

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Zion United Church of Christ Le Sueur, Minnesota

zionlesueur.com uccmn.org

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Validated 5/16/23

May 17, 2023

POSITION POSTING

LISTING INFORMATION**SCOPE OF WORK****COMPENSATION & SUPPORT****WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US? WHO****IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?****LISTING INFORMATION**

Church name: Zion United Church of Christ

Street address: 240 So. Elmwood Ave., Le Sueur, MN 56058

Supplemental web links: <https://www.zionlesueur.com>

Facebook: Search "ZionLeSueur" or

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/130294151953/>

Additional ecumenical affiliations:

Conference: Minnesota UCC

Association: n/a

UCC Conference Staff Contact Person:

Name: Rev. Cindy Mueller

Title: Minister for Congregations in Transition for the Minnesota
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Summary Ministry Description:

The United Church of Christ's motto, "that they all may be one", Jesus' prayer for the unity of his church, is deeply rooted in the formation, history and story of our church. Zion UCC has been a community presence and spiritual leader in the Le Sueur area for over 150 years. Historically based in two differing denominations, each with a common German heritage, our church has grown and benefitted over the years by welcoming other congregations, their beliefs and traditions. Our members have always cared for each other and at the same time respected their differences, resulting in a caring, diverse environment of views where all are welcome. Zion has a rich history. Numerous families have been members over several generations, yet we have the strong desire to continuously attract new families and members who want the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ as they see fit while also being a part of a unified Christian community. Zion

is sound financially, with no debt and several established endowments to allow us draw on our historical connections as we continue to grow and move forward as a congregation.

Now we are looking for a pastor with vision and courage, an inspiring, faith-filled and creative leader to work with us as we grow in our ability to serve our members, our community and our world. As with most churches, we are looking to find how God is calling us into the future given the challenges presented by the realities of being a mainline church today and Covid. We are ready and eager to move forward. In faith, we welcome this exciting opportunity to search for a pastor to partner with us in our ideas for new growth in membership, outreach, programs, property use and so much more, while honoring what has worked for Zion UCC in the past.









What we value about living in our area:

Le Sueur conveniently sits directly off US Hwy 169, approximately 45 minutes from the south suburbs of Minneapolis & Saint Paul, about an hour from the MSP International Airport and 30 minutes north from Mankato/North Mankato, our regional hub (population 60,000) for shopping, dining, and entertainment.

Our town has several amenities, including an outdoor public pool and skating rink, numerous parks & ball fields and a community center offering quality programs and membership access to a fitness center area, gymnasium, racquetball court, and golf simulator. Downtown Le Sueur brought back its main street, modernized with a mini mall, bars, restaurants, grocery store, hair/full-service salons and more. Le Sueur celebrates their town festival in August - Giant Days - and has various activities throughout the year (Christmas in the Valley, Market Fest, Farmers Market). Neighboring Henderson offers a variety of opportunities for antiquing, eating, and festivals. Le Sueur has ample job opportunities and the Le SueurHenderson school district will be constructing a new elementary school in Le Sueur beginning in 2023.

Current size of membership: 282 Active members, 36 active non-members

Languages used in ministry (other than English): None

Position Title: Pastor

Position Duration: Settled

Compensation Level: Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

SCOPE OF WORK

Ministering to Zion UCC

- Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including scripture study, sermon preparation, guiding and sometimes finding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with musical staff, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.
- Guiding faith formation of our youth and young adults along with our Christian Education committee.
- Pastoral services, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals.
- Demonstrating strong and consistent leadership and administration skills.
- Being energetic, outgoing, engaging, a spiritual guide and a mentor to all.

Ministering to the Community and Wider World

- Community engagement and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love.
- Visiting the hospitalized and the shut-ins.
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference meetings.
- Availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations.
- Pastoral care, listening and referral.

Ministering to the Operation of the Church

- Leadership development by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs.
- Responsibility for supervision of staff.
- Strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry.
- Attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership.
- Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills so as to lead, teach, and preach better

Core Competencies:

- ✝ A pastor who will continue to improve Zion's mission of developing and supporting youth & young adult faith formation and ministries, as part of our desire to increase youth participation in all aspects of our church's life.

- † A communicator who can prepare inspiring, relatable sermons & worship services that speak to the needs of our entire congregation.
- † A leader who can nurture and continuously develop lay leadership within the walls of Zion and out into our community, encouraging all members to take an active role in the life of the Church.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis: The base salary plus a housing allowance will total \$69,000 – 78,000 in accordance with the MN UCC 2023 compensation guidelines, the pastor’s experience and Zion’s Active Membership total.

Benefits: An additional \$34,000 has been budgeted for benefits. This total will be a negotiated balance of:

Medical Insurance Dental Insurance

Contributions to the Annuity Fund, an IRS 403(b) tax-sheltered annuity administered by The Pension Boards, United Church of Christ

The UCC Life & Disability Insurance plan

Vacation: One week of paid vacation for every 3 months of service. Two additional paid weeks off per year, including Sundays, is expected for continuing education.

Reimbursements: Moving costs up to \$5,500. Business expenses for mileage reimbursed at the current IRS rate, continuing education, and attending conference UCC events.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

Zion does not own a parsonage, so the pastor will secure their own housing, preferably within the Le Sueur-Henderson school district or as close to Le Sueur as possible.

State any incentives:

We are prepared to negotiate up to a \$40,000 low interest loan to be used as a down payment for a home purchased within the Le Sueur Henderson school district. Term of the loan is 20 years; however, the total balance would be due and payable upon the end of the Pastor’s employment by Zion UCC. For the first 10 years, \$2,000 of principal would be forgiven each year, the forgiven amount not to exceed \$20,000. This loan would not have a prepayment penalty.

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

- The MN Conference offers occasional classes and workshops on topics like Boundary Training, Anti-Racism, Faith Formation, Local Church Ministry support, etc.
- Professional support is readily available with 4 seminaries within an hour of Zion: > United (UCC), St. Paul > Luther (ELCA), St. Paul > Bethel Seminary (Baptist), St. Paul > Bethany Lutheran (ELS), Mankato
- Regional UCC Clergy Support Group meets monthly as able.
- The Damascus Project, Minneapolis, MN is a joint venture of the MN and WI UCC Conferences that offers a variety of programs and learning experiences for clergy and laity.
- There are many colleges and community colleges in the Twin Cities and surrounding areas, including Gustavus in St. Peter, and MN State University and Bethany College in Mankato.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

There are a number of ministry goals we seek in our next minister to help us achieve. Those we see as the highest priority are:

- ✠ Ministry of the word/teaching the congregation – finds fulfillment in preaching and teaching and is attracted to a congregation that is wanting to rebuild faith formation programs for children and youth.
- ✠ Celebrant/worship leader – is most at home leading the congregation in worship; deep appreciation for ritual and ceremony in both formal and informal settings.
- ✠ Spiritual guide – encourages development of all members’ spiritual lives.
- ✠ Friend/Fellow traveler – warm and loving person who relates to us as an ordinary human being; compassionate and good listener; not afraid to reveal personal pain and struggles.

