

# INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Who  
are  
we

Who  
is our  
neighbor

Who is  
God  
calling us  
to become

?

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!

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



# UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Pastor

Iowa, Nebraska, & South Dakota Conferences; Two Rivers Association

[Validation Date]

### 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

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**Church name:** First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

**Street address:** 300 South Minnesota Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 57104

**Supplemental web links:**

<https://www.firstcongucc.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/@firstcongregationalchurchu9950>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Congregational-Church-Sioux-Falls-South-Dakota/462614060468421>

Instagram: @firstcongucc

**Additional ecumenical affiliations:** Episcopal church (Pride service), ELCA Lutheran (Pride service and Vacation Bible School), and Unitarian Universalist (Our Whole Lives education)

**Conference:** Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences (Tri-Conference Ministries)

**Association:** Two Rivers Association

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

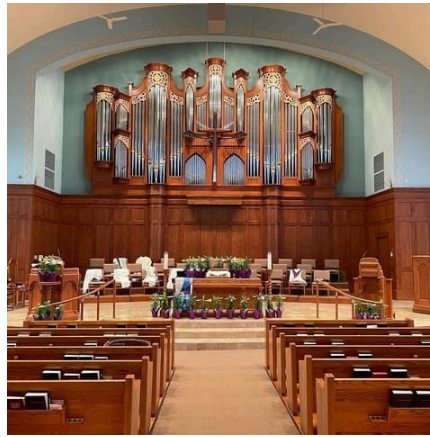
Jonna Jensen, Associate Conference Minister, (563)357-7287, [jonna@ucctcm.org](mailto:jonna@ucctcm.org)

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

We call ourselves the “Church in the Heart of the City.” We are a congregation with a history of commitment to openness and inclusion within our church and beyond our walls. This includes maintaining our Open and Affirming status, reaching our homebound members, and ministering to the broader community. We have a continued desire to engage our church community: families and children, single adults, seniors, and others. We want everyone who walks in our doors to be able to participate in church life, regardless of their age or stage in life.

We are seeking a pastor to lead vibrant worship services and write sermons that inspire the congregation toward our values of inclusiveness, community engagement, and being God’s hands in the heart of our city. As we continue our mission, we hope for a pastor who is ready to engage with our multigenerational church in creative ways. This could include, but is not limited to, increasing engagement from current members and educating new members in how they might envision participating in ministry through First Congregational Church.





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

Sioux Falls is a progressive and growing city that has much to offer for all ages and interests: many city parks, bike trails, swimming venues, a booming restaurant scene offering diverse menu options, semi-pro sports teams, and a vibrant youth athletic and arts program. Sioux Falls has a strong public school system, several private schools, multiple universities, and a technical school as well as museums, theaters, dance studios, art classes, and more. City leadership focuses on planned development, job opportunities, and expansion of affordable housing. Our medical resources consist of two large hospital systems, a VA hospital, and additional specialty clinics and facilities. You can learn more about Sioux Falls [here](#).

**Current size of membership:** 420 (approximation)

**Languages used in ministry (*other than English*):** None

**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 (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):** Full Time

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

Yes



## 1b. SCOPE OF WORK

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

### **Full time Pastoral Position (40-50 hours weekly / 10-12 units)**

- Preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation including scripture study, guiding and finding lay liturgists as needed, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.
- Faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, and identifying helpful resources and opportunities for members
- Teaching confirmation and being part of the Our Whole Lives sexuality education (OWL) teaching rotation.
- Leadership development by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs
- Pastoral care in collaboration with lay persons
- Community engagement and leading the church to be an ambassador of God's love (for example: attending Pride festivals/activities, representing FCC at the [Transformation Project](#) Gala, etc.)
- Strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry
- Attending meetings and providing leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership
- Participating in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings
- Faithful financial development and stewardship
- Supervising staff and coordinating administrative tasks
- Availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations
- Counseling, listening, and referral
- Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills in leading, teaching, and preaching
- Energizing and deepening others' spiritual connections and faith understandings

### **Core Competencies:**

We are seeking a pastor who is **compassionate**. Our members have expressed the importance of being able to approach their pastor with diverse needs and concerns. We also value sensitivity to the larger community such as the unhoused, food insecure, LGBTQIA+, immigrants, and others.

We are seeking a pastor who is a **good collaborator**. Our pastor must interact with a variety of

personalities on staff, within the church membership, and in the wider community.

We are seeking a pastor with **strong administrative skills**. Our pastor must be able to oversee a small staff, work with teams and committees, and coordinate with staff the daily duties of running an active mid-size church.



## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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**Salary Basis** (*The salary basis comes from the 2023 South Dakota Conference UCC Compensation Guidelines and is equal to Cash Salary plus Housing Allowance*):

\$81,757 - \$100,590 (dependent on experience)

**Benefits:** Salary plus benefits

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

Our church does not provide a parsonage. We would prefer the pastor to live within a 30-mile radius of Sioux Falls.

### **State any incentives:**

- 3-month sabbatical after 5 years of service
- Continuing education funds and time
- Professional and book allowance
- Housing allowance
- Annual paid scheduled time off (4 weeks)
- Up to 8 weeks paid family leave for birth/adoption of a child
- UCC retirement annuity (14% of salary and housing)
- UCC life and disability insurance
- UCC health benefits - Plan A (100%)
- UCC dental benefits (100%)
- Other benefits - vision (100%)
- Conference, association, and wider church meetings
- Spiritual direction/coaching (up to \$1200 budgeted for 2024, reviewed annually)
- Travel reimbursements

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

- Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conference
  - Peer support through one of the Communities of Practice
  - Continuing education (ex. Boundary Awareness Training)
  - Access to spiritual directors and counselors
  - Conference minister
  - Conference deacons
  - Clergy coffee hour
    - Weekly every Thursday (online)
- Spirit of Peace (UCC) and other ecumenical partners in Sioux Falls

## 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.**

We seek to establish and further our reputation as a church that is safe, welcoming, and affirming for the LGBTQIA+ community as well as other marginalized groups. We hope to increase our presence and visibility in the wider community through advocacy, partnerships, and service work, which includes, but is not limited to, collaboration with the organizations housed in our building ([the Naomi Project](#) and [South Dakota Voices for Peace](#)). Our partnerships with these organizations are key to our service to the wider community. We also care for the homeless population by offering supplies and funds throughout the week, while also welcoming them to the table for Sunday breakfast, where we can form deeper relationships. Our leadership is eager to be present in the community to share God's love in many ways. For example, past church leaders have sat on panels to offer a more inclusive lens on social issues and have led prayer at city council meetings.

