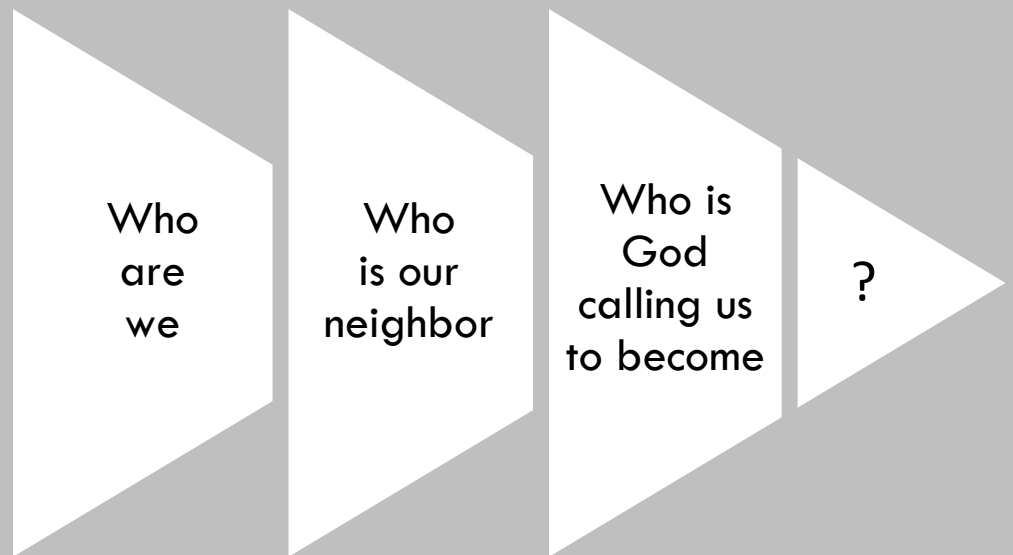


## Search and Call Tools for Congregations

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

South Congregational Church  
East Hartford, CT

Pastor

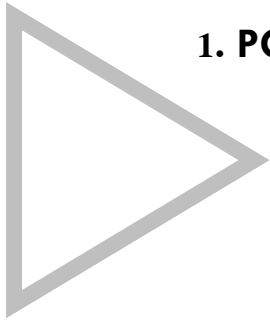
Southern New England Conference, Hartford East Association

March 12, 2024

### LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- Who Are We Now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
- References
- Consent and Validation

*“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)*



## 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: South Congregational Church

Street address: 1301 Forbes Street, East Hartford CT 06118

Supplemental web links: [www.southucc.org](http://www.southucc.org)

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

Conference: Southern New England

Association: Hartford East

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person (Rev. Isaac Lawson, ACM South Central Region, 860-761-7188, [lawsoni@sneucc.org](mailto:lawsoni@sneucc.org))

#### **Summary Ministry Description:**

As a faith community, we are in the midst of exploration, to discern the church God is calling us to be. In March 2023, our church council discussed their reactions to a PowerPoint Lunch & Learn presentation the Southern New England conference created to help churches discern their future. In October 2023, we held a half day envisioning retreat in our church library to start a conversation with the congregation about the future of South Church. We continued this effort with a church wide survey leading into the search and call process to understand the congregation's priorities for us as a faith community and a new settled pastor. These efforts have met with varying degrees of engagement, and we will be conducting further sessions as we prayerfully consider the future of our church.

Our hope is to find a Pastor who can partner with lay leadership in innovative and creative ways to evaluate our mission and ministries to ensure we are effectively engaging with the community in addressing their needs. We seek a pastor who is willing to help us make an impact in the community and in our faith journeys by encouraging members and friends to use their gifts in service to others. We desire to grow this congregation so the benefits we have enjoyed from living our faith will continue well into the future.

Building Exterior



Sanctuary



Christmas Concert City Singers of Hartford



South Church Preschool



Christmas Eve 2023



Stained Glass Window created by members



## **What we value about living in our area:**

The Greater Hartford area features a capital city of medium size that has cultural attractions, night life and sporting events that are easily accessible. We are also between two major metropolitan areas, Boston & New York City, for additional excursions. Proximity to the rest of New England is a short distance away as well.

**Current size of membership:** 127

**Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):** N/A

**Position Title:** Pastor

**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:**  $\frac{3}{4}$  Time

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

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Like many churches, we were impacted by the pandemic, were slow to respond, and have not fully made our way out of the wilderness. As a church, we are at an inflection point where it is obvious that we need to be open and willing to embrace a new way of thinking about church. Our 11-year report and the responses from members to our church wide survey indicate that we need to rebuild as a church. Growing our membership was the number one response when the congregation was asked about the future of our church.

Therefore, a top priority for our new pastor as outlined in the Call Agreement Workbook is:

- **Strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry**

There is a genuine love for this place we call South Church and a desire to see the blessings of this faith community continue into the future. Our challenge is in finding a spiritual leader who can help us coalesce around a shared vision that turns our dreams into reality. We also are looking for the Pastor to partner with church leadership for ways to increase congregational vitality and grow our membership.