The ways in which we see these goals being achieved are through the style of ministry, worship and sermon:

Style of Ministry

- Welcomes new approaches and ideas
- Strong on spiritual development
- Interactions tend to be thought provoking
- Bible emphasis
- Encourages congregational and lay leadership decision-making
- Has a relaxed interpersonal style
- At times the cost of programs sets priorities
- Helps people figure things out for themselves
- Outgoing and socially engaging
- Balances private life with the life of the church and work as pastor

Worship

- Providing time for members to greet one another
- Providing worship that is emotionally moving and intellectually challenging
- Attention given to sacraments
- Lay participation in leadership
- Use of inclusive, non-sexist language
- Use of creeds or statements of faith
- Silent prayer or meditation
- Having parts of the worship especially for children
- Corporate prayer in which the entire congregation participates
- Use of contemporary worship styles, music and language

Sermon

- Sets forth a clear faith position as a guide for making decisions and living a faithful life
- Touches directly on everyday life
- Is challenging and thought provoking
- Is carefully composed and skillfully delivered

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

We envision our new minister being someone who reinforces our current acts of charity in our community, while leading us to discover even more ways to serve all in need. We see our church making an impact beyond its walls by providing faith formation for all children and youth, sharing the good news of the gospel with the unchurched, and participating in activities and programs with other local churches and groups. We are already searching for ways to use our building to serve our community in new ways. Historically our building has met the needs of the greater Le Sueur community by serving as a space where the public school has held classes, the Ecumenical summer Vacation Bible School often calls it home and, before moving to its current independent site, the Food Shelf was housed here. Numerous community service groups and local organizations have used our spaces for meetings. We have recently been exploring ideas about how to once again utilize our facilities to serve our neighbors and the greater Le Sueur community. Using our Transition Team meetings input, members recently met with facility use consultants to begin to brainstorm new, more creative uses for our church. The needs in our community, and opportunities for Zion to use its facilities to possibly serve the elderly, young families, and other yet undiscovered emerging needs of a small town are currently being evaluated.

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.

- † Exhibiting a spiritual foundation and ongoing spiritual practice
- † Building transformational leadership skills
- † Caring for all creation
- † Strengthening inter- and intra- personal assets

WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation, and describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation. Our church values fellowship and social interaction and it feels that we are being called to expand on these values and welcome even more people to join us. God is calling us to become more visible to the community and to those seeking a faith community. We are striving to be a church that is creating and engaging in community and ecumenical opportunities. To strive towards this, we want to re-engage present youth and young adults to become a more integral part of their lives. We are being called to become a vital church in our community by sharing the good news and being the body of Christ in our everyday lives to encourage our world around us.

We have been trying to confront decreasing young adult membership and declining youth participation by experimenting with different styles of Christian education including intergenerational meals before faith formation classes, combining different ages of youth in our Christian education to allow older children to help teach the word of God to younger peers, and grouping multiple school-grade classes together so that we have a core group for discussion and participation in the classrooms. We continue to find value in broadcasting our ministry across southern Minnesota via our church service radio broadcast. We hope that continuing these efforts and trying to adapt and do more will help us to become and stay a vital church for our community.

WHO ARE WE NOW?

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith, & describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

There are plenty of ways to answer the question of who we are as a church and where we would like to go in the future, but the answers of both of those questions can be derived from the strengths we have as a congregation. One of our strongest assets are lay people who are willing to take on leadership in our church. We are generous and eagerly engage with new visitors or in outreach projects. We are a group of active volunteers who enjoy our social hour after service, serving funeral luncheons, and fellowship opportunities.

Our membership vows call us to be followers of Jesus Christ and in covenant with each other. We value fellowship and social interactions outside of worship and all of our strengths listed above really demonstrate that we practice these values in our everyday lives. We come from a diverse set of backgrounds in our congregation, as we have gathered from all different walks of life and faith perspectives, yet we all respect each other and worship our Lord together.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Sunday worship gathers in the sanctuary and consists of traditional and contemporary music provided by musicians and the choir. We utilize PowerPoint aids to assist the congregation in worship and incorporate video elements. Communion is also provided at nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and the homes of shut-in members. A highlight we hope to reinstate is a service held outside or in a community park. Baptisms tend to be traditional with a personal component. Other ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals, are more personalized. We are looking for an individual who can bring energy to our services and strikes a good balance between spiritual and thoughtful sermons. We would like messages to be relatable to everyday life while also challenging our in-house and radio congregation.

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

“Equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Eph 4:12) has, from the beginning, been at the core of Christian Education/faith formation at Zion UCC. We have a strong history of commitment to Christian Education for all ages. Shrinking membership, Sunday youth activities and Covid have challenged our work. But we are committed and determined to give our children, youth, and adults a variety of ways to discover the scriptures, grow in their relationship to Jesus Christ, and understand their call to be the church here and beyond our doors. In terms of vision, the future is open. We want to provide creative, challenging, fun, faith-based programs for all ages, but the how and when in a world where the lives of members and their children are busy is yet to be discovered. During the school year we provide Wednesday evening classes for children of all ages. One class combines 3-year-olds through 5th graders, one class is for 6-7th graders, and an 8-9th grade Confirmation class lead by the pastor. This year we have seven confirmands. We have talked about future possibilities such as re-introducing nursery care during worship to encourage more parents to attend; finding a way to have Christian Education on Sunday mornings (this is working in some churches in the area).

Involvement in the summer Ecumenical Vacation Bible School continues to be a large part of Zion’s Christian Education Program. The congregation has contributed scholarship money available to anyone wanting to attend. Our goal is to grow this vital summer ministry and have more Zion adults and children participate in it.

Zion has a history of youth ministry with past mission trips, weekly gatherings, participation in UCC summer camps and other activities. We do have post-Confirmation youth, but we have not discovered how to renew this deep commitment of Zion.

Adult education, whether Bible study, contemporary issues or faith exploration, has been historically at the heart of our life at Zion. We are in a holding pattern now and want to find ways, new and old, to begin to address the faith formation of adults either with classes, retreats, Zoom gatherings, sermon feedback sessions, ecumenical classes, etc.

