

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



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LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Trinity United Church Of Christ

Hartley, Iowa

Iowa Conference, Northwest Association

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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

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

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

Street address: 140 N Fifth Ave. E.

Supplemental web links: trinity@tcaexpress.net; facebook: trinity ucc hartley

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

Conference: Iowa Conference

Association: Northwest IA Association

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

Rev. Jonna Jensen

Search and Call Associate Conference Minister

phone: 563-357-7287

email: jonna@ucctcm.org

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?

We are Christain Disciples empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve all people through Jesus Christ. We are a church where everyone is welcome no matter where they are in their faith journey. We need someone who will embrace us as we are now, but will challenge us and work with us to become more. We want to become a stronger congregation by continued spiritual growth through worship, fellowship and mission work. We are seeking a leader to further develop our unity as a congregation.

Photographs:



What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences):

Our church is in a small rural town of approximately 1,700 residents, including many multicultural families, and is located close to large city resources in Sioux Falls, Sioux City, Spencer, Sheldon and IA Great Lakes. Hartley has 2 medical clinics, several hospitals within 30 miles, an updated assisted living and nursing home, licensed daycare, funeral home, eye clinic, dental office, two chiropractic offices, progressive grocery store with in-house pharmacy and gift shop, flower shop, active library, fitness center, ballfields, lovely community center and a golf course 4 miles from town. A YMCA and the Clay County Fair is within 20 miles. Hartley has municipal owned utilities for electricity, water, sewer and cable systems. There is a well trained ambulance crew and fire department. Our strong school system just completed a building project in 2021 in which a new progressive elementary was connected to an updated highschool and a new middle school addition was built in Sanborn, a nearby community. Our people within the Hartley community help each other. There is a backpack program in the school using community donations. A new pool, built with community support, is soon to be opened. There have been fundraisers for the Hartley Daycare building improvements, Chapel and Community Center updates, Friends of the Library, and a future bike trail around Hartley.

Current size of membership: 146

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

Position Title: Settled 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

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

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

Preparation and leadership of worship including:

- Scripture, liturgy, music, prayers, bulletin preparation, serving communion, children's sermons and meaningful messages that we can relate to.
- Assist in preparing special/holiday/services that include but are not limited to weddings, funerals, Christmas Eve, and Thanksgiving.

Attend to the spiritual development of members and self.

Faith Formation and vitality through

- Assist with or lead Bible study, fellowship groups
- Provide resources and opportunities for spiritual growth
- Routinely meet with Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Leadership

- Working with people in the church and community to create ministry and programs
- Attend monthly meetings that include but are not limited to consistory (where a report is given that describes activities and contacts made), committee meetings and conference meetings
- Encourages development of the spiritual life of all in the congregation
- Assist with and supports educational programs for children and youth
- Lead confirmation classes

Support the local, regional and world missions of the church

- Provide administrative support

Pastoral Care

- Visits with members and friends of UCC who are sick, elderly, or grieving.
- Counseling members with premarital, spiritual, grieving, personal, family and/or work related problems etc.
- Assist with crisis intervention
- Provide care center ministry and communion

Planning and development activities

- Participates in wider church activities such as conference and regional association meetings
- Supports church's stewardship programs such as the food pantry and backpack program

Presence in community

- Works with local ministers
- Participates in community events

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.)

- A minister who will encourage us to learn and grow in our faith, to participate in church activities and reach out to others.
- An effective leader and speaker who is able to work cooperatively with others in the congregation and community.
- A minister who is open to discernment of the bible and our faith, being an educator to the youth, adults, and congregational leaders.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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

Benefits *(choose one):* 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)?*

We expect our pastor to live within our community with a portion of the total compensation as housing allowance.

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

The pastor would be required to visit members in the hospital within 30 miles of Hartley. There are also hospitals in Sioux City and Sioux Falls the pastor may need to travel to.

State any incentives *(e.g. school debt reduction or retention bonus after a certain number of years in position):* Trinity would be open to discussing incentives. Some possible incentives may include paying for continuing education, offering the 5th Sunday as a weekend away for the pastor (when the 5th Sunday isn't Easter), which would not be counted as vacation days. Other options are open for discussion.

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

NW Iowa Association Committee on Ministry. NW Iowa Association Cluster Meetings. Sioux Falls (SD) Area Clergy Group. There is a local ministerial group, shared resources from the Tri-Conference Ministries, as well as the Iowa Conference.

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

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

Our church wants to increase and attract membership along with retaining membership. Our ministry will infuse all ages of our congregation with a sense of enthusiasm and excitement, so we can participate like a church family showing all are welcome here. Our church will give our children a Christian education that instills the importance of helping others in need and treating others with love. Our church will increase our mission work outside the walls of the church.

