

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!

Rachel Hackenberg

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

**Ladera Community Church
Portola Valley, CA**

Settled Minister

Northern California Nevada Conference, UCC

June 13, 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)*

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.

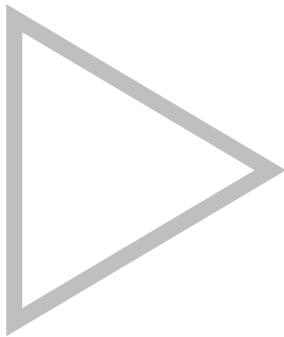
The interim season is not the only time in a church's life when it's valuable to give attention to explore a congregation's vocation. Three sections of the Local Church Profile – WHO ARE WE NOW, WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR, and WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME – are meant to be updated every 3-5 years. Known 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 storytellings and many prayers, and 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.



POSITION POSTING

[LISTING INFORMATION](#)

[SCOPE OF WORK](#)

[COMPENSATION & SUPPORT](#)

[WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?](#)

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: **Ladera Community Church**

Street address: **3300 Alpine Road, Portola Valley, CA**

Supplemental web links: www.ladera.org

Please send inquiries to: pastorsearch@ladera.org

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

Conference: **Northern California Nevada Conference UCC**

Association: **Santa Clara**

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

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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?

Ladera Community Church is a small, but well-resourced church in the beautiful area of Portola Valley, California. We seek a minister who can help us keep the best of our history and roots while we work together to revitalize, grow, and be more relevant to the community around us. We recognize that growth is a challenge to most communities of faith these days, yet we strongly feel the social justice, environmental justice, open-and-affirming, radical inclusivity and progressive action that we bring to the world is as important for the next 70 years as it has been for our past 70 years. We are open to creativity and change to achieve our growth (while understanding that isn't always easy). We desire a minister who loves God and can help us reflect that love in the truest, broadest sense. We enjoy inspired preaching that speaks truth to what's going on in the world today. We have talented and committed people that support a broad range of activities –

including our hybrid (on-line and in-person) services with accomplished technical support. We pray that this speaks to exactly the right person who is called to come journey with us.

Photographs:

Insert 1 – 3 images of your church, its people, its parsonage or building or gathering space, etc.





What we value about living in our area (2 – 3 sentences):

Portola Valley is the best of town and country – we are in a natural area with abundant trees and greenery and yet still have proximity to larger urban areas. We are close to world-class education facilities and in the heart of Silicon Valley, providing us with many cultural resources, sports teams (professional and collegiate) and activities. People in the area are progressive, with a fair amount of diversity and education. We have wonderful weather and are close to both the ocean and mountains, with lots of outdoor activities.

Current size of membership: **93**

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): **Only English**

Position Title: **Called Minister**

Position Duration (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

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**

SCOPE OF WORK

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

The full-time pastor will be responsible for:

- **Leading the spiritual life of the church, with primary responsibility for planning and leading the worship service. Also arranging for pulpit supply for planned absences.**
Support for this role: Worship team, Pastoral Relations Committee, and technical support for services.
- **Special services, such as weddings and memorials, as well as possible prayer services for difficult public events (natural or human-made disasters, for instance)**
Support for this role: Worship team, Office team, Individuals in congregation, technical support for services
- **Pastoral care for those in need. Counseling, listening and referral as needed.**
- **Coordinating faith formation through prayer, Bible study and other programs. Helping define and promulgate the faith formation program of the church. Encouraging and supporting lay leaders as they develop and lead programs.**
Support for this role: Lay leadership
- **Managing the church staff and ensuring that all staff members receive appropriate support and feedback to be successful in their jobs. Setting job objectives with individual staff. Conducting performance reviews and consulting with the Personnel Committee.**
Support for this role: Personnel Committee, Moderator, Assistant Moderator
- **Participating in the final selection of all non-ordained staff positions.**
Support for this role: Personnel Committee does initial recruitment

- **Directing the day-to-day administration of the church, working in collaboration with the staff and members of the congregation in planning and implementing church activities**
Support for this role: Office Manager, Office Administrator (contractor). The Facilities Team handles the management of the church property.
- **Engaging with the community, leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love**
- **In cooperation with Church Council, helping with strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry and broader church life.**
Support for this role: Council, Budget Committee for consultation and activities as planned
- **Creating specific annual goals with Church Council and endeavoring to meet them.**
- **Serving on the Church Council, consulting with the Personnel and Budget Committees; attending other meetings as appropriate.**
- **Participating in wider church activities, such as Conference meetings.**

This is our desired scope of work; for the right candidate, we are open to a negotiation of scope of work and compensation.

Core Competencies:

(List three core competencies that you imagine could be foundational in your next minister's relationship with the church. For example, a church seeking a pastoral care minister might hope to call someone who is caring, sensitive and sociable, while a church seeking an executive minister might want an organized, detail-oriented and time-conscious person.)

Three core competencies we'd like in our pastor are:

- **Thoughtful and searching, with authenticity and integrity**
- **Practical – able to direct the day-to-day management of the church and manage staff**
- **Pastoral change leader – able to work with and guide us as we strive to become our best selves and be relevant for the future**

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (*from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance*):

\$120,000 -- \$150,000 -- Total salary and benefits;

\$90,000 -- \$110,000 -- Cash salary (including housing allowance)

Benefits (*choose one*):

Salary plus Benefits: Benefits are Medical/Dental/Vision insurance, Disability and Life insurance, Annuity, Mileage/Expense Allowance, possible Housing (or Housing Allowance), Professional Growth and Meetings expenses as agreed.

What is the expected living situation for your next minister

Negotiable – the church has a brand-new, two-bedroom cottage next to the church, rented at below-market rate, that is available for the minister, if desired.

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

If the minister does not live on site, there is the possibility of a commute of from 15 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the location the minister prefers to live in.

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

Paid sabbatical

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

The Santa Clara Association meets occasionally, but primarily for Ecclesiastical Councils and Ordinations and Installations. The Northern California Nevada Conference (NCNC) has an annual meeting as well as an Authorized Ministers Retreats, as well as other conference-wide webinars, retreats and conferences. Pacific School of Religion (PSR) in Berkeley, CA also provides lectures and workshops.

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

Negotiable

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

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

- **Ladera Community Church strives to be a community of care, both internally (with each other in the congregation) and externally (broader community). We are dedicated to improving in this area.**
- **Ladera Community Church realizes that it needs to shift to be more relevant to our broader community. The world has changed, especially since Covid, and we must change too. What people desire from “church” is different now.**
- **By meeting our community where it is and offering programs and resources relevant to their needs, we hope to increase our attendance at events (not just worship services, but all that we do) and our vitality as a community, both spiritually and practically.**

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

By helping LCC determine a viable path forward as a community of care, the minister will enable us to keep alive a progressive voice of Christianity in the world. We can create the future of the church and bring the compassionate, non-judgmental love of Christ into the coming decades.

