

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



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

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE **HALF TIME PASTOR**

First Congregational UCC
Whiting, Iowa

Iowa Conference of United Church of Christ

Northwest Association

February 26, 2024

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

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

INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

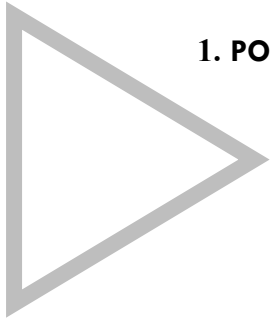
The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – WHO ARE WE NOW, WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR, and WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME – are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. Known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

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

Your conference can provide materials referenced in the Local Church Profile, such as the 11-Year Report containing data as reported by your congregation annually to the UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite reports containing demographic information on your community. More information on types of pastorate in the United Church of Christ can be found in the Call Agreement Workbook. Be sure to use the Call Agreement Workbook's Scope of Work to describe in this Local Church Profile the position being sought.

When it is time for ministerial search, the conference can counsel you on posting the Local Church Profile together with your public listing at UCC Ministry Opportunities (<http://oppsearch.ucc.org>).

The last page of the Local Church Profile contains a statement that parallels the consent statement signed by ministers in the UCC Ministerial Profile. In keeping with the covenantal relationship between a church and those it seeks to call, this statement encourages an open, honest exchange of information. On behalf of the United Church of Christ, and on the basis of the best knowledge available to them, your conference staff will validate your completed Local Church Profile when it is ready to be shared in relationship with prospective new leaders.



1. POSITION POSTING

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

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: First Congregational UCC
Street address: 429 Whittier Street
Phone Number: 712-455-2475
Email Address: fconwhiting19@gmail.com
Whiting, Iowa 51063

Supplemental web links: <https://sites.google.com/site/cityofwhiting/whitingucc>
Pictures [Church/Parsonage Pictures](#)

Additional ecumenical affiliations:
None

Conference: **Iowa Conference**

Association: **Northwest**

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Rev. Jonna Jensen – Associate Conference Minister), 563.357.7287 jonna@ucctcm.org

Summary Ministry Description:

Our goal is to be a church where everyone is welcome no matter who or where they are on their faith journey. We seek a pastor who partners with us in caring for our members, reaches out to our local community and explores new ways to adapt to the ever changing world.

What we value about living in our area:

Our members value the small size of our community. We are located on Interstate 29 between Sioux City and Omaha. Both cities offer many opportunities for entertainment and employment. We have a hospital within eight miles, pharmacy, and full service grocery store in Whiting. Other businesses include a bank, hair salons, post office, and various agricultural services. Whiting also has a fire and rescue squad. Our small town also includes a nursing home and assisted living facility, a beautiful public library, city park and our own K-12 school under one roof.

Current size of membership: 151

Languages used in ministry (other than English): None

Position Title: Pastor – Half time

Position Duration:

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:

½ Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

We are seeking a pastor who is welcoming, community focused, and desires to minister beyond our walls. We are also looking for a pastor who possesses good communication and leadership skills and who has the ability to work well with others in a compassionate, caring way.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis: Cash salary within the Conference Guidelines

Benefits: Salary includes Optional Benefits

What is the expected living situation for your next minister:

We have a very nice parsonage.

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

We hope to have our new pastor live in our parsonage but are willing to be flexible.

State any incentives: Negotiable possibilities: Time off the week after Christmas.

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

Northwestern Association of the UCC, area ministerial groups, Iowa/Nebraska/South Dakota
UCC Tri-Conference Ministries

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

Our church is willing to make adjustments to support a Pastor in a shared or bi-vocational position.

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.

Spiritual Growth

- *Be a spiritual example for Christians to follow
- *Help church grow spiritually through good Bible instruction
- *Make church services inspiring and enjoyable

Partnership

- *Develop enthusiasm for the members to participate in church activities
- *Work to partner with area churches to conduct services and needed projects with the help of lay people

Caring

- *Visit shut-ins and elderly once a month and those hospitalized (if requested). Right now that is less than 5 people. Contact may be in person, by phone or send a card.
- *Touch base with inactive members with the help of our lay people

Communication Skills

- *Build a connection with members and attendees by getting to know them inside and outside of worship service
- *Open and good communication with members and attendees of all ages

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

Lead by Example

- *Be involved and connected to the community as time permits
- *Continue our involvement at the Pleasant View Care Center-lead a short worship service once a month
- *Help give direction to the congregation that will enable our church to grow

Outreach and Mission

- *Opening our church doors to the community through community projects, and mission projects including Siouxland and world-wide projects with the help of our lay people as time permits

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

None

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. [Ordained Minister's Code](#)

We would like our new pastor to:

- * Loving God, following Jesus Christ, and being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship.
- * Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
- * Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity.
- * Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership.