Another priority for the congregation is to find a candidate who can deliver sermons that relate the lessons in the Bible in a context that is relevant to our everyday lives. Therefore, another priority is:

- **Worship leadership and preparation and sermons that feed our souls**

In order to maximize our effectiveness as a community of faith in living our mission beyond our walls, our next pastor needs to be open to sharing their ministry with the laity of the church and be willing to **develop our leadership skills**. We need to take an introspective review of our mission and ministries to see how we extend them into a partnership with the wider community. Our survey results indicate that many members thought that **community engagement** was important, although our thinking differed as to what that meant and the extent to which the Pastor needed to be involved.

Our choice as a congregation is between a traditional view of what church is and the pastor's role as preacher, teacher and visitation, or a more progressive view that invites the community into our midst and envisions a higher level of engagement in the community, where South Church partners with other organizations to address areas of common concern. Ideally, this would involve more direct contact on a more personal level in servicing the needs of our community and those in need. A partnership between our lay leadership and the new pastor to define a renewed vision of our mission and explore new opportunities and possibilities for what church is, may exceed our wildest expectations. Hopefully, we can work through all of these challenges and set a new direction for South and invigorate our mission and ministries in new and exciting ways.

The areas above are the key areas we want the new Pastor to focus on. There are other areas where we need to set clear expectations regarding time commitment. Those areas are:

- **Pastoral Care** – We have a Caring Ministry made up of volunteers who reach out in Christian love to support, nurture fellowship and maintain the connection to our faith community for those otherwise unable to participate in the life of South Church. This ministry can help assist in meeting the visitation needs of the members of South Church and be a supportive extension of the Pastor's ministry.
- **Administration/Personnel Management** – The professional staff are under the direct supervision of the Pastor. As professional staff they require very little supervision and the expectation is that the Pastor will work in collaborative and supportive ways with the staff; e.g., conduct weekly staff meetings, meet with the Minister of Music for worship planning, and be open to exploring creative and innovative ways to enhance our programming and worship experience.
- **Stay abreast of Conference and Association activities** – This is an area that can be left to the pastor's discretion in consultation with church leadership.

## Core Competencies:

- (1) Strong ability of strategic planning for the growth and life of the church.
- (2) Partner with our staff and church leaders to ensure that the on-going needs of the church are met.
- (3) A people's pastor, willing and able to interface with a congregation of faithful people with all our challenges and differences, with a desire and ability to develop our leadership skills and help us grow in our faith journey.

## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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

Yes

**Salary Basis:** *(from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance):* \$82K – \$95K

**Benefits:** Benefits package is negotiable as part of the Call Salary.

### **What is the expected living situation for your next minister?**

Living nearby with a housing allowance included in the total salary package.

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

Residing within the Greater Hartford area preferably close to the church.

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

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

The Southern New England Conference and the Hartford East Association websites outline the professional and ministerial supports available to UCC clergy.

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

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

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

At this point, we have not fully flushed out a shared vision for the future direction of South Church. We have started a conversation to be deliberate and intentional about that future and developing a shared vision that we as a congregation of faith can coalesce behind. We expect these discussions to continue and look forward to finding a spiritual leader who will partner with us to bring this shared vision to fruition.

We believe the ideal candidate to be our next minister should:

- Promote in all ways the spiritual welfare of the church and those it serves.
- Work well with all age groups.
- Be a good listener and a good communicator.
- Encourage members of the congregation to become more involved in the life of the church in new ways.
- Partner with community leaders to identify how the church can help to meet the community's needs.
- Be a compassionate and caring individual who will meet us where we are, then lovingly guide us to where we hope to go.

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

We believe that the minister we seek should be a people person that the congregation can relate to on a personal level and through the life lessons delivered in sermons. We are not where we need to be in terms of transitioning from the traditional view of what church is, to one more attuned to the societal realities of today. We have increased our outreach in the community and aspire to maximize our community impact to the best of our abilities.

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

East Hartford is very culturally diverse and our congregation does not reflect that diversity. If we are to grow our membership, we need to understand how we embrace that diversity and become more relevant in the fabric of the community. The ability to speak Spanish may be beneficial but is not required.



**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.**

**Building Transformational Leadership Skills:** The church covenants with pastoral leadership to share in the mission and ministry that God makes known to us. For us to extend and multiply the impact of that mission and ministry, we the people of South Church are called to share in that work. What better way than to see ourselves as servant leaders, even though the thought of being a leader is outside most people's comfort zone. One way to overcome that fear is by encouraging people to try something new, to embrace opportunities for growth and to assure them they should not be the first person who tells themselves "I can't do that."

With the right kind of mentoring and coaching, we can build the transformational leadership the church needs to adapt to an ever-changing world that no longer seems to value the tenants of organized religion. We are in uncharted territory and need adaptive leadership that can look for new solutions for growing the church and making it more relevant to people without a connection to a faith community.

**Engaging Sacred Stories:** Everyone loves a good story especially those rooted in our faith in God. We seek a minister who can bring those stories to life and make them relevant to our times and people's daily lives. Whether through sermons or Bible study, this congregation thirsts for a minister with a keen understanding of scripture, and who will encourage our members to grow in their faith.