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

We appreciate the need for diversity. Our commitment to ONA has existed for decades and is very strong. We have been somewhat successful with LGBTQ+ membership, but could do more for this and other categories of diversity. We would like a minister who is sensitive to diversity needs. See also [Historical Information](#), Three Significant Happenings.

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.

- **Caring for All Creation**
- **Working Together for Justice and Mercy**
- **Building Transformational Leadership Skills**
- **Sharing Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions**



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?

Our Mission

The mission of Ladera Community Church is to provide a sanctuary where anyone can come and experience the presence of God; to nurture the spiritual, moral, and intellectual growth of each person; to serve God with our talent, time, energy, and resources, accepting full stewardship for our community and world; and to welcome others to serve in our ministries.

Our Vision

Our vision for Ladera Community Church is to be an inviting, vibrant, and visible faith community that lives Jesus’ central teaching of love of God and neighbor. We value and celebrate our diversity, and offer a heartfelt welcome to all, including the LGBTQ+ community and anyone who feels marginalized. We are committed to making a positive impact, expressed through social, environmental and educational actions to promote justice, kindness and a healthier world. We seek to create a community that inspires, connects, and brings all closer to God.

Radical Inclusivity

Ladera Community Church, in accordance with the spirit and teaching of Jesus, seeks to be an inclusive fellowship welcoming and affirming people of every race, color, class, sexual orientation (LGBTQ+), and religious background. The church calls upon its members as individuals to uphold the above declaration both in church activities and in daily life.

Our Purpose

***Seeking* – We value questions as much as answers and recognize there is more to be discovered, understood, and enjoyed about our faith, each other, ourselves, and the world around us. We seek to pursue and practice our dynamic faith.**

***Serving* – We feel a responsibility to act compassionately and boldly to alleviate suffering, address its root causes, and to care for our planet. We are committed to sharing our resources generously with the broader community to make a meaningful impact in the world.**

Growing – We offer a safe and supportive place to grow spiritually and stronger in faith. We strive to be authentic, to appreciate and respect one another, and to grow our community. Together we endeavor to seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

We communicate our mission, vision, and purpose in the following way on our website, which we believe to be more accessible language for the broad community:

Look Deeper: At some point in life, we want more. More than just the outer experiences – we want to think deeply, understand, find meaning. We think this search is important and worthy of support.

Quiet The Noise: Life has many distractions. Sometimes we find ourselves saying “I can’t even hear myself think,” much less listen, for the still, small voice inside of us. That voice is key to our well-being, peace, and self-discovery.

Find Connection: Life is better with a community, with people who know you and care about you. We share good times and difficult times. Our connections help us make the difficult parts of the journey not only bearable but often fun! We take the position of justice, equity, and inclusion of those of any race, class, sexual orientation, and religion. We welcome you to our community.

Make A Difference: When we help others, we gain so much more. When we see our shared humanity, we are pulled out of our own small world and our problems often seem less than when we started. There are many ways to make a difference.

Our Covenants

Over the past few years we have been revisiting our covenants. A historical covenant, inserted at the front of our hymnals, is currently the default “Membership Covenant.” Please refer to the [Congregational Reflections](#) section for more information.

Recently, we developed a governance covenant: “LCC Covenant for Working Together as a Loving Community.” It is included in the section [Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission](#).

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

For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps? Has your church had a multi-year strategic plan or vision statement; if so, where do you see that plan/vision taking you?

We have a multi-year strategic plan. Our goals for 2023 and 2024 are shown below. We also share a reflection on outreach in the recent past.

Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

Goals for 2023:

- **Internal Community Revitalization – increase our connection by following our shared love of meals, nature and ecology, music and the arts and fun!**
- **Consider an all-church retreat -- postponed**
- **Food and Fellowship events – Lenten Soup Suppers, Town Hall gathering, Annual meeting and luncheon**
- **Member-led fun events – Eco-home tour, Group hike, Ping-Pong party, Bass Lake**
- **Music and Arts – Friday painting group, Choir**
- **Look Deeper – Spiritual Growth group, Hildegard of Bingen series, Short Story series, Claire Heinzelman Poetry and Healing**
- **External Community Engagement, hopefully leading to growth – create events that let people know about LCC, our people and our values in a fun way, hoping they ‘stick around’.**
- **Creative Arts for Children – 20 children in the program, ended in 2023**
- **Joint collaboration with Ladera Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) group – Ladera Pride Parade and table display**
- **Music and Arts – Brass Band and ice cream social, Messiah Sing and Play Along, hosted PV Art Fair**
- **Member-led fun events – Wine tasting, Sequoias Game night and dessert, game nights**
- **Community Service and Collaboration – Navigation Center (Maple Street) regular lunches for homeless, School supplies drive, and Christmas gifts, hosted PV Arts Fair, Easter Egg hunt, Ecology Speaker Series, Coastal Clean Up, Sequoias Ecumenical Bible Study, Styrofoam recycling drive, food drives**
- **Replace the Cottage – finally started construction in 2023, hurrah!**
- **Develop a Site Revitalization Plan – completed, report on website**

Goals for 2024:

- **Select and hire a bridge pastor**

- **Complete Cottage**
- **Launch and make progress on Phase 1 of Site Plan**
- **Select and install a called pastor.**
- **For spirit and community: having activities that primarily focus on quieting the noise, looking deeper, and becoming a better “Community of Care”. Current events include Navigation Center lunches for the homeless, Speaker series on Global Warming, Lenten Soup Suppers, Spiritual Insight from Short Stories series, Wine tasting, Building Democracy with Digital Power speaker; more to be planned!**
- **Track our progress in engaging with others (whether inside the church or outside), building community, and link this to overall church growth objectives**

We have experimented with outreach programs in the last year, consisting of special events that we invite the community to (as listed above) and a children’s art program. While these events were successful in being fun and well attended, they have not resulted in keeping new, active participants in the church community. We understand that the way people see church today is very different, and we struggle to create a model that will be mutually beneficial to the church and the community.



WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

[CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS](#)

[11-YEAR REPORT](#)

[CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS](#)

[PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING](#)

[CHURCH FINANCES](#)

[HISTORICAL INFORMATION](#)

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 members represent a wide spectrum of beliefs: traditional Christians, Progressive Christians, as well as atheists and agnostics. Many of our members value spiritual practices that come from other traditions. While most of our own local traditions are grounded in Christianity, our most basic shared beliefs center on the value of every individual as an essential expression of love.