We would also like to grow participation in Sunday School and other children's/family programs. We envision a pastor supporting this goal by showing enthusiasm for our programs, making appearances at children's and family events such as Sunday school breakfast, and working in cooperation with our director of Christian Education.

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

In many ways, the pastor is the "face" of our church in the wider community. In addition to interfacing with other churches, organizations, and businesses, the pastor helps set expectations for the church community. By being welcoming and compassionate, our pastor will not only represent the church in the community but inspire members to bring their spiritual values beyond the church walls. A strong pastor not only brings their own innovative ideas, but also brings out the best in others and collaboratively supports their ideas to fruition.

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

Although our congregation is mostly white and English-speaking, pastors who have additional cultural experiences would be an asset to our community, especially as it relates to our Native population and the larger ethnic/immigrant groups in Sioux Falls. From a social justice

perspective, we would value someone who is culturally responsive and does not default to "white, cis-gender norms." We would like someone prepared to address issues of race and social justice, and who will not only be passively welcoming to those who find us, but actively seek to engage with those of other cultures and backgrounds.

**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.**

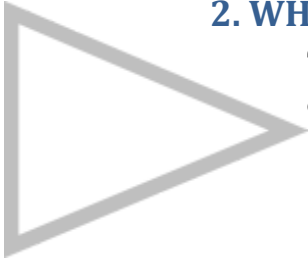
The four Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry that we value most are 1) Engaging sacred stories and traditions, 2) Working together for justice and mercy, 3) Caring for all of God's creation, and 4) Building transformational leadership skills.

Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions - Our congregation highly values inspirational preaching that brings life to sacred stories and speaks to modern concerns and reaches across generations.

Working Together for Justice and Mercy - Our congregation is committed to our Open and Affirming status. We seek to continue to engage with and minister to the marginalized. Further examples of our current work related to this mark are discussed throughout the profile.

Caring for All Creation - Our congregation believes in nurturing all of God's creation with compassion, from caring for our environment to helping neighbors in need. We also encourage our members, including our pastor, to practice self-care and life balance.

Building Transformational Leadership Skills - After our senior pastor's departure, we worked with Coach Becky David to heal and to process the experience, without a designated pastor, for more than a year. Following that period, we called two ordained members of our congregation to serve together as interim pastors. While leaning more on our own leadership, we have attained stability in the midst of uncertainty. Now, we are ready to collaborate with a settled pastor. We hope for a leader who can connect and interact with the congregation, build trust, and work with us to sustain and increase engagement.



## 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?**

Part of our mission is to “be God’s hands at work in the heart of the city.” We are called to be a beacon of welcome to those seeking a church that shows and spreads God’s love. This includes those with a UCC history, those who have felt unseen by other churches and/or religious authorities, and anyone seeking to be seen. We need to be able to do this while respecting the journeys that have brought people to us..

We strive to foster engagement both within and beyond our church’s walls. This includes enhancing our adult education and Bible studies, fellowship across life stages, Sunday school, confirmation, Our Whole Lives (OWL) education, mission trips, music and arts programs, and volunteer opportunities both within the church and the greater community.

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

Our previous settled pastor resigned to give our congregation space to resolve disagreements about the value of his ministry. We had also already experienced the departures of both a long-term associate pastor and a part-time director of music and arts ministry. These changes occurred after COVID kept our congregation physically distanced for almost two years. Many in the congregation were bewildered, anxious, and bereaved. Some may have been relieved. Most of us hoped this time of uncertainty could birth a transformation that would strengthen and carry our church into the future with clear intention and effort.

Church leadership called Reverend Becky David, a transition coach and consultant, to lead us through our “pastorless” period, and we assembled a Transition Team of seven church members to serve as a liaison between the congregation and Coach Becky David. Our director of Christian education, a longtime staff member who was pursuing ordination, stepped into a new role as



director of congregational life, coordinating the church's day-to-day activities. We relied on pulpit supply for Sunday services, as well as for the administration of sacraments.

Over the last year, the Transition Team put in countless hours preparing for and conducting congregational workshops with Coach Becky David. During these workshops, we processed the grief and confusion surrounding our various losses, worked to dispel rumors and assumptions, and clarified our priorities, goals, and vision for the future. The Transition Team offered one-on-one interviews with every member of the congregation to ensure that all voices and perspectives were included, not just those who might feel comfortable speaking up in large-group settings. After these discussions, the Transition Team brought the themes that emerged to the full congregation. Through this process, we gained clarity on our church's strengths and identified opportunities for growth.

One change that came out of this intentional discernment period was the creation of our Ministry Support Team, which replaced the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee. This team provides ongoing support to our pastor as well as serves as a resource when concerns arise from church members that are not resolved through a direct conversation with the pastor. In addition, we adopted a behavioral covenant for how we commit to resolving conflict between members or between the pastor and congregants. The covenant is a commitment to being open, direct, and respectful. We will say more about the covenant in section 3f of the profile.

We learned not to always rely on a pastor, but to work with one another. We clarified our vision for the church's future, as well as what matters most to us in a pastoral leader. We have had time for deep reflection on how to support our next settled pastor, which includes fostering an environment that is warm, welcoming, and healthy for our new leader and our continued growth.

\*If you are interested in learning more about our transitional year, please reach out to us to get in touch with Coach Becky David or to view documents.



### 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.**

Our care of one another is central to our spirituality at First Congregational Church. A common tagline on our website and printed materials is, “Whoever you are, wherever you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” Our members take this promise seriously and will greet new faces and regulars with warmth and love. There is little distinction between members who have been with the church for generations and those who are visiting for the first time when it comes to inclusion in worship and fellowship.

In worship, God is described as female, male, and other (they/both, etc.). Prayers and sermons often emphasize God’s unconditional love and our desire to be in authentic relationship with God and one another. Many of us conceive of the Holy Spirit as a guide, helper, and companion that is revealed in the privacy of our consciences and through the wisdom and example of others. We perceive Jesus’ teachings as the ultimate moral authority and strive for deeper understanding and insight on applying them in today’s world.

