INTRODUCING THE NEW

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who is God calling us to become?

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE, SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Custer Community Church R.2.18.23

INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. POSITION POSTING

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

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Custer Community Church -UCC
Street address: 547 Harney Street, Box 769, Custer, SD 57730
Supplemental web links:
Web Site: www.custercommunitychurch.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/custercommunitychurch/
YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuZJm_zpAfFpR8CpkNslY5g

Additional ecumenical affiliations *(e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships)*
United Church of Christ
Custer Ministerial Alliance

Conference: South Dakota Conference / Tri-Conference Ministries
Association: Black Hills Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person
Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones
Associate Conference Minister
pronouns: she/her/hers
sarah@ucctcm.org
808-631-2444 (cell)

Summary Ministry Description:
In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?

The most challenging trend for CCC and for many churches is the decline in membership. Our congregation would like to work closely with our new pastor to create a caring Christian fellowship that is inviting and welcoming to all. We would like to develop programs and activities that encourage involvement of past, present and future members. We seek to provide a worship atmosphere that fosters spiritual learning.

Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc. Photographs:

Church Building - Exterior

Church Building - Interior

Choir

Horns

Handbell Choir

Closing service

Easter Sunrise Service 2022

Dinner Church

Outreach to hospital

Outreach to teachers

Parsonage with garage and patio

Front Room

Kitchen

See our CCC website for additional pictures of the interior parsonage remodel.
www.custercommunitychurch.org

What we value about living in our area:

The beauty of the Black Hills and its spiritual history make Custer and the surrounding community a wonderful place to appreciate nature. Our community is open, caring and welcoming. We are located just minutes away from Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse Monument and Custer State Park. It is a beautiful place to live, work, worship, and play.

Please take a closer look -

https://visitcuster.com
https://www.visittheusa.com/destination/black-hills

Current size of membership: 81 (As of Dec. 31, 2021)
Languages used in ministry *(other than English)*: N/A

Position Title: Pastor

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

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

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

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes, Based on SD UCC Conference Guidelines

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

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

Core Competencies:

(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church. For example, a church seeking a pastoral care minister might hope to call someone who is caring, sensitive and sociable, while a church seeking an executive minister might want an organized, detail-oriented and time-conscious person.)

Spiritual Leader: Participate actively in the church and in the community. Provide counseling, advice and guidance to members on personal and spiritual matters. Provide assistance to the church council.

Pastoral Call Leader: Visitations to people based on need, desire, hospitalization or inability to attend due to various reasons. This includes contact and visits with members who have not been attending regularly.

Ministry Leader: Preach uplifting and meaningful sermons with a focus on a message of hope. A sense of humor is appreciated. Possess a good knowledge of bible history and culture.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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

Negotiable, based on experience. The total support package will meet SD Conference compensation guidelines. Conference link - http://sodakucc.org/Salary%20Recommendations%20for%20Clergy%202013.pdf

Benefits:

Salary plus benefits.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister *(e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed)*?

The church parsonage is a stand-alone brick home. There is a living/dining room with a fireplace, kitchen, office, 3 bedrooms and one full bath on the main level. A spacious family room with fireplace, laundry, storage, an additional bath and study exist on the basement level. Appliances include stove, refrigerator, dish washer, and washer/dryer. There is a single car detached garage and a yard with room to garden. A new heat pump heating and air conditioning system was added in 2012. The parsonage is not handicap accessible.

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

Our pastor would be expected to live in the Custer area and would be highly encouraged to live in the parsonage.

State any incentives *(e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position)*:

Vacation has increased in the past, with time in position. We are willing to consider other options such as candidates who have not yet completed their Masters of Divinity or Ministerial education. We are willing to negotiate an incentive package that may include school debt reduction, relocation expenses, or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position. A furnishings allowance is the option of the minister, to designate a part of their cash salary as furnishings allowance, as allowed by the IRS.

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

There are many resources available on the Tri-conference website.

https://ucctcm.org/ , South Dakota UCC - TCM (ucctcm.org)

A couple of connections they offer are below-

1.Ministers' Moments: A Space for Authentic Conversation About Ministry
Are you an actively serving authorized minister or lay pastor? On the first Tuesday of the month at 12:00pm CT you can join a Zoom call to connect with your Ministerial Staff and fellow clergy through a book study!

2.Clergy Coffee Hour

A program partnered with Ministers' Moments, Clergy Coffee Hour is a time for clergy in our Conferences to connect and visit via Zoom on the first Thursday of the month at 12:00pm CT. Sessions will be hosted by ACM Rev. Kendy Miller. All Clergy in our Conferences are welcome to join the Zoom call.

Additionally, the Black Hills Association offers support. For example, they offer a Pastor's Bible Study for the Black Hills. https://www.facebook.com/SDUCC/
The previous pastor of the CCC was part of the Custer Pastoral committee.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

This is a full time appointment.

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

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

1. To grow our membership and fill our church with God's message and love.

2. To expand our effect on the Custer Community and beyond by reaching out to those in need, listening, and spreading love, faith, and kindness.

3. Create an environment of spiritual growth.

4. Becoming a more financially stable church.

5. Revitalizing our youth ministry and bringing in more family units.

6. Encouraging participation and involvement by our members and community.

7. Develop programs and activities of interest to encourage the involvement of all church members and persons in the community.

8. We want to embrace the UCC's purpose, vision and mission.
   PURPOSE: To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22)
   VISION: United in Christ's love, a just world for all.
   MISSION: United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

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

1. To explore ways to impact our community in faith, and compassion, to give aid, and to lift each other up as our brothers and sisters.

