

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who
are
we

Who
is our
neighbor

Who is
God calling
us to
become?

?

The new Local Church Profile is not just for congregations in search of a pastor. *All* congregations are encouraged to engage in its process of discovery every 3-5 years. The UCC Local Church Profile reflects valuable data, assesses ministry, clarifies change, and helps advance the calling of the congregation. Not just to be completed by a search committee – the more participation, the better!

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



**First Plymouth Congregational Church
Englewood, CO**

Designated Term Pastor

Rocky Mountain Conference

Version 2.1

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

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- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
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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)

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POSITION POSTING

LISTING INFORMATION

SCOPE OF WORK

COMPENSATION & SUPPORT

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: First Plymouth Congregational Church

Street address: 3501 S. Colorado Blvd, Englewood, CO 80113

Supplemental web links: <https://www.firstplymouthchurch.org/>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*):

Conference: Rocky Mountain Conference

Association: Metro Denver

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

Rev. Erin Gilmore, RMC Acting Interim Minister, (707) 738-8563, erin@rmcucc.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?

First Plymouth, a loving, active, and mission-focused community, is in a liminal season that cannot be described in one paragraph. We are between what has been for our church and what is yet to be, knowing that change is necessary if we are to thrive. Like many Protestant churches across the country, we are in a building with significant capital needs and, while not dying, our congregation is experiencing a decline in membership and pledges, especially since the Covid pandemic.

In this crossroads, we have chosen to take a pro-active and earnest look at how we will continue to thrive and live out our purpose and vision in the future. For the past two years, we've been exploring and discerning options for our building and community. There are those in the congregation who believe we are stewards of an incredible physical asset that could be repurposed to partner with community needs. There are others, who don't want to leave the building, but who believe we can best be true to a mutual Purpose and Vision at an alternative site better suited to the actual size of our congregation. They believe that without drawing down our finances for our capital needs, we would be better able to serve community needs while creating long-term stability.

At the September 2023 Annual Meeting, the Church Council presented a 3-Year-Vision (see separate document) that commits to staying in our current location for the next three years while we continue to discern next steps. Two task forces - a Worship & Well-Being Center Task Force and a Relocation Options Task Force - are at the center of this discernment, as well as other activities to help us revitalize our congregation post-Covid. We are seeking a designated term pastor to come alongside our beloved community to hold us together, inspire, guide, and help lead us on our journey toward what's next for First Plymouth.

Photographs (insert 1-3 images of your church, its people, its building or gathering space)



What we value about living in our area:

Coloradans value their work-life balance and enjoy spending as much time outdoors as possible. Living in the Metro Denver area affords easy access to the mountains and all manner of outdoor experiences. The area also offers all the entertainment, professional sports, museums, universities, and quality restaurants you would expect of a major metropolitan area.

Current size of membership: 531 (*active membership approximately 296*)

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): English is the only language used.

Position Title: Designated Term Pastor

Position Duration: 3-5 years, with the potential for a call to a settled minister position thereafter

Compensation Level: Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? *Yes*

SCOPE OF WORK

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

The senior minister is authorized to delegate duties as necessary and create an organization responsive to the congregation's and community's needs. Generally, the duties fall into the following categories:

Worship

- Offers spiritual leadership by providing varied, meaningful, and challenging worship opportunities for the congregation of all ages. Sermons are expected to be biblically based in exploring contemporary issues.
- Prepares and leads Sunday worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.

Pastoral Care

- Provides pastoral care in collaboration with part-time Pastoral Care Associate and lay people.
- Leads weddings, funerals, and baptisms.

Leadership and Advocacy

- Leads us in strategic planning for current and new directions in being the church in the Denver area.
- Provides ministerial counsel and support to the lay-led Mission Team.
- Establishes an intentional visitation ministry with the goal to reconnect with families and other members, past, present, and potential, after the losses due to Covid.
- Assists in building relationships with ecumenical and community partners.

Education

- Inspires spiritual formation in others.
- Contributes to on-going Christian education of the congregation.

Administration

- Provides executive leadership and administrative oversight to the coordinated areas of ministry, programs, and staff of the church in accordance with the Carver Model of Policy Governance.
- Provides leadership in exploring the potential need for staff reconfiguration given current financial realities and congregational size.
- Supports faithful financial development and stewardship.

Terms

- The nature of a designated term is for 3-5 years, with goals and progress to be assessed near but before the end of that time. The designated term pastor will be eligible for a renewed call as the settled pastor after the designated term is completed.

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.)

1. Engaging leadership: Leadership that captures the attention and steers the effort of the lay leadership and members as the driving force of First Plymouth; that allows the congregation to express their love of each other, their church, and the wider community. Provides leadership in on-going discernment as it relates to the congregation's future.
2. Excellent communication skills: The senior minister must communicate effectively the First Plymouth message; must give preaching a high priority and have good judgment about how to preach with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper (or relevant social media) in the other; ability to communicate current scholarship and theology in ways that are meaningful and understandable; uses inclusive language for God; must be an intentional, engaged listener who also follows up based on what he or she hears; and offers conflict resolution and consensus-building skills.
3. Creativity and flexibility: Creativity to explore alternative ways to worship – including different forms of liturgy that have integrity for the membership and feed both older and younger generations; to develop different points of entry for new people to find their place at First Plymouth and grow in their Christian life.

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance): Starting salary \$95,000 - \$115,000, depending on experience.

Benefits: 20% additional in 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)?

Living nearby with a housing allowance.

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

The senior minister should live within a 30-minute commute of First Plymouth.

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

The Rocky Mountain Conference of the UCC, and the Metro Denver Association, have been going through many changes recently. A Conference-wide Committee on Ministry has been established. We currently have an Acting Conference Minister (Rev. Erin Gilmore), and the conference may soon be looking for a new Conference Minister. Peer and professional supports have changed, as well. The conference offered regular support gatherings on Zoom during the Covid pandemic, and occasional educational opportunities and listening sessions, but these offerings have been reduced because we have less conference staff. Several ministers in the Metro Denver Association, and beyond, gathered recently to share ideas and support, and that group hopes to continue to meet in the future.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

- A revitalized, spiritually grounded, and diverse First Plymouth community
- A sustainable, thriving, and united congregation living out its Purpose & Vision
- A clearer consensus on our next steps at the end of the 3-Year-Vision process

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

Our recent Purpose & Visioning process affirmed First Plymouth's strong ongoing commitment to social justice. We envision a minister who continues to empower our many current programs and imagine new ways of building community partnerships in a financially sustainable way.

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

First Plymouth does not require language skills other than English. However, we have housed and assisted Spanish-speaking migrants, and rely on several church members who speak some Spanish, to help communicate. The Denver Metro area has many churches where Spanish is an important linguistic asset.

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

- Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
- Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices.
- Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church.
- Continuing discernment of one's call in community.
- Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith.
- Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship.
- A person of deep faith, who truly believes the good news of Jesus can help a progressive church grow in faith and ministry and can communicate that to a congregation. The church must be able to teach the Christian faith to a new generation.

BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.
- Strategically creating the future of God's Church.
- Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
- Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
- Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.
- Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong learning.

PARTICIPATING IN THEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

- Practicing theological reflection and engagement as part of one's sense of ministerial identity.
- Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.
- Articulating a theology and practice of ministry consistent with the UCC Manual on Ministry.
- Demonstrating an appreciation for and participation in the ecumenical and interfaith partnerships of the UCC.
- Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.
- Embodying the UCC Ministerial Code.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR JUSTICE AND MERCY

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



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?

This past year, the Church Council invited a local facilitator to lead our community through a Purpose & Vision process. Our Mission Statement had not been updated in many years and we believed that a renewed look at our mission was important, especially after the Covid pandemic. The question we were now asking was: How is our progressive faith community being called to serve each other and the world in 2023 and beyond?

The eight-month process included a book study on *The Way of Discernment* by Elizabeth Liebert (80 participants), a large-scale survey of the congregation (with 160 individuals participating), and Purpose & Vision Conversation Groups (75 participants). At the end of the process, the congregation agreed to the following new Purpose & Vision Statements, to be reviewed on an annual basis to determine their continued relevance and efficacy in decision making and evaluation:

First Plymouth Community Purpose:

We are a welcoming spiritual community that actively cares for one another, our neighbors and the earth. Inspired by God’s love and the teachings of Jesus, we engage in meaningful worship and spiritual practices; pursue social and earth justice through acts of service and advocacy; and create space for diverse expressions of belief.

First Plymouth Community Vision:

Grounded in Divine hope, our vision is to nurture an ever-evolving, inclusive community that seeks justice for the marginalized and protects our precious earth.

Please see the attached document, “Final Report: Discerning Purpose & Vision” for further observations from our facilitator and consultant, Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi.

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 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?

We believe we have many opportunities in our community for promoting social justice and working toward structural change, including serving our immigrant population (described elsewhere in the profile), addressing homelessness, serving the growing mental health needs of youth, families, and adults, advocating for racial equity, and ending gun violence, all of which have dedicated committees at First Plymouth. Recently, in response to several new members' requests, we have started a monthly potluck for LGBTQ+ persons and their families following worship, which has attracted new visitors to the church and supports this marginalized community.