Our life of faith extends beyond the church. The church offers opportunities to learn about challenges facing our community – such as the trafficking of undocumented immigrants or barriers to adult literacy – as well as direct opportunities to be of service to others. This might include serving meals for the food insecure at The Banquet, purchasing Christmas gifts or school supplies for children in need, or collecting diapers for babies on South Dakota’s American Indian reservations. Our OutReach Team recently decided to contribute funds to [Harmony South Dakota](#), a free youth music program. We keep a stock of personal care items in

the church lobby for visitors in need. Many of our members also engage in justice work or activism beyond church-sponsored activities.

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

As a progressive and open-minded congregation, our mix of generations and economic classes allows us to extend an extravagant welcome to anyone who comes through our doors. This creates a sense of community which is then nurtured by the genuine care we have for one another. Our members actively engage in what's happening in our church and our community. This is evident by their willingness to serve on multiple committees and teams and to volunteer as opportunities present themselves.

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

We gather in our sanctuary each Sunday for two worship services based on scripture and the ecumenical calendar. Our service is live streamed on YouTube and is also available outside of service times. We upload the week's scriptures and sermon to Spotify as a podcast.

Our mostly traditional services begin with words of welcome, mission opportunities, and other special announcements. Our services include a children's message, liturgy, hymns, and special music. The message relates to the day's scripture, is accessible to people of various ages and experiences, and is relevant to challenges in our daily lives and throughout the world. The message should inspire further reflection and action. Even though we hold a traditional service, we often incorporate non-traditional elements, such as secular music and insights from other faith traditions. We look forward to embracing the unique elements our next pastor will bring to worship.

We have communion the first Sunday of every month and on special ecumenical holidays. We offer an open table to all who wish to partake. Baptism is available by request. We most often baptize infants and young children in a ceremony that is joyful and affirming. Baptisms include the congregation singing to the newly baptized child with the parents or the pastor carrying the child through the church to be welcomed into our church family.

We provide a kid-friendly play space in the sanctuary, activity bags, and rocking chairs for parents and babies. Children who do not wish to stay in service can participate in a supervised nursery or children's activities. We use hymnals, Bibles, and paper bulletins instead of an electronic format projected to the front of the sanctuary. We have a wonderful pipe organ, piano, harpsichord, and handbells to enhance Sunday services and other events.

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

Our congregation strongly supports the Christian education program, which provides youth and adults with a strong moral foundation and helps them develop a sense of purpose and meaning in life. We offer many different ways for members to form and refine their faith over a lifetime by participating in programs such as Sunday school, summer Vacation Bible School, Confirmation for seventh and eighth graders, and [OWL](#) sexuality education. Adult faith formation includes weekday adult Bible study, classes such as White Privilege: Let's Talk, and discussion groups. One attendee of the White Privilege class said, "It opened my eyes to the roadblocks that were systemically put in place to keep certain groups in their place." Participants in a parenting discussion group felt a sense of community and got to know other parents in the congregation. We offer intergenerational Wednesday evening activities at the church. [Placerville Camp](#) (UCC) in the Black Hills provides retreat opportunities for all.

While some of our Sunday school age groups have long-term, dedicated volunteer teachers, others rely on the director of Christian education and rotating volunteers to lead activities. Our preschool and elementary-aged students may be underserved currently, despite using a very promising curriculum that incorporates science, movement, music, storytelling, cooking and more into Biblical learning. Our hope for the future is that we can recruit more Sunday school teachers to give tailored attention to this age group.

Our OWL sexuality education, currently offered to grades 6-8, is another facet of faith formation at First Congregational Church. Our incoming pastor should be willing to be trained as an OWL facilitator and become part of the OWL teaching rotation in addition to teaching confirmation class. Parents of OWL students, who also have their own discussion group, value the opportunity to support their adolescents' sexuality education through this curriculum and look to the church community to deliver accurate information and sex-positive messaging. Beyond being an Open and Affirming church, we strive to embrace sexuality throughout the lifespan as healthy and God-given.

## **Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.**

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

Based on our Constitution and Bylaws our teams include Church Council, InReach, OutReach, Stewardship, and Trustees. In addition, sub-committees include, but are not limited to, the Nominating Committee, Building and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, and Sexual Misconduct Response Team. We also assemble additional committees as needed, such as the Pulpit Committee for seeking our next settled pastor.

The church newsletter includes updates from teams and committees. We communicate major decisions during special congregational meetings, worship services, and in the church bulletin. Any decision requiring a congregational vote will include mailings prior to the vote. Minutes from each team meeting are available in the church.

Our church may struggle for vision in creating our post-COVID church. Membership decreased after almost two years of distance from one another. Our abrupt change in leadership also prompted some members to pursue other worship communities. We grieve what we have lost, and it is challenging to envision a new future rather than wishing to return to a successful past. We long for a crowded, vibrant, engaged, and flourishing church, but we're still working on how to get there.

**When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?**

Staff meet formally 1-2 hours per week. Teams usually meet once a month for 1-2 hours and as needed. Subcommittees meet as necessary.

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

In June 2023, staff members noticed water in the basement on a Saturday afternoon. They texted the Building and Grounds Committee members for resources and assistance. Within ten minutes, members showed up with fans, shop vacs, and dehumidifiers. They began clearing out the water. The majority of the water damage occurred in a storage area and in the room used for supervised nursery during worship services. Staff and members removed items from these rooms and by Sunday morning a different room had been set up for supervised nursery. Because of the quick response and cooperation of staff and church members, Sunday services proceeded without impediment. Church members' quick response also prevented damage to the rest of the basement, which is a central gathering place for church activities.

