
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The First Church of Christ New Haven, CT

CHURCH PROFILE

February 16, 2024



**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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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)*

Position Information

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST NEW HAVEN
ALSO KNOWN AS CENTER CHURCH ON THE GREEN

311 Temple Street, New Haven, CT 06511

<https://www.centerchurchonthegreen.org>

Southern New England Conference, New Haven Association

Margret Hofmeister, Area Conference Minister, Southwest Region

Email: hofmeisterm@sneucc.org Phone: 860-761-7198

Summary Ministry Description

Center Church currently provides, and historically has provided, an exceptional context for enlightening and fulfilling religious experiences. With its long history of leadership in the New Haven religious community and its centrally located facilities, Center Church is naturally able to offer a beautiful and striking setting for worship and celebration. Despite the small size of the congregation, Center Church makes a meaningful contribution to the community by engaging in acts of charity and service for persons in need. We believe that our theological and philosophical diversity reflect aspects of the New Haven community and are a strength of our church. The primary challenge facing Center Church is the task of building our membership and presence in the community. Despite setbacks, the members of our congregation have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to maintain and build the church as an institution and community, and the determination to do the job. We seek an experienced candidate whose past accomplishments demonstrate a track record of success in the area of congregational growth and revitalization to fulfill our current priority of rebuilding membership and lay leadership “bench size” after a period of loss.

Setting

Centrally located between New York and Boston, New Haven offers the panache of a big city, with a far lower cost of living. New Haven prides itself on offering residents an array of world-class cultural offerings and attractive, affordable living options. It is the most populous, and most economically significant city in the Greater New Haven region. With a population of approximately 135,000 and a median age of 31 years old, New Haven's current population is one of Connecticut's most diverse and fastest growing. Home to four universities and colleges including Yale and its medical school, it is no surprise that the primary economic drivers are healthcare, higher ed, arts and tourism.



New Haven is a true cosmopolitan city with a diverse population, world class restaurants, educational and cultural resources, historical richness, New England charm, and, of course, the best pizza in the country. Its most important resource is its diverse, vibrant and engaged citizenry who are agents of change on a variety of cultural, civic and social justice issues.

To learn more about what greater New Haven has to offer, please visit the link below:

<https://visitnewhaven.com>

Scope of Work:

We are seeking a full-time, settled Minister and offer a total support package that meets conference compensation guidelines. Bi-vocational candidates will not be considered.

Duties include:

- Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding and finding lay liturgists, coordinating with the Director of Music and Church Council, preaching, offering of prayers, and planning for special holiday services;
- Faith formation and vitality through prayer, service, and development of programming relevant to the congregation;
- Leadership development by working with people in the church to create community, ministry, programming, and fellowship opportunities outside of regular Sunday services; providing training for lay leaders;
- Pastoral care in collaboration with and without lay people, including initial outreach to members who no longer attend regularly, and potential new members; visiting hospitalized and homebound members;
- Community engagement and church growth: challenge people to commit to Christ and to Center Church through preaching and through calls to invite them into membership, and to represent the congregation in those activities in the community which will help to strengthen and grow the church at large in its task of proclaiming through word and deed the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
- Weddings and funerals for the community;
- Strategic planning for current and new directions in identity, ministry and church growth;
- Meetings attendance and leadership as needed to boards, committees, and church programs in collaboration with lay leadership, i;
- Wider church activities: participate with laity in representing the congregation in the community and Conference;
- Church and Office Administration;

-
- Faithful financial development and stewardship; help to redefine the scope and duties of administrative staff positions and supervise them in a manner that will facilitate the ministry of the church, foster creative talent, and advance their growth (including regular and timely evaluations); oversee the day to day functions of the church office and use of the buildings;
 - Special worship programs, and representation of the church to local organizations, including acting as church liaison to our Parish House tenant, the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen;
 - Counseling, listening and referral;
 - Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve leadership, teaching and preaching skills ;
 - Energizing and deepening the spiritual connections and faith understanding.