**Caring for All Creation:** God's creative beauty is all around us, and in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives we often overlook it. Our sanctuary is a place for prayer, meditation and quiet reflection. It is a place to pause and be thankful for the blessings God has bestowed in our lives, to find that peaceful center, and let our stress and anxiety slip away. Self-care and life balance are essential to our overall being, and what better place than church to find it.

**Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation & Ongoing Spiritual Practice:** A minister who has a firm spiritual foundation can share that knowledge and practice with the congregation to encourage them to grow in their faith. We are all connected in the body of Christ by our faith, and the more we learn about that faith can help us strive to be better disciples in serving the Lord.



## **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?**

This is the key question that needs to be more fully developed with the congregation. Most of the respondents to our church wide survey indicated that they see growing the church as being important. More than half also thought that engaging with the community was important. The responses were evenly split regarding the Pastor's role in working with the congregation on these issues. There were also questions about what living our mission beyond our walls means, our capacity to scale it up, and differences of opinion regarding the extent of action required to make progress in these areas. Hopefully, further conversations will allow us to answer these questions and build a consensus for a shared vision for the future.

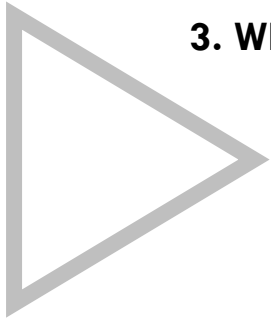
Through our Lenten Love Project, we have learned that sometimes it only takes a small act to raise our visibility in the community and let people know we are here. During the 40 days of Lent (Mon.-Sat.) from 8am-9am, members of the congregation have stood in front of the church waving to passing traffic and holding signs with affirming messages. The response has been overwhelming with return waves, air hugs and beeping horns not to mention the comments on our Facebook page. The public noticed and welcomed our messages of kindness and hope.

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

In the past year, we have ramped up efforts to raise the awareness of the congregation and move to a more service-oriented model that benefits the wider community. We have implemented what we call Service Sunday on the second Sunday of the month, where we invite the public in to be part of a service-oriented activity or a kid-centric event.

We have experienced a measure of success with this effort and since its inception in August 2023 have attracted 34 people from the community to join us for various events. These people are not looking to join a church and are selective in which events they participate in so we have not seen repeat visits. The feedback from our visitors has been very positive and glowing. Some have stayed in contact via email while others are following us on Facebook. Our next event is to host Easter Egg coloring which has already seen 21 RSVPS from the public. We ask everyone to wear name tags, and learned we need to include a start and end time for our events, have enough supplies on hand, and encourage the congregation to interact and talk to our visitors.

The other change we have made is to invite local non-profits to our "Second Hour" presentations that occur after Sunday worship to talk about their mission and answer any questions. The congregation has supported these activities wholeheartedly and have been highly engaged in asking questions during presentations by outside groups. As a follow-up to the presentations, we have organized activities that directly support the group's initiatives; e.g., socks for the homeless and personal hygiene products for families in need.



### **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.**

First and foremost, we are a people who love our Lord, and want to share that love through our worship, and through our caring for those in our midst and throughout the world. We are an Open and Affirming Church; a joy-filled congregation who love attending worship with each other and lovingly embrace all others who come through our doors. It is our Faith in God and our Faith in Jesus that inspires our church membership to Christian fellowship, and service to our community and the world in need.

We have a Caring Ministry made up of volunteers who reach out in Christian love to support, nurture fellowship and maintain the connection to our faith community for those otherwise unable to participate in the life of South Church. Our active Missions Board faithfully serves the local community through our food bank, soup kitchen and partnerships with social workers at nearby schools to address food insecurity and other needs. Our Missions Board also reaches out to the wider world through monetary contributions and heartfelt prayer. We have a Church Growth Board that works in collaboration with other Church Boards to sponsor events open to the congregation and the general public. This increases our visibility in the wider community. We have an innovative and inspirational Christian Education and Faith Enrichment (CEFE) Coordinator who impacts our church life with new, spiritually meaningful and often fun-filled activities and events. Our Church has a strong faith-based professional and laity leadership that has led us through challenging times, and keeps us grounded in our purpose of being a Christian Church.

##### **Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.**

We are a deeply caring and welcoming faith community. We believe that all those who enter our doors, are greeted and invited to share in the blessings and love of Christian fellowship. Strong,

effective leadership with all our governing bodies and staff. A versatile 17-member choir, led by a multi-talented Minister of Music who brings joy and vitality to our worship each Sunday. Our long-time active food bank which has served our community for well over 30 years; our members see that full meals are provided for anyone in need regardless of residential status. We also provide food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas, this past year for needy families at two schools located close to the church.

**Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.**

For the most part, our worship service is based on the traditional UCC format, with scripture and sermons generally following the wider-Church Lectionary. We prepare for worship each Sunday with piano or organ music, a welcome to our congregation and guests, and a greeting of joyful fellowship with each other. We have a 17-member choir, led by a dynamic, young and extremely talented Minister of Music, who helps lead a spirited worship service. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated monthly and open to all. Many members of our congregation help lead worship as lay readers of scripture, the call to worship and prayers.