“The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers” (Eph 4:13). Zion has not just depended on the pastor as teacher. Many lay people, gifted in faith and willing to share it, have taught not only our children, but also youth and adults. This has been a strong ministry here at Zion, one we hope to be nurtured, welcomed and strengthened.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

The governing body of this Church is the membership assembled in a congregational meeting. The vote of a majority of members present at the meeting is the action of the congregation. It is the prerogative of the congregational meeting to decide such questions as the buying and selling of property, building projects, extensive repairs of Church property, the call of a pastor or pastors, and questions of the policy of the church, the borrowing of funds, as well as changes in the constitution. All other business is entrusted to the Council.

The Council is the executive body of this Church. It is composed of twelve (12) members of the congregation, four Elders, four Deacons, and four Trustees. Council members can serve two, three-year terms. The Pastor or Pastors shall be ex-officio members of the Council.

- Elders are responsible for maintaining the membership rolls, and nominating persons to run for the elected positions as well as helping to fill appointed committee positions.
- Deacons are responsible for working with the treasurer to prepare the annual budget, provide pulpit supply in the absence of the pastor and other worship related items.
- Trustees are tasked with overseeing and maintaining the Church property. Other committees include Christian education, stewardship, fellowship, funeral, memorial, scholarship, altar, music, historical, and pastor-parish relations.

Decisions made within the church are communicated in multiple ways. Announcements are made at the beginning of each Sunday worship, which are also included in the following radio broadcast. We have been utilizing weekly emails, as well as our monthly print publication, "The Zion Herald" that is mailed to members. Urgent issues are quickly communicated between council members and we have acted as necessary when the need arises with the leadership that's available at the time.

- 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

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS

Church#: 360810

Assoc: 434

Schedule: 0 Zion United Church of Christ

Le Sueur

MN

56058

| YEAR | AVG WEEKLY | | | CHR ED/ FAITH | | | | TRANSFER | | OTHER LOSSES | NET MEMBS ADDS- REMOVED |
|------|------------|------------|----|------------------|--------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| | MEMBERS | ATTENDANCE | | FORM | CONFIRMATION | CONFESSION | REAFFIRM | TRANS OUT | | | |
| 2011 | 479 | 147 | 65 | 9 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 0 | | |
| 2012 | 432 | 127 | 40 | 7 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 1 | | |
| 2013 | 422 | 114 | 59 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 13 | -10 | | |
| 2014 | 336 | 112 | 59 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 86 | -86 | | |
| 2015 | 484 | 95 | 53 | 3 | 0 | 199 | 9 | 45 | 148 | | |
| 2016 | 462 | 89 | 44 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 18 | -22 | | |
| 2017 | 417 | 88 | 43 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 36 | -45 | | |
| 2018 | 399 | 75 | 60 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 11 | 25 | -18 | | |
| 2019 | 387 | 78 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | -12 | | |
| 2020 | 378 | 78 | 46 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 15 | 0 | -9 | | |
| 2021 | 372 | 46 | 25 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 0 | -6 | | |

| YEAR | CURRENT EXPENSES | CAPITAL PAYMENTS | BASIC TOT OTHER | | | TOTAL OCWM | OTHER GIFTS | WIDER BASIC SUPP% | | TOTAL EXPEND | PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS |
|------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| | | | SUPPORT | UCC | GIVING | | | MISSION | CURR LOCAL | | |
| 2011 | \$247,278 | \$0 | \$21,500 | \$4,418 | \$25,918 | \$5,556 | \$31,474 | 8.69 | \$278,752 | \$208,825 | |
| 2012 | \$270,243 | \$0 | \$21,500 | \$2,259 | \$23,759 | \$1,152 | \$24,911 | 7.96 | \$295,154 | \$212,479 | |
| 2013 | \$227,087 | \$144,258 | \$15,000 | \$3,024 | \$18,024 | \$5,014 | \$23,038 | 6.61 | \$394,383 | \$226,277 | |
| 2014 | \$249,210 | \$29,071 | \$15,000 | \$3,470 | \$18,470 | \$5,104 | \$23,574 | 6.02 | \$301,855 | \$212,747 | |
| 2015 | \$232,037 | \$0 | \$16,111 | \$4,562 | \$20,673 | \$0 | \$20,673 | 6.94 | \$252,710 | \$218,879 | |
| 2016 | \$239,645 | \$39,512 | \$12,500 | \$12,351 | \$24,851 | \$5,331 | \$30,182 | 5.22 | \$309,339 | \$197,921 | |
| 2017 | \$235,579 | \$139,612 | \$17,500 | \$7,987 | \$25,487 | \$1,550 | \$27,037 | 7.43 | \$262,616 | \$204,363 | |
| 2018 | \$237,527 | \$14,296 | \$15,000 | \$6,292 | \$21,292 | \$1,550 | \$22,842 | 6.32 | \$260,369 | \$228,327 | |
| 2019 | \$238,082 | \$42,685 | \$15,000 | \$6,534 | \$21,534 | \$4,576 | \$26,110 | 6.30 | \$264,192 | \$219,820 | |
| 2020 | \$214,998 | \$3,706 | \$15,000 | \$7,934 | \$22,934 | \$0 | \$22,934 | 6.98 | \$237,932 | \$214,763 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-----|----------|------|-----------|-----------|
| 2021 | \$230,779 | \$10,746 | \$16,250 | \$5,308 | \$21,558 | \$0 | \$21,558 | 7.04 | \$252,337 | \$223,200 |
|------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-----|----------|------|-----------|-----------|

| | AVG WEEKLY CHR ED/ | TOTAL TOTAL CURR LOCAL | TOTAL TOTAL % CHANGE | MEMBERS | ATTENDANCE | FAITH | | |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------|------------|-------|--------|--------|
| FORM ADDITIONS | REMOVALS | EXPENSES | OCWM | EXPENDITURE | | | | |
| 2016-2021 | -19.48 | -48.31 | -43.18 | -44.44 | -64.52 | -3.70 | -13.25 | -18.43 |
| 2011-2021 | -22.34 | -68.71 | -61.54 | -58.33 | -8.33 | -6.67 | -16.82 | -9.48 |

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.

