

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



First Congregational United Church of Christ

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Settled Lead Minister

Rocky Mountain Conference

Southeastern Association

_____ [Validation Date]

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS:

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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)*

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

First Congregational United Church of Christ
20 East Saint Vrain Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Supplemental web links:

fcucc.org

facebook.com/PrimoCongo/

youtube.com/c/fcucccos

Conference: Rocky Mountain Conference

Association: Southeast Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:

Name: Rev. Sue Artt

Title: Conference Minister

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Summary Ministry Description:

Historically, we have been a vibrant, growing church known for having a strong progressive voice in a more conservative city. This is still the case; however, the congregation has come out of a period of questioning its identity and commitment to long held church values. We are looking forward with hopeful anticipation to regaining this sense of vibrant growth, even while recognizing the challenges of the last five years. We strive to create an extravagant welcome, a true sense of wonder, and a positive and proactive witness to the possibility of a just world. We are seeking a minister with strong administrative and consensus-building skills and who is living Jesus's message; modeling Micah 6 to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

What we value about living in our area:

Stunning Natural Beauty At the foot of Pikes Peak, Colorado Springs offers stunning natural beauty with four seasons and snow that usually evaporates the day after it falls. We have a semi-arid climate with ~243 sunny days per year and ~16 inches of rain. We have large, beautiful city parks. We are only 1.5 hours from downtown Denver, and 2.5 hours from the ski slopes in the heart of the Rockies.

University/College Town We have the advantages of being the 2nd largest city in Colorado with the opportunities provided by having a state university, an elite private college, and the US Air Force Academy. The Pikes Peak region has 9 area school districts with a number of award-winning schools.

Olympic City USA We are home to the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee, their museum, and to many training sites.

Downtown Revitalization Just a few blocks south of us, Colorado Springs is experiencing a revitalization of our city center with thousands of units (apartments, condos, offices, businesses) going up over the next few years.

Military Town Colorado Springs is home to five large military institutions and is home to many active and retired military personnel.

Current size of church membership: **585**

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

Position Title: **Lead Minister**

Position Duration: **Settled**

This is 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**

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?
Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Worship

- Coordinate the overall worship themes, in collaboration with staff, and lay leaders.
- Regularly preach, teach, and lead services of worship.
- Celebrate the sacraments according to the traditions of the United Church of Christ.
- Officiate weddings, funerals, memorial services, and other services as needed.

Administration

- Establish a safe and trusting relationship with all staff and congregants.
- As the lead administrator, act as Chief of Staff (as required in bylaws), support and supervise all church staff, building relationships and trust, as well as defining roles and creating a sense of team; competent and experienced in personnel and financial matters.
- Provide leadership in planning and visioning for the current and future well-being of the congregation, in collaboration with the Church Council.
- Safeguard and guide, working with the church staff and leadership, the nurturing of generosity, development of stewardship, and management of all resources – including facilities, finances and people.
- Communicate and coordinate plans and activities on a regular basis with staff members and key volunteers.

Pastoral Care

Work with others to fulfill ministerial functions such as providing pastoral care, offering extravagant welcome to guests and visitors, and counseling. We are seeking a pastor who will shepherd members through listening, restoring, and encouraging congregants.

Teaching and Inspiring

- Inspire on-going spiritual growth and in-depth study and contemplation. A team of dedicated lay and staff members are currently working to create an alternative worship experience in the style of Taizé to fulfill the stated desires of our congregation. This new service will begin on February 27, 2022.
- Interpret for the congregation Jesus's call to Justice and Peace and encourage the Mission Giving and Outreach efforts of the church.
- Participate in planning and teaching, with the Director of Youth Ministry, the biennial confirmation classes. Inspire youth to speak and act their truth.
- Be a resource for meaningful faith development, authentic spiritual nurture, and accessible Christian education for all ages.

Community Engagement

- Represent the congregation in the larger community of Colorado Springs in ecumenical events and gatherings, and beyond.
- Engage the broader community and lead the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love.
- Participate in wider church activities including conference and association meetings.

Core Competencies

The Search Committee has participated and listened to the church as we have discussed our past, present, and future and determined the top three areas highlighted here:

- **Leadership** - can craft a vision and goals and take a facilitative approach to engaging the gifts of the congregation.
- **Compassionate** - connects with emotional intelligence to people of all ages; can be present and show empathy; can establish deep trust with congregants.
- **Intellectually challenging and spiritually grounded** - to help us grow in our faith.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis: \$110,000 - \$120,000 (contingent on education and experience).

Benefits: Salary plus Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

Housing allowance included within salary

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

Minister's discretion. There are homes for sale or rent within easy commute of the church.

State any incentives:

We offer a 3-month sabbatical after 5 years of service.

If the sabbatical is taken, the minister commits to staying for at least another year.

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

- ✓ Pastoral support council of members (Congregational Clergy Relations Committee)
- ✓ Peer group of other downtown pastors (The Muskrats)
- ✓ UCC Association / Conference support

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?**Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with**

Recently the church has wrestled with an identity crisis. We say we are an Open and Affirming (ONA), Just Peace (including Black Lives Matter), and Micah 6 church. But how is that reflected in our practices as a church and within our daily lives?

Our next minister will need to support us by:

- Helping to re-establish a safe and trusting environment within the church. Showing, through leadership, what Micah 6 means in daily life. Being a fair and competent administrator to the church staff and establishing open and honest communication with the congregation. Showing care and comfort to all in need.
- Increasing the financial capacity of our church. Our next leader will need to be fundamental in supporting efforts towards building back membership and financial support for the church and its ministries.
- Seeking out meaningful ways to engage and welcome all kinds of diversity, challenging the congregation to be open to self-reflection and awareness, and to make room for all perspectives and backgrounds. Creating more opportunities for fellowship and personal connections, both inside and beyond our walls, and making worship more accessible to different backgrounds.
- Continuing to find ways to be outspoken in our community through action as well as strategic funding, and to help our congregation (and our city) transcend political and other differences.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

As a church that is known for being a strong progressive voice, we need a lead minister who will help us act and live beyond this label. We appreciate moving toward action, and not just engaging intellectually, so that we can truly be a place of refuge downtown, and a beacon of effective community outreach and partnership, to generate the greatest impact on our community. And we need a lead minister to help us discern the best course of action, to slow down and listen to the Spirit of God so that we can move together in a focused way.

We want to continue our history of dynamic lead ministers, with someone who is comfortable with public visibility and risk-taking on issues of justice, who can fearlessly speak up and authentically engage those with different perspectives to find common ground.

In this political climate, we need a lead minister who doesn't isolate us in a comfortable bubble, but who draws us out, actively, beyond the walls of our church, to seek greater understanding of everyone in our community, and how we can come together to lift up our whole city and beyond.

We hope that our lead minister will think creatively about how to bring worship beyond the walls of the church, to reach different groups where they are, and extend our refuge outside of formal Sunday services, especially given the realities of Covid.

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

Experience Partnering with Conservative Communities

Colorado Springs has seen several cultural shifts in the past few decades, moving from a more traditionally Western city into a period when the city recruited Evangelical organizations to relocate here - which helped to create a dominant voice of cultural conservatism. In recent years, the area has moderated a bit culturally, though it remains politically conservative. Since this is not a typical large city, a minister who has experience partnering with conservative communities would be helpful, as we work with those institutions to solve community problems. It would also help to understand the culture that many of our post-Evangelical members are coming from and how that background may have affected them, and to make our church more accessible to them.

Perhaps Multi-lingual

While our congregation is largely monocultural, our city has a growing Hispanic community (about 18% of the population), and a Spanish-speaking minister could add value in terms of outreach and connections with community-serving organizations.

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 five 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.

- **Commitment to life-long spiritual growth and practice, individually and in community.**
We seek a lead minister who has been, and continues to be on a rich journey of faith, who can model and practice this with us.
- **A passion for the oneness of the body of Christ as expressed through commitment to ecumenism, justice, and the full embrace of all persons in the radical hospitality of God.**
We seek someone who has a foundation in UCC and Congregational identities, and who will challenge us to reach out in all different directions (including outside our comfort zones).
- **The ability to accept and promote diversity, to inspire others to do so, and to minister in a multicultural and multiracial, open and affirming, just peace, accessible to all, united and uniting church.**
We seek a lead minister who can show us how to more effectively live out these descriptions and designations, and to more actively confront our privilege so that we may work toward greater diversity in our congregation.
- **The ability to engage in community leadership that is collaborative and transformative.**
We seek someone who is as comfortable speaking up as they are with listening and evolving their own viewpoints, and who will model that in our wider community.
- **The ability to preach the good news, lead worship, and participate in the sacraments in a manner faithful to the broader Christian heritage and appropriate to the characteristics of a specific culture and setting.**
We seek a lead minister who can challenge and encourage us through sermons, worship, and spiritual activities, integrating both tradition and innovation in this setting; a minister that can be forward thinking about worship during these continued times of Covid.