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

The minister will challenge us to understand and grow in our faith using the UCC theology. This minister will be a visible member of the community, involved with all facets of our community and a presence in the state and Northwest associations. The minister will use technology to expand our congregation outside the church walls to encourage interest and enlarge our church family. The minister will work with other ministers in the community, which may include but not limited to Bible school, combined church services, and crisis counseling.

Language requirements: We are currently entirely an English-speaking congregation.

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 *Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

- A sense of theological identity and authority, while being responsive to the opinions and values of others.
- To provide effective and appropriate pastoral care and Christian education, and to equip and motivate others to share in these ministries.
- Engaging in mission and outreach not only locally but beyond.
- Nurturing togetherness by helping our members better connect with each other about their faith

• 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?

- A church where people can express their faith in God. Even with differences in opinions, we can still be loving toward one another, supporting each other and growing into a stronger church.
- A church that involves our children, youth and adults in our faith journey. A church where people want to come to church and are willing to be involved.
- A church that is physically and financially supportive.
- A church that has outreach to the community.

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?

Vision Statement:

Trinity United Church of Christ is in partnership with God and all creation. It is our hope that everyone who enters the light of this Faith community will share with us the compassion, forgiveness, kindness, humility, gentleness, love and patience of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Experiments our congregation has initiated.

Monthly Food distribution: Upper Des Moines brings a truck load of food to our church the third Wednesday of each month. Volunteers from other Hartley churches help us with the food distribution for qualifying people from the area who come and get food. People in the surrounding area have been helped by having access to food.

Facebook church services This was started when the church was not meeting face to face because of covid. Facebook allows members to hear the church service when they do not feel comfortable to attend in-person services. It also helps to reach a broader population.

Community Bible School: This has brought the Hartley churches together for a common cause of giving children in our community a Christian Education.

Praise Band: This gave a change in music to the congregation. The challenge was the limited number of songs they played (needed to give more time to evolve repertoire of songs). Unfortunately the choir disbanded because there was not a practice time that would work with the organist around her scheduled practice time with the praise band. Currently the praise band is hoping to play once a month.

Lent: Two different activities were tried on Wednesday nights. On two Wednesday evenings, a Christian related movie was shown. On three Wednesday evenings, a meal was served before the church service. Weather affected some of these activities. It was felt the attendance could have been better.

Current Challenges we face:

- We do not have a full time UCC pastor to provide leadership.
- Getting people to be involved/reinvolved in church and activities since covid has been difficult.
- Getting curriculum recommendations and teachers to help with Sunday School. We need more youth involved in Sunday School and the church.
- We need a curriculum for our confirmation age youth.
- Keeping current membership and increasing membership has been difficult because we do not have a full time UCC pastor..

3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

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?

We are disciples of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve all people.

Our statement of faith is the Apostles Creed affirming that God is the Father Almighty maker of Heaven and Earth and that we believe Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior who guides us through our faith journey.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Our church family has a good mix of multi generational members with recent groups of younger members joining our congregation. There is a strong family atmosphere that welcomes all, making them feel loved and accepted and supported by each other. Our members support local needs and community projects. Our members step up to help with big projects like the Brotherhood Beef Supper and Autumn Auction. Our church knows we need a change of direction and are willing to embrace change with guidance from a new full time pastor.

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?

Before the service, people are able to gather outside the sanctuary to greet and visit with one another with coffee or hot chocolate provided. Our service is held in our spacious sanctuary with beautiful organ or piano music before and after the service. There are announcements which include asking for joys and concerns followed by passing of the peace. Then two songs are sung, followed by the sermon ending with one more song and Benediction. The service is on Facebook and local cable for people to watch.

We occasionally bring in special groups to lead the service. In the summer, we will have a special service at another location which is usually in a park.

Baptisms: Family members and sponsors are present for the service and invited to join the congregation during social hour. Parents, baby (usually) and Godparents come in front of the church during the baptism. The baby is anointed with holy water with a blessing and there is a welcome from the congregation. The pastor usually carries the baby down the aisle for the congregation to see.

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?