Core Competencies

- **Self-motivated and Energized:** Able to function as a team leader to initiate activities and programs to excite and engage the congregation and community.
- **Collaborative:** Able to work well with others and work through times of friction and disagreement.
- **Compassionate:** Able to minister to those in need of spiritual and emotional care and support.

Compensation and Support

Salary and Benefits: The salary package offered is \$90,000 to \$120,000, with flexibility for exceptional candidates. Benefits include pension contributions, medical and dental benefits, sick leave, generous vacation leave, and sabbatical.

Housing: A housing allowance is offered since the church does not have a parsonage. We have a strong preference for a Minister who is engaged in the community and who will live in New Haven. However, we are willing to be flexible on this issue for the right candidate.

Peer and Professional Support: Clergy situated in the New Haven Association benefit from several sources of support. The Association clergy meet periodically for fellowship and mutual support. The Association Committee on Ministry is the point of contact for ministerial standing and periodic reviews. The COM encourages participation by Association clergy. The Association is the geographic home to Yale Divinity School and Andover Newton Seminary @ Yale Divinity School; the latter institution provides opportunities for continuing education. This Association is part of the South West Region of the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ. It cooperates with neighboring Associations on professional programming and support. The Southern New England Conference offers continuing education and professional development, along with direct professional consultation through the Area Conference Minister..

Who is God Calling to Minister With Us?

We are searching for a minister who, in partnership with the congregation, will:

- Work with the congregation to create and maintain an environment in the greater community that nourishes the spiritual life of the church through worship, music, and programming;
- Create a congregational culture of care for members as well as the broader community;
- Reestablish Center Church's role as a community faith leader and active participant in addressing issues of hunger, justice, and other social issues facing New Haven;
- Grow the membership and participation of the congregation;
- Reengage members, especially our young adults, who no longer attend or actively participate in church; and
- Grow Center Church's presence in and engagement with the New Haven community.



We seek an experienced minister whose past accomplishments demonstrate a call to the unique challenges and rewards of full-time parish ministry. Our ideal candidate would

also have a track record of success in the area of congregational growth and revitalization--including experience in ministerial oversight of operations that are in some way equivalent in complexity to ours, especially with regard to stewardship demands and the current need to prioritize rebuilding membership and lay leadership after a period of loss.

Center Church is progressive in its polity and inclusiveness, but traditional in its worship. The Search Committee believes that, especially in this geographic area, this identity represents a unique asset and “niche” we have to offer to potential members, rather than a liability.

Our church membership has been deeply invested in the community of New Haven since our founding in 1638 and we seek a minister who will represent us locally. Candidates should be willing to reside in the Greater New Haven area and to be a visible presence for the church, particularly towards the goal of attracting wider membership.

As a Congregationalist-heritage church unique in having a strong historical identity--and responsibility--as The First Church of Christ in New Haven, we would also prefer candidates who can share a genuine personal and professional interest in church history. This is especially critical given the collective discernment we are looking forward to entering together as a prominent local historic and cultural institution at the turn of yet another century.



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?

Our goal is to provide space and support for the congregation and community to live the gospel, love God and our neighbors as ourselves, and establish a more just world. By pursuing these goals, we hope to remain relevant, faithful to Christ, and responsive to our own members and to those searching for meaning in their daily lives.

In this post-pandemic period, we hope to grow our presence as an institution of faith in the New Haven community. We seek a pastoral leader who can work with the congregation to develop a clear vision and programmatic strategy, strengthen our work in professing our faith, and increase our effectiveness in addressing issues of social justice. We hope that through these efforts, we can position Center Church to attract new members and encourage active participation in worship and missions.

Who Are We Now?

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

Congregational Reflections

Our life of faith is best characterized in our Covenant:

We covenant together in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures and as manifested in our experience, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us.

We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all the world, exalting the worship of the one true God and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human unity.

