

## Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

# First Congregational church in Auburn LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,  
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH**  
OF CHRIST



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE**

**First Congregational Church in Auburn**

**Auburn, MA**

**Settled Pastor**

**SNEUCC**

February 15, 2024





## 1. POSITION POSTING

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

### 1a. LISTING INFORMATION

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Church name: **First Congregational Church in Auburn**

Street address: **128 Central St. Auburn, MA 01501**

Supplemental web links: <http://www.auburnfirstucc.com>

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

Conference: **Southern New England**

Association: **Central Massachusetts Association**

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

Conference minister: **Rev. Carol Steinbrecher**

ACM phone number **508-244-4887**

ACM email: [steinbrecherc@sneucc.org](mailto:steinbrecherc@sneucc.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?*

**The First Congregational church in Auburn (FCC) is a mature, financially stable church. We are a suburban church, “God’s Church in Auburn Center doing Christ’s work in the world”. We are seeking a minister who will first and foremost, embrace the children of our community. Our vision includes a minister that is willing and able to embrace charitable work within Auburn and the wider community.**

Photographs:

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



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

**Auburn is a community in central Massachusetts with 16,889 residents (2020 census). Interstate I-90 (mass pike) exit 90, route 12, route 20, I-395, I-290 all intersect in Auburn. You can be in Boston in less than an hour, Providence, RI in 45-50 minutes and Hartford, CT in 1-1/2 hours. There are many restaurants, coffee shops and playgrounds throughout the town. Sports facilities include baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, tennis, and pickle ball with leagues as well as an indoor ice skating rink.**

Current size of membership: Pre-pandemic Avg. **163**  
Current Year. **168**

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):

Position Title: **Settled Pastor**

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

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

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

**Full Time**

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

## **1b. SCOPE OF WORK**

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

**As primary professional staff member of the First Congregational church in Auburn, the Minister shall serve as the head of staff and provide oversight and leadership of the church’s worship and organizational life. They shall work in covenant relationship with Christ and the congregation and cooperatively with the elected officers and leaders of the church. The minister shall be responsible to the Church Council and the Board of Deacons.**

**It is expected that the minister will perform the following duties:**

- **Teach the Gospel**
- **Administer the Sacraments of the church which include Baptism and Communion**
- **Exercise pastoral care and spiritual leadership to the Congregation**
- **Develop liturgy for worship services**

- **Officiate at weddings, funerals and committals of church and community members**
- **Preach challenging and inspiring sermons**
- **Support education for children as well as adults**
- **Pastoral calls to the hospitalized, shut-ins, care facilities and the general congregation as able**
- **Contribute to Council and Diaconate meetings, and other Boards and Committees**
- **Be welcoming to members of the community who want to attend services and church activities**
- **Counsel and receive new members into our congregation**
- **Learn about and become involved in the community**
- **Teach Confirmation classes every other year to our young adults**
- **Maintain partiality in dealing with a wide range of issues and interests in the church**
- **Participate in wider UCC activities outside our church**
- **Maintain a healthy work/life balance**
- **Any and other duties to help nurture the church's vision and mission and abide by its values**

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.*

- **To preach the Bible in such a manner as to reach a diverse spectrum of participants.**
- **To lead by example, toward righteous living, giving and worship.**
- **To demonstrate trust through courage, humility, openness and vulnerability.**
- **To deliver meaningful sermons to the congregation, direct charitable activities/ events and outreach.**

## **1) 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT**

Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*): \$ **95,000-115,000 Total Compensation Package**

Benefits (*choose one*):

**Salary plus Benefits**

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

**Living near by with a housing allowance**

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

**Within an hour or less commute. Needs to be available as needed**

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

**Can be discussed at time of contract**

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

**Southern New England Conference has many peer and professional support systems within their organization. See website above**

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

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

**The First Congregational church of Auburn seeks to collaborate with our minister (1) To preach the Bible in such a manner as to reach a diverse spectrum of participants. (2) To lead by example, toward righteous living, giving and worship. (3) To demonstrate trust through courage, humility, openness and vulnerability. (4) To be part of God's church and ministry and show others how to live out their God-given purpose with the goal of bringing church members to spiritual maturity. (5) To deliver meaningful sermons to the congregation, direct charitable activities/events and outreach. (6) To meet with members of the congregation to help them strengthen their faith. (7) To lead parishioners by working with and through people to minister to them. (8) To be a godly leader, a role model, and a guidance giver - for our church members as well as the community. (9) To mentor and encourage people, furthering their faith and ensuring that they have a positive church**

**experience. (10) To help develop spiritual goals and objectives we set for our church to get closer to God in an effort to quench the thirst for spiritual nourishment.**

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

**We take “Beyond the Walls” to mean any and all activities outside of his/her responsibilities behind the pulpit; outside the traditional Sunday service.**

**If “minister” is described as a verb, it means to attend to someone’s needs. As a noun, it is defined as a member of the clergy. Our vision is to combine these definitions. A member of the clergy who attends to not only the needs of the congregation, but also the community in which this congregation resides.**

**Our vision is a minister who will first and foremost, embrace the children of our community. That begins with all youth programs (cradle roll through confirmation and up to our young adults through 18 years old) associated with FCC Auburn. It will also include an active roll in the Here We Grow community ( our preschool).**

**Our vision includes a minister who looks forward to helping us further and enhance charitable work with Auburn and adjacent communities. He/She will work closely with our Outreach committee to lift up those in need of charity.**

**Our vision includes a minister that is compassionate and willing to have difficult conversations with persons or families that are struggling due to the loss of a loved one, those who are sick or taking care of someone sick, someone battling addiction, someone in a mental health crisis, someone who is losing their faith, or any person who comes in and needs guidance.**

**If one of our goals is to grow our congregation, reaching out beyond our church walls will do that. If one of our goals is to tend to those less fortunate and show them compassion, reaching out beyond our church walls will do that.**

**Our vision of a new pastor is that he/she will lead our congregation by example, living a life of charity, faith and humility. One who will show us how to walk the path that Jesus laid out for us. One who embraces the love the Lord has for us, as stated in the Bible.**

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

**English is the only language currently spoken within our church**



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.

