

Search and Call Tools for Congregations

Advancing the Spirit's guidance into God's future

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



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

MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE,
SUPPORT & AUTHORIZATION

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

Slatersville Congregational Church
Slatersville, North Smithfield, RI

Settled Pastor

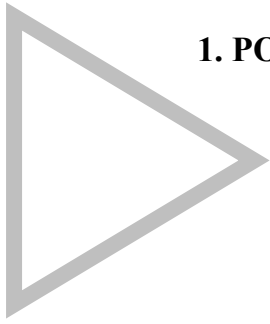
Southern New England Conference of the UCC

May 1, 2024

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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)*



1. POSITION POSTING

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

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: **Slatersville Congregational Church, UCC**

Street address: 25 Greene St North Smithfield, RI 02896

Mailing address: P. O. Box 808, Slatersville, RI 02876-0899

Supplemental web links: <http://www.slatersvillechurch.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SlatersvilleChurch>

Instagram: @slatersvillechurch

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g., denominations, communions, fellowships):

Conference: Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ

Association: Rhode Island Association of the United Church of Christ

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

Name: Rev. Dr. Patricia Kogut PCC

Title: Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region

Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ

Phone: 508-244-4416

Email: kogutp@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description:

In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?

We at Slatersville Congregational Church are prayerfully seeking a Pastor to partner with us as we move forward into our future. Some of the important priorities for us would be to continue our support of various missions, to expand educational opportunities, to grow our congregation, to expand our community outreach including but not limited to increasing Ecumenical participation, and to develop further awareness of our Open and Affirming pledge. We hope to call someone with new ideas who will walk with us and collaborate with us in our journey.

Here are a few photos of our beautiful church on the common, and our church family:





What we value about living in our area:

We enjoy being part of a small-town community and participating in local events such as parades and the Pumpkin Festival. We are proud of being a part of America's First Mill Village and having one of the longest running Sunday Schools in the nation. Our town in Northern Rhode Island is the perfect blend of rural and urban living: a small New England town with trees and plenty of green space, but in close proximity to larger towns and cities with their amenities.

Current size of membership: 192 members, with weekly attendance typically 50-75 persons

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

Position Title: Settled Pastor

Position Duration: Settled

Compensation Level: Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

We would prefer that qualified candidates have these three Core Competencies:

- Effective communication skills (speaking and listening)
- Outreach and empathy
- Strengths in both leading and teaching.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Total Value of Compensation Package offered by church, including housing and benefits:
\$97,000 to \$107,000

Benefits include the following: health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, social security, life insurance/disability insurance, annuity. Compensation package distribution can vary based on the needs of the Settled Pastor and approval by the Finance Committee.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister (e.g. parsonage, living nearby with a housing allowance, living elsewhere to commute as needed)?

A housing allowance is provided for our incoming Settled Pastor and is included in the above compensation package.

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

Slatersville Church expects our Settled Pastor to be present at our church and in our community several days a week to participate in meetings and social activities, to visit local members at home or in care facilities, and to engage with the community and other faith-based groups. In order to meet these expectations, we would like the Pastor to live within a 20–30-minute commute to the church.

State any incentives:

Pastor will collaborate with the Pastoral Relations Committee and the Church Council to arrange a Sabbatical, in keeping with the standards set by the UCC.

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

Periodic Zoom meetings for collaboration with area ministers organized by the area conference minister. The Area Conference provides peer support groups. There is also the RI Association of Ministers.

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

N/A

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

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

As a congregation, we are seeking opportunities to invite new visitors and members into our church community. We also hope to rekindle relationships with members and friends who are no longer active but are still local residents. As part of this, we are looking to grow into our Open and Affirming distinction and more actively demonstrate this role within the community. We are also excited to expand educational opportunities in our church and in our town for people of all ages and stages – children, youth, young adults, families, singles, adults, seniors, and so on.

Serving those who are experiencing homelessness and in need of a hand up is an ongoing ministry that is a priority to our congregation. We want to further develop this ministry and expand our outreach to more groups in the surrounding communities.

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

During input-gathering sessions, our church family identified Community Outreach as a priority for our congregation moving forward. Our Missions Committee works toward this goal by providing donations to people in our church, neighboring towns, nationally, and internationally. They organize events to support a wide range of community needs and service projects, in addition to providing monetary donations. We are exploring further opportunities to share our time, treasures, and talents within the community. In the past, we have had inter-faith services and would like help re-establishing and nurturing these relationships. We are the only UCC church in Northern Rhode Island and the only mainline Protestant church in our community, so our relationships with other denominations provide us with opportunities to interact with our neighboring communities. Our future Pastor will help us make a greater impact by providing prayerful guidance, compassionate leadership, and creative collaboration.

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

Our congregation is primarily English speaking, but as we grow in size and in outreach, we want to grow our congregational diversity. A candidate who has experience in bridging cultural differences would be a great blessing to our church.

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.

Our Pastoral Search Committee reviewed *The Marks* and determined that these four areas of excellence would be most valuable to our congregation and our goals for the future:

Working Together for Justice and Mercy

We want to expand upon becoming Open and Affirming designation and opening ourselves up to other more diverse members of the community around us. We would like to find more opportunities to work with other faith-based communities to advocate for underrepresented and marginalized people and groups in our area. One idea we are researching is offering educational forums to the church and the community to understand LGBTQ terms and their meanings.

Engaging in Sacred Stories and Traditions

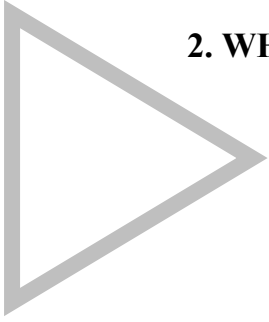
Our past is very important to who we are; it is our foundation. We share the stories of how our church and Sunday School were started when we celebrate Apple Sunday to start the Sunday School year, as well as other times of the year. We have our traditions to celebrate the Advent and Lenten seasons, and other special times during the calendar year. We desire faithful guidance to maintain and respect our traditions as we grow into our future selves. We are seeking a pastor who can recognize and celebrate our past and our foundation with us, while we try new things to expand and grow into the church we want to be for our future.