With this Church we covenant to worship faithfully and share its sacraments; to give it of our substance and ourselves; to walk with all its members in sincerity and love; and to work and pray for its increase, purity, and peace.

Depending, as did our forebears, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the Kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.

Congregational Strengths

We feel that Center Church currently provides--and historically has provided--an exceptional context for enlightening and fulfilling religious experience. With its long history of leadership in the New Haven religious community and its centrally located facilities, our church is naturally able to offer a beautiful and striking setting for worship and celebration. We also feel that, despite the small size of our congregation, our church makes a meaningful contribution to the community by engaging in acts of charity and service for persons in need. We believe that our theological and philosophical diversity reflect aspects of the New Haven community and are a strength of our church. The sharing of our facilities with the community is part of our longstanding tradition of making sure we remain available as “New Haven’s meeting house” after all these centuries.

Worship

Worship services are held in our historic Meeting House located on the New Haven Green and are centered around a spiritually engaging and thought-provoking sermon. Communion is offered on the first Sunday of the month and administered by individual cups. The New Revised Standard Version Bible is used for Scripture readings and in the pews. The Pilgrim Hymnal is used as our primary hymnal, and the New Century Hymnal for music not found in the Pilgrim Hymnal. An important part of our worship is our robust and sophisticated music program that includes vocal and instrumental soloists and special programs for the holidays. Children are a welcome part of services with a play area in the rear of the sanctuary. Following services, we share a time of fellowship, coffee, and finger foods in the back of the church.

Our congregation values preaching which challenges us and makes us think. A sermon should be Biblically based and illustrated, and it should set forth a clear position on faith and its role in daily life. We appreciate a sermon that reflects considerable care in composition and is delivered skillfully. Scholarly and literary illustrations are very welcome at Center, but more important to us is a sermon crafted with the agenda of connecting with the spiritual needs of those in the pews.

Christian Education

In recent years, we have not offered any adult or youth educational programs. We are seeking to call a leader to work with the membership to develop meaningful youth and adult Christian education experiences and events so that the congregation can continue its spiritual growth, and so that we can offer opportunities outside of Sunday services to welcome potential future members into our community of faith.

Church Organization

Center Church revised the bylaws to provide for a single Interim Governance Council composed of Church Officers and members at large. The Council assumed all responsibilities of the individual boards and committees listed in the bylaws. The Council meets monthly and conducts all business of the Church and is responsible for leadership and decision-making. Copies of Church bylaws and policies are available upon request.

11-Year Report

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC
YEARBOOKS**



Church#: 782842

Assoc: 932 Schedule: 0 First Church of Christ in New Haven, UCC New Haven CT 06511

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	72	51	4	3	0	0	5	3	-5
2013	70	33	20	0	1	1	4	0	-2
2014	73	37	5	0	0	3	0	0	3
2015	62	33	2	0	0	3	5	9	-11
2016	59	33	2	1	2	2	6	2	-3
2017	61	29	3	0	0	2	0	0	2
2018	60	23	0	0	0	2	3	0	-1
2019	59	23	0	0	0	2	3	0	-1
2020	37	24	0	0	0	1	2	21	-22
2021	37	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	37	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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	\$615,516	\$0	\$20,500	\$2,180	\$22,680	\$39,402	\$62,082	3.33	\$677,598	\$42,852
2013	\$569,853	\$764,271	\$20,500	\$2,588	\$23,088	\$31,656	\$54,744	3.60	\$1,388,868	\$36,079
2014	\$492,278	\$1,977,337	\$20,500	\$1,331	\$21,831	\$22,891	\$44,722	4.16	\$2,514,337	\$35,343
2015	\$621,743	\$403,642	\$21,525	\$376	\$21,901	\$35,452	\$57,353	3.46	\$1,082,738	\$27,848
2016	\$568,117	\$172,454	\$21,756	\$996	\$22,752	\$18,452	\$41,204	3.83	\$781,775	\$16,991
2017	\$539,614	\$81,346	\$22,000	\$2,240	\$24,240	\$6,500	\$30,740	4.08	\$570,354	\$21,492
2018	\$582,518	\$0	\$5,500	\$6,215	\$11,715	\$1,800	\$13,515	0.94	\$596,033	\$16,356
2019	\$582,518	\$0	\$15,500	\$6,763	\$22,263	\$1,800	\$24,063	2.66	\$606,581	\$16,356
2020	\$414,866	\$761,019	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$169	\$169	0.00	\$415,035	\$3,576
2021	\$414,866	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	\$0	\$10,000	2.41	\$424,866	\$0
2022	\$414,866	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$414,866	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2017-2022	-39.34	-17.24	-100.00	-100.00	0.00	-23.12	-100.00	-27.26
2012-2022	-48.61	-52.94	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-32.60	-100.00	-38.77