- **We seek to understand the life, teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ in inclusive, practical, and relevant ways.**
- **We respect each other. We hold each other in freedom. We ask questions and affirm people for who they are.**
- **We believe all people are spiritual beings in that everyone has some indescribable qualities that reveal our passions and inspire us to do wonderful things.**
- **We are companions on this earthly journey. We live to fulfill our purpose as human beings inside a community of care.**
- **We believe that together we are more!**

We begin our Sunday worship services by saying together: “God is here, now, everywhere, and always.”

Either the liturgist or pastor says at the start of our services (or paraphrases) the following: Ladera Community Church, in accordance with the spirit and teaching of Jesus, seeks to be an inclusive fellowship welcoming and affirming people of every race, color, class, sexual orientation (LGBTQ+), and religious background. The church calls

upon its members as individuals to uphold the above declaration both in church activities and in daily life.

What beliefs and commitments are stated in your congregation's purpose statement or membership vows?

We say our Covenant together as members when new members join.

OUR COVENANT

WE COVENANT WITH THE LORD AND WITH ONE ANOTHER AND BIND OURSELVES IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD:

- ***TO WALK TOGETHER IN MUTUAL LOVE AND RESPECT***
- ***TO RELY UPON THE CONTINUED GUIDANCE OF GOD'S SPIRIT TO LEAD US INTO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S PURPOSES,***
- ***TO SEEK IN ALL THAT WE DO TO FOLLOW THE WAY REVEALED IN THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.***

WE ACKNOWLEDGE OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS CHRISTIANS TO SHARE IN THE WORK AND FELLOWSHIP OF THIS CHURCH, BOTH AT HOME AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

How is God most often described in worship liturgy?

There is freedom to refer to "God" as "Father," "Mother," "God," or "Creator" in the Lord's Prayer that we say together. Sometimes we use feminine or gender-neutral pronouns for God in Biblical readings and liturgies.

In what ways would you describe the Holy Spirit in your midst?

We do not focus on that aspect of the Trinity as much as the others.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- **Core group of long-time members with deep roots in the church.**

- **Overlapping core group of very active members.**
- **A level of openness and trust with one another, as evidenced by the prayer request sharing time within the Sunday service**
- **Professional musician leadership. Committed choir. Support for the choir and music program.**
- **Well-functioning media/technology leadership, with Zoom and Facebook coverage for all worship services and other events in the Sanctuary.**
- **Strong individual ties within Portola Valley (Peter Sass, a member of the Church Council is on the Diversity/Equity/Inclusion group for the Ladera community within Portola Valley; Linda Drey Nightingale, a leader in the church, is a leader in environmental issues within the Los Trancos community within Portola Valley.)**
- **Many activities/events initiated /led by members of the church: Styrofoam drive, presence at the Gay Pride parade in Ladera, Environmental lecture series, Hildegard of Bingen series, Spiritual Insights from Short Stories series, wine tasting events, ...**
- **Strong ties to The Sequoias, a senior living facility, with several church members as residents**
- **Commitment to social justice with a team that is helping to lead an affordable housing initiative with the Affordable Housing Task Force. The Social Justice Team meets regularly and is very active.**
- **There has been a long-standing tradition of spiritual leaders from local churches and institutions meeting once a month. They included the Christ Episcopal Church, Valley Presbyterian Church, Woodside Village Church, Our Lady of the Wayside Catholic Church, and the Priory School.**

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

For example, where does worship take place, and what is it based around? What was a recent baptism like? What are some words used to describe good preaching?

Sunday worship is a joyful celebration of God’s presence among us. Through song and silence, prayer and reflection, we find inspiration, renewal and refreshment. Lay members are involved in worship as liturgists and choir members, and we seek to integrate the arts – music and visual – to enrich the worship experience. Worship is available in person in the sanctuary as well as online via [Zoom](#) and [Facebook](#). We are fortunate to have great technical support that makes it all work well.

We celebrate communion on the first Sunday of each month (all are welcome at our table). We have held “Sharing our Journey” every second Sunday, during which the minister interviews someone about their faith journey.

We offer special worship services throughout the year for a variety of holidays and purposes, such as Blessing of the Animals, Earth Day, Graduation Sunday, All Saints Day, Social Justice Sunday, and prayer vigils in response to current events.

We have enjoyed Lectionary-based preaching, church-season sermons, and contemporary topic-based talks.

Music is an integral part of our worship and individual faith journeys. Music Director [Eric K](#) and Accompanist [Sam Cisneros](#) choose music of all periods and traditions to enhance and expand the lessons and the season (in collaboration with the pastor). Christmas and Easter are important musically. We often include outside instrumentalists and vocalists for special selections during these times.

We do not simply sing from a hymnal. Congregational singing includes traditional church music, Taizé chants, and contemporary songs.

Our piano and keyboard accompanist, Sam Cisneros, brings the service to a close in various musical styles, including jazz, show tunes and other contemporary compositions. He is also a composer and arranger and shares these gifts with us.

Our choir consists of a variety of different voices. Several members have also sung in other groups in our community. The choir sings from September through June. New members are welcome to join us at any time, even those who are beginners! The choir meets for rehearsal [Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.](#) in the Sanctuary.

Music Director Dr. Eric K is also the Founder and Music Director of the [Redwood Symphony](#), an orchestra that has performed throughout the Bay Area for over 35 years.

Art has also been a focus of LCC, starting under Pastor Lindsay Fulmer and continuing under Pastor Jeff Munnis with a Friday afternoon program at the church. Various personal projects, as well as church decorations and devotional banners were created. This time also served as a reflective and connecting time for participants as well as a community outreach opportunity. The program ceased when Pastor Munnis left, but several members would be interested in this program and art as a way to connect with our broader community.

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

For example, how are young people in leadership? How do people continue to form their faith over a lifetime? Name a topic studied or curriculum used recently; what was the impact of this study on those who attended?

Historically, we have had Second Hour programs (11am – 12 noon) after the Sunday worship service. Most recently, the pastor has led a midweek educational program titled Spiritual Growth and Transformation. In the past we have also had a weekly prayer group. Currently, we have a variety of Second Hour programs dedicated to “Looking Deeper.”

Five years ago, we had a Children’s Program that was run by Holly Kennedy (former Minister of Faith Formation). For a long time, the LCC Children’s program was a vibrant part of the church and helped bring in many current members. We have tried different approaches to reviving this program with limited success (see Children’s Art Program in this document). Unfortunately, our membership of families with young children has dropped off (perhaps reflecting our demographics) and thus our Children’s program has ceased. We’d love to have a Children’s Program again if we can gain the interest of the community.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?