**Strengthening Inter- and Intra Personal Relationships**

- **Developing and maintaining a healthy sense of self as shaped by God, community, and life experiences**
- **Demonstrating excellent communication skills**

**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**

**Caring for All Creation**

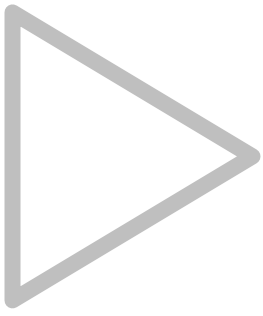
- **Providing Hope and Healing to a Hurting World**

**Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice**

- **Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship**

**Working Together for Justice and Mercy**

- **Understanding community context and navigating change with a community**



## **2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?**

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

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

**God is calling our church to continue to change and adapt to an ever diverse world that offers unique challenges and opportunities. The congregation is looking for a growth in membership at all age groups if possible with a focus on youth and young families. We believe that God is calling us to bring in more people to our circle of inclusion.**

**Sustainability of the church requires us to have better outreach to all demographics. God is calling for our church to expand our outreach to as many local, national and international callings as possible.**

**The congregation feels that it is important to use this crossroads to reflect on our calling and to adapt to changing circumstances, challenges, and opportunities as we seek to live out our faith and fulfill our mission in the community and the world.**

**Our Congregation believes that God is calling us to promote unity and reconciliation, both within our community and in the broader society. As a whole we do need to consider how we can further this through the congregation’s attempts at outreach and bring new fresh ideas to the table.**

**Our congregation, through God, emphasizes charitable giving and acts of kindness as a central aspect of our calling. Our Outreach committee and the congregation as a whole is always looking for new ways to engage different needs, charities and programs of our local communities.**

**The Congregation sees ourselves as an instrument of positive change in our community, working to address social issues, alleviate suffering, and promote justice and compassion. We have a growing belief, through God, to increase this part of our church. Parts of the church would love to see more participation in prominent social issues facing the world today.**

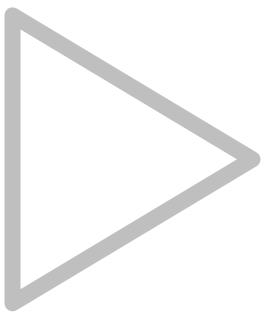
Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

*For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?*

**In the past year we had a community outreach cookout that was open to all. We had a volunteer committee, with a small budget, that planned games, live music and food with an open invite to all and marketed to the town of Auburn mostly through word of mouth and social media. We had mixed results where we had people show up and enjoy the hospitality, but we don't have a firm idea if it helped to generate any new memberships or not. We do know it generated a fun safe experience for the patrons mostly from the retirement apartments across the street from the church.**

**Every year we run a church fundraiser where we sell pumpkins that is a twofold charity. It first helps the church raise money and the pumpkins are sent from a Navajo reservation that farm them in New Mexico. Approximately 2/3 of the money raised are then sent to the reservation in NM. It is a community staple and helps drive people from all over to the church's front lawn. We haven't formally used this to address God's calling but would give a good opportunity to do so.**

**At this time we have not put together a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement, however the congregation has spoken about doing this. Now would be a good time to tackle this as we enter a new chapter in our church's history as well as looking to the future.**



### 3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

#### 3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

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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?*

#### **Our Mission Statement;**

**The mission of The First Congregational Church in Auburn and its members is to serve God and to promote His Kingdom. We will provide an open and caring place of worship and fellowship. We will seek to know and do the will of God, especially as that will is set forth in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will proclaim God’s message by word and deed, in this community and throughout the world. We will work and pray for the advancement of knowledge, the promotion of justice, and the reign of peace. We will look with faith for the triumph of good over evil, for the forgiveness of sin and for everlasting life.**

#### **Our Covenant;**

**We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves together in professing our Christian belief and purpose. We promise to prayerfully study the Bible as our rule of faith and practice. We will seek holiness of heart, and entire conformity of life to the requirements of God’s Word. We promise to consecrate ourselves, our time, talents, and treasures to the strengthening of the cause of Christ, in this community, and in the whole world.**

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

**-Our congregation is an active community of participants who share their time, talents, and treasures. Many members serve on committees, often multiple committees. Those who are not committee members often volunteer their personal time in other ways. It is truly a team.**

**-Besides our pastor, our community is supported by a wonderful staff with our Director of Religious Education, Sexton, Parish Nurse, Organist and Choir Director and our Church Secretary.**

**-Additionally, our church is blessed with a widely-respected pre-school staffed with an amazing director and loved teachers.**

**-For the most part, and with gentle reminders, there is healthy communication surrounding needs of the community. This takes place through formal means of regular written communication in the weekly Church Bulletin as well as the Tidings, a monthly newsletter. The DRE connects regularly with the parents through email and texts. The Parish Nurse often provides updates before church. Our Sexton communicates closely with our Trustees for the physical needs of the building. Our Pre-School Director reports twice a year to our congregation keeping us in the loop of this amazing community of 3,4 and 5 year olds. The Organist/Choir Director interacts with the music committee to provide all aspects of the musical ministry of our church. And our Church Secretary.... There are no words to express her outstanding level and style of communication.**

**-Our youth are a valued part of our community. We realize they have many options of places to be at this busy and critical time in their lives. We are honored and delighted that they, and their families, choose the church as an important place in their lives. Our DRE lets each child know they are welcomed and valued and connects them with the broader congregation.**