Please note: Zero values ("0" or "\$0") may reflect missing information in some years. Christian Education/Faith Formation refers to Church School Enrollment for all figures before 2007.

Note: Due to staff turnover, reports were not submitted to the UCC for 2021 and 2022.

Congregational Demographics

Church Participants:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Number of active members:	39	Actual
Number of active non-members:	12	Actual
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	51	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
More than 10 years:	43%	Actual
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	19%	
Less than 5 years:	40%	

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
4%	10%	6%	2%	12%	12%	18%	18%	18%

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		Is this number an estimate?
Single adults under 35:	4%	yes
Households with minors:	10%	yes
Single adults age 35-65:	15%	yes
Joint households with no minors:	33%	yes
Single adults over 65:	38%	yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		Is this number an estimate?
High school:	13%	yes
College:	42%	yes
Graduate School:	46%	yes
Specialty Training:		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		Is this number an estimate?
Adults who are employed:	57%	yes
Adults who are retired:	2%	yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	41%	yes

Racial Diversity

Caucasian	African American
64%	36%

Participation and Staffing

Ordained Participants

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev Richard DenUyl	3	Transitional Minister	Transitional Minister	No
Carolyn Young	No		Associate Member	Yes

Current Staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Transitional Minister	Yes	Full Time	Governance Council	2 years
Business Administrator	No	Part Time	Minister	1 year
Music Director	Yes	Part Time	Minister	2 years
Church Secretary	No	Part Time	Minister	1 year
Sexton	No	Part Time	Minister	3 months

Church Finances

The following information provides a general overview of Church finances. It is provided to demonstrate the stability and strength of the Church as a Christian institution capable of enduring long into the future and to highlight the resources available to increase Christ's presence in the community. More detailed financial information will be made available to those candidates who are considered finalists in the selection process.

Current Annual Income

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$5,000
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy)	\$453,000
Other (specify): Other Donations	\$108,000
TOTAL	\$566,000

Current annual expenses

		Comments
Salaries and Administration	\$291,000	
Buildings and Maintenance	\$173,000	Includes expenses in support of on-site soup kitchen
Music	\$65,000	
Mission	\$35,000	This is in addition to expenses in support of Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen
Programming	\$2,000	
Total	\$566,000	

Center Church's budget reflects our continued support of the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, including providing rent free facilities, all utilities, and a recent program of major capital improvements to the kitchen and dining rooms. We feel this mission both

directly addresses and supports other community efforts tackling one of the most important issues facing New Haven: hunger.