- Christian Education committee is responsible for the selection of the church school curriculum.
- Sunday school is scheduled during church twice a month. This year they are using the curriculum borrowed from another church called Lifeway Kids.
- Sunday School meets during the church service after a children's sermon is given by the pastor.
- The supply pastor has a joint confirmation class with Grace Fellowship (another church in town) on Wednesday evening. (Our current supply pastor serves both of these churches). We would like our youth to have confirmation classes in our church using Trinity United Church of Christ's theology.
- Youth can attend the Grace Fellowship youth group. There is a weekend youth rally hosted by Grace Fellowship that our youth can attend along with other regional group events.
- A monthly youth event is being planned for our youth in grades 8 through 12.
- We would like our youth to be involved in the church. In the past, youth have helped with sound and taping of the church service. We have one child who plays the piano for the service when our organist is gone.
- We have occasionally had an adult bible study and would welcome one again.
- Dorcas, the women's fellowship, started having a book study after their meeting.
- We would like lay people to participate within the church service. (Call to Worship, Prayer of invocation and scripture readings). We would welcome concluding our service by singing "Alleluia" before the benediction.
- We want faith based sermons that people can relate to in their lives showing the compassion of Christ motivating us to do more for others.

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?

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

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

- The Nominating committee fills vacancies on the Consistory ,our governing body, for a 3 year term. The Consistory is made up of 9 members which meets once a month for 1-2 hours. They follow written by-laws of the church. The Consistory handles the routine bills, maintenance, disbursements without a vote from the congregation. Input from the congregation is welcomed and large budget matters are brought before the congregation for discussion and a vote if needed. The Consistory fills committee memberships at the beginning of the year. Each consistory member is assigned a committee and they are responsible to report back to the consistory at the meeting. Current committees are: Mission and Social Concerns, Property Committee, Spiritual Concerns, Stewardship & Finance, Memorial Committee, Trust Fund, Christian Education and Pastor Parish Relations. Committees are supposed to meet once a month as needed.
- There is an Annual Meeting in late January. The congregation meets after the church service to discuss and approve the annual report, the new budget and vote on committee members.
- Brotherhood, men's fellowship, and Dorcas, women's fellowship, meet as scheduled.
- A monthly newsletter is sent out to each member that includes a pastor's report, president's report, any committee report, and other current church information.

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


Consistory assumes the role of decision making for the congregation. Our Pastor passed away suddenly, which was a very devastating time for our church. The consistory had to find a weekly supply pastor to do the service. The consistory has since hired a supply pastor who is currently doing a weekly service and other services for us. This arrangement will end in January, 2024. The consistory will find weekly supply pastors until a full time pastor is found.

Where does your church struggle for vision

- We have struggled to move forward as a church since the passing of Rev. Filkins and covid. Having a supply pastor who doesn't have the same theological view as UCC and who serves another church in town with his view, has not helped us to keep and gain members. Our church is ready to move forward to change this direction and make our church vibrant again.
- Understanding the concerns of all our members of the congregation and getting feedback from the congregation when asked at times does not happen.
- It seems like after kids are confirmed, they are not an active participant in the church. We need to develop ways to keep them involved.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST										
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS										
										
Church#:	221140									
Assoc:	272	Schedule: 0	Trinity UCC	Hartley			IA	51346		
YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED	
2012	296	88	26	0	0	3	8	1	-6	
2013	281	90	21	4	0	0	9	10	-15	
2014	266	76	22	0	0	0	11	4	-15	
2015	254	85	23	4	0	5	12	9	-12	
2016	246	82	20	0	0	4	5	7	-8	
2017	239	86	16	0	0	3	10	0	-7	
2018	239	93	12	4	0	3	7	0	0	
2019	235	86	12	3	0	0	5	2	-4	
2020	217	35	10	1	0	0	6	13	-18	
2021	203	60	6	4	0	0	7	11	-14	
2022	146	30	16	4	0	0	5	56	-57	
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
2012	\$118,410	\$0	\$11,938	\$2,065	\$14,003	\$1,786	\$15,789	10.08	\$134,199	\$129,563
2013	\$118,410	\$0	\$14,296	\$2,770	\$17,066	\$347	\$17,413	12.07	\$135,823	\$125,945
2014	\$124,286	\$0	\$13,526	\$3,405	\$16,931	\$1,779	\$18,710	10.88	\$142,996	\$127,721
2015	\$126,972	\$0	\$13,584	\$3,398	\$16,982	\$329	\$17,311	10.70	\$144,283	\$125,854
2016	\$150,724	\$0	\$13,866	\$1,909	\$15,775	\$300	\$16,075	9.20	\$166,799	\$109,349
2017	\$135,598	\$0	\$6,872	\$3,685	\$10,557	\$112	\$10,669	5.07	\$146,267	\$121,652
2018	\$140,607	\$0	\$11,872	\$1,347	\$13,219	\$165	\$13,384	8.44	\$153,991	\$109,682
2019	\$148,808	\$0	\$7,477	\$1,115	\$8,592	\$0	\$8,592	5.02	\$157,400	\$126,947
2020	\$148,808	\$0	\$7,477	\$440	\$7,917	\$0	\$7,917	5.02	\$156,725	\$103,102
2021	\$111,270	\$0	\$6,900	\$0	\$6,900	\$17,089	\$23,989	6.20	\$135,259	\$98,311
2022	\$111,270	\$0	\$7,500	\$95	\$7,595	\$0	\$7,595	6.74	\$118,865	\$0
% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		
2017-2022	-38.91	-65.12	0.00	33.33	510.00	-17.94	-28.06	-18.73		
2012-2022	-50.68	-65.91	-38.46	33.33	577.78	-6.03	-45.76	-11.43		

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.