Building Transformational Leadership Skills

We are looking for a leader who will be truly present for and engaged with our congregation and the community around us. We are looking for someone who will help us create our future in God's Church and our community. We have a tradition of strong lay leadership in our church too, to partner with the pastor, and provide a support system and structure for this work.

Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets

We recognize that the needs of the different generations in our church vary. We look for help continuing to support those who have been pillars of our church for decades, while encouraging the participation of families with young children. We want to reengage those young adults who have drifted away once they graduated from school. We need to encourage more people to get involved as committee members and leaders in our church to keep this good work happening, and we also need to improve communication both within our church community and the community at large.



2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

As we emerge from the challenges of the last several years, we are excited to see growth and increased participation from our members and community. We want to provide both religious and social opportunities to grow together.

We expect that our attendance will increase as the impacts of the pandemic continue to subside, and people feel more comfortable gathering. We are reinstating and growing our programs for children, including Sunday School. We are exploring ways to work more with our older youth through community service projects and confirmation classes. We are restarting Bible studies and discussion groups with our adult members as well. We are embarking on a new plan to host service projects that provide opportunities to serve others and also welcome members of the community to participate in those projects with us; these projects are open to volunteers of all ages, and to our community to participate.

We are improving awareness of the church through continued and increased community involvement. We want to be a spiritual leader in our community and ensure that people know that ALL are truly welcome here, and that this is a safe place to gather.

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

There are three major areas we are working on to understand and address the challenges facing us and our community:

#1 Improving Communication Using Tech Tools and Social Media

Over the past two-and-a-half years, our church has worked hard to reach as many members of our congregation as we can, using a variety of ways:

- The church’s website received a complete overhaul in 2023 to greatly improve its appearance and functionality, to make it easier to use and to better attract more people online, and ultimately, in-person visitors. Please visit us at slatersvillechurch.org.
- Lay leadership use our social media tools to communicate with congregants and the community at large. During Advent and Lent, we shared Reflections which included

scripture passages and prompts that were written by congregants. We highlight special services and events too, to encourage people to join us in worship and in fellowship. Check us out on Facebook (www.facebook.com/SlatersvilleChurch) and Instagram (@slatersvillechurch).

- During COVID restrictions, we recorded our services and posted them online for those worshipping at home. After a brief hiatus, a team of members is working to overcome copyright and technical challenges to launch Facebook Live to stream our services.
- We initiated the use of the Zoom platform for virtual services and meetings during the pandemic, and have continued to use Zoom even as we transition into more in-person activities. The result is that we can make many of our meetings and gatherings open to all, no matter where they are. This includes a weekly Zoom prayer group.
- The church utilizes a regular email "Prayer Chain" that is sent to many members and friends of the congregation, asking our community to pray for joys and concerns. The Joys and Concerns shared during Sunday worship are also shared via the Prayer Chain email.
- Our church administrator and the moderator also use email messages to distribute announcements and updates, to conduct many aspects of church business, and to share information related to upcoming Sunday services and church events.
- Our monthly newsletter "On The Common" and the church events calendar are distributed via email to all members and friends and made available on the website. Printed copies are also made available in the church office entry, and mailed to those who prefer to receive printed materials.

#2 Exploring Our Future: The SCC Visioning Initiative

In 2019, our then moderator organized a Visioning Initiative project that involved an informal church gathering to bring members and friends together to talk openly and candidly about our future as a church. We discussed what was working and what challenges we were facing at that time, and then we started brainstorming ideas for improvement and ways to challenge ourselves to do better. As a result, church leaders started implementing some changes in the months immediately following the gathering, including:

- We added visual signs of our Open and Affirming status on the signage outside our building
- We started addressing the accessibility and safety modifications that the congregation identified
- We have worked on the efficiency of our communication and use of technology as described in the previous section.

We recognize there is further work to be done in this area. Unfortunately, COVID caused us to reprioritize many of the other changes that we identified during the Visioning Initiative in order to focus on other priorities. But it is part of our plan to reassess the information gathered and to move forward with more changes and improvements. During our conversations with the

congregation as part of preparing for this Pastoral Search, many of the same topics have come up again, reminding us that we have further work to do and need volunteers available to do it. Those priorities include but are not limited to reengaging our families with children who lead busy lives, connecting with our elderly who may not be able to attend regular services but need their church friends, and growing our membership and pledges for stronger financial stability.

#3 Congregational ‘Crucial Conversations’ Dialogue Series 2023

During Fall of 2023, our Pastoral Search Committee, with support from our Bridge Pastor, facilitated a series of dialogue sessions to gain a better understanding of the feelings and priorities of our congregation. The sessions were open to all members and friends of our church, and active participation was strongly encouraged, so the dialogues were well-attended. The sessions provided a setting to reflect on our similarities and differences. Our dialogues have included reviewing how we made the decision to become ONA, and where we might want to consider going from here. We also had some initial dialogues around using gender neutral or expansive language in worship versus the more traditional masculine expression of God. The congregation found commonality in our ongoing Missions to support the underserved in our neighboring communities, and we brainstormed resources for how to expand upon our current missions. We have identified some initial small groups to start working on making recommendations for the various areas of interest in our congregation. One of those groups is using the book Crucial Conversations as way to learn how to have more effective and meaningful dialogues within the congregation as we move forward.



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

For example, what beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation’s purpose statement or membership vows? How is God most often described in worship liturgy? In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?

Our newly updated Church Covenant ends with these powerful words:

“Using the Bible and the life of Jesus as our guide, we dedicate our time, talent and treasure to serve faithfully as Christian disciples. We depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us to strengthen the community, nurture hope, seek justice, promote healing, and foster connection. We promise to walk together in the Word and ways of our still-speaking God.”