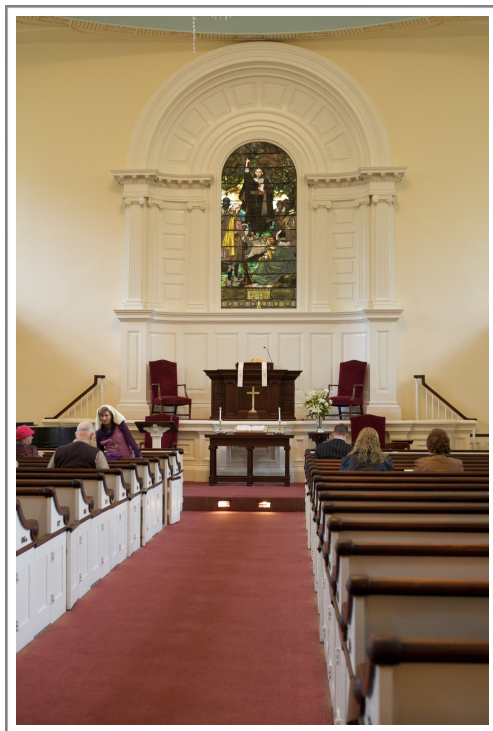
Center church has no indebtedness and has never failed to pay its financial obligations to any vendor, staff or Minister.

Church Buildings

"Our meeting house is not a museum or a work of art, simply to be enjoyed or admired. The church will have a much wider outreach in the community if its function is not only to serve as a place of worship on Sundays, but as a true Meeting House, a place where citizens can gather to discuss important matters or to celebrate great events. Such was long one of the purposes this building served, and to restore it is an end much to be desired."

Dr. Edmund Ware Sinnott, on the vision for Center's renovation campaign (1960)

The Meeting House is a stately brick building completed in 1814, with a capacity of 640. It is prominently located at the center of the New Haven Green and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Meeting House basement also houses a crypt that contains original 17th, 18th, and 19th century monuments marking the remains of New Haven's early citizens. (The crypt is overseen by a separate non-profit organization that maintains the crypt and conducts tours.) The Parish House is a



Victorian-era mansion built in 1860 with a major addition (the Pratt Hall Ballroom) completed in 1912. It contains offices, a library, meeting rooms, a small chapel, a basement dining room currently used as a soup kitchen, a ballroom, sitting rooms, and a third-floor apartment that is currently vacant, but has been used as a Sexton's residence in the past. Renovations to the Parish House were recently completed, and a major project to repair and restore the Meeting House steeple and roof is currently under construction.

Both the Parish House and the Meeting House can be accessed by wheelchair, however, the Meeting House ramp is not ADA compliant.

Historical Information



The Reverend John Davenport led the first formal service of our church on Sunday, April 25, 1638. He delivered his sermon under an oak tree on the Sabbath shortly after he and his fellow settlers landed in what was to become the New Haven Colony. Davenport and his Puritan followers arrived with the dream of founding a theocratic "New Jerusalem." To gain

a sense of how our history continues to define us, see *Appendix A, Old Colony Sunday Address Delivered May 7, 2017* by our church historian, M.R. Georgevich.

Since the church's founding, there have been many significant happenings that have shaped the identity of the congregation. Chief among them are:

- 1742 - A split in the congregation caused by the Great Religious Awakening, and resulting in the forming of another Congregational church on the New Haven Green;
- 1971 - Merger with Edgewood Church; and
- 1999 - The adoption of the principle of being an open and affirming congregation.

An event that has shaped the congregation more recently was the 2015 effort led by the Regional Minister to encourage Center Church to merge with three other nearby churches to address the issue of shrinking UCC membership at the local level and the fact that there are four other UCC churches within a half-mile radius. After a period of sharing services, joint confirmation classes, and some Christian education efforts, the majority of the congregation came to appreciate our distinctive approach to worship and the intimacy of the Center Church community even more. The congregation ultimately did not support the merger, and our participation was withdrawn. In 2017, the other churches involved voted to maintain independent identities rather than merge. However, the merger exploration process resulted in a loss of membership from those who were uncomfortable attending rotating worship services and those who chose to transfer membership to one of the other participating churches. The members of our congregation who weathered this experiment and those who have joined since have demonstrated a solid commitment to maintaining and growing the church as a faith community.