2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

We have been guided by these words from the final sermon of Reverend James Gregg, who served our congregation from 1882 to 1909:

“Aim to keep this church ever representative, not of any particular interest of the community but broadly of the city as a whole, including sympathetically in your fellowship all classes and conditions of the people, rich and poor, high and low, the learned and the unlearned. Do not allow this church ever to become in anywise an exclusive and therefore unchristian society, but keep it always as inclusive of all persons in the grace of God made manifest in Jesus Christ.”

First Congregational United Church of Christ of Colorado Springs practices congregational polity, which holds that the members of a local church have the right and responsibility to decide their church forms of worship, confessional statements, choose their own officers, and administer their own affairs without outside interference.

Our church was guided by this polity through the years up to and including our last Search Committee. However, the trajectory of our story was shifted by events in 2019.

After our previous Lead Minister's resignation, the Search Committee that called her reconvened to support one another during a challenging and painful time for our faith community. It was agreed; the profile created in 2017 felt right then, but the Church is different now from the church then described.

We've been humbled; not only the committee that called the pastor, but also the congregation. After many years of feeling very certain about most things, it is now understood that our Church is a faith community reestablishing its path. The gift of our last pastor's short ministry was that it helped to bring our “exceptionalism” into the light. Over the years, we have proudly wrapped ourselves in the *words* of Micah 6, Just Peace, and Open and Affirming, but recent events have forced deep searching about actually *living* these words, both inside and outside of our church.

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

Given the challenges of the recent past, we believe we are called to move boldly forward re-emphasizing the fundamentals of being a Congregational Church: Christ as the Head and Example of our Church, Christian, Covenantal, Reformed, and Congregational. We strive to transform our beliefs into a dynamic and vital living faith. A faith that will sustain and help us to be light in our world.

We are called to be a strong progressive voice in our community; recently affirming in an all Church meeting our commitment to: **Spirituality, Radical Inclusion, Living Micah 6, being Multigenerational, and practicing Active Social Justice, and in particular, elevating the voices of the many generations represented in our members.**

We hear God's call to become not just a refuge for ourselves and a place to feed our own hearts, but also a beacon of hope and light - a sanctuary in our community, and a magnet for compassionate action.

We have proudly proclaimed an Open and Affirming, Just Peace designation, and now we intend to turn our designations into a living reality within our church and out into the broader community.

We need to be a community that is willing to look in the mirror and ask hard questions, figure out how we can be more welcoming, loving, and inclusive. We can be a bit proud at times of how welcoming and progressive we are - and we need to be more regularly aware of our gaps and failings, and how to correct those. We are called to love and be in community regardless of our political and theological leanings.

We are called to be anchored in our long history and strong tradition, while also being stretched into new ways of worshiping and being. In a world of binary choices, our congregation is in the unique position to become “Both/And”; finding ways to embrace a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds, and model that for others. We seek what in the Greek is “*Arete*” which in its most basic sense means “excellence” in being a United Church of Christ, followers of Christ, truth seekers and free thinkers.

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

We are developing our multi-year strategic plan, having just experienced major disruption due to the Covid pandemic. We are intentional, in a time of transition, in terms of major vision and priorities.

The following are actions and ideas addressing the emerging challenges in our community:

- ✓ **Just Peace:** This UCC aspirational designation was unanimously approved by our congregation January 29, 2017. The Just Peace team desires to spearhead congregation and community action. Recently the inflow of displaced Afghans has added an additional focus to this ministry.
- ✓ **Mission Giving & Outreach (MG&O):** In addition to all of the existing work of MG&O, we recently added “Reaching In Reaching Out” retreats which invite our congregants to in-depth spiritual work and service with our grantees.
- ✓ **Worship:** Our exile from our church building due to Covid created opportunities for exploring a new format of worship. Our creative Worship and Music staff and lay teams, using video technology, began livestreaming our services to [youtube.com/c/fcucccos](https://www.youtube.com/c/fcucccos). A wonderful remote worship experience was created. Certainly not a substitute for in-person, it opened our “doors” to reach people wherever they were. Even now, while we are present in-person, many of our members have opted to remain safely in their homes to enjoy our services on livestream or to watch later on YouTube or our website.
We are in the process of creating an alternative Sunday morning worship experience in the style of Taizé with congregant participation in meditation and lectio divina. This came about as a result of a survey of the congregation.
- ✓ **Youth:** We have a commitment to uplift the voices of our youth. The rapid social change that has happened, and is happening across the country, because of this past year’s BLM movement was spearheaded by young people. As a result, the youth are at the center of the change and incredibly cognizant of the ways in which we are evolving socially. We aim to treat our youth as integrated members and leaders in the congregation, just as any other adult member.

3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

Our life of faith plays out in wide-ranging, creative and meaningful ways.

A statement read to a newly baptized member exemplifies our view of faith:

“While we will share with you the stories and practices of our faith, we do not presume to tell you what to believe, for ours is a community of freedom and wonder.”

When we say the Lord's Prayer, we start with “Our Mother, Our Father...” or “Our Creator...” acknowledging the gender neutrality of God.

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry, UCC (U Care Casseroles), Visitation Ministry, Church Nurse and Stephen Ministry support our community through volunteer-led care. Zoom has provided another avenue of providing Christian support for widows, caregivers, and those struggling with the impact of Covid. Being part of Family Promise, we work with other churches in housing and feeding homeless families.

The Holy Spirit is in our midst most often through the relationships built within the congregation, showing support to one another, checking in, offering transportation, and being there in a crisis.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Our congregation, clergy, and staff are committed and resilient. We have weathered difficult changes in the past three years, including the departure of a recently called lead minister and some valued staff. Just as our transitional lead minister arrived to guide us through this challenging situation, Covid drove the cancellation of in-person services and a transition to online worship. But we persevered. Our staff and clergy produced and digitally recorded powerful worship services and posted them on YouTube, like Christmas Eve 2020, [youtube.com/watch?v=0z1jydXKoQg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0z1jydXKoQg) and our 2020 Christmas Mystery program which allowed us to maintain a 110-year-old tradition, [youtube.com/watch?v=iWFnfvkOGSE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWFnfvkOGSE). As our Colorado weather improved in late spring, we shifted to outdoor services by closing off the street in front of the church. In-person Sunday School also returned in an outdoor setting. Commitment also revealed itself financially. Our transitional minister encouraged us to initiate a campaign to reduce or retire our nearly \$600,000 mortgage. The response was nothing short of phenomenal—the “Burn the Mortgage” campaign achieved the necessary pledges within three months.

Our historically excellent and diverse music program continues to be an important element of worship. The pipe organ, Chancel Choir, Flute Choir and Bell Choir are at the core of church services, while jazz and folk music take center stage from time to time.

Congregational commitment to moving forward was confirmed by engaged attendance at three consultant-led sessions to prepare for the Lead Minister search. Congregants, prominently including youth members, focused on our history, our identity, and what we are called to become in the world. The results figure prominently in this profile.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Worship takes on many forms in our church.

We dedicate services throughout the year to different themes while following the liturgical calendar. We have varied artistic offerings in worship. We sometimes worship in the style of Taizé and we enjoy multigenerational services. We regularly experience diverse music offerings from our organ and many choirs. We have a portable labyrinth that can be set up in our Founders’ Room for contemplative walking.

Baptisms display a strong sense of community. Congregants collect water from their global travels and this is combined with water from the Jordan River. Congregants are invited to join the family on the chancel to show support. Then the baptized individual is carried (if an infant) or walked around the sanctuary to be greeted by the congregants as the newest member of God’s community.

We expect inspired preaching.

We desire artful messages which come from the spiritual and intellectual wellspring of our Lead Minister’s personal walk and evolving understanding of God. Showing authenticity and vulnerability has been particularly powerful, whether about certain issues or in experiencing periods of doubt in their faith. It is our wish that our Lead would be firmly rooted in the Christian faith while fluent in the common perennial truths found in other spiritual paths. We desire one who will engage and challenge our congregation to utilize their spiritual gifts for the benefit of the church and community. Messages that are personally relevant stick with us, helping us to connect the dots between ancient stories, God, and what we do now.

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

For example, how are young people in leadership? How do people continue to form their faith over a lifetime? Name a topic studied or curriculum used recently; what was the impact of this study on those who attended?

Vision: Education is one of the four Ministry Areas our church has prioritized. Faith Formation offerings are created in the belief that faith is built over a lifetime and that ongoing experiences are necessary to challenge and grow each individual's spiritual understanding.

Adults: Many activities have either been put on hold in light of the pandemic or pivoted to online. Some examples of recent Faith Formation offerings held throughout the week include:

- Multigenerational Advent activities in which families explore the characters and meaning of the stories leading up to Jesus' birth
- Bible Study led by Transitional Lead Minister
- Discussion and Fellowship groups including Tuesday Night Conversation, Soul Feast, Bible Nerds, Men's B&B, Lenten Film Series
- Prayer Shawl Ministry: a prayerful gathering that knits/crochets shawls that bring comfort to those who receive them.
- Racial Justice led by Associate Minister
- The Forum offers expert-led lectures and discussions on a wide variety of topics from theology to art to world affairs to local politics and history. The Forum often attracts unchurched people from the wider community and some eventual members enter through this pathway.
- James W. White Lectureship is an annual weekend that brings in national and international figures in theology such as John Spong, Brian McLaren, Nadia Bolz-Weber, Peter Rollins and many others. Like the Forum, this brings in new members every year.

