0
2014	\$47,819	\$0	\$1,263	\$2,697	\$3,960	\$0	\$3,960	2.64	\$51,779	\$29,537
2015	\$47,819	\$0	\$1,263	\$1,823	\$3,086	\$0	\$3,086	2.64	\$50,905	\$0
2016	\$47,819	\$0	\$947	\$1,065	\$2,012	\$250	\$2,262	1.98	\$50,081	\$0
2017	\$47,819	\$0	\$758	\$790	\$1,548	\$0	\$1,548	1.59	\$49,367	\$0
2018	\$47,819	\$0	\$556	\$1,015	\$1,571	\$0	\$1,571	1.16	\$49,390	\$0
2019	\$47,819	\$0	\$510	\$930	\$1,440	\$0	\$1,440	1.07	\$49,259	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2014-2019	-1.37	-15.00	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	0.00	-63.64	-4.87
2009-2019	75.61	70.00	0.00	-100.00	-100.00	-4.28	-55.28	-7.37

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*

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