Conflict

In 2015, a division in the congregation occurred when the minister and the Board of Deacons attempted to revoke the membership of an outspoken--and to a few, offensive--member of the congregation who served as Clerk and Treasurer. The process for revoking the person's church membership was not transparent, fair, or in compliance with the church's governance documents. The broader congregation reacted with alarm at the extreme nature of the response from the minister and Deacons to dealing with the situation. The Deacons reluctantly rescinded the action, and the matter was eventually resolved by the Moderator, who organized a small group to meet with the member in question and explain how and why her behavior needed to change. Subsequently, this member made every effort to improve, and successfully repaired relationships within the church. From this sad and trying episode, we learned the value of adhering to our governance documents, and that to survive as a healthy Christian community, we need mature mediating leadership and honest, open, and fair communication with one another.

Ministerial History

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Richard DenUyl	2021-present	Y
Matthew McCaffrey (Transitional)	2020-2021	Y
Kevin Ewing (Interim/Bridge)	2017-2020	Y
Sandra Olsen- Settled	2005-2015	Y
Thomas Leinbach (Interim)	2005	Y
Joseph Neville (Interim)	2003-2005	Y
Shepard Parsons, Settled Co-Pastor	1991-2002	Y
Patricia Carque, Settled Co-Pastor	2000-2002	Y
Campbell Lovett, Settled Co-pastor	1991-1995	Y

Reflections on Ministerial History:

Center Church has experienced departures by past ministers for a range of reasons, including personal issues, age, and misalignment of goals and the future vision of the church. The Church weathered those transitions and grew and learned from them. Our experience has been that the strongest and most successful relationships between the congregation and ministerial leadership occurred in the presence of ministers gifted with strong interpersonal skills and mature, caring, and conciliatory ways of communication and mediation. We have learned that we need to rise above our differences, emphasize our strengths and what we have in common, and be courteous and civil but open, frank, and direct with one another and with the pastor in all our dealings as a church community. We recognize that we cannot productively dwell on controversies and issues of the past, and that we need to focus our energy and attention on making the church what we need it to be: a Christian community that is centered on Sunday worship, responsive to the spiritual needs of its members and their children, and responsible in its stewardship.

Reflections on Ministerial Leadership:

The congregation has changed dramatically over the past decade in size and composition. The last 10 years, in particular, have seen the number of active members dwindle, with a handful of dedicated lay leaders shouldering more and more of the lay responsibilities of church life. More than ever, lay leaders need to be able to look to the pastor for spiritual guidance and for practical advice in their particular areas of responsibility based on the pastor's experience with other congregations, with private groups, and with the UCC.

Effective pastoral style in our church must begin with firm, knowledgeable leadership. Because we are a theologically and philosophically diverse community, the pastor must be thoughtful enough to consider many divergent perspectives on many issues, sensitive enough to discern and develop possibilities for consensus without discouraging dissenters, and strong enough to forge consensus and unite the congregation for forward movement. Openness and honesty in communicating with individual members and the congregation are vital. By example, the pastor must establish that, within the church community, candor and respect are the benchmarks for effective discourse about ideas and issues.

Who is Our Neighbor?

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

Community Vision

Center Church seeks to connect with the community on three primary issues: poverty, hunger, and homelessness. Our commitment is demonstrated through our support of key non-profit service providers in the New Haven community:

- Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, a secular non-profit serving hundreds of meals and pantry bags per week to guests from around the greater New Haven area from its full commercial kitchen, pantry, and dining hall located in our Parish House basement;
- Columbus House, a homeless shelter that also “offers a broad array of programs and services for individuals, families with children, and Veterans who are experiencing homelessness” in the greater New Haven area

The church has participated in missions primarily through financial aid to chosen existing organizations that are dedicated to advocacy and service in the areas of our identified focus issues. We seek to call a pastor who will assist us in broadening opportunities for more collaborative and hands-on roles in mission activities, especially in cooperation with other UCC and ecumenical efforts in the community. We expect that the new pastor would support members of the congregation in continued involvement in the above activities and choose additional ones with the congregation's assistance.