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church. (As of December 1, 2022)

| | | <i>Is this number an estimate?</i> |
|---|-----|------------------------------------|
| Number of active members | 282 | No |
| Number of active non-members | 36 | No |
| Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above) | 318 | No |

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

| | | <i>Is this number an estimate?</i> |
|---------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| More than 10 years | 75 | Yes |
| Less than 10, more than 5 years | 20 | Yes |
| Less than 5 years | 5 | Yes |

Number of total participants by age:

| 0-11 | 12-17 | 18-24 | 25-34 | 35-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65-74 | 75+ | <i>Are these numbers an estimate?</i> |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 36 | 18 | 19 | 22 | 22 | 19 | 47 | 60 | 76 | Yes |

Percentage of adults in various household types:

| | | <i>Is this number an estimate?</i> |
|-------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| Single adults under 35 | 32 | No |
| Households with minors | 23 | Yes |
| Single adults age 35-65 | 10 | Yes |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|-----|
| Joint household with no minors | 70 | Yes |
| Single adults over 65 | 39 | No |

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

| | | <i>Is this number an estimate?</i> |
|--------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| High School | 17 | Yes |
| College | 66 | Yes |
| Graduate School | 15 | Yes |
| Specialty Training | 2 | Yes |

Number of adults in various employment types:

| | | <i>Is this number an estimate?</i> |
|-----------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| Adults who are employed | 41 | Yes |
| Adults who are retired | 56 | Yes |
| Adults who are not fully employed | 3 | Yes |

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

Le Sueur and the surrounding area are a blend of rural professions, blue-collar and professional job opportunities. Most of the working members of our congregation are in professional careersteachers, business small and large, and technical careers. We also have a high number of farmers, clerical workers, and service workers. One in five are self-employed.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Our congregation is almost entirely made up of white ethnicities with ties to German and other European heritages. Our ethnicity matches our community for the most part, although our congregation does not represent the presence of our Hispanic community in Le Sueur.

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

There are no plans for this, but we are not opposed to going through this exercise at some point in the future and are looking to our new pastor for guidance. There have been conversations in adult classes and meetings with the interim pastor about this topic.

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

| 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 | | Fellowship Committee (30+) Ruth Circle (6-8) Men's Breakfast (6) Women's Breakfast (7) |
| Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>) | 3 | Pastor |
| Children's Groups or Classes | 30 | Pastor, Christian Education Committee, Volunteers |
| Christmas Eve | 147 | Pastor, Worship Tech, Choir Director, Musicians |
| Easter Worship | 157 | |
| Church-wide Meals | 40 | Lay Leaders |
| Choirs and Music Groups | 15 | Choir and Music Directors |
| Communion (<i>served how often?</i>) | 68+ First Sunday of each month | Pastor and Altar Committee |
| Community Meals/Food pantry/Lutheran Social Services | Food Pantry (6) Meal distribution (6) | Ecumenical venture, Zion laity responsible for a board seat & staffing 2 months a year |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>) | 5 | Pastor |
| Funerals (<i>number last year</i>) | 17 | Pastor, Funeral Committee |
| Prayer or Meditation Groups | 20 | During/after Covid accomplished via email and phone calls; Lay Leaders |
| Theology or Bible Programs in the Community | 40 | Ecumenical VBS |
| Weddings (<i>number last year</i>) | 0 | Pastor |
| Worship – 9 AM | 59 | Pastor, Worship Tech, Choir Director |
| Worship – 10 AM Radio Broadcast | KCHK 1350 AM 95.5 FM | Lay Leaders who record the service and monitor broadcast |
| Youth Groups or Classes | 7 | Pastor, Christian Education Committee |

As of March 31 (year-to-date): 0 Baptisms and 2 Funerals.

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

| Name | Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or no) | Ministry Setting | Type of Ministry Role | Retired? (Y or N) |
|----------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Robert Broeder | | Ordained UCC Minister | Former Senior Pastor | Yes |

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. Broeder attends periodically, and is

active in a Lutheran church in Saint Peter. At Zion UCC he is occasionally asked to preach or lead a funeral when the pastor is absent.

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 |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--|-------------------|--|
| Interim Pastor | Yes | Full Time | Church Council | March 2022 - present |
| Administrative Assistant | No | Part Time | Pastor | January 2017 - present |
| Custodian(s) | No | Part Time | Pastor & Trustees | April 2023 |
| Senior Choir Director | No | Part Time | Pastor | August 2022 - present |
| Worship Tech | No | Part Time | Pastor | March 2020 - present |
| Organists (3) Pianists (3) | No | Part Time | Pastor | Varies |

REFLECTION

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

The church has been successfully emerging from Covid and its challenges. Attendance and participation in worship and gatherings is growing. The church is excited about its future and having a new pastor.

CHURCH FINANCES

| | 2022 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
| INCOME | | | |
| Recorded Contributions | \$239,815 | \$129,228 | \$175,016 |
| Anticipated Unpledged Contributions | \$0 | \$72,992 | \$84,216 |
| Loose Offering | \$1,400 | \$3,403 | \$1,400 |
| Initial Offering | \$150 | \$141 | \$150 |
| Sunday School Offerings | \$100 | \$100 | \$0 |
| Zion Herald Contributions | \$150 | \$225 | \$150 |
| Radio Contributions | \$9,500 | \$10,050 | \$10,000 |
| Coffee Hour Donations | \$200 | \$713 | \$200 |
| Vacation Church School (separate account) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Reimbursements & Misc. Income | \$1,000 | \$23,429 | \$1,000 |
| Youth Account (Recycling Cans Added Here) | \$500 | \$632 | \$0 |

| | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Fellowship Events Income | \$0 | \$215 | \$0 |
| Christmas/Easter Flowers | \$0 | \$847 | \$0 |
| Designated Income-- Bulletins | \$300 | \$875 | \$300 |
| Checking Acct. Interest | \$0 | \$23 | \$0 |
| Housing Fund Income | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Building Fund Income | \$100 | \$120 | \$100 |
| Facilities Use Income | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Income and Donations | \$253,215 | \$242,991 | \$272,532 |
| Easter and Holy Week Special Offering | \$0 | \$3,630 | \$0 |
| Neighbor in Need Offering | \$0 | \$1,464 | \$0 |
| One Great Hour of Sharing Offering | \$0 | \$1,730 | \$0 |
| Christmas Special Offering | \$0 | \$2,882 | \$0 |
| Strengthen the Church | \$0 | \$805 | \$0 |
| Misc Out Reach Offering | \$12,000 | \$750 | \$12,000 |
| Special Offerings | \$12,000 | \$11,261 | \$12,000 |
| Total Income | \$265,215 | \$254,252 | \$284,532 |