The vision for our newly commissioned Worship and Well-being Center (WWC) is a direct response to the epidemic of loneliness and other mental health challenges our country is experiencing. This includes the struggles parents of young children have with childcare and other current issues of raising children in this complex world. We are looking for ways to reach out to the community largely through the WWC. We believe church is relevant now more than ever. We want to be a safe and welcoming space to share the spirit of community and God's love.

A recent experiment we initiated was a community event called "A Night to Illuminate Grief." The first official event of the Worship & Well-Being Center, this gathering was designed to respond to the significant personal and communal grief people in our world are experiencing and to remind people that they are not alone. Held in the sanctuary (and online) on the Winter Solstice from 7-9pm, this interfaith service included teaching by a licensed grief therapist on how to process grief in our bodies as well as a candlelight ritual to honor and acknowledge grief. The event was conceived of and led by several church members and a strong volunteer group of nearly 40 people (many from outside our church). The candlelight ritual included our own ministers, as well as local Rabbis, a Catholic priest, an Imam, and a Native American elder. Local mental health non-profits came and set up tables to share resources. The event was marketed heavily to the community and drew some 180 participants to the service, with another 160 watching online (and a total of 350 views and growing for the recording.). We anticipate this will become an annual event and grow in popularity.

Lastly, several other initiatives are in place to respond to challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation: a Net Zero initiative to consider ways to reduce our carbon footprint as well as expenses in our current building; more creative worship including intergenerational services; and a marketing initiative that includes updating our website with current search engine optimization (SEO) tactics and content marketing to better "tell our story" to those who are seeking inclusive communities of service and care.



WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

11-YEAR REPORT

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

CHURCH FINANCES

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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?

FIRST PLYMOUTH PURPOSE & VISION STATEMENT (adopted in 2023, to be evaluated annually)

First Plymouth Community Purpose:

We are a welcoming spiritual community that actively cares for one another, our neighbors, and the earth. Inspired by God’s love and the teachings of Jesus, we engage in meaningful worship and spiritual practices; pursue social and earth justice through acts of service and advocacy; and create space for diverse expressions of belief.

First Plymouth Community Vision:

Grounded in Divine hope, our vision is to nurture an ever-evolving, inclusive community that seeks justice for the marginalized and protects our precious earth.

First Plymouth is a welcoming, questioning congregation on a Christian journey. It’s a church of engagement and activism. It is a church of courage, willing to take a stand, especially on social justice issues. It is a learning church. It is a church with a strong and lengthy tradition and practice of active lay leadership. It is a church which has remained steadfast to its history of supporting marginalized communities for over 150 years. First Plymouth consistently recognizes the importance of children’s and youth programs but is struggling to achieve consistency and strength in this vital area. First Plymouth values the arts and music and is known in the community for its art collection and concert performances.

Many would agree that God is referred to in worship in an inclusive way which is open to a variety of interpretations such as a personal God, an Eternal Creator or Spirit, a Creative and Loving Cosmic Force, or, simply, Love. The Holy Spirit moves us to be the church we are or can become. Another way we are inclusive is to use both male and female pronouns, and gender-neutral language when referring to God, as demonstrated by the version of the Lord’s Prayer we use that begins with “Our Creator...”

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

First Plymouth has been home to a congregation that is progressive in many ways and is dedicated to its many missions in the community, such as its decades-long support for the Denver Inner City Parish, affordable senior housing provided by Kentucky Circle Village, and support of Habitat for Humanity home building through the Loaves and Fishes Coalition. First Plymouth also is and has been truly congregational – its strength is in the persistent determination of its members to participate, self-govern, worship, and be the heart and face and hands of Christ in the world. It has maintained a steadfast fidelity to who we have been, who we are, and who we will become in the service of God.

As evidence of these strengths and positive qualities, First Plymouth conducted a successful capital campaign from 2014-2018 which raised approximately \$3.2 million to renovate our sanctuary and chapel and improve the building's energy usage. The construction, which occurred in 2014-2015, has provided us with a 21st century place to worship that reflects our progressive future. Ten percent of the total collected was designated to a "Mustard Seed Fund," which eventually funded the Second Chance Center (helps the formerly incarcerated transition back into society), and Denver Inner City Parish.

More examples of strengths and positive values, from social justice support to outreach to Community Camp at La Foret and many others are contained throughout this profile and need not be repeated here.

Other organizational and internal efforts to energize and serve our church community include:

Web of Care: A volunteer program through which trained church members visit and connect with other church members on an ongoing basis, recognizing the ministry we have to our own community.

Women's and Men's Fellowship Groups: The Men's Fellowship group has been active for 25 years and enjoys educational events once a month. A Men's Road Trip is another popular annual activity. FP women and friends gather annually for the popular Women's Retreat at La Foret and monthly for lunch, speakers, and fellowship.

Dedication to outreach: First Plymouth partners with community organizations through our weekly Share-the-Plate program, raising awareness and financial support for our partners. An example of our dedication to outreach is our Share-the-Plate collection for different community efforts. For the 2023 fiscal year, \$30,492 was collected from the Share-the-Plate program.

New Membership Efforts: Despite the national trends in declining membership, we still continue to attract visitors and welcome new members regularly. During the last few years, new member classes have become much more intentional after being studied by the Church Council and a membership task force. The current new member program has emerged as a successful, sustained effort, coordinated by a long-time church member working together with the Pastoral Care staff and senior minister. The NMP has received considerable positive feedback. Before participating in the NMP, those interested have an opportunity to attend a Newcomer Coffee on the last Sunday of every month, an informal opportunity for visitors to ask questions and receive information about First Plymouth.

Visitors and new members regularly report that our congregation is genuinely welcoming and respectful of all. The community is a comfortable environment for LGBTQ+ persons.

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?

Sunday worship takes place in the sanctuary and is based on the traditional model: an organ prelude, gathering prayer, hymns, and choir anthems, passing the peace and time for community, scripture reading, sermon, pastoral prayer, and the Lord's Prayer, offering, and benediction. Communion happens on the first Sunday of the month. For the fiscal year of 2023, the average worship attendance was 175, including in-person and online attendance. It is important to note that many of our active members 'worship' through outreach and social justice efforts and may not attend Sunday morning worship.

Engaging and inspiring preaching is highly valued and for some is the highlight of their Sunday experience.

Music of high quality - choral, instrumental, orchestral, various ensembles, and more - has been a signature element of worship and offerings to the community at First Plymouth. The church boasts a hybrid pipe/electronic organ that is frequently played by some of the top organists in the Denver area, and the acoustics of the Sanctuary are appealing for a wide variety of performing arts ensembles including Kantorei, The Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Flute Choir. The congregation has enjoyed top-tier music staff throughout its history and is currently navigating changes and challenges as the congregation continues to age, and the lingering effects of the pandemic on participation of its musical ensembles. First Plymouth often employs outside quality soloists and other guest musicians to lead in worship during high liturgical celebrations and during summer months.

During worship at First Plymouth, one is free to bring one's own image or images or feelings about God to the service, to refine or reinforce them, to add to them or develop new images and feelings, all with the sense that those who lead our worship and those who worship with us are joined in heart and spirit and love, and that one is at peace, engulfed in a community of love.

Beyond our traditional worship service on Sundays, once a month there is a "Silent Prayer in the Park" contemplative outdoor service before worship. We've also been experimenting with a monthly intergenerational service during Sunday worship as we try to include more children and families in worship.

Each Thanksgiving season, we have a joint interfaith service with our long-time partner, Temple Sinai.

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?

Education and learning are foundational at First Plymouth and many members attach the highest value to learning at church.

Youth Education and Activities: First Plymouth has a supportive and safe youth program, including Sunday night gatherings, service projects, creative activities, and a variety of outings. First Plymouth youth are fixtures at Rocky Mountain Conference camps and retreats and have participated in work trips

and learning trips. Parents and youth alums acknowledge the critical importance of having a church youth group during the challenging adolescent years. The Youth Group receives limited funding from the church budget that is supplemented by fundraising and is organized by a member of staff in consultation with laypeople and volunteers. Attendance has fallen since the pandemic and currently, we average 6-10 participants weekly.

Children are welcomed into Worship where some sit with families, but most sit in the children's area. This area was designed to be inviting, comfortable, and relaxing for children of all ages. Worship is thoughtfully designed to offer the opportunity for the children to engage at the level of their choosing. Every Sunday we have a "Story for All Ages" to offer a space and time in Worship that is unique for them. After this time, children head to Sunday School where they learn the foundational stories of the Bible. The curriculum used was created by the Children's Ministries staff and written specifically for First Plymouth. Each unit focuses on three different learning activities to reinforce the theme of the unit: story-based learning using literature; an art or science lesson; and having the children act out the story. There are additional classes supplemented as needed, for example, a First Communion Class, or Summer Sunday School. These classes are tailored to meet the needs of First Plymouth Families.

There is a perennial struggle to attract new families with kids because of the increasing demands on families. Our families are split where half attend the majority of Sundays and the other half only attend once a month. Many competing interests keep attendance irregular for some families. Our children's choir has been inactive due to a lack of interest from families. However, the Sunday School teachers now have the option of adding music and singing seasonal songs as part of their time on Sunday. We are looking for more leadership from a senior minister to help families connect with the church through the children's ministries program.