A staff member discovered more water overflowing a drainage trench within the wall on Sunday evening. Rainfall that weekend complicated discovering the water source. Staff drained the boiler and shut off the water. Various professionals evaluated the situation although the water source remained unknown. Eventually, they tracked the problem to a faulty pipe under the building, which was accessed through the women's bathroom. Before professionals could repair



the pipe, the walls needed testing for asbestos. With the negative asbestos report, work to repair the pipe began. We can now use those rooms 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?**

[Bylaws](#)

[Organizational Structure](#)

Annual report available upon request

### 3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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[First Congregational United Church of Christ 11-Year Report](#)

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

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**Describe those who participate in your church.**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	400	x
Number of active non-members (Associate Members and Friends):	20	x
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	420	x

**Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	60%	x
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	30%	x
Less than 5 years:	10%	x

**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>
45	46	30	46	63	44	39	60	75	x

**Percentage of adults in various household types:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	6.67%	X
Households with minors:	33.34%	X

Single adults age 35-65:	6.67%	X
Joint households with no minors:	40%	X
Single adults over 65:	13.33%	X

**Education level of adult participants by percentage:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	95%	x
College:	75%	
Graduate School:	40%	
Specialty Training:		We don't have this data
Other (please specify):		

**Percentage of adults in various employment types:**

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	65%	
Adults who are retired:	30%	
Adults who are not fully employed:	5%	

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

Our congregation consists of a wide range of occupations including business, clerical work, farming, manufacturing, professionals (teachers, attorneys, writers, programmers, healthcare workers, etc.), tradespeople, and students.

**Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. What does diversity mean in your context?**

Our members are mostly of European descent with some members who are multi-racial, Black, or Native American. We value racial diversity as well as generational, economic, and gender identity/sexual orientation diversity. We welcome diverse beliefs and our congregation has a mix

of backgrounds, life experiences, and religious upbringing. When a diverse group comes together in fellowship, a church becomes a home for all.

**Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future? th**

Our congregation became an Open and Affirming church in 2011 and recommitted to that status by a unanimous vote in 2021. Within the last couple years, we chose to prominently display a Progress Pride flag on our church tower. We had already been participating in local Pride events for several years. We want to make it clear that all are welcome and encouraged to be their authentic selves here. In the wake of the racial unrest following George Floyd's murder, First Congregational Church offered two virtual White Privilege: Let's Talk series sessions. These classes met online because we were still social distancing as a congregation. However, when we came together in the church space again in Fall 2021, the series was offered once more, both in person and online. The series aimed to deepen our understanding of and dismantle our unconscious biases. This was an important step in our journey to become aware of how we can continue to embrace and encourage diversity. We hope to offer the series again in the future. The past year has been transformational in terms of our beliefs and ideals and we look forward to continuing to push ourselves to embrace diversity.

### 3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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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		
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	2	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	91	Director of Christian education
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	Includes on-line 350-Easter 400-Christmas Eve	Pastor, music director, director of Christian education (Easter Breakfast), lay person for decorating
Church-wide Meals	50-90 per meal	First Wednesday of each month - lay led; Sunday morning breakfast - lay led
Choirs and Music Groups	20	Music director
Church-based Bible Study	20	One study lead by pastor and one study lead by lay leadership
Communion <i>(served how often?)</i>	1st Sunday of the month	Once a month, pastor and lay leaders prepare
Community Meals		
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i>	8	Pastor
Drama or Dance Program		
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	3	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	50	Lay lead social groups
Outdoor Worship		
Prayer or Meditation Groups	10	Pastor



Public Advocacy Work		
Retreats		
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community		
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	0	
Worship (time slot: 8:30)	36	Pastor
Worship (time slot: 10:30)	Includes on-line 150	Pastor, choir director
Young Adult Groups or Classes	20	Lay lead social group
Youth Groups or Classes	20	Director of Christian education
Other		

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

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Fred Sprenger	No		Ordained	Y
Paul Opsahl	No		Ordained	Y
Tim Worthington	No		Ordained	Y
Walter Geiszler	No		Ordained	Y
Kathryn Timpany	No		Emerita	Y
Lorah Houser Jankord	No		Ordainable pending call	N
Samantha Houser	No		Ordained	N

**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:**

Retired and licensed pastors share in the life of the church alongside other members. They offer insightful comments and are cognizant not to dominate the floor. In a crisis, they can assist in a ministerial capacity, such as when our former senior pastor became ill in the middle of leading service. Retired pastors stepped up to continue the service and offer communion.

**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
Designated Transitional Minister	Yes	Full-time	Executive Committee	Oct. 2023 - Present
Transitional Director of Christian Education	No	30 hours/week	Theologian in residence and InReach Team	June 2022 - Present
Theologian in Residence	Yes	10-15 hours/week	Designated Transitional Minister and Executive Committee	Oct. 2023 - Present
Facilities Manager	No	Full-Time	Head of Staff	Nov. 2021 - Present
Office and Communications Coordinator	No	20-25 hours/week	Head of Staff	Sept. 2022 - Present
Financial Administrator	No	Full-Time	Head of Staff	Nov. 2020 - Present
Choir Director	No	Contract Hours	Head of Staff	Sept. 2023 - Present
Church Music Intern	No	Contract hours	Head of Staff	May 2023 - Present

## REFLECTION

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

Most of our members have a long history with the church, with 60 percent having been here 10 years or longer and 90 percent having been here five years or longer. Most have weathered changes in the church's life and remain engaged. Even in times when we have been without a pastor, lay leaders have emerged to help guide the church through these transitions.

We are deeply invested in the church's youth. We selected children's and family programming as one of our top three priorities during our transition year. The church allocates more hours to the director of Christian education than to many other staff positions, including one of our transitional pastors (theologian in residence). However, because our largest membership is among older adults (65+), we require pastoral care relevant to retired and older adults as well.

According to our members' self-reporting, the majority of our congregation has higher education. We are thoughtful and questioning and seek to engage with life's big questions without forcing a certain set of answers. Our church's ministry is able to tap into many types of expertise and has the opportunity for our values to spread through the community due to our wide reach into various professional, social, and academic groups.

Our high employment rate means many members are financially secure and have a desire to use that privilege for the good of others. Although our members have busy lives with careers, families, and other pursuits, we still value carving out time for church, spirituality, and service.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

2023 Mission Spending Plan - General Funds Budget	Actual Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$387,416.76
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	\$136,758.00
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i> )	\$0.00
Fundraising Events	\$0.00
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0.00
Grants	\$0.00
Rentals of Church Building & Grounds	\$0.00
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0.00
Support from Related Organizations ( <i>e.g. Women's Group</i> )	\$0.00
Other (specify): Investment Returns	\$2,001.64
Other (specify): Legacies	\$7,885.00
Other (specify): Funerals, Weddings, and Miscellaneous	\$312.18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$534,373.58</b>

**Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):** \$513,267.00 (budget) and \$520,607.93 (actual)

[Most recent mission spending plan \(12/31/2023\)](#)

**Current budgeted net income (for the most recent fiscal year):**

Although we passed a 2023 Mission Spending Plan with a net income of negative \$62,622.00, (income of \$450,645.00 and expenses of \$513,267.00), our actual income (amount received in pledges, gifts, other donations, endowment investments, and other income) was \$534,373.58, expenses were \$520,607.93, leaving us with a net income of \$13,765.65.