We have a reputation in our area as a welcoming church family and community of faith:

- We are an Open and Affirming Church as well as a Stephen Ministry Church.
- We are known in the community as "The Church that Prays" and this is an important ministry for us. We receive requests from the greater community for Prayers and for Prayer shawls hand made by Church members.
- The North Smithfield Food Pantry is located in our basement and our Church provides many of the volunteers that keep it in operation. The pantry was set in motion by our former Minister's husband. We strive to be a place of welcome and pride to the community.
- Our most recent community project has been to create Blessing Bags to distribute to people in crisis and many experiencing homelessness. Townspeople who don't attend our church were quick to respond, donating supplies and volunteering to help with assembly.
- We open most of our events to all, including our Vacation Bible School, fellowship breakfasts on special Sundays, musical dinners and variety shows, hymn sings, and community service projects.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Slatersville Congregational Church has a long history and tradition to celebrate, and a beautiful heritage in this small town, beginning with its formation with just eight people in 1816. In the more recent past, we have been guided by five pillars that define our Strengths: We worship, we educate, we praise through music, we nourish, and we comfort.

We are welcoming, caring, and accepting of all who walk through our doors; we strive to be a Church of Extravagant Welcome. We are known in the community as the church that prays, and neighbors and friends from throughout the local area request our prayers in times of need. We have an active Missions program with its own budget funded by separate Missions-only pledges which supports local, national, and world-wide causes. We regularly help to support the local Food Pantry, a Men's Shelter, Adopt-A-Family at Christmas, and group mission activities such as our Blessing Bags program, to name only a few projects. The projects connect us not only to the local community but to a wider outreach as well. We welcome anyone who wants to participate in our activities with us. Our Vacation Bible School is free to anyone who attends and children will often bring friends and family members who do not typically attend our services.

We have a strong music program with gifted directors as well as talented members of our congregation. We offer an Adult Choir and a Handbell Choir, and also Children's Choir and Chime Choir. Hymn Sings and seasonal special musical events such as an Easter Cantata and Christmas Pageants take place during the year, greatly enriching our community.

Perhaps our greatest strength is that we are a church family built on a strong foundation of faith and love and belief in God. We have dealt with some challenges in the past but we have moved forward in a positive way, believing that we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

We come together every week to praise God, sing and listen to inspiring words of faith and wisdom, and learn how to bring the teachings of Christ into our day-to-day life, as Sunday worship is the center of our spiritual life. The best words to describe worship are "multi-generational family affair."

- Children of all ages are part of our family and always welcome in worship. For the comfort of parents, we offer a supervised nursery with the Service piped in, if that is what they prefer.
- We also offer a Sunday School during the second half of Service every Sunday, with the exception of Communion Sunday, where children are welcomed to eat at the table if that is what they and their parent(s) choose.
- Worship takes place in the sanctuary, organ music is played before the start of the service, and announcements are made before the congregation settles in for a quiet, reflective and prayerful hour.
- The Order of Worship is fairly routine with the inclusion of a Children's Moment and a time to share Joys and Concerns.
- Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month and all are welcome to participate.
- Baptisms take place during the service while the Sunday School children are still in the sanctuary (seated at the front of the church to feel a part of the baptism). Parents and godparents and young family members take part in the ceremony and then the child is walked around the church to be greeted by the congregation and welcomed into their new family of faith. The child is presented a rose, a children's Bible, and a baptismal certificate.
- The congregation looks for sermons to be meaningful and guided by the teachings of the Bible, yet relevant and applicable to modern life. Uplifting and inspirational sermons, perhaps based on life experiences, are appreciated as are sermons challenging the congregation to be the best Christians they can be. Language should be straightforward

so that people of all ages and educational backgrounds can understand and remember the message.

- Our congregation is comforted by the older, more familiar hymns, but occasionally non-traditional music is a part of the services and the informal relaxed atmosphere created by contemporary music is enjoyed by all.

Until very recently, our church has only used long-accustomed prayers and songs that refer to God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We had a guest minister who approached this differently and it brought forth some strong feelings. Some people would like to move toward more expansive and gender-neutral terminology while others want to maintain the long-held traditions of a male God that are familiar to them. We have included this in our Crucial Conversations dialogues (described in a previous section), to begin exploring the direction we will move in the future regarding gendered language and how we are living into our ONA status. It is a sensitive issue that we need to continue to explore.

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

Christian Education is an important part of our spiritual growth and tradition, and one we hope to expand in the next few years. Our Sunday School was originally established in 1808 and is one of the longest continually operational church schools in the country, a fact that we celebrate every September with Apple Sunday. The school year opens in September and runs through early June, and classes for pre-school through 8th grade are held during the latter part of the morning worship service. A fully-staffed nursery is available year-round. The Christian Education Committee has the primary responsibility for choosing the curriculum with guidance from the minister. Music is often incorporated in the Sunday School classes as well. Lessons based on the curriculum are incorporated into the Children's Moment or Children's Story during worship. On World Communion Sunday, the children participate in the service and second graders are invited to participate in Communion for the first time. Throughout the Sunday School year, children remain with their families to celebrate Communion so that all are gathered at God's table.

Confirmation classes are held every other year for ages 13 and older. The course is guided by the minister and lay teachers and includes an individual mentor for each student with the intent that confirmands and mentors will learn together and grow in knowledge and faith. Our confirmand class of 2017 continued their work together for two more years to prepare for a Mission Trip to Philadelphia to minister to the homeless. This group and the following class, which was held mostly virtually due to the pandemic, have continued their involvement by sharing their experiences with the congregation, speaking during Stewardship Moments on how the church has impacted their lives, reading the Scripture lessons, and more. They have enriched our worship services. We are including our youth in more active roles with the church such as inviting a teen to participate on the Pastoral Search Committee (until he left for college), and having our youth involved in the Blessing Bags ministry.