Adult Christian Education and other groups engage in Bible and book studies, discussions, classes, presentations, and movies on varied subjects. Past classes have included topics such as end-of-life decisions, mental health awareness, Gen Z perspectives on gender and sexuality, racial justice, and civic involvement. The Creation Justice Ministry hosted a popular Vegan Potluck Dinner this past Earth Day. This past fall we hosted a Drag Queen Story Hour for our families following worship. In the past few years, we've hosted national speakers and authors, such as Rev. Jacqui Lewis, Dr. Adrian Miller, and Mark Yaconelli, for special events.

Theology and social justice studies and discussions on other subjects are provided on weeknights. For example, Rev. Dr. Eric Smith, our Teaching Minister, recently conducted an eight-week class on the New Testament with a "live" attendance of 15+ per class, and many more watching the recordings (which is true of many of our Adult Forums).

First Plymouth has two long-running Adult Education classes that attract diverse segments of the congregation: Bible Basics and Beyond and Progressive Christianity. Bible Basics and Beyond began in the early 1990s and emphasizes the "history of the Bible," not the history in the Bible. Attendees generally feel they do not know the Bible well and want to learn the basics. The class usually studies a book for multiple weeks.

Progressive Christianity is the next generation of a class started in 1995, then called Bible Workbench. The class is more generally understood as "progressive theology," using not only the Bible but sources from other spiritual traditions to gain a broader understanding of divinity. Attendees see the need to move beyond the "theistic" definition of God, and several members of the class challenge the concept

of God altogether. Books on these subjects are sometimes used but the class enjoys digging into the spiritual or mystical understanding of the words of not only the Bible, but also other traditions.

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?

- In 2009, the Carver Model of Policy Governance was adopted. Detailed policies were written that guide the work of the Senior Minister and the Church Council.
- The Church Council is a body of 6 elected members and 4 officers: Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer and Clerk. The Senior Minister and the Director of Administration are non-voting members who report at Council meetings about meeting the church’s Ends and compliance with the Executive Limitation Policies.
- The existing ministries and committees are defined as Coordinated Areas of Ministry (CAMs). Each CAM has a chair and co-chair. All other members serve at will and are not elected, which allows for broad participation and flexibility in mission.
- The Mission Team was created to connect all the committee and CAM chairs together so they could work toward common goals and share information. The Senior Minister is designated as the Chief Mission Officer and is present at Mission Team meetings which are chaired by the Vice Moderator.

The Church Council communicates with the congregation regularly both in writing and through monthly “Coffee with Council” sessions held after worship. A Council’s Corner update appears in our weekly emails and occasional one-off congregational emails provide current information. A minimum of two Congregational Meetings are held each year, which enables the congregation to approve the budget and conduct any other church business that requires a vote of the congregation.

Please see page 45: Organizational Chart from our Annual Report

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

Both Council and the Mission Team meet once a month for approximately two and half hours each. Occasionally, Council will call a second meeting per month as needed.

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

A recent example is when our former pastor resigned suddenly without giving the amount of notice that would be ordinarily expected. After emailing the Council with the news, the moderator immediately formed a temporary Transition Task Force composed of herself, past moderators, the Director of Administration, and several other at-large members, including the pastor’s personal representative in the congregation.

The following Sunday, the pastor made her announcement in worship, followed by an announcement by the moderator about the temporary Transition Task Force to handle the following tasks: filling the pulpit

to avoid a lack of continuity, establishing an interim search process in conjunction with the Rocky Mountain Conference, and congregational care around the sudden and unexpected news.

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

11-YEAR REPORT

2023 Report (Including 2022 data)

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	700	248	325	9	1	10	16	29	-25
2013	687	220	325	7	10	0	13	17	-13
2014	687	220	325	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	687	220	325	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	621	220	280	2	16	0	23	61	-66
2017	606	215	272	0	9	0	15	9	-15
2018	606	192		0	0	22	23	7	-8
2019	598	210		0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	598	197		0	0	33	13	0	20
2021	618	142		5	0	10	20	-21	-36
2022	582	175		0	0	15	14	0	1

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	SPECIAL SUPPORT	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2012	\$898,800	\$0	\$17,500	\$19,593	\$37,093	\$120,226	\$157,319	1.95%	\$1,056,119	\$793,000
2013	\$854,629	\$0	\$17,500	\$9,900	\$27,400	\$129,058	\$156,458	2.05%	\$1,011,087	\$803,544
2014	\$854,629	\$0	\$17,500	\$13,370	\$30,870	\$0	\$30,870	2.05%	\$885,499	\$719,843
2015	\$854,629	\$0	\$18,151	\$7,325	\$25,476	\$0	\$25,476	2.12%	\$880,105	\$717,609
2016	\$822,000	\$800,000	\$17,500	\$32,074	\$49,574	\$40,000	\$89,574	2.13%	\$911,574	\$800,270
2017	\$873,678	\$1,000,000	\$17,500	\$0	\$17,500	\$69,000	\$86,500	2.00%	\$960,178	\$776,640
2018	\$884,289	\$0	\$17,500	\$0	\$17,500	\$6,410	\$27,253	1.98%	\$908,199	\$714,102
2019	\$954,297	\$0	\$17,675	\$0	\$17,675	\$5,954	\$222,505	1.85%	\$977,926	\$757,673
2020	\$967,541	\$0	\$17,685	\$0	\$17,685	\$9,804	\$105,726	1.83%	\$995,030	\$691,195
2021	\$1,003,166	\$0	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000	\$13,305	\$214,279	1.79%	\$1,034,471	\$781,528
2022	\$1,039,229	\$22,808	\$18,000	\$0	\$18,000	\$10,905	\$24,079	1.73%	\$1,068,134	\$717,666

Percent changes in previous 5 and 10 year periods.

	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2017-2022	-3.96	-18.60	11.11	20.83	18.95	2.86	11.24
2012-2022	-16.86	-29.44	-50.00	68.89	15.62	-51.47	1.14

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Based on best estimates from church management software.

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	296	Estimate. 281 pledges plus 15
Number of active non-members:	15	Estimate
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	311	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	75%	Estimate based on “received” data in our database.
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	17%	Estimate based on “received” data in our database.
Less than 5 years:	8%	Estimate based on “received” data in our database.

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>
13 (3%)	11 (2%)	49 (10%)	134 (27%)	291 (58%)					Estimate – 9% have no DOB

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Single adults under 35:	3%	Estimate
Joint household with minors:	12%	Estimate
Single adults age 35-65:	9%	Estimate
Joint household with no minors:	20%	Estimate
Single adults over 65:	31%	Estimate
Adult couples over 65	33%	Estimate

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	20%	Estimate
College and Some College:	50%	Estimate
Graduate/Professional School:	30%	Estimate
Specialty Training:	Nil	

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	35%	Estimated
Adults who are retired:	65%	Estimated
Adults who are not fully employed:	Nil	Estimated

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

First Plymouth's membership represents a high level of educational and professional achievement and includes retired ministers, college educators, medical and legal professionals, plus upper-level business and governmental professionals. The congregation draws from a very large area of suburban Denver with many other occupations represented.

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?

The vast majority of the congregation has been and is Caucasian. There are only a few members who are Hispanic, African American, or Asian. At the same time, there is a desire to widen our ethnographic representations. Those efforts are noted in response to the next question.

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:

First Plymouth has made a clear commitment to understanding and welcoming diversity. In keeping with the life and teaching of Jesus, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome - and involve - all people of any age, gender, race, culture, ability, or sexual orientation into our community of faith and affirm the worth of all people as unique individuals made in God's image.

Over 20 years ago, we voted to become an Open and Affirming congregation. We continue to focus on seeking further understanding and pathways to inclusiveness. The conversations and educational opportunities are intentional, ongoing, and meaningful. This includes the efforts of WISE (Mental Health) and the Racial Equity Team, which led First Plymouth to declare that it is joining the initiatives of the UCC to work toward the elimination of racism by being a "Congregation of Racial Equity."