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	146	yes
Number of active non-members:	66	yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	212	yes

Describe those who participate in your church.

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	98%	yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	1%	yes
Less than 5 years:	1%	yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
14	16	3	8	17	10	29	29	42	yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	6%	yes
Households with minors:	16%	yes
Single adults age 35-65:	19%	yes
Joint households with no minors:	38%	yes
Single adults over 65:	21%	yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	54%	yes
College:	25%	yes
Graduate School:	3%	yes
Specialty Training:	28%	yes
Other (please specify):	16%	yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	44%	yes
Adults who are retired:	48%	yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	11%	yes

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

People in our congregation work in the agriculture industry, education, healthcare and service industry. Many of these workers commute to nearby towns to work.

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?

Most of our members are Caucasian with Northern European descent. We also have members who are of Filipino descent.

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:

Trinity has members across political, professional and educational backgrounds. Our members range theologically from conservative to progressive. Some take a literal teaching of the Bible, while others are not. We have not had a conversation about openly welcoming diversity, however, we do welcome all that enter. Consistory decided to allow same sex marriage in our church if one is a member. A non member same sex marriage could be done by the pastor outside of Trinity Church.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? (<i>list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff</i>)
Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	2 in 2022	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	10-12 (2022)	Christain Ed.
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	Christmas Eve.: 109 in 2021 Easter: 105 in 2022	Pastor, organist and choir director
Church-wide Meals	34	Consistory
Choirs and Music Groups	6	Praise band
Church-based Bible Study	0	
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	41 monthly average for 2021	First Sunday of the month Pastor does the planning
Community Meals	Brotherhood Beef Supper 800 (2022) Dorcus fall meal 140 (2022)	Men of the Brotherhood Dorcus women
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	4 (2022)	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	0	
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	5, 2022	Pastor, Dorcus
Intergenerational Groups	7 Brotherhood; 20 Dorcas	members of group
Outdoor Worship		

Prayer or Meditation Groups	NA	
Public Advocacy Work	NA	
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	NA	
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	0 (2022)	Pastor
Worship (time slot: _____9:00_)	average number of 50 for 2022	Pastor, organist
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	youth can participate with Grace Youth group	Parents, pastor
Other		

Additional comments: 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)

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
Secretary	Karen Keller	part time	Consistory	8 years
Custodian	Jolene Wildeman	part time	Properties/ Consistory	13 plus years

REFLECTION

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

Trinity needs to get our adults involved in church groups and Bible study. Our youth need to be encouraged to continue to be involved in the church. We need to do a better job at ministry in our community and beyond. Our members need to be willing to volunteer toward our church's ministry.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 108,100.54
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$0
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events (autumn auction)	\$15,437.31
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$0
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (Brotherhood)	\$5,139.97
(<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>) (Dorcas)	\$3,08.56
(Missions & Social Concerns)	\$274.74

Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Other (specify): Savings	\$35,000
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$213,677.78