2. Have the pastor and the church members provide phone calls and visitations to hospitalized and homebound people.

3. To support our Outreach program.

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

English is the main language of use in our community. The majority of the Custer population is White. (91.49 percent)

We want a ministerial leader who is respectful, loving, and will care for all people, no matter who or where they come from, regardless of race, creed, sexual preference, or other religious affiliations.

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

CARING FOR ALL CREATION
o Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation.
o Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness.
o Practicing self-care and life balance.
o Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.
o Attending to one's own spiritual and pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate.
o Stewarding the resources of the Church.

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

STRENGTHENING INTER- AND INTRA- PERSONAL ASSETS
o Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences.
o Living in relationships of covenantal accountability with God and the Church.
o Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity.
o Respecting the dignity of all God's people.
o Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the lifespan.
o Demonstrating excellent communication skills.

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

2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

The previous two years have been a test for our congregation as we, and the rest of the world, navigated life during a pandemic. Each Sunday, and more frequently for many, we are encouraged to carry our faith from the sanctuary to the world around us. That inspiration and the faith of the congregants has carried the Custer Community Church through the stresses of remote services, new procedures, and figuring out what the future held. It was in the midst of that time frame that our congregation went through a discernment process that addressed big questions about the church's future.

Church enrollment numbers changed, but we feel stronger as a congregation - difficult questions were addressed and church members made choices. In the end, we feel as though our membership reflects the words in our covenant with one another. It is included it here:

Our Covenant With One Another – Custer Community Church

As the Church, we are committed to each other and our community. No matter who you are, you are welcome here. Our hearts, minds and ears are open to all people – the young and old, saints and sinners, the lost and the found. We are a community of God's Beloved People called to love and hold each other up. We will support each other through service, learning, understanding, participation, fellowship, and giving.

To live as Church together, we covenant with one another to create an environment that upholds the dignity of each person in our congregation. We will consider the impact of our words and actions on others as we seek to make our Church a safe place for people of all races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, and neurodiversities.

Our communication with others will be timely, direct, honest, open, and sensitive although we may disagree with another's assumptions, opinions, and decisions.

We understand that conflict is a healthy part of life, including life in the Church. We will accept and affirm differences. While we may have strong opinions, we acknowledge that others do also. We will embrace the diversity in our spiritual family, imagine other perspectives, and be enriched by these differences. We will be respectful of one another as we direct our attention to the issues and challenges at hand.

We understand that our Church stays strong as each person is heard, and we seek the participation of all our congregants. We also understand that though all people are welcome not all behavior is welcome. When a person's behavior is harmful to others or to the community, that person may need to be asked to step away from participation in community for a season. We entrust the sacred task of speaking such truth in love to those leading the community and we will always strive for the restoration of relationships and rebuilding of community upon a person's desire for reconciliation and return to the community.

We will engage in self-reflection and prayer, seeking ways that our presence will build up our Church and its people, as well as our community and our world. We will seek God's guidance and grace to listen attentively as we live into our future.

As a part of this faith community, we will work responsibly for the benefit of the whole and endeavor that all we do and say will be grounded in love.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.
For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?

Yes, the Custer Community Church does have a strategic plan. Its goal is to achieve church growth, with objectives of increasing worship attendance and taking a greater role in community and other service events. As plans were being created and specifics designed, the pandemic put some of those ideas on the back burner.

Our church's mission and vision statements are included below.

Custer Community Church Mission Statement:
"To build a family of faithful believers through community service, inspiring worship, and a welcoming and inclusive space where people of all ages can grow."

Custer Community Church Vision Statement:

- The Custer Community Church will be regarded as the "go-to" church. We will be widely seen as being vibrant, open, welcoming, nurturing, and sharing.
- The Custer Community Church will be a growing church, offering exciting and attractive programming targeted at young families and retirees. A word of welcome from the Custer Community Church will be one of the first things newcomers to this community receive. First-time visitors to our church will feel like they've come home.
- The Custer Community Church will embrace its identity as one of the only Mainline Protestant churches in the community, reaching out to Methodists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians (etc.) whose faith traditions are not otherwise represented. Other churches will look to our congregation as a role-model for an open, ecumenical, and inclusive practice of the Christian faith.

- The Custer Community Church will make ourselves known to non-members in the community through our community service and outreach. We will listen so as to better understand the needs of this community. Our membership will consist of willing workers who demonstrate their faith through their actions.
- The Custer Community Church will stand with oppressed peoples and persons, and be intentional about their inclusion in the life of the congregation and community.
- The Custer Community Church will continue and grow our congregation's tradition of musical excellence.
- The Custer Community Church will be known for world-class, effective, and efficient church governance.

3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

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

Core Values:

Welcoming; Forgiving; Loving; Sanctuary

Behavioral Covenant: Our Covenant with One Another

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As a part of this faith community, we will work responsibly for the benefit of the whole and endeavor that all we do and say will be grounded in love.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- Custer Community Church is committed to the credo,
- "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here"
- We are forgiving.
- We volunteer time and talents when needed and requested.
- Our music program sets a reverent atmosphere.

When a hardship arises, we come together to work to address it, make a plan and then execute it. We use our gifts and talents to work together and to strengthen our church. We are a family with all its glorious warts and beautiful hearts. We want to share the blessings that we have received and spread God's love. We are extremely supportive of our local community.

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

For Sunday Service we gather in the Congregational Hall in our church. We love to bring all types of music and talent into our ministry. Music is an essential part of each Sunday service, here, at the Custer Community Church and has always been an important part of the life of our church. On April 16, 2022, the Custer Community Church was the only church in Custer to produce a cantata of Easter music in Custer, a small town with 18 churches. The community very much appreciated this production, which included the new horn quartet, the hand-bell ensemble, talented brass player soloists, and the 12-member choir, which so beautifully proclaimed the message of salvation with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

We have two full time keyboard people playing the organ and the piano, and these two music leaders coordinate the music for each service. We have always had a worship choir with a paid director, singing most Sundays of the year. Because of the COVID crisis, we are one of the very few remaining church choirs in this area.