**-Each year our church has two successful community fund-raisers. While these help greatly with the fiscal health of the church, their larger benefit is that they strengthen internal and external community relationships. In the fall we work with the New Mexico Navaho Reservation on a cooperative pumpkin patch fund raiser. For 4-5 weeks our town-center front lawn is covered in pumpkins. The volunteer Pumpkin Patch chairs coordinate an amazing team of volunteers to staff the patch to serve customers from 10-6 every day. Our local high school Honor Society helps out with the patch during worship service as well as other times. It is truly a community event that extends well beyond our small congregation. The other front-lawn fund-raiser is a yard sale/plant sale that takes place in June. Community members rent tables and our lawn, once again, becomes a place for the community to gather.**

**-The church has been around for over 200 years. During that time it has needed to continuously evolve to remain viable. Yet it has had to keep the core teachings of the faith constant. The church community is united in its mission to keep the church strong through its next phase with a new pastor**

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

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

**Worship is both quiet and reflective as well as active and action-based.**

**The congregation meets every Sunday at 10:00 for 45 minutes to an hour of worship. This varies depending upon the special moments for a particular service. While many would consider the service staid and traditional, it provides a framework which still allows for humor and compassion during the service. We begin with announcements after which Our Music/Choir Director provides an introit and a Call to Worship. The theme for each Sunday is often based on the UCC recommendation for the week, but can change by the person providing the sermon if they so choose. One or two scriptures related to the sermon are read by a lay reader. Music is selected in cooperation with the Music/Choir Director. The choir will sing 1-2 pieces of music during the service, one during the offering and the other on its own. There is a time for “prayers of the people” to offer up prayers of celebration and concern. Children are usually downstairs for Sunday School, but they do join in once a month. A brief children’s sermon is provided during which the children are welcomed to the front of the church and sit on the alter steps with the pastor or DRE in a casual moment of sharing. (Pastor Brian’s lollipops were a big hit and encouraged participation!) Summer worship is more casual. The choir takes a break and music is provided by a soloist or instrumentalist.**

**Special events such as baptisms, welcome of new members, and confirmations are celebrated with the congregation’s participation in vows and commitments. We recently welcomed a new family of members with two teens, one who had been confirmed and the other will join confirmation class this fall. With the family’s permission, the congregation each came to the front of the church to welcome them. Friends and families are encouraged to join us for the celebration.**

**Following each service the congregation is welcomed to a “coffee hour”. While this is not formal worship, it is a time set aside to nurture friendships, share information, and engage in discussion. It is an intrinsic component for developing and maintaining personal relationships within the church community. Committees provide the goodies and make the coffee on a rotating basis during the year, and families volunteer during the summer. Previous pastors have found this a valuable time to connect with a variety of members.**

**Words to describe good preaching...**

- Relatable**
- Respectful/respectable**
- Flexible (open to interpretation)**
- Creative**
- Timely**

- Thought-provoking/conversation provoking
- Focused
- Engaging
- Well-researched and informative
- Inclusive
- Empathetic
- Wise

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?*

**First Congregational Church of Auburn is not alone in its struggle to attract and keep younger people active in our church. This challenge is not a new challenge. For the past few generations (or more) children are over managed and over scheduled and attendance in church/Sunday School is dramatically affected as a result. With the acknowledgment of the challenges that come with education and faith formation, I would like to share with you what we have been doing to alleviate some of these challenges.**

**Outside of creating an environment that young people look forward to being a part of, our education team is always looking past the walls of our classrooms to build a strong bond between our youth and our church. A few of those initiatives include a closing prayer every Sunday, read by a student and delivered to the congregation during coffee hour. For those students who are involved in activities such as sports, scouts, theater and dance, we try to promote those activities and support the children when we can, outside of the walls of our church. Our Confirmation class, which is every other year, works alongside our Deacons to learn all the work that goes into a Sunday worship, to make it run smoothly and effectively. This year, we will be implementing a mentor program that will begin at the confirmation level and hopefully grow to include all youth! Another initiative that we are implementing this year for the first time, is inviting the confirmation class to attend committee meetings. Our hope is that through bridging the gap between all age groups, we will grow relationships and grow bonds that will last forever! By offering the older students' insight into how a church works, behind the scenes, they will want to continue to be a part of making the church successful.**

**The curriculum that is taught to all grades and ages in the Sunday School/Confirmation age group, is Bible based with a focus on the love that God has for us. We talk a lot about forgiveness, acceptance, and choice. Our youngest group is currently learning the parable of the mustard seed. They are learning that the smallest act of love and kindness can change the world for the better, even though we may not see the fruits of our labor right**

away. The junior high classroom recently learned about how God wants us to spend our time. They were all very surprised to see how much of their free time is spent on electronics (phone, iPad, gaming etc). They were all very enthusiastic to discuss what activities we can do in place of mindless scrolling. For example, we asked the children to spend the length of a TikTok video (approximately 2 minutes) in prayer. Our most recent lesson for the confirmation class was to learn each line from the Lord's Prayer and understand what exactly we are requesting and acknowledging from and about God. In all three classes, these lessons sparked conversation about faith, God, the Bible and the church.