As a general overview, we are a bridge between a family church and a lay-led program church. An effective guide in the governance of our church has been the following covenant:

LCC Covenant for Working Together as a Loving Community

- 1. We work to create an environment of respect and support for one another and to foster open communication. We value our diversity of ideology, both spiritual and temporal, and realize that each of our personal visions / opinions / passions is one of several valuable viewpoints.**
- 2. We recognize that each of us is acting in good faith. Communication is a human endeavor and misunderstandings may occur. We will resolve these in the spirit of love and forgiveness.**
- 3. As individuals, we accept our responsibility to express ourselves openly and directly so that our opinions and ideas can benefit the decision-making process.**

4. We will actively seek broad input of opinions and ideas.
5. We will listen to the opinions expressed by others with respect and openness, realizing that their opinions are held with the same passion and belief as we hold our own.
6. We will take satisfaction from having our viewpoints seriously considered and lovingly heard, rather than from prevailing in our position.
7. We will be open to considering that a better outcome may involve a melding of differing points of view.
8. We recognize that valuing diversity can result in decisions that may reflect views other than our own.
9. We will be intentional in our decision-making process, and strive for consensus.

The church is organized with a Council, Standing Committees, and Project Committees.

- **Council consists of the Moderator, Assistant Moderator, Minister, Recorder, Treasurer and 3 at large members.**
- **Standing Committees are: Endowment; Investment; Facilities; Mission, Service and Social Justice team; Nominating; Personnel; Pre-school Liaison; Stewardship; Pastoral Relations**
- **Recent/Current Project Committees arise for specific needs and last as long as needed, then disband. They are (or recently have been): Affordable Housing Task Force; Children’s Art Program; Community Engagement (now Share Your Joy); Cottage; Site Team**

The Council keeps a dashboard document tracking key projects in the church. The Council categorizes projects by Elephant, Ecosystem, and Metrics. Elephant projects are larger in scope, breakthrough in nature, and require dedicated leadership, resources and church-wide alignment to complete. They may also be multiple year projects. The church cannot have too many Elephants at one time; priority decisions must be made. Ecosystem projects are critical for the success of one (or more) of the Elephants and are strategic, but are a means rather than an ends in achieving our primary goals. Metrics are key areas that Council will review every month. There is also an area of Staff Goals and Programs (often within the Metrics section, but sometimes in other areas). Staff is responsible for driving these programs and achieving results, but will bring up issues that require Council assistance.

At the end of the fiscal year/beginning of the year, the church identifies projects, goals and needed budgets. These are put into the yearly goal budget and approved by the

congregation. If a project is identified during the year, Council has discretion to allocate funds within certain limits, or a team can shift funds within its existing budget.

We keep a dashboard of each project and its progress, which is reviewed at each Council meeting. When projects are initiated, the goals and resources are defined, as well as the scope of responsibility and decision-making delegated to the team. A Council member is also identified to liaison with the team. Therefore, most teams can operate independently within their scope. When something occurs outside of the scope, issues are brought to Council for resolution. There are circumstances when changes are large enough that a Congregational Meeting will be called to approve a project and its budget, but this is not frequent.

Within this framework, decision-making is relatively straight-forward. Projects are approved and staffed, people report progress and completions are celebrated. Council meets for approximately 2-3 hours a month. Individual teams meet as necessary; the amount of time varies by project. Larger projects, such as the Site Team, hold a combination of individual work meetings and larger meetings with the congregation to seek input, feedback, and to communicate work progress. There are also hours spent by individuals in discussions, etc. that lead up to decision making, all part of being a Congregational church.

For communication, we have a weekly email, a regular (mostly monthly) newsletter, a website, congregational emails as appropriate and announcements/reminders each Sunday, both verbal and written.

In addition to the above church activities, we also have an on-site Montessori Pre-school, the Sharmila Montessori Preschool. We also share our church with the Tongan congregation of Haumalu o' Langi.

An example of a time when action had to be taken quickly:

In the first months of 2023, we had an unprecedented amount of rain that saturated the ground and resulted in the flooding of our main meeting room, Peabody Hall. Many people pitched in to vacuum up water, clean out the swale, clear drains, and wash and replace towels and rags. The head of the Facilities Team directly worked with the moderator to get help from a general contractor and a soils/drainage expert to see what could be done. Action was taken and, when necessary, special meetings of Council were called to allocate funds. Council worked closely with the Facilities Team, contractors and others to cover the immediate problem and also over the longer term to assess what must be changed to prevent the problem from recurring. We are still working on this.

Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance?

Yes

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#: 20845

Assoc: 20 Schedule: 0 Ladera Community Church Portola Valley CA 94028

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2013	105	72	45	0	6	0	4	-1	3
2014	111	69	55	5	2	1	2	0	6
2015	110	69	55	0	2	0	2	1	-1
2016	118	60	48	4	1	6	3	0	8
2017	115	54	45	0	0	0	3	0	-3
2018	115	54	45	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	92	60	13	2	0	0	2	23	-23
2020	92	60	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	92	60	13	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	94	32	0	0	0	3	2	7	-6
2023	94	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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
2013	\$482,918	\$0	\$0	\$12,302	\$12,302	\$7,253	\$19,555	0.00	\$502,473	\$291,034
2014	\$368,457	\$0	\$15,000	\$7,260	\$22,260	\$0	\$22,260	4.07	\$390,717	\$297,527
2015	\$432,500	\$0	\$15,250	\$6,785	\$22,035	\$0	\$22,035	3.53	\$454,535	\$289,250
2016	\$368,494	\$0	\$15,000	\$9,830	\$24,830	\$15,064	\$39,894	4.07	\$408,388	\$294,171
2017	\$364,517	\$0	\$15,000	\$10,723	\$25,723	\$20,436	\$46,159	4.12	\$410,676	\$288,031
2018	\$364,517	\$0	\$12,500	\$4,239	\$16,739	\$0	\$16,739	3.43	\$381,256	\$0
2019	\$338,700	\$0	\$10,000	\$3,570	\$13,570	\$0	\$13,570	2.95	\$352,270	\$255,723
2020	\$338,700	\$0	\$10,150	\$3,540	\$13,690	\$0	\$13,690	3.00	\$352,390	\$0
2021	\$338,700	\$0	\$10,000	\$5,780	\$15,780	\$0	\$15,780	2.95	\$354,480	\$0
2022	\$400,941	\$0	\$1,250	\$2,705	\$3,955	\$32,513	\$36,468	0.31	\$437,409	\$244,517
2023	\$400,941	\$0	\$10,500	\$2,735	\$13,235	\$0	\$13,235	2.62	\$414,176	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2018-2023	-18.26	-40.74	-100.00	0.00	0.00	9.99	-20.93	8.63
2013-2023	-10.48	-55.56	-100.00	-100.00	-100.00	-16.98	7.58	-17.57

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.

CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	46	
Number of non-active members:	47	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	93	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	82%	
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	13%	
Less than 5 years:	5%	

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>
0	0	5%	2%	0	8%	12%	25%	48%	

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	2.5%	
Joint household with minors:	12.5%	
Single adults age 35-65:	2.5%	
Joint household with no minors:	25%	
Single adults over 65:	57.5%	

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	5%	
College:	32.5%	
Graduate School:	60%	
Specialty Training:	0	
Other (please specify):	2.5%	

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed FT:	17.5%	
Adults who are employed PT:	5%	
Adults who are retired:	57.5%	
Adults who are not employed:	12..5%	
Other (student, etc)	7.5%	

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

We have a number of members who are employed in education (Stanford University and other local institutions), high tech and medicine. A significant portion of our congregation is retired, but came from these areas.

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

We are predominantly white and English speaking. We have been an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation since 1998 and are highly committed to it. We have LGBTQ+ members, but feel we could do even better in this area (see [Historical Information](#), Three Significant Happenings).

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:

No

PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

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

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? (<i>list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff</i>)
Adult Groups or Classes	12	Spiritual Insights from Short Stories: Colleen Crangle
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	0	
Children's Groups or Classes	20	Past program (not currently active) Children's Art Program: Stelli Munnis
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	60-85	Rev. Jeff Munnis, Rev. Evelyn Vigil
Church-wide Meals	14-18	Lenten Soup Suppers: Dolly Verplank, Pat & Curt Luck
Choirs and Music Groups	16	Choir director Eric K and Sam Cisneros, pianist
Church-based Bible Study	2-10	Spiritual Growth Group: Rev. Jeff Munnis
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	Once a month	Martha Luemers and Al Knickerbocker
Community Meals	9	Monthly Navigation Center Serving: Mike Smith and Amy Boward. Office Administrator

Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	
Drama or Dance Program	0	
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	3	Rev. Jeff Munnis, Rev. Wilma Reichard, guest pastor, Sue Bartolo, Ketzal Cruz, family members
Intergenerational Groups	0	
Outdoor Worship	31+ furry friends	Blessing of the Animals Service: Rev. Jeff Munnis
Prayer or Meditation Groups		
Public Advocacy Work	8+	Social Justice and Affordable Housing: Karen Turner, Pat Luck, Curt Luck, Dolly Verplank, Linda Clever, Nancy Hay, Tim Clark, Jud Hoffman
Retreats	0	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	7	Rev. Evelyn Vigil and Kirsten Kingdom from the Sequoias
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	0	
Worship (time slot: <u> 9:30am </u>)	35-40	
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	0	
Other		

Additional comments:

See other sections of this documents for lists of activities.

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)
Wilma Reichard	3-Way	Stanford Medical Center	Director of Chaplains	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:

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

No staff person is the head of staff; the settled minister is the 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
Youth/Community Outreach (unstaffed as of 2024)	No	Part-time/temporary	Minister	9 months; we need a strategy/person for this role.
Office Administration (Amy Boward – remote)	No	Part-time	Minister	1.5 years
Office Administration (Ketzal Cruz – on-site)	No	Part-time	Minister	1 year
Director of Music Ministry	No	Part-time	Minister	10.5 years
Music -- Pianist	No	Part-time	Minister	10.5 years

REFLECTION

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

We get a great deal done for the size of our church. We need to work on growth and appealing more to our broader community.

CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 219,048
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$ 74,177
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	NA
Fundraising Events	NA
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	NA
Grants	NA
Rentals of Church Building	\$ 16,457
Rentals of Church Parsonage	NA
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	NA
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$ 908
Other (specify): Interest	\$ 10,920
Other (specify): Preschool Rental	\$ 104,345
TOTAL	\$ 425,855

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$418,625

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

We can provide our annual report and full budget, balance sheet, etc. via email.

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

33%, based on 2023 actual expenses

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

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

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

One Great Hour of Sharing

Strengthen the Church

Neighbors in Need

Christmas Fund

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

We include a budget item for UCC Share. In 2023, the amount was \$5,000 and increased to \$7,500 for 2024. This is in addition to any funds contributed by church collection for OCWM.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: NONE

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.

The church has had a cottage on the property for decades. The cottage was originally built and used to house refugees. The cottage had become uninhabitable and the congregation made the decision to replace it. The project is expected to be completed by May 2024 and

the total cost for the cottage is estimated to be approximately \$360,000. It is being funded from existing reserves; no debt is involved.

The first priority for use of the cottage is to house the pastor. If the pastor is not interested, then alternative uses will be considered.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe: **NONE**

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

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

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

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

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes, 2 Endowments. The following information is from 12/31/2023 balances.

Endowment #1 Proceeds from the sale of the original manse/Westridge Funds:

What is the market value of the assets?

\$1,900,885

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

We draw 3.75% based on a three-year average to support the operating budget of the church.

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

The church adopted the 3.75% draw rate about 3 years ago. In 2018, our draw was 3.98%. However, the draw was based on increasing the draw amount by CPI and not calculated as a % of the endowment.

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

The draw from the endowment has been an integral part of our operating budget since 2015. We have only drawn from the endowment the budgeted amount. We have not used the endowment to address any shortfalls in the operating budget. The only exception to this statement is that the congregation approved taking

approximately \$100,000 from the endowment to complete the cottage. The funds were withdrawn in 2024.

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

Indefinitely; the historic return has exceeded our draw rate.

Endowment #2 LCC Endowment from individual contributions

What is the market value of the assets?

\$140,606

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

The interest from this endowment is used to support outreach activities by the church. Principal from the endowment must be preserved. There is a very specific policy for how the interest is to be spent: 70% for outreach, 20% for facilities and 10% for special projects. Due to the investment losses in 2022, we currently are rebuilding the endowment to its required balance based on principal and liabilities. We don't have interest for distribution until 2025 or 2026.

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

None

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

None

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

Indefinitely; the policy requires that the principal in the endowment is maintained in perpetuity.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): **\$322,469**

These assets are invested in interest-bearing savings accounts and CDs.

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

Does your church have a parsonage?

Not in the traditional sense. We have the cottage, as described above. The cottage has 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, laundry, living/dining area and kitchen. It is 800 sq. ft. It's newly built, so in excellent condition.