Our church records, edits, and uploads each Sunday Service to the Custer Community Church's YouTube channel, CCC Facebook, and the church's Website. Church services, including the Easter Cantata can be found at custercommunitychurch.org

Each Sunday we have coffee and treats in our fellowship hall where we can gather and visit after services. We also gather in the Fellowship Hall for our monthly Dinner Church, where we prepare a meal and discuss scripture.

We celebrate our annual church baptism on Easter when the Pastor invites anyone to come down to be baptized or renew their baptism.

Words used for good preaching are inspirational, educational, motivating, and thought-provoking.

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?

We have a Kids Time program that uses one of the Faith Inkubators curriculum programs called Bible Song Cross+Gen. There is a simple faith practice built into the core of every Faith Inkubators system, resource, and product. It is a powerful framework that deeply connects people to God and one another, connects church to home, and connects faith to daily life. Bible Song Cross+Gen builds a fun and life-giving cross generational (Cross+Gen) ministry by engaging the senses, the brains, and the hearts of people of all ages. Walking through the biblical narrative from Genesis through Acts, Bible Song Cross+Gen creates Biblical literacy. It encourages the children to feel secure in their faith and teaches them how to impact the community in helpful and kind ways. They are encouraged to participate in the third church service of each month by serving as acolytes and helping collect the offering. CCC provides transportation from the Custer School Complex to the CCC building each day school is in session. There is no cost to participants for transportation or attendance in the program.

We have a Youth Group that runs the AV system for our church. They perform other duties for the church if needed. They also assist with serving an annual Pancake Mardi-gras meal in which they prepare, cook, and serve the meal. They interact with the community and learn responsibility.

One of our youth members helped change the UCC by-laws in which churches may now have a third delegate that is 21 years and younger. This way the youth can have a voice and be represented. We have had a youth member attend the Tri Conference Annual Meeting and the General Synod. We will have another youth member this year who will be 15 yrs old attend the conference in Sioux City, IA.

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?

Our Church is a covenantal church and not a creedal church. This means that there is no particular set of beliefs of dogma that one must ascribe to in order to be a member. We have a theological covenant with God. We acknowledge that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Head of the church. We look to the word of God in scriptures and to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to prosper in its creative and redemptive work in the world. In accordance with the teachings of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, we recognize two Sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion. We hold it to be our mission to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in all the world, serving the needs of humankind. We depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us.

Our Church is governed, first and foremost, by the members of the congregation who express their will during our annual congregational meetings. Outside of congregational meetings, the Church Council, which is elected by the church's membership, is the governing body. There are positions consisting of the Moderator, and various committee chairs that together form the Council. The Pastor is an ex-officio member. Positions are for a two year term. The Council meets monthly for 1-3 hours. Special meetings are called when the need arises. Special announcements go out to the congregation as needed.

Committee meetings are held on a monthly basis that is convenient for the members of each committee.

An all church congregational meeting is held annually to present the annual budget to all members for approval.

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

An abandoned dry well (which suddenly opened up to 30 feet deep) was discovered by our Pastor in the backyard of the church parsonage. He notified the Church Council chairperson for thoughts and direction. The Church Council notified State and Local officials who promptly inspected the site. Action was taken to fill the well within the same week so that remedies met the requirements of State and local laws and ordinances. The work was completed safely and timely. Additionally, the church's heater stopped working this winter and we had many members step up and help with their talents and funds to get it fixed.

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

Yes

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT *(attached here)*

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

God is still speaking, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Church#: 720300

Assoc: 720 Schedule: 0 Custer Community Church UCC Custer SD 57730

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2011	159	67	32	0	3	5	3	0	5
2012	153	58	20	0	2	0	8	0	-6
2013	144	55	17	0	4	1	9	5	-9
2014	122	51	35	0	0	0	7	15	-22
2015	116	60	37	0	0	4	10	0	-6
2016	123	61	56	0	7	8	8	0	7
2017	131	64	47	2	2	4	0	0	8
2018	127	61	40	0	0	1	5	0	-4
2019	123	54	43	0	0	2	3	3	-4
2020	71	41	0	0	1	0	2	51	-52
2021	81	42	16	4	7	0	1	0	10

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
2011	$117,175	$0	$3,200	$4,472	$7,672	$589	$8,261	2.73	$125,436	$92,480
2012	$111,931	$0	$3,200	$1,376	$4,576	$373	$4,949	2.86	$116,880	$92,480
2013	$118,154	$0	$3,500	$1,667	$5,167	$1,227	$6,394	2.96	$124,548	$92,480
2014	$112,887	$0	$3,560	$1,415	$4,975	$313	$5,288	3.15	$118,175	$92,480
2015	$98,236	$0	$3,500	$1,343	$4,843	$310	$5,153	3.56	$103,389	$92,480
2016	$108,364	$0	$3,500	$1,390	$4,890	$2,422	$7,312	3.23	$115,676	$92,480
2017	$122,832	$0	$3,500	$1,718	$5,218	$10,455	$15,673	2.85	$138,505	$92,480
2018	$123,683	$0	$3,900	$642	$4,542	$1,681	$6,223	3.15	$129,906	$92,480
2019	$135,455	$0	$4,225	$1,539	$5,764	$3,779	$9,543	3.12	$144,998	$92,480
2020	$125,710	$0	$3,900	$700	$4,600	$1,900	$6,500	3.10	$132,210	$92,480
2021	$122,696	$8,500	$2,599	$477	$3,076	$2,793	$5,869	2.12	$128,565	$92,480