Children & Youth: We believe in providing a foundation of faith for our younger members rather than telling them what to believe. As they grow into their own faith, we encourage youth to be equal contributors to the congregation and the world. This is realized through a great deal of exploration and hands-on experiences of faith for all ages, such as:

- **Godly Play**, a Montessori-style experience for the Pre-K through 1st graders to act out the stories from the Bible. Facilitators are drawn from mature members of the congregation to build generational connections.
- **Kids' Community Worship** allows children to have their own experience of the service and liturgy, including setting the table, serving communion, and singing. Recently, they have been supporting refugee families from Afghanistan by creating lunch boxes filled with activities for children.
- **Some Jesus News** was created during the Covid lockdown. Utilizing the social media theme "Some Good News," our children collected materials and created activity kits to occupy children of immigrants who were busy with courts and paperwork.

- **Seasons of the Spirit** is an age-appropriate Sunday School curriculum that offers accessible stories, hands-on activities, and a focus aligned with the liturgical year. During the pandemic, the goal was to connect families in safe environments including Easter drop-off kits to families and other outdoor activities.
- **Multigenerational connections** were made when children and older church members wrote messages of support to one another - this was a true blessing of Covid.
- **Third Grade Bible Class** is designed to teach Biblical organization, timeline, and key understandings; it culminates with each child receiving their own Bible and blessings from the congregation.
- **Multifaith Camps** held in the past offered children experiences in other faith traditions such as the Jewish, Buddhist, and Islamic communities. We plan to revitalize this important community program impacting the faith formation of children in elementary and middle school.
- **Ubuntu leadership** is an important feature of faith formation for older elementary and middle school students who mentor younger children in Sunday School and church activities. This lets our youth experience leadership and continues faith formation.
- **Our Whole Lives (OWL)** is a popular offering at our church, helping children have a healthy experience of sexuality and faith, in age-appropriate groups from kindergarten to young adult. OWL has been a huge draw in retaining families with strong participation from both church members and non-church members. This program has been critical in maintaining youth faith formation at a time when Sunday School participation is still not back to pre-pandemic levels.
- **Youth groups for middle and high schoolers** are flexible and allow for fun and community building, along with important faith conversations. Recently, our youth minister has been coordinating with other local UCC churches for combined youth events. During the pandemic, the youth minister used social media to communicate with youth as well as weekly youth group gatherings in person as able.
- **Outdoor youth and family fellowship** took place in parks and local amusement centers to allow for social distancing outside.
- **The biennial Confirmation Class** for 9th and 10th graders focuses on deepening one's faith. At the completion, each individual decides if they are going to join the church.
- **Youth group volunteer trips** have provided a powerful experience for teenagers to see first-hand some of the inequities and injustices of life, and to have the opportunity to practice living out Jesus's teachings. Last year, middle schoolers traveled to work with an organization serving the migrant farming community and unhoused people in Alamosa. In the past, high school trips have traveled to inner city and immigrant organizations.
- **Youth Leadership:** Two high school youth are valued members of the Lead Minister Search Committee.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

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

Church leadership communicates regularly and effectively with the congregation via weekly emails (e-blasts), the bi-monthly Communicator newsletter, written announcements in the Sunday bulletin and verbal announcements from the Chancel during services. While much of the communication is now electronic, church staff tracks who in the congregation needs physical (hardcopy) communication.

FCUCC recognizes that congregational interests and passions evolve over time. The oft-cited decision to become ONA was accompanied by the creation of an ONA Committee that was very active for years. But as ONA status became more and more woven into our fabric, if not a routine “fact of life,” interest in serving on that committee waned. Council ultimately decided to allow the committee to lapse until renewed interest indicated otherwise. We seek a lead minister to recognize our ONA commitment and re-energize our ONA efforts. Conversely, grass roots energy behind a focus on Just Peace led to creation of a ministry team and ultimately congregational adoption of Just Peace status for FCUCC.

FCUCC is currently wrestling with the notion that we are not necessarily who we have thought ourselves to be. We will need help from our new settled Lead Minister in discerning again and acting on our call to be diverse and inclusive, as well as caring for each other and understanding each other's differences of thought and personality.

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

The lead minister can expect to spend three hours at Church Council meetings per month plus weekly staff meetings. Additionally, there are several special meetings or retreats where leaders and staff participate in planning and making long-term decisions.

We have a large number of teams and committees, which are led and managed by lay leadership and volunteers, with periodic input from the lead minister and other staff.

Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

As we have all experienced, quick action was needed when Covid threatened our safety. Our Transitional Lead Minister had not yet arrived, which left our Associate Minister in charge. On a Wednesday evening, she was notified that we had to shut down the church immediately. Clergy and staff scrambled to provide an online service for the coming Sunday. The congregation was notified and a new system of reaching further into the community was born. After that initial Sunday, we produced high quality, online services for public viewing.

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

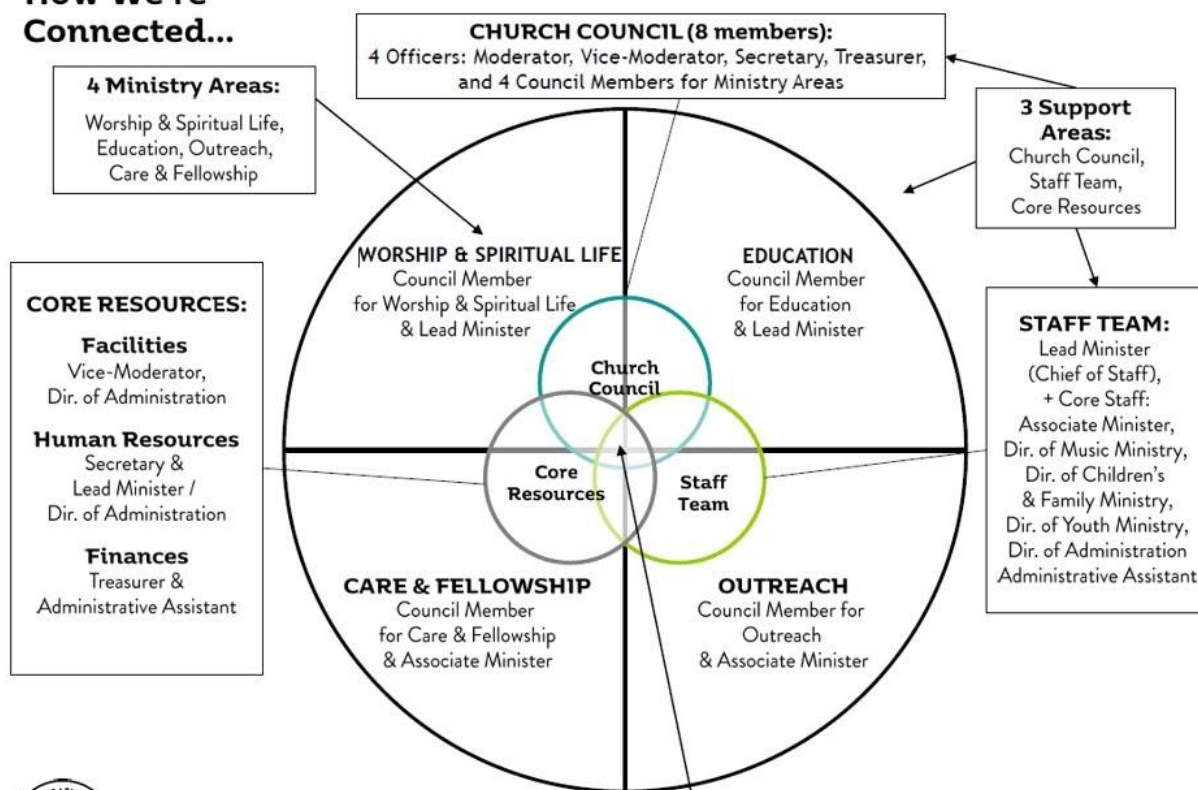
Yes, we can provide bylaws and annual reports to any interested candidate.

From our bylaws: "With regard to church employees, the lead minister shall function as chief of staff ..."

When we are at our best, FCUCC moves beyond hierarchy-displayed below-and seeks communication, collaboration, crossflow, and understanding. We've used this graphic for some time now to describe our main lines of effort and how we try to work together.

Clergy and staff are partnered with lay leaders and ministry teams to nurture and advance ministry areas, staff, facilities, and our financial health. It's worth noting that while our (non-clergy) staff are not necessarily members of the church they are vital participants in the life of the church, including worship and musical offerings.

How We're Connected...