EXPENSE

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| OCWM | \$15,000 | \$15,000 | \$12,000 |
| Dues Per Capita | \$3,780 | \$3,780 | \$2,780 |
| Radio Ministry | \$7,400 | \$6,487 | \$7,500 |
| Misc. Outreach Ministries | \$12,000 | \$12,334 | \$12,000 |
| Total Missions-Variou | \$38,180 | \$37,601 | \$34,280 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------|------------------|
| New Pastor salary | \$30,600 | \$0 | \$45,000 |
| Pension | \$0 | \$0 | \$11,130 |
| Bridge Pastor/Interim Pastor Minister mileage | \$2,700 | \$0 | \$2,700 |
| Sr. Pastor Cont. Ed. | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Social Security offset | \$0 | \$0 | \$5,814 |
| Health Insurance | \$6,000 | \$0 | \$15,000 |
| Life Insurance | \$1,000 | \$0 | \$800 |
| Dental Insurance | \$593 | \$0 | \$1,200 |
| Housing Allowance | \$0 | \$0 | \$31,000 |
| Sr. Pastor Phone | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total Sr Pastor Expense | \$40,893 | \$0 | \$112,644 |

| | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|
| Bridge Pastor Salary | \$22,950 | \$58,907 | \$0 |
| Visitation Pastor | \$6,000 | \$7,441 | \$0 |
| Christian Education & Youth Coordinator | \$7,000 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Administrative Secretary | \$29,640 | \$29,640 | \$31,200 |
| Custodian Salary | \$5,000 | \$6,240 | \$5,400 |
| Senior Choir and Bell Director | \$5,400 | \$8,032 | \$5,000 |
| Organist Salaries | \$4,000 | \$4,065 | \$4,500 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Special Musicians | \$0 | \$0 | \$300 |
| Pulpit Supply | \$2,000 | \$2,125 | \$2,000 |
| Workman's Comp Insurance | \$1,300 | \$1,626 | \$1,300 |
| FICA Employer's Contribution | \$3,500 | \$3,670 | \$3,825 |
| Bridge Pastor Pension | \$7,250 | \$8,568 | \$0 |
| Worship Technician | \$0 | \$0 | \$5,400 |
| Kitchen Supervisor | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Visitation Pastor Mileage | \$0 | \$2,865 | \$0 |
| Visitation Pastor Misc Expense | \$0 | \$1,200 | \$0 |
| Sr Pastor Misc Expense | \$0 | \$3,983 | \$400 |
| Interim Pastor Lodging Expense | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,160 |
| Staff Christmas Gifts | \$0 | \$900 | \$400 |
| Total Staff Expense | \$134,933 | \$139,262 | \$174,529 |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Church Insurance Expense | \$9,500 | \$8,603 | \$9,213 |
| Church Utilities | \$21,000 | \$28,237 | \$21,000 |
| Church Phones--Internet | \$2,500 | \$2,894 | \$2,500 |
| Custodial Expenses | \$1,000 | \$862 | \$1,000 |
| Property Maintenance | \$8,000 | \$2,802 | \$8,000 |
| Office Equipment and Maintenance | \$4,500 | \$5,062 | \$4,500 |
| Snow and Lawn Care | \$4,500 | \$3,360 | \$4,500 |
| Elevator Maintenance | \$1,500 | \$949 | \$1,500 |
| Office Supplies | \$2,200 | \$1,733 | \$2,200 |
| Kitchen Supplies | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 |
| Postage | \$2,000 | \$1,949 | \$2,000 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Boiler Maintenance | \$1,000 | \$3,986 | \$1,000 |
| Loan Interest Exp./Bank Fee | \$200 | \$0 | \$200 |
| Vanco Invoice Maintenance | \$510 | \$573 | \$510 |
| Equipment Maintenance | \$3,500 | \$1,140 | \$3,500 |
| Total Operations and Maintenance | \$62,060 | \$62,150 | \$61,773 |
| Curriculum for CE | \$1,300 | \$541 | \$1,300 |
| General Supplies for CE | \$250 | \$207 | \$250 |
| VBS (Separate Account) | \$500 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Tuition/Mileage for CE | \$150 | \$0 | \$150 |
| Total Christian Education | \$2,200 | \$748 | \$1,700 |
| Contribution Envelopes | \$400 | \$333 | \$400 |
| Worship Supplies | \$200 | \$532 | \$200 |
| Choir Appreciation | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Flowers | \$500 | \$1,235 | \$500 |
| Delegate Expense | \$550 | \$50 | \$550 |
| Petty Cash | \$200 | \$0 | \$100 |
| Devotional Books | \$400 | \$305 | \$400 |
| Fellowship Hour Expense | \$100 | \$0 | \$100 |
| Stewardship Expense | \$200 | \$0 | \$200 |
| Confirmation Expense | \$300 | \$249 | \$300 |
| Fellowship Events | \$100 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Special Gift Expense | \$200 | \$79 | \$0 |
| Special Reimbursement Expense | \$550 | \$336 | \$0 |
| Special Phone Expense | \$0 | \$50 | \$0 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Beef Dinner Expense | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Equipment Purchases | \$2,000 | \$3,579 | \$0 |
| Historical Expense | \$100 | \$23 | \$100 |
| Music License | \$900 | \$852 | \$900 |
| Music Expense | \$0 | \$2,113 | \$500 |
| Miscellaneous Expense | \$1,000 | \$273 | \$0 |
| Church Supper Expense | \$300 | \$0 | \$300 |
| Praise Band | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Advertising Expense | \$700 | \$171 | \$700 |
| Pastor moving expense | \$0 | \$0 | \$5,500 |
| travel expense | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,000 |
| Candidate housing | \$0 | \$0 | \$500 |
| Total Programs | \$8,700 | \$10,180 | \$12,250 |
| Building Expense | \$5,500 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Capital Payback | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total Building Projects | \$5,500 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total Expenses | \$251,573 | \$249,941 | \$284,532 |

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 35%

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

We have never failed to pay a minister or any other staff their promised compensation.

Is your church 5-for-5? In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage?

We are a 5 for 5 Church, supporting OCWM, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund. In 2022 the percentage of the total operating expenses for OCWM support was 5.7%.

What is the church’s indebtedness? Zion

UCC has no debt currently.

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget.

We are anticipating resurfacing the south parking lot. Some funds are left over from the repaving of the north and west lots and some other donations have been made for the project. The actual starting date will be after the city replaces the storm sewer that runs through our lot.

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

| Year | Project | Cost | Financed with |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 2022 | HVAC Repairs | \$10,225 | Fund drive |
| 2022 & 2023 | Sound system and TV upgrade | \$12,355 | Fund drive & general fund |
| 2019 | Roof repairs | \$28,830 | Memorial & Investment earnings |
| 2019 | Kitchen AC | \$6000 | Memorial/Funeral fund |
| 2016 | Parking lot resurface | \$96358 | Fund drive |

Does your church have an endowment?

We are very fortunate to have an endowment fund with a current value of \$543,743. Last year there were no funds used from this account due to a loss caused by the market downturn. The fund is made up mostly from monies willed to the Church. From time-to-time earnings are spent for various projects, however stipulations made by contributors’ state that \$471,257 of principal is to remain unused while earnings can be spent.