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 in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>List the specific worship planners, lay leaders, pastors, musicians and other staff are listed below.</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	Groups Range from 6 to 50+ in size	Senior Minister, Minister of Teaching, CE Ministry and a long list of lay leaders from fellowship groups described in the Small Groups Booklet
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	3	Pastoral Care, Senior Minister
Children's Groups or Classes	Groups Range from 5 to 15+ in size	Director of Children's Ministries
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	CE: 2022 - 357 EW: 2023 - 309	Senior Minister, Minister of Teaching, Director of Children's Ministries, Director of Music, Organist
Church-wide Meals	NA	
Choirs and Music Groups	Groups Range from 10 to 50 in size	Senior Minister, Director of Music, Organist, Director of Children's Ministries
Church-based Bible Study	10 to 30	Members
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	Once per month	Senior Minister, Pastoral Care
Community Meals	400	Mission Team/Denver Inner City Parish
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	Minister of Teaching, Senior Minister
Drama or Dance Program	NA	
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	9	Senior Minister, Pastoral Care

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>List the specific worship planners, lay leaders, pastors, musicians and other staff are listed below.</i>
Intergenerational Groups	10 to 20	Mission Team/Denver Inner City Parish
Outdoor Worship	N/A	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	5-20	Senior Minister, Lay Leaders
Public Advocacy Work	Groups Range from 10 to 50+ in size	Outreach Ministry, Reduce Gun Violence Committee, Creation Justice Ministry, Open & Affirming Committee, Racial Equity Team, WISE Ministry
Retreats	Groups Range from 10 to 150	Men's Fellowship Group Road Trip, Women's Retreat, Community Camp, La Foret Conference Youth Retreats
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	Groups Range from 10 to 30	Book study and theological topics with the Minister of Teaching/Linked to Iliff Theological Seminary
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	1	Pastoral Care, Senior Minister
Worship (time slot: 10:00 AM)	See 11 Year Report	Senior Minister, Minister of Teaching, Director of Music, Organist, Director of Children's Ministries
Young Adult Groups or Classes	1	Senior Minister, Minister of Teaching
Youth Groups or Classes	10 to 16	Minister of Teaching, Seminary Intern, Lay Leaders
Sound Technician(s)	3 to 4	One primary paid position
FP Learning Center (preschool)	60 Students	Learning Center Director (1), Teachers/Assistants (11)
Introduction to FPCC and New Membership Classes	Groups Range from 3 to 10	New Members Program Coordinator, Senior Minister, CAM Chairs
Web of Care	See note below	Web of Care Coordinators

Additional comments: Inreach Ministry

Organized in 2013, the Web of Care (WOC) is a lay-led ministry that works with the First Plymouth Pastoral Care staff to keep all members connected to our beloved community. Before WOC, there was no official way to keep in touch with members. In fact, news about our members was often missed. This oversight left members feeling abandoned by their church. We began this ministry with approximately 40 church members who volunteered to be Web of Care Coordinators. Each Coordinator was assigned a group of 5 – 15 family units. Coordinators contact their group regularly (usually monthly or bimonthly) to check in and offer support as needed. All Coordinators receive some initial training on pastoral care, including confidentiality, change and transition, death and loss, and prayer.

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).

The First Plymouth congregation includes eleven ministers/chaplains who regularly attend services. These include our Pastor Emeritus, retired ministers, consulting ministers and chaplains who work in other capacities. Some within this group are active volunteers in church leadership and worship planning.

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

Rev. Dr. Stuart Haskins became the pastor in 1967, a pastorate that would continue for 26 years. Dr. Haskins is now the Pastor Emeritus. Other ministers in membership occasionally preach and provide Christian Education classes.

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
Minister of Teaching		PT	Senior Minister	10
Director of Music and Technology	Yes	FT	Senior Minister	6
Organist		PT	Director of Music & Technology	6
Director of Children's Ministries	Yes	PT	Senior Minister	4
Nursery Manager		PT	Director of Children's Ministries	1
Assistant Minister for Pastoral Care		PT	Senior Minister	1
Sound Technician		PT	Director of Music & Technology	1
Director of Administration	Yes	FT	Church Council	5
Office Coordinator		PT	Director of Admin.	5
Communication Coordinator		FT	Director of Admin.	8
Facilities Manager	Yes	FT	Director of Admin.	3

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Custodian 1		PT	Facilities Manager	3
Custodian 2		PT	Facilities Manager	1
Custodian 3		PT	Facilities Manager	<1
Director of First Plymouth Learning Center	Yes	FT	Director of Admin.	2

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

One overall reflection relates to the high level of activity in the church: it is striking how much goes on in the congregation and how many people participate and how well they are organized. There are ample opportunities for social, spiritual, educational, and service-oriented activities. The congregation does not shy away from tough issues, such as racial justice and mental illness.

However, as our congregation ages, there are fewer people to both lead and do the work that keeps community life strong. Currently, we have many people who serve on multiple committees to keep the work going.

A review of the numbers provided by the 11 Year Report reflects the same numbers seen in our weekly attendance (approximately 175). Based on these reports, our membership is defined as 531 but of active members, there are approximately 185 pledging units (some multi-member households).

Our demographics are heavily skewed to those over 60. We conduct many more memorial services each year than baptisms. We are looking to attract younger adults and families and add new programs to serve their needs.

CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year) FY Ending June 30, 2023

Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$720,026
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$160,000
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events* (Annual Community E-Waste Collection Event profit for FY 2023)	\$3800
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose (Memorials)*	\$0
1. Grants*	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$113,005
Rentals of Church Parsonage (NA)	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women’s Group</i>)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Other: Learning Center Contribution	\$61,300
Other: Miscellaneous	\$6,922
TOTAL - Operating Budget	\$1,065,053
<i>*Not included in operating budget.</i>	

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): *See 2017 Annual Report*

Reserves (savings): \$ 115,760 operating reserves (10% of the operating budget)
 \$ 79,389 building reserves
 \$ 7,978 program reserves
 \$ 203,127 Total Reserves

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

Total ministerial support (salaries, retirement, benefits) for both the Senior Minister, the Minister of Teaching and the Minister for Children and Families is \$162,685 representing 14% of the total budget for fiscal year 2024. This ministerial support is less than normal because the church has a part-time interim minister with limited benefits.

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 (Veterans of the Cross)

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

For the past two years, our OCWM support, which is included within the operating budget, has been \$18,000.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

- Total amount of loan debt: \$0.00
- Reason for debt: no debt
- Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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

The Learning Center is undergoing some extensive remodeling to build out the nursery to meet licensing requirements to care for infants and to install a sprinkler system. These projects require significant resources.

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

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes. In 2022 the church leadership reorganized the First Plymouth Endowment, the First Plymouth Foundation and other donor restricted funds into the First Plymouth Fund. The creation of The First Plymouth Fund allowed us to more efficiently and effectively manage the generous gifts of church members who came before us.

The First Plymouth Fund offers the opportunity to proactively use the earnings on unrestricted assets to provide a solid operating foundation in support of the church's mission. Assets which have been

restricted by their donors continue to be used according to those restrictions. Annually 5% of the unrestricted assets of the Fund are available to the church’s operating budget. The percentage used for the Church’s operating budget, determined by a set of trustees, and governed by the First Plymouth Financial Policies, can vary year to year.

What is the market value of the assets? See below.

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Funds must be requested.

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

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: Prior to fiscal year 2023, the endowment did not pay or contribute to the normal operating expenses of the church proper. Beginning in fiscal year 2023, the endowment can contribute up to 5% of the average balance over the previous 12 quarters.

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

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: Calculations are actual not estimates.

Church Endowments

	6/30/2022	6/30/2023
	Beginning Balance	Ending Balance
THE FIRST PLYMOUTH FUND		
General Fund	2,366,507	2,471,565
Brand Fund	854,303	922,219
Turpin Fund	1,044,540	1,142,434
Bayley Fund	226,478	258,820
Huebner Outreach Fund	77,952	92,047
TOTALS	4,569,780	4,887,085

2022-2023 MISSION AND PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

First Plymouth’s 2022-2023 spending included \$27,907 for program and mission expenses, which is about 2.72% of the expenditures. That figure does not, however, provide a complete picture of the programming and mission outlay of the church. In 2022-2023, the Outreach Fund, Share the Plate, and other special funds, provided \$106,275, in mission and outreach support for our community. Please note that 20% of Share the Plate income transfers to the Outreach Fund for distribution.

First Plymouth Program Expenditures	\$27,907
Share the Plate	\$24,072
Mission/Outreach	\$54,296
TOTAL MISSION/PROGRAM GIVING	\$106,275

SHARE THE PLATE	
Ukraine Relief Fund - UCC	\$3,184
Archway Communities	2,164
Savio	2,158
GraceFull Café	2,447
Loaves & Fishes	3,056
Project Angel Heart	1,744
Hurricane Ian Fund	1,806
Energy Outreach Colorado	1,732
Reach Out & Read	2,110
Empowerment Center	1,507
We Don’t Waste	2,164
TOTAL SHARE THE PLATE	\$24,072

MISSION/OUTREACH SUPPORT	
DICP - Scholarship	\$1,600
The Action Center	2,584
First Plymouth Learning Center Grant	1,000
DICP - Thanksgiving	1,000
DICP - Christmas	1,000
Energy Outreach Colorado	268
Metro Caring	1,124
Bowman Video Grant	1,480
Empowerment	68
Metro Denver UCC	900
UCC Per Capita Dues	10,800
UCC - OCWM	18,000
UCC - Neighbors in Need	105
Immigration Task Force	13,686
Men’s Fellowship	681
TOTAL MISSION/OUTREACH	\$54,296

FIRST PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
Designated and Restricted Fund Balances for the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2023