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

Attach the most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

**TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
HARTLEY, IOWA
TREASURER'S REPORT DECEMBER 2022**

DISBURSEMENTS	CURRENT	YTD	2022 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET
BENEVOLENCE				
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$625.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
CUE-Seminaries	\$65.00	\$780.00	\$800.00	\$800.00
Northwestern Association	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$800.00	\$300.00
Local Mission	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$800.00
Special Wider Mission	\$0.00	\$95.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL BENEVOLENCE	\$690.00	\$8,375.00	\$9,400.00	\$9,400.00
WORSHIP				
Supply Pastor	\$0.00	\$1,470.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Supplies	\$0.00	\$866.48	\$2,000.00	\$1,500.00
Fellowship Supplies	\$224.52	\$1,615.41	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Organist/Supply Piano	\$0.00	\$3,445.00	\$3,600.00	\$3,900.00
Media Center	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$350.00	\$350.00
TOTAL WORSHIP	\$224.52	\$7,396.89	\$8,950.00	\$8,750.00
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION				
Curriculum	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$300.00
Confirmation	\$0.00	\$380.52	\$300.00	\$300.00
Church School Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$300.00	\$300.00
Bibles	\$0.00	\$1,421.92	\$150.00	\$100.00
Vacation Church School	\$0.00	\$51.05	\$0.00	\$500.00
Hanging of the Greens	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Christmas Program	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$0.00	\$1,853.49	\$1,250.00	\$1,500.00
PASTORAL LEADERSHIP				
Pastor's Cash Salary	\$2,866.67	\$34,400.04	\$34,400.00	\$35,776.00
Total Salary	\$2,866.67	\$34,400.04	\$34,400.00	\$35,776.00
General Benefits				
RETIREMENT	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
HSA	\$645.83	\$7,749.96	\$7,750.00	\$7,750.00
HEALTH INSURANCE	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
CONTINUING EDUCATION	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
HOUSE, CELL, TX, EXPENSE	\$1,500.00	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00
Total Pastoral Compensation	\$5,012.50	\$60,150.00	\$60,150.00	\$61,526.00
ADMINISTRATION				
Secretary's Salary	\$435.00	\$6,915.00	\$10,296.00	\$10,296.00
Office Supplies	\$9.87	\$967.53	\$900.00	\$1,000.00
Postage & Permit	\$120.00	\$1,022.56	\$900.00	\$1,000.00
All Risk Insurance & Umbrella	\$0.00	\$8,564.00	\$7,563.00	\$9,500.00
Worker's Compensation	\$609.00	\$943.00	\$1,400.00	\$1,000.00
Miscellaneous	\$0.00	\$191.46	\$400.00	\$400.00
Stewardship Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$0.00
Delegate's Expense	\$0.00	\$598.00	\$300.00	\$550.00
Social Security	-\$104.54	\$1,387.26	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	\$1,069.33	\$20,588.81	\$24,309.00	\$26,046.00

DISBURSEMENTS	CURRENT	YTD	2022 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET
MAINTENANCE				
Custodians Salary	\$670.00	\$8,040.00	\$8,040.00	\$8,400.00
Custodial Supplies	\$0.00	\$597.74	\$800.00	\$800.00
Church	\$1,155.12	\$3,106.06	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
Grounds Keeping	\$986.50	\$2,503.30	\$5,200.00	\$5,000.00
Organ and Piano	\$0.00	\$630.00	\$850.00	\$850.00
Office Machines	\$113.16	\$1,453.01	\$1,200.00	\$1,400.00
Multi Media Equipment	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
TOTAL MAINTENANCE	\$2,924.78	\$16,330.11	\$21,290.00	\$21,650.00
UTILITIES				
Electricity, Water & Sewer	\$196.08	\$2,570.26	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Gas	\$1,033.25	\$7,634.18	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
Telephone/Internet	\$102.95	\$1,268.84	\$1,250.00	\$1,300.00
Garbage	\$21.35	\$264.76	\$300.00	\$300.00
TOTAL UTILITIES	\$1,353.63	\$11,738.04	\$13,550.00	\$13,600.00
TOTAL BUDGET EXPENSES	\$11,274.76	\$126,432.34	\$138,899.00	\$142,472.00

RECEIPTS FOR DECEMBER 2022		AUTUMN AUCTION ACCOUNT	
Weekly Offering Envelopes	\$7,784.00	DEC BEG. BAL.	\$42,433.28
Weekly Offering Direct Deposit	\$1,600.00	RECEIPTS	\$1.74
Monthly Offering Direct Deposit	\$1,705.00	DISBURSEMEN	\$0.00
VEMO account	\$0.00	DEC END BAL.	\$42,435.02
Loose Offering	\$20.00		
Checking Interest	\$0.35		
Initial Offering	\$28.57		
Cookbook / VBS	\$0.00		
Rent / donation	\$0.00		
Thanksgiving Eve.	\$0.00		
Ash Wednesday	\$0.00		
Lent Offering	\$0.00		
Strengthen The Church	\$28.57		
Easter	\$0.00		
Christmas Fund	\$123.57		
Christmas Eve	\$488.58		
Advent	\$0.00		
Good Friday	\$0.00		
Maundy	\$0.00		
OGHS	\$28.57		
NIN	\$28.57		
Blanket Sunday	\$28.57		
Omllette Brunch	\$0.00		
Snow Removal deposit	\$0.00		
Feed the Fund	\$0.00		
Insurance Deposit	\$0.00		
Autumn Auction transfer	\$0.00		
Transfer in / reimbursement	\$0.00		
Transfer out	\$0.00		
Refund	\$0.00		
Fellowship Fund	\$0.00		
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$11,864.35		

YTD Receipts 2022 \$108,100.54

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 44 % ?

