



Name of Church

Zion United Church of Christ

Address

PO Box 339
Lowden, IA 52255

Conference:

Iowa

Association:

Eastern Iowa

Title

Full Time Shared Minister

Start Date

Aug 11, 2025

Description

The heart of Zion UCC is to be a place where people truly experience the love of God - in worship, in service and in everyday connection. Alongside Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tipton, and trusting the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we're looking for a pastor who can walk with us, encourage us and help us grow deeper in faith as we care for one another and reach out to those around us.

We've got a good foundation-we're ready for what's next.

Church Contact Information

(563) 941-7726 (Church Primary Phone)

zionucc@fbcom.net (Church Email)

Listing Information

Web Presences

<http://www.zionucclowden.org>

Type: Professional

http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-g_9eogQfml54EELGwzgbw

Type: Other

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tipton

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Kendy Miller

Title:

No response

Phone:

5156891978

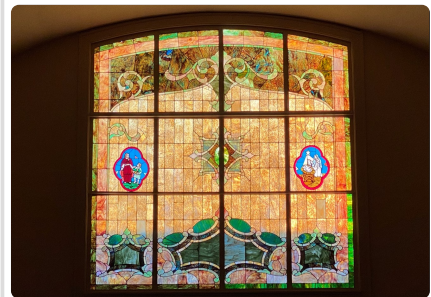
Email:

kendy@ucctcm.org

Summary Ministry Description

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Church pictures**What we value about living in our area.**

Lowden, a rural community with its roots primarily in agriculture, is close-knit and actively supports its many civic organizations. For a small town, Lowden boasts a vibrant business community—law office, dental clinic, many ag-related businesses, 3/30 Golf and Country Club, library, hardware store, floor covering store, and plumbing and heating company. The community supports scouting and 4-H clubs for kids, providing them with a safe environment to learn and grow. The Lions Club supports the local community with its various events. Lowden is one of the feeder communities into the North Cedar Community School District. Many of our residents are long-term residents; others having migrated from larger metropolitan areas in search of quiet, small-town living.

Lowden is centrally located in Eastern Iowa—only an hour's drive from larger metropolitan areas (Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Iowa City, the Quad Cities) that offer additional entertainment, shopping, healthcare, higher education, and sporting opportunities.

Current size of membership

100

Average in person attendance

41

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

No

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Full Time Shared Minister

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

[Download compensation guidelines](#)

Scope of Work

Some fields reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ](#).

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the [Call Agreement Workbook](#).

No response

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

Spiritual (Able to discern and meet the spiritual needs of members and to encourage new membership)

Second:

Nurturing (Able to meet the needs of individuals, foster a culture of care, inviting youth and younger adults to be involved in the life of Zion)

Third:

Sociable (Actively involved in the community)

Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the [Call Agreement Workbook](#), equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	80000	☒	☐
Housing Allowance	0	☒	☐
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	☒	☐
Salary Basis: 80000			
Pension/Annuity	0	☒	☐
Social Security and Medicare Offset	0	☒	☐
Medical/Dental Insurance	0	☒	☐
Life Insurance	0	☐	☒
Disability Insurance	0	☐	☒
Worker's Compensation	0	☒	☐

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

\$80,000 represents the maximum cash basis for a highly experienced candidate as the total compensation package for the shared ministry. In other words, this is the total package that Zion and Trinity ELCA (combined) are prepared to offer for the full time pastoral position. This includes medical insurance for the candidate only. Housing allowance: It is the preference that the candidate reside in the parsonage such that the pension contribution would be based upon a calculation of salary plus 1/3 of the value of the parsonage.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

Parsonage

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No

No response

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

N/A

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.

Cell Phone and/or Internet.

Conference and/or Association meeting registrations

Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).

Criminal background checks.

Community of Practice Participation.

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

The Iowa Conference has a resource list of spiritual directors to counsel clergy. There are also virtual communities of practice available which provide opportunities for growth and support groups.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

Zion's called Pastor will have significant opportunities to lead the congregation and help bring to life the following specific ministry goals:

- A teacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the common person
- Embrace the life of Zion UCC in order to maintain and advance a framework that nourishes the spiritual life of the church
- Growth in faith

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

Faith is ever-evolving and we as members of the Zion community desire to continually learn and grow as Christians. We would expect our next called pastor to share the message of Jesus Christ in order to help us to develop a deeper personal relationship with God, to promote hospitality to both members and non-members of Zion, and be foundational in spiritual guidance.