Does your church have a parsonage? We

do not own a parsonage.

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

We own a 2.67 acre lot with the Church building currently valued at approximately 6 million dollars. The main level of our church has a sanctuary that comfortably seats 200, pipe organ,

grand piano, choir area, modern sound and video technology, and historical chapel with furnishings from our previous church. The sanctuary includes a balcony under which is an overflow area set up for social interaction before or following services. Church offices and a conference room are located at the main entrance. The other levels of the church include a large social hall with a full kitchen, several classrooms, a nursery area, library, and a “fireside room” with adjacent kitchenette. The entire building is air conditioned. We also own a 1.4 acre parcel with a cemetery (Dresselville) and a 1 acre parcel with an old wood frame Church building and cemetery (Salem Tyrone).

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

Almost our entire building is handicapped accessible. We have an elevator that goes to all levels of the church. The two areas not accessible are the raised chancel and the balcony.

Reflection: After reviewing the church’s finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation’s mission and ministry?

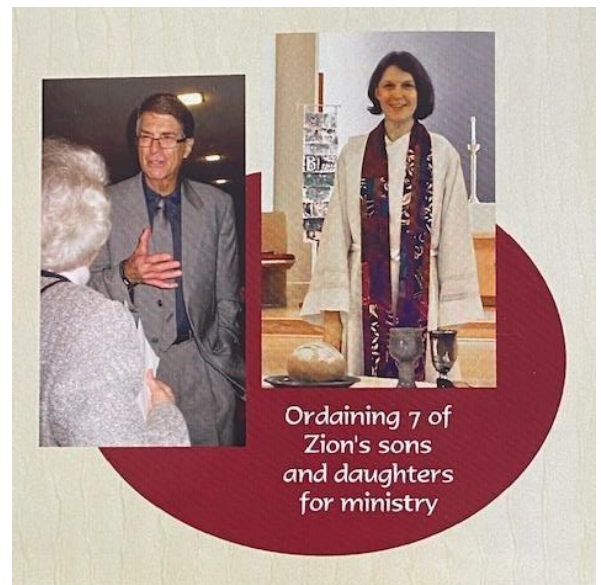
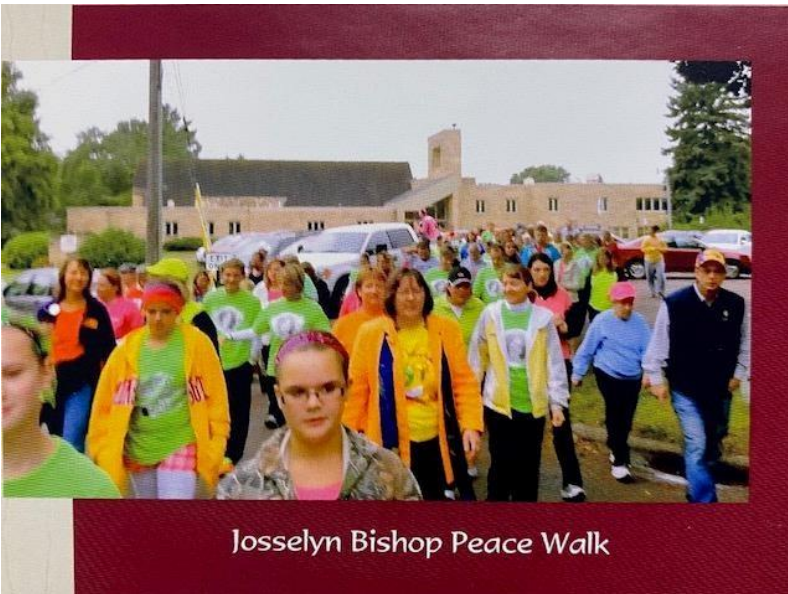
Our congregation has a long history of meeting the financial needs of the day-to-day operations as well as wider missions and special projects.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name 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.

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

Our church has unfortunately weathered the deaths of two young members, one of which happened at Pilgrim Point camp and one through homicide. Our response to those tragedies has shown the heart of our congregation by supporting their loved ones and by doing whatever was needed in those hard times for their families and friends. Included as part of that support is our Funeral Committee. The committee has been consistently led over several years and has always remained a steadfast source of comfort and support when families have needed it most. Recently, the restrictions and challenges of Covid required us to re-think how we worship and continue our work as a congregation. We embraced and updated new technologies to facilitate worship and church meetings. Zion remained a relevant presence in our members' lives through the limitations and challenges of Covid, and we are now seeing a healthy emergence and re-birth of the church as those restrictions have lifted. An interesting fact within the history of Zion UCC is that seven members have gone on to become ordained ministers.



Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Our membership tries its best to respect each other’s differences, but we realize that a broad range of values and views can cause conflict when trying to prioritize church business. Conflict is typically handled by members addressing the issue either in formal meeting settings or with lay leadership and/or the Pastor. We have experienced conflict with a Pastor that was not handled well by all involved. We have learned that allowing those conflicts and disagreements to go unaddressed and unresolved for too long is not a healthy way to handle a congregation’s relationship with their Pastor. Zion has a pastor-parish relations committee that is being trained to better address issues before they become larger problems for either the Pastor or the congregation.

Ministerial History

| Staff member’s name | Position | Years of service | UCC Standing |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Rev Robert Broeder | Senior Pastor | 1984-2007 | Yes |
| Rev Lauren Heidenriech | Associate Pastor | 1994-2002 | Yes |
| Rev Barb Jackman | Visitation Pastor | 1997-2011 | Yes |
| Rev Ken Ribe | Interim | 2008-2010 | No/Presbyterian |
| Rev Beth Benson | Senior Pastor | 2010-2013 | Yes |
| Rev Jean Sidner | Visitation/Interim | 2012-2018 | Yes |
| Rev Kent Meyer | Senior Pastor | 2013-2018 | Yes |
| Rev Rosemary Rocha | Visitation Pastor | 2018-2022 | Yes |
| Rev Rosemary Rocha | Interim Pastor | 2022-present | Yes |

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

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Yes

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church? No

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION InSite

COMMUNITY VISION

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

Our congregation has always felt compelled to support those who do not have adequate access to life's essential needs. Food, clothing, and the support of children are some of our top priorities. We are very active in the Le Sueur Food Shelf, with volunteers staffing the majority of the food shelf's needs 2 months each year and one of our members serving on the Board of Directors. Before the restrictions of Covid on group gatherings we were active with Feed My Starving Children, an organization that would pack bulk meals for those in need. We have provided for area youth during Christmas in several ways: participating in our county Adopt-aFamily program, support of the Salvation Army, and in Operation Christmas Child. Donations from our Ruth Circle and Fellowship committee address local needs through donations to various organizations including our local hospital, Ridgeview Le Sueur Medical Center. Our stewardship committee has collected offerings for organizations in our area including the VFW/Legion and the Mankato Area Crisis Nursery. We support the residents of the Saint Peter Regional Treatment Center and the CADA house, a domestic abuse support organization.