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? no

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of the operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%) Budgeted 5%

What is the church’s current indebtedness? \$0

Total amount of loan debt:

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments current?

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.

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

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

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.

Does your church have an endowment? NO

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$

Investments (other than endowment): Trust Fund \$93,693.987, 2023

Does your church have a parsonage? NO

Describe all buildings owned by the church: Our church (built in 1963) is a beautiful handicapped accessible single story insulated brick building located on one city block with a hard surface parking lot. The sanctuary, with seating for 400 people, is equipped with a Reuter 2 manual pipe organ, grand piano and a large viewing screen. The fellowship hall seats 250 and the kitchen has an industrial dishwasher. One wing contains a new updated carpeted fireside lounge, pastor's office and secretary's office. The education wing has 7 rooms, one being used as a quilting room. The main bathrooms are handicapped accessible.

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*) The church, bathrooms and a sanctuary which contains a wheelchair lift at the front to give access to the worship area.

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?

Our church budget is recalculated yearly through recommendations of the committees. Our church's finances have affected our mission and ministry since the loss of a full time pastor and Covid.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

The present church was built in 1963 with the burning of the mortgage in 1971.
Centennial Celebration and burying of the time capsule in 1999.
Supplied our church building to house the DayCare for 5 years.

While pastor Jeff Filkins was our pastor, being a service oriented congregation increased. When he saw a need in the community, he would get members of the church involved. Some things we participated in were Habitat for Humanity and Upper Des Moines food pantry. In Hartley, we were known to help someone out of town in need of something like fuel for a car.

The Brotherhood Beef Supper celebrated their 75th anniversary.

A stained glass window depicting Christ at the Gethsemane from our former church was purchased, restored and installed in the social hall.

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

- We are using technology more. A large screen has been installed in the front of the sanctuary which displays songs, scripture readings, power points etc. The church service is live streamed on Facebook and aired on the local cable. We use more texting and emailing to correspond with members. We have members who run the sound system and multimedia.
- We are sharing a pastor with another church in Hartley.
- Our church service format has changed and there is a new time for Sunday school.

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?)

being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)

Church members are free to bring concerns to the Consistory and/or Pastor Parish committee for them to discuss and help resolve. In the past, we knew that there were members of our church who read and interpreted the Bible literally and those who were not literal interpreters. Even with these differences, our congregation had been able to worship together seeing the Bible as a book of spiritual and moral guidance. We wanted to understand what God was telling us through the Bible and we did not let arguments about the literal truth of the Bible distract us from that goal. Having a supply pastor not of UCC background and who serves another church in town has caused an increased divide in our church concerning theology. We are searching for a minister who will unite us so we can move forward in understanding our theology.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. M. Milo Sheldon	1993-2002, 9 years	Yes
Howard Campbell	2002-2004, 2 years	Yes
Rev. Jeff Filkins	2004-2017, 13 years	Yes
Pastor Lyn Dau	2018-present	No

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

We are accepting of different philosophies on spiritual leadership and beliefs people have.

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

Yes, Over 30 years ago, a pastor left to prevent division by a small faction within the church.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

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



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?

At Trinity, we strive to seek out opportunities in our local community and beyond the local area to bring our love, show our understanding and compassion for others. In the past we have participated outside the walls of our church many times.

Trinity’s past service:

- Habitat for Humanity
- Meals on Wheels
- Polar Plunge for Special Olympics
- Host monthly Upper DesMoines food distribution with volunteers from other churches.
- Support the Hartley Community Outreach
- Soles for Souls- shoe collection
- At Christmas, several groups/committees will donate money to folks in need.
- Donated money/items and sent people to serve at “The Banquet” in Sioux Falls
- Special donations for disaster relief when it arises
- Church is open to community for weddings and funerals
- Dorcas, women’s fellowship, has collected food and personal items for the food bank; made donations to a variety of non-profits like but not limited to BEECIN Hospice, Mann Wing and Assisted Living Activities, Trinity Missions, HMS PIE, and the Backpack program; made quilts for the local women's shelter, nursing home, school, graduates and other shelters in need; collected school supplies; helped with Shop with a Cop program. Dorcas has hosted a guest day inviting women from area churches.
- The Brotherhood has given funding for The Banquet, snow removal for church parking lot, and improvements toward the church building.
- Christian Ed with the Sunday school students has collected coins through the Christmas Noisy Offering to buy personal items for a family in need, participated in Operation Shoebox at Christmas and Heifer Project, organized a hat and mitten drive, made cards for nursing home residents, and made items for our church autumn action. The weekly Sunday school offering is also donated toward something in the community.
- We give a scholarship to any Trinity high school graduate who applies.
- We give financial support to youth who attend summer camp.