Language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

No special language requirements as our community and congregation are predominantly English speaking.

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

- Spiritual Foundation for Ministry
A lived faith showing love of God, trust in Jesus, and openness to the Holy Spirit.
- UCC Identity for Ministry
Our Pastor acknowledges Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church, participates in the various activities of not only the local church also our conference and association.
- Personal and Professional Formation for Ministry
Our Pastor demonstrates exemplary standards of moral maturity in all areas of personal and professional life, including a strong commitment to the education and nurture of our children, and responsibility to one's self, family, church, and community.
- Knowledge and Skills for Ministry
Our Pastor possesses the ability to perceive how a person's individual perspectives and interests shape communications and appreciate the virtues and limitations of those perspective and perceptions. Our Pastor is able to grasp, evaluate, and respect the justifications that people give for their opinions.

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 God is calling us to become as a congregation.

God is calling Zion to be caring, inclusive and welcoming to all, to live in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to be faithfully attentive to those of our members, the community, and the world in need of comfort, grace, and a sense of belonging.

God calls us to be attentive to the uniqueness of each individual who walks through our doors but at the same time to be inclusive of that uniqueness to form a congregation following the calling of the Holy Spirit in a collective advancement towards a more faithful, Godly way of life.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

Zion's identity is deeply rooted in its Christian faith. In order to faithfully sustain the needs and desires of the congregation, a Vision 2000 program was initiated to learn, through small group discussions, the direction of our faith practices and where changes or augmentation was warranted in the eyes of our congregation. Information gleaned in that process and throughout the transition and

current pastoral search has required the church to re-examine its ministry and outreach programs and determine that a full-time shared settled pastorate is the direction Zion should pivot to in the future.

A challenge that Zion faces is with regard to its finances. Zion's 'problem' is different than those experienced by similar small churches in similar small communities. Due to the bequests of generous members of the church, Zion enjoys a healthy endowment fund. Zion is blessed with young families; however, their financial obligations prohibit tithing at historical levels. We are needing to rely upon endowment funds to meet our day-to-day financial obligations. The future of Zion is troubling if the current trend towards reliance on endowment funds to serve the souls in the pews persists.

Congregation Reflections

We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

Congregants of Zion UCC aspire to deepen and broaden their faith by being forgiving, all encompassing, welcoming, and loving. All persons are welcome at Zion and are invited to join together in our mutual faith journey. Our life of faith is led in part by preaching that is spiritually nurturing, mentally engaging, and realistically connected to the lives of the listeners.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

Zion's strengths are many and include our outstanding volunteerism, not only for church activities but also for community events; our eagerness to help all; our openness to all who come through our doors; and our support of and commitment to our many mission projects. Zion has an enthusiastic Christian Education program. Leaders and their classes are out in the community supporting local events. Zion presents a live nativity scene during Advent. Zion's membership as a whole is most supportive of the Missions projects that are undertaken, including gathering school supplies, office and cleaning supplies for the Church; hats/mitten/gloves for low income families in the Winter; and socks for homeless or warming shelters. Zion participates in a Christmas "Bell" program to provide food to underprivileged families and gifts for their children. Zion's membership provides strong participation in church activities and events such as the Spring Dinner (the church's annual fundraising event) and mid-week Lenten services with area UCC churches.

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

Developing innovative methods of communicating is an on-going process. While Zion is heavily involved with community outreach, for example with its Vacation Bible School program with neighboring towns, we look forward to calling a pastor who can provide guidance based on pastoral and practical experience.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

The cornerstones of worship are learning the teachings of the Bible through lectionary and preaching (largely based on the Gospel passage for the week), time with our children, music, and prayer. Passing of the Peace involves handshakes, hugs, smiles, and warm greetings. Lay leaders present the scripture.

During the school year, Sunday School-aged children are present in worship through the Childrens' Time at which time the children are invited to the front of the sanctuary for a fun and age-appropriate, sometimes interactive lesson, and then are excused for Sunday School, and the post-confirmation aged congregants remain for the remainder of the service. The confirmation students serve as acolytes and occasionally participate in worship.