OUR MISSION: Responding to God's love, we are First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, of Colorado Springs, an inclusive, ecumenical, and spiritual people, who through worship, education, care, fellowship, and outreach seek to embrace the mystery of God.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

✓ See attached

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	585*	*(not all members are actively engaged)
Number of active non-members:	100	X
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	685	X

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	59%	X
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	22%	X
Less than 5 years:	19%	X

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
110	62	41	72	58	59	82	110	91	X

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	10%	X
Households with minors:	25%	X
Single adults age 35-65:	15%	X
Joint households with no minors:	35%	X
Single adults over 65:	15%	X

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	25%	X
College:	50%	X
Graduate School:	20%	X
Specialty Training:	5%	X
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	55%	X
Adults who are retired:	40%	X
Adults who are not fully employed:	5%	X

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

Academics, educators (including teachers, tutors, childcare providers, educational paraprofessionals), psychotherapists, social workers, human resource professionals, musicians, chaplains, doctors, stay-at-home parents, massage therapists, dental assistants, very active retirees, lawyers, engineers, realtors, accountants, small business owners, non-profit leaders, consultants, writers, artists.

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?

Primarily white, 2% nonwhite, 15-20% LGBTQ, growing transgender and gender non-conforming population. We also see our diversity through members who are differently-abled, and those in and out of homelessness. We have a few mixed-race families in our congregation, but Black and Hispanic families often don't stay. Based on conversations with some who don't stay, it's sometimes a problem of style (it doesn't feel like home), but sometimes a failure to fully welcome or include. We have a traditional Protestant liturgy, and that may also be a problem for some younger “Ex-vangelicals” who find their way here.

Compared to our city and county, our church has a diversity of places of origin, particularly drawing people who have moved here from more liberal areas or people who have chosen to retire here.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future?

(perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory) Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

We seek a lead minister with innovative and progressive ideas that can be implemented to foster diversity. We have not completed the formal Welcoming Diversity Inventory; however, we have had informal conversations focused on developing a diverse congregation.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart.

Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	300-400	Volunteer presenters, volunteer lay leaders, Lead and Associate Ministers
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Lead and Associate Ministers
Children's Groups or Classes	12 Adults Per Week 120 Kids & Youth	Director of Children & Family Ministry, Director of Youth Ministry, Sunday School teachers, worship volunteers
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	500	Lead & Associate Ministers, Director of Music Ministry, professional musicians, worship volunteers
Church-wide Meals	300	4 Annual events planned by Children's Ministry Team, Stewardship Team, Membership Team
Choirs and Music Groups	96	Director of Music Ministry, Volunteer Flute Choir Director, Brass Ensemble Director
Church-based Bible Study	15	Lead Minister and lay leaders
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	1st service-Weekly 2nd service-Monthly	Lead & Associate Ministers, Director of Music Ministry, Communion Coordinator
Community Meals	Variety	Several events focused on smaller communities within the church; Thanksgiving meal organized by lay leaders

Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	Every other year: 2021-5; 2019 -8	Director of Youth, Lead & Associate Ministers
Drama or Dance Program	The Mystery (28 performers); The Madrigal (every other year) (50 Performers & crew & 300 -350 audience)	Director of Music Ministry; The Mystery Team (lay leaders), Ad Hoc Volunteer team
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	8	Lead & Associate Ministers, Memorial Service Coordinator
Intergenerational Groups	45 (Annual Family Camp)	Volunteer Team and 1-2 staff members
Outdoor Worship	100 per service Weekly outdoor services during Spring/Summer for safety reasons;	Lead & Associate Ministers; Dir. of Music Ministry, Dir. of Children's & Family Ministry, Dir. of Youth Ministry
Prayer or Meditation Groups	70 Contemplative Prayer Shawl Ministry, Soul Feast, Zen Meditation	Associate Minister, Lay Volunteers
Public Advocacy Work	75	Lead & Associate Ministers, Just Peace Ministry Team, volunteer leaders
Retreats	20- retreat to Benet Hill Monastery	Mission Giving & Outreach
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	350+ James W. White Lectureship Series	Volunteer Ad Hoc Committee
Weddings (<i>number in 2020</i>)	1	Associate Minister & Wedding Coordinator
Worship (time slot: 8:30)	25 (in-person)	Lead & Associate Ministers; Dir. of Music Ministry, Dir. of Children's & Family Ministry, Dir. of Youth Ministry

Worship (time slot: 11:00)	140 (in-person)	Lead & Associate Ministers; Dir. of Music Ministry, Dir. of Children's & Family Ministry, Dir. of Youth Ministry
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	40	Director of Youth Ministry, 6 Lay Leaders
Other	OWL: Our Whole Lives - 11 (1st-3rd Grade); 19 (6th- 7th grade)	6 Lay Leaders (OWL Trained); Director of Children's & Family Ministry

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers.

Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Don Longbottom	3	UCC	Transitional Lead Minister	N
Jacque Franklin	3	UCC	Minister for Pastoral Care	N
James White	3	UCC	Emeritus	Y
Jerry Jordan	3	UCC	Emeritus	Y
Patricia Walker	4	UCC	Minister within UMC	N
Steve Alsum	4	UCC		N

Lyn Boudreau Mahaffey	4	UCC	Chaplin	N
Steve Fehl	No	Lutheran		Y
Kate Holbrook	No	Presbyterian	Chaplin	N
Faye Gallegos	No	UCC		Y
John Snyder	No	Presbyterian		Y
Wil Green	No	UCC		Y
Bruce Coriell	No	American Baptist		Y
David Bribach	No	Presbyterian	Children's Ministry volunteer	Y
Elizabeth Vincent	No	UCC	Stephen Minister	N
Frank Jopp	No	UCC		Y
Catherine White	No	UCC	Chaplain	Y
Joe Pickle	No	American Baptist		Y
Bob Kinsey	No	UCC		Y
Gordon McKay	No	Disciples of Christ		Y

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:

- ✓ Rev. Dr. Jerry Jordan
- ✓ Rev. Dr. James W. White

They participate in worship and in other volunteer activities just like all other members. Pastors Emeriti are recognized for their institutional knowledge, but the title doesn't come with additional responsibility.

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	Chief of Staff?	Compensation (Full time, Part time, Volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Transitional Lead Minister	Yes	Full	Moderator	2 Years
Minister of Pastoral Care		Full	Lead Minister	14.5 years
Director of Music & Arts		Full	Lead Minister	4.5 years
Director of Administration & Communication		Full	Lead Minister	8.5 years
Administrative Assistant		Full	Lead Minister	1 year
Director of Youth Ministry		Part Time	Lead Minister	1 year

Director of Children & Family Ministry		Part Time	Lead Minister	6 months
Custodian		Full	Director of Administration & Communication	14 years
Custodian		Part Time	Dir. of Admin. & Comm.	6 years
Sunday Sexton (2)		Part Time	Dir. of Admin. & Comm.	Varies
Nursery Attendants (2)		Part Time	Dir. of Admin. & Comm.	Varies

REFLECTION

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

We are a spiritual and intellectual congregation. We're mostly white and mostly older, although we have a number of active young families. We have gay and lesbian participants (single and couples), as well as transgender and gender-nonconforming members. While we have a number of people who grew up in the UCC, many of our members come from other faith backgrounds including Catholic, Buddhist, Jewish, Unitarian, Evangelical, and other mainline Protestant denominations.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$659,883
Endowment Proceeds <i>(as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)</i>	\$35,300
Endowment Draw <i>(beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")</i>	N/A
Fundraising Events	N/A
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$100,542 (MG&O and Capital)
Grants	\$133,371 (PPP Loan forgiveness)
Rentals of Church Building	\$720
Rentals of Church Parsonage	N/A
Support from Related Organizations <i>(e.g. Women's Group)</i>	N/A
Transfers from Special Accounts	N/A
Other (specify):	\$1,100 (Dividends, Interest + other)
Other (specify):	\$1,000 (fees + Sales)
TOTAL	\$931,316

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

Total 2021 planned budget of \$990,994:

\$843,052 in General fund, \$99,300 in MG&O, \$48,642 in Capital

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

29%

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)

X Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

X One Great Hour of Sharing

X Strengthen the Church

X Neighbors in Need

X Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of the operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)

The church typically gives 45% of total Mission Giving & Outreach contributions to the wider settings of the UCC.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$0 (No Indebtedness)

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.

No building program currently underway.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal \$	Result \$	Impact
2011	Paid for restoration of interior sanctuary Built access corridor and Elevator addition Renovated kitchen and Hook & Hastings Organ	\$2,000,000	\$1.4 million	All projects are now complete
2021	“Burn the Mortgage”	\$582,000	\$582,000	Removed Debt Reduced budget needs by \$40,000 annually

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

There are no current Capital campaigns.

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? \$1,188,000

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

Endowment income is drawn regularly to fund capital projects.
 No other draw down of endowment funds occurs.

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

N/A

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

N/A

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

Perpetuity. Endowment income is declining gradually, as bonds purchased before 2002 have matured.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings):	\$171,079
Investments (other than endowment):	\$45,840
Does your church have a parsonage?	No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

20 E. Saint Vrain Street, Major Buildings: Sanctuary (1889), Founders' Room (1903), Atrium (1995). West Building (office & meeting spaces, 1959), Elevator and Access Corridor (2015). *20 E. Saint Vrain Street is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for the Sanctuary and Founder's Room.*

The Dwelling Place at 508 N. Tejon Street (Built 1962, purchased 1992), adjacent to the church, is a one-story, cement block building that houses youth activities and community groups.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

(worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.)