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

The church has the following facilities:

- Sanctuary with narthex, pastor’s office, meeting room and bathroom.
- A meeting hall (Peabody Hall) with adjacent kitchen, and office.
- Nine classrooms on the second floor, five of which are rented to a local preschool 5 days a week. There are also two bathrooms on a split level.

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

None

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*)

The ground floor facilities are all accessible to wheelchairs. The classrooms and upstairs additional bathrooms are not wheelchair accessible currently.

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

For example, when was a time the church made a major budget change? How is the budgeting process done? What new ministry initiative has your church financed?

Financially, our church is strong. We feel grateful for the able stewardship of many members, past and present. We have no debt. We have funds to invest in our future. We do need to refresh our site – things have been maintained but are showing the wear of age. We have had a Site Team develop a site improvement plan. We are working on the first phase of that now. Some of the later phases are dependent on the church making plans for its future. We look forward to working on that with our new pastor.

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.

Three Significant Happenings:

1) Continuous excellence of our Music Program: decades of respect, appreciation, and inspiration. Our Choir is unflinching in helping to make worship “sing;” often offering special music and guest musicians for special Sundays and events – mostly classical & traditional, but also contemporary. (See [Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.](#))

2) Our Cottage, adjacent to the Sanctuary, has a long history. A two-bedroom, factory-built unit had served for decades as social justice outreach, first to refugee families, and later for temporary housing for families with patients at nearby Stanford hospital. In recent times, it fell into disuse and disrepair. Just prior to Covid, our Church launched a rebuilding effort. Gaining funding was smooth, but working with contractors and obtaining permits was challenging. Fortunately, a church member championed the project and saw it through. We will have a grand opening celebration soon and are finalizing tenant options: short- or long-term housing for a called pastor, affordable housing for the local public sector, church staff, or the wider community.

3) Becoming an Open and Affirming congregation.

Being a welcoming ONA church is an absolute part of who we are. LCC was among the early adopters in UCC's ONA movement.

Our three-year education, conversation and approval process was carefully shepherded and Spirit Led. It culminated with full congregational approval on September 20, 1998.

Our pastor Rev. Dalton's prayerful reflection set the culmination tone: "It was with thanksgiving for the Spirit's guidance, and great pride in our church, that I led the prayer after members of the church voted on September 20 to become an Open and Affirming congregation. The spirit of that meeting reflected the strength of a congregation in which difficult issues can indeed be discussed and decided upon in the spirit of the Lord who brought us together."

Our Moderator, Jane Land, also shared insight and inspiration: "In some ways, this simply formalized what the Ladera Community Church has always stood for, our belief in the equality of all people. In other ways, it has challenged us as individuals and as a church. This issue touches each of us deeply."

This ONA spirit continued strongly through the next decades, and remains at the core of who we are.

Here are some of our initiatives and activities during recent years:

- A previous minister and his wife were active in the transgender movement. Several members of our church attended a Zoom summit addressing transgender issues; his wife was one of the key organizers. Transgender individuals have spoken in our Second Hour gatherings and they have conducted worship services.**
- We've held yearly beach clean-ups and various environmental restorations, with the Baylands FrontRunners, an LGBTQ+ running group in our area. These service projects always include a potluck lunch gathering afterwards. One of our church leaders belongs to the running group and has taken the lead in organizing these events. Several of our members and Front Runners have got to know each other.**

The FrontRuners club has also used our campus for celebrations, where our pastor welcomed them (a group of about 100 people).

- Since 2021, we have participated in our Ladera neighborhood's annual LGBTQ+ Pride parade and celebration and have had a booth in the parade. This year the parade will end at our church and the celebration at the end of the parade will be held on our patio and social hall. We are pleased to host the celebration.
- Our partnership with the Ladera DEI group is strong and expanding.

Finally, we open most of our worship services with an affirmation of being open, affirming, and welcoming. Since 1998, LGBTQ+ folks and parents and grandparents of LGBTQ+ folks have been active LCC members, participating in the leadership of our church. Ladera Community Church is on board!

The most important event in the past 10 years:

As with the Cottage, our Preschool also has had a long history. The church owned and operated a preschool under the name "Ladera Community Church Preschool" for 53 years, from 1966-2019, with much of the work of governance provided by church volunteers and preschool parents. With our expansive playgrounds and rural surroundings, the preschool welcomed children and families from Ladera, Portola Valley and surrounding communities.

The preschool was highly regarded, but as the needs of families and demographics changed, and as more preschools opened in the area, the school's enrollment declined. Over time, the church found that it was no longer able to keep up with the work of operating its own preschool with volunteers, and reached the decision to close the preschool at the end of the 2018-19 school year and take some time to consider next steps.

In 2020 the church did visioning work and found there was strong support for offering our preschool facilities for lease to an outside operator, but then Covid-19 delayed further progress. In late 2021 the concept of leasing our preschool space was formally approved, and a small committee began meeting weekly with a goal of renting our preschool space by January 2023. They solicited proposals and conducted site visits and interviews with applicants. They then narrowed the decision down to two finalists. We selected a Montessori preschool with a warm and gentle director who wanted a larger site to grow her school. They offer full and half-day options and are licensed to increase enrollment to 60 students from ages 18 months to 6 years. The preschool is flourishing and the income from the school has a significant impact on our operating budget. The partnership has exceeded our expectations, and the church has a very favorable relationship with the preschool.

Every church has conflicts, 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.

For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)

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

Providing Affordable Housing On Campus

The current deliberations around providing affordable housing have surfaced disputes in our congregation. Providing affordable housing on an undeveloped, unused area of our campus has been a vision for many years. Early in 2020 a lay-led team, the Affordable Housing Task Force, initiated a process to bring that vision to the forefront. The Task Force consulted with several for-profit developers along with Habitat for Humanity to develop realistic options. The task force determined that Habitat for Humanity was the best fit for our congregation. Surveys were done, alternative options were explored, and the team then brought a formal resolution to the congregation.

Several amendments were proposed by concerned church members, and an informal hearing was conducted. It didn’t go well. Further civil discourse was intentionally encouraged, including engaging the local Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center to facilitate a town hall type gathering. This started a more productive dialog.

The Task Force is modifying their proposal and is addressing objections raised. Further interviews and collaboration is ongoing. Habit for Humanity is showing flexibility and creativity. A new proposal will be deliberated on soon.

In recent years Church leadership has worked hard to develop governance and communication protocols, and we are currently revisiting our “LCC Covenant for Working Together as A Loving Community.” This current such Covenant is included under [Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.](#)

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Jeff Munnis	4.5	Y
Rev. Lindsay Fulmer	10	Y
Rev. Al Williams - interim	1.5	Y

Rev. Wayne Dalton	11	Y
Rev. Ann Lougee - interim	1	Y
Rev. Lowell Streiker	4	Y

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

Generally speaking, we have had solid relationships with persons providing pastoral leadership. We have learned that we need to be open and honest with feedback for each other and work together to resolve issues.