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2016-2021	-34.15	-31.15	-71.43	-26.67	-87.50	13.23	-37.10	11.14
2011-2021	-49.06	-37.31	-50.00	37.50	-66.67	4.71	-59.91	2.49

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Number of active members:	66	✔
Number of active non-members:	15	✔
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	81	✔

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
More than 10 years:	62%	✔
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	17%	✔
Less than 5 years:	21%	✔

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	*Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)*
6	5	1	2	6	2	6	14	46	✔

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Single adults under 35:	0	✔
Households with minors:	10%	✔
Single adults age 35-65:	6%	✔
Joint households with no minors:	62%	✔
Single adults over 65:	17%	✔

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
High school:	40%	✔
College:	34%	✔
Graduate School:	16%	✔
Specialty Training:	10%	✔
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Adults who are employed:	22%	✔
Adults who are retired:	73%	✔
Adults who are not fully employed:	5%	✔

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

Many members are retired teachers and other professionals including military veterans. Some members are currently in the education system in our local school. Others volunteer at various community businesses.

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?

Our members are predominantly white western European. Diversity, to us, means to follow our "Covenant with One Another" to hold our hearts, minds and ears open to all people - the young and old, saints and sinners, the lost and found. We are a community called to love and hold each other up. We will support each other through service, learning, understanding, participation, fellowship and giving. We covenant with one another to create an environment that upholds the dignity of each person in our congregation. We consider the impact of our words and actions on others as we seek to make our Church a safe place for people of all races, ethnicities, backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, and neurodiversities.

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:

Our Congregation recently experienced a "discernment process" resulting in the formation of a personal covenant with each other.

We understand that conflict is a healthy part of life, including life in the Church. We will accept and affirm differences. While we may have strong opinions, we acknowledge that others do also. We will embrace the diversity in our spiritual family, imagine other perspectives, and be enriched by these differences. We will be respectful of one another as we direct our attention to the issues and challenges at hand. We will seek God's guidance and grace to listen attentively as we live into our future.

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? *(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)*
Adult Groups or Classes	15	Pastor, Fidelis,
Baptisms *(number last year)*	1	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	6	Christian Education
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	80	Pastor, Music Leadership
Church-wide Meals	35	Fidelis (women's group)
Choirs and Music Groups	25	Music director, Organist
Church-based Bible Study	6	Pastor
Communion *(monthly)*	35-40	Pastor
Community Meals	30	Custer Ministerial Alliance
Confirmation *(number last year)*	4	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	0	n/a
Funerals (*number last year*)	0	
Intergenerational Groups	n/a	
Outdoor Worship	15	Pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups	20	Rotational
Public Advocacy Work	n/a	
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	0	
Weddings (*number last year*)	2	Pastor
Worship (time slot: _9:30am_)	42	Pastor
Worship (time slot: _____)	n/a	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	n/a	
Youth Groups or Classes	n/a	
Other		

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)*
Richard Berringer	No			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:

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Office Manager		PT	Church Council	24 yrs
Organist		PT	Church Council	22 yrs
Choir Director		PT	Church Council	4 years
Housekeeper		PT	Church Council	20 years
Church Council	Y	Volunteer		2 year rotating

REFLECTION

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

> That we are committed to our Core Values: Welcoming, Forgiving, Loving, Sanctuary. That we believe our Mission Statement: To build a family of faithful believers through community service, inspiring worship, and a welcoming and inclusive space where people of all ages. That as part of this faith community we will work responsibly for the benefit of the whole and endeavor that all we do and say will be grounded in love.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	$99,704
Endowment Proceeds *(as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)*	$8,500
Endowment Draw *(beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")*	$0
Fundraising Events	$8,000
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	$477
Grants	$0
Rentals of Church Building	$420
Rentals of Church Parsonage	$0
Support from Related Organizations *(e.g. Women's Group)*	$1,120
Transfers from Special Accounts	$0
Other (specify):	$0
Other (specify):	$0
TOTAL	$118,221