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?

As a congregation we want to:

- *be actively responsible and financially supportive
- *be open-hearted
- *put our faith into action
- *be a positive and continuous learner

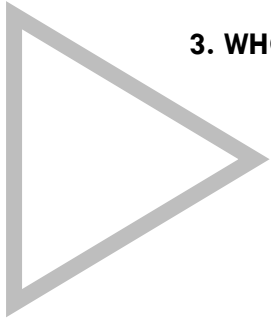
Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

Challenges:

- *increase our membership and be appealing to all age groups
- *aging population
- *financial stability
- *encourage our younger members to be involved

Opportunities:

- *innovative programming
- *open to challenges and ready to assist our community
- *up-to-date technology for use at services



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

We do our best to follow our Mission Statement: “As believers in God and followers of Christ, we are led by the Holy Spirit to serve, care, teach and proclaim the gospel to all people.”

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Strengths/Positive Qualities of Our Congregation:

- *we are a close-knit small community and feel a calling to help everyone
- *we reach out to people even if they are not members – we welcome all
- *the “Care Team” is a very positive part of our church for all ages
- *we support local needs and mission projects
- *active “Women’s Fellowship”
- *we work well together

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Traditional but relevant to modern times. We greet each other as we enter the sanctuary and visit before the prelude starts. We incorporate a Children’s Message during the service. We usually have scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments with sermons lasting approximately 15 – 20 minutes. We like to do “Passing of the Peace”, Offertory and Doxology. We do still like the “old” hymns but are open to contemporary music too. The congregation is asked to offer “Joys and Concerns” and that is followed by a prayer for those concerns and the Lord’s Prayer. We also like to have a Fellowship Hour following worship for more socialization.

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

Our young people and youth participate when asked.
 Confirmation – taught by minister and lay leaders every other year.
 Occasional Adult Bible study – can be chosen and led by lay people
 Women’s Retreats – themes chosen and developed by lay women

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?
 1-2 hours
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

In the early 90’s, we experienced a 13 inch rain which quickly started to fill our church basement with water. Several men of the church immediately worked to cut a hole in the concrete floor of the basement and installed a sump pump to empty the water. With wet vacs and many fans the problem was solved. Thankfully that has never happened again!

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

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

Year	Total Membership	Confirmations	Confessions of Faith	Reaffirmations of Faith	Letters of Transfer	Total Additions	Deaths	Transfers	Other Removals	Total Losses	Adjustments	Total Membership (Published)	Children Baptized	Adults Baptized
2023	153	4				4	2	1		3			2	
2022	152		2	1		3	3			3		152	1	
2021	152	2				2						152	1	
2020	150		1		1	2	1	3		4		150		
2019	152			3		3	5	1		6	-2	152	3	
2018	157	6	4			10	5	1		6		157	1	1
2017	153						2			2		153		
2016	155	7				7	4	3	1	8		155	2	
2015	156						1	3	33	37		156		
2014	193	5	5		2	12	3			3		193	3	
2013	184						5	2		7		184	5	

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	85	Yes
Number of active non-members:	5	Yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	90	Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	80%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	10%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	10%	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
5	5	6	4	10	7	11	26	15	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	10%	Yes
Households with minors:	22%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	14%	Yes
Joint households with no minors:	28%	Yes
Single adults over 65:	26%	Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

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

High school:	10%	Yes
College:	21.2%	Yes
Graduate School:	9.6%	Yes
Specialty Training:	59.2%	Yes
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	34.09%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	57.58%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	8.33%	Yes

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

Health Care Agriculture Finance
Non-Profit Professional Education

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?

We do have differing political views, economic and educational levels but strive to respect our differences. We consider our congregation mono-cultural.

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:

We have had casual conversations about diversity and what it means to welcome everyone. Nothing formal has ever been proposed. We view everyone as equal children in the eyes of God.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	TBD	Lay leaders
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	1 class	Board of Christian Education
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	40-50	Pastor w/Deaconhood
Church-wide Meals	30-40	Lay leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	0	
Church-based Bible Study	TBD	Pastor or Lay leaders
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	Monthly	Pastor w/ Deaconhood
Community Meals	N/A	
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	4	Pastor & Lay leaders
Drama or Dance Program	N/A	
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor w/ families
Intergenerational Groups	N/A	
Outdoor Worship	2	Pastor & Deaconhood
Prayer or Meditation Groups	N/A	
Public Advocacy Work	N/A	
Retreats	N/A	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	
Weddings <i>(number last year)</i>	0	Pastor along with couple

