

*UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST*  
***LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE***



*Southport, CT*

*Senior Minister*

*Southern New England Conference*  
*Fairfield East*

*Summer 2024*

***LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS***

*Position Posting*

*Who Is God Calling Us To Become?*

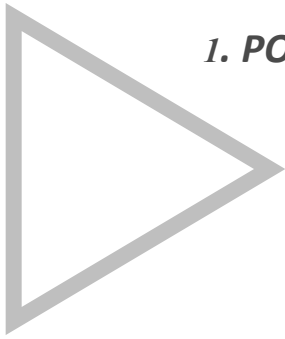
*Who Are We Now?*

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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that  
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,  
you may abound in every good work.”  
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*



## **1. POSITION POSTING**

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

### **1a. LISTING INFORMATION**

**Church name:** Southport Congregational Church

**Street address:** 524 Pequot Ave, Southport, CT 06890

**Supplemental web links:**

<https://www.southportucc.org/>

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

<https://southport-congregational-preschool.com/>

<https://www.southportucc.org/carousel-thrift-shop-2>

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

**Conference:** Southern New England

**Association:** Fairfield East

**UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:**

Rev. Margret Hofmeister  
ACM, SW Region SNEUCC  
[hofmeisterm@sneucc.org](mailto:hofmeisterm@sneucc.org)  
860-761-7198

## **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?**

Southport Congregational Church is grateful for our thriving church community. Over the last thirty years we have established a vibrant and healthy functioning church with an engaged, active and growing membership and a secure financial position. This is a blessing and no small feat, especially in our current societal climate where many churches are closing their doors and fewer and fewer individuals find themselves identifying with any religion. A 2019 Pew Research Center survey found in the last decade, the percentage of adults in the US who identify as Christian has declined 12 percent, while agnosticism increased by 17 percent. In a culture where we are inundated with pressures, social media negative narratives, and increasing financial and recreational obligations, there is a great deal of competition and distractions for our focus and time. We do not take our situation for granted. We recognize that to maintain this stability, and grow in this environment, we must always evolve and pivot as needs change.

As a church community, we want to continue our current trajectory of stable growth, which includes not only adding to our membership, but expanding our missions and community outreach, inviting thought provoking leaders to our community, and continuing our commitment to providing spiritual guidance and fellowship. We want to be proactive in our community and take on leadership roles when appropriate, as part of our ministry to love and serve others. We want to continue to be a place of calm and safety in an often-chaotic world – a place where our souls are nourished and our lives enriched through community and communion with each other.

We are seeking a Senior Minister who will continue to promote the growth of these interpersonal connections which are critical to the health and vitality of SCC.



*Southport Congregational Church*

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

Southport Congregational Church is located in the heart of the historic coastal Southport Village just an hour outside of New York City and 30 minutes south of New Haven, CT. Southport is a gem of Fairfield County rich in history, coastal charm, and beautiful sunrises and sunsets. Southport is a part of Fairfield, CT which is home to Fairfield University and Sacred Heart University. Downtown Fairfield offers a variety of cultural activities, shopping and restaurant dining. Located on the coast of Long Island Sound, the Town of Fairfield offers its residents access to five (5) beaches and one community lake. The Town has a strong public school system which includes 2 high schools ranked among the top 20 in the state.



**Current size of membership:** 755 members

**Languages used in ministry:** English

**Position Title:** Senior Minister

**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

## 1b. SCOPE OF WORK

The Senior Minister is responsible for the spiritual welfare and pastoral care of the congregation. The Senior Minister is also responsible for the leadership of the church, management of its facilities and the 14 full and part-time staff who carry out its programs and ministries. In addition, the Senior Minister is integral to the success of the stewardship campaign which makes the ministry and mission of the church possible.