**We do not have many young ladies and young men in leadership roles. However, through the above mentioned initiatives and curriculums, our hope is that soon, our church will be flourishing with leaders representing every generation.**

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

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

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?
- **Each Board/Committee Meets 10 months/year for 1-2 hours per meeting**
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?
- **Each Board and/or Committee reacts quickly to get any problems taken care of quickly. We had a leak in the roof above the Narthex and Elevator and the Trustees had it repaired within a couple of weeks**
- 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/No] **Yes**

### **3b. 11-YEAR REPORT**

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



ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC YEARBOOKS



Church#: 786127

Assoc: 905 Schedule: 0 First Congregational UCC Auburn MA 01501

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	206	114	20	0	3	0	7	0	-4
2013	158	105	29	7	9	0	6	58	-48
2014	161	103	30	0	1	11	8	1	3
2015	169	93	34	6	0	6	6	0	6
2016	166	91	38	0	0	3	6	0	-3
2017	174	90	42	3	0	8	3	0	8
2018	160	87	40	0	0	0	3	11	-14
2019	163	90	42	6	0	4	8	2	0
2020	162	51	24	0	0	1	2	0	-1
2021	162	51	24	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	165	66	34	6	5	0	3	5	3

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2012	\$209,971	\$0	\$7,273	\$1,888	\$9,161	\$2,500	\$11,661	3.46	\$221,632	\$129,060
2013	\$210,803	\$0	\$6,107	\$4,823	\$10,930	\$9,516	\$20,446	2.90	\$231,249	\$124,116
2014	\$204,847	\$0	\$1,500	\$14,091	\$15,591	\$4,355	\$19,946	0.73	\$224,793	\$127,903
2015	\$204,897	\$0	\$0	\$4,153	\$4,153	\$4,185	\$8,338	0.00	\$213,235	\$130,352
2016	\$201,777	\$0	\$0	\$6,273	\$6,273	\$4,240	\$10,513	0.00	\$212,290	\$129,292
2017	\$210,619	\$0	\$0	\$335	\$335	\$7,375	\$7,710	0.00	\$218,329	\$136,022
2018	\$206,441	\$0	\$0	\$1,949	\$1,949	\$6,325	\$8,274	0.00	\$214,715	\$138,445
2019	\$214,386	\$0	\$0	\$163	\$163	\$7,681	\$7,844	0.00	\$222,230	\$135,462
2020	\$210,811	\$0	\$2,520	\$792	\$3,312	\$6,163	\$9,475	1.20	\$220,286	\$136,979
2021	\$210,811	\$0	\$2,200	\$1,296	\$3,496	\$0	\$3,496	1.04	\$214,307	\$0
2022	\$248,000	\$0	\$2,000	\$1,524	\$3,524	\$0	\$3,524	0.81	\$251,524	\$140,181

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2017-2022	-5.17	-24.44	-19.05	0.00	166.67	17.75	951.94	15.20
2012-2022	-19.90	-40.35	70.00	266.67	14.29	18.11	-61.53	13.49

Please note: Year values (PP or PPP) may reflect previous information in same year. Christian Education/Park Extension refers to Church School Enrollment for all forms before.

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	168	
Number of active non-members:	429	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	597	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	<b>58%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	<b>26%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Less than 5 years:	<b>16%</b>	<b>YES</b>

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Yes, but close</b>

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	<b>18%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Households with minors:	<b>20%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Single adults age 35-65:	<b>18%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Joint households with no minors:	<b>24%</b>	<b>YES</b>
Single adults over 65:	<b>20%</b>	<b>YES</b>

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>

High school:	90%	YES
College:	60%	YES
Graduate School:	25%	YES
Specialty Training:	15%	
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	50%	YES
Adults who are retired:	38%	YES
Adults who are not fully	12%	YES

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

**The following are some of the occupations of one or more of our church members. Health care professional, talent acquisition/business administrator, Librarian, manufacturer, teacher, paralegal, academic administrator, business owner, banker, sociologist, moving company worker, day care provider, tech professional, insurance agent, delivery driver. Church retirees bring skill sets from their previous and current employment.**

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?

**Auburn is predominantly a caucasian community, and our congregation reflects the town population. There is some representation of non-caucasian and mixed race members. The ethnic heritage of members is not monitored but is more-often casually shared among friends. There are few, if any, non-US citizens, though members express a welcoming attitude toward all races and ethnicities.**

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

**The congregation has not had a recent conversation about welcoming diversity. In September 2023 the town took in a group of asylum refugees. Such events could provide an opportunity for the church to think more intentionally about the role it plays as a christian church in the wider community.**

### 3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	7	Auburn Comfort Blankets
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	6	Pastor and Deacons
Children’s Groups or Classes	30	1 Boy Scout And Cub Scout Troop (100 Years at our church) 2 Girl Scout Troops meet at our church
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	123 & 135	Christmas and Easter
Church-wide Meals	150	Palm Sunday Brunch/Consecration Sunday Brunch
Choirs and Music Groups	15	Adult choir and Bell choir leaders
Church-based Bible Study	20	Interim Minister
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	1/month 1st Sunday	Board of Deacons
Community Meals	90-100	Monthly, Non since Covid
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	9	Board of Ed, Director of Ed and Pastor
Drama or Dance Program	N/A	

Funerals ( <i>number last year</i> )	<b>7</b>	<b>Pastor</b>
Intergenerational Groups		
Outdoor Worship	<b>44</b>	<b>Easter Sunrise Service</b>
Prayer or Meditation Groups		
Public Advocacy Work	<b>20</b>	<b>Homelessness and mental health</b>
Retreats	<b>15</b>	<b>Monadnock Bible Conference</b>
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community		
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	<b>0</b>	
Worship (time slot: __10	<b>70+</b>	<b>Minister/Deacons</b>
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	<b>18-20 weekly</b>	<b>Interim Minister</b>
Youth Groups or Classes	<b>17</b>	<b>YOM - Youth on a Mission</b>
Other		

List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
<b>N/A</b>				
<b>N/A</b>				

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

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Secretary	No	Part time	Trustees	17 years
Sexton	No	Part time	Trustees	7 years
Parish Nurse	No	Part time	Deacons	23 years
Dir. of Religious Ed.	No	Part time	Board Of Education	2 years
Organist/Choir Director	No	Part time	Music Committee	5 years