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

A congregational delegate and usually the pastor has attended Association and Conference meetings like but not limited to the Northwest Association meeting, Leaders Retreat, Special Pastoral Installations, Cluster meetings and Advisor council meetings.

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.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <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 |

Our church participates in the Church's Wider Mission. Donations are collected for One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, Christmas Fund, Blanket Sunday and Disaster Relief.

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, we might consider these things in the future.

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

- Women's guest day held at area churches
- World Day of Prayer held in the community
- Community wide Bible school
- Joint youth group/programs with other churches and retreats
- Baccalaureate service for seniors
- Community wide church service during Hartley's annual Summer Fest
- Participates with churches providing worship and communion at local assisted living and nursing home.
- Broadcasting church services over local cable TV channel.
- Joint food booth with local churches when Ragbrai, bike ride, came through town.
- Trinity's monthly food distribution from Upper Des Moines has help from other churches in town.
- Combined special church services with Grace Fellowship during Lent and Thanksgiving
- Joint confirmation classes with Grace Fellowship

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.

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?

Our church encourages the pastor to be involved in community mission work and the wider church mission along with participating in established activities with other church leaders and to bring new ideas and implement them within the church.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

Hartley has had a slight decrease in population. The median age is around 43. It is predominantly Caucasian with a mix of Mexican/Hispanic, African American, Native American and Asian populations. The trend is for there to be an increase in Hispanic/Latino and black/African with a decrease in white. The town has a mixed education level. The education level is above the state average in having some college and associate degree but below the state average in having a bachelor's degree. Many people commute to other area towns to work. The average household income is around \$48,672. The poverty rate is slightly below the state average. The Hartley-Melvin-Sanborn school population has remained steady. The school district is above the state average for the number of students qualifying for reduced lunch, at 47%.

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

Our congregation reflects the area demographics fairly accurately. We are becoming more diverse in our community. Although our members are mostly Caucasian, we do have some Filipino members.

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

Because Hartley has many students who qualify for a reduced lunch rate, our church helps this population by participating in programs like the backpack program, donating winter attire, and school supplies. With the addition of the new school and building of a new swimming pool, families are wanting to keep our community striving forward to draw more people. Our church helps the community achieve these goals.

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

Our church has a striking tall steeple, with a beautiful large sanctuary containing a pipe organ and grand piano. We help others in the community, hold an annual Brotherhood Beef Supper and host a monthly local food distribution through Upper Des Moines. We are a denomination that accepts LGBT ministers and marriage between two sexes. Our denomination has a non literal interpretation of the Bible.

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

We are accepting and friendly toward new members making them want to be involved. Some new younger members get involved when their children are Sunday school age, because they want to help organize and teach Sunday School. Some also get involved because they were raised in a family that was active in the church.

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.

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.

REFERENCE 1

Lori Griswold/ Pharmacist / Fort Madison, IA

(319-470-5367 / iowagriswold@gmail.com / confirmed in the church)

October 5, 2023

Lori Griswold
Pharmacist
2164 303rd Avenue
Fort Madison, IA 52627

Re: Church Reference Letter for Trinity UCC

To whom it may concern,

The current Trinity UCC in Harley, IA was built in 1963. It has been a solid foundation for the city of Hartley because it has provided 60 years of service to the community in several ways. These services include, but are not limited to, donations to local charities, food bank distributions, providing companionship/communion to shut-ins, and giving money to several missions. The members of this church are a true family to each other. They join together to help with funeral luncheons, they volunteer for various projects that the church needs (painting, mowing, etc.) and they send greeting cards to each other for birthdays, graduations, wedding anniversaries and more.

As with all of the denominations, the Trinity UCC in Hartley could use some guidance to help increase attendance and support new programs and activities.

I personally was baptized and confirmed in this church. I also celebrated my high school graduation here and was married in this church 29 years ago. All of the years that I attended Sunday school and the aforementioned milestone events have helped to shape me and my faith as I was growing up. I now live 6 hours from Hartley, however my faithful roots started in this church and have stayed strong my entire life.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lori Griswold
319-470-5367
iowagriswold@gmail.com

1234 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN, STATE ZIP (123)-456-7890 NO_REPLY@EXAMPLE.COM

REFERENCE 2

Nancy Filkins / part time / Maiden Rock, WI
(712-348-4916 / Filkinsn@gmail.com / wife of former pastor)

Nancy Filkins/Semi-Retired/Former congregant
712-348-4916/filkinsn@gmail.com/past resident of community

Prompts for References

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.