Another way that we have grown our relationship and service to New Haven is by opening our facilities to the community. Major renovations to both Church-owned facilities have allowed us to better serve the greater New Haven community through our shared use of the renovated spaces. The Parish House is made available as needed to community organizations approved by the Council and Minister. Pre-COVID regular users were the Morris Dancers, various support groups, non-profit community meetings, the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, educational programs, and performing arts groups. The same is true of the Meeting House, but to a lesser extent. The Meeting House is also used to celebrate local community events such as Powder

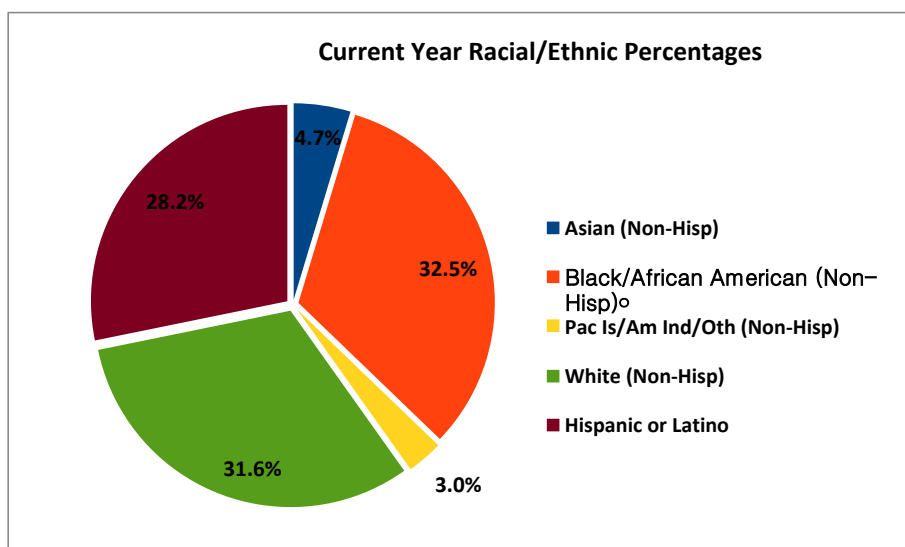
House Day, the City of New Haven’s Memorial and Veterans Day celebrations, and musical performances.

The Church also extends its reach through participation by pastors and members in the Southern New England Conference of the UCC and the New Haven Association. We expect the pastor to represent our congregation and to support members’ involvement in these and other interfaith and ecumenical activities.

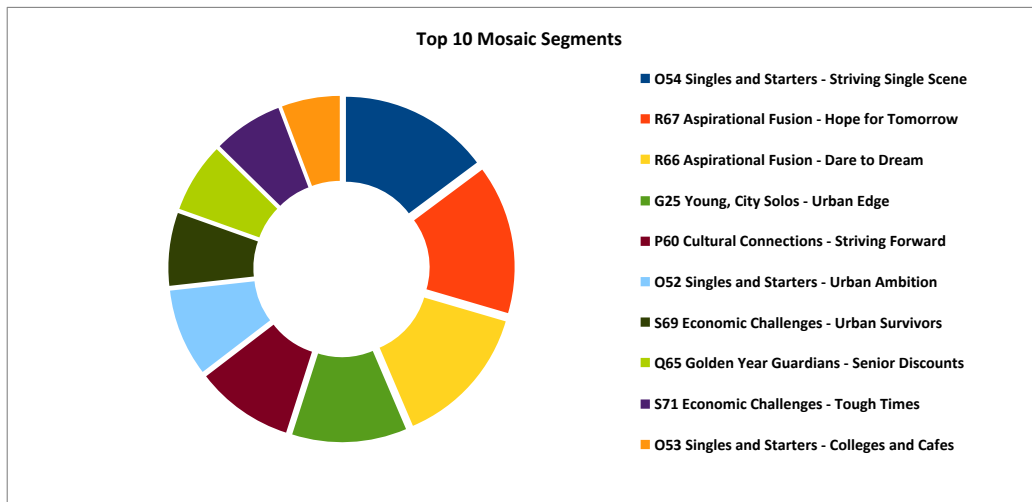
While our current involvement with other institutions significantly dropped off during the pandemic, in the past we held joint confirmation classes with nearby UCC churches and hosted and attended joint services around Christmas and New Year's. We are seeking a minister who is comfortable establishing and fostering relationships with other ecumenical institutions in the area to strengthen our connection to other faith communities.