Worship	15 - 25	Pastor or Supply Pastor
Young Adult Groups or Classes	N/A	
Youth Groups or Classes	1	Lay leaders & Pastor
Other		

Additional comments:

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

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Doug Handeland			Lay Minister (graduate of Center Learn)	no

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

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position

REFLECTION

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

Our congregation is composed of long-time members, adults and youth. We are very active in missions, both locally and world-wide. We would like to create and support more church activities for all ages.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$58,775.51
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	Need Approval For All
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	Need Approval For All
Fundraising Events	\$2,500
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants	\$0.00
Rentals of Church Building	\$0.00
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0.00
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$0.00
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$8,178.75
Other (specify):	\$
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$69,454.26

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

Whiting Budget For 2023

OUR PASTORAL MINISTRY 2023 Budget

Pastor's Salary	20,000.00
Social Security	2,088.45
Travel Expenses	2,500.00
Parsonage Utilities	4,200.00
Hospital Insurance	
Family Protection	409.50
Continuing Education	250.00
Annuity	3,822.00

	33,269.95

OUR MINISTRY TO THE WORLD

O.C.W.M.	4,500.00
Local Mission	2,000.00
Seminary	500.00
Total	7,000.00

OUR EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY

Church School	1,100.00
Vacation Church School	600.00

Total	1,700.00

OUR MINISTRY AT HOME

Heat And Electricity	5,700.00
City Bill	600.00
Music	600.00
Stewardship/Worship Supplie	800.00
Office Supplies	2,000.00
Custodian Supplies	500.00
Telephone	1,500.00
General Maintenance	2,500.00
Flower Fund	150.00
Insurance	10,785.00
Per Capita Dues	500.00

Total	25,635.00

Over-all totals **67,604.95**

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 49.21%

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%)

OCWM, CUE and local missions are line items in our budget. The amounts are agreed upon at the Annual Meeting of the congregation each January.

What is the church’s current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$0.00

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
	No	\$	\$	
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

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

		\$	\$	
--	--	----	----	--

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

Does your church have an endowment?

What is the market value of the assets? \$159,000

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

As needed with approval of the Church Council for major expenses which are not part of the operating budget, for youth activity expenses, and for educational expenses.

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

2018: 2%; 2023: 1%

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: **None**

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

indefinitely

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: :

The endowment fund was created in 1983 with a generous bequest from a loyal church member. Since then earnings from the fund have been used as needed and approved for expenses such as replacement of the church heating system, replacement of the church roof, installation of an elevator, and for many projects to maintain or improve the church building and the church parsonage. In addition to the many thousands of dollars spent for maintenance and improvements, the principal of the fund has grown from \$115,000 to \$159,000. Earnings from the fund are also used for youth activities and for pastoral and congregational educational purposes, with the approval of Council.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): **\$125,000**

Investments (other than endowment): **None**

Does your church have a parsonage? Yes

Church/Parsonage Pictures

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: \$1,200
How is the parsonage used? Parsonage
Street / City / State / Zip: 409 Plymouth Whiting, Iowa 51063
Finished square footage: 1,568
Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: 3 Bedrooms, 2 Bathrooms
Assessed real estate value: \$143,356
Available for minister residence: Y/N
Expected minister residence: Y/N
Condition of structure, systems and appliances Excellent
Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs Trustees

Describe all buildings owned by the church: None

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? All areas except the pulpit

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

Our congregation has always been good stewards of our finances and are faithful supporters of missions. Following our stewardship drive in November, a Budget Committee meets to formulate a new budget for the next year. The Church Council votes on the new budget and then it is presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting in January for a final vote.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

Our church building was built in 1911 not only to fill our own spiritual needs but also to meet some of the community's needs. Our present Fellowship Hall was built as a gymnasium, which held our school's extracurricular activities. The remodeled kitchen on the south end of the Fellowship Hall once served as a two-lane bowling alley. The pastor's study is quite large because for years this part of the building was the city's public library serving our community and surrounding area. In the past few years we have updated the kitchen, restrooms and fellowship areas. An elevator has also been installed to serve all areas in the church.

In 2004, ten very diverse members of our congregation were challenged to "Let It Shine". Each member was given \$100, not our money but God's money entrusted to them to reach out into the community and touch lives.

Our members have helped whenever needed. The 2011 flood as well as the recent flood in 2019 saw many members filling sandbags, cleaning and cooking to help our neighbors.

(Please check our website for more historical information about our church.)