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): $119,501
Attached below

2022 Financial Statement

	2022 Budget	YTD EXPENSE	YTD INCOME	YTD BALANCE
MINISTRY TO OTHERS:				
Black Hills Association	**$150.00**	$162.00	$0.00	($12.00)
Our Church's Wider Mission	**$2,100.00**	$2,100.00	$0.00	$0.00
Outreach	**$200.00**	$34.39	$0.00	$165.61
PASTORAL LEADERSHIP:				
Ministers Salary	**$34,930.08**	$11,645.36	$2.00	$23,286.72
Parsonage Utilities	**$4,500.00**	$4,114.98	$0.00	$385.02
Travel Allowance	**$300.00**	$52.65	$0.00	$247.35
Annuity	**$6,794.00**	$1,672.19	$0.00	$5,121.81
Dental Insurance	**$1,000.00**	$249.75	$0.00	$750.25
Medical Insurance	**$12,641.00**	$3,160.92	$0.00	$9,480.08
Life and Disabilty Ins	**$728.00**	$179.17	$0.00	$548.83
Furnishings Allowance	**$2,400.00**	$800.00	$0.00	$1,600.00
Continuing Education	**$500.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$500.00
Social Security Offset	**$3,613.00**	$1,204.32	$0.00	$2,408.68
Substitute Pastors	**$200.00**	$5,800.00	$0.00	($5,600.00)
Sabbatical Expense	**$1,500.00**	$1,200.00	$0.00	$300.00
MINISTRY OF MUSIC:				
Organist Salary	**$2,400.00**	$2,142.00	$0.00	$258.00
Pianist Salary	**$1,500.00**	$1,224.00	$0.00	$276.00
Choir Director Salary	**$3,150.00**	$3,500.00	$0.00	($350.00)
Music	**$150.00**	$228.51	$0.00	($78.51)
Bell Music	**$0.00**	$97.15	$0.00	($97.15)
Piano & Organ Upkeep	**$250.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$250.00
ADMINISTRATION:				
Office Manager Salary	**$10,000.00**	$7,163.76	$0.00	$2,836.24
Office Expense	**$500.00**	$801.57	$30.00	($271.57)
Postage	**$500.00**	$580.37	$0.00	($80.37)
Copy Machine	**$4,500.00**	$4,607.89	$0.00	($107.89)
Matching FICA	**$1,700.00**	$1,281.17	$0.00	$418.83
Christian Education	**$300.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$300.00
Delegate Expense	**$100.00**	$1,351.80	$2,000.00	$748.20
Diaconate Expense	**$150.00**	$286.67	$0.00	($136.67)
Worship Expense	**$300.00**	$178.35	$0.00	$121.65
Web Services	**$75.00**	$109.19	$0.00	($34.19)
Advertising	**$350.00**	$260.00	$0.00	$90.00
MAINTENANCE:				
Custodial Salary	**$3,150.00**	$3,150.00	$0.00	$0.00
Water & Sewer	**$800.00**	$1,170.93	$0.00	($370.93)
Electricity	**$2,000.00**	$3,458.57	$0.00	($1,458.57)
Garbage	**$600.00**	$569.88	$0.00	$30.12
Propane	**$10,000.00**	$11,712.00	$0.00	($1,712.00)
Telephone	**$1,300.00**	$1,316.31	$0.00	($16.31)
Snow Removal/Yard	**$100.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$100.00
Insurance	**$4,500.00**	$8,636.50	$153.00	($3,983.50)

BUDGETED:				
Current Income	**$0.00**	$502.50	$76,457.59	$75,955.09
Plate	**$0.00**	$0.00	$2,959.00	$2,959.00
OCWM	**$0.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Payroll Taxes Withheld	**$0.00**	$0.00	$2,230.85	$2,230.85
Federal Tax,FICA Paid	**$0.00**	$2,152.38	$0.00	($2,152.38)
NON-BUDGET:				
Use of Church	**$0.00**	$200.00	$900.00	$700.00
Christmas Fund	**$0.00**	$570.00	$570.00	$0.00
Neighbors in Need	**$0.00**	$86.00	$86.00	$0.00
OGHS	**$0.00**	$307.00	$307.00	$0.00
Strengthen The Church	**$0.00**	$407.00	$407.00	$0.00
WEAVE	**$0.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Food Pantry	**$0.00**	$601.63	$601.75	$0.12
Turkey Dinner	**$0.00**	$0.00	$4,000.00	$4,000.00
Rally Breakfast	**$0.00**	$3,350.79	$7,053.64	$3,702.85
SD Sales Tax	**$0.00**	$530.91	$538.99	$8.08
Walt Thomas Memorial Golf	**$0.00**	$0.00	$1,815.00	$1,815.00
We Care - Dakotamart	**$0.00**	$0.00	$1,100.00	$1,100.00
Labels for Learning	**$0.00**	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Fidelis	**$0.00**	$755.29	$755.29	($0.00)
Dinner Church	**$0.00**	$0.00	$42.00	$42.00
Pastoral Call Fund	**$0.00**	$14,000.00	$0.00	($14,000.00)
Pastoral Call Expenses	**$0.00**	$238.82	$0.00	($238.82)
Dividend Income	**$0.00**	$0.00	$107.37	$107.37
Memorial	**$0.00**	$1,564.03	$1,564.03	$0.00
Rally Booth	**$0.00**	$126.17	$0.00	($126.17)
Orphan Train Ukraine Relief	**$0.00**	$2,468.00	$2,468.00	$0.00
Pastor Gift	**$0.00**	$780.00	$780.00	$0.00
Transfer with Building Fund	**$0.00**	$556.23	$556.23	$0.00
Total Budget	**$119,931.08**	**$88,857.23**	**$83,832.44**	**$114,906.29**
Total Non-Budget	**$0.00**	**$26,541.87**	**$23,652.30**	**($2,889.57)**
TOTALS	**$119,931.08**	**$115,399.10**	**$107,484.74**	**$112,016.72**

Capitol Improvements				
Building fund	**$3,000.00**	$848.13	$450.00	$2,601.87
Custodial Supplies	**$300.00**	$229.07	$0.00	$70.93
Rally Booth	**$200.00**	$310.24	$0.00	($110.24)
Computer/Technology	**$500.00**	$425.99	$0.00	$74.01
Lawn Care	**$1,000.00**	$1,005.36	$0.00	($5.36)
Roof Repair	**$0.00**	$62,012.34	$66,695.30	$4,682.96
Parsonage and Garage Repair	**$0.00**	$3,732.41	$3,902.97	$170.56
Transfer with General Fund	**$0.00**	$0.00	$0.00	**$0.00**
Total Capitol Improvements	**$5,000.00**	**$68,563.54**	**$71,048.27**	**$7,484.73**
GRAND TOTAL	**$124,931.08**	**$183,962.64**	**$178,533.01**	**$119,501.45**

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 55%

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? Yes *(indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)*

_✔_ Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
_✔_ One Great Hour of Sharing
_✔_ Strengthen the Church
_✔_ Neighbors in Need
_✔_ Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

General Fund giving

If calculated as a percentage of the operating budget, what is that percentage? 2% *(recommended 10%)*

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: $0
Reason for debt: $0
Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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.

None at this time.

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2017-2021	To establish an endowment fund	$25,000	$33,719	Funds were secured for building and grounds maintenance and upkeep.