Once a month we break from tradition and have an abbreviated worship service followed by a service activity involving the congregation. The activities are led by our CEFE Coordinator and based on social and seasonal needs, such as filling backpacks for students and Thanksgiving baskets. Over the course of a liturgical year, we have many special worship opportunities, some traditional to the wider church, and others that have evolved through our own traditions. Whenever we meet for worship, or however we are called, it is clear that our lovely Church and worshipping and serving together are important to us.

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

The foundation of the Christian Education and Faith Enrichment vision for South Church is grounded in relationships. Relationships with a loving God, relationships with the members of this congregation and relationships among the wider community in which we seek to serve. Although babies are always welcome during the worship service, our nursery for infants and toddlers is open on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. This ministry is ideally staffed by nurturing volunteers from this congregation, but admittedly sometimes it is a challenge to identify and retain this level of staffing.

Youngsters ages three to twelve are encouraged to participate in our monthly Service Sundays. These moments for mission are a time for community building, fellowship, outreach, and praise. Whether assembling bags of canned goods for our food pantry clients, hosting a Back-to-School celebration, or making Valentines for our neighbors struggling with an illness, providing

moments for meaningful intergenerational fellowship remains a program goal. Other initiatives that we seek to cultivate include integrating children into the Sunday morning worship experience. Children might be encouraged to act as ushers/greeters, be welcomed to read the scriptures or even asked to lead the congregation in prayer. Collaborating with the Pastor, it is our vision that Moments for Ministry might become part of our weekly worship experience as well. This is not a moment for children, or even a children's sermon, but instead another way of introducing the scriptures or a lesson to all members in an interactive and meaningful way. The use of props or music and movement activities are integrated to engage all members of the community, whether they are three or one hundred and three.

A more formal Sunday School model is observed on the fourth Sunday of the month. Children ages three to twelve are invited to share stories about their week, engage in a craft activity or help plan for service projects or other church ministries. We have created donation boxes to collect a variety of goods for our neighbors, created holiday ornaments for the homebound and provided handmade clay crosses to be hung in the sanctuary during the season of Lent. Adopting a user-friendly, high-energy curriculum that addresses the spiritual needs of a multi-age and often distracted room of young learners, is also a priority.

Opportunities for Adult Study include a weekly Book Club, as well as a Bible Study. Guest speakers are introduced during our South Church Sunday Second Hour and focus on topics such as aging, homelessness, humor, and faith. Above all, the heart of our ministry beats with intentionality and love for our community. Many of our fellowship and opportunities for spiritual growth can be found in the ways we choose to serve our community and our neighbors.

What are we being called to do as followers of Christ? Somedays we are called to collect socks for the homeless or to provide a support group for those experiencing a crisis or a loss. Sometimes we are called to gather on the church lawn to illuminate the neighborhood with light, or to invite our brothers and sisters in Christ to participate in a Carol Sing. Still other times we are simply led to leave the church doors open for a while and allow fellow travelers to indulge in the quiet beauty of our sanctuary. The opportunities to grow in the body of Christ are limitless, and at South Church we are committed to doing this both relationally and intergenerationally.

### **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?**

Our governance structure is anchored by the church council which meets monthly for approximately an hour or two and entails staff reports and a review of the activities of our boards. Each board is responsible to conduct monthly meetings which may typically

run for 60 to 90 minutes. Our board structure includes: Christian Education & Faith Enrichment (CEFE), Church Growth, Deacons, Missions, Stewardship and Trustees. The Pastor is expected to attend Church Council and the Deacon's meeting.

Our challenge when it comes to visioning is that our focus tends to be more tactical than it is strategic. Our boards and committees share many of the same members, so we need to look at whether our governance structure is working for us and embracing more "We the Church" moments.

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

Our church received an unsettling letter that was taped to our door. Our Office Manager notified the Moderator after she reviewed the letter. The Moderator also reviewed the letter and she contacted the local police, who sent a detective to the church. After they reviewed the letter, they noted it was most likely someone who was driving around posting the same letter to other churches.

As a precaution, we hired an officer for the Sunday service to ensure everyone's safety. The Moderator discussed the letter and case with the officer on Sunday who confirmed he didn't think it was really a threat based on its contents. Another church in East Hartford also received a similar letter. The detective said we did everything right, and it was good we hired an officer for Sunday but didn't think we needed to hire anyone going forward. We continue to be diligent but leave our doors unlocked during Sunday service.

- **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, we can provide all of this to the final candidate upon completion of the candidating Sunday.

### 3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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



Church#: 784873

Assoc: 920      Schedule: 0      South Congregational Church, UCC      East Hartford      CT      06118

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	232	100	30	0	11	0	5	2	4
2013	225	100	45	0	4	0	5	6	-7
2014	228	100	50	0	0	4	1	0	3
2015	228	100	50	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	232	75	32	0	9	0	4	1	4
2017	219	100	32	0	9	0	7	15	-13
2018	227	125	20	0	20	0	12	0	8
2019	231	125	18	0	12	0	8	0	4
2020	223	100	20	0	0	0	8	0	-8
2021	215	50	28	0	4	0	12	0	-8
2022	167	50	6	0	0	2	1	49	-48