Holy Communion is offered on the first Sunday of the month and for other occasions per the church year. Holy Communion is open to all.

Zion enjoys a rich musical history. The church is blessed with a bevy of talented singers, pianists, and organists who willingly share their talents with the congregation.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Zion believes that an individual's faith formation starts at an early age and steps towards those formative years including making 'church' interesting, fun, and down to earth for its youth.

Zion is committed to preparing its youth with tools for faithfully navigating future life experiences through confirmation as well as teaching our youth vital principles of the UCC beliefs, practices, and history. Zion's expects (and its Constitution currently requires) that our called Pastor will assume responsibilities for providing confirmation instruction. In the past, confirmation curriculum has been taught via a two-year program.

Vacation Bible School is typically offered in July. The program has evolved into a shared program with a neighboring UCC church and has also attracted youth from non-UCC affiliated families, due to its reputation of offering fun and engaging themes for the participants.

Zion has a Sr. High Fellowship (post confirmation age youth) and Zion Youth Club (ZYC) (for grades three through six).

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Pastoral staff consists solely of our pastor. Office staff includes a church secretary and a financial secretary. Others on payroll include a custodian and four organists.

The governing body of Zion is our Church Council consisting of six elected voting members of the church, each serving three-year terms. The Council is led by the Council President and meets monthly, or more frequently as the need arises. Decisions are communicated to the general membership by announcements or Council minutes. One Council member is assigned to each church committee to serve as a liaison between the committee and the Church's governing body.

Committee reorganization took place in late 2021. Now, rather than 15 committees carrying on the work of the church, we now have five consolidated committees, namely Church Life, Faith Formation, Stewardship of Resources, Missions and Outreach, and Worship, who regularly report to the Council.

When it comes to decision-making, 5 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

The Church Council is relied upon to lead the membership through times of difficulty or uncertainty, such as what occurred when the pandemic changed our regular routine of worship, service, and activity. Congregational meetings can be called by the Council to inform and apprise the congregation of unusual or emergent situations and to seek approval for major proposals, if required by the Church's formative documents

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[🔗 2024 Zion Annual Report.pdf](#)

11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[🔗 Download 11-Year Report](#)

Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	100
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	10
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	110

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	82%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	0%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	18%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	4
12-17	8
18-24	6
25-34	3
35-44	20
45-54	11
55-64	15
65-74	17
75+	16

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	11%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	15%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	12%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	41%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	21%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	43%
COLLEGE:	32%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	2%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	23%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	40%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	51%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	9%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Farming, agribusiness, teaching, computer/technology, healthcare, care giving, health/beauty, truck drivers, clerical, business owners.

The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Zion's heritage is predominantly German and our racial make up is nearly wholly Caucasian.

What diversity means in our context?

From Zion's perspective, diversity includes socio-economic and racial components.

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

No

Participation and Staffing



Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	0	N/A
Baptisms (number last year)	0	N/A
Children's Groups or Classes	15	Faith Formation Team
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	175	Council, Worship Team
Church-wide Meals	165	Various Teams
Choirs and Music Groups	7	Individual Talent
Church-based Bible Study	8	Faith Formation Team
Communion (served how often?)	605	Served Monthly
Community Meals	210	Church Life Team
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	0	2-yr program
Drama or Dance Program	0	N/A
Funerals (number last year)	2	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	0	N/A
Outdoor Worship	44	Worship Team
Prayer or Meditation Groups	0	N/A
Public Advocacy Work	0	N/A
Retreats	0	N/A
Weddings (number last year)	0	N/A
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	6	N/A
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	N/A
Youth Groups or Classes	7	Faith Formation Team
Other	0	N/A

Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
9:30	41	Various

Additional comments:

Ideally, our called Pastor will be involved with planning many of the above activities and gatherings. In the absence of a pastor, the Church Council and our various ministry teams have been taking active roles planning and participating in the church's activities.

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
N/A	none	0	0	☐

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

N/A

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Church Secretary	Church Council	part	Church Council	3 years
Church Custodian	Church Council	part	Church Council	Less than 1 year

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

Many of Zion's members are retired or semi-retired; the core members are active in Zion's overall ministry. Additionally, many of our members commute to jobs out of town, reducing the available time for individuals to commit to or volunteer for activities or events at the church. That being said, Zion UCC functions optimally as a church 'unit' whenever a call is put out for action.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	71924
Endowment Draw (beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")	10000
Fundraising Events	3500
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	8350
Total	93774

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

72915

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.

[Download church budget](#)

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

No response

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?

Weekly tithes

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

1

Total amount of loan debt:

No response



Reason for debt:

No debt

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

N/A

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2023	Organ refurbishment, Masonry	92000	9200	Enhancement of worship experience and use of church facilities
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0	None	0	0	
0		0	0	

Description the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

N/A

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

870000

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

As needed

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

1% in 2024 versus 6.2% in 2022

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

Difficult to gauge because we don't have a pastoral compensation package in effect that enters into annual budget considerations.

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

Unknown

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

These estimates are likely to change once a pastoral compensation package is implemented.

Other Assets

N/A

Reserves (savings):

No response

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

1000

How is the parsonage used?

Currently empty

Street

Jefferson

City

Lowden

State

IA

Zip

52255

Finished square footage:

2100

Number of Bedrooms:

4

Number of Bathrooms:

1

Assessed real estate value:

150000

Available for minister residence?

Yes

Expected minister residence?

Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Good

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Stewardship of Resources Team

Parsonage pictures

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

Church proper, Christian Education Building, Parsonage, Storage Garage

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

None

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids
Large print bulletins
Closed-captioning on sanctuary screen and/or livestream
Wheelchair access in bathrooms
Handrails on all stairs

Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Curb cuts
Accessible bathroom on each floor
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

All, except educational building basement, sanctuary balcony and chancel area, and parsonage.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Church Council oversees the financial practices of the church, including authorizing payment of bills.
Our financial secretary counts weekly offerings, prepares the deposit for same, distributes deposits to correct account.
Our Stewardship of Resources Team oversees budget formation.
Church treasurer pays General Fund bills and is responsible for reconciliation of Designated Ministry accounts.
We also employ outside accounting agency for payroll assistance.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

Compared to other similarly situated churches in our locality, we have an unusually large endowment fund. Our budget is developed by comparing the prior year budget to the current year expenses and making adjustments as necessary.

Historical Information**Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.**

1. As with many local churches, Zion continues to suffer a decline in active membership, either through the deaths of older members, transfers of members to other churches out of town, and declining involvement. Zion continually looks for way to re-engage members who have ceased active roles in the church.
2. Zion is cognizant of the challenges of securing a pastor to come to a rural church on a part-time basis. Zion's congregation voted in mid-2023 to proceed with exploration of sharing a pastor with another congregation, both on a part-time basis with the end result being to call a settled pastor for a combined full-time position between the two congregations.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

Zion has been in the search and call process for lengthy period of time. Despite not having a settled pastor, the congregation, Council, and Ministry Area Teams, shepherded by the presence of the Holy Spirit, have done an excellent job of meeting the needs of our

congregation and community, continuing the advancement of Zion's mission.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

We have no written policies, protocols, or structures, per se, for dealing with conflict, but as a general rule, it is always best to gather as much information as possible about all perspectives to the conflict and not rush to a decision. Also, it is a particularly important to honestly approach the conflict with the understanding that not all 'sides' will be pleased with the outcome. The main goal, however, is that all perspectives to the conflict are presented and respected, and that the underlying priorities and reasons for the conflict are understood by all involved.

Conflicts arising at committee meetings are discussed until an amicable resolution is reached. The Council deals with conflict through discussion/negotiation culminating in a majority vote.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

A conflict that was difficult and perhaps not resolved optimally was with a former pastor and largely involved the concept of sabbatical. At that time, Zion was not able to accommodate the request for sabbatical and because it was the first that had been requested by any of Zion's pastors, the church perhaps did not completely understand the concept. The Council/congregation felt that the issue was not presented in a sense that explained the activities contemplated to be undertaken by the pastor during the sabbatical or what the resulting benefit to the congregation was projected to be. Ultimately, the pastor resigned.

Ministerial History:

<i>Name:</i> Stephen Stepp	<i>Years of service:</i> 8	UCC Standing
<i>Name:</i> Barbara Muhs	<i>Years of service:</i> 12	
<i>Name:</i> Vernon Clausin	<i>Years of service:</i> 4	
<i>Name:</i> Stephen Voelker	<i>Years of service:</i> 4	

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

We have enjoyed diverse styles of ministerial leadership in the past nearly 30 years, with each of the above ministers excelling in different areas. These diverse styles occasionally has led to active members becoming inactive during the course of one's ministry, only to become active again when a ministerial change occurs. We expect open and honest dialogue with our pastor.

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

Yes

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

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

Zion has a dedicated room for its Food Pantry, which will be open to the public during the church secretary's office hours.

Zion has for many years partnered with the North Cedar School District Bells to provide Christmas gifts and food baskets for underprivileged or low income families with children.

Our Mission Team is very active throughout the year with local, state, national, and international mission projects. Local activities include collecting items that can be put to use in the community and school; the state, national and international mission work is through monetary donation to various groups.

Zion hosts Vacation Bible School (VBS) in July for not only its children and youth but also children and youth from neighboring churches and communities.

Zion's Evening Circle (a womens' group that meets once a month) does a variety of activities to support the life of Zion and fellowship of its members.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

Zion sends two congregants to the Annual Meetings of the Iowa Conference, United Church of Church meeting, and the Eastern Iowa Association, United Church of Christ.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

We are unsure what this question means. Zion does not actively "organize movements" in our community.

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, through [Just World Covenants](#) or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

None.

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

Zion would not be opposed to considering the above statements if approached.

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

Members of Zion and another church in our town have partnered to provide food supplies and meals to needy members of the community.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

N/A

The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.

Zion's expectation is that its pastor will be involved and will ask members for their participation in furthering the ministry of Gospel of Jesus Christ. We would expect that our pastor would be open and actively open communicate with the members of Zion so that the ministry can move forward but not become overwhelming. Zion believes that spreading the Good News is a team effort, not to be undertaken only by the pastor or only by the membership.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

No response

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

The majority of our community is made up of white (non-hispanic) individuals. The greatest percentage of ethnicity is German, followed by "unspecified/unclassified," with other races/cultures representing lesser percentages.

Our cost of living is lower in our small towns than in the larger metropolitan areas. We are close to many amenities that are offered in metropolitan areas of Dubuque, the Quad Cities, Iowa City, and Cedar Rapids.

How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.

Our demographics are consistent with and similar to neighboring communities (limited ethnic diversity, i.e., Caucasian, English-speaking, German descent).

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

We have many people within our community who are unchurched. We strive to come up with items to interest and intrigue people to come and see what exciting things are happening at Zion. Also, we compete with Sunday morning sports and leisure activities.

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

Zion is known for its members' volunteerism for community events. Even our children are involved: our Christian Education department periodically visits the local Fire Department in support of their fundraising events.

Our sanctuary is well known for its beauty and architecture and for how well it is taken care of.

Our pipe organ, which has been recently restored, is truly a priceless instrument, and is renowned among organists from area churches.

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

New members with young children are drawn to Zion by our Christian Education Department, which may in fact start with their child attending Vacation Bible School on a whim. Some families eventually migrate from their childrens' Sunday School or youth events to Sunday morning worship. Other members have said that they find Zion to be truly welcoming while being mindful and attentive of the significance of the new members' spiritual upbringing or habits.

References



■ Barry Hoffmeier

Contacted: Friday, Sep 12, 2025

Primary Email Address: bjhoff@fbcom.net

Reference Response

No response

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the guidance of your Holy Spirit in the preparation of our Local Church Profile. We pray that at each section of the Profile preparation, we have considered all aspects of the ministry at Zion with a proper focus on a review of our history, where our ministry is right now, and our hopes for continuing the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for Holy Spirit-led conversations between church and candidates.

In Jesus name we pray,

Amen.

Statement of Consent

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.

Members of the Search Committee
Organizational Leaders

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

This profile should be considered in conjunction with the profile of Trinity Lutheran ELCA in Tipton, Iowa. Zion and Trinity have entered into a Covenant for Shared Ministry.