Mission InSite

New Haven is a fast growing, diverse and lively city with a local government and community that prioritizes equity and social justice in all areas of civic life. The population is diverse with a roughly even balance between Blacks, Whites and Hispanics.

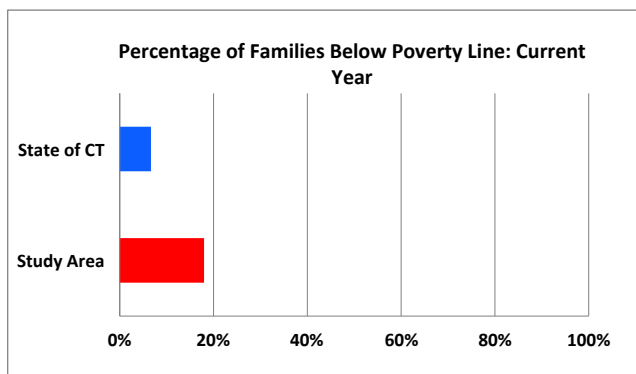


Center Church is centrally located in the heart of downtown where thousands of residential housing units have been built in the last 5-7 years. These units, which are within a quarter-mile radius of the church, along with the Yale residential population present a very real opportunity to increase church membership among those within walking distance of the church. The new housing tends to be occupied by well educated "meds and eds" associated with Yale and New Haven's growing biotech market.



The downtown population growth has taken place largely through new construction on vacant parcels remaining from the federally funded Redevelopment Plans of the 1950's and 60's and has resulted in minimum displacement as a result. Some of New Haven's neighborhoods, on the other hand, tell a very different story of the City. The poverty rate for families is significantly higher than the state average, as shown in the table below. Over 26% of children in New Haven live below the poverty level. The homeless population is visibly noticeable in the center city. As in most cities, the need for services

and ministry is great, and New Haven has been blessed with a large number of social service and faith-based organizations to help meet the need.



Poverty Level	Pop	Area % Pop	CT % Pop
Above poverty level	21,445	82.0%	93.3%
Below poverty level	4,700	18.0%	6.7%
Total	26,145	100.0%	100.0%

Closing Thoughts

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22

The search for a new minister is not an easy task in the best of times, but it is particularly difficult during this post-pandemic period. Like all churches, the pandemic disruption resulted in a drop-off in church attendance to the point where it is now critical for us to reestablish our connection, identity, and relevance to the community. Our small numbers will pose a challenge, but we feel that by pairing discipleship with growth, we will succeed. We look forward to working together with a pastoral leader who welcomes transparent and open communication and who is willing to work in trusted partnership with lay leaders to bring us back into conversation and community. We hope to emerge stronger from this post-pandemic transition to grow in faith and support each other and our community. We are blessed with the resources for the journey and look forward to the future that God has planned for us.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11

References:

Lawrence Zukof, Long-time professional choir member. zukoflawrence@gmail.com

Carolyn Young, Associate member, retired minister. youg59@yahoo.com

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.

Signed: Nicholas Mignanelli, Vice-Moderator

Validation by Conference/Association

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

Staff Comment:

Type to enter text

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

Staff Comment:

Type to enter text

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

Staff Comment:

Type to enter text

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Rev. Margret Hofmeister*

Date: February 16, 2024

Margret Hofmeister, Area Conference Minister, Southwest Region

Email: hofmeisterm@sneucc.org Phone: 860-761-7198