Adult Bible Study classes have been led by the minister and members of the congregation over the years, and we have an ongoing Morning Prayer group that meets weekly via Zoom. A

discussion group focusing on White Supremacy met during the pandemic, also via Zoom. The congregation is open to various opportunities for exploration and study in order to learn and grow and become better Christians, such as the contemplative services led by our Bridge Pastor on our town Common held during summer evenings, and the spiritual practices moments he shared during worship services over the course of a few months.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our lay leadership gathers monthly in the Church Council meetings. The Church Council includes the chairperson from each of our active committees, and comes together to discuss all matters of our church, from financial updates to operational challenges, new events and Missions projects, and more. Between meetings, we communicate via emails for time-sensitive matters that cannot wait until the next meeting, or we may have small group discussions or special meetings if the need arises. Our committee structure allows us to “divide-and-conquer” the responsibilities of church operations, organize volunteers to meet our needs, and manage issues as they arise, to the best of our abilities, and having the monthly Church Council meetings for the leadership gives us a dedicated time to check in with one another for advice, support, and collaboration.

- *When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?* 4-6 hours per month, but can be more if we are planning special events or projects
- *Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?* The Moderator, Diaconate Chair and Property Manager are the main contacts for emergency situations and they delegate as appropriate. Our Stephens Ministers are key crisis management partners too.
- *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?* Our church’s By-Laws and Annual Report are available upon request, as are our monthly newsletters. Please review the organizational structure below, which was pulled from our church By-Laws, to better understand the leadership at Slatersville Church.

PASTOR

The pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church, in partnership with the Diaconate.
He/she shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees without vote.
He/she shall be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the Church secretary as well as the Church office budget.

OFFICERS

Moderator
Clerk

Financial Secretary
Treasurer
Other Officers

CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator
The Clerk
The Treasurer
Chairperson for Missions Committee
Chairperson for Diaconate
Chairperson for Music Committee
Chairperson for Finance Committee
Chairperson for Property Committee
Chairperson for Stewardship Committee
Chairperson for Hospitality Committee
Chairperson for Christian Education Committee
Chairperson for Caring Committee
Pastor in an ex-officio, non-voting role

DIACONATE

The Deacons are everyday spiritual leaders providing care and nurturing within the Church and community.
The Diaconate shall consist of a minimum of twelve (12) active members.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

(add here the 11-Year Report developed with the help of your conference staff, UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite)

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



Church#: 783901

Assoc: 944 Schedule: 0 Slatersville Congregational Church, UCC Slatersville RI 02876

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2011	352	150	60	13	6	0	3	0	16
2012	354	130	70	0	0	6	4	0	2
2013	360	120	65	8	4	0	6	0	6
2014	362	135	77	0	2	0	0	0	2
2015	362	125	87	0	5	0	5	0	0
2016	371	136	93	0	13	0	4	0	9
2017	375	125	94	7	0	0	3	0	4
2018	379	100	80	0	7	1	4	0	4
2019	379	100	80	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	379	100	80	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	191	50	0	0	2	0	8	182	-188

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2011	\$191,884	\$0	\$4,500	\$3,020	\$7,520	\$0	\$7,520	2.35	\$199,404	\$160,503
2012	\$193,649	\$155,243	\$4,500	\$5,356	\$9,856	\$18,265	\$28,121	2.32	\$377,013	\$164,844
2013	\$192,500	\$205,062	\$4,425	\$4,637	\$9,062	\$0	\$9,062	2.30	\$406,624	\$137,060
2014	\$205,418	\$0	\$4,500	\$4,920	\$9,420	\$0	\$9,420	2.19	\$214,838	\$170,448
2015	\$205,418	\$0	\$4,500	\$4,200	\$8,700	\$0	\$8,700	2.19	\$214,118	\$178,701
2016	\$205,418	\$0	\$4,500	\$4,200	\$8,700	\$0	\$8,700	2.19	\$214,118	\$0
2017	\$205,418	\$0	\$4,500	\$0	\$4,500	\$0	\$4,500	2.19	\$209,918	\$0
2018	\$205,418	\$0	\$1,006	\$0	\$1,006	\$0	\$1,006	0.49	\$206,424	\$0
2019	\$205,418	\$0	\$3,750	\$55	\$3,805	\$0	\$3,805	1.83	\$209,223	\$0
2020	\$205,418	\$0	\$3,500	\$3,375	\$6,875	\$0	\$6,875	1.70	\$212,293	\$0
2021	\$206,836	\$0	\$3,125	\$11,000	\$14,125	\$6,700	\$20,825	1.51	\$227,661	\$185,814

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2016-2021	-48.52	-63.24	-100.00	-84.62	4650.00	0.69	62.36	6.33
2011-2021	-45.74	-66.67	-100.00	-89.47	6233.33	7.79	87.83	14.17

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

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Please note: The numbers below reflect post-pandemic participation.

Describe those who participate in your church.

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Number of active members:	80	Yes
Number of active non-members:	20	Yes
Total of church participants:	100	Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

	Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)

More than 10 years:	60	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	35	Yes
Less than 5 years:	5	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these estimates?</i>
7	7		4	10	10	25	25	12	y

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:		(We do not gather this information)
Households with minors:		
Single adults age 35-65:		
Joint households with no minors:		
Single adults over 65:		

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:		(We do not gather this information)
College:		
Graduate School:		
Specialty Training:		
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

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

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

This is not information that we generally gather from our members and visitors. Any guesses would not be an accurate reflection of this information. According to InSite, the area has a general make up of employment in professional specialty of 24.4%, Managerial 18.3% and production transportation 11.2%. Two-thirds of this area is white collar, as is the majority of our congregation.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

Our church is primarily made up of white non-Hispanic members. This is reflective of the community directly around our church, but other cities and towns in Northern Rhode Island are more diverse than North Smithfield. Our diversity is more in the area of family structure and household make up, inclusive of LGBTQ+ members and friends. We became Open and Affirming in 2019 and are exploring opportunities to make more people in the community aware of this so that more people know that this is a safe space for ALL people to learn and grow in their faith.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

This is an area we are eager to explore, but we have not made specific plans at this time.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people attending	Who plans each of the listed gatherings?
Adult Groups or Classes	14-16	Men’s Group Lunches
Adult Groups or Classes	5	Needles and Pins
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	15	One Deacon assists Pastor with each baptism
Children’s Groups or Classes	Currently 12 registered	We have reinstated Sunday School under a new framework. Christian Ed leaders and volunteers lead classes.
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	Pre-COVID, approx. 200,	Pastor works with deacons and music director

