



Brief Church Profile

First Congregational United Church of Christ
170 East Main St., P.O. Box 177, Andover OH 44003



1. WHO WE ARE TODAY – *description of who you are as a church, and your vision and mission statement*

First Congregational UCC Andover, Ohio is a faith-filled, friendly, and welcoming church family dedicated to seeing our 190 plus year old church continue as we care for one another and our community through prayer and mission. We sit close to the town square and are known as a historical landmark church with the very tall white steeple.

Though small in numbers, we are big in faith, generosity and dedication. We tend toward traditional worship, yet are open to new ideas. We reach out through our Zoom service, Facebook and website. We like to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and achievements. We love to laugh, and our services often include some good-natured teasing of one another. We see an opportunity to grow, especially with younger people and older folks looking for a new church home.

Our congregation has a passion for local outreach and remains very active in service to our community. When there is a need, our church family responds!

We are located in rural farm country in northeast Ohio boasting a huge state park and lake with opportunities for fishing, boating, camping and outdoor recreation. The summer months bring thousands of tourists to our area. Cleveland and Pittsburgh with their many cultural opportunities, world-renowned healthcare facilities, and major league sports are only 70 miles away.

2. WE LIVE OUT OUR VISION AND MISSION THROUGH THE FOLLOWING – worship, faith formation, care and fellowship, mission and outreach opportunities:

Worship: Sunday morning worship begins at 10:30 a.m., both in person and via live zoom for those unable to attend. Our sanctuary and fellowship hall are handicap accessible via an added elevator. There are two handicap bathrooms off Fellowship Hall. Our services are traditional and follow the Lectionary in scripture and sermon. Our adult choir provides us with uplifting special music. Our 190+ year old sanctuary with its beautiful stained-glass windows and baby grand piano provide a spiritual setting and peaceful space to worship in the glory of God.



Faith Formation: Adults meet for Coffee Talk/Bible Study twice a month, exploring different topics and alternating lay leaders. A monthly Kids Club was organized last year and has been successful with children and adults attending regularly.

Care and Fellowship: We consider ourselves a church family who cares deeply for one another! Prayer needs are openly shared and special prayer requests are communicated as they arise. We enjoy monthly potlucks, coffee hours during summer, and the weekly Steeple Stitches quilting group. The diaconate has a card ministry. We check on regular attendees missing from church; calling, and occasionally visiting the homebound.

Mission and outreach opportunities: We are very proud of our mission and outreach activities!



Our largest mission is the Back to School Bash, now in its 15th year. We coordinate a free distribution of backpacks and school supplies for around 500 local needy students annually, from pre-school through 8th grade as well as basic supplies to high schoolers. The mission operates on funding from grants, the local community, the high school's honor student Philanthropic Society, and local businesses. Our church members, high school students, members of six local churches, and a variety of other organizations including the local Salvation Army join together in the distribution.

We are home to the busy Steeple Stitches quilting group, who sew and provide quilts to those suffering house fires, create Quilts of Valor for veterans, provide quilts for displaced children in Homesafe -a local domestic shelter - and sponsor an annual community quilt show together with our local Andover Public Library. The quilters earn money from commissioned work, which they generously donate to church missions. This industrious group consists of church family as well as quilters from outside our congregation.



The local food pantry is a cause we generously donate to with our annual Souper Bowl collection and donated food items throughout the year.

We are active volunteers for the local Chamber of Commerce's LakeFest and People in the Park, a summer concert series in the nearby town square. You can count on our church to volunteer many hours ringing the Salvation Army bell during the local Red Kettle campaigns.

We support the UCC 5 for 5 missions. We also have provided generous financial support to hurricane/tornado relief, Ukraine support and a number of smaller missions.

3. STATISTICAL DATA

- Active Membership: 54 (Actively attend plus non attending who support financially)
- Total Reported Membership: 74
- Sunday Worship average attendance: 25
- Average Church School Attendance (Adult) 6
- Members serving on Boards and Committees (DO NOT include small groups): 15
- Mission outreach giving, annual: 2% of the annual budget is pledged, but much more is given.
- Mission outreach giving by the congregation personally and the Steeple Stitches quilting group for UCC 5 for 5, local food pantry, Back to School Bash, Homesafe and occasional other special collections:
 - 2023 \$4,736.57

- 2022 \$8,025.79
 - 2021 \$6,886.53
- Our church's annual plan for resourcing the ministry (budget): We rely on our income, which includes offerings, apartment rental income and investment dividends. We have an investment held by Wells Fargo with a value of \$160,648.12 to draw from if our income does not cover expenses.
 - 2023 income:
 - Offerings 59,367.21
 - Rental income 10,373.00
 - Dividends 4,509.47
 - TOTAL 74,249.68
 - Number of staff persons serving the church: Our paid staff includes the part-time pastor, part-time secretary and part-time custodian. Our unpaid staff include the music director and treasurer who volunteer their time and talent.

4. WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME TRENDS IN THE CHURCH FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS?

Over the past several years, due to the pandemic, we experienced a decline in attendance. The congregation made an effort to increase our outreach that has helped us start to see an increase in worship attendance. We offer our service via Zoom, and there are always viewers. We have a social media presence via Facebook.

A year ago, we created a kids' program that meets monthly to learn and talk about God, sing, and enjoy fellowship; some of our youth now attend church service regularly.

Unfortunately, there is less ecumenical interaction with local churches as the community ministerial group has stopped meeting. We continue to reach out to other churches to help with our mission projects that need additional support.

Our trustees have completed important repair projects including a new furnace, steeple repair, and parsonage and rental apartment improvements.

5. WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME TRENDS in the larger community/town in which the church is located?

Andover is a close-knit, caring community. Our small, rural community continues its slower pace of life with a high percentage of older residents. We have a substantial Amish population that continues to increase. The summer months bring a large influx of summer residents, visitors, and tourists to our very popular Pymatuning State Park area. A bike trail is being constructed that will run through town and connect to the state park which will increase visitors and provide an opportunity for business development.

There are some remarkable community outreach services which are well used. There are numerous opportunities to volunteer to help these services. Many of the experienced volunteers are reducing their time, but high school students have been filling a need by volunteering in many local mission projects.

The population tends to be conservative, and there are several fundamentalist churches. The area has a number of older, small churches who face declining attendance as their congregations age. The community has seen a loss of medical resources with the closure of our emergency room and a primary care physician's office. A blessing has been a national organization, Remote Area Medical/RAM, that visits our county annually to provide free medical, dental, and optical services to nearly 1000 patients.

Our schools have excellent, caring teachers and administrators who do their best to educate and offer extra support to children who may come from families facing instability. The Future Farmers of America is a large organization at the high school, as it is a rural area with many area farms. This group is planning an agricultural learning center on the high school grounds to further educational opportunities.

6. THE SPECIFIC MINISTRIES/ISSUES YOU EXPECT YOUR NEXT PASTOR to address during their tenure -including the gifts, talents, and skills and leadership style you are looking for in your next pastor

We seek a compassionate and friendly part-time pastor to partner with us in fulfilling worship and ministry and share our enthusiasm for local outreach beyond our walls and into the community. We value our relationships with other local faith-based and service organizations and hope for a pastor that feels the same. We offer adequate resources of people, time and money and are good stewards to those resources.

We wish for a pastor to collaborate with the congregation on how worship is organized. We follow the common Lectionary, but are open to individual interpretation of the Bible. We desire a pastor to help us comprehend the scriptures and help us develop a deeper understanding of them. The pastor normally picks worship hymns, and musical knowledge is a plus. We are willing to try new things.

The governance of the church is congregationally managed. We encourage the pastor to offer guidance and provide input on programs offered by the church or community programs where the church participates.

A willingness to listen to members of the church family and assist in training and developing lay persons for shut in visitations is desired. We would like our pastor to occasionally offer communion to our shut-in members.

Our church belongs to an area UCC clergy group, the Grand River District, that meets several times a year, and we would like our pastor to be a part of this. Our community ministerial group is no longer as active as it once was, but we are taking steps to renew Christian alliances by involving other churches in outreach such as the Back to School Bash and Salvation Army volunteering. Our new pastor should be aware that our local area is conservative, and there are several fundamentalist churches who view us as too liberal.

7. PROVIDE AN ESTIMATED COMPENSATION RANGE you are offering in dollar amounts. If less than full-time, specify the hours of work.

Do you follow Conference Compensation guidelines ___ Yes _____

We are seeking a 20 hour per week pastor, per UCC compensation guidelines. We do provide a parsonage. The compensation package is negotiable. We have an opportunity to partner with a Presbyterian church in a nearby community if a pastor is looking for a more full-time position.

_____ Pam Amy _____
Council/Search Committee Chairperson

_____ March 20, 2024 _____
Date

8. FROM THE ASSOCIATION

_____  _____
Signature of Association Staff

_____ March 22, 2024 _____
Date

Association Staff member assisting:

Rev. Nayiri Karjian, General Minister

960 Portage Trail, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221 330.940.2220 x102 nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org