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

We regularly send Delegates to the MN Conference UCC Annual Meeting. In the past we have had members participate in state-level UCC committees and projects. We are a 5-for-5 congregation that supports the UCC's national OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission) and its 4 special national mission offerings. Historically our youth participated as campers and counselors at Pilgrim Point camp and UCC weekend retreats.

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A)* | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M) | <input type="checkbox"/> None |

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future? Our congregation has not felt a call to adopt any of these formal policies, but we have worked toward some of the goals of these programs. Our biggest efforts to-date surround the accessibility of Zion UCC to all, by:

- Installing an elevator to all levels and having almost all parts of the building handicap accessible.
- Having pew arrangements that are handicap accessible and inclusive.
- Making large-print bibles and bulletins available.
- Providing visual and hearing support devices for worship.

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

Historically the ecumenical scene in Le Sueur was vital and strong. Currently we are one of 4 denominations meeting periodically for business and planning, occasionally sharing worship, outreach, and educational events.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?

Our mission statement, "*Called by God, Committed to Christ, Connected in the Holy Spirit*" is something our congregation tries to live each day. We take to heart the call to practice hospitality, to welcome the stranger, to feed the hungry. We are called by God to be a community of kindness, and to share our gifts to spread the good news. We feel compelled to do these things through worship and prayer. We strive to share God's blessings and the good news of the

Gospel as we reach out into our communities to serve our neighbors by volunteering and donating. The day-to-day actions of our congregation align well with our mission statement.

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?

While our congregation would like the Pastor to primarily focus on the current congregation and its needs, we also believe that a portion of the Pastor's time should be used to help the congregation be active in our community and the wider church.

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

When evaluating our Mission Insite report, we find the breakdown of our community shows we are predominantly a White community (89%) with the next largest ethnic group being Hispanic (7%). This break down of ethnic groups appears to be very static with a very slight growth expected in the Hispanic and Asian ethnic group.

We see the age demographic showing the average age to be growing slightly over the next ten years, but slightly below the state average. We also see a moderate growth expected in the school age children within the next ten years.

We see a trend of less families and young children attending church while the older generations tend to be the ones attending church most often.

We cannot ignore or dismiss the trends which currently exist in our community and/or community of faith. We embrace the opportunities that lie before us. Our congregation has always had a strong ministry for our elderly and shut ins. We see ourselves continuing and making that ministry even stronger. Our church has had a good Christian Education program and we look to renew and strengthen it. Our youth and families are our greatest opportunity going forward. Our congregation acknowledges and is aware of the opportunity and this will be a major focus going forward.

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?

The church demographics include fewer young families than are present in our immediate neighborhood. The demographics of our church mirror the larger community in which we are located. Our church has a small ethnic diversity.

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

We need to focus and find a path to enhance our ministries to and with young families and youth. We must work harder to find ways to educate and welcome all into our community of faith. We will continue to honor and minister to the elderly of our church and community. We have for many years had a part-time visitation pastor to address this group along with our friendly visitors' team. The visitation pastor position is vacant at this time, but may be filled in the future depending on the new pastor's skills and priorities and the wishes of the congregation.

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

We are known to be a very friendly and welcoming church. We are often recognized for serving others through the food shelf, community dinners, distribution and location for food drop for Lutheran Social services. We are also known as a church that believes in and is active in ecumenical efforts. People know that we love worshiping with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are seen as very willing to help out in the community by being the hands and feet of Christ.

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

Zion creates a very friendly and welcoming environment that encourages all to be an active participant in the life of the church. The people will greet you and generally care for and about you and your family. The style of worship and staff are welcoming, accessible, and relatable.

REFERENCES

Rev. Carl Bruihler, retired ELCA clergy

St Peter, MN 507-649-1231

cbruihler@gmail.com

Relationship to the congregation

Former pastor at neighboring First Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Le Sueur from 2005-2021. I had overlap with previous ZION clergy: Rev. Bob Broeder, Rev. Ken Ribe, Rev. Beth Benson, Rev. Jean Sidner, Rev. Kent Meyer & Rev. Rosemary Rocha.

1. Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry. Worship with solid preaching and quality music is a priority and strength at Zion UCC. The congregation has a rich Lutheran/Reformed and now UCC heritage and is respected as a community of faithful people in Le Sueur. Zion is known for its radio ministry and as a strong partner with the other mainline protestant congregations in town: First Lutheran (ELCA) and the United Methodist Church. Zion UCC leadership, clergy and lay alike, have been faithful supporters of the Le Sueur Food Shelf and other ecumenical ministry efforts including, but not limited to: ecumenical Thanksgiving worship, ecumenical midweek Lenten worship, participation in the Le Sueur Ministerial Association and LSMA sponsored activities. For many years Zion hosted the Le Sueur ecumenical summer Vacation Bible School. Zion occupies a visible location on Elmwood Ave. and has a well-kept facility; the sign outside proclaims, *"No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at Zion!"* The congregation has a rich history and a bright future; it is now seeking strong pastoral leadership to move forward in ministry in this post-pandemic era.

2. Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry. Zion UCC is known for its caring ministry - perhaps more in terms of in-reach than out-reach. Somehow it is always the tendency of mainline congregations (and dare I include clergy?) to become comfortable doing ministry the way we always have, rather than exploring new opportunities and ways of reaching out with God's love. An ongoing challenge for Zion and other churches in Le Sueur has been reaching youth and young adults with effective ministry. Recruiting and retaining staff to do children youth and family ministry staff is never easy, and placing this responsibility solely on the pastor is unrealistic. Another challenge (and opportunity!) in small communities like Le Sueur is outreach to the increasing diversity in the minority populations that have come to make Le Sueur their home.

3. Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry. I have had healthy collegial relationships with the three pastors that have served Zion UCC over the course of my 16 year pastorate in Le Sueur. The congregation has strong lay leadership that have been great partners in staffing the Le Sueur Food Shelf, an organization that I was very committed to throughout my years in town.

4. Anything else you wish to share. Zion UCC is located in Le Sueur, a rural, small town within easy driving distance of Mankato to the South and the Twin Cities to the North. Pastoral ministry in Le Sueur and at Zion UCC has some challenges, but also many opportunities and benefits that go hand in hand with small town life. A leader who loves God and cares for people, with a willingness to be visible and active in the community, will find Zion UCC to be a delightful congregation and Le Sueur a good context in which to serve as a spiritual leader.