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

First Congregational Church had a full-time director of congregational life from 01/01/2023 to 09/30/2023 along with guest ministers (pulpit supply). The director of congregational life became the full-time term designated transitional minister as of 10/01/2023 and is supported by a part-time term theologian-in-residence.

The director of congregational life and guest minister expenses, from 01/01/2023 to 12/31/2023, approximates \$53,621.00 not including benefits.

The designated transitional minister and theologian-in-residence expenses, from 10/01/2023 to 12/31/2023, approximately \$37,740.00 including benefits.

The designated transitional minister, director of congregational life, guest ministers, and theologian-in-residence expenses, from 01/01/2023 to 12/31/2023, approximately \$91,360.00. This amount represents 17.80 percent of 2023 year-to-date budget expenses (\$513,267.00).

The designated transitional minister and theologian-in-residence expenses, from 01/01/2024 to 12/31/2024, are estimated at \$155,892.00.

**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)**

Yes Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM - Basic Support)

Yes One Great Hour of Sharing

Yes Strengthen the Church

Yes Neighbors in Need

Yes Christmas Fund

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

First Congregational Church allocates 10 percent of current year pledges, other gifts and donations, and prior years pledges.

**What is the church's current indebtedness?**

Total amount of loan debt: None



Reason for debt: Not Applicable

Are capital and other payments current? Not Applicable

**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.**

We are considering repairing the north and south walls in the basement fellowship hall. However, there is no schedule for this project as it is still in the discussion phase.

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
None	None	\$ -----	\$ -----	Not Applicable

**If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:**

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
None	None	\$ -----	\$ -----	Not Applicable

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

First Congregational Church members have not initiated and/or approved a recent capital campaign.

**Does your church have an endowment?**

Yes.

**What is the market value of the assets?**

The 12/31/2023 Endowment Fund market value is \$3,555,459.55

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

First Congregational Church draws funds monthly to support the annual Mission Spending Plan.

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

The draw rate is 4 percent of the Endowment Fund's trailing 12 quarter average balance.

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

\$117,505.00 was drawn to support the 2019 Mission Spending Plan (budget).

\$117,000 was drawn to support the 2020 Mission Spending Plan (budget).

\$117,000 was drawn to support the 2021 Mission Spending Plan (budget).

\$11,236.54 was drawn monthly or \$134,838.48 annually to support the 2022 Mission Spending Plan (budget).

\$11,396.50 is drawn monthly or \$136,758.00 annually to support the 2023 Mission Spending Plan (budget).

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

The Endowment Fund should last indefinitely unless First Congregational Church runs into significant financial problems.

**Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:**

The Trustees Team reviews the Endowment Fund draw each year during the Mission Spending Plan/budgeting process.

**Other Assets (as of 12/31/2023)**

**Reserves (savings):** \$0.00

We have three 90 day CDs each with an original balance of \$50,000.

**Investments (other than endowment):** \$151,476.42

**Does your church have a parsonage?**

No

**Describe all buildings owned by the church:** First Congregational Church does not own any buildings other than the church.

**Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:** First Congregational Church does not use and/or rent non-owned buildings or space.

**Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs?** The areas accessible to wheelchairs include the church office, education wing (via ramp and elevator), fellowship hall (via elevator), pulpit (via ramp), and sanctuary (main floor via ramp). The balcony 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?**

Our financial position reflects that we are fiscally conservative with our resources but generous in our support of ministry. In the past, we have been able to cover even major unexpected expenses without much hardship. Those entrusted with monitoring our finances take their stewardship role seriously, prioritizing the financial security of our pastors and sharing resources that further the church's values in the wider world.

### 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.**

Our 150-year history has included an alliance with many progressive thought leaders. Susan B. Anthony spoke from our pulpit and Theodore Roosevelt also visited our church. More recently, we extended a call to our first female senior pastor in 2005. She served the church for more than 10 years and retired due to health reasons. When it came time to call her successor in 2017, we called the first openly gay minister in the state of South Dakota. He increased our visibility as a safe and welcoming church for the LGBTQIA+ community. He also helped guide the church through the pandemic, embracing technology such as upgrades to the sound system and cameras to ensure the church's message could be received via computer, television, or phones even if we were not together in person.

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

When creating the 2023 Mission Spending Plan, there was a negative gap between pledges and expenses. We had higher expenses related to our transition between pastors and fewer pledging members coming out of COVID. The resignation of our senior pastor also impacted pledges. During 2023, the Stewardship Team organized a "Close the Gap" campaign. This was a second stewardship drive seeking pledges, in which the team sent letters and made announcements in church. The Stewardship Team told the congregation the exact amount needed to continue meeting the church's financial obligations, retain its staff, and maintain programs. Within about a month, the church raised 90 percent of the targeted funds.

The "Close the Gap" campaign occurred after the congregation had been working with Coach Becky David and our Transition Team for several months. A lot of healing had taken place, and members were feeling newly invested in the church and more optimistic about the future. We believe the increased pledges in our time of need were a concrete way for members to communicate this healing.

**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.**

As a Midwestern congregation, one of our strengths and weaknesses is the idea of "Midwest nice." In other words, many of us are uncomfortable with direct confrontation. In the best case,

this means we're friendly with one another, are willing to let small upsets go, and move past perceived slights. But when deeper conflicts occur, some of us feel ill-equipped to handle it.

Unfortunately, this discomfort with confrontation played a part in our senior pastor's recent departure. When a handful of church members were unhappy with his leadership, they were not able to resolve the conflict in a way that was acceptable to all parties. Some members did not feel heard by the senior pastor, and the pastor resigned. Many of us found ourselves in the dark about the processes our church had in place for such situations, if any. In our transition year, one of the first things we examined was how our inability to move through conflict had hurt both our senior pastor and our congregation. From these painful experiences, we wrote our Behavioral Covenant, which answers the question, "How will we behave when we don't understand each other and when we don't agree?"