Accessible: Sanctuary, Founders' Room, Atrium, West Building, Dwelling Place

Not accessible: The Founders' Room balconies and the chancel

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?

We have recently concluded our Stewardship Campaign themed "Here Comes the Sun".

We embarked on two goals of (1) \$960,000 dollars, and (2) 80% of the congregation's households providing pledges. As of January 9, 2022, we have pledges for \$731,562 for 2022, with 54% of households having provided pledges.

We are dedicated to living within our attainable budget. Like many churches, our numbers trend down, and the age of the congregation is up. But we believe that with our booming downtown and the right leadership, this congregation can buck that trend and find young families who desire our unique, thoughtful and non-dogmatic Christian environment.

Meanwhile, we are working hard to find a sustainable balance with the right number of staff with the right number of hours for our budget. Our next minister will inherit an excellent staff. If our current stewardship levels are maintained, the council may need to decide if we have the funding for two full-time ministers. Our Associate Pastor will be retiring at the end of 2022. Our next minister will have input into the ongoing structure of the staff in 2023 and beyond.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

Land Acknowledgement: While we are proud of our foundation, we must also acknowledge that the land on which the City of Colorado Springs stands is the homeland and unceded historic territory of many Native American Nations, including Ute, Cheyenne & Arapaho. The very founding and development of our city was in direct violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. Although this history cannot be changed, it should move us to remember that our past is not the past recognized by all peoples. We acknowledge with humility these injustices.

nativeland.info/about/land-acknowledgment/

I. Historic Identity Shaped by Early Years (1874-1889)

1874-1881 Progressive Foundation

Founding Connection to Colorado College: Two years before Colorado became a state, in a town of 1000 on a treeless plain, visionary Eastern Congregationalists founded both First Congregational Church (FCC) and Colorado College (CC -a coed private liberal arts college in the style of Oberlin).

The first two presidents of the college were ministers of our church. Most early faculty and many of the early trustees were members of FCC and students attended services with us. While our ties have loosened over the years, as the College became secular, we maintain a friendly relationship with CC and still have several professors on our membership rolls.

Early Inclusion of Women: Women were included from our start as deaconesses, a rarity in Protestant churches at the time, and women in the congregation were active in suffrage, temperance, overseas mission work, and more.

Early Acknowledgement of Science: Darwin's theory and "truths from Science" were unanimously affirmed at an 1877 meeting of the Colorado Congregational Association in Colorado Springs after a lecture titled: "Darwinism, not necessarily opposed to the Bible" was delivered by FCC member and CC Geology Professor James Kerr.

Early Emphasis on Social Justice: Edward S. Parsons, member and CC Prof. who wrote "The Social Message of Jesus," was a passionate advocate of the Social Gospel Movement that applied Christian ethics to poverty, crime, alcoholism, race, labor, and education. Many early members were involved in social justice, especially in projects promoting education.

1889 Historic Building-with Pillars, Dome, Organ, and Library-Completed:

Our beautiful sanctuary has an oft-commented-on feeling of peace that facilitates worship. The present building was completed in 1889. It is now the oldest church building in continuous use by the same congregation in the city. The original pipe organ (now modernized) was designed by Hook and Hastings of Boston. The original plan included a library (still subsidized by an endowment from early days) that shows our interest in scholarship.

Of our exterior, Rev. Gregg (1882-1909) said: "*Surely few churches there are with so many pillars. The many pillars in our portico seem suggestive of the spiritual life of the church within, its strength, its dignity, its peace.*"

Our building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

Our identity of inclusion and valuing education, begun by these long-ago founders, continues to the present.

II. Identity of Inclusion; ONA Discussions, Vote and Designation (1992-1999)

Our Open and Affirming (ONA) designation (official in 1999) is a very important event in our more recent past and established us as a socially liberal congregation willing to discuss and act on controversial issues. ONA is deeply embedded in our DNA.

1992 Colorado Amendment Two: A conservative citizen initiative was placed on the Colorado ballot “to prohibit the State of Colorado and any of its political subdivisions from adopting or enforcing any law” which prohibited discrimination against Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual (LGB) persons. El Paso County voted 66-34% (per Wikipedia) in favor of this amendment due, perhaps, to the large influx of mostly conservative Evangelicals in the 1980’s and 90’s. Though Amendment Two was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1996, deep divisions remained, locally, between supporters and critics of gay rights.

FCUCC Discussion: Amid this highly charged atmosphere, our congregation engaged in discussion, education, and discomfort as we discerned our beliefs and position on LGB inclusion. Rev. Dr. Jim White (1989-2005) encouraged and facilitated these ongoing conversations. Early in this process, Rev. White also became a national spokesperson for LGB rights, and in 1993, along with member Betty Lynn Mahaffy, appeared on a *PBS NewsHour* special, “The New Holy Wars,” hosted by Bill Moyers. For a transcript, follow this link: billmoyers.com/content/the-new-holy-war/

1997 Controversial ONA Vote: After several years of discussion, the church voted to step forward as an advocate for LGB social justice and obtain the Open and Affirming designation. To this day, long-time members of the church will tell you about the pain and sadness that the ONA process created. Most will also tell you about the joy and wholeness that was also felt and practiced as we moved forward to truly become ONA. While we lost members who no longer felt they belonged, we gained so very many who found a safe spiritual home.

Derision as Pseudo Christians: After the ONA vote, our church and ministers were derided by a group of local conservative ministers as “pseudo-Christian ministers of an off-brand denomination.” Our response was an editorial written by our Council President reminding the community that our ministers were educated at Harvard and Yale, and that in 17th century America, our denomination had sought freedom from religious persecution.

Pride: In the end, our church’s journey focused a new light on our place in Colorado Springs; one of acceptance and inclusion. To this day, virtually every New Members class includes at least one individual or family joining because of our inclusive stance (which has since expanded to include members along the full LGBTQ+ spectrum).

III Major Building Restorations Completed since 2004

Our congregation values our historic building and has, in the last 20 years, committed to many significant renovations. We do not EXPECT any large projects on the horizon.

2004 Capital Campaign for Extensive EXTERIOR Repairs - We launched a capital campaign that successfully paid for roof replacement, stonework repointing and stained-glass window restorations.

2010 Emergency Loan after Plaster Collapse - As we prepared to turn our efforts to the interior, a section of plaster on our sanctuary's sloped ceiling crashed to the floor, forcing an immediate \$1,000,000 construction loan. We worshiped under a scaffold for many months as the whole sanctuary ceiling was replaced as well as the wood floor.

2011 - Capital Campaign for Extensive INTERIOR Projects - We launched a \$2 million capital campaign to pay off the sanctuary emergency loan, build an addition to provide access to all five levels of our various buildings (via an elevator and several ramps), update the kitchen, restore and completely modernize our 1889 Hook and Hastings pipe organ, and add audiovisual equipment to our sanctuary.

Social Justice vs Financial Concerns - When the 2011 campaign only raised enough to EITHER pay off the emergency loan OR the extensive interior projects, we had a great deal of impassioned discussion. We had to decide: shall we use the campaign funds to pay off the loan or shall we complete the interior projects including the elevator addition? Articles were written and meetings held to share information and models.

Some spoke from their hearts that access was a matter of social justice - that everyone in our building, regardless of disability, has a right to participate in downstairs choir rehearsals, visit the ministers' upstairs offices, and pick up their child from the basement nursery.

Others spoke to the potentially crippling financial limitations that the ongoing loan payments placed on future budgets and congregations.

The Decision - After much listening and careful consideration, Council recommended keeping the loan in place and building the elevator addition. The effort concluded with a secret ballot vote at the 2012 annual meeting. Moving ahead with the elevator addition was approved by a wide margin. While it took some time to heal, those most opposed to keeping the debt have remained active members. This was an example of our congregational process, interactions, and outcomes at their best.

April 2021 Successful Burn the Mortgage Campaign - By 2021 our remaining mortgage balance was down to \$582,000. We tackled this with a short campaign, asking for sacrificial one-time donations to pay-down or pay-off the mortgage to free up money that would otherwise be used to pay interest and principal. To our happy surprise, in the middle of a pandemic, we paid the mortgage off completely.

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

The Covid Pandemic

Our transitional minister arrived in late March 2020, just as the whole world came to a standstill. The decision was quickly made to close the church for live services and a safety committee was created to follow the latest medical updates and make recommendations to staff and Council.

Sunday Services Online from March 2020 through May 2021:

Our talented and resilient staff produced online services; each staff member created their own content which was then adroitly assembled by our Director of Music Ministry into meaningful services. These skills were developed quickly to help the congregation (and friends across the country) feel the beauty of being in worship together. While we were able to meet outside off and on during times of nice weather, we did not come back inside the building until May 30, 2021.

Most services can be located and watched on our YouTube channel [youtube.com/c/fcucccos](https://www.youtube.com/c/fcucccos) or on our website fcucc.org. A few services that demonstrate the staff's creativity and devotion to keeping the congregation engaged during the pandemic are Mar. 22, 2020 (the first online service), April 5, 2020 (Palm/Passion Sunday), Dec. 24, 2020 (Christmas Eve) and March 14, 2021 (Celtic).