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

Yes

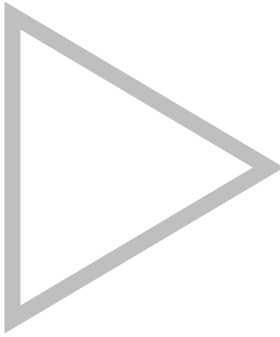
In the early 90's, a newly called pastor, who hadn't served a congregation before, tended to have conflict with several congregation members. Division ensued, feedback was offered, a congregation-wide workshop was conducted, but support continued to wane. Unfortunately, this individual then contracted cancer and we gracefully ended our relationship.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us **No**

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

Y/N/Ask us **No**



WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

[COMMUNITY VISION](#)

[MISSION InSite](#)

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?

The 2023 Annual Report of the Mission & Service Team provides a good summary of our service and advocacy work.

Annual Report, Mission and Service Team, 2023

For our small congregation we accomplished some amazing collections and outreach projects. Sharing with and caring about our local community and world communities are at the heart of Ladera Church. Three groups now promote and facilitate our outreach activities: the Social Justice Team, the Green Team, and yearly Mission & Service offerings, aided by write-ups from the office staff.

Annual Mission & Service Collections

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

Church World Service Offering

Relief for Earthquake in Turkey and Syria

Family Giving Tree School Backpack Drive

Relief for Maui Fire

Neighbors In Need Offering

Ecumenical Hunger Program Christmas Sharing Program

Navigation Center (formerly Maple St.) Christmas gifts for residents

Christmas Fund

Green Team

Styrofoam Drive

Eco Home Tour

Sacred Earth Sunday Service & 11:00 a.m. workshop, “Putting Plastic in the Past”

Climate Action Now app from Matthew Vollrath

Coastal Cleanup

Weekly Green Tips

Assist Valley Presbyterian in their Styrofoam Drive

Social Justice Team

Important Initiatives this year:

- Local Disaster relief – Helped residents of flooded Redwood City mobile home park with supplies and clothes.

- Affordable Housing – Visited a Habitat for Humanity building in Redwood City. Provided steady support to the Affordable Housing Task Force and assisted in their outreach efforts.

- Conflict Resolution – Facilitated Council’s support of the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) to help our congregation discuss affordable housing effectively and fairly.

- LCC Identity – Helped Pastor Jeff with church wide exploration.

- October Social Justice Sunday – Planned and produced the worship service. The highlight was a panel of affordable housing participants, moderated by an inspiring Habitat for Humanity director. Both current and soon-to-be homeowners made heartfelt presentations.

- Healthy democracy – Supporting non-profit, apolitical organizations and movements. Getting out the vote support with Rev. Wilma Reichard, Martha Luemers, the Vote Riders, and others in writing

and making calls to people in targeted areas with information about where, when, and how to vote. And most importantly, how to secure the essential identification papers needed to meet new, restrictive regulations promulgated in over half of the States.

- Halting irresponsible fossil fuel investment – participated in Protest marches and setting example of cutting ties with big banks. Working with our Investment Committee encouraging possible adjustments to our portfolio. Staying abreast with actions the Third Act movement.

Future Interests:

***Borders* – Continue deepening our awareness and noting initiatives in support of the incredible challenge of border issues in Ukraine, Israel, USA / Mexico, and on.**

***Puente de la Costa Sur* – Reviving our relationship with this local organization in supporting farm workers and families in Pescadero and Half Moon Bay.**

***Election Year* – Information gatherings and outreach with League of Women Voters**

and other non-profits. Redoubling get-out-the-vote campaigns.

Peace – how can we keep Peace in our minds, hearts and actions?

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

Our Pastor attends Association meetings regularly; Moderators or other members attend them infrequently. Pastor and/or members also attend Conference Annual Meetings occasionally. One Church member had been in a Four Way Covenant with our Church, the Santa Clara Association, the Conference, and the Chaplaincy Program at the Stanford University Hospital (and later at Lucille Packard Children’s Hospital). After retirement, she now has a Three-Way Covenant, as described under [Participation and Staffing](#).

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.

- Accessible to All (A2A)
- Creation Justice
- Economic Justice
- Faithful and Welcoming
- God Is Still Speaking (GISS)
- (1)** Border and Immigrant Justice
- (2)** Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M)
- Just Peace
- Global Mission Church
- X** Open and Affirming (ONA)
- WISE Congregation for Mental Health
- (3)** Other UCC designations:
- Designations from other denominations

NOTES:

(1) Over the years our congregation has been heavily involved in Border Issues and Assistance; however, this activity and financial support have primarily been separate from the National UCC setting.

(2) We are currently engaged with the local Peninsula Multifaith Coalition (P.M.C.): monthly meetings; area-wide service projects, e.g., MLK Day; interfaith panels with topics such as “God” or “Prayer;” and a Book Group.

(3) “PIN,” the Palestine Israel Network – We are occasionally active in Conference-wide initiatives.

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?

Social Justice and Environmental issues are at the forefront of our education and outreach – locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

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

Please see the numbered notes above.

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.

Please refer to the [Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?](#) section and also to the *Annual Report, Mission & Service Team, 2023*.

Our congregation is currently getting better at “gathering,” is very good at “governing,” and is strong at “going out.”

During and post-Covid, we have been fairly strong at “going out” digitally – petition signing, signing up for educational and inspirational programs, etc.

This Spring we have had three very informative and well attended hybrid (in-person and on Zoom) talks: one was a series of talks on the prevention of global warming, and another a presentation on getting out the vote of young adults (using influencers, specialized data tracking, etc.) to motivate and assist in their registering and actually voting.

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?

A previous Pastor, before Covid, was a cheer leader for local marches: Science, Climate, Democracy & Voting, Peace, etc. She even helped us fashion large banners for the marches. We felt we were making a difference. Our most recent pastor championed the art community, the Sequoias (local retirement community), democracy issues, and LGBTQ+ issues.