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
		$	$	

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

To fund an endowment account to assure the long term maintenance and upkeep of the Church property.

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? $40,697

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?
Funds are drawn under certain circumstances that would be reviewed and approved in advance by the Church Council.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?
There was no fund 5 years ago. The rate of draw will never deplete the assets as it is set to only allow withdrawal of interest and/or earnings.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:
The endowment fund is not used for operating expenses.

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

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:
The principal balance is invested and cannot be used. Only earnings are available to use for maintenance and upkeep of the Church property.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): $604 as of 12/31/2021 (Davis Fund)
Investments (other than endowment): $10,648 as of 12/31/2021 (Scholarship Fund)
Does your church have a parsonage? Yes
Fair market rental value of the parsonage: $9,600/annually
How is the parsonage used? Pastor residence
Street / City / State / Zip: 519 Harney Street, Custer, SD 57730
Finished square footage: 1570
Number of Bedrooms: 3, Number of Bathrooms: 2
Assessed real estate value: not assessed as it is a 501(c)3
Available for minister residence: Yes Expected minister residence: Yes
Condition of structure, systems and appliances: good
Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs: Church Council

Describe all buildings owned by the church:
Church Building, parsonage, garage, tool shed, Rally Breakfast shed, land

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:
None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?
Worship space, fellowship space, facilities. The pulpit is not wheelchair accessible.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry?
For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?

The Endowment Fund campaign started in 2017. There have been no major changes in the budget process as those funds are secured for maintenance purposes and not for operating expenses.

The Budget process is based on last year's income and expenses. The draft budget is created based on the prior years expenses. It is then presented to the Church Council for initial approval. It is then presented to the congregation for final approval. In the event of a major expense, the Church Council discusses options and brings a request to the Congregation for approval.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation.

The Church building had a disastrous fire in 1952. In 1989 a new narthex was added that included a handicap accessible elevator. In 2020 the Church celebrated the 140 year anniversary. Recent updates to the sound system and internet capabilities were done in 2021.

Our church holds an annual outside breakfast during the week of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. Over the past several years this has become very popular. Guests return, from all over the country, to our corner every year because they remember the good fellowship and the good food. We serve an estimated 753 meals during our 5 day event that runs from 6am to noon.

Another annual meal served by Custer Community Church is our Turkey Dinner. Transformed into a drive-thru event this past year, we were very successful, serving 393 meals to the local community. We served another 138 for a chili and cinnamon roll drive through event.

A community outreach program, called "Meet and Eat" takes place twice a month in our church building with rotating community churches serving the evening meal.

Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

There was an unfortunate event in the life of our Pastor, in that his wife requested a divorce. The circumstances were controversial and that caused a division among members. The attendance and subsequent membership dropped significantly. The remaining members have been strong, supportive and dedicated to rebuilding membership.

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

We want to be known as a welcoming Church so that everyone can participate in the life of the church. We extend God's love outside our walls to serve those in need. We cultivate the spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical well-being of one another. We honor all expressions of family as part of the body of Christ.

New members of the Custer community are beginning to attend worship and we have recently added 7 new active members to our membership role. The Church is very active in the community and the community is growing, so growth in membership is a very real opportunity for the Church.

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?)

"The shadows are as important as the light" by Charlotte Bronte.

Our church has had its challenges and struggles. Life seems like it was moving right along with our congregation until some topics came to light and opened up some needed conversations and self-reflection for our church members. Topics like divorce and the LGBTQ community came to the forefront of conflict within our church. Our doors say, "All Are Welcome" and we found out that was not the belief some members had. With Covid-19 happening at the same time, it was hard to navigate the conflict and communicate appropriately.

While our church went through discernment with Reverend Ellis Arnold, a previous Associate Conference Minister for the Tri Conference, the members of our church had open conversations to determine who we are as a church and what we want to be for the community. With the guidance of Reverend Arnold, we wrote a Behavioral Covenant. This stated that "we are committed to each other and… no matter who you are, you are welcome here. Our hearts, minds, and ears are open to all people… Our church is a safe place for people of all races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, and neurodiversities." Our church needed to go through that dark and challenging time. We are better for it and stronger because of it.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing *(Y/N)*
Orin Johnson	1	?
Andy Smith	6	Y
BethAnn Sehring	5	Y
Keith Ballinger	5	Y
Martin Nussbaum	1/2	Y
Bill Comfort	7	Y
Dustin Bartlet	6	Y

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

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

Y */N/Ask us*

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y */N/Ask us*

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

Y */N/Ask us*

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?*

We engage others in our community in love, caring, and reaching out to our brothers and sisters. Our church has been a gathering place for music programs, picnics, dances, bibles studies, and we have movie nights in the winter months. Our church annually participates in supporting WEAVE (Women Against a Violent Environment), we have an annual food drive for the Storehouse, the church provides a meeting place for the community Meet & Eat, and we also have a Kid's Time program after school at the church. Our Outreach program provided Coffee and Tea Baskets for both schools in Custer, we did a Book and Batteries drive for the Black Hills Children's Home. We went Christmas Caroling to our shut-ins, the church did a Food Advent Calendar, and participated in the Select-A-Gift program. Our church also gave 2 baskets full of activity books, crayons, and stuffed animals to the Pediatric Ward at Monument Health in Custer and Rapid City. We sent Letters of Support to our military overseas. We baked brownies and cookies for delivery to our local, all volunteer fire station, in appreciation of their dedication and for keeping the heart of the Black Hills safe since 1879. We collected and sent donations for relief to the people of Ukraine during the war. Custer Community Church has a knitting group where they have blessed and donated prayer shawls to nursing homes and anyone in need of love and comfort. During the school year we participate in the Feeding South Dakota School Backpack Program and in the summer we participate in their Summer Sack Lunch program, which addresses the need for food when school is not in session. Our church sends monthly mailings to all members to remind them that we are thinking about them, and that they are valued. We also contribute to the UCC Special Mission Offerings, 5 for 5 program, and have been participating in that for many years. Custer Community Church plans, and runs the Annual Motorcycle Rally Breakfast fund-raiser where we have the opportunity to enjoy and connect with peoples from across the country.