	6/30/2022	Fiscal Year 2023		6/30/2023	
SPECIFIC DONOR RESTRICTED FUNDS	Beginning Balance	Receipts or Increase	Expenditures or Decreases	Ending Balance	
Habitat for Humanity	2,754	5,081	5,000	2,835	
Immigration Task Force	12,188	14,945	13,686	13,447	
Memorial Garden	50,080		-	50,080	
Minister Transition Fund	28,025		-	28,025	
Minister's Discretionary Fund	64,739	4,203	21,350	47,592	
Music Donations	5,772	5,470	3,600	7,642	
Next Year Pledges	68,701	54,680	68,701	54,680	
Outreach	15,138	7,511	11,505	11,145	
UCC All Church Offerings	2,388	2,327	105	4,610	Note 2
SUBTOTALS	249,784	94,218	123,947	220,055	
OTHER DONOR RESTRICTED FUNDS					
Adult Education	4,095	-		4,095	
Arts at Plymouth	3,897		-	3,897	
Bible Basics	2,942	-	-	2,942	
Children's Education	6,428	2,839	242	9,025	Note 3
Community Camp	33,173	52,290	52,437	33,027	
Creation Justice	21,720	6,918	4,629	24,009	Note 5
Flower Committee	3,882	1,785	1,259	4,408	
Gala	2,000	-	2,000	-	Note 1
Knit Wit Society	465	50	153	362	
LOFT	2,659	2,483	1,541	3,601	
Men's Fellowship	1,760	1,124	1,681	1,203	
Other Designated Gifts	5,746	2,580	780	7,546	Note 1
Pastoral Care	1,015	-		1,015	
Racial Equity Team	700		-	700	
Share the Plate	16,108	30,492	38,739	7,861	
Vacation Bible School	2,517	-	2,517	-	Note 3
Visual Arts	2,796	25	322	2,499	
WISE Fund	2,166			2,166	
Women's Fellowship	115	3,312	840	2,587	
Women's Retreat	9,464	3,412	3,345	9,531	
World Gift Market	2,624	-	2,624	-	Note 4
Youth	4,089	2,063	4,230	1,922	
SUBTOTALS	130,361	109,373	117,338	122,396	
TOTAL NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS					
	380,145	203,591	241,285	342,451	

FIRST PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
Designated and Restricted Fund Balances for the Twelve Months Ending June 30, 2023
(continued)

Note 1: Balance transferred from Gala to Other Designated Gifts at the request of the donor

Note 2: Checks sent to designated UCC agencies in fiscal 2024

Note 3: Balance transferred from VBS to Children's Education fund

Note 4: Balance transferred from World Gift Market to Program Reserve

Note 5: Ending balance includes \$13,000 in the Green Energy Fund, established to fund projects in our building to reduce First Plymouth's carbon footprint. The first project in 2021 was to replace interior lighting with LED bulbs at a cost of about \$6,000, and the fund is restricted for use on actual projects, not studies.

	6/30/2022	Fiscal Year 2023		6/30/2023	
CHURCH DESIGNATED FUNDS	Beginning Balance	Receipts or Increases	Expenditures or Decreases	Ending Balance	
Capital Reserve Fund	34,447	53,741	8,799	79,389	
Endowment BA Contingency	5,578	-	-	5,578	
Endowment Special Projects	25,402	8,253	13,616	20,039	
Memorials	24,250	1,276	1,844	23,682	
Minister Transition Hospitality	1,799	-	-	1,800	
Operating Reserve	63,904	51,856	-	115,760	
Program Reserve Fund	5,354	2,624	-	7,978	Note 1
Special Projects	1,865	23,135	14,150	10,850	
Unallocated Gifts	77,617	-	-	77,617	
DESIGNATED FUNDS TOTALS	240,216	140,885	38,409	342,692	
Note 1: Balance of World Gift Market fund transferred to Program Reserve					

Other Investments (other than endowment): None

Parsonage: None

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

The church is a 58,000 square foot building on 5.32 acres located at 3501 S. Colorado Blvd. Englewood, Colorado 80113. The church is on a corner of the highly trafficked intersection of Hampden Avenue and Colorado Boulevard.; both are well-known, primary roads of the Denver metro area. The building has three levels. The church was originally built in the 1950's and had a major addition in the 1990's. The most recent update in 2015 was a significant remodel of the sanctuary and chapel as a result of the capital campaign.

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? Most of the facilities are accessible.

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

The church is committed to our mission and ministry and desires to continue to live out our purpose and vision in a sustainable way. While the church's financial condition appears strong, First Plymouth is not without its challenges. The smaller membership has resulted in overall less pledge income. For the 2023-2024 Stewardship Campaign, as of October 2023, we have received 185 pledging units representing total commitments of \$615,230. That amount is a decrease of \$55,481 from last year.

Additionally, there are many large substantial capital expenses on the horizon, for instance, a roof and HVAC system. See Capital Planning Estimate addendum (page 46).

Prior and current members have been generous and committed to contributing to community outreach and special purposes, such as the net zero efforts, building maintenance, and the music program.

A final note here. Among the FP community as a whole - congregation, lay leadership and staff - there is a difference of perspective around future steps. For some, we have plenty of financial resources to weather this storm. For others, we don't have enough financial resources to maintain the church in its current location. *We all* agree that if we are to be a church serving today's people, we must evolve. There are differences in opinion on how to do that. This is what we hope our new designated term pastor will help us with.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In 2014 First Plymouth Congregational Church celebrated the 150th Anniversary of its founding. The history of First Plymouth Congregational Church, U.C.C., goes back nearly to the beginning of Denver. Efforts were begun as early as 1860 to establish a Congregational church in Denver. Due to the high cost of maintaining missionaries in the “wild west” the requests were turned down. Finally, in 1863, church officials sent Rev. William Crawford to Denver with an eye towards establishing a Congregational church in Denver. Crawford’s first visit to Denver left him unimpressed and he moved on to the gold mining town of Central City where he established the first Congregational church in the Colorado territory. Crawford returned to Denver and founded the First Congregational Church of Denver on October 9, 1864, with 12 charter members. Rev. Norman McLeod was the first pastor.

As with the other newly formed churches in the pioneer city, the congregation had no home and met in various places until they constructed their first church in 1869 at the corner of 15th and Curtis Street, in what was then a pleasant residential area. With the growth of the congregation and the encroaching business district, it soon became time to think about moving.

In 1881, the congregation built a fine new structure, seating 900, in the 1600 block of Glenarm Place, (currently the site of the Paramount Theatre). The church had several pastors during its time on Glenarm. Among them was the Rev. Myron Reed, a noted social action minister, who filled the church every Sunday and whose sermons were widely published the next week. By 1907, the business district was again encroaching on the church, and the congregation decided to move “up the hill” to a new building on the corner of E. 10th Avenue and Clarkson Street. On January 13, 1907, after the final service at the Glenarm church, the church under construction was engulfed in flames and heavily damaged. Since the congregation had made arrangements to meet at Temple Emanuel until the new building was completed, they held services there until November 7, 1907, when Rev. Monroe Markley conducted the first service in the new church.

In 1884, another group of Congregationalists was getting together in north Capitol Hill and formed the Park Avenue Congregational Church. They built a small church at 17th Avenue and Ogden Street. In 1891, the struggling congregation found themselves without a pastor. However, Rev. Frank T. Bayley was vacationing in Colorado with his family at the time and preached a few times at the little church. The congregation took a liking to Rev. Bayley and offered him the position. In honor of his former pastorate, the congregation voted to rename the church Plymouth Congregational Church. Dr. Bayley would pastor the church for 26 years until his death in 1917. During his pastorate, the congregation began to grow and built a large stone church at E. 14th Avenue and Lafayette St.

By 1929, both First and Plymouth churches were beginning to struggle as members moved farther away and other congregations began drawing members away from the center city churches. The “great depression” of 1929 only worsened the situation. The solution was a merger of the two congregations to become First Plymouth Congregational Church, meeting at the Lafayette St. building.

By the mid-1950’s, the congregation was again bursting at the seams and traffic and parking in the area was becoming an issue. There was no room to expand and staying on Capitol Hill did not seem to be an option. In 1955, the church purchased property at the intersection of Hampden Avenue and South Colorado Boulevard at, what was then, the edge of the city. A new modern building, the church’s current location, was constructed on the site and the congregation worshiped there for the first time on November 30, 1958.

In 1961, the congregation voted to affiliate with the recently formed United Church of Christ (UCC), which had been created by a merger of the Evangelical and Reformed churches with the Congregational Christian Church; thus, the formal name First Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC. Rev. Dr. Stuart Haskins became the pastor in 1967, a pastorate that would continue for 26 years. Dr. Haskins is now the Minister Emeritus. In 2005, the call was issued to the Rev. George C. Anastos.

After a decade of service, which included a major capital campaign and Sanctuary renovation, Rev. Anastos retired in 2019, and Rev. Dr. Bob von Trebra was welcomed as the Interim Minister. The church undertook an extensive search process, resulting in the call of the Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas in 2019. Shultz-Thomas' high energy and passion for social justice drew new members and families. However, soon after her arrival, COVID forced us to close the physical church and move worship and the community online. In addition to innovative online worship, Rev. Shultz-Thomas created online "treehouses" - fellowship groups of up to a dozen that met regularly and were revolved around topical issues such as racism and climate change or general fellowship/book clubs, to keep the community connected and supported during the pandemic.

As the church re-opened July 25, 2021, we saw more than half of our congregation return, however numbers are not "back to normal," especially among our families. In the late spring of 2022, Rev. Shultz-Thomas resigned unexpectedly for personal reasons, and the congregation called the Rev. Dr. Bob Von Trebra back as their Interim Pastor.

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.