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	\$300,012	\$0	\$4,000	\$6,214	\$10,214	\$16,000	\$26,214	1.33	\$326,226	\$211,000
2013	\$305,615	\$0	\$4,000	\$12,205	\$16,205	\$11,465	\$27,670	1.31	\$333,285	\$208,196
2014	\$302,047	\$0	\$4,000	\$10,419	\$14,419	\$14,044	\$28,463	1.32	\$330,510	\$215,103
2015	\$302,047	\$0	\$4,000	\$1,829	\$5,829	\$0	\$5,829	1.32	\$307,876	\$0
2016	\$294,706	\$0	\$4,000	\$8,257	\$12,257	\$12,623	\$24,880	1.36	\$319,586	\$191,766
2017	\$241,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$2,491	\$5,491	\$10,000	\$15,491	1.24	\$256,491	\$175,000
2018	\$276,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$2,411	\$5,411	\$14,000	\$19,411	1.09	\$295,411	\$170,000
2019	\$287,000	\$0	\$3,000	\$5,875	\$8,875	\$15,000	\$23,875	1.05	\$310,875	\$185,000
2020	\$56,000	\$0	\$5,270	\$2,500	\$7,770	\$0	\$7,770	9.41	\$63,770	\$171,000
2021	\$62,078	\$0	\$4,390	\$2,164	\$6,554	\$0	\$6,554	7.07	\$68,632	\$138,000
2022	\$70,000	\$0	\$5,420	\$595	\$6,015	\$12,000	\$18,015	7.74	\$88,015	\$165,000

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2017-2022	-23.74	-50.00	-81.25	-77.78	127.27	-70.95	9.54	-65.68
2012-2022	-28.02	-50.00	-80.00	-81.82	614.29	-76.67	-41.11	-73.02

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.

**Footnote:** The average weekly attendance for 2020 is prior to the pandemic and the switch to online forms of worship. We suspended in-person worship after 3/8/2020 and utilized Zoom and live-streaming options before returning to in-person worship on 11/22/2020 but with limited capacity In-person worship suspended after the Christmas Eve Service due to a case of covid and the limited capacity in-person worship service did not resume until 2/7/2021.

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

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Our church does not have this level of detail for our congregation.

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	127	Yes
Number of active non-members:	10	Estimate of people who attend worship with varying degrees of frequency
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	137	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:		
Less than 10, more than 5 years:		
Less than 5 years:		

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>
2	6	2	9	8	10	20	32	40	Y

Percentage of adults in various household types:

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



Education level of adult participants by percentage:

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

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

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

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

Many in our congregation are retired and we have no knowledge of the range of occupations for those who are working.

**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?**

Our congregation is predominantly white and people of different ethnicities represent a small percentage of the population. We have always been an open and welcoming faith community and pride ourselves for embracing people from different backgrounds and traditions. This was noted when we applied for and received our ONA designation.

**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:**

Our last pastor, a Black man, was enthusiastically accepted by the congregation and he often commented in awe, of how seamless his transition was. We have not had a conversation about welcoming diversity because it doesn’t appear to be an issue. Since our church is in a very

diverse community it would be worthwhile consideration to incorporate into our discussions regarding the church's shared vision for the future.

### 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: Book Club Second Hour Programs	12 20-25	CEFE Coordinator
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	2-5	CEFE Coordinator
Easter Worship Christmas Eve AM/PM	80 35/74	Pastor, Minister of Music, Diaconate
Church-wide Meals	69	Diaconate
Choirs and Music Groups	17	Minister of Music
Church-based Bible Study		Has not regrouped since covid
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	Monthly	Pastor, Diaconate
Community Meals	75	Council, Various Boards
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	0	We have not had a Confirmation class since 2018.
Drama or Dance Program		
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	4	Pastor, Diaconate
Intergenerational Groups	30-40	CEFE Coordinator
Outdoor Worship (Easter Sunrise Service)	13	Diaconate, Lay Leadership

Prayer or Meditation Groups		
Public Advocacy Work		
Retreats		
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community		
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	0	Pastor, Minister of Music, Diaconate
Worship (time slot: __10AM__)	40 (avg. weekly attendance btwn 9/3/23 – 11/26/23 inclusive)	Pastor, Minister of Music, Diaconate
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes		
Youth Groups or Classes		
Other		

**Additional comments:** N/A

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)
N/A				

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

Rev. Dr. Henry Millan was never employed by South Church and has no ministerial role in the church.

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
Office Manager	N	Part time	Sr. Pastor	6 yrs.
CEFE Coordinator	N	Part Time	Sr. Pastor	3 yrs.
Minister of Music	N	Part Time	Sr. Pastor	2 yrs.
Accounts Manager	N	Part Time	Trustees	20+
Sexton	N	Part Time	Trustees	2 yrs.

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

As a faith community we are warm, friendly and care deeply about each other. Visitors who join us either in worship or for our Service Sundays are made to feel welcome and often remark about our friendliness. We come together to worship God, to refresh our souls and to find inspiration in hearing His message for our daily lives. We extend His love through our service to the community in trying to meet their needs whether through the food bank, soup kitchen or Service Sunday activities.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$140,000.00
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	\$42,000.00
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i> )	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$9,700.00

Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$1,800.00
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$10,900.00
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (e.g. Women's Group)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts – Investment Account	\$38,300.00
Other (specify):	\$0
Other (specify):	\$0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$242,700.00</b>

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

*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.*



2024 Proposed Budget .pdf

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 30%

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%) In 2023, the total actuals spent represented 7% of the 2023 budget.