	Post-COVID approx. 100	
Church-wide Meals	50-70	2-6 depending upon the year
Choirs and Music Groups: Vocal	17	Music Director
Choirs and Music Groups: Handbells	12	Handbell Choir Director
Choirs and Music Groups: Children's		Children's Choir Director Note: need to re-establish. Varies by year based on Sunday School attendance
Choirs and Music Groups- Chime		Need to re-establish. Varies by year based upon attendance of Sunday School
Church-based Bible Study	8-10 people	
Communion		Deacons assist pastor with preparation and serving on the first Sunday of each month.
Community Meals		N/A
Confirmation	6 confirmed in 2023	Confirmation Classes are held every other year
Drama or Dance Program		N/A
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	11	Pastor, with assistance from Deacons
Intergenerational Groups		N/A
Outdoor Worship	varies	Developed this ability during COVID
Prayer or Meditation Groups	10	Virtual prayer group
Public Advocacy Work		N/A
Retreats		N/A
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community		N/A
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	3-5 a year	Pastor and Wedding Day Coordinator

Worship at 10am on Sundays	Pre covid 75-115, Post covid 55-80	Pastor leads, supported by the Worship Team (Music and Deacons)
Young Adult Groups or Classes		N/A
Youth Groups or Classes		Will re-establish; Vacation Bible School was reinstated in July 2023
Other: Blessing of the Animals	10-12	Pastor plus deacon to assist

Additional comments: Youth groups, adult classes, Vacation Bible School, and Confirmation were on hold during COVID, but are being re-established.

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)
Rev. David Proctor	No	UCC	Church member who volunteers to celebrate Communion when needed	Y

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: N/A

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/part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Time for current person in this position
Office Administrator		Part Time	Pastor	1
Youth Choir Director		Part Time	Pastor and Music Comm. Chair	Open
Hand Bell Choir Director		Part Time	Pastor and Music Comm. Chair	2
Organist / Choir Director		Part Time	Pastor and Music Comm. Chair	17

Nursery Care		Part Time	Christian Ed. Committee	4
Maintenance		Part Time	Property Committee	12

REFLECTION

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

We have done so much good over the years, with our strong history and traditions, but our church and our ministries have so much room to grow! There are opportunities around us to reach out to different ages and stages, from families with children, to empty nesters, and to senior populations, to assure them that we have room for everyone within our doors. Our decision to become an Open and Affirming church should lead us into better welcoming and serving our LGBTQ neighbors as well, and we are not yet living fully into that. We would like to increase our outreach within other communities abutting North Smithfield.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (figures reflect church's 2023 financial results)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$144,140
Endowment Proceeds <i>(as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)</i>	\$7,425
Endowment Draw <i>(beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal")</i>	1.7%
Fundraising Events	\$5,905
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$2,250
Grants	None
Rentals of Church Building	\$2,820
Rentals of Church Parsonage	N/A
Support from Related Organizations <i>(e.g., Women's Group)</i>	\$100

Transfers from Special Accounts	\$8,790
Other (specify): Prior year surplus	None
Other (specify):	\$
TOTAL	\$171,430

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$182,351

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? Currently 37%

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church? No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

- Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing (did not participate in 2022)
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

(Note: we consistently donate to UCC emergency missions. For 2023, contributions totaled \$6,070)

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

The support to the conference is included in our budget. We provide a total of \$7,500 per year (includes Support and Per Capita dues). We do not calculate this as a percentage, but we used the guidelines given in past years.

What is the church’s current indebtedness?

- Total amount of loan debt: \$0
- Reason for debt: N/A
- Are capital and other payments current? N/A

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. N/A

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2012	Exterior paint and windows	\$175,000	\$212,797	Very successful. We were able to complete all planned work, and the overage was used to purchase a new piano and to complete other property projects.
		\$	\$	

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe: We have had additional smaller project-based fundraising efforts as different needs have arisen. We are considering a capital campaign in 2024 to offset expenses related to a property project to refurbish our patio surface. Project planning is still in progress, but cost estimates are in the range of \$30,000-\$60,000.

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

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

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? As of 12/31/2023, the total balance of our endowment stands at \$433,410. It is divided into two sub-accounts:

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

- We withdraw \$675 per month for operating expenses (\$8,100 per year) from our primary endowment account.
- For the past several years, we have taken advantage of market appreciation to take additional distributions from our endowment. Some of this has been used to offset operating expenses, and some has served to increase certain restricted funds.

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

Approximately 2% per year, from our primary endowment account. (This refers to the \$8,100 per year.)

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

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? Our experience is that our level of withdrawals does not indicate that the endowment will deplete.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: Even with our distributions, our endowment has been relatively stable. During 2022 the market weakened substantially, and the endowment dropped to roughly the same level as 2013 and 2014. During 2023, we saw improved performance. We feel that the health of the endowment depends on the market. Our funds are managed by Morgan Stanley.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings):

Our bank account balance as of 12/31/2023 is approximately \$67,000.

Investments (other than endowment):

We have a separate investment account, also managed by Morgan Stanley. This account was created from the proceeds of the sale of our parsonage in 2022. The return on this account supports the housing expenses of our minister

- Housing Equity Account balance as of 12/31/2023 was \$458,319.93

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church: At street level, we have the Church Sanctuary with offices and social hall adjacent. The basement under these buildings houses a meeting room, the music department rehearsal room, Sunday School classrooms and the nursery, and also the North Smithfield Food Pantry.

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

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? Our worship space, fellowship hall, and office spaces are accessible to wheelchairs. The pulpit, choir loft, and balcony are accessible only by stairs. There is stair lift to the lower floor where classrooms are located, for those who are able to walk but are unable to use the stairs safely.

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

Historically our pledges have been adequate to meet the needs of our budget. Our endowment is generally stable, following the market with limited withdrawals for our operating costs. It is on the table that we may have to make some additional withdrawals from our endowment during this period of transition and exploration of where we are moving in the future. Our budget is completed by our Finance committee, based upon the previous years' performance. It is then presented to the Church Council for approval prior to being brought to the congregation at our Annual Meeting for final approval.