Letter of Reference for Trinity United Church of Christ in Hartley, Iowa
October 15, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been asked by Sandy Mohni to write a letter of reference for the Trinity United Church of Christ (UCC) profile.

Northwest Iowa is very committed to supporting their churches in the area, and Trinity UCC is no exception to this loyalty in following the teachings of Jesus. Where Trinity UCC differs is how Trinity United Church of Christ Congregation offers a refreshing and much needed alternative to more restrictive and doctrinal churches in the Northwest Iowa geographic area. Trinity UCC offers a safe place to worship or explore the Christian faith, yet being open to other faith traditions. It allows visitors and members to read the Bible and Jesus' message along with interpreting, discussing, questioning and wondering about Christianity and other religions.

Trinity UCC welcomes all people; those with a rich family faith background or no family faith background. Trinity UCC follows the Greatest Commandment to love God and love one another (Matthew 22:34-40, NIV), no matter who or what you are—we are all children of God, beloved and beautiful as we are created. The Trinity UCC Congregation won't always agree with everything discussed in the church, but will love and respect all members.

In most organizations and churches, not everyone agrees with one another and Trinity UCC is no exception in this reality either. I'm sure Trinity UCC is struggling for members, as most small churches are experiencing. This dilemma is now an opportunity for Trinity UCC to reflect, change and grow with new ways to reach out to the community. In reaching out with love to the local community, we honor the past and look forward to inviting new people in ways we haven't even considered yet. I have hope for this local love of people and hope in broadening that scope of love to the state, national and international levels for the Trinity UCC members.

Another challenge, which goes hand in hand with diminishing members, is the financial struggle of juggling the operating costs to keep the physical worship spaces open. For individuals and families, it

is difficult to focus on giving when financial issues loom. It is hard to run a church when giving is uncertain. Again, though, I have hope Trinity UCC will be able to reach out to honor the past and develop new ways to keep the church community financially thriving and loving.

I have been a past member of this loving church for 14 years and I cannot draw on just one single significant experience in the Trinity UCC ministry. I think that is the point; everyday is an opportunity for all members to minister. The pastor is there to support those members in ministering to others. There have been many experiences where the love of the people of Trinity UCC was shared in daily experiences, from the bank to the grocery store to the bar or the school. This love has been present in the care and support for any event that life throws at us, from soldiers lost at war, beautiful music, hugs to get through the day, planning for beef or chicken suppers, quilting, camping and celebrating nature, helping with the food pantry, educating all ages, assisting at local homeless shelters, planning worship services, to welcoming those lonely or in need of friends. This is what loving one another and encouraging one another looks like.

Trinity United Church of Christ is a beautiful congregation and they need to know they are all loved and supported. Look at the many ways the visitors or members agree; be supportive, patient, loving and kind for those issues where there is disagreement and build on the positive aspects.

Thank you for the opportunity to share in honoring Trinity United Church of Christ in Hartley, Iowa.

In God's Love and Peace,

Nancy Filkins

REFERENCE 3

Joyce Tewes / retired nurse / Hartley, IA
(712-363-1127 / Jbtewes1@gmail.com / husband associated with Trinity)

Joyce Tewes

712-363-1126

Jbtewes1@gmail.com

Spouse of TUCC member

TUCC has a very strong faith base with a congregation that supports each other. A church where you can make friends, feel a sense of belonging, and build a supportive network that you can rely on. Members are active in their community, and many serve as volunteers when needed.

The congregation that attends church regularly are the older members. Reaching out to the younger members to see why they do not attend church may be beneficial.

I am a wife of a member so have been involved with a few of their annual events such as beef supper and fall auction. When working these events, I always feel very welcomed and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Joyce Tewes

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:

God on the Mountain

Verse 1

Life is easy when you're up on the Mountain
And you've got peace of mind like you've never known
But when things change and you're down in the valley
Don't lose faith for you're never alone

Chorus

And God on the mountain
Is still God in the valley
When things go wrong
He'll make them right
And the God in the good times
Is still God in the bad times
The God of day
Is still God of the night

Verse 2

We talk of faith when we're up on the mountain
But talk comes easy when life's at its best
But in the valley of trials and temptations
That's when faith is really put to the test

Chorus

And God on the mountain
Is still God in the valley
When things go wrong
He'll make them right
And the God in the good times
Is still God in the bad times
The God of day
Is still God of the night

CCLI#2647647

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 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.)*
Profile committee and consistory
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

Linda Suwe	Consistory President	10-19-23
Sandra Mohni	Profile Committee	10-19-23

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