## REFLECTION

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

**We have a wonderful group of staff members. Our secretary is the most generous and loving individual that you would ever like to meet. Our sexton is always looking to help the Trustees in any way possible to help save the church money on repairs. Our Parish nurse is devoted to the congregation and will especially help the elderly of our church to appointments and an extra set of ears at certain appointments. Our Director of Religious Education is fun and energetic with the children, parents and all congregants. Our Organist/Choir director is a long time musician within our community. Since taking over the organ and piano, even though we have a small senior choir (5-6 adults) we always have a lot of compliments from whomever is in the congregation. One guest who heard the choir warming up before church thought the sound was from a much larger size choir than what went up to the choir stalls prior to the service. We also have a Bell Choir that has been playing over 7 years now and is becoming well established.**

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	<b>132077</b>
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	<b>42805</b>
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i> )	<b>0</b>
Fundraising Events	<b>15208</b>
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	<b>1085</b>
Grants	<b>0</b>
Rentals of Church Building	<b>2430</b>
Rentals of Church Parsonage	<b>0</b>
Support from Related Organizations ( <i>e.g. Women's Group</i> )	<b>22598</b>
Transfers from Special Accounts	<b>7400</b>
Other (specify):	\$
Other (specify):	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>223602</b>

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$ **251,743**

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

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? **36%**

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

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

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

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

**It is gathered through envelopes throughout the year that are in the pews and sent out via our monthly newsletter, The Tidings**

What is the church’s current indebtedness? **Zero**

Total amount of loan debt: **N/A**

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments current?

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

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
<b>2013</b>	<b>Driveway/Parking Lot</b>	<b>\$ 18,000</b>	<b>\$ 18,000</b>	<b>Fully Funded</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>2 New Boilers</b>	<b>\$ 54,000</b>	<b>\$ 54,000</b>	<b>Fully Funded during Covid</b>



If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

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

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign. **Just before Covid struck us in 2020, our steam boiler for the Sanctuary ran out of steam(haha). 2 weeks later is when we closed the church due to Covid. The Trustees met on the front lawn and came up with a plan. Our preschool was going to start again in September/October and we needed to get this installed. With lots of demolition to the old steam system and plumbing for 2 new forced hot water systems, along with removing a 1000 gallon underground oil tank and replacing it with a 1000 gallon propane tank, we were able to get everything done in time for end of October/beginning of November, because here in New England we would need heat. The congregation stepped up to the plate with the capital campaign making it available for the Trustees to get the system in quickly.**

Does your church have an endowment?

**The First Congregational church of Auburn is likely able to maintain its financial stability into the foreseeable future. This information is private to us but we will be happy to fully share this information when we meet face-to-face. The church owns the church building outright. There is no parsonage. The only other property owned by the church is a 5 acre land-locked parcel in town that was bequeathed to the church by a member several decades ago.**

**There were two funds bequeathed to the church. Each has a specific purpose: one to help the elderly of the church and the other to support capital needs. They have no specific rate of draw and are used as appropriate needs arise.**

**The budget is supported by parishioner pledges, the Here We Grow Preschool, and through dividends and interest of invested funds. The preschool operates on its own budget and contributes a portion of their funds to cover expenses incurred by their operation. They are a part of the church and are not a separate entity.**

What is the market value of the assets? **This information is private to us but we will share this information when we meet face-to-face**

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

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

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

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

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$

Investments (other than endowment): \$

Does your church have a parsonage? **No**

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

How is the parsonage used?

Street / City / State / Zip:

Finished square footage:

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:

Assessed real estate value:

Available for minister residence: Y/N

Expected minister residence: Y/N

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Describe all buildings owned by the church: **All buildings at 128 Central St Auburn, MA 01501. Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall. Offices and conference room on 2nd floor. Vestry, HWG Preschool and Education wing along with children's library on 1st floor**

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

**5 Acre parcel off site used by our Boy Scout Troop**

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*).

**Worship Space, Fellowship Hall, Education Wing (both levels)**

**All levels of the church. Fellowship Hall, Education wing are all Handicap accessible along with handicap restrooms on the sanctuary/fellowship hall/education wing floor. Pulpit is not currently wheelchair accessible.**

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

*For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?*

**Budgeting process is completed yearly by the Board of Trustees with the help of the Treasurer**

### **3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

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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. **Bathrooms in the education wing, right off from Fellowship Hall and the Sanctuary, were updated to ADA approved specifics.**

**New Lift/Elevator coming from the parking lot directly into the Narthex for wheelchair and handicap accessibility.**

**New safety approved seat cushions for all pews in the church.**

**2 new boilers installed in 2020 for comfort and savings for the church**

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past. **FCC, along with the world, had to adapt to the 2020 pandemic. Our communication of faith and fellowship remained open in creative ways. The office remained open but secluded and contact for the general needs of the church was managed via prayer, outside gatherings and electronics, Zoom,(especially in the beginning). Zoom is still active each week for those who cannot get to the church. On a positive slant to the chaos, FCC was in dire need of a new boiler system and the timing for its completion was ideal.**

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...." Describe your congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

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

In 1998, FCC experienced a difficult period during the decision to sell the parsonage. There were strong opinions that split the church for a period of time. After the sale, the church as a whole did resolve its struggle and accepted the change.

In the last few years FCC has struggled with retaining and increasing its members. Some believe this is due to a change in our society. For others there is a need for spiritual guidance based on scripture, relative to current times and struggles. As well as regains a sense of spirituality that has been waning in the last few years. The goal in this search remains, with our faith in God, to continue our spiritual growth and remain faithful and active as a church community.

FCC throughout its struggles, has remained active in proclaiming God’s message by word and deed, in this community and throughout the world.