What is the church's current indebtedness? None

Total amount of loan debt:

Reason for debt:

Are capital and other payments current?

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

None

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2018	Repave Parking Lot	\$125,000.00	\$125,000.00	Work Completed
		\$	\$	

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. N/A

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? \$1,300,000.00

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

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

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: Trust Distribution 3.5% to 5%

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

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:  
Trust Distribution by IRS Guidelines.

## Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$20,000.00

Investments (other than endowment): \$730,000.00

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: Church building including Sanctuary, Sunday school annex and a Fellowship Hall.

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?

*Sanctuary, church office, and the fellowship hall are accessible to wheelchairs. Also have a unisex handicap accessible lavatory. The pulpit is not handicap accessible.*

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

To maintain current mission and ministry level, while hoping to increase our membership over time and continue to grow our church.

### 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.**

Annual community events include our spring Strawberry Fair, autumn Trunk or Treat, winter Cookie Walk, and Christmas caroling for the homebound. A concert series, offered by our Minister of Music and Choir in which ten concerts, highlighting different instruments and voices, were held weekly during the summer of 2022. In 2023 the summer concert series featured seven concerts and we hosted two Christmas concerts by a community choral group. Due to the success of this series planning will soon be underway for the summer of 2024.

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

When our previous Pastor left our employ, we were determined to make sure the church continued to function without skipping a beat. We realized that we needed to rally together and with our collective wisdom figure a way forward in a respectful and co-operative way. We discussed our options at council and began a serious discussion regarding the future of the church. We voted to authorize the Diaconate to initiate a search for an interim pastor. The Diaconate is also responsible for arranging for pulpit supply and they went above and beyond by not only finding substitute pulpit supply but also in planning the service of worship for each Sunday before the interim's start date.

**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.**

Although we have had little conflict within our membership, we have experienced conflict in years past between former staff members. We put in place measures to provide avenues to address conflict but staff did not avail themselves of these remedies. Those measures include: a Code of Conduct, a Grievance Policy, and the establishment of an Administrative Committee. These policies and procedures were incorporated into our By-Laws and Personnel Handbook, and communicated to our staff and members.

**Code of Conduct:** This "Code" was developed when it was determined, due to former staff issues, a policy needed to be clearly stated and documented that within the church environment at all times, everyone (i.e., staff, volunteers, Church members and visitors) should be treated with respect and dignity.



**Concerns and Grievance Policy and Procedure:** This process allows for disagreements and conflicts between individuals and/or groups to first discuss openly and honestly with each other to try to facilitate an amenable resolution without having to take issues to the Administrative Committee for a more formal resolution

**Administrative Committee:** This Committee’s primary purpose is to serve as the human resources function of the church, and be responsible for addressing issues that concern the Staff.

These measures are in addition to our long-standing tradition of having the Pastor select a Pastoral Relations Committee. This body’s primary function is to provide an open and supportive relationship with the Pastor and act as a sounding board where there can be a sharing of ideas, hopes, dreams and mission. If used appropriately this group can help mediate and mitigate issues before they escalate.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. John Adams	12 yrs.	Y
Rev. Bob Woodward	6 yrs.	Y
Rev. Al Turner	17 yrs.	Y
Rev. Fredd Ward	5 yrs.	Y

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?

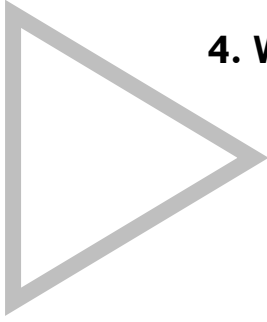
N

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

N

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

N



## 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?**

We have partnered for many years with another church in town to provide a well-stocked food bank open to anyone in need – residents and non-residents alike. Besides food, we offer a growing collection of toys, household items, toiletries and clothing. We have also added volunteers from the community who want to be a part of this effort.

Once a month, a team from our church prepares and delivers a hot meal to the town’s soup kitchen. Most of the ingredients for these meals are donated by members of the congregation. Prior to the pandemic we would also serve the meal to their clientele, but this has been replaced with grab & go packaging.

The recipients of these services have been most appreciative and have expressed their thankfulness, and our volunteers are also warmed by the experience.

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

A member of our congregation has been actively involved in the Hartford East Association, our local association. Our pastor and various members have been involved in local conference meetings, and our former pastor attended the General Synod in 2022.

**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.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <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 checked="" 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 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?**

We have not conducted any conversations regarding these designations and other than GISS & ONA have been unaware of these additional designations. We live our faith in service to others and try to be sensitive to the needs of our community in defining our ministerial outreach and not through designations.

South Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming (ONA) Faith Community where everyone is welcome for fellowship and worship in a safe and supportive environment. We have a long history of being a welcoming church and in 2016 voted to affirm that we are open to all. Come as you are, whoever you are you are welcome here.