Community Through Zoom: Zoom meetings began on a variety of topics such as Sunday Community, Being a Micah 6 church (with the pastor), Bible Nerds, Bible study (with the pastor), budget discussions (with council), The Forum, Nine to Dine (dinner groups) and many more.

Return to In-Person with On-going livestream: Starting May 30, 2021, once vaccination was available and our air filtration systems were improved, the Safety Committee determined that it was safe to go back into our sanctuary if we all remained masked. Simultaneously, we started livestreaming Sunday services.

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.

For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)

Values: While our church bylaws do not detail procedures or practices for resolving conflict, we are aware of the need to employ effective listening and inquiry to solve these issues. In the past and the present, we have engaged professional facilitators or mediators, some of whom are members of our congregation, to mediate conversation among the concerned parties.

Historically, there has been a willingness in our congregation to assume positive intent on one another's behalf – understanding that we all care deeply about our church and sharing our concerns from that place of common ground.

ONA conflict of the 1990s - Described in the (3f - Historical Info) section about identity.

Our most recent conflict involved money and staff and challenged our values:

Between 1973 and 2016, we had just three lead ministers, averaging about 15 years of service each. Two former pastors are still emeritus members of the congregation. Our long experience has been one of stability and good relations with clergy. However, after our lead minister left in 2016, we entered a period of uncertainty and on-going financial stress. Our financial situation eventually drove a staff restructuring, resulting in the reduction from five to three staff positions in May of 2019, followed by conflict within the congregation. Our history of deep attachment to staff versus our financial reality at the time resulted in challenges that required significant problem solving and communication efforts to move forward. A number of people in the congregation left. Seven months later, we were challenged again by the resignation of our minister who had been with us just 2 years. Three months after that, in March 2020, our transitional minister came to help us sort things out and the church immediately closed its doors for the Covid pandemic, and we were forced online.

To say the least, it has been a very difficult five years with three different ministers, staff restructuring and a pandemic!

What we have done over the last two years to deal with this last conflict:

First, the church council redoubled its efforts to make church finances and decisions more transparent; we had several well-attended Zoom meetings allowing open discussion of all aspects of the budget in advance of the annual meeting.

Second, our Ministers and Stephen Ministers offered a listening ear to all who felt wounded, and in Fall of 2021, professional facilitators led three well-attended meetings that covered:

- History—*Who Have We Been?*
- Mission—*Who Do We Wish To Be?*
- Pathways—*How Do We Get There?*

Third, we challenged ourselves to dig deep to pay off a \$582,000 mortgage that negatively affected the annual budget. We DID pay off that mortgage!

Fourth, the congregation was challenged, again, to have a robust 2022 stewardship campaign to provide our next minister with a clean financial start and to live responsibly within the results of that campaign.

We are ready! For two years now the resilient core congregation and staff has been doing the work to prepare for a return to our historic stability and feelings of goodwill among the congregation. At this point, the congregation is more than ready to have another long-term successful minister.

Ministerial History (includes all previous ministerial staff for the past 48 years)

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Dr. Donald Longbottom	Mar 2020 to Present as Transitional	Yes
Rev. Heather Haginduff (McDuffee)	Jan 2018 to Dec 2019 Lead	Yes
Rev. Nayiri Karjian	Fall 2016 to Fall 2017 Interim	Yes
Rev. Dr. Jacque Franklin	2006-Present Associate	Yes
Rev. Dr. Benjamin Broadbent	1999-2016 7 as Associate 10 as Lead	Yes
Rev. Bill Mulford	2005-2006 Interim	Yes
Rev. Dr. James White	1989-2005	Yes, Emeritus Member of the congregation
Rev. Dr. Bradley Skinner	1988-1989 Interim	Yes
Rev. Dr. Jerry Jordan	1973-1988	Yes, Emeritus Member of the congregation

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

Historically, our congregants value relationships with leadership. Our ministers have been open, sincere, and accessible. They have served as mentors, teachers, and guides. They stand beside us: curious, willing to learn, and open to new ideas. They are grounded in their own personal spiritual practices. Just like us, they wonder and question, and share human frailty and doubts. This is our long history.

We have learned, through many hard lessons, that we need to provide our next minister with financial stability and work with them as a team with open communication.

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

Yes.

The year 2019 proved to be difficult as long-time financial realities finally came to a head. Mixed and contradictory messages were received by congregants which began to raise doubt and wither trust in key leadership. In sum, these fiscal realities led to the staff restructuring and downsizing in May 2019.

Turmoil continued to brew throughout the summer and fall, leading to the pressured resignation of our Lead Minister in December 2019. As in all circumstances, there were lessons to be learned by all involved, and as a congregation we have since worked diligently to reflect on our part in the situation.

We are committed to transparency within the legal limits and would be fully open to further discussion. You are welcome to speak to our Conference Minister and our Transitional Lead Minister for greater insight.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Yes.

Consultation with the Rocky Mountain Conference and other associates occurred starting in 2019 and resulted in the Transitional Lead Minister being called in March 2020.

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

No

4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church's engagement with neighbors near or far?

FCUCC endeavors to be Micah 6 in action: justice, kindness, and humility.

We bring this social justice belief into worldly action through the actions shown below.

Mission Giving and Outreach (MG&O)

Several decades ago, FCUCC made the decision to grant MG&O their own separate budget. This reflects the congregation's desire to be a church which would be known for reaching out beyond its walls.

To implement this, our pledges may be divided, as we instruct, between the Local Church and MG&O.

In 2021, despite the effects of Covid, MG&O had a Budget of \$99,300.

Our breakdown of expenses was in the following areas:

1. **Local Community Support \$42,900 with grants in the following areas:**
 - a. **Homeless Support and Prevention**
Habitat for Humanity, Homeward Pikes Peak, Partners in Housing, La Puente in Alamosa, and One Nation Walking Together.
 - b. **Hunger Prevention**
Food to Power, located in the Southeast part of Colorado Springs, plus Westside Cares, and Tri-Lakes Cares.
 - c. **Mental Health and Neglect Prevention**
Inside Out, The Place, Depression/Bipolar Support Alliance, Fostering Hope, The Assistance League and Finding our Voices.
 - d. **Refugee Support**
Accompaniment and Sanctuary Coalition, and to Threesixty.
2. **UCC Wider Outreach Support:** \$37,300
3. **Interfaith Hospitality Network Hosting:** \$ 3,300
4. **Westside Cares:** \$ 4,800
5. **Non-Local (International Support):** \$ 2,200
6. **Seminary Scholarships:** \$ 3,300
7. **Special Needs** (which come up during the year): \$ 5,500

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

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. Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

Financial Support to RMC: We are solid financial supporters of the Rocky Mountain Conference, and we are regular attendees of conference and association gatherings.

Our Whole Lives (OWL) Leadership: FCUCC's leadership in implementing the Our Whole Lives curriculum is a significant contribution to UCC national programming. In line with our 1999 ONA designation, our church became a first-wave leader in the Our Whole Lives – Sexuality and Our Faith movement (OWL). FCUCC member Lynn Young was recruited to join the original cadre of national trainers. In 2001, we launched the first middle school OWL program at FCUCC. This powerful program faced very little resistance. As one ninth grader put it, *"People think OWL is about sex—and it is. But really it's about respect."* Notably, the original Sexuality and Our Faith companion for Young Adult OWL and Adult OWL was co-authored by Lynn Young.

Check statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

- ☐ Accessible to All (A2A)
- ☐ Creation Justice
- ☐ Economic Justice
- ☐ Faithful and Welcoming
- ☐ God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- ☐ Border and Immigrant Justice
- ☐ Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)
- ☒ **Just Peace**
- ☐ Global Mission Church
- ☒ **Open and Affirming (ONA)**
- ☐ WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- ☒ **Other UCC designations:**
 - ☒ **Micah 6**
 - ☒ **5 by 5 church**
 - ☐ Designations from other denominations

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?

The ONA designation is a guiding principle for our congregation – challenging us to be more welcoming and inclusive. In January 2017, to further this commitment, our congregation voted unanimously to adopt the Just Peace designation following a year of education and conversation.

We are having conversations and doing work toward several other designations, including Accessible to All, Immigrant Welcoming, Global Mission Church, and WISE Congregation for Mental Health.

Our designations reflect who we are as a congregation: they affirm our beliefs that we are all God's children, that we are charged to create heaven on earth, and that we carry Jesus's teaching into our daily lives.

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities

(with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

While the following programs have been negatively affected by the pandemic, we expect them to resume as restrictions are lifted:

Youth Group Visitation

One opportunity for our youth group has been to visit other churches to worship with them. This is a positive and affirming experience to learn more about other denominations and faith traditions.

Multi-Church Youth Group Activities

Our Director of Youth Ministry has been and will continue to work collaboratively with ministers and staff of Black Forest Church and Broadmoor Community Church to create a supportive, engaging connection with the youth of those churches with the youth of FCUCC through periodic joint youth activities. This is being done because there are too few youths at the Black Forest Church or Broadmoor Community Church to form their own youth groups, so FCUCC is leveraging our established youth group to strengthen youth engagement in those churches in the spirit of fellowship in their formative years.

Family Promise Collaboration with Temple Shalom

Both congregations work together to provide volunteers that cook dinner and stay overnight with families working toward permanent housing.

Muskrats

Eight downtown ministers meet monthly for support and relationship-building.

Children's Interfaith Summer Camp

In 2016, the Director of Children's and Family Ministry developed an interfaith summer program introducing children to four global doctrines — Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity — as a way to grow their personal faith, while gaining a greater understanding and tolerance of the religious beliefs of others. About 60 kids, coming from all four faiths, participated in the inaugural camp and it was recognized with the national article below:

ucc.org/colorado_church_multi_faith_camp_promotes_peace_across_religious_lines/

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 include four important statements from our website: *Mission, Purpose, Vision, and Values*. Each provides a meaningful view of who we are and who we hope to become.

Our Mission

Responding to God's love, we are First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, an inclusive, ecumenical and spiritual people, who through worship, education, fellowship, and outreach seek to embrace the mystery of God.

Our Purpose

As a church we are a people called to embrace the mystery of God.

Our Vision

With God, we will set the table for all who hunger and thirst.

Our Values

Welcome, wonder and witness

As we reflect on these beliefs, we recognize that much is expected of our lead minister and of ourselves. The reality is that it takes a wide range of activities to address the mission and move towards the vision. This requires administration, organization, outreach, and connections inside and outside the church to prepare the table for all as well as an attitude of openness, inclusion, and curiosity.

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 know that our new minister will need time to transition, ground, and connect. Our new leader will also bring their own dreams and talents which will need to fit into the duties we've outlined. We hold in healthy tension our grand expectations and an understanding of the time and energy it will take to fully embrace this role. We commit to allowing our new minister the time to find the balance points. We offer patience and prayer. We also know that we already have a vibrant church, with a professional staff, and many capable volunteer leaders, therefore, we don't expect our lead minister to do it all!

Our congregants recognize three primary functions for the Lead Minister:

1. Leading Sunday services as the primary mechanism for connecting with the congregation
2. Serving as an ambassador for our church and an advocate for the issues we care about in the Colorado Springs community
3. Taking responsibility, as chief of staff, for the overall functioning of our church

As our new minister becomes more comfortable and settled, our best hope is that this individual will carve out time in their developing schedule to pursue their own passions, and to light and nurture those flames that will bring out the best in themselves and others.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

*Detailed reports are available upon request.

FCC's Mission area includes a wide geographic span. Our membership includes significant numbers of households from as far north as Monument, as far south as Cheyenne Mountain/Fountain, as far west as Woodland Park, and as far east as Falcon. As a result, our MissionInsite report reviews a 15-mile radius from our church location.

Area population is expected to grow. According to our report, in the next 10 years, this area is projected to have moderate growth, expanding the population within our ministry area to more than 700,000 people. The composition of the population isn't expected to change dramatically, and is comprised of moderately diverse (mostly White, ~18% Hispanic, ~7% African-American, ~3% Asian, 1% Indigenous, etc.), mostly white collar (67%) households with higher overall education rates than the statewide average, but lower rates of bachelor and graduate degrees.

Families with children are likely to live in our area at the same rate as the rest of the state, and our population of school-aged children is expected to grow slightly in the next 10 years. Household incomes are slightly lower in our area than the state average, but the proportion of families at the poverty level is the same.

Lifestyle Segmentation Analysis. According to the lifestyle segmentation analysis of our report, our area has a smaller “singles scene” than the state (although recent media reports suggest Colorado Springs will be an increasingly attractive location for Millennials), and a much higher proportion of “*Everyday Moderates*” (which makes sense in our politically moderate to conservative community).

We have more than twice the “*Single and Starters-Family Troopers*” population (probably because we host five major military installations in the region--Air Force Academy, Peterson Space Force Base, Fort Carson Army Base, Schriever Space Force Base, and Cheyenne Mountain Space Force Station).

Not a surprise to us at FCC, the Springs has a creative community, reflected in our higher proportion of “*Blue Sky Boomers-Rooted Flower Power*” and “*Significant Singles-Bohemian Groove*” households (likely the result of our proximity to specific “artistic” communities like Old Colorado City and Manitou Springs).

Major Urban Development is taking place near us in the downtown area of Colorado Springs. We feel the new downtown population can be an opportunity for FCUCC.

- Weidner Field—a new soccer field/concert venue (1.5 miles south) opened Spring 2021
- Ed Robson Arena—CC’s new hockey and multi-purpose arena (a few blocks north) opened Fall of 2021
- Twelve large buildings (within two miles) with as many as 2000 units are currently up or going up soon and that number is expected to double or triple in the next five years. These include condos, apartments, office buildings and retail space with downtown investment near \$2 billion in the next decade.

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?

Compared to the neighborhood adjacent to our church, we’re both similar and different.

Ours is a downtown church and several communities operate downtown.

The Old North Neighborhood is one to which we are similar. This neighborhood is predominantly filled with professionals. The homes were built early in Colorado Springs’ history; the people who built them had ties to the city’s development or to Colorado College and many still do.

Second are the students and faculty at Colorado College; FCUCC’s congregation does not currently draw as many students as we do faculty, perhaps because CC has its own non-denominational Shove Chapel.

And finally, downtown itself is home to small business owners, several of whom attend, as well as the bulk of the city's homeless population. While our congregation overall doesn't widely resemble people experiencing homelessness, we've acknowledged and know that several members have come close to or experienced periods of very difficult financial stress. We hold an intention of welcoming, hosting, and supporting our homeless population.

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

Outside of the demographics themselves, the large homeless population right in our own neighborhood is a big focus for our outreach ministries. We have also engaged in some partnerships related to veterans. The large number of condominium and apartment structures being built downtown offer an opportunity to minister to new residents of the downtown area.

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

- Progressive thinking / Theologically liberal viewpoint
- Open to interfaith dialogue
- Justice and Peace / Service to the unhoused, racial justice, etc.
- Open and Affirming (ONA) / Welcoming to LGBTQ community

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

Many of the things we're known for in the community are what draw people to begin attending FCC – our progressive, more liberal, justice-oriented mindset, our Open and Affirming status, and our music programs. People have noted the warm welcome they've received, including the opportunity to dip their toes in through our Faith Formation classes and lectures and not feel rushed into "joining." Families with younger children frequently share that they want to find a church that offers rich programming for their children's faith development, as well as something meaningful for the parents—like intellectual and spiritual engagement around faith—and the opportunity to find a more like-minded community in a city that can feel more conservative.

5. REFERENCES

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.

REFERENCE 1

Kristy Milligan

Executive Director

Westside Cares

719-389-0759

kristy.milligan@westsidecares.org

Kristy leads Westside Cares, an important mission partner that the church supports with volunteers and giving. They help neighbors with basic needs such as food and housing.

REFERENCE 2

David Gardiner, PhD

Associate Professor of Asian Studies and Religion

Colorado College

(719) 440-4517

dgardiner@coloradocollege.edu

Professor Gardiner is interested in Buddhist-Christian dialog and comparative religious thought and, in the past, participated in interfaith conversations with Rev. Dr. Ben Broadbent as well as sponsoring meditation classes and bringing a Tibetan Buddhist monk to discuss Buddhist thought in our sanctuary.

REFERENCE 3

Elizabeth Levitt Resnick, M.A., CPC, DLI-MP

President and Founding Partner

Elizabeth Resnick LLC

Executive Advisor and Certified Professional Coach

(201) 788-0804

elizabethresnickllc@gmail.com

Elizabeth served as a consultant to help the congregation as they processed their past, present and work on goals for the future.

6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you...
a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

*We are Your people, enveloped in Your Spirit
and intent on knowing Your will for our congregation.*

*Continue to create in us a longing to walk with You
and a discerning spirit
to recognize Your person
for this time in our community.*

*It is in You we put our trust.
Amen*

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending a suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? (e.g., church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)

The Search Committee:


Jon Vigne (Chair), Sylvie Robinson, Eli Hauber, David Riley, Jennifer Malenky, Ardith Hanson, Lee Lehmkuhl, Lois Benson, John Stefonik, and Pauli Hubbard.