In place are current By-Laws, active Officers and Staff, Committees under the oversight of Church Council; as well as active community groups that utilize First Congregational church in Auburn.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Dr. Kenneth E. Knox	23	Deceased
Rev. Mark Seifried	2yrs Interim Pastor	Y
Rev Duke Gray	6-9 months Interim	Y
Rev. Brain M. Grover	12	Y
Rev. Dr. Virginia Child, Interim Pastor	5 months	Y

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership: **With the Interim ministers after a 23 year minister, change was hard for many people set in their ways. There were certain items that were suggested by the Interim Ministers but were turned down by the church as a whole. For example, the Interim eliminated Christmas music during advent. This was not received well by most congregants as we had always sung this music during advent. Other items went fine and were agreed upon by the church. Previous ministers have tried to provide a bible study and have not been successful. Our current Interim has approximately 20 congregants studying the Bible weekly. Sometimes it takes time to merge ministerial skill sets with the church’s needs and interests.**

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

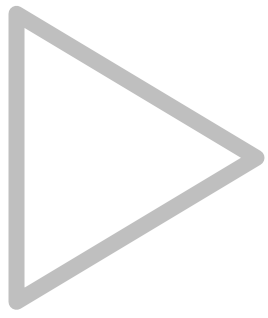
Y/N/Ask us **No**

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us. **No**

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

Y/N/Ask us. **No**



## 4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

### 4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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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?*

**Every year our Board of Christian Outreach have had many wonderful opportunities to support both local and global ministries. This past year they were able to provide financial support for 1.) Veterans, Inc. 2.)Audio Journal, a radio reading service for individuals who are blind, low vision, or cannot access print material due to a disability. 3.)Worcester Area Mission Society (WAMS) meeting the needs of children and families so they can reach their educational and economic potential. 4.) World Central Kitchen (supplying hot meals to Ukrainian citizens). 5.) NEADS World Class Service Dogs. 6.) Dismas Harvest Festival (the farm provides housing and services to homeless former prisoners on a working farm in Oakham, MA where residents learn skills to reintegrate with society. 7.)Auburn Youth and Family Services**

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

**We are having difficulty finding congregants who will participate in these meetings**

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at [ucc.org](http://ucc.org).) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

Accessible to All (A2A)

Creation Justice

- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- Border and Immigrant Justice
- Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M)
- Just Peace
- Global Mission Church
- Open and Affirming (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- Other UCC designations:
- Designations from other denominations
- 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?

**We are always open to discussing different missions within our church**

Describe your congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional). **Each year there was an Ecumenical church service in Auburn, shared by FCC, Catholic Church, and Faith Baptist Church. There was an award given out to the oldest resident in Auburn each year. Unfortunately, since Covid came to our town, this has not resumed at this time**

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.

**Over the years, we have reached out across the world both financially and with in-person help. We sent congregants to Haiti after the devastating earthquake to help rebuild there infrastructure. We have had many children who went on mission working weeks in many states on the eastern seaboard and West Virginia with our Youth on a Mission (YOM).**

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?

**As with all relationships, expectations will evolve with time and the needs of the community. By achieving a better understanding of the church and its current image within the community, the pastor would ideally see opportunity to grow the congregation through reflecting a positive and welcoming identity for prospective members. Active engagement with organizations outside the church gives the pastor insights about the community to share with the congregation. It also provides opportunity to share with those who don't belong to the FCC in Auburn a bit about who the church is and what we represent.**

**Our two past settled ministers have both lived and worked in our town. They have become involved in many aspects of the community such as Fire Department Chaplin, Cemetery Commissioner, and Ecumenical Council of Auburn. There are ministries in and around Auburn, including Worcester Area Mission Society (WAMS), Laundry for Love, Habitat for Humanity, and Dismiss House. Within our community we have Boy Scouts(100 years),**



**Girl Scouts, Here We Grow Preschool, along with community favorites, our Annual Plant and Yard Sale on the Common and our October Pumpkin Patch on the Common. There are many other community opportunities throughout Auburn and adjoining cities and towns that our Outreach Committee has, and is, involved with.**

#### **4b. MISSION InSite**

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

**We see that Racial-Ethnic diversity within the town is reflected in our congregation. Age demographics within our church is staying the same as state averages, but we also see retirement demographics in our community rising. We have a strong group of 30-55 year olds with families in our congregation.**

**Household income is on an upward trend within our area.**

**Education level compared to the state average is higher in our community, which we also see within our congregation.**

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

**Our congregation's internal demographics compares well with our neighborhood. We are starting to see a number of houses within the neighborhood that are listing for sale and turning over very quickly. Auburn is a highly sought after community for its central location to get anywhere within the state rather quickly**

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

**Our past ministers have encouraged us to keep involved with our community. We have had community suppers that were well attended. We share our space with outside organizations from the community. We have an annual yard sale on our front lawn (Auburn Center) that includes a plant sale that friends and neighbors split there perennials and give to our church for the sale. We still collect food on Communion Sunday that we donate to the food pantry at Auburn Youth and Family Services. At one point we had our own food pantry but since Covid hit, we had limited participation and gave it up to donate to other food pantries.**

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

**Temporary Town Clerk Ginger Bureau - Highly involved with community, The Pumpkin Patch, HWG trick or treat, kids outside on lawn playing, lots of parents at pick-up, Been around a long time, grandparents got married there**

**Fire department Headquarters (secretary not from Auburn) - Reverend Knox was the fire Chaplin for years, Pumpkin patch**

**Auburn Water Department (Paula) - Day Care, HWG. Community service with yard sales, Project Linus, past Saturday dinners, Pumpkin Patch, Troop/Pack 101**

**Town manager's office (Sue Strozina) - Choir, Campfire Sunday, Christmas Eve service 11pm, Weddings, Funerals, HWG preschool, Pumpkin Patch, community yard sale, suppers.**

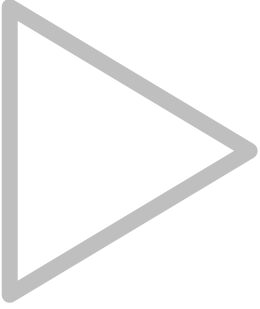
What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