Our ONA covenant pledges that:

We, the members of South Congregational Church, welcome and support all people, including those of every age, ethnicity, gender identity, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation and social economic status. While we recognize that there are differences among us, we believe that we can love alike even though we may not think alike. It is in this spirit that we invite all people to join our Faith Community.

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

The food bank at our church is a long-standing shared ministry with the Catholic church located down the street from our facility. Our food bank was open daily (M-F) and staffed by volunteers from each church on a rotating alternate month basis; so, one month our church would provide the volunteers and the next month the other church supplied the volunteers. This was done in concert with the Social Services Department who managed the client base. This past year it was determined by all of the constituent entities to move away from the social services model and

provide food to anyone in need not just in our community but in the Greater Hartford area. This shifted the activity to a once-a-week model. The food bank is open from 12-2 pm on Tuesdays, staffed by a blended mix from both churches, and appears to be working quite well.

In the past there was quite a bit of coordination with local churches in sponsoring ecumenical services especially for Thanksgiving but that has not happened in a number of years. The organization that used to coordinate these services, East Hartford Interfaith Ministries, is now defunct and this issue has not been raised with our local association.

**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.**

*Our current Mission Statement denotes:*

*The Mission of South Church is to worship our God, to live our faith, and to love and serve one another in the spirit of the Lord, here and throughout the world, as disciples of Jesus Christ.*

We are trying to expand our outreach into the community. Some examples are as follows:

Working with several elementary schools, we have provided bags of food and grocery gift cards to families identified by the school's social worker as needing extra assistance.

Through our "You Are Loved" initiative, we have put together bags of candy kisses for various town entities (fire, police, teachers), distributed hand knitted hearts to nursing home residents, and collected socks, mittens, shampoo, soap and other items which were donated to our town's shelter.

In August 2023 we started another initiative called "Service Sundays", which takes place after a shortened worship service on the second Sunday of the month. This program alternates between kid-centric activities such as holiday crafts with community service projects e.g., the packing of back-to-school supplies into individual kits in support of the East Hartford School System or dental hygiene products in partnership with Hands on Hartford to support homeless children enrolled in their back pack program.

Whenever we have conducted collection drives for any of these initiatives the congregation has stepped up joyfully and generously with their support. We are truly blessed by their spirit!

**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?**

We have not defined a specific amount of time that our Pastor needs to devote to this activity. As we contemplate the future, we feel we need to look at how we live our mission beyond our walls. This is an area where we would welcome the leadership and guidance of the Pastor in how we covenant to create a shared vision that reimagines our mission and ministries in new and exciting ways, and inspires the congregation in service to others.

#### **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 often hear anecdotally about the decline in the support for organized religion, church membership and belief in God, and these reports provide analytic evidence targeted to our locale. The demographics for our zip code, 06118, are similar to statistics for all of East Hartford, and while the town overall shows slight declines in population, the south end of town holds steady in maintaining existing population trends. We are an aging population that is 46.4% White, 20.7% Black, and 25.2% Hispanic. There is expected to be little change in the number of children (ages 0-17) over the next 10 years. We also have a lower percentage of two parent households than the rest of the state and a higher percentage of single parent households usually with the mother present. Determining how we can assist single parent households may represent a service opportunity in our neighborhood.

The data contained in these reports will provide invaluable insights as we discern the future and envision the church God is calling us to be.

**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?**

We don't have the same level of detail regarding our church family to make many comparisons with the MissionInsite data. Our congregation is an aging, predominately White congregation in a town that recently became multi-culturally and racially diverse. If we are to grow our church, we need to be intentional in working to diversify our membership to reflect the demographics of the town.

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

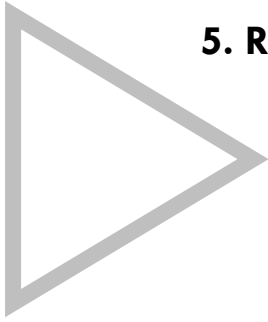
We have not formally looked at the town's changing demographics as a factor in our ministry. With our Service Sunday initiative and Second Hour programs, we have been actively looking to raise an awareness of the missions of non-profits that we could potentially partner with to extend our outreach.

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

We are known for our involvement in the food bank in partnership with one of the Catholic Churches in town. We are also involved monthly in the soup kitchen in town, serving 40-60 meals. We have partnered with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity and have sponsored work crews for projects in East Hartford, attending their open house ceremonies when the families are presented with the keys to their new home. Some of our members have marched in the town's Memorial Day parade and staffed a vendor booth following the parade, passing out informational flyers about events at our church. We have participated in the town-wide Holiday Fest Weekend since its beginnings nearly a decade ago.

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

New members and visitors often comment that they were impressed with our warmth and friendliness and the welcome they received, which made them want to return.



## 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

**Name:** Jeff Cregeur

**Position:** Music Director/Minister

**In what way do you interact with the church:** Facilitate all musical ministry at South Church. This includes Chancel Choir, MOSAICS Concerts Series, pianist/organist during worship services.

**Telephone:** 860-608-4550

**Email:** music@southucc.org

**Relationship to the Congregation:**Non-Member

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

The few members that volunteer their time and energy to church life give 110% of their effort. Most of these volunteers are excited about changing standing traditions for the benefit of church growth. I believe that these two characteristics are promising for the regrowth of South Church, characteristics that I have not witnessed so strongly at my previous religious jobs.