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

Our church has participated in the Black Hills Association by attending and being on the board. Our Pastor and delegates from our church attend the Tri-Conference meetings and the National Synod. We also have had youth that have and will attend these Conferences. Our church introduced a proposal which was made into a bylaw that now allows anyone age 21 and younger to participate as a third delegate . We support and have youth attend Placerville Camp and Retreat Center.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.) Check any 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:
__ Designations from other denominations
_X_ None

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

Yes, in 2020 our council voted to start work on being an ONA church. Covid-19 shut us down and then we went into discernment. So, we would like to start work on that again. We would also like to explore other statements that would become a part of our church.

We believe that no matter who you are, you are welcome. Our hearts, minds and ears are open to all people. We strive to create an environment that upholds the dignity of each person. We believe that all people have a great amount of value and that they can contribute their abilities to the church and community. Everyone should have a chance to find God and learn to trust him in all that we do and continue to share God's work.

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

We participate in the Meals on Wheels Program, Meet & Eat community activity, and Ministerial Alliances' Christmas Select-a-Gift. We also have Easter Sunrise Service in Custer State Park up on Coolidge Mountain, all are welcome. Our youth attends Camp Placerville and we are blessed to have it in the Black Hills.

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.

Custer Community Church Mission Statement:

> *"To build a family of faithful believers through community service, inspiring worship, and a welcoming and inclusive space where people of all ages can grow."*

We developed a 2020 Strategic Plan with several goals, one of them to increase community Service and Outreach. We have a Kids Time program that is open for all to attend. When we can, we do a Vacation Bible School in the summer. We participate in service and outreach activities that reach not just our Custer Community but to locations in Rapid City and beyond. Some examples include Movie Night, Meet & Eat, Halloween Dance Party, donations to the Black Hills Children's Home, Rapid City Pediatric Ward, a war in Ukraine, and Storehouse donations. We proudly proclaim that "All Are Welcome" at our church and state so on our website and videos to have on our YouTube Channel. We have an LGBQT+ flag on our door. Our church has Bible Studies for anyone to attend. We know we need to continue to work to strive for all to not only know but truly feel they have a home with Custer Community Church. We involve our church family and community to join in our Outreach projects.

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?

The engagement in ongoing communal activities has been a blessing. The outgoing Pastor visited and gave communion to our Shut-ins. He participated in the Custer Ministerial Alliance, which rotated, performing Sunday Service at the local nursing home. He also volunteered at the Storehouse, helping to find assistance for those who needed shelter or financial support to turn utilities on. The Meet & Eat program was started by one of our Pastors and is still going on. This program offers all people to come and visit while enjoying a meal. He participated in many committees and boards for the wider church. There are many opportunities for a minister to pursue. All talents and new ideas are welcomed to be brought forth.

4b. MISSIONInSite

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

A little over half of the population is ages 50 to 85. The data shows a small increase in our population over the next few years. We are currently seeing an increase in people moving into the Black Hills region. It shows an overall slight decrease for high school age groups, with a slight increase in middle School-age population in the future.

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?

Many of our congregational members are 50 yrs. and older. There are many churches in our community that families are attending. We would like to attract more young people and families to join and participate in Custer Community Church.

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

61 percent of households in Custer are families. We do have a community that is a tourist destination in the summer months in which the city is bustling with people. In the offseason, the city quiets down. There are a variety of churches in the area. Most of the population is white and middle income.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?
Our church offers a space for Meet & Eat, where local businesses take turns hosting this activity at our church. We are a community space where organizations can use our facilities. We offer community activities that anyone can participate in.

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

They received a warm welcome and felt God was speaking to them, that they belonged. They were extremely impressed by the pastor's sermon. Some really liked the research and perspective the Pastor brought into the sermons. They felt needed and wanted to participate and use their talents for the church. The church's statements, such as our Mission, Vision, and the Custer Community Church's Covenant is part of why some people joined and believe in our church's mission and direction.

5. REFERENCES

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

Make sure they are not members of your church but are persons who know your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Request a letter from each reference in answer to the four prompts below. Attach the letters (up to three) as desired.

REFERENCE 1

Reverend Bill Comfort/ Minister
360-228-4006/ pas2rbill@yahoo.com / Served as minister from 2008-2015

Sunday, April 24, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

The main thing I want to say is that I loved being the pastor of Custer Community Church, United Church of Christ and I felt loved in return.

I was called to be the Pastor of Custer Community Church, United Church of Christ in 2008 and served there for almost eight years. During that time, I found the congregation to be gracious and accepting of the ministry of this West Coast Liberal. I found a range of theological understanding among the congregants. Some people became my fans and others came to my office, and we had a talk about what might have been our differences. Almost all these talks turned out to be congenial in the end. We found that for most theological issues we could find our respective places and along a continuum of understanding and agree that we could accept that a serious Christian could have either of our positions.

During my time with the Custer church, I found a very active group of lay people who ran an after-school program for young children, a sometimes-thriving group for teenagers, a dynamite music program, hosted a regular community meal, provided an annual rummage sale, and raised money from an annual breakfast on our lawn for bikers

attending the Sturgis Rally. My job at the Biker Breakfast was to mingle with those who were eating and engage them in conversation. I found that most of them were professional people from around the country who enjoyed a motorcycle trip to the Black Hills.