Support from the local and conference staff:

Emily Bond, Rachel Rumble, Josh Rumble, Rev. Dr. Don Longbottom, and Rev. Sue Artt.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed: _____



Name / Title / Date: Jon Vigne, Search Committee Chair, 1/9/2022

Email: search@fcucc.org

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

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



Church#: 690170
Assoc: 684 **Schedule:** 0 First Congregational UCC Colorado Springs CO 80903

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2010	708	365	292	0	1	37	23	9	6
2011	691	350	320	9	4	22	10	48	-23
2012	691	347	450	0	3	30	8	25	0
2013	710	354	283	11	3	54	12	37	19
2014	737	369	194	0	1	42	6	10	27
2015	704	388	445	10	0	32	8	67	-33
2016	715	381	454	0	0	28	13	4	11
2017	681	341	524	12	3	13	11	51	-34
2018	688	330	564	0	2	36	15	16	7
2019	648	200	145	8	0	5	15	38	-40
2020	621	110	66	0	0	12	20	19	-27

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
2010	\$679,362	\$0	\$49,800	\$24,546	\$74,346	\$57,653	\$131,999	7.33	\$811,361	\$861,121
2011	\$728,178	\$13,252	\$43,227	\$17,753	\$60,980	\$44,552	\$105,532	5.94	\$846,962	\$1,171,375
2012	\$735,742	\$16,639	\$45,039	\$34,040	\$79,079	\$56,355	\$135,434	6.12	\$887,815	\$1,252,609
2013	\$768,605	\$38,028	\$43,848	\$19,398	\$63,246	\$53,007	\$116,253	5.70	\$922,886	\$1,167,751
2014	\$826,066	\$18,500	\$56,000	\$15,646	\$71,646	\$57,398	\$129,044	6.78	\$973,610	\$1,282,932
2015	\$885,572	\$41,836	\$65,878	\$22,953	\$88,831	\$71,059	\$159,890	7.44	\$1,087,298	\$1,048,925
2016	\$864,799	\$18,243	\$56,574	\$14,282	\$70,856	\$93,286	\$164,142	6.54	\$1,047,184	\$993,670
2017	\$902,906	\$17,849	\$50,906	\$5,651	\$56,557	\$71,104	\$127,661	5.64	\$1,030,567	\$1,133,412
2018	\$953,454	\$33,907	\$44,784	\$11,215	\$55,999	\$64,302	\$120,301	4.70	\$1,073,755	\$986,796
2019	\$945,282	\$33,977	\$33,515	\$11,009	\$44,524	\$67,430	\$111,954	3.55	\$1,057,236	\$932,965
2020	\$1,038,560	\$133,612	\$34,029	\$1,871	\$35,900	\$50,316	\$86,216	3.28	\$1,124,776	\$976,089

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2015-2020	-11.79	-71.65	-85.17	-71.43	-48.00	17.28	-59.59	3.45
2010-2020	-12.29	-69.86	-77.40	-68.42	21.88	52.87	-51.71	38.63

Please note: Zero values ("0\" or \"\$0\") may reflect missing information in some years. Christian Education/Faith Formation refers to Church School Enrollment for all figures before 2007.



Providing care and compassion to our neighbors in need

December 9, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for considering a call to First Congregational United Church of Christ. I write this letter of reference in hopes of illuminating FCC-UCC's strengths, opportunities, and position in the community.

It's worth noting that I personally became familiar with FCC-UCC while I worked at Citizens Project (in the early 2000s), a small grassroots organization in Colorado Springs dedicated to diversity, equality, and civic engagement. During my tenure at Citizens Project, FCC-UCC was a leading voice for equity and inclusion measures, particularly in the realm of LGBTQ+ communities, an important (and difficult) thing to be in a community like Colorado Springs, where discriminatory policies (like Amendment 2) were born.

When I began my work with Westside CARES, an interfaith nonprofit dedicated to providing care and compassion to our neighbors in need, I was disappointed to learn that FCC-UCC was already a member of ESM, a more local (to the church) sister organization of Westside CARES. Although I regretted that FCC-UCC was not yet a member of Westside CARES, I was pleased to witness the leadership the congregation showed at ESM and delighted to find other, less formalized ways to partner with FCC-UCC.

At the beginning of the pandemic, ESM closed their doors permanently, and almost immediately, leadership with FCC-UCC reached out to Westside CARES to inquire about formal partnership. I was impressed both by the commitment of the leadership to serving people experiencing poverty, as well as the relative agility of FCC-UCC in solidifying formal membership with Westside CARES. Since joining Westside CARES, FCC-UCC has been a vital partner in our shared commitment to providing home, health, and hope-building services to people experiencing poverty.

Based on my observation, there is general cohesion within FCC-UCC and a strong throughline of equity, justice, and inclusion. We have witnessed strength in the leadership team, a powerful MGO program, and considerable community investment.



Providing care and compassion to our neighbors in need

Of course, no faith community is perfect, and FCC-UCC is not immune to the general struggles facing congregations of all sizes and types; specifically, how to engage the next generation and how to balance safety & community amid the pandemic.

Also, because FCC-UCC's most recent leadership transition was more wrought than is typical, I believe that FCC-UCC's next leader would be most successful if s/he is a consensus-builder who is committed to incremental change, valuing the assets that are currently in place at FCC-UCC, with a clear vision of social justice for marginalized communities in our region and beyond.

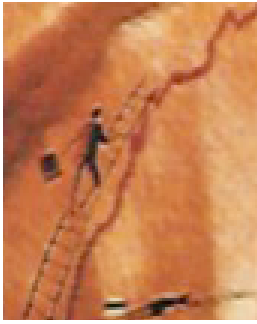
First Congo (as it's affectionately called by members and partners alike) is a wonderful community of beautiful bright lights, and it's poised to lead our broader community into greater collaborative space. If you are called to serve and would like to further discuss anything about FCC-UCC, I'd be delighted to speak with you:

Kristy.Milligan@westsidecares.org

(719) 389-0759 x101

Thank you for your consideration,

Kristy Milligan
CEO



Elizabeth Resnick, LLC

President and Founding Partner
Executive Advisor and
Certified Professional Business Coach

562 Barnett Place
Ridgewood, New Jersey 07450
201-788-0804
elizabethresnickllc@gmail.com
www.elizabethresnickllc.com

December 25, 2021

To whom it may concern:

It is my honor to provide a reference for First
Congregational Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

I have gotten to know the staff and congregants quite well
as I have partnered with them to clarify their vision and
goals moving forward. To that end, I have had the privilege
of talking individually with many people and facilitated
multiple group sessions too. These conversations have taken
place in person and via "Zoom."

I have found literally every single person... professional
staff, lay leaders and general members... to be
exceptionally welcoming, accepting, respectful and
supportive ... even more noteworthy as I am from a
different part of the country and from a different faith as
well.

They also appear very clear on their core— ie, social justice and making an impact on the broader world, while possessing a progressive, intellectual view of the world. This includes an understanding of the importance of questioning and thinking vs rigidity (which probably stems from their rich history including a long-term past connection to Colorado College).

Their intellectuality coupled with a “let’s actually do the work” attitude propels them towards thoughtful, pragmatic tangible results and impact. They are also aware that a multi-generational approach and mindset are paramount. Though it appears that the church’s demographic skews chronologically mature, there seems to be a clear regard for, and desire to leverage, these “younger” voices.

An opportunity/area for improvement includes engaging, and marketing to, the broader community —I think they have the capability to make that happen. One other issue they may want to consider is how to relax certain high standards, in order to demonstrate even more inclusivity, like when some are not as intellectually gifted as the majority, for example. Finally, with Covid, membership and other financial realities, it behooves them to rely on enhancing a volunteer engagement model, though key staff support like Emily and Rachel are top notch and value-added. These staff members drive important

technological best practices which is critical for attracting new members and has an effect on sustainability and progress.

On a final note, I really loved getting to know everyone... staff and volunteers seem to be exceptionally engaged and talented. I cannot wait to see how FCC UCC Colorado Springs evolves as it moves forward.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to provide further details.

Warm regards,
Elizabeth Levitt Resnick

December 10, 2021

Professor David Gardiner, PhD
Associate Professor of Asian Studies and Religion
Colorado College
(719) 440-4517 dgardiner@coloradocollege.edu

Reference for First Congregational Church (FCUCC) of Colorado Springs

As a faculty member in the Colorado College Religion Department, I have been in relation with First Congregational Church since 2000. It is my understanding that the College was founded by the Congregational Church although it no longer has a formal relationship. I am not a Church member.

I have had many opportunities to work with the Church and all of them have been entirely satisfying. I list them in the next paragraph. My comments respond to the prompts regarding "significant experiences" I have had that represent "areas of strength in this church's ministry" I do not have sufficient knowledge to suggest any "areas for improvement."

I have found the Church leaders and its membership to be exceedingly open and welcoming regarding matters of interfaith dialog. I have been invited to speak at the Church's Sunday "Adult Forum" many times, usually on topics of interfaith interest. My area of specialty is Buddhism. I also invited Rev. John Spong to speak both at the Church and at Colorado College and introduced him on both occasions. Further, I have had the privilege of bringing the Tibetan Buddhist monk Khen Rinpoche Lobzang Tsetan to speak at the Church on at least two occasions. At each event, one of the Church's pastors shared the stage with the monk and me to create dialog and to take questions from the audience. In addition, former pastor Benjamin Broadbent and I offered a couple of events for the community where the two of us spoke about Buddhist and Christian perspectives on matters of religious practice. Also, in response to a request from a regular Church member, in 2007 (or '08) I began offering instructions in Buddhist meditation at the Church. This continued for several years, with a regular attendance of 10-20 people, until we moved the group to a Colorado College location. I have always found Church leadership to be eager to host such events and to invite an outsider from the College to participate. On every occasion the pastors and members showed deep respect and interest in the contributions non-members offered.

Lastly, while I am not Christian myself, I have many good friends who have long been happy members of the Church. I know from their experience, as well as from my own, that the FCC community has richness, diversity and integrity, and that its wide range of services continues to provide our wider community in the Colorado Springs area with indispensable gifts of charity.