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

Communication between deacons, interim pastor, office staff, and Christian Education leaders, and music ministry have been sparse and uninformative. Decisions made in one department do not carry to the next. It would also be great if more church members would actively participate in church events and/or church life. Current volunteers take on too much responsibility/involvement than what they should have to do.

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

Collaborations with the previous minister have been the most spiritual and organic experiences when crafting services and events. The creation and success of MOSAICS Concert Series have also been a wonderful surprise in the growth of the church. The camaraderie and support of the Chancel Choir is more than I could ever ask for as a director.

### **Anything else you wish to share.**

I think this church has tremendous promise because of its volunteers and facilities. I believe the only variable standing in the way of church growth may be fear or unwillingness to invest in new ideas.



## REFERENCE 2

**Name:** Maria Sipala

**Position:** N/A

**In what way do you interact with the church:** PreSchool Director and current PreSchool Board Member, Attended a number of events, Recently had a granddaughter baptized at the church.

**Telephone:** 860.212.0379

**Email:** msipala@gmail.com

**Relationship to the Congregation:** Non-Member

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

The church is very welcoming to non-members. The number of events (strawberry festival, trunk or treat, MOSIAC series, etc) held provides both members and non-members the ability to participate and to have a sense of community. Which in today's world is critical. There is a real sense of give back and support to the community, which creates a very positive atmosphere to anyone who interacts with the church ministry/community.

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

The one area where some improvement might be made is in a reach out to younger people. Currently the church seems to have a much older population participating on a regular basis. Reaching out to younger members and broaden its base of members would be beneficial in establishing a more sustainable parish.

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

A few years ago, I interacted with the church's ministry through my role as PreSchool Director. I found the whole ministry extremely welcoming and very supportive. The staff of the church, as well as the pastor, were all very open and helpful. I found the whole community to be very positive.

I also recently interacted with the interim pastor for the baptism of my granddaughter. I found the pastor to be knowledgeable and accommodating. I really enjoyed the experience as did my whole family. Especially being a non-member.

### **Anything else you wish to share.**

Not at this time.

## REFERENCE 3

**Name:** Ruby Birdseye

**Position:** Voluteer – St. Christopher Catholic Church

**In what way do you interact with the church:** Working together through the food bank.

**Telephone:** 860.466.9427

**Email:** Rbirdseye05@yahoo.com

**Relationship to the Congregation:** Non-Member

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

This church ministry’s greatest strength is the ability to work together as a team to get the job done.They are very active in the church as well as in the community, many, many service projects.All working together for the greater good, in a very welcoming and friendly manner.

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

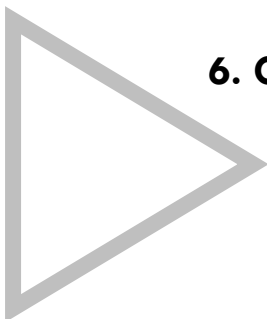
The only improvement I can see, is the need for a full time pastor.They need someone compassionate and strong to stand by them in all the challenges that are sure to come. I couldn’t imagine our church without our pastor, he is our guiding light.

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

This past year our food bank has had many challenges. We had to rethink and redo the whole process of how we were running everything.There were many unknowns and many safety issues. The whole congregation stood behind us and decided to let us try to make it work. Our two teams came together, we planned, we organized, we worked hard!! Today we are going strong, one whole team of friends, getting the job done.

### **Anything else you wish to share.**

Not at this time.



## **6. CLOSING THOUGHTS**

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

**Gather Us In**  
**Marty Haugen**

**Verse 1**

Here in this place, the new light is streaming,  
shadows of doubt are vanished away.  
See in this space our fears and our dreamings,  
Brought here to you in the light of this day.  
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken;  
gather us in; our spirits in-flame.  
Call to us now, and we shall awaken;  
we shall arise at the sound of our name.

**Verse 2**

We are the young our lives are a mystery;  
We are the old, who yearn for your face.  
We have been sung through-out all of history,  
called to be the light to the whole human race.  
Gather us in the rich and the haughty;  
gather us in the proud and the strong;  
give us a heart so meek and so lowly;  
give us the courage to enter the song.

**Verse 3**

Here we receive new life in the waters;  
here we receive the bread of new birth;  
here you shall call your sons and your daughters,  
call us anew to be salt for the earth.  
Give us to drink the wine of compassion,  
give us to eat the bread that is you;  
nourish us well, and teach us to fashion  
lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

#### Verse 4

Not just in buildings, small and confining,  
not in some heaven, light years away,  
here in this place the new light is shining,  
now is God present, and now is the day.

Gather us in and hold us forever;  
gather us in and make us your own;  
gather us in, all peoples together,  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

## 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?** Transition Team
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed: *Felix Piersa*

Name: Felix Piersa

Title: Vice Moderator, Transition Team Lead

Date: 3/6/2024

Signed: *Erin Duffy Pelletier*

Name: Erin Duffy Pelletier

Title: Moderator, Search Committee Chairperson

Date: 3/6/2024

## 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:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

This document is created through support to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

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

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**