The first part of the covenant addresses how we ought to interact with one another. This includes striving to understand different perspectives, speaking from our own journeys, recognizing that love and disagreement are not mutually exclusive, choosing forgiveness, walking with our church leaders, and prioritizing what is good for the church as a whole over what benefits individual members or small groups.

The second part of the covenant lays out the steps for addressing deeper conflict between members, which includes the pastor or staff, and it is based on Matthew 18:15-17. The first step is to have a conversation with the person with whom the member has a conflict. If the member does not feel heard or the conflict remains unresolved, a Church Council member is invited to witness the attempt to deal with the conflict, serving as an impartial party. If the relationship remains unrestored, the last step is to call on the church moderator. Each step of conflict resolution must remain confidential, unless doing so would create an unsafe situation.

For some members, addressing conflict directly with the offending party is scary. But we know that this is the only way to avoid misunderstandings, rumors, and further pain. If a member does not feel able to own their feelings and experiences and address conflict directly, then that member must make peace with letting the conflict go.

Our Behavioral Covenant is included in the church bulletin and livestream as a reminder that this is now a cornerstone of our church culture. You can view the covenant in its entirety at the bottom of a [past newsletter](#).

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Arlan Fick	1992-2001	Y
Rev. Jack Brooks	1990-2005	Y
Rev. Norman Shomper	1994-2007	Y
Rev. Joseph Dudley	2001-2005 (interim)	Y
Rev. Kathryn Timpany	2005-2015	Y
Rev. Tim Worthington	2006-2007	Y
Rev. Ryan Otto	2009-2021	Y
Rev. Dr. Martell Spagnolo	2017-2022	Y

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

Our church has gone through a period of deep reflection and growth in our understanding of the pastor's role. During our transitional year (2022-2023), we reviewed how we can better work with others in disagreement. No pastor is perfect for every church member. However, the way we respond when we disagree, including with the pastor, is within our control. We created and adopted a behavioral covenant to ensure that all members of our community are afforded respect in conversations and disagreements.

To better understand the pastor's role, we participated in an exercise that asked us to prioritize what we wanted from a pastor and the amount of hours we expected the pastor to spend on various tasks. This helped us understand where we most wanted our pastor to spend their limited time and resources. We reflected on the importance of boundary-setting and respecting the boundaries set by others. We learned to promote and encourage self-care for each other, including and especially for our pastor. This led to dismantling the former Pastor-Parish Relations Committee and replacing it with the Ministry Support Team. The goal of this new team is to support the pastor in setting their own boundaries and caring for themselves. We believe

that the changes adopted in our transitional year will provide a strong foundation for our church's future.

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

Ask us

Our former senior pastor expressed feeling “forced” to resign by some church members dissatisfied with his ministry. However, he did not face pressure to leave from any official channels. The majority of the congregation as well as the Executive Committee, Church Council, and staff supported his leadership.

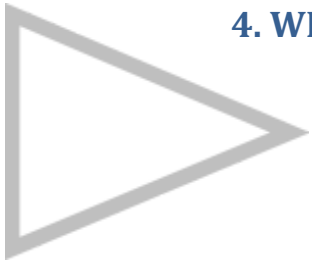
**Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?**

No

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

No





#### 4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

#### 4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

Our OutReach Team selects local missions for our congregation to participate in either by service or financial support. We provide support to various local ministries, such as a group that works with homeless teens in Sioux Falls. We also support and provide office space to [The Naomi Project](#) and [South Dakota Voices for Peace](#). In the past we have provided space for the [Transformation Project](#). We participate in the homeless count, providing a meeting place and meals for volunteers. We're active in the Pride community, and we serve at [The Banquet](#) and other organizations that help the food insecure.

On an annual basis, we invite representatives for marginalized groups to participate in our service and share information about their missions and goals.

We also include children from a predominantly Latinx congregation in our Vacation Bible School, giving our children an opportunity to experience and interact with another culture through their language, music, games, and food.

In addition, we are discussing reviving our mission trips, which were put on hold during the pandemic. In the past, we traveled within the United States (St. Louis, Tucson/borderlands, Washington D.C., and Philadelphia) and abroad (Nicaragua). Mission trips have engaged with immigration issues, food security, and racism, among other causes.

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

We send delegates to all association, Tri-Conference, and national UCC events. Our youth and young adults also participate within the wider UCC community.

**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?**

Our Open and Affirming (ONA) designation is key to our church's identity. During our transitional year, our congregation took part in an exercise in which we noted the aspects of our church that were most important to us. Our status as an ONA church ended up with the most members indicating it as a core value.

Before COVID, we had discussions about becoming a WISE Congregation for Mental Health. We believe that we already hold many of the values of the other designations and would be open to working toward others, especially if an incoming settled pastor had a particular passion for one. The above list could serve as a potential roadmap of goals and ways to better ourselves.

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

First Congregational Church participates in various ecumenical and interfaith activities. In the summer, we cooperate with our sister UCC church in Sioux Falls, Spirit of Peace, as well as a Spanish-speaking Lutheran church and Episcopal churches for Vacation Bible School. The church's pastoral and office staff contribute to an ecumenical Pride service in June. We've hosted block parties with our next-door neighbor, First Lutheran Church. When someone defaced local buildings with anti-semitic hate symbols, we collaborated with other churches and organizations to hold a candlelight vigil showing solidarity with the Jewish community. We've hosted choirs from several different denominations during ecumenical Good Friday services, and we have provided space for the [Rainbow Choir](#) to rehearse and perform.

**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 mission statement is:

To create a Christian community based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth by growing in our relationships with God, each other, and our neighbors through a thinking faith, unbounded welcome, creative worship, and generous service. Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

We continuously strive to live out our mission statement in all church activities, governance, and our interactions with the wider community.

**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?**

During our transitional year we estimated the amount of time a minister devotes to various activities. We ask our pastor to be involved in our wider community to strengthen our visibility and mission. The congregation also realizes the importance of joining and supporting the pastor in this role. We want to give our pastor space to deepen their spirituality, which means we will assist them in setting boundaries. Work-life balance is essential to the pastor's and congregation's health, and we will work with an incoming settled pastor to achieve this balance.