One of the features of the congregation was their willingness and get it done attitude about maintaining the beautiful building and grounds. They were proud of being a large gathering place in the center of town. Many weddings and funerals were held in our sanctuary.

Who would not enjoy a trip to the Black Hills? Sheri and I loved to explore the area and see the abundant wildlife. The new-born buffaloes in Custer State Park every spring were one of the highlights.

Recently, I was happy to see that the Easter Sunrise service at a scenic overlook in Custer State Park that started while I was there was still happening and it looked like attendance had grown.

I would certainly recommend Custer Community Church, United Church of Christ to anyone who would be interested in a loving relationship with a congregation and a town that will love you back.

Rev. Dr. Bill Comfort

REFERENCE 2

Reverend Richard "Mitch" Behringer/Minister/Interim Ministry
(605) 381-9605/ jrbehringer@hotmail.com /Interim minister - 2015

1. Two areas of strength immediately come to mind in reflecting on Custer Community Church. First, over the years, I have always been impressed by the musicians and the music at the church. The music is consistently appropriate and good. Second, the Wednesday after school program for younger students in the community is a valuable asset to the community and, I think, also indicates the concern of the congregation for the community.

2. Although I have no direct knowledge, I do know from various conversations that the congregation went through a process of discernment to determine what kind of congregation they would be. My impression is the town of Custer has a high amount of congregations for a town of its size and that there is a predominance of small independent

congregations of theologically unusual backgrounds. It seems to me that the Custer Community congregation decided to recognize itself as a "mainline" normal alternative.

3. This, admittedly, may sound a bit crazy. Almost twenty years ago, I started regularly attending the congregation's daily "Biker Breakfasts" during the week of the famous Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. As I recall, this was my first contact with anyone from the congregation. I was impressed by the cordial receptions by the volunteers and impressed by the camaraderie and coordination to serve the sometimes outlandish collection of visitors to the Black Hills. My impression, fortified with my many conversations at breakfast with motorcyclists from all over the country, and some foreign visitors, is that this event is an interesting form of ministry. The breakfasts are a real positive activity for the congregation particularly when the pastor talks with, and is available, to the guests. The friendliness and hospitality of the volunteers leaves a good impression, I feel, of church people. This event extends way beyond being a fundraiser for the congregation.

4. Some years ago, my wife and I did serve as interim pastors for the congregation prior to the calling of Rev. Dustin. I did find the congregation had a friendly, inviting milieu that was sincere. Although I did hear one comment that the church should just hire anyone with a black suit and a Bible, I was glad that the congregation used the standard call and profile process of the United Church of Christ and, for most part, was serious about calling an appropriate pastor.

   Richard L. Behringer
   April 27, 2022

REFERENCE 3

Bev Bartlett / bevbartlett79@gmail.com / Friend
308-430-3886

Describe some areas of strength in this church ministry:

The Custer Community Church is blessed with several extremely talented musicians that freely share their gifts and add so much to the worship service and special events. The bell choir is a special delight. Church members are also very involved in the community - through food drives, book drives, movie nights, kid's programs, letters to service members and much more. It seems there's always something going on.

Describe some areas of improvement in this church's ministry:

The church has established a fundraising event, offering breakfast to motorcycle riders during the week of the annual Sturgis Rally for a free will donation. Members recently worked together to design, raise funds for and construct a new outbuilding from which to prepare and serve the

food. The structure is well done and shows the commitment they have made to continue their fundraising and outreach efforts.

Describe a significant experience you have had with this church's ministry:

As with most groups we are a part of, we can't always choose the other members of our family; and this is especially true of our church family. Differences in backgrounds, education, life experiences, biases, etc., can lead to strong opinions and sometimes disagreements. While my son served as pastor for the Custer Community Church, his family went through a divorce when his wife acknowledged that she could no longer live in a heterosexual relationship. Reactions from church members were varied and strong. While a few people left the church, the majority worked through a soul-searching process and together, with the help of conference leadership, the members determined what the role of this church would be in their community moving forward and whether they would be open and affirming to all people. This was an extremely challenging time for all. In the end, with God's leading, I believe everyone involved has grown through this (painful at times) experience. It appears to me that the church members have affirmed for themselves individually what they truly believe, and how they will work collectively to share a newfound commitment to their faith.

Anything else you'd wish to share:

Although I'm not a member of the Custer Community Church, I intend to continue to support the church financially with my tithe. In his workbook, *Experiencing God*, Henry T. Blackaby shares that one way to know and do the will of God is to look around for where we can see God at work and join in. (As opposed to coming up with our own work and then asking God to bless it.) All that I have seen happening in this church teaches me to trust God for what I have not yet seen. I believe God is still speaking to and through this church.

If I can be of any further help, please feel free to contact me.

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:

Each Sunday at the close of the worship service we join hands and sing the following:

Go, my children, with my blessing, Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; You are my own.
In my love's baptismal river
I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing - You are my own.

Below is a familiar benediction that our search committee agrees is a meaningful favorite:

As you go, may God go with you
May God go before you to show you the way.
May God go behind you to push you, gently, into places you might otherwise
avoid but will lead to your growth.
May God go beside you as your companion for the journey.
May God go beneath you to keep you grounded and catch you when you fall.
May God go above you to watch over you and protect you.
May God go within you, to be your power and your peace.
In the name of the God who created you;
Christ who redeemed you;
the Spirit who sustains you.
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? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)*

   Church Council, Search Committee

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

   We are attaching the 2021 Mission InSight Report as a separate document to accompany our 2022 Church Profile.

Signed:

Vachel Rice
Search Committee Chair
Custer Community Church
February 16, 2023

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:

This document is created through support to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'" – Mark 11:22

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST