

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

United Congregational Church of Newport in Middletown
Middletown, RI

Settled Pastor

Southern New England Conference
Rhode Island Association

July 3, 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

United Congregational Church of Newport in Middletown
524 Valley Road, Middletown, RI 02842

<http://uccmiddletown.org/>

Conference: Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC)

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person :

The Rev. Dr. Patty Kogut
Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region of SNEUCC

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Summary Ministry Description:

We are a loving and caring church family determined to have a positive impact on the world around us. We enthusiastically seek unique ways to reach out to the community and welcome them into our family. We aim to help those in need and to spread the love of Jesus. We strive daily to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that it may be said of us, as it was of the early Christians, "Behold how these Christians love one another," so that others of all ages and backgrounds will be attracted and join our outreach.



What we value about living in our area :

We are thankful for the natural beauty that surrounds us including the conservation land and trails, the ocean, and the beaches. We are proud that our church has been a part of the rich and significant history of Newport and the surrounding area for almost 330 years.

Current size of membership: 203

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

Position Title: Settled Pastor

Position Duration :

Settled – a called position intended for longer -term ministry in which the minister moves church membership to the congregation and moves standing to related association

Compensation Level: Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

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

- preparation and leadership of Sunday worship including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, guiding and sometimes finding lay liturgists, planning of music in coordination with musical staff or volunteers, preaching, offer prayers, etc. (The Secretary to the Ministerial Staff has the worship guide online and updates it each week. Lay readers volunteer via a sign -up sheet. Music Director plans weekly anthems.) ing of
- faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities, and encouraging lay persons to participate.
- leadership development by recognizing and developing strengths and spiritual gifts of the members and encouraging them to put their gifts to use in creating or enhancing our ministry and programs
- pastoral care offered to members and non -members through visitation and counseling, and when appropriate, referrals.
- coordination of Lay Visitation and care through the efforts of the Board of Deacons
- community engagement to discover ways we might address needs within our community to help us be better ambassadors of God's love
- weddings and funerals for participants in the worshiping community and the larger community
- strategic planning with church leaders and the congregation to help enhance our current work and discern new directions in our ministry
- attend meetings and offer guidance to church leaders and clarification of ministry goals of the church.
- participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings

- administration responsibilities (unless delegated) such as emails, website enhancements, brochures, etc.
- administration of the Memorial Garden - United has an official burial ground for cremated remains of church members
- faithful financial development and stewardship through coordinated and inspired efforts of the Board of Trustees and Stewardship
- responsibility for supervision of staff
- availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations
- study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills so as to lead, teach, preach better
- energizing and deepening spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do.

The various church boards monitor areas within the church family and the community for their respective interests and responsibilities. Our new, settled minister will be well supported by all of us.

Core Competencies:

Our future minister will be our teacher, our friend, and our shepherd. They must have the ability to articulate and convey the Word of God to our congregation in ways that are relevant to our everyday lives. We seek someone who is good humored and good hearted. Our church family loves to laugh and laugh often. Our new minister will be caring and compassionate, with an empathetic nature. They will make regular visits to our members who cannot attend church or who need prayer. In conjunction with our boards, our minister will manage the day-to-day decisions of church business. Following the teachings of Jesus, our new minister will guide us as we develop innovative ways to become more active in our local and global communities.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis:

\$95,000 - \$120,000 total compensation package including benefits

Benefits:

Pastor may allocate a portion of the total compensation package above to benefits of their choosing (e.g., medical insurance, UCC annuity, life insurance, housing allowance etc.).

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

We strongly suggest that our new minister settle into a home that is less than a one -hour driving distance from our church. We suggest this proximity to avoid problems traveling during inclement weather and to encourage familiarity with our congregation and our community.

State any incentives:

We offer a 3 -month paid Sabbatical after 5 years of service. We also offer an annual vacation package of 20 days per year .

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

Aquidneck Island Clergy Association - This is an ecumenical group of local clergy that meets regularly. Different members host luncheons at their houses of worship. Our former minister was very active with this group.

Communities of Practice group, through the Conference

RI Clergy Association (SNEUCC)

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

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

We are constantly looking for unique ways to be present in our community and share our gifts, talents, and treasures with those who are less fortunate. We strive daily to find new ways to be relevant. We need guidance to meet the new challenges presented by the post -COVID world. We are a blend of different personalities and faith understandings, and we look for someone who can meet each of us wherever we are in our Christian journey.

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

Despite actively searching the community for those needing help or a church home, we are struggling to make the impact that we could. We feel that people are unaware of our ministry. Our new minister will help us develop a stronger voice and greater presence in our community. Although our community initially appears affluent, we know that there are many people who cannot afford basic necessities such as food and shelter. Our new minister will help us reach out to these people. Additionally, within our ministry we have a substantial health fund, called the Callender Bed Fund. Our new minister will provide more structure for this fund and increase our ability to help people struggling with medical expenses. Moreover, our new minister will help bring others to our church home. We have so much love to share. We want more people to know about our message. We want people to understand that we are Christians who accept others regardless of the way they live, the way they dress, or whom they love.

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

We do not have any language requirements or preferences for culturally specific capacities for our new minister as we are an English speaking congregation from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

- Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness
- Demonstrating excellent communication skills
- Loving God, following Jesus Christ, being guided by the Holy Spirit; living a life of discipleship
- Integrating theological reflection in teaching, preaching, and ecclesial and community leadership
- Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation

2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

God calls us to give generously, with love and creativity. God calls us to be a congregation that actively demonstrates our faith within the community. We endeavor to become more widely known in our local community as a source of solace, comfort, and joy. With God's guidance and inspired leadership, we hope to discover more opportunities to connect with people within our nearby community and beyond.

God calls us to continually evolve as a congregation as we extend an invitation to the greater community to join us on our faith journey. We hear God's call to invite and welcome all individuals to our community without judgment and without exclusion. As Saint Francis said, "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary, use words."

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

God calls us to address the challenges within our congregation and our community with patience, love and faith. God calls us to be inventive as we embrace the opportunities ahead.

Like many churches, our primary focus has been navigating challenges brought on by the COVID pandemic. We have strived to maintain the connections within our congregation and continue to provide a center of faith for our members. More recently, a devastating flood damaged our beloved facility. These two situations remind us that our church is so much more than just a place. We continue to devote our energy to supporting our spiritual community, despite the struggles of the physical world.

One way we stay connected as a congregation is to serve others together. Recently, we reached out to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center looking for additional ways that we could be of service to them. The community center had just opened a "warming center" and needed winter socks and toiletries for distribution. Our church members heeded the call. We collected several boxes of donations for the center which included socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, ChapSticks, hand warmers, and cough drops.

We continue to look for ways to engage our community with our ministry of outreach. In a recent conversation with the Mayor of Newport, we learned that the public education system needs support. The mayor said

that despite the appearance of our community, the school system in Newport has a level of poor test scores, dropout rates and children who qualify for free school lunches nearly akin to an inner city school system. In the past, our church has offered tutoring services to local students. We believe continuing to support the school system is one of the many ways that we can make a difference in the future.



We look forward to collaborating with our new pastor to develop a comprehensive and uplifting strategic plan that addresses both the challenges and the opportunities within our faith community and the community at large.

These are some of the additional ways we reach out to the community:

- Providing regular donations to the MLK Jr. Community Center Food Pantry
- Providing regular donations to the Portsmouth Community Food Bank
- Operating a soup kitchen every other month at a local Baptist Church
- Hosting AA meetings three times a week in our reception hall
- Delivering potted flowers and poinsettias to members who are shut in during Easter and Christmas
- Managing our Callender Bed Fund; a fund that pays medical expenses for those who cannot afford it
- Providing annual college scholarships for members
- Offering our United Book Club - for cultural & spiritual edification
- Offering our United Knitters Group -knitters who gather weekly to knit baptism shawls and prayer shawls
- Offering our Weekly Prayer Group who gather to pray for names brought forth to them
- Offering our Women Empowered and Blessed (WEB) Group - a group for the enrichment of mind, body, and soul
- Hosting Bible Studies
- Participating in our Biloxi Mission Trip to work alongside the Biloxi residents through the Back Bay Mission
- Meal delivery to church family members in need
- Offering our Foundations of Faith Series



- Supporting The “Your Pillow” project - a recent campaign to deliver pillows to homeless shelters for personal use
- Donating Christmas gifts to residents of Slater Hospital and children in foster care
- Donating teddy bears to Newport Police Department
- Participating in One Egg Haiti –an initiative that provides nutrition to children in Haiti through the Rhode Island Association (part of a broader mission to Haiti)
- Participating in Mothers’ Day Blankets of Hope
- Participating in Fathers’ Day Tools of Hope
- Assisting with Confirmands’ projects, such as gathering and donating laundry baskets of household items to the Crossroads RI Housing Program
- Sending aid to Katrina victims (donations of cleaning supplies)
- Sending aid to Maine church community, ravaged by ice storms, circa 2010
- Participating in Social/Stewardship activities and fundraisers.
- Participating in an annual Thanksgiving drive to collect donations of coats for a Newport church to distribute to those in need



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

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

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

Following the teachings of Jesus as best we can, we believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. We hope to hear the Spirit when it speaks to us so that we can share the love and the joy of God’s realm.

Our Membership vows:

On a New Member Sunday, the new members are asked to state the following vows:

*I will do my utmost
to give myself to God
to follow the ways of Jesus Christ
to create a place in me which the Holy Spirit
can dwell, guide, and comfort.
I will seek to do God’s will as taught in the Holy Scriptures.
I will seek to be loyal to the Church
by upholding it in my prayers, my presence, my worship,
my gifts and my service.
I will seek to minister to others and serve the community
and the world in word and deed in the spirit of Jesus Christ
as God is my helper.*

The congregation then welcomes and vows to support them as follows:

*As members of this church,
We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church.
We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share
the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ.
By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue
to grow together in God’s knowledge and love
and be witnesses of our risen Savior.*

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

We are a loving, welcoming family and we want to invite others to share our love and care.

We are:

- a genuine community of people who care about growing in their faith
- a kind, honest, eclectic community that enjoys worshiping together and nurturing relationships between congregational members
- in favor of a sense of humor in all things
- proud of the sense of belonging we get when we enter our church, feeling like the church family is an extension of our own families
- a joyful group that enjoys working together and playing together, as demonstrated in all we do from clean -up projects around the church to potluck gatherings
- involved in community outreach, as demonstrated by the gifts for Slater Hospital patients who have been largely forgotten, the continued support of the MLK Jr. Community Center, and the many coat and food drives for which we collect.

Additionally, our church has a powerful music program that supports our worship. We have a Bell Choir, the Chancel Choir, and enjoy both guest and member musicians.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

We are a joy -filled congregation, finding peace and restoration through our beautiful music and weekly studies of faith, which energize us to better serve our community. We genuinely enjoy each other's company, and when we gather for worship on Sunday, there are many hugs and much chattering as we catch up with each other. There is such a cheerful buzz in the air!

When the organist begins the organ prelude, we settle down in our seats and listen to the peaceful music as we gaze upon the beautiful scenery of our Cedar Chapel grounds, which are visible through the floor -to -ceiling windows in our chancel. We are warmly welcomed by our minister and before worship begins, the congregation hears announcements from church boards and family members.

The choir files in and settles into the choir loft on the chancel as we sing our opening hymn. We are introduced to the week's lesson by our "prayer of enlightenment" followed by the scripture readings, all of which are delivered by a volunteer lay reader. We have had the great fortune of always having a minister who can teach us through a compelling sermon filled with life lessons well -learned and sug gested maps for successfully navigating life's uncertainties.



The sermon is followed by a purposely chosen anthem delivered by our volunteer choir. There is not a week that goes by that our choir does not give us goosebumps or tears of understanding (during a touching piece), or an urge to tap our feet (during an upbeat piece). Under the conscientious guidance of our Director of Choirs, the choir sings beautifully, and t he heartfelt music deepens our connection to the service. The congregation is also regularly treated to an additional anthem performed by our talented handbell choir.

During the Offertory, prayer cards containing individual names or concerns are gathered in the collection plates to be read during the pastoral prayer. Lifting up to God the names on the prayer cards is inspiring in so many ways. We whole -heartedly belie ve in the power of prayer. After the service, the prayer cards are delivered to the members of our prayer circle, who will continue to pray over them for the rest of the week.

The service is concluded as the choir recesses during our closing hymn, after which the minister dispatches us with an inspiring benediction. But before we leave the comfort and peace of the sanctuary, we are treated to an inspirational and beautifully del ivered organ postlude. The postlude provides a perfect coda as the hour of worship concludes. The congregation remains seated and silent until the last note and then often responds with applause. We then make our way to the fellowship hall, where we share snacks and sip tea and coffee offered by weekly volunteers. Our time spent in the fellowship hall is marked by reflection, conversation, and connection. We value our time together and leave the service refreshed, renewed, and ready to serve the greater goo d.

Our music program is stellar and helps unite our congregation during weekly worship and on special occasions. In addition to our chancel and bell choirs, there are church members who are musically inclined, and we are treated to performances by guitarists , flutists and even the occasional saxophone player. Our Christmas Eve service is blessed by a string quartet, and Easter morning is joyfully celebrated with the help of a brass quintet.

Baptisms:

Baptisms are such special events in our church. The minister calls the parents, the child, and sponsors to the front of the congregation to surround the baptismal font. Then the minister gives a brief introduction of the importance of Baptism. The minister will then speak directly to the child, declaring that this is the child's day when they will be welcomed into the family of Christ.

Next, the parents pledge to raise the child in the light of Christ, the sponsors pledge to support the parents in their endeavors, and the congregation pledges to love the child as their own and work with the parents to raise the child in Christ's light.

The Baptism sacrament is then given. Then the child is wrapped in a Baptism shawl, knitted by United Knitters, and introduced to the church family. The minister walks up and down the aisle so everyone can gaze adoringly into the child's face while singing a special hymn. This service secures the child's place as a member of our community of faith.

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

In its heyday, our church school was booming. It was a joyous, laughter filled center of bustling activity, where children were encouraged to be seen and heard. Many parents have told stories of their children insisting on going to church because they did not want to miss a week. Children would bring their friends, who had so much fun learning Old Testament stories and stories of Jesus. If they could not convince their own parents to come to our church, they would continue to attend with their friends who were children of church members. There were summer and vacation camps attended by children from all over the area. We even had a youth choir.

The parents and other adults in our church family volunteer to help with the teaching activities each week. Lessons were written by the Christian Education Coordinator, using appropriate language and activities for each age level in each classroom. Church school children interacted with all members of our community ranging from family members to other

adults who had not been blessed by having their own children. All involved were edified by the experience.

During the COVID shutdown, our Faith Formation Minister held, “porch visits” with our young families and their children on church grounds. Other activities included a family advent wreath -making event in the parking lot, faith and family Zoom activities, a nd outdoor, one -room Sunday School in our Peaceful Way Garden.

Unfortunately, decreased numbers persisted after COVID restrictions were relaxed, especially as school sports have reconvened on Sundays and school children now have schedules as busy and regulated as their parents.

Optimistically, we continued with the one -room classroom approach, returning to the congregation for volunteers to lead weekly lessons. Artists, photographers, musicians, storytellers, scientists, and gardeners shared their passion and talents with the children. The Director of the Choirs and members of the bell choir led our “Make a Joyful Noise” series one spring. Children participated in Growing with God in Nature which included a field trip to a member’s backyard to learn about composting. The adults who were leading the classes were as nourished by these interactions as the children were. The lessons brought generations together in friendship, appreciation, and discipleship.

Like many church families around the world, we are experiencing ever dwindling numbers, and are seeking ways to address this new situation. In the meantime, our Faith Formation Minister has been asked by us to help with various ministerial tasks and other needs of the congregation. The planning and strategy of the future of our church school is currently being considered by our Church Education Board.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

We have several permanent, active, church boards whose members assess and address the needs of the church family and the surrounding community. These boards include:

- Board of Deacons
- Board of Stewardship
- Board of Trustees
- Board of Christian Education
- Board of Missions

Our Church Council oversees these five boards. The members of these boards and the Church Council are responsible for bringing the decisions they have made to the church community. Additionally, we have a Music Ministry and an Altar Guild.

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

Decision making is done by members of our five boards and the Church Council. The Church Council includes a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, the Church Clerk, the Church Treasurer, the Minister, and the Chairperson from each of the five boards. The Director of Music and Minister of Faith Formation are ex-officio members.

Each board usually meets once a month for 60 to 90 minutes. Boards will meet longer when necessary. Each board is required to meet a minimum of six times a year according to our by-laws.

All board members are nominated by the Nominating Committee at our annual meeting and voted onto their respective boards by the church membership.

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

Early one Sunday morning in February 2023 the congregation members responsible for leading the day's service arrived to find water spilling freely out of our church doors. The pipes in our kitchen wall had burst and flooded our church. Due to the quick thinking of the service leaders and the generosity of spirit of our congregation, several church members showed up on the scene with shop vacs and supplies to clean up the mess before others arrived for the service. Fortunately, the sanctuary was left undamaged, however, the bathroom facilities, nursery, kitchen, office areas and fellowship hall were all unusable. Realizing this, the service leaders held a brief meeting, and quickly redirected the order of service for the day. By the time the rest of the church family began to arrive, all was ready for them in the sanctuary, and an abbreviated church service proceeded without a hitch.

Other issues with our building stemmed from this incident, but the Board of Trustees adeptly took charge of the situation and worked with our insurance company and local contractors to repair the damage.

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

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



Church#:	785141	Schedule:	2	United Congregational Church of Newport	Middletown	RI	02842		
Assoc.:	944								
YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2012	294	116	105	0	0	7	3	4	0
2013	298	118	100	10	0	11	11	6	4
2014	308	112	107	7	0	9	6	0	10
2015	296	108	100	0	3	11	8	18	-12
2016	305	106	110	0	0	14	5	0	9
2017	290	117	110	0	0	11	3	23	-15
2018	290	117	110	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	290	117	110	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	290	117	110	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	286	51	55	0	0	2	4	0	-2
2022	286	51	55	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	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2012	\$276,581	\$0	\$2,000	\$7,704	\$9,704	\$20,658	\$30,362	0.72	\$306,943
2013	\$295,634	\$0	\$2,075	\$4,940	\$7,015	\$26,613	\$33,628	0.70	\$223,588
2014	\$305,603	\$0	\$2,000	\$5,625	\$7,625	\$36,645	\$44,270	0.65	\$349,873
2015	\$305,603	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00	\$305,603
2016	\$309,477	\$0	\$2,000	\$9,825	\$11,825	\$0	\$11,825	0.65	\$321,302
2017	\$344,921	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,098	\$4,098	\$0	\$4,098	0.58	\$349,019
2018	\$344,921	\$0	\$700	\$2,724	\$3,424	\$0	\$3,424	0.20	\$348,345
2019	\$344,921	\$0	\$0	\$2,925	\$2,925	\$0	\$2,925	0.00	\$347,846
2020	\$344,921	\$0	\$4,511	\$1,071	\$5,582	\$0	\$5,582	1.31	\$350,503
2021	\$334,577	\$0	\$4,511	\$6,947	\$11,458	\$32,000	\$43,458	1.35	\$378,035
2022	\$334,577	\$0	\$4,511	\$2,476	\$6,987	\$0	\$6,987	1.35	\$341,564
% CHANGE 2017-2022	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	
2017-2022	-1.38	-56.41	-50.00	-100.00	-100.00	-3.00	70.50	-2.14	
2012-2022	-2.72	-56.03	-47.62	-100.00	-100.00	20.97	-28.00	11.28	

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.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

* Please note that there is an error in this report received from SNEUCC. There were pledges received in all years where the report shows \$0 (bottom, right-most column).

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	199	
Number of active non-members:	4	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	203	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	160	
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	24	
Less than 5 years:	19	

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>
9	11	4	7	16	38	77	47	70	✓

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	6%	✓

Households with minors:	8%	✓
Single adults age 35-65:	11%	✓
Joint households with no minors:	38%	✓
Single adults over 65:	14%	✓

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	13%	✓
College:	61%	✓
Graduate School:	35%	✓
Specialty Training:	15%	✓
Other (please specify):	1%	✓

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	40%	✓
Adults who are retired:	51%	✓
Adults who are not fully employed:	30%	✓

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

Our congregation consists primarily of white collar workers as well as some blue collar workers.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Our congregation is currently composed of predominantly white people, with very few non-whites. However, we are striving to be open and inclusive. We welcome all to worship with us and to join our family. Our goal is to achieve greater diversity as we focus on our common humanity. We are looking to explore new ways to achieve this goal.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one in the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)?

Yes. We recently have established an Open and Affirming (ONA) Committee to investigate certifying our congregation as ONA.

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 involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? (list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)
Adult Groups or Classes	25	Minister or members
Baptisms (number last year) 3	91 present, 25 Zoom	Minister and the parents Some baptisms are held privately in our Cedar Chapel, where only Minister, parents, godparents, and selected family are present
Children's Groups or Classes	17*	Minister of Faith Formation (MFF), CE Board

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>
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	154	Minister, MFF, Deacons, Music Director
Church-wide Meals	70	Minister, various boards
Choirs and Music Groups	34	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	34	Minister
Communion (Monthly and Holy Days)	78	Minister, MFF, Deacons, Music Director
Community Meals	12	Community Meal Volunteers, Missions Board, local Baptist church
Confirmation <i>(number confirmed last year)</i> 7	20	MFF, Minister
Drama or Dance Program	85	Bi-annual Nativity puppet show
Funerals <i>(number last year)</i>	80 - 150 each, for 5 funerals	Minister, family of deceased, Music Director, Deacons
Intergenerational Groups	30	Minister, MFF
Outdoor Worship	25-45	Minister, MFF, Deacons, Music Director
Prayer or Meditation Groups	5	Minister, Prayer cards collected each Sunday during worship
Public Advocacy Work	N/A	
Retreats	20 - 40	Minister, MFF, Deacons
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	
Weddings <i>(number last year)</i>	0	

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>
Worship (time slot: 10:00 AM)	61 in person; 20 Zoom households	Minister, MFF, Deacons, Music Director
Worship (time slot: _____)		
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	
Youth Groups or Classes	20*	MFF, Minister, CE Board
Other		

Additional comments:

***The numbers marked with an asterisk include ALL people involved in attendance for children/youth classes, including all adults involved with mentoring and/or instruction. Furthermore, two families with children have moved out of the area since these counts were taken.**

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? <i>(3 or 4 or No)</i>	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? <i>(Y or N)</i>
Joe Runner	No			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:

Our recently retired minister remains a member of our church and has been designated Pastor Emeritus. However, he is no longer worshipping with us out of respect for our interim minister and whomever the new settled minister will be. He is well aware, as is our church family, of the communication restrictions that are necessary for effective transition and bonding with our new minister and has distanced himself accordingly.

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

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Interim Minister	Yes	Part time	Board of Deacons	February 1, 2023 to present
Minister of Faith Formation	No	Part time	Christian Education Board	July 1, 2020 to present
Secretary to the Ministerial Staff	No	Part time	Trustees	January 1, 2005 to present
Director of Music/Choirs	Music Staff	Part time	Board of Deacons	December 1998 - 2005; September 2012 to present
Organist	No	Part time	Board of Deacons	February 2020 to present
Sexton	No	Part time	Trustees	Over 20 years
Nursery Supervisor	Nursery staff	Part time	Christian Education Board	2006 to present
Nursery Assistant	No	Part time	Christian Education Board	Fall 2018 to present
Church Treasurer	No	Part time	Trustees	2010 to present

REFLECTION

We do many diverse activities for the members of our congregation. Additionally, we are currently exploring new ways to reach out to the community at large.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$264,560.00
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$61,224.00
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$9,260.00
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$200./month from AA
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$0
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$37,272.00
Other (specify): Miscellaneous	\$9,457.00
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$381,773.00

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$381,773.00

The following four (4) pages show the budget that was approved for 2024 at our annual meeting in January (highlighted column).

GENERAL OPERATING FUND

	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Proposed 2024
RECEIPTS			
Pledges	216,000	231,778	228,000
Loose Offerings	16,500	30,797	20,000
Special Offerings	1,100	510	1,100
Fund Raising Events	5,500	9,260	7,500
Donations	5,000	1,475	5,000
Endowment Fund Distribution (Scheduled)	74,162	61,224	69,883
Endowment Funds Distribution (Excess)	19,982	0	0
Chipman-Harrison Distribution	29,107	37,272	30,861
Miscellaneous	0	9,457	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	367,351	381,773	362,344
DISBURSEMENTS			
MINISTRY			
Minister's Salary	21,620	34,051	65,000
Housing Allowance	62,280	62,282	0
Payroll Taxes & Workers' Compensation Insurance	6,925	7,738	5,712
Annuity	12,192	12,192	3,250
Life & Disability Insurance	1,306	1,306	975
Pastoral Coverage	1,500	2,000	1,000
Continuing Education	500	141	0
Mileage	2,500	2,429	1,000
Professional	2,500	1,718	1,000
TOTAL MINISTRY	111,323	123,857	77,937
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION			
Minister of Faith Formation - Salary	30,663	30,663	40,040
Nursery Caregivers - Wages	4,391	3,347	4,523
Payroll Taxes & Workers' Compensation Insurance	2,758	2,894	3,676
Mileage reimbursement (ministerial duties)			750
Professional expense (ministerial duties)			750
Supplies & Resources, Cont. Ed, Postage, Bibles/Hymnals	3,400	3,283	3,100
Youth Activities (escrow)	500	500	0
TOTAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	41,712	40,687	52,839

GENERAL OPERATING FUND

	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Proposed 2024
MUSIC			
Organist	11,732	11,768	12,147
Director of Choirs	21,618	21,618	22,267
Payroll Taxes & Workers' Compensation Insurance	2,751	2,704	2,834
Anthems, Cont. Ed & Conferences, Misc.	845	663	800
Copyright Permissions	800	900	900
Piano/Organ Maintenance	1,585	785	1,585
TOTAL MUSIC	39,331	38,438	40,532
MISSIONS (see separate report for details)	30,000	30,000	30,000
OPERATIONS			
Secretary to the Ministerial Staff	31,605	31,607	32,553
Treasurer	9,951	9,951	10,249
Payroll Taxes & Workers' Compensation Insurance	3,428	3,362	3,531
Conference Dues	2,790	2,790	2,790
Copier: Lease and Service Contract	3,780	3,399	3,780
Office Supplies/Printing, Cont Ed. Postage, Misc.	4,700	3,426	4,700
Payroll Services	2,250	2,590	2,500
Public Relations / Advertising	500	0	500
Distributions (Deacons, Missions, Library)	1,390	1,390	1,390
Pastoral Search support			4,000
Fellowship	600	780	600
Stewardship	650	528	650
Worship Supplies	850	683	850
TOTAL OPERATIONS	62,493	60,506	68,093
FACILITIES			
Sexton	12,944	13,248	13,732
Security	2,804	2,903	2,975
Payroll Taxes & Workers' Compensation Insurance	2,468	2,188	2,618
Electricity	15,000	17,363	15,000
Insurance	18,575	18,600	23,219
Building and Grounds Maintenance (escrows)	5,000	5,000	5,000
Repairs & Maintenance, building & equipment	8,500	9,402	10,000
Grounds and Parking Lot Maintenance	12,000	14,393	15,000
Telephone	4,200	4,407	4,400
Water & Sewer	1,000	781	1,000
TOTAL FACILITIES	82,491	88,285	92,944
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	(22) 367,351	381,773	362,344

MISSIONS FUND

The Board of Missions reserves the right to make changes to allocations set forth in the 2024 budget, in the event of changed circumstances or conditions encountered in the course of the year which, in the Board's judgment, justify such reallocations.

	Budget 2023	Actual 2023	Proposed Budget 2024
Receipts			
Receipt from Church General Operating Fund	30,000	30,000	30,000
Non-Budgeted			
Christmas Fund - Veterans of the Cross donations		2,212	
Church World Service - Blankets/Tools of Hope		923	
Clements Marketplace (Community Meal)		456	
Crossroads RI		50	
Eleanor Slater Hospital donations		400	
Haiti donations		135	
Jeanne Peirce bequest		150	
MLK donation		50	
Neighbors in Need donations		460	
One Great Hour of Sharing donations		673	
Receipts from General Fund - Distributions	312	312	312
Syria/Turkey relief		1,050	
Total Non-Budget	<u>312</u>	<u>6,871</u>	<u>312</u>
Total Receipts	30,312	36,871	30,312
Disbursements			
Southern New England Conference Wider Mission	2,000	2,000	2,000
International Missions			
Church World Service	1,000	1,000	1,000
Kids Alive International (Dominican Republic)	1,000	1,000	1,000
Women for Women International	350	350	350
	<u>2,350</u>	<u>2,350</u>	<u>2,350</u>
Missions Education and Special Ops			
Youth missions			
Common Cathedral Common Art		225	
Crossroads Rhode Island	450	225	450
Total Missions Education	450	450	450
Rhode Island Missions			
Eleanor Slater Hospital	200	200	200
Rhode Island Community Food Bank	2,000	2,000	2,000
Veterans Home - Bristol	1,000	1,000	1,000
Rhode Island Missions	<u>3,200</u>	<u>3,200</u>	<u>3,200</u>

MISSIONS FUND

	<u>Budget 2023</u>	<u>Actual 2023</u>	<u>Proposed Budget 2024</u>
Aquidneck Island Missions			
Christian Action Center	450	450	450
Conexion Latina Newport	250	250	250
EBCAP Kid's Connect	750	750	750
EBCAP Safety Net Programs	2,650	2,650	2,650
Housing Hotline (Newport)	1,500	1,500	1,500
Lucy's Hearth	1,500	1,500	1,500
Martin Luther King Center	2,200	3,438	2,200
McKinney Shelter	1,500	1,500	1,500
Portsmouth Food Bank	500	500	500
Salvation Army - Newport	450	450	450
Seaman's Church Institute	1,350	1,350	1,350
Turning Around Ministries	700	700	700
United Congregational Church Community Meal	3,000	1,871	3,000
VNA Newport County - Hospice	1,000	1,000	1,000
Women's Resource Center	700	700	700
Total Aquidneck Island Missions	<u>18,500</u>	<u>18,609</u>	<u>18,500</u>
Our Church Missions			
Haiti Mission Subcommittee	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,500</u>
Total Our Church Missions	1,500	1,500	1,500
Emergency Funds			
Special Needs Fund	1,000	1,000	1,000
Special Reserve for Aquidneck Is. Needs	<u>1,000</u>	<u>891</u>	<u>1,000</u>
Total Emergency Funds	2,000	1,891	2,000
Non-Budgeted			
Christmas Fund - Veterans of the Cross		2,212	
Church World Service - Blankets/Tools of Hope		923	
Community meals support		200	
Crossroads RI donation		50	
Eleanor Slater Hospital donations		400	
Haiti		135	
Housing Hotline - non-budgeted		668	
MLK donation		50	
Neighbors in Need		460	
Other Expense	312	50	312
One Great Hour of Sharing		673	
Turkey/Syria relief fund		<u>1,050</u>	
Total Non-Budgeted		6,871	
Total Disbursements	<u>30,312</u>	<u>36,871</u>	<u>30,312</u>

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

32.4% (40.4% including the Minister of Faith Formation salary)

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?

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?

OCWM is contributed through our dues, and through our Missions Board.

What is the church’s current indebtedness? **None** .

Total amount of loan debt: **N/A**

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: **N/A**

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

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

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

Does your church have an endowment? **Yes**

What is the market value of the assets? **\$2,182,259.00**

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

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

2.8% FYE 12/31/2023 2.4% FYE 12/31/2018

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: Scheduled draws on the endowment are at a rate of approximately 5% per year. Excess draws are only made if the need arises to meet budgetary needs.

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

In perpetuity.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Data is drawn from the Annual Report 2023.

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$

Investments (other than endowment): \$

Does your church have a parsonage? **No**

Fair market rental value of the parsonage: **N/A**

How is the parsonage used?

Street / City / State / Zip:

Finished square footage:

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:

Assessed real estate value:

Available for minister residence: **Y/N**

Expected minister residence: **Y/N**

Condition of structure, systems and appliances
Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

Our church building contains our sanctuary, a narthex, a sacristy, four offices, four classrooms, two nursery rooms, a large meeting room (“Farnum Hall”), a living room style meeting room (“The Manchester Room”) a kitchen, and two restrooms.

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

N/A

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

All spaces except the pulpit.

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

We are financially stable and capable of fully funding our mission and ministry well into the future.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Our church, the United Congregational Church of Newport, in Middletown, Rhode Island, has a storied history. Our congregation was “gathered” in 1695, ...not founded, but gathered. Our church is free from any outside authority except what we believe comes from God. Today, this congregation worships and works in freedom, carries on its own business, manages its property, envisions its destiny, and interprets faith for its own time and place as given to us by the Holy Scriptures.

The United Congregational Church continues to strive to be inclusive of all people. In 1777, the roots of being an inclusive church developed. The Rev. Ezra Stiles (1755 -1776) pioneered this practice. Now, as it was then, everyone is invited to receive Communion at our Lord’s Table.

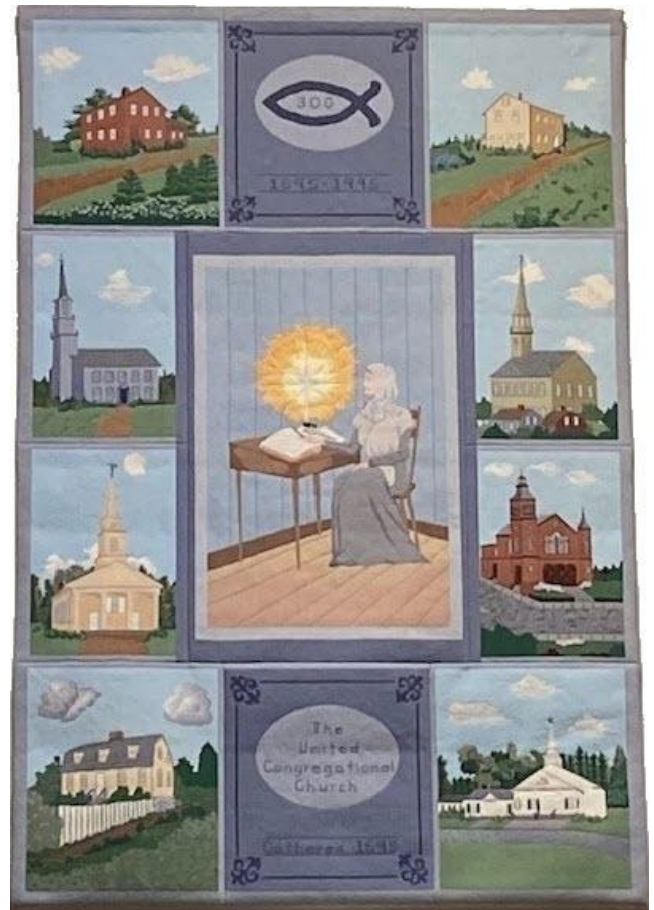
In early 1784, when many people looked upon slavery as a divine institution and upon slave dealers as enterprising citizens, our church took a stand. On January 30, 1784, at the urging of Rev. Samuel Hopkins (1770 -1803), the congregation passed a historical vote: the slave trade and the enslavement of Africans was a gross violation of the righteousness and benevolence of the gospel and would not be tolerated by the church.

Through the ages, college presidents, authors (Rev. Henry Van Dyke, US Ambassador to the Netherlands, author and poet who wrote the words to a popular hymn in our tradition, “Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”, was one of our

ministers), revolutionaries, businesspeople, missionaries, military chaplains, and social activists have graced the pulpit of United Congregational Church. It has been a congregation of many firsts: the first Congregational church wedding, the first Congregational female deacons, and one of the earliest Congregational African American deacons. Our church has come close to closing its doors several times, only to be saved by the energy of a new minister, and by the determination, support, and love of its lay people. At one point, the church building was the private home of a resolute church member, Sarah Osborn. Sarah invited all into her home for Bible study, including local slaves, and even the British soldiers who were currently occupying our established church building. Due to members like Sarah our church perseveres. The picture to the right depicts Sarah, surrounded by all of United's church homes.

In the late 1960's, with tensions running high surrounding our nation's participation in the Vietnam War, our congregation stood steadfast behind the US military's involvement, as we were a congregation filled with military families. When the United Church of Christ General Synod pronounced their anti stance the United Congregational Church of Newport, in solidarity with its members, exercised its autonomy by dissociating itself from that body. Many decades have passed since that crucial decision, where we chose to put our families and our beliefs first. Today we are in good standing with the Southern New England Conference and anticipate discussion regarding the possibility of rejoining the national United Church of Christ.

-war



In 1975, the United Congregational Church moved from Newport, RI, to Middletown, RI. The old church needed repair, and parking was limited. Members were aware that a generous financial donation including property would be given to the church if they agreed to build a new church in Middletown. The majority of members voted to build in Middletown. Some members decided to remain behind. The "Faithful Remnants" brought the Middletown United Congregational Church members to court. They disputed the distribution of endowments, historical silver, and antique furniture. The court decided that the endowments, silver, and antiques were the property of The United Congregational Church of Newport in Middletown.

In spring of 2020 COVID struck. To keep our members safe, we closed our church doors from March 2020 to September 2022. However, the state mandated order did not keep us from worshipping together. An ad -hoc safety

committee was formed to monitor the government formulated safety conditions. We embraced the use of Zoom which allowed us to be together from our homes. Our minister led us in worship from his living room. The choir director combined individual recordings from choir members and the organist to create Sunday's music ministry. The bell choir met outdoors to rehearse and record their anthem. Zoom time was extended after services. Chat rooms were arranged so that parishioners could converse the way they would a person service. Members visited each other's homes, careful to remain outdoors and safely distanced. We stayed connected.

By July 2022, our church had implemented a partial opening. Congregants made "reservations" to attend Sunday service. About thirty members were physically in church while the others "Zoomed." Homecoming September 2022 marked the full opening to all church goers. Masks were required and there was no singing from the pews. Meanwhile, the choir wore special masks to sing. Deacons served communion in individual servings. Church school was taught outside. We adapted, devoted to keeping our congregation together.

Today, we find ourselves stronger. Our faith restores us. Our technology is state -of -the -art. Our interim minister has helped us prepare for our future, the choir is offering up beautiful songs of praise, bell ringers are sounding out the glory of God, and parishioners are back in the pews. Committees meet. We once again enjoy retreats, Bible studies, coffee hours, tea parties, and potluck dinners together. We did much more than survive. We flourished. We are humbly grateful.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Robert M. Mitchell	1984 - 1999	No
R. Joseph Tripp, Jr.	2000 - 2022	Yes

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

Fifty years ago, a minister was asked to resign. He agreed.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation? No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church? No

4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

In addition to the active work of our Missions Board, our church family constantly has our feelers out into the community, looking for ways we can help those in need. If a member of our church family hears of a need, they bring it to the church’s attention . Recently, one of our newest members reached out to a local community center, which we support as one of our missions. The center had just added a “warming center” in their building, and needed some warm socks, and toiletries. Within a week, our church family had gathered and bundled 150 “Socks of Love” packages.

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

As members of the SNEUCC branch of the UCC, we send delegates to the SNEUCC biannual meetings. In the past, our youth have actively participated in UCC national youth gatherings.

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"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace | |

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

We are interested in working towards all the above statements. We have just begun the process of reviewing the UCC ONA guidelines and forming an ONA Committee. ONA is our first step, but we see the potential for more growth in our community.

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

We have historically had a close relationship with the Jewish temple in our neighborhood. Each year we participate in an ecumenical service of Thanks on the eve of Thanksgiving, which the temple hosts. Clergy, lay people, and choirs representing many of the churches on Aquidneck Island gather for a joyful service filled with song, praise and thanks to God.

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

We are truly fortunate. God has been so good to us. We are actively seeking ways to spread and share God's love and his bounty with our neighbors. We are looking for new ways to reach out and draw people into our family and join us in our joyous work.

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?

Traditionally, our ministers have worked side -by -side with us. They have attended our board meetings, counseled us, met with civic leaders, collaborated with other local clergy, and helped us to maintain awareness of the needs around us. We look forward to the continuation of this practice. We are all in this together. We want to share in all aspects of the work of being an active force for good in our community.

4b. MISSION InSite

The demographics depicted in the MissionInsite Report for Aquidneck Island are reflected directly in the population of our church family. We are keenly aware of the lack of diversity in race and ethnicity of our membership. We are conscious of the fact that our congregation is aging,

and fewer children are attending our services and church school. The cost of living is rising in our area and, while the report shows that income averages will be on the rise in the next five years, the cost of living will undoubtedly rise in direct relation. There is much discussion revolving around these concerns.

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

Our website proclaims the slogan “Amazing Grace! Amazing Place!” Our hope is that we are known for the closeness and dedication of our congregation. We are an inclusive institution, rooted in our common humanity, devoted to worshiping God and helping our neighbors. Our church is filled with laughter, music, and love.

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

- I was “church hopping.” I wanted a place to call home - for my children and myself - at a time in my life when I felt empty. This church - the minister, the people, and the church school filled that void. “My cup runneth over.” I found a new home.
- It is a great place with a great Pastor and terrific, giving parishioners. The music is second to none!
- It feels like home!
- I came for a need in my life - I stayed because of the people.
- Friendly people!
- I love that everyone is always welcoming and always listens.
- Acceptance, warmth, welcoming, non -judgmental.
- Sermons, music, and people make you feel like you have a second family/home when your family is far away. The joy of being able to look forward to the message/music and seeing familiar faces is very uplifting and gets you through the next week with a happy heart and hope for each day.

5. REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1: [Heather Hole Strout](#)

Executive Director, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, Newport, RI
(401) 846-2828

hstrout@mlkcenter.org

The center is a recipient of the many donations from our church; Friend



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
COMMUNITY CENTER

20 Dr. Marcus Wheatland Blvd.
Newport RI 02840
P 401.846.4828
F 401.848.7360
www.MLKCCenter.org

March 15, 2024

To Whom it Concerns:

Martin Luther King Community Center has a long-standing and positive working relationship with United Congregational Church that goes back many years and continues today. The mission of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center (MLKCC) is to nourish, educate, and support Newport County, Rhode Island residents to improve their economic, social, and physical well-being. Founded in 1922 and renamed for Dr. King in 1968, today MLKCC is a multi-service agency providing a wide variety of human services and enrichment activities to annually meet the diverse needs of nearly 6,000 residents of Newport County.

The United Congregational Church is an essential part of the Newport County Community. The congregation is consistently thinking of ways to help the greater community and the MLKCC. We receive regular food donations for our food pantry, of the largest in the state of Rhode Island, from United Congregational. We also receive annual monetary support to help us fill the gaps to meet the needs of many people who turn to us for help and hope, some of the most vulnerable in our community. In addition, many of the members of United Congregational serve as volunteers at the MLK Center in a variety of ways, from stocking our pantry, to delivering food to homebound residents and so much more.

We have appreciated the community involvement that Reverend R. Joseph Tripp has shown in his time at United Congregational. He is seen out in the community showing his support to schools and organizations all over Newport County. He is looked up to as a role model in the community. I am looking forward to this continuing when a new pastor is appointed.

If I can be of assistance during this process, please feel free to reach out to me at 401-846-4828 ext.105 or hstrout@mlkcenter.org.

Sincerely,

Heather Hole Strout
Executive Director
Martin Luther King Community Center

REFERENCE 2: [William Murphy](#)
Retired teacher, Middletown, RI 02842
(401) 849-2205
wmurphy317@cox.net
Friend

First, my comments about the church (referred herein as UCC MIDD) are bifurcated into before COVID and the retirements of Joe and Megan, and after these events.

Strengths of ministry-

- open and affirming
- uniting in common activities...spiritual growth, social activities and outreach, family activities, improvement of facilities
- solid Biblical basis in services and sermons
- Cedar Chapel Grove
- strong musical component to ministry

Areas for improvement-

- more than anything else, a return to more in-person presence for that sense of community of faith
- for active members to be individually active in bringing people to this church and its services, social activities, introduction to the Cedar Chapel grove as a site for reflection and meditation

Personal experience of UCC MIDD ministry-

- I have been involved in music ministry in an Acapella ensemble (now defunct), Christmas puppet shows, memorial rites, Christmas caroling
 - I have read Scripture and lit Advent wreath candles during services
 - I have been involved in the Community Meal ministry outreach
 - I have been involved in clean-up projects
 - I have been involved in Christian growth activities
 - I have been an Assistant Treasurer as well as the official handyman for small projects
 - I have helped set up for many and varied functions
- In all of these I have felt Christ working in this church.

Other-

Jonathan has been a true disciple of Christ as interim pastor. May your search for a permanent pastor be prayerful, thoughtful, and successful.
I have also been at UCC MIDD when serious and divisive issues were solved with grace and love. May this be the case in your search.



REFERENCE 3: [Gay Lawton](#)
[65 Young Drive, Portsmouth, RI 02871](#)
[401-663-1890](#)
[Friend](#)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a long-standing member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Newport, RI. However, I attend the United Congregational Church at least once a month because everyone is friendly and welcoming. Gentlemen and Ladies greet me with big smiles and kindness.

The sermons delivered by the interim minister are not just words but a powerful source of inspiration. They uplift me in the moment and resonate with me throughout the week, shaping my thoughts and actions. The selfless acts of the United Congregational church members, such as the lenten soup night, shrimp boil, bazaar, and other fundraising events, are not just events, they are life-enriching experiences that inspire me to do more for the community.

When I recently experienced a mild stroke, the outpouring of support from the church was overwhelming. One kind member came with a home-cooked dinner and a lovely prayer shawl. I was told that many prayers were said on my behalf. I received many get-well cards. This church doesn't just care about what happens to its members; it cares about its friends and our community. I am deeply grateful for this.

The United Congregational Church is where God's work is carried out.

Sincerely,



Gay Lawton

65 Young drive
Portsmouth, RI 02871
401-663- 1890

6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God and Creator,

Our congregation is searching for a new minister to lead us in the coming years.

We pray that you guide someone who intends to lead with kindness, thoughtfulness and intelligence to our church profile.

We are a congregation that enjoys each other's company and laughter, so please send to us someone who likes to laugh and can easily find humor in daily living.

We know you hold the vision of the individual best suited to minister to our church family. Direct our footsteps and show us what you would have us do. Use us as instruments of your love.

We are excited to meet this new person and ask that you help us create a church profile which conveys our gratitude, dedication and joy as Congregationalists. We pray that our church profile will inspire someone to walk with us on the path you would have us follow - a path that helps us spread Your love and follows the teachings of Jesus.

We give thanks to You for watching over us all these years and for the many gifts You have bestowed upon us.

We thank You for this journey that brings us closer to You and each other. We are grateful for Your help as we seek a new minister who will fit our little congregation well.

*May Your will be done in our lives and throughout the living of our lives.
Amen*

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 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 Search Committee gathered data from the congregation and developed the church profile with their input.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed: Ellen A. Davis

Name / Title / Date: Ellen A. Davis, Search Committee Co-Chair July 3, 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. Patricia Kogut*

Name / Title: Rev. Patty Kogut, Area Conference Minister, Southeast Region

Email: kogutp@sneucc.org

Phone: 508-244-4416

Date: July 3, 2024

This document is **UNITED CHURCH**
OF CHRIST  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