#### **4b. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS (Formerly MISSION InSite)**

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***\*Note from Pulpit Committee:** We (UCC) do not have access to MissionInSite. We have answered the below questions based upon our knowledge and research into our community demographics.*

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

Data trends for the greater Sioux Falls area show that our population continues to increase and is becoming more racially diverse. We have a growing number of foreign-born residents (about 7.45%) and households that speak a language other than English. While employment is strong and median household income is trending upwards, there are opportunities for growth around

bringing awareness to the diverse needs present in our community, particularly for working families and our aging population.

**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?**

While we do not collect race or income demographics for our congregation, we are able to draw some direct comparisons between our church and the larger community. The age of our congregation trends older than that of Sioux Falls, with approximately 30% of our membership over the age of 65, as compared with 13% of the city's population. Our rate of higher education is greater than the community at large, with 75% of our congregation having attended college, as compared with 36% in Sioux Falls. Sixty-five percent of our congregation is employed, compared to 74% of the community as a whole. However, this is accounted for by our retirement-aged population.

Our congregation appears to be less racially diverse than the general population, and more affluent. The neighborhoods immediately surrounding our church have a significantly lower median income than Sioux Falls as a whole, by about \$20,000 annually.

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

The needs of our downtown neighbors influence our church's ministry. We have a significant population of homeless and otherwise marginalized people living in our church's immediate area. We provide gas cards, bus passes, hygiene items, winter clothing items, and more for those in need. We give financial and volunteer support for various community organizations that focus on alleviating food insecurity, and we provide office space in our building for community partners who work with marginalized populations, specifically immigrants.

In contrast, downtown Sioux Falls is also growing, with the addition of new, upscale condos and apartments as well as many trendy and emerging businesses. This may provide us increased visibility with professionals, young people, and others who are drawn to the vibrant downtown scene.

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

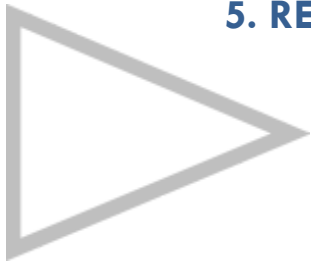
Our church is known as the downtown church with the huge stained-glass windows, Bedient pipe organ, and an open staging area, which has made it a gathering place for a variety of musical performances. Now, community members may also know us as the church with the

Progress Pride flag. We hope that this flag is an outward symbol of our commitment to welcoming all and being the hands of Christ. We are also aware the flag stirs up mixed emotions for others. Although community members would probably not go on record to admit any negative feelings toward our church, some do not share our message of God's unconditional love for everyone. Some people see our beliefs as a threat to the way they perceive the Bible. We hope all people, even ones with varying beliefs, would feel welcome if they chose to walk through our doors.

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

Our church is often described by new people as warm and welcoming with a friendly atmosphere. Our inclusive nature provides an environment open to anyone, free from judgment. We value kindness and compassion with a progressive approach to the Bible's teachings allowing unconditional love to flourish. Every person of any age, race, or sexual orientation is welcome with open arms and open minds.

## 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.

### 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.

### **REFERENCE 1**

**Rev. Jean Morrow**

Position: Retired pastor from First Congregational Church’s local sister church, Spirit of Peace UCC.

#### Contact Information:

Telephone: 605-941-6934

Email: jemorrow56@gmail.com

Relationship to Congregation: Longtime friend, currently occasional pulpit supply, occasional worshiper. I was the pastor for 16 years at Spirit of Peace UCC, a sister church in Sioux Falls, SD. Through conference work, association work and periodic combined programs, I came to know First Congregational very well. I have appreciated strong relationships with the First Congregational pastoral and education staff. I have a deep affection and respect for the folks at

First Congregational Church. I retired in 2019 and have served as pulpit supply several times since then.

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

First Congregational is a lively, large intergenerational congregation. The adult membership is highly educated and look forward to thoughtful and challenging sermons and learning opportunities. When it comes to social issues, they are both moderately conservative and moderately liberal. The successful senior pastor candidate will have experience in community-building. I have found the congregation to be open to new ideas or challenging topics.

First Congregational is a mission-centered church. Located in the heart of downtown, they take their urban ministry seriously. I have been impressed with their willingness to open their facility to a variety of programs that uplift the community, like hosting the Rainbow Chorus concerts and offering rental space to two organizations that work with immigrants and refugees. They have also offered their parking lot for interfaith vigils on several occasions. While they take seriously their location in the community, they also reach out to various cities and situations through mission trips, including a trip to the southern border to bear witness to what was happening and to be hands and hearts in providing relief.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention their love of music. They have a gorgeous pipe organ and have traditionally hired a worthy organist for such a magnificent instrument. They also have a choir and several members who offer their musical gifts as special music. Again, location is important and First Congregational is neighbors to the Washington Pavilion, home to the South Dakota Symphony. The church has been very generous in lending their space for auditions and small group rehearsals.

I think the congregation is poised for moving forward into an exciting time. Like all churches, bouncing back from Covid was challenging. Additionally, they have been through a time of tension and stress with the departure of their most recent settled senior pastor. Wisely, instead of rushing into a search, they hired a coach to help them open up and break through the tension. I believe that was a courageous and healthy move on their part.

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

I don't feel equipped to answer this question. The congregation is coming out of a healing time and I think they are doing well. I understand that post-Covid and post-tension, their giving has been down. A successful senior pastor candidate will want to do an analysis of funds and stewardship.

I also think the successful senior pastor candidate can lead the congregation in a governance evaluation, looking at the church governance structure. Again, I'm looking at this from the fringe, but it has struck me that it may not involve enough people in the development process for programs.

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

I have been on the Board of Directors for South Dakota Voices for Peace (SDVFP) since 2018. SDVFP builds power and enables healing in immigrant, refugee, and Muslim communities by amplifying their voices and working in solidarity with all who dismantle bigotry and racism. During my time as Board chair, the organization was growing and we had to look for more office space. First Congregational was completely open and gracious in renting some of their space. On two occasions, they have helped us expand space even further. They are supportive of the mission of SDVFP and have opened their doors wide to us. We are blessed to be in partnership with First Congregational.

Anything else you wish to share.

I don't think the congregation fully understands how important they are to the South Dakota Conference. They are the flagship church in a conference dominated by small rural churches. If First Congregational is strong and healthy, leading the way educationally and programmatically, it gives everyone else hope for the future of the denomination.