Regardless of our operating budget, donors have the option of making donations directly to our Missions Committee. We find Missions to be essential to our ministry. The funds directed to that committee are only allowed to be used for the purpose of Missions and cannot be used to cover operating costs.

Although we have had some difficulty balancing our budget in recent years, we are starting to see increased attendance, return visitors and guests, and other positive signs. We had a decline in pledges due to deaths, donors moving, and a decline in attendance with COVID, but we were able to employ a variety of strategies to manage those challenges, including encouraging additional financial support from the congregation, and using COVID relief funds to assist our budget for two years (2021-22). We continue to work to address these trials in a thoughtful and prayerful manner, realizing we must be faithful stewards of the funds that have been entrusted to us.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

Our church is unique in that we have a strong historical foundation. Our Sunday School came first in 1808 to meet the needs of children in the mill in town, and is one of the oldest Sunday Schools in the country. Our congregation was then established in 1816 and is now housed in a beautiful building that was completed in 1838. A neighboring congregation, Globe Church, merged with our congregation in 1974, and in 1988 a multi-use hall was added to the church building and was named "Globe Hall."

The most important event in the past 10 years for our church is when we voted in 2019 to become "Open and Affirming," dedicating and confirming our Welcoming Statement which has more recently been merged with our Church Covenant: "No matter who you are and where you are on life's journey, you are welcome to the full life and ministry of this church." As a church,

we highly value our deep history and revere our traditions, but we also continue to adjust and shift with the times, accepting all people into our church by respecting differences, moving beyond tolerance into acceptance and affirmation.

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.

Our church and congregation are known for being welcoming to all people who enter our doors, for worship, for service, or in our food pantry. Several years ago, we decided to explore becoming officially Open and Affirming. Our congregation is made up of people who have come from many faith backgrounds and have different views about how the Bible should be interpreted. Our moderator at the time led the congregation through meetings to discuss our feelings on the subject. The setting was respectful and supportive but clearly divided, and emotions often ran high during these conversations. Our pastor had the challenge of supporting people who had similar and different views about this controversial topic. Some people attending felt that there was a bias and this led to some people choosing to leave our church. When the vote was taken, it was overwhelmingly in favor of Open and Affirming, and a few more people left after that. Even after the vote, there were mixed feelings about how to communicate our decision, i.e., the use of symbols. And still, some people feel we have not done enough. To be Open and Affirming is more than just title. We continue to explore what this means for us as a congregation. We have seen a few people who left initially start to come back again and we find this encouraging and hopeful, as we seek ways to continue to move forward. This dialogue is ongoing, please see the information about our Crucial Conversations described earlier in this profile.

In addition, this prolonged period of transition as we continue our search for a new Settled Pastor has given us the gift of extra time to assess our church operations and tackle long-overdue changes and improvements in areas of personnel management, processes, and documentation. These insufficient practices have created uncertainty, which has caused conflicts to arise. Our lay leadership has embraced this work to take these opportunities to build new strengths and open the door to a better future. In the past 9+ months, we have transitioned from a church that is waiting to call a new Pastor, to one that is preparing to call a new Pastor. We have rewritten all of the job descriptions for our church staff and developed clear, written expectations of the roles and responsibilities, and how staff members can and should interact with one another and with leadership. We have developed a Personnel Committee within the Church Council to ensure that our staff’s needs are managed (ex: salary and performance reviews occurring on time each year), and that each member has a path to manage and resolve conflicts or issues, if any should arise.

We have also launched a new Worship Team that includes three important aspects of the worship service – Pastor, Diaconate, and Music – to support the pastor’s message, to facilitate more collaboration, and to create a “unified voice” in services. The Church Council’s goal is to create a better working model that will improve communication and encourage planning in advance to reduce stress.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Korte Yeo (Bridge through Jan. 2024)	10 months	Y
Rev. Linda Hartley (Interim)	1.5	Y
Rev. Eileen Morris	13	Y
Rev. Beverley Edwards (Interim)	1	Y
Rev. Charles Simonson (Interim)	1	Y
Rev. David Poole	7	Y
Rev. Janie Gebhardt (Interim)	1.5	Y
Rev. Leo Hourihan	11	Y

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

Our congregation has a history of having pastoral staff stay with us for a long time, building strong relationships with the congregation and community. This works well with how we enjoy maintaining our traditions and knowing what to expect, while also growing a deeper relationship with our pastor and building the trust that enables us to try new things together. It also means that we can take time to adjust to new pastoral styles and changes to our routines. We believe that the right minister for us will encourage us to accept change, while respecting our history and traditions. We would like to “add to” rather than “take away” from our experience of worshipping God and growing our faith together. During this time of transition, we’ve explored new spiritual practices and engaged in meaningful dialogues with one another to open ourselves to new experiences, and we’re excited to welcome a new spiritual leader to continue that growth.

We want to feel connected to our pastor. We view our pastor as an important member of our church family, someone we will come to love, and we want them to love us back. We tend to

form a deep commitment to our pastor, so we want to partner with them to succeed and overcome challenges or conflicts. If that should occur, the Church Council, leadership, and congregation will support the pastor in finding a resolution.

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

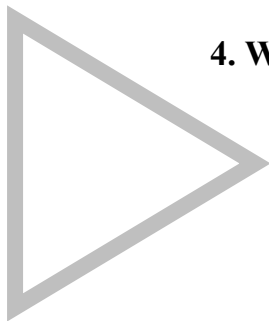
There was an incident of misconduct by a pastor almost 20 years ago. We can provide further information, if needed.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

See above

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

See above



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy? For example, which service activities has your church participated in this past year? Where has the church participated in global connections of care and justice? What is currently transformational in your church’s engagement with neighbors near or far?

Supporting our community and the world beyond with our time, treasures, and talents is fundamental to our church. It is so important that we have established a separate pledge line item that usually exceeds \$10,000 annually to fund our Missions activities.