1. The Rev. Myron W. Reed, pastor of First Congregational Church of Denver (predecessor of First Plymouth) from 1884 to 1894, in cooperation with a Jewish woman active in Denver charities, a rabbi, a priest, and another minister, founded the "Charity Organization" in Denver in 1887. This organization was the forerunner of the Community Chest and the precursor to the United Way national organization.
2. Over 20 years ago, after numerous lengthy and difficult conversations, the congregation elected to become an "Open and Affirming" congregation. As a matter of statement of faith and mission, the church is committed to welcoming all people of any gender or sexual orientation. This commitment had serious consequences: a number of members left, with an associated decline in financial commitment to the church. However, this stand has clearly marked First Plymouth as a leader of inclusiveness in the Denver area and today, is regularly cited as a reason people seek out our church to visit and join.
3. In 2019 and again this past year (2023), First Plymouth organized to house migrants to the Denver area. This demonstrated our hospitality and concern for social justice and the ability of the church to respond quickly to a significant community need. (See below in "Community Vision" for a fuller description.)

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

Through a coordinated effort of lay leadership and staff, strategic financial planning led to a detailed long-term financial projection shedding light on First Plymouth's changing financial picture. The projections identified a trend towards ongoing deficit. A knowledgeable group of church members and staff evaluated the current First Plymouth assets which included:

- The First Plymouth Foundation - founded in 1981 to serve as a separate 501(c)3 to fund requests from community organizations and requests for special one-time projects at the church.
- The First Plymouth Endowment - an unrestricted fund established to support the mission and ministry of the church through grants for primarily internal programs and activities.
- Donor Restricted Funds - Various purposes including education, outreach and building maintenance.

After a two-year planning and discussion process, it became clear that the purposes of the Foundation and Endowment were not distinctly different from the Church. Consolidating all the assets under one umbrella of the First Plymouth Fund would create continuity in financial management and reduce the number of board members and financial advisors, creating more value with less overhead. The assets would have more impact if the proceeds of the various unrestricted endowments could be budgeted annually by the church with the flexibility of being dedicated to operations, not just special projects.

The First Plymouth Fund was established in January 2022 with the initial assets of the endowment and some of the donor restricted funds. In March 2022, the Board of the Foundation and First Plymouth congregation voted to transfer the Foundation assets to the First Plymouth Fund. By streamlining the management of approximately \$5.5 million in assets, the First Plymouth Fund provides more coordinated stewardship of church assets.

The consolidation of these funds has allowed the proceeds to meet urgent and ongoing needs of the church and has provided stability to the budget and greater ability to plan for the longer term. The First Plymouth Fund does not completely close the budget gap but helps to reduce the deficit projections.

Every church has conflicts, 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?)

Given the national trend of declining membership, combined with our own 65-year-old building with significant capital expenses on the horizon, FP began pro-actively exploring options two years ago for how to continue to live out our purpose and vision while remaining financially sustainable. This process has been challenging and ultimately divisive, forming several "camps," as noted in our opening summary. Acknowledging we needed more time to discern, this past fall Council proposed the 3-Year-Vision to allow us more fully explore both the "repurpose" and "relocate" options before making any final decisions about our building.

Amidst the conflict, we have intentionally attempted to weave the community back together and discern where we are being called at this juncture in our life together. This past summer, we invited the Rev. Erin Gilmore, our Acting Conference Minister, to lead five "Listening Sessions" to help the

community reconnect after a year of divisiveness. These sessions were well attended with the majority of our congregation participating.

The congregation has matured significantly in recent years in how it deals with differences of opinion. We are learning how to listen deeply and respectfully to each other. We have discerned that we need to slow down to bring everyone along and not leave anyone out of the conversations. We are making space for all sides to explore possible ways forward and bring research and information back to the congregation for further discernment. The Church Council committed to seeking consensus in our process rather than taking the decision to a vote. We are trying to live into a more discernment-focused body, but we still have a way to go. We are taking it day by day, seeking to discern “our next faithful step.”

Additionally, we have instituted more intentional communication efforts in the past couple of years to reduce rumors and provide transparency. The monthly Coffee with Council and the Council’s Corner in the weekly email have helped greatly to reduce conflict.

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

Senior Ministers

1. Rev. Dr. Bob Von Trebra, Interim Senior Minister, 2022-present
2. Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas, Senior Minister, 2019-2022
3. Rev. Dr. Bob Von Trebra, Interim Senior Minister, 2019
4. Rev. George Anastos, Senior Minister, 2005-2019
5. Rev. Gary Bryant, Interim Senior Minister, 2003-2005
6. Rev. M. Scott Landis, Senior Minister, 1997-2002
7. Rev. Jim Kirk, Interim Senior Minister, 1996 and 1999
8. Rev. Roy Smith, Interim Senior Minister 1996-1997
9. Rev. Ben Smith, Interim Senior Minister, 1994-1995
10. Rev. Ron Stegall, 1994
11. Rev. Stuart Haskins, 1967-1993

Associate Ministers

1. Rev. Jane Ann Ferguson, Associate Minister, 2004-2010.
2. Rev. O. Elaine Hinnant, Associate Minister, 1999-2003.
3. Rev. Dianne Prosser, Associate Minister, 1993-1998.
4. Rev. Diane Gallo, Associate Minister, 1990-1993.
5. Rev. Hollis Bredeweg, Associate Minister, 1986-1990.
6. Rev. Mark Bigelow, Associate Minister for Youth, 1986-1991

Minister of Children and Families

1. Rev. Alix Wright, 2021-present (called position)

Teaching Minister

1. Rev. Dr. Eric C. Smith, 2008-present

Minister of Pastoral Care

1. Rev. Wesley Snedeker 2022-2023
2. Rev. Anthony Scott 2020-2021

Assistant Minister for Pastoral Care

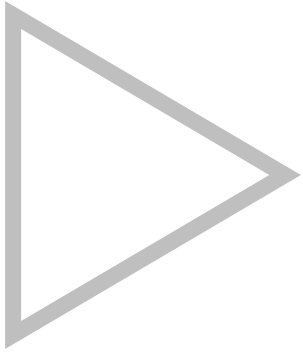
1. Sophia Hayden, 2023-present

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership: With our past two ministers, we have realized that we created ambitious job descriptions and may be unrealistic in our expectations. We understand the enormity of a senior minister position and don't expect that person to be all things to all people. At this time, we believe the most important quality for our next minister is spiritual leadership.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination? To learn more about our past staffing issues, please ask. Not all details are public and may not be available.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation? To learn more about our past staffing issues, please ask. Not all details are public and may not be available.

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church? To learn more about our past staffing issues, please ask. Not all details are public and may not be available.



WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

COMMUNITY VISION

MISSION InSite

COMMUNITY VISION

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

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

We strive to be the hands and face of Jesus to each other and the world through our ministries and programs. First Plymouth includes many lay-led Coordinated Areas of Ministry (CAMs) which reach out to the larger community to make a difference and to help people transform their lives. First Plymouth endeavors to take a stand against poverty, racism, injustice, intolerance, violence, and homelessness. These experiences have been transformational to our members.

A recent example is a congregation-wide effort to provide housing and support of 14 immigrants from Venezuela this past spring. We created a task force and recruited 115 volunteers to help create a temporary shelter in our building for these immigrants, which included one family. This group was housed, fed, and driven to job interviews for a week by a team of volunteers organized by our church. The team also included many members of other local churches. Since that effort, members of our Immigration Task Force have remained in relationship with our Venezuelan friends and continue to support them as they strive to become self-sufficient here in the United States.

What we anticipated to be a short-term project to shelter our immigrant friends as they transitioned to life here in the U.S. has instead turned into a continued ministry of accompaniment and mutual transformation as our friends work to attain safety and security in the community.

Service Activities

Family Promise of Greater Denver: FPCC supports homeless families by collaborating with other local churches to provide temporary housing, transportation to and from work, breakfast and dinner meals, childcare while parents attend financial management classes and overnight hosting.

First Plymouth Learning Center: FPCC runs a healthy, growing, and self-sustaining childcare program licensed by the State of Colorado. It is comprised of three components – Infant Care, Preschool, and Pre-Kindergarten (year-round and five days a week).

DICP (Denver Inner City Parish): an inner-city ministry that is a hands-on avenue to provide support in the areas of hunger, education, health and wellness, and community support. First Plymouth helped found DICP over 50 years ago and continues to be a physical and financial presence. First Plymouth also puts on an annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner at DICP.

KCV (Kentucky Circle Village): FPCC was one of the founding organizations in 1959 of KCV, an affordable housing community for seniors. FPCC members continue to serve on the Board of Directors to ensure the financial security and well-being of the community.

Moment for Mission/Share-the-Plate: Every month, the Outreach Ministry designates a community organization that supports our community in various areas of need to receive loose offerings from the Sunday offering. Representatives from these organizations are given time during the worship service to address the congregation and talk about what they do.

Can-Do Sunday: A monthly collection of canned goods, packaged food, personal care items, and cash donations which are given to Denver Metro Caring, a local food bank.

Angel Tree: The Outreach Ministry sponsors a program at Christmas that encourages members to give donations of toys or gifts to residents of the Family Homestead family shelter.