**Brian Castellano - The youth program, proximity to my home, people we know that are members, HWG preschool experience, They are very welcome and open.**

**Marilyn England - I visited the church and felt very welcomed each Sunday, The main reason I joined was because of Pastor Brian, I enjoyed his sermons and found them inspiring.**

**Patricia Hilbert - Grew up baptist, called Faith church in Auburn and got no response. Called FCC on a Sunday morning before church to inquire about the church. Not only did someone answer, it was Pastor Brian himself. Feels the congregation is very welcoming**

## 5. REFERENCES



### REFERENCE 1

**Cristi Corey, Director, Here We Grow Preschool, Preschool within our church  
508-832-8184 - [director@herewegrowpreschool.com](mailto:director@herewegrowpreschool.com) - Not a member of the church**

### REFERENCE 2

**Shannon Henry, President/Funeral Director Britton Funeral Home, Inc.  
508-835-6226 - [shannon@brittonfuneralhomes.com](mailto:shannon@brittonfuneralhomes.com) - Not a member of the church**

### REFERENCE 3

**Andrew Roy, Scoutmaster, Boy Scouts of America Troop 101  
774-696-7713 - [ajroy83@yahoo.com](mailto:ajroy83@yahoo.com) - Not a member of the church**

### REFERENCE 4

**Sharon Stein, Scoutmaster Girls Scouts of America Troop 65016  
508-832-4571 - [SharonS614@gmail.com](mailto:SharonS614@gmail.com) - Not a member of the church**



First Congregational Church

128 Central Street

Auburn, MA 01501

508-832-8184

Website: [www.herewegrowpreschool.com](http://www.herewegrowpreschool.com)

Email: [director@herewegrowpreschool.com](mailto:director@herewegrowpreschool.com)

I am the Director of the Here We Grow Preschool at the First Congregational Church in Auburn. We are an outreach program of the church, I have been at the school for 15 years and have seen 3 ministers during my time here, 2 interim and 1 permanent. Over the last several years I have seen The First Congregational Church in Auburn do a great job with community outreach, they have run a food pantry, community suppers, offer a lending service for medical equipment and have offered flu/covid clinics. They are there to provide support and guidance to the preschool as a whole and to our staff individually as needed. The church benefits from strong leadership who get involved in the community.

One area of improvement the church could benefit from is more involvement from its membership. There are many wonderful people in the church community, and it is always the same people getting involved. I know life is busy for everyone but without more involvement from new/younger members they are going to burn out the individuals who are getting involved.

The preschool is an outreach of the church, we have a board of Directors made up of both parents and members of the church. As the Director of the school I meet with the board monthly, and have been able to mend the relationship between the school and members of the church community through our willingness to listen and work with the church to make improvements within the building.

This is a wonderful community of people who want their church community to thrive and succeed, they would benefit from a minister who is interested in being involved both within the church and community at large and is willing to listen to as well as bring new ideas and new excitement to the church.

Sincerely,  
Cristi Corey  
Director, Here We Grow Preschool  
508-832-8184



**Reference:**

Shannon M. Henry, President/Funeral Director – Britton Funeral Homes, Inc. of Auburn and Shrewsbury, MA - (508) 832-4420

[shannon@brittonfuneralhomes.com](mailto:shannon@brittonfuneralhomes.com)

**Funeral Director in the Town of Auburn**

Throughout my funeral career of 35 years at Britton-Wallace Funeral Home, and in my time serving the community of Auburn, I've seen many wonderful attributes of the First Congregational Church and its members past and present. The church has always been a friendly, close-knit neighborhood church community, with clergy/ministers and many members who have been well respected for their countless contributions to the Town of Auburn. At times, even without a minister at the pulpit in the interim, I have seen that the deacons, trustees, boards and committees of the congregation have continued to work together to provide as a "Giving Church" to all who were ever in need in the community.

In many other nearby communities I work in, I see many churches closing because of non-participation and lack of continued pledging/funding; it's so heartbreaking to watch. I don't believe with my whole heart, that I will ever see this happen to The First Congregational Church of Auburn, because of its deep-seated history in the town and its strong- faithful loving members.

It seems that the world has changed considerably in just a few short years. Change can be difficult, and it takes time to make new considerations and improvements in all things we do in our lives, including religion. I do believe that diversity of all sorts and fresh perspectives will bring new members into the congregation for its continued longevity and common good. I would like to commend the church and its' faithful members for all their hard work, in the past many years, in beginning and continuing to restore the beautiful center church – it has been noticed!

648 MAIN STREET, SHREWSBURY, MA 01545  
508-845-6226 508-842-0061 FAX

91 CENTRAL STREET, AUBURN, MA 01501  
508-832-4420 508-832-2007 FAX

POST OFFICE BOX 198, AUBURN, MA 01501  
[WWW.BRITTONFUNERALHOMES.COM](http://WWW.BRITTONFUNERALHOMES.COM)

The church sponsors flea markets, church suppers, coffee hours; events that continue to bring people together, it's so wonderful to see these activities continue. During my career, I have met so many younger individuals that had attended the Here We Grow Preschool, another fantastic way the church gives back to the town by means of providing a welcoming and safe space for the children of our community. Personally, I always look forward to driving up South Street turning onto Central Street and seeing all the pumpkins perfectly displayed on the front lawn of the scenic white church, it's a cheerful sign of autumn. Again, this is another fantastic annual event for the community that the dedicated members of the church organize, provide man-power, and continue to support nationally the Navajo Nation.

Most recently, I have experienced the very compassionate side of the First Congregational Church and its' members by providing a family who was in need of a larger faithful setting to have the funeral of their young daughter – and I lovingly thank the church, clergy and its' members for helping this beautiful family in their time of need.