MISSION InSite

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

The area around LCC is still growing, but at a slower rate of 2.5%. There is no particular growth in children – in fact, children tend to be aging through and not being replaced. Single parent households are projected to increase, but only slightly – less than 1% (.7%). The majority of children (84.7%) live in married couple families. There are fewer people per household and the area is getting older – the number of people over 65 is projected to increase 4.6% in the next 5 years. The current breakdown of ages is: 29% 43-65 yrs., 27% 20-42 yrs., 23% 1-9 yrs., 14% 63-78 yrs., 5% over 78 yrs. The ethnic breakdown is projected to stay mostly the same, currently at: 44% White, 26% Asian, 22% Hispanic, 5% Pacific Islander/Other, 2% Black. The area is very well educated – more than 66% of people are college educated or have graduate degrees. Jobs tend to be white collar (81.1%), with company executives or professional specialties being by far the most prominent categories (66.1% combined). The area is wealthy. Average household income is \$248,817 and projected to become more so – incomes are predicted to grow by 36% over the next 5 years. Using the MOSAIC segment descriptions, the characteristics of the area are: Affluent, Educated, Progressive viewpoints, interested in Travel, Healthy Lifestyles, Environmental issues and Philanthropy.

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

We are similar to the area around us in: Education, Job categories, Children aging through, Progressive viewpoints, and interests in Travel, Healthy Lifestyles, Environmental issues and Philanthropy. We are different in that we are Older than the current breakdown, we have not grown in membership (we have shrunk), we are not as diverse, we are reasonably well-off financially, but probably not to the level of the community around us.

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

Currently, they're not. We need a strategy to meet the community needs better.

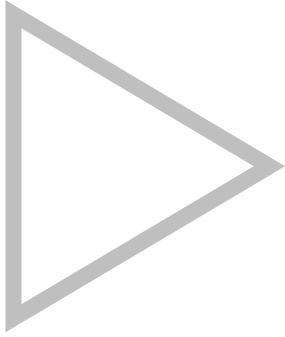
What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

They love the nature and quiet of the campus. We're known for our community events such as the Portola Valley Art Fair, Styrofoam recycling drive and other drives (such as backpack/school supplies, food), music concerts, classes, pre-school. Many say we are a good neighbor and an asset to the community

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

There is a spirit of openness and acceptance, a genuine interest in social and environmental justice, and a noticeable commitment to working things out when there are differences of opinion.

The welcome given to new people is wonderful. The sermons are good. The architecture of the Sanctuary is inspiring.



REFERENCES

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

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

REFERENCE 1

Name / Position / Setting

(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

Barb Gaal – letter copied below.

Further references furnished upon request.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The ministerial search team for Ladera Community Church (“LCC”) asked me to write a “reference letter” for prospective ministerial candidates. I am happy to provide this letter for that purpose.

Before offering any comments, it may be helpful to explain my connection to LCC. I am not a member of LCC or any organized religion, nor do I regularly attend church services. Nonetheless, I am well-familiar with LCC, because my parents-in-law were very active in the church for over 50 years (my father-in-law is now deceased but my mother-in-law continues to attend LCC). Consequently, I have participated in various LCC activities ever since I moved to this area in 1980. In particular, I have attended LCC’s Christmas Eve service and its annual retreat at Skylake Yosemite Camp almost every year for the past 40+ years. I know many members of the congregation and I sometimes participate in LCC community service activities, such as preparing bag lunches for residents of the Maple Street shelter, writing get-out-the-vote postcards, and assisting with the styrofoam collection drive. I have also attended several memorial services at LCC and a few other services, such as a Blessing of the Animals and an Earth Day service.

Here are my responses to the four questions this letter is supposed to address:

Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry. The LCC congregation is a loving, caring, and welcoming community. The members are generally well-educated, generous, and determined to use their diverse talents to improve the world and help people in need. Although the congregation is much smaller than it used to be, it is an unusually hard-working group that still undertakes and successfully completes a wide range of different activities. Of particular note, the music program is excellent (I especially love Sam's piano playing) and the church adapted well during the pandemic, quickly acquiring the technology and expertise needed to provide online access to its Sunday services. Some other important recent achievements are the reestablishment of a preschool at the LCC facility, the continuation of LCC's facility-sharing arrangement with a Tongan congregation, and the renovation of LCC's cottage and the upstairs rooms at Peabody Hall.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry. The LCC congregation is not only small, but also aging. Many members have health problems that make it difficult or impossible for them to continue to help with church activities. Some members are younger (not young), but they are overloaded with church responsibilities and there hardly any young members or children involved in the church at all. It would be great if the new minister could figure out how to rejuvenate and diversify the congregation, making it reflect a fuller spectrum of the general population.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church's ministry. Although I am not an LCC member, I agreed to help update LCC's binders that describe the stained glass windows in the sanctuary and the LCC members commemorated in those windows. Through that work (still ongoing), I have learned a lot about LCC's history and key members of the church community. The congregation has included many amazing people, who contributed to the church and the broader world in lots of different ways. Their stories are inspiring, as are the good-hearted, smart, and dedicated people currently comprising the LCC community. I have no intention of joining LCC or any other church, but I do hope that LCC will be able to creatively evolve to meet today's challenges and remain a supportive, open-minded, and vibrant church community.

Anything else you wish to share. I cannot think of anything else to add at this time. Prospective ministerial candidates can reach me at (650) 346-6403 if they have any questions. Please leave a voicemail if I do not answer. I receive a lot of phone solicitations, so I generally do not pick up the phone unless I recognize the number.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gaal
155 Brookside Dr.
Portola Valley, CA 94028

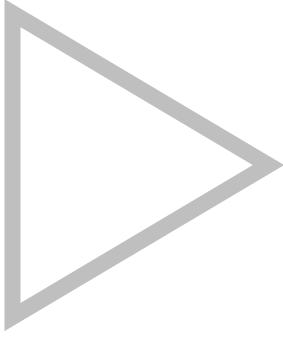
PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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.



CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

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:

Gracious God,

We pray that our next minister is committed to nurturing, preaching and leading as we discern how to honor the past at Ladera Community Church and move into the future with new possibilities for service, connectedness, and spiritual growth. We ask your blessings as we work together to share the good news that each of us is beloved by you, even as we invite others to come to know this as well. May we become an even more welcoming and giving community in the church and beyond.

In your many names we pray. Amen.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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


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

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)*

The New Minister Search Team, the Church Council, the Facilities Team, Personnel Committee, Office Manager, and the Church Treasurer

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:



Name / Title / Date: 6/3/24

Karen Turner

Ladera Community Church

Member of the Ministerial Search

Member of the Church Council

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: *Ladera Community Church UCC is in good standing with the Santa Clara Association and the Northern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ.*

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

Staff Comment: *To the best of my knowledge, this ministerial information provided is accurate and complete.*

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

Staff Comment: *The financial report given by the Ladera Community Church is thorough best to my knowledge.*

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Rev. Dr. Davena L. Jones*

Name / Title: *Rev. Dr. Davena L. Jones/ Settled Conference Minister*

Email: *davena@ncncucc.org*

Phone: *(510) 359-7208*

Date: *June 12, 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