Barbara and Arthur Straub, Distinguished local musicians, educators, and naturalists
Le Sueur, MN
507-665-2658

Re: Reference regarding selection of new Pastor at Le Sueur's United Church of Christ

There is a modern hymn by name of "All Are Welcome" which gives flesh, in our eyes, to Zion United Church of Christ in Le Sueur. From the person who meets and greets one at the front door, to smiling church members inside, one is made to feel at home in this house of Christ. Prelude music will be experienced wafting from the narthex enticing one into the nave, announcements will be made, and the service will commence with prayers to the living God; prayers of praise, prayers of healing, prayers of celebration and prayers for consolation. Music is lifted, setting the mood for the service. Music has been one and is one of Zion's fortes.

The Covid pandemic attempted to extinguish the Spirit of music's power. Zion has been known as a bastion of beautiful choir and congregational singing! With the lifting of masking recommendations, the hiring of a new choir director, introduction of both older and new hymnody; leadership at Zion attempts to design a meaningful Godcentered service that will send the congregation out to be "little lights in a weary world" spreading the Good News of God's love to an unloving world. Perhaps Covid was a blessing in disguise, as the interim Pastor and Technology Director were able to utilize the old hymns plus "new forms of music worship" via technological advances to worshippers physically present, as well as to those listening via radio broadcast.

Inspiration of Holy Spirit and enthusiasm by Interim Pastor Rosemary Rocha has rejuvenated fine preaching of the scriptures enticing more members and strangers to attend church in person. Zion embodies the goal of priesthood of all believers, that we may all be one, proclaiming the Gospel by word and deed to heal the divisions in the body of Christ. Zion Church members believe that each person is unique and valuable, with emphasis on worldwide interfaith and ecumenical efforts, civil rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of the sometimes ignored. As the church is connected to a local radio station, Sacred Word and Praise goes out over the airways for surprisingly long distances. A gifted and talented media technician spends much time in preparation and delivery of music selections across the airways.

Zion congregants represent a large rural contingent, Le Sueur and numerous nearby and far-flung entities. You will find their efforts moving out through the greater world, both financially and in prayer through the various Mission efforts in which they participate. They are NOT a stagnant church zeroed in on their own needs. Also, you will find them fully embedded in the lives and organizations of Le Sueur area and nearby rural vicinities. Believe us, Zion 'lights' shine locally and throughout the land. If there is a need, Zion will be represented to ease the burden for others. For example, Missions, Food Shelf, Ecumenical seasonal services, etc. They are not a church sitting lone upon a hill.

"Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren, that you do unto me," obviously is a goal of the People of Zion.

We see as a challenge for Zion in 2023, youth church enrollment. Sports in particular have sapped both Wednesday evening youth education, in addition to a steady creep of athletic activities on Sundays as well! Peer pressure does its best to steal youngsters away from Word and Action! It's a challenge shared in many of our Christian churches!

Barbara and I are not enrolled members of this church family, yet our backgrounds stem from close relatives and many church friends active at Zion. Once upon a time, 30 years and more ago, we were without a church in which to use our music ministry. The Zion pastor at the time invited us to provide sacred music with the congregation once per month. This gave us the courage to not only assist Zion in music ministry, but to share music ministry in church services in additional area churches, denominations and environs. We owe a great deal to Zion people and leadership, which we would describe more fully should an applicant wish us to do so. Thank you for reading our reflections regarding the impressive People of God, Le Sueur Zion Church of Christ. We are at your behest.

Rev. Mary Kay Sauter – UCC Retired interim Pastor

651-216-4172

mksauter67@comcast.net

Relationship to the Congregation: Served as an Interim Consultant

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

I met with this congregation several times as a consultant for the interim process. I led worship, preached, met with the leadership, led a congregational meeting and had a variety of conversations with Rev. Rocha who has done an excellent job. My first impression every time I've gone to Zion is that they are warm, friendly and welcoming. I took them through an Appreciative Inquiry process of identifying their strengths. Their list included: human contact, music, message, caring, prayers, outreach, pastoral visits, broadcasting the worship services, leadership, strong connection to the community, financial security, commitment, ecumenical, good building and other strengths. They have been a part of the community for a long time and several members are multiple generations (which can be a strength or a weakness). For most churches the future is unknown because the role of the church is changing as we move into these liminal times. For most churches it will mean change. I sensed that many members were eager to explore new possibilities, while some were less so. I believe they trust each other, and they trust God to guide them into what might be new even as they've explored doing new and different things during this interim time.

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

Because I use an Appreciative Inquiry approach to interim ministry I didn't spend much time with areas needing improvements. However, my observation is that, as with most churches, there is a mixed openness to change. At the same time there is a strong desire to continue as a community of faith.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry. Each time I met with members I was impressed with their willingness to explore possibilities for the future. As in all congregations not everyone is in the same place, but overall, I heard a deep respect for their past, a deep desire to live in the present and a hope for the future.

Anything else you wish to share.

I believe this community of faith is and can find a strong future with the right leadership. Someone who knows and understands the complexities of churches. Someone who can help them be the church they believe God is calling them to be.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you tell us to ask and we will receive, so we ask you now to use your power, guidance, and wisdom to help us find the new pastor we are seeking. We are looking for a person who isn't necessarily young but is young at heart, strong when strength is needed yet gentle when a soft touch is the answer. We ask that this person can bring new ideas and excitement to our congregation. Please help us find someone who communicates well with the young and old, and people who have a wide range of personalities and vocations. We feel it is important that our new Pastor can meet people where they are on the path of life and help them get to where they want to be. We feel we are a church that has done great things in the past, but now finds ourselves in need of new enthusiastic leadership to help us rekindle our passion to carry out your work in our community and beyond.

We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

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 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?

Transition Team, Interim Pastor, Church Council, provided supplemental materials, suggestions, and guidance throughout the process.

In addition, all members and friends of Zion UCC were invited to complete one survey and participate in one small group session & one large group session. Members of the Search Committee completed several sections of the Profile, including congregational demographics and the financial summaries.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: None

Signed:



Ryan Thelemann, Chair of Search Committee for Zion United Church of Christ

May 17, 2023

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: Rev. Cindy Mueller

Name / Title: Rev. Cindy Mueller, Minister for Congregations in Transition for the MN Conference United Church of Christ

Email: cindym@uccmn.org

Phone: 763/515-3281

Date: 5/17/23

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
God!" – Mark*

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



*them, 'Have faith in
11:22*