The most dramatic example of our church’s outreach is the North Smithfield Food Pantry, housed in our church’s basement, which was the vision of our former pastor’s husband. Both church and community members sit on its Board of Directors and the Pantry is supplied with food and monetary donations from the congregation and the community. More than sixty families are served each month.

In addition, we have been associated with a local Men’s Shelter for a number of years, donating needed supplies and providing a monthly dinner to the men who stay there from November through March. Our young people make grinders for Super Bowl Sunday. Church participants fund the effort by purchasing the grinders we donate to the Men’s Shelter, a local Family Shelter, and a Women’s Recovery House every year. Each December we work with a community leader to provide Christmas gifts for a number of families through the Adopt-A-Family program. For the past two years, our confirmation class participated in the 9/11 National Day of Service by putting together Blessing Bags of food and hygiene supplies to distribute to people in the area who are experiencing homelessness.

Our Missions Committee is very active and generous in responding to needs outside of our community with monetary or gift donations as well. These have included such disasters as the floods and tornadoes in the South, Haitian Relief, and relief efforts for the war in Ukraine, as well as charitable donations that positively impact the lives of people in developing countries.

We are known in the community as the “church that prays” with an email Prayer Chain, a weekly Zoom Prayer Group, and the sharing of Joys and Concerns during our Sunday services. Community members reach out to be included, and this is just one more way we engage with our neighbors near and far.

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

We have delegates who are nominated and confirmed by the congregation to attend association and conference meetings.

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input 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?

As previously stated, in recent years we became ONA. We are looking to expand community awareness of this distinction. While some of these other distinctions may fit with our community missions, we do not know enough about them at this time to determine what path we might take toward one or more of them.

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

Pre-COVID, our church was very active in ecumenical activities with a number of churches in and around our community. Such activities included youth attending services at different places of faith and ecumenical music worship opportunities. While small events have started to resurface, we would like to further expand these interactions as all the churches in the area have resumed their more typical worship patterns.

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities?

In lieu of a mission statement, we have a Church Covenant. We recently merged our previous Covenant with our Open and Affirming Statement to better reflect who we are as a congregation and church family. We strive to live out our covenant with each other and in our community:

“We, the people of Slatersville Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, believe that no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome to the full life and ministry of this church.

As a UCC Open and Affirming church we love, support, and include all people without regard for race, ethnicity, class, age, mental status, family structure, physical ability, sexual orientation, or gender expression. All are equal in the eyes of God and this congregation.

Using the Bible and the life of Jesus as our guide, we dedicate our time, talent and treasure to serve faithfully as Christian disciples. We depend on the Holy Spirit to lead and empower us to strengthen the community, nurture hope, seek justice, promote healing, and foster connection. We promise to walk together in the Word and ways of our still-speaking God.”

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?

The balance of our pastor’s work between in-church responsibilities and community ministry varies depending upon the time of year and the activities of the congregation and community.

There are opportunities to support missions, ecumenical events, and community outreach throughout the year. We encourage our pastor to actively participate in these. We also expect the pastor to delegate such responsibilities as appropriate to keep a balance of work-life expectations. Our lay leadership enjoys collaborating with the pastor to meet church and community needs.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

We did a MissionInsite report on the 15-mile radius around our church because we are the only UCC church in this area. We have people who travel quite a distance to attend our services. Our MissionInsite report noted that most people in our area are either 35-54 or 65 and older. Our active congregation attending service regularly is primarily 60 and older at this time. Prior to COVID we had a large number of families with parents in the 35-54-year-old range. We recognize the need to build our active participation of those in the younger age groups in order for our church to continue to thrive.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

Our adjacent neighborhood is primarily white, non-Hispanic. We do have a small city nearby that is more diverse but we do not see that diversity within our congregation.

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

In our area, 40% of people consider themselves to be Catholic and 47% are unknown. Only 6% are mainline Christians. A large number of people who attend our church are former Catholics who were seeking something different. These members and attendees are part of the reason there is range of perspectives on the balance of keeping tradition and accepting change. This has led to some challenging dialogues, and we know more will be necessary in the future.

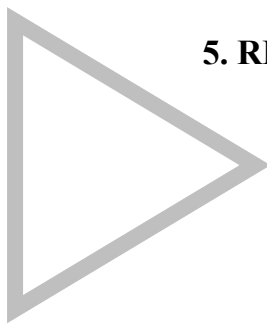
What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

We are referred to by many in the community as "the church that prays," and that is important to us, as is our reputation for being open and welcoming. The community knows our church as the

place “On The Common” where community events have frequently been held, and they know our congregation truly enjoys participating in town events like concerts, parades, and town fairs. We are also known for housing and staffing the North Smithfield Food Bank. We enjoy all of these distinctions within our community.

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

When we have spoken to people who are relatively new to our church, the response to why they return is almost always how friendly we are. We make a point of reaching out to each new face, giving them a gift, and inviting them to join us in fellowship. Parents of young children tell us that they are thankful for space where their children are welcome in the sanctuary and in our nursery and Sunday School. We have also had people say that they enjoy how the congregation is invited to actively participate in services such as doing readings, making announcements, and asking for prayers.



5. REFERENCES

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

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

REFERENCE 1

Gary S Ezovski

Former North Smithfield Town Administrator

401-765-2543

ezovski@gmail.com

Friend of the church

REFERENCE 2

Pastor Steve Bacon

Harvest Community Church

Office 401-765-1777 Cell 401-741-7351

Leader of local Men's Homeless Shelter

**88 North Main Street
Slatersville, RI 02876
401-765-2543
ezovski@gmail.com**

August 7, 2022

RE: Slatersville Congregational Church

To whom it may concern:

With the good fortune afforded by almost fifty years of living in Slatersville, I have come to know some of the people, the leadership, and the values that appear to be the essence of the Slatersville Congregational Church (SCC). I suspect it is that circumstance that has caused Mrs. Jean Meo to request that I provide this reference as the SCC pursues a new minister. The energy of the congregation has been revealed to many who are not members but live in North Smithfield as neighbors to SCC, as active parishioners of a nearby church, as friends of those who are members, as municipal leaders and, at least for me, as one who has been pulled into one of the Church activities.