**REFERENCE 2**

**Elaine L. Miller.** Current position - retired ordained clergy. Selected in April 2023 to be one of ten Conference Deacons with the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ. This position is a 5-hr. a week pastoral role on behalf of the Conference to the 27 pastors and churches in my designated region.

Contact information

Cell phone: 605-351-3880

Email: elmiller200@yahoo.com

Relationship to the Congregation

I was the 3/4 time Acting Associate Pastor from 2015 to 2017 with First Congregational United Church of Christ. I was responsible for a full range of pastoral duties and leadership alongside experienced and qualified staff whose collegial practices of planning and decision making were quite effective.



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

First of all, the location of this church is truly in the heart of the city of Sioux Falls, S.D. That has helped the congregation explore a variety of ministries throughout their years. The many opportunities available to them informed their living out Jesus' command "...that you love one another as I have loved you." They have thoughtfully opened building office space in more recent times to non-profit organizations whose goals of caring for those in need, and advocating for justice and peace for all of God's people, are well matched to the church's purpose and mission. The members and friends of First Congregational Church are a gifted community with excellent skills and abilities in creative programming and ministry. Their Christian Education and Music Ministry nurture the spirit of all ages in all times. One of the points of celebration from my perspective is that this people understands what it means to worship God through diversity of prayer, play and service!

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

I would rather offer words of encouragement than describe areas for improvement because I have experienced this church to be one that is capable of transition through times of challenge and change. There is a "voice" that can be heard as their individual and collective hearts and minds sense there is something new yet to come forth from this place full of hope and grace.

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

There was an adult component to the Wednesday Family Program after supper that was often lead by the pastors. The goal was to provide a setting that might offer personal connections to the week's topic. There were a few people who were always ready to share their stories and insights. However, we as pastors gently impressed that the setting was to be safe space for each person to speak. Much to our surprise, and the work of the Spirit, numbers increased and participants became comfortable in breakout groups. Then came the evening when a younger man stood to speak of a very personal "God moment" encounter during a late night drive home from a fishing trip with the guys. The room was quiet as they took in what had just occurred. Building of such trust was a remarkable accomplishment! It was possible to build upon this in offering additional adult faith formation sessions.

It was a blessing to be a part of their journey as they acknowledged a faith that is still unfolding!

**REFERENCE 3**

**Taneeza Islam** / CEO SD Voices for Peace / Nonprofit organization on the 2nd floor of FCC. 12 staff. Our mission is to build power and enabling healing in immigrant, refugee and Muslim

communities by amplifying their voices and working in solidarity with all who dismantle bigotry and racism in our state.

Contact Information

(605)782-9560

[info@sdfpeace.org](mailto:info@sdfpeace.org)

We have office space on the entire 2nd floor and have grown since we moved in, in 2019 and grateful for FCC's welcoming environment and support of our work.

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

FCC takes action and that is truly appreciated by those who partner with the church (like SDVFP, Naomi Project and Transformation Project) and the communities we collectively impact. The church staff is very approachable, welcoming and helpful in all cases. We love being in this supportive environment. I don't know of any other churches in our area that host advocacy organization working with immigrant and trans communities.

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

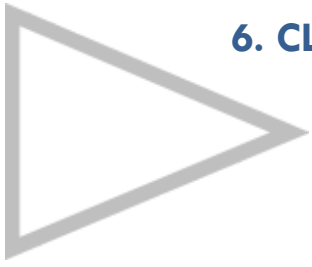
NA

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

See above

Anything else you wish to share.

We work with undocumented people and having an office inside of a church builds more trust with our clients. In addition the church's location close to public transportation stops is critical for our clients as well.



## 6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

### 6a. CLOSING PRAYER

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Dear Searching Pastor,

Thank you for spending the time to get to know us better through our profile. Our prayer for you is that you continue to learn more about God and yourself on your search for the right church home, and we hope considering our church helps in that discovery process. We understand that finding the right church to share your gifts with can be a draining, fraught journey, and that ultimately choosing to pastor a church requires a huge leap of faith. You may be leaving other employment, moving from a place where you have deep roots, or relocating your family in service to God's call on your heart. We deeply appreciate the spiritual work you are doing and pray that it proves fruitful no matter where you end up.

We are eager to grow, learn, and collaborate with someone new, and we look forward to putting into practice everything we learn through our transition year(s) about how to treat one another and support our pastor. We thank God for the team called together to do this work, for the opportunity to learn more about ourselves as a church, for the support and prayers of our congregation, and especially for the time you've spent getting to know our church.

If you decide our church is not right for you, we wish you well on your journey and pray that you find a place that fits you and your unique gifts.

If you are the pastor who joins us, know that we have been praying for you for over a year. Although you remain unknown to us, we continue to pray for you as the search process unfolds.

May we be a safe, loving church home for you. May we help and accompany you on your faith journey. May we support your leadership and co-create the kin-dom of God with you. And may anyone who accompanies you on this journey also find welcome, engagement, and love in our community.

As the Holy Spirit has drawn this Pulpit Committee together and guided our steps, may the Holy Spirit also be with you. With joyful anticipation, we wait for you.

In Christ's Love,  
The Pulpit Committee of First Congregational Church

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

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

Pulpit Committee (Sarah Bell, Mike Wiederrich, Jamie Craghead, Kelli Huwer, Liliann Lukuke, Rodger Ellingson, Lacey Louwagie, Joyce Anderson, and Lana Vetter)

Becky Pagone, Designated Transitional Minister

John Pagone, Transitional Director of Christian Education

Lisa Hastings, Financial Administrator

Signed:

***Sarah Bell - Chair - 03/05/2024***

*Mike Wiederrich - Co-Chair - 03/05/2024*

*Jamie Craghead - Secretary - 03/05/2024*

***Rodger Ellingson - 03/05/2024***

***Kelli Huwer - 03/05/2024***

*Liliann Lukuke - 03/05/2024*

***Joyce Anderson - 03/05/2024***

***Lana Vetter - 03/05/2024***

*Lacey Louwagie - 03/05/2024*

## 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: *Rev. Jonna Jensen*  
Name / Title: Associate Conference Minister  
Email: [jonnaacme@ucctcm.org](mailto:jonnaacme@ucctcm.org)  
Phone: (563) 3537-7287  
Date: April 11, 2024

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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

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