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

Our church is working to use our technology more. Five years ago screens were installed in the front of our sanctuary and power points, etc. can easily be projected there. We use it for music as well as bulletins. We have begun to live-stream services and have them available on Facebook. We use texting, Facebook and email to correspond with our members, too.

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.

We try not to dwell on our differences, but strive to focus on the common good of our church and church family. The guidelines we follow are our "Covenant With One Another" that was written five years ago. (refer to our webpage)

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Jessie Lent	2	Yes
Nea Stepp	2.5	No
Reva Karstens	15	Yes
Patricia Minnick	4	Yes
James Stroh	9	Yes

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

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

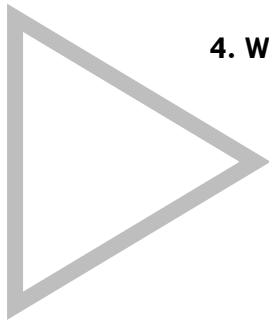
Y/N/Ask us

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us

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

Y/N/Ask us



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

We pride ourselves in reaching out to others. We participate every year with a CROP Walk and all of the five missions of the UCC. We have a very active “Care Team” in our church that celebrates joys and shares in concerns of our members. Other activities include “Warming Shelter”, School Supply Drive, “Tree of Love”, county food programs, various Orphan Grain Train projects, “Laila Mae’s House” (human trafficking) and Water Project.

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

Over the years, we have had clergy and lay people serve on various association committees and several members have attended association meetings. Several years ago we hosted an association meeting.

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

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

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

Yes

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

We participate in "World Day of Prayer" with other churches in our county. We have hosted community and area cantatas several years directed by our choir director as well as helped coordinate July 4th worship services in our city park. Every fall we host a worship service at Blue Lake (a lake nearby) and have a potluck followed by our CROP Walk. Our lay people also lead the Sunday morning service at the Pleasant View Care Center once a month, along with helping with Bingo and their Tuesday afternoon worship services every month.

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

We do a good job as we are "led by the Holy Spirit to serve, care, teach, and proclaim the gospel" in all of our activities.

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

Our expectations include pastoral care and visitation, engaging sermons and some community outreach.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

No report

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 community is very small. Our congregation is representative of the people in our community.

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

We strive to serve our members and the community around us. When there is a need to try to fill it.

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

Our congregation is known for its caring of others. We also have a rich musical history.

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

The friendliness of our members and traditional services have attracted some people. Our church family strives to be there whenever anything is needed.



5. REFERENCES

Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: “The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions.”

Make sure they are not members of your church but are persons who know your church well enough to be helpful to candidates seeking more information. Request a letter from each reference in answer to the four prompts below. Attach the letters (up to three) as desired.

REFERENCE 1

Jeffrey D. Thelander; Superintendent, Maple-Valley-Anthon Oto Community School, Adjunct Professor, Morningside College, Teaching Team, Sunnybrook Community Church (Sioux City)
(712)490-2649 jthelander@mvaoschool.org pulpit supply

REFERENCE 2

Reva Karstens; Former Pastor
(712)-223-0540 pastorreva@gmail.com

REFERENCE 3

Jody Still Herbold, Pastor Salem Lutheran Church Correctionville, IA
Education Consultant and “fill in” pastor
712-490-0322 stillherboldj@gmail.com

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.

January 14, 2024

I am writing this letter in support of the First Congregational Church in Whiting, Iowa and their search for a new pastor. I have helped fill the pulpit at various times at Whiting UCC from 2019-present. I also grew up in Whiting and have known many of their congregants personally for most of my life. As many of the Whiting UCC congregants have been teachers, neighbors, and friends as far back as my childhood until today, I believe I can speak clearly and candidly about the strength of this church and the people who serve in it.

The First Congregational Church in Whiting is comprised of 30-40 core members who are dedicated to local ministry in the Whiting area and they support ministries beyond Whiting. They have active outreach at the Pleasant View Nursing Home in Whiting and they support ministries such as the Orphan Train. The congregation has active lay leaders who dedicate their talents to organizational leadership within the church, to preparing visual print and music production for weekly Sunday services, and to various studies and community fellowship activities. The core congregants of this church are some of the most dedicated and kindest people of faith that a minister could ask to work with. I understand the challenges that small, rural community churches face in finding ministerial support and I believe that this church would provide great support and stability for a potential minister.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey D. Thelander

First Congregational UCC, Whiting, Iowa

Letter of Reference for 1st Congregational U.C.C. Whiting, IA

I served as pastor of the Whiting Church from September, 2000 until my retirement in May, 2016. First Congregational Church, U.C.C. has many strengths. The congregation has long had strong lay leadership. The people work to keep the church both functional and vital. They have some treasured traditions but are also receptive to new ideas. During my years with them, we tried a number of new programs, worship variations and mission and outreach ventures. Some of those have become regular parts of the congregation's ministry.