As an active member of nearby St John the Evangelist, I have witnessed repeated SCC efforts to engage in ecumenical services. There have been continuing efforts to offer the church building and grounds in ongoing effort to build community. Though the town now has its own venue for events, until just recently our town's Concerts on the common, and Christmas on the common, had been enjoyed by young and old of all faiths for many, many years. SCC is clearly a welcoming community.

As neighbors we have seen the untiring and rational effort to sustain the beauty that is the architecture and the grounds of the church which are a valued piece of our community and its history. Over the years we have seen SCC members volunteer to care for the church and cemetery grounds. Despite the small size of its congregation, we have seen repairs and upgrades to the church that clearly had to be a huge financial challenge but were accomplished as a commitment to the future. Friends who have been active members have evidenced their commitment to SCC in word and deed over decades.

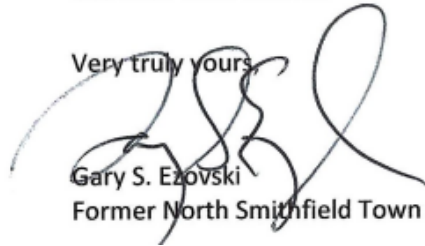
The examples of leadership provided by ministers of SCC have also been notable. Most recently, the methods developed by Reverend Morris to overcome the impact of the pandemic caused my wife and I to worship online with SCC as a safe alternative, and years ago, Reverend

Harvey's interest in the history of our town spurred many to engage in those endeavors. SCC is an entity that certainly serves its members, but it has repeatedly demonstrated concern for interests well beyond its walls and property lines.

Finally, as the Town of North Smithfield's elected town administrator from 2016 to 2020, my assistance was requested in an effort to re-establish the board of the North Smithfield Food Pantry that has been afforded space to operate at SCC since its founding. Two core volunteer "super senior" citizens had announced need to retire, creating a void in the daily management of the pantry activities. In joining that board, I witnessed what I believe to be the faith-filled foundation on which the congregation is built. People stepped up with selfless action to assure that the 50 to 60 families who rely on the pantry were not disappointed.

Though I am not a member, it is with great comfort that I can say I am very proud of our Slatersville Congregational Church. It is my hope these insights provide encouragement to a person who is interested, qualified, and determined to become the next outstanding leader of this faith-filled church.

Very truly yours,



Gary S. Ezovski
Former North Smithfield Town Administrator



60 North Main Street Woonsocket, RI 02895

Winter Shelter and Transitional Ministry for Homeless Men

401.765.1777

August 9, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I'm writing to you today to share a few thoughts concerning the wonderful relationship our homeless ministry has had with Slatersville Congregational Church (SCC). I represent Harvest Community Church in Woonsocket, RI located about 10 minutes from Slatersville.

Our church began operating a seasonal homeless shelter in our facility back in 2002. I don't recall the exact year Pastor Eileen Morris reached out to us to visit our shelter and ask if there was some way SCC could co-labor in our efforts to minister to the homeless. However, that initial meeting was the starting point of years of support and ministry that would follow to this very date.

Initially, our friends at SCC would collect toiletries and hygiene items and drop them by the shelter where we make them available for our residents. In later seasons, a group of people from SCC began making plastic mats out of recycled shopping bags to be used by homeless sleeping outdoors during the summer months. These mats prevent moisture from passing from the ground onto a sleeping bag or blankets. I was told that some men placed their plastic mats under tents to add cushioning as well as weatherproofing.

Superbowl Sunday was one annual event that our residents always looked forward because our friends at SCC provided dozens of grinders, crocks of soups, chips and snack foods for our residents. Because of that generosity it has always been a special day.

I wish I knew the exact date this began, but for the past four or five years the mission board of SCC provided a full chicken dinner for our shelter residents on the first Saturday night of each month of operation. No surprise we usually have full attendance at the shelter on that night!

These gifts of love along with clothing and food donations and basic need items have shown our residents that their lives mean something to the local Christian community.

Deuteronomy 15:7,8 teaches the following principle:

*“If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut *your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be.*”*

Our friends at Slatersville Community Church have demonstrated the love of Christ and followed His example of putting the needs of others first and not only in tangible gifts, but in personal one-on-one ministry during their monthly visits to the shelter.

This variety of involvement is the heart of what our homeless ministry provides and we could never hope to accomplish that without the consistent support and genuine love of the men and women at Slatersville Congregational Church.

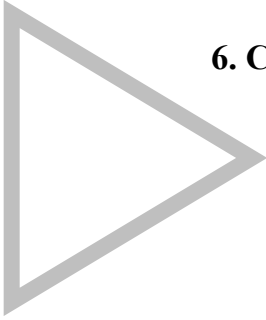
If I can be of any further help, please contact me at either of the numbers below. May the Lord guide you to fill the pulpit with a minister who is as much in love with the truth of God’s word as they are with shepherding the people God has directed to SCC.

In the one who taught us to wash the feet of others,
Pastor Steve Bacon

Steve Bacon

Harvest Community Church
60 North Main St.
Woonsocket, RI 02895

Office – 401-765-1777
Cell – 401-741-7351



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

Loving God, we prayerfully feel your presence amongst our Search Committee as we await the arrival of a pastor who will be our spiritual leader and walk with our congregation in the years to come. We are thankful to do Your will as we continue to serve You. We know that all things are possible because of Your incredible love and grace.

Amen

"I (We) can do all things through Christ which strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending 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? (*for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.*)
Tamara Sylvestre, Jenni Hull, George & Marilyn Briggs, Jean Meo, Jill Boday, Karen Yetter, Michell Eskeli, Finance Committee, Church Council and the friends and members of SCC.
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Tamara Sylvestre

Chairperson of Pastoral Search Committee

April 22, 2024

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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. Dr. Patty Kogut

Name / Title: Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region

Email: kogutp@sneucc.org

Phone: (508) 244-4416

Date: May 1, 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