In conclusion, I look forward to continue working with the interim minister, Rev. Virginia Child and whomever is chosen as the new candidate for the permanent position of Pastor of the Historic First Congregational Church of Auburn.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon M. Henry".

Shannon M. Henry,

President/ Funeral Director

Britton Funeral Homes

Auburn & Shrewsbury, MA

508-832-4420

**Troop 101**  
**128 Central St**  
**Auburn, MA 01501**

**RE: Reference for the First Congregational Church of Auburn**

**January 28, 2024**

My name is Andrew Roy, Scoutmaster for BSA Troop 101 affiliated with the First Congregational Church in Auburn, MA. Troop 101 is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a registered Scout Troop here in Auburn. Although that is an impressive statement on its own, I can also tell you that it has also been with the same chartered organization for all 100 years! As you can probably guess, it is in fact the F.C.C. of Auburn. In my opinion this speaks volumes not only about the strength of the congregation but the ministers that have led them through history. The troop and the church have always had a wonderful working relationship, understanding our commitment to the values and duties to God, family and the community in which it resides.

Since I have been involved with scouting at F.C.C. I have witnessed the church's ministries and what they have to offer. They have a very close congregation in which you can see after the service during coffee hour with much of the congregation staying to socialize with one another. The quilting ministry that provides handmade quilts to comfort children in need has been ongoing for many years. The Here We Grow Preschool which resides at F.C.C. has been providing early education to Auburn and surrounding communities for over 30 years. From Yard Sales to potluck suppers to the annual fall pumpkin patch there always has been a sense of pride and community. These are just some examples at what this congregation has to offer.

As with any religious organization in this current world, congregation numbers are not what they used to be. The congregation to me seems to be getting older with very few younger families coming for service. It is my hope that a new minister can renew one's faith in God, bring in a younger generation so that this church can continue to sustain itself and all it does for the community and have a continued relationship with Troop 101 for another 100 years. Please feel free to reach out to follow up with any questions that you may have.

Sincerely yours in Scouting,

Andrew Roy

Cell: (774)696-7713

Email: [ajroy83@yahoo.com](mailto:ajroy83@yahoo.com)

I have been a part of the First Congregational Church of Auburn's extended community for the past 12 years. While I am not a member of the church itself, I do reside in Auburn, my family has been connected to the Here We Grow Preschool on site, and I am currently the leader of a Girl Scout troop that meets at the church throughout the year.

My first experience with the First Congregational Church came when I was touring preschools for my oldest child in 2011. I was immediately impressed with the church grounds themselves, the general appearance and upkeep of the building, and the space provided to the preschool. It was obvious that much care was taken to make the space inviting and inclusive, not only by the preschool staff, but also by the church itself. There were signs of church life everywhere thanks to the colorful bulletin boards announcing events, the kids' art projects from the Sunday School program on full display, and the friendly demeanor of everyone I came into contact with. I was immediately sure that this was the kind of environment that I wanted for my children. Over the years while my children were at Here We Grow and I served on the Parents Board, and later when I became a teacher at the school, I had the privilege of getting to know and work with some of the church leadership. Their interest in the school and the community it served was always evident. They clearly valued the program and the connection to the greater Auburn community that it enhanced.

For the last 6 years I have been a Girl Scout leader for my daughter. When we suddenly lost our meeting place and had to find a new home for our troop, I did not hesitate to reach out to First Congregational. I knew that they had hosted scout troops in the past, and I hoped that they could find space for us. Again, I was impressed by the church leadership's willingness to help and accommodate us. We have been meeting at First Congregational for two years now, and couldn't be happier. Communication is always timely and clear, guidelines and procedures are thoughtful and well implemented, and the space itself is taken care of exceptionally well. We are thrilled to call First Congregational our scout home.

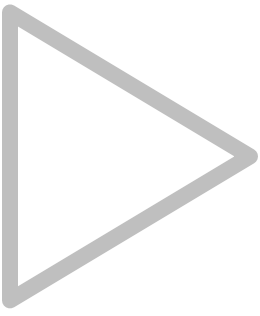
Holding our meetings at First Congregational has also made me more aware of the number of scout groups and other community connections the church is involved in. Over the years, First Congregational Church has provided my family and my scouts with numerous opportunities to help their community. There are often coat drives, food drives, or toy drives being implemented to help local families. There are opportunities for community service through volunteering at the annual pumpkin patch, building a little library, or planning a new garden for the preschool. First Congregational Church is an active church working to connect with and serve their greater community.

It has been my pleasure to be part of First Congregational Church's extended Auburn community, and I look forward to continuing that connection in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

Sharon Stein  
508-832-4571  
SharonS614@gmail.com





## 6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

### 6a. CLOSING PRAYER

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

***My God, my helper,***

***Please guide this pastoral search committee in selecting a pastor that is lead by the Holy Spirit.***

***Help us to honor you during our journey.***

***Provide us with candidates who are faithful in Your Word.***

***We have turned to you in this time of uncertainty so that our faith in you will be a beacon of inspiration and courage.***

***Lord, please bless us with a mutual respect for each other, as we navigate through our differences and find common ground.***

***All this we ask with a sincere heart.***

***AMEN***

## 6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)*  
**Pastoral Search Committee, Church Secretary, Treasurer, and Deacons with help from our Interim Minister**
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:  
**Please contact either of the Co-Chairs of the Pastoral Search Committee if you have any questions concerning this Local Church Profile**

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

**Ronald L Hanks Co-Chair Pastoral Search Committee and contact person**

**Shannon Hartman Co-Chair Pastoral Search Committee**

## 6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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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: *Rev. Carol Steinbrecher*

Title: Area Conference Minister, North Central Region, SNEUCC

Email: [steinbrecherc@sneucc.org](mailto:steinbrecherc@sneucc.org)

Phone: 508-244-4887

Date: February 15, 2024

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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*