The congregation does not have much conflict. When conflict or discontent becomes evident, the congregation does well at handling the conflict. They work to discern the real issues and to resolve those. The people are, for the most part, tolerant of diverse opinions and personalities.

The congregation is warm and welcoming. They have a strong sense of community and genuinely care for one another. They are there to support one another in times of struggle.

The church also is mission minded. They give both money and time to the wider church and to local mission and justice ministries.

Like many small town churches, the church faces a declining membership due to attrition. They have struggled with having a ministry that can attract children and youth.

I have enough memories and examples of Whiting's ministry to fill pages. I'll share a couple. One year we took the High School Youth Group to serve a meal at a homeless shelter in nearby Sioux City. One of the girls was very concerned about the mattress situation in the sleeping quarters. She and some others in the group decided to invite the congregation to join them in raising money to replace some of the mattresses. They were successful in their effort.

After a visioning session for the entire congregation, a Care Team was formed. The team met regularly to find ways, to encourage, to thank, to support and to provide for specific needs. When I injured my back and was house bound for two weeks, they arranged for meals which my husband could reheat and serve when he got home from work. The Care Team is an ongoing ministry to the church and community.

I hope that pastoral candidates will give serious consideration to First Congregational Church U.C.C, Whiting, IA.

Rev. Reva B. Karstens

Pastor Jody L Herbold
Lead Pastor of Salem Lutheran Church
712-490-0322
stillherboldj@gmail.com

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

I have been so impressed with the love and acceptance this church offers to those visiting. First Congregational UCC opens their hearts and arms to those wanting to learn and develop a relationship with Christ. In addition, the congregation dearly loves their church family and will do whatever it takes to keep this church functioning and reaching out to the community. Lastly, I would describe this church as small but mighty!

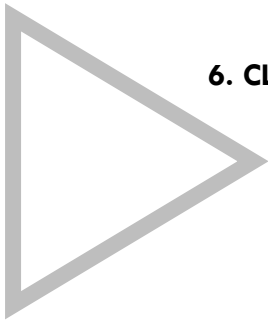
Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.

First of all, it is a little difficult to assess what the church needs to improve on since I was only there once a month at most. With that being said, I do think they could do a better job of reaching out to others to share what they have going on in their church. I do think social media could help in spreading to the community and outside communities what great things are happening in the church. I am not sure if the church shares much in the local paper, but this could also be an avenue to get word out to those seeking a welcoming church family.

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

The people here are so welcoming and appreciative to those who walk through the doors. Each time I gave a message, I had people shake my hand and share what they learned during the message and I received many hugs. To be honest, I miss these people very much. I lost my beautiful husband January 5, 2023 and this church reached out to me in my grief in so many ways. I will forever be grateful for them! In addition, they were open to work with me as I developed my messages and offered the use of technology which I feel is helpful. They also do not hesitate to help people in times of need, and they offer prayers for those needing them. Lastly, I am honored that I had the opportunity to share Christ's love in this church and whomever decides on leading this church will be blessed beyond measure.

In the Good Shepherd's name,
Pastor Jody L. Herbold



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Help us along our path to find a new pastor to meet our needs. Grant us patience and wisdom in our decisions. Help us be open-minded and understanding. Our past traditions are very important to us yet we look to the future for new possibilities as we strive to show God's love and faithfulness to all people.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

We feel that our "Vision Statement" should be shared with you at this time:

Our church is striving to be a haven for all God's people. All are invited to be in partnership, sharing a common Lord, a common spirit, a common call to ministry, a common life together. We seek to serve the needs of all God's people, practicing what we have learned and received from Jesus Christ so we may celebrate as one family.

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

The work in this profile was done by the Search Committee of First Congregational, UCC in Whiting, Iowa. The committee conducted surveys of our membership by email, mail, phone calls and in-person conversations.

Signed:



Suzanne Brenden, brenden_farms@yahoo.com

Fran Haack, franwh63@gmail.com

Co-Chairs of Search Committee

2-26-24

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: **Yes**

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

Staff Comment: **Yes**

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

Staff Comment: **Yes**

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Jonna Jensen* Type text here

Name / Title: Reverend Jonna Jensen, Associate Conference Minister, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota

Email: Jonna@ucctcm.org

Phone:

Date: 3-12-24

This document is created
Church's Wider Mission
through the covenantal
the United Church of Christ.

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



through support to Our
(OCWM) and is only possible
relationships of all settings of

"Jesus answered them, 'Have faith in God!'" – Mark 11:22