Outreach Ministry: This Coordinated Area of Ministry (CAM) searches out where we can be of service to the community and awards monetary grants to organizations who serve those in need, such as Denver Inner City Parish (DICP), Kentucky Circle Village (KCV), Habitat for Humanity, CHARG Resource Center, and Savio House and Iliff School of Theology. Outreach not only responds to requests for support, but also seeks out those in need and provides appropriate assistance in any way possible.

Loaves and Fishes: FPCC provides outreach to Habitat for Humanity of Denver, through the Loaves and Fishes coalition of twelve churches in the Denver metro area of which First Plymouth was a founding member. Together we have built eighteen houses since the coalition was organized in 1998.

Creation Justice Ministry: The Creation Justice Ministry is a defining part of First Plymouth Church's mission and identity. Dedicated to affirming the divine gifts of creation, we commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to the intertwined responsibilities of practicing wise stewardship of the Earth and seeking justice for those oppressed by environmental degradation. The Creation Justice Ministry holds an annual E-Waste recycling event, supports healthy food, air and water sources for all, offers information about eco-justice topics and partners with other ministries, churches and community groups to promote practices that heal and protect our environment.

First Plymouth is recognized in the Rocky Mountain conference as a Creation Justice Church with a Creation Justice covenant that unites our members, ministries, ministers, and programming in a common commitment to love and protect God's creation. The Creation Justice Ministry has established and maintains the Green Energy Fund for physical projects within the church to help reduce global warming by reducing our carbon emissions. In 2023, CJM coordinated, and partially funded a contract with a professional engineering firm to study how First Plymouth could reduce its carbon footprint, save energy costs and move toward becoming a Net Zero carbon emitter.

Immigration Task Force: The Immigration Task Force (ITF) provides members of First Plymouth Church with opportunities to welcome the stranger in our community and to walk alongside our immigrant neighbors. In the last year, we have provided temporary shelter and support in our church building for a week to recently arrived Venezuelans (see description above), and members of First Plymouth continue to accompany several of our Venezuelan guests in their journey to establish a life in Denver. The ITF also raised funds to support an immigrant Afghan family and worked together with other churches to provide ongoing care and accompaniment to that family.

The Sock It To Em Sock Campaign: The Sock It To Em Sock Campaign is a 501C3 that was begun in 2012 by two of our members. Sock It To Em provides new socks for men, women and children experiencing homelessness and/or are in need. First Plymouth Congregational Church has been a significant supporter of the campaign since its inception collecting socks and have provided thousands and thousands and thousands of socks. Sock It To Em collects NEW socks from businesses, places of worship, schools, organizations, clubs, city halls and a multitude of other resources. Sock It To Em has provided just shy of 1.3M pair of socks with an influence in all 50 states. Socks collected from First Plymouth have been distributed to a multitude of shelters, services and agencies in the Denver Metro Area and Front Range. Most recently socks collected at First Plymouth went directly to the migrants who are new guests in our state.

Transformational

Racial Equity Team: The Racial Equity Team exists to help FP stretch its understanding of racial equity and white supremacy; to learn, understand, and be introspective about who we are as a beloved community; to acknowledge that our understanding is ever evolving and that we as a community must be open, affirming, welcoming, and inclusive of all peoples. First Plymouth strives to facilitate awareness and education for its members.

First Plymouth is active throughout the greater faith community in promoting social justice and working towards structural change by facilitating the UCC curriculum “White Privilege: Let’s Talk;” conducting book studies; partnering with First Universalist Church to host an annual Social Justice Film Series; and sponsoring BLM demonstrations on our busy church corner. We are also active members of Together Colorado, another faith-based organization active in addressing police Use-of-Force policies and Criminal Justice Reform.

First Plymouth officially became a Racial Equity Congregation in 2019, just before 2020 brought the double challenge of COVID-19 and the full exposure of systemic racism resulting from the George Floyd murder.

Reduction of Gun Violence: Although FPCC is not officially designated a “Just Peace” congregation, First Plymouth adopted a public statement and position on firearm violence in 2013, becoming the first faith community in the Denver area to do so after the shooting at Sandy Hook on December 14, 2012. The statement says, in part, that we support “legislation at the state and national levels designed to reduce the present level of violence arising out of the improper use of firearms.”

That same year, the church’s Reduce Gun Violence Committee, which was created to implement the congregational position statement, helped mobilize church members to speak out and communicate with state legislators during the 2013 legislative session when a package of common-sense gun safety measures was being debated. In 2014, the Committee helped form an interfaith coalition called Colorado Faith Communities United to End Violence (CFCU). This coalition, currently made up of 56 congregations of several faith traditions, works year-round to continue advocating for common sense gun safety laws, and presented extensive testimony during the 2015 legislative session to successfully defend the existing gun safety bills under attack by some legislators and other opponents.

CFCU members, including some from First Plymouth, have continued testifying on new firearm violence prevention bills through the 2023 legislative session. Over 20 have been approved and signed into law. Since December of 2014, First Plymouth has hosted a Candlelight Vigil to commemorate the

anniversary of the Sandy Hook massacre and in honor of all others lost to gun violence. The vigils have been held in cooperation with both the First Universalist Church and CFCU.

Second Chance Center: Nearly ten years ago, First Plymouth began a relationship with the Second Chance Center, a national model for successful prisoner re-entry programs by a non-profit. Initially, a group of low-cost housing experts at First Plymouth helped them with the financing and planning of multi-story housing for their clients and obtaining an office building for their growing operation. Since then, they have been Share-the-Plate recipients regularly. After our Capital Campaign, we awarded the Center \$150,000 from the First Plymouth Mustard Seed Fund. Since then, we have enjoyed a partnership that has included volunteering for their job placement center, donor appreciation events, and the clothing-for-work program. A video testimonial from founder and director Hassan Latif can be found on the homepage of our website.

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

- Rocky Mountain Conference virtual Moderators Meetings
- La Foret retreats and events
- Joint worship services and other events with local churches
- Event host for annual regional UCC event

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: Whole Earth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input checked="" 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 is significantly involved and engaged in numerous projects in the community. We seek to establish strong and active relationships with community partners, immigrants, and marginalized populations. We seek a pastor who will join us and offer fresh approaches to strengthen these significant partnerships.

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

- Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service with Temple Sinai (one of the longest-running interfaith services in the country - 56 years!)
- Founding member, Colorado Faith Communities United to End Violence (CFCU)
- One of the founding churches of the Denver Inner City Parish
- Partnership with Calvary Presbyterian Church which holds worship services in our chapel
- Partnership with Calvary Baptist Church to host homeless families served by Family Promise of Greater Denver.
- Cofounder and board members of Kentucky Circle Village
- Annual joint Worship Service with Denver Metro UCC churches
- Immigration Housing & Support Services

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

We believe our Purpose & Vision statement accurately reflects actual time spent engaging in different activities. Our congregation “worships” on Sundays, but equally throughout the week through advocacy, outreach, and mission-focused activities.

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 expectation for our next pastor is to support the active outreach ministries and the community already in place. Our entire congregation, through its various ministries, is already engaged in the community and we would expect our next minister to be a part of this with us.

As one of the largest progressive churches in Colorado, we take a leadership role in the community with regards to social justice. As the leader of this church, we would expect our minister to be visible and have a strong voice in the community.

MISSION InSite

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

The data in the QuickInsite Report is based on a Study Area 2.5 miles around 3501 South Colorado Boulevard, Cherry Hills Village, Colorado 80113. The study employs a current year estimate: 2023; a 5-year projection: 2028; and a 10 year forecast: 2033. The report is dated 10/30/2023.

Based on First Plymouth’s recent QuickInsite Report, the following observations can be made: In the 10-year future, little population change is expected; little school age change is expected; and compared to the state, families with children have the same likelihood to live in two parent households. Adult education attainment is very high. Racial/ethnic diversity will be homogeneous (white). Compared to the state, median family income will be somewhat greater, and number of families in poverty is somewhat below the state average. Occupations are somewhat white collar. The predominant racial/ethnic group is white.

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?

First Plymouth Congregational Church constructed a new building and relocated to its current location in 1958. At the time, it was surrounded by fields and in one of Denver’s original suburbs. The demographics were primarily young middle to upper class families. Today, it resides in one of Colorado’s most affluent zip codes. Compared to the neighborhood:

	Below Average	Similar	Above Average
Age			
19 - 34	√		
46 - 50		√	
51 – 76+			√
Average Household (HH) age		√	
HH with Children	√		
Income			
Average HH Income			√
Median HH Income			√
Ethnicity			
Caucasian (80%)			√
Minorities (20%)	√		
Education			
No College Degree (48%)	√		
BA and or Graduate (52%)			√
HH Occupation			
Retired (30%)			√
Professional (38%)			√
Blue Collar (7%)	√		

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

Our growing Learning Center, with extended hours and services, is addressing the childcare needs of our surrounding community. We continue to explore how to reach more young families.

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

“First Plymouth was one of the first churches that lined up to support our work, paving the way for others to follow. The work that First Plymouth does around the equity movement is not surprising. You all were doing that with us before people were talking about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). You were walking that walk. I think that’s what the congregation has always been about: justice, equity, and compassion.”

Hassan A. Latif, Founder, Second Chance Center, Denver

“Our synagogue, Temple Sinai, is just down the street from First Plymouth Congregational Church but we’re even much closer in friendship. Fifty years ago, First Plymouth opened its doors and provided a home for our congregation. Since then, we have cooperated on a number of projects that spiritually nurture our respective members and contribute to the welfare of our neighbors. One of our most precious programs is the Interfaith Thanksgiving service we hold together. Hundreds of people gather in prayer, setting a perfect mood and tone for Thanksgiving, as well as raising funds for the local food banks.

Rabbi Rick Rheins, Senior Rabbi, Temple Sinai, Denver

“First Plymouth Congregational is an important partner with Habitat for Humanity Metro Denver in supporting affordable housing in Denver. First Plymouth is a member of the Loaves and Fishes coalition, a group of churches supporting Habitat with the necessary funds and volunteers for the past 19 years, building 19 homes.”

***Heather Lafferty, Executive Director and CEO,
Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver***

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

People regularly tell us they visit because of the rainbow banner on the front lawn that reads: *Everybody Welcome. Seriously, Everybody.*

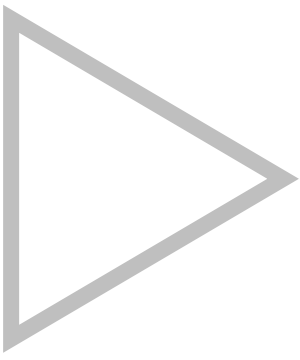
Here are several specific comments from new members:

“First Plymouth’s statement of purpose begins ‘First Plymouth is a welcoming spiritual community that actively cares for one another, our neighbors, and the earth.’ This church is true to its word. We have felt warmly welcomed and cared about and have found ample opportunities to get involved to help our neighbors in need. We felt quickly ‘at home’ amid this congregation of progressive thinking, active, and committed Christians. Wonderful music, enlightening preaching and genuine fellowship make us always look forward to gathering for worship on Sunday morning.”

“We were initially attracted to the affirming congregation and many LGBTQ members, as well as the positive and very friendly people. We enjoy the community emphasis, the progressive theology, and the many volunteer opportunities. We’ve been especially active with the Creation Justice Ministry!”

“Since retiring and relocating to Colorado/Denver metro we had searched for a church that has some relationship to being theologically progressive. That was the initial draw. Adding to our interest is FP’s excellent music program. Additionally, we are very impressed with the quality of programs and sermons provided by staff and ministers. It’s a good fit for us.”

“One of the things that really struck me about FPCC was how involved the members were in the areas of social justice. Whether they supported the homeless, the incarcerated, those people struggling with addictions or issues of gun violence, LGBT rights or climate change, the people that I met in this congregation dedicated their discussions, their money, their talents and most importantly their time to the most compelling issues of our age. I truly believe that is doing God’s work. And seeing these folks carve out the time for this in their lives inspires me to want to get involved.”



REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1

Chris Gilmore, Senior Minister, Sixth Avenue UCC
720-384-7028; chris@sixthavenueucc.org

REFERENCE 2

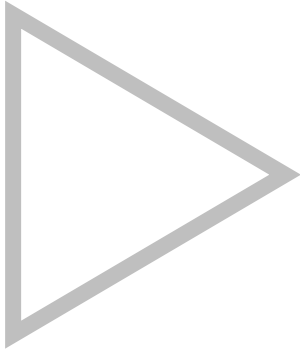
Brad Berglund, Spiritual Director and Pilgrimage Guide, Illuminated Journeys
303-523-7711; brad@illuminatedjourneys.com
Brad has consulted for First Plymouth relating to membership concerns and staff enrichment.

REFERENCE 3

Hassan Latif, Founder, Second Chance Center
303-537-5838; info@SCCcolorado.org

REFERENCE 4

Joan Chase, retired professor of anthropology and archaeologist
303-797-9560, chasejw@msn.com
Joan regularly attends Bible study and worship at First Plymouth although she is a member of a Unitarian Universalist Church nearby.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

CLOSING PRAYER

“Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything, to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet, it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability — and that it may take a very long time. And so I think it is with you. Your ideas mature gradually — let them grow. Let them shape themselves without undue haste... Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.”

--Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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


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

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

A Church Profile Team, consisting of three council members and one at-large member, created the profile. Church Council reviewed the draft and provided feedback and suggested edits. The final review was provided by the congregation, which was offered two weeks to review and respond with feedback and suggested changes.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:



Name / Title / Date: Deborah Arca, Moderator - January 30, 2024

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

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: 

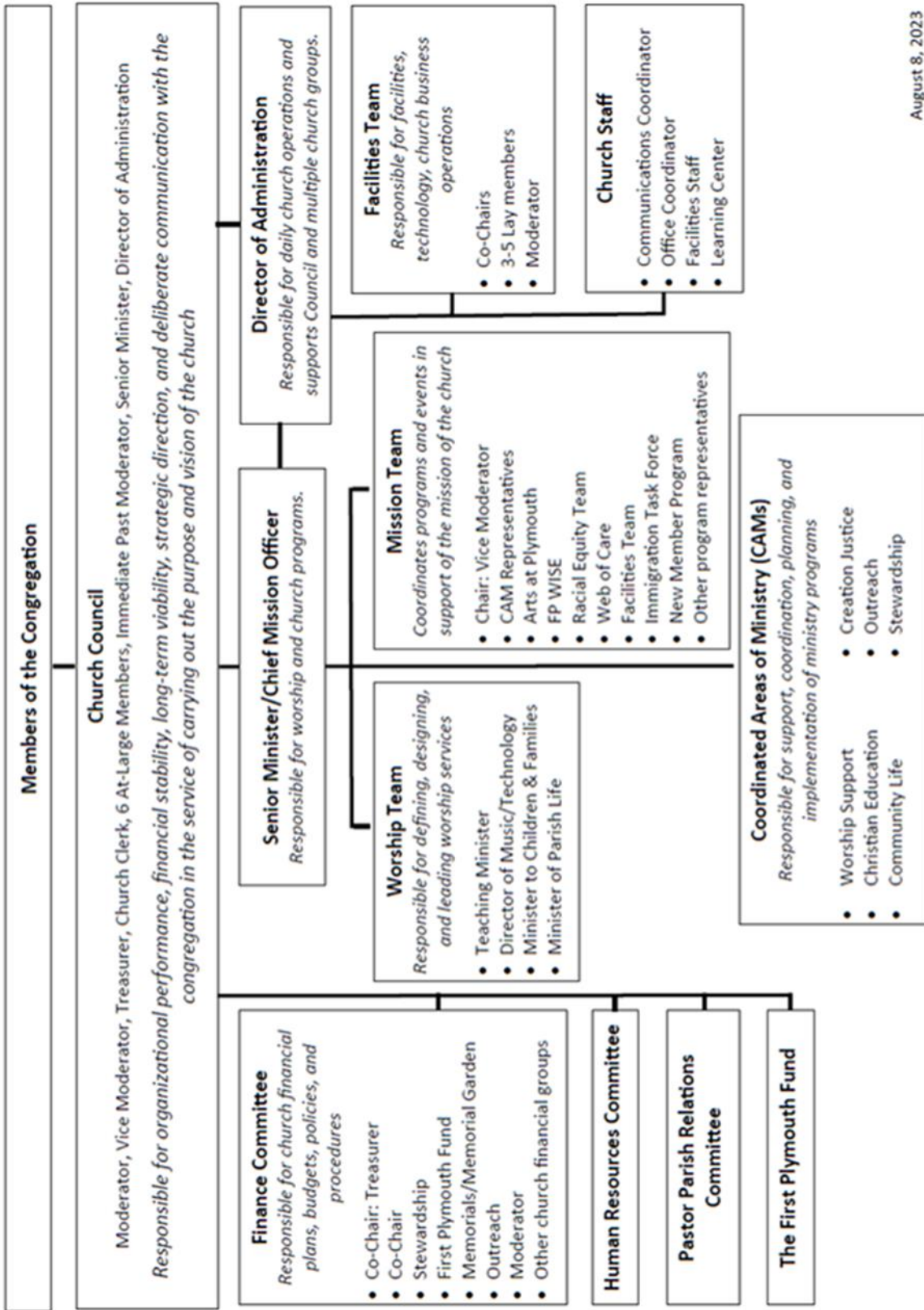
Name / Title: Rev. Erin Gilmore / Acting Conference Minister

Email: erin@rmcucc.org

Phone:

Date: 1/30/2024

First Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



August 8, 2023

**FIRST PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UCC
2024-2033 POTENTIAL CAPITAL MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT ESTIMATES**

Capital Group	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Carpet		16,873		36,500		39,478	41,057			
Fire Protection	65,000		100,000							
Furniture	12,979			105,850			61,587			
HVAC System	128,169	11,248								293,264
Information Technology	5,408	21,372		2,433						
Kitchen	1,082	30,372		8,517					7,401	
Landscaping	5,408		36,500							
Lighting - Exterior		112,486								
Music	54,080		16,378	4,867			34,214		76,972	
Parking Lot					253,064		13,686			
Plumbing	3,785			121,665					22,204	
Roof			469,113							
Sanctuary	21,632								148,024	
Signage				24,333						
Structural	10,816			307,205						
Window Coverings	21,632	11,249		40,150						
TOTALS	292,135	203,600	621,991	651,520	253,064	39,478	150,544	-	254,601	293,264