The Senior Minister's Responsibilities Include:

- Execution of Church Mission | The Senior Minister will be called to faithfully and effectively execute the church Mission. The Senior Minister will be the strategic leader, guiding initiatives and activities in accordance with an agreed upon plan, developed in collaboration with the Church Council. The Senior Minister will work closely with the Church Council, lay leaders, and the staff to effectively lead the development and execution of our vision, strategy, and operations. The Senior Minister will build on the Church's successes and lead the Church into the future.
- Worship and Preaching | The essence of SCC's worship experience is centered around the sharing of a thoughtful, inspirational, and an engaging sermon. The Senior Minister must be able to relate to, and connect with, both younger and older people from diverse cultures and political viewpoints. The ideal candidate will lead from a place of love with actionable messages that congregants can apply to their daily lives.
- Pastoral Care | The Senior Minister will embrace pastoral care and be an integral part of the church community.
- Church Growth | The Senior Minister will be asked to help increase both the size of the church membership and the depth of its spiritual vibrancy. The Senior Minister must be a relational leader offering spiritual fulfillment to both current and potential members.
- Stewardship | The Senior Minister will, in partnership with the Church Council, ensure the successful acquisition and faithful stewardship of SCC's resources to further its mission and vision.
- Outreach, Missions, and Service Ministry | The Senior Minister will champion SCC's mission outreach ministry with programmatic and financial assistance in alignment with each mission partner's needs and goals. The Senior Minister will actively engage in the community and help identify where SCC's resources are best served.

## 1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Range	\$90,000 to \$120,000
Health Insurances	Medical, Dental, Vision
Housing	Parsonage
Retirement Savings	403b
Relocation Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reimbursement for the move of the successful candidate's household goods and furniture to the Parsonage in Southport, CT.</li><li>● Costs associated with initial visit to Southport and SCC, for the candidate and spouse/partner.</li><li>● A small lump sum amount to minimize the candidate's miscellaneous expenses related to the relocation as well as the tax burden assumed by the assistance mentioned above.</li></ul>

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

The SNEUCC offers several resources for clergy, including Communities of Practice, Webinars/Workshops through the Center for Transformational Leadership, Project Proclaim. Association Clergy gather on occasion for fellowship and community building.

## 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 seek a minister who is compassionate, personable, approachable, a good listener, an effective manager and spiritual leader who, utilizing the talents of the Church's committee members, the congregation at large and the staff, is committed to:

- Growing the youth and adult membership
- Maintaining fiscal stability
- Supporting SCC's Mission Outreach program to meet our Mission partners' greatest needs, and providing the necessary funding
- Guiding the growth of a vibrant Christian Education program, including new culturally relevant programs
- Most importantly, maintaining the current culture of love and spirituality experienced individually and collectively

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

The minister will be actively engaged in the community personally, and as SCC's spiritual leader. The minister will support the Mission program's growth and oversee SCC's relationships with our current Mission partners. The minister will also be mindful of opportunities for supporting (financially and non-financially) new agencies, beyond our neighborhood, who are in need and reflect our values and culture.

**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.**

- Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice
- Building Transformational Leadership Skills
- Caring for All Creation
- Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets





## 2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

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

**Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?**

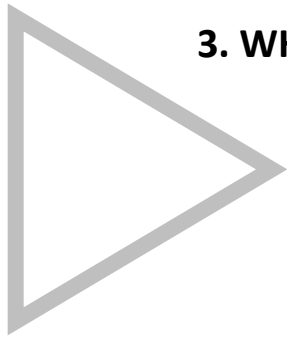
Statement of Mission and Purpose:

Southport Congregational Church is a warm and welcoming community of faith, united in ministry and mission for the purpose of enriching life. We understand our purpose through the life of Jesus Christ, who set forth as our highest priority to love: to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. With this spirit of abundant life and joy, we strive to value and serve each person as an individual created in God's image.

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

We are:

- Seeking a minister who will be actively engaged in the community
- Continuing to provide multiple opportunities for participation in Sunday Worship by maximizing technology to engage a wider audience and provide greater accessibility
- Enhancing the 10 a.m. worship with related engaging opportunities, ie, Second Hours guest speakers, youth, adult and family programs
- Offering a caring support system for parents, families, children and young adults
- Offering a “safe space” allowing for diversity and acceptance - a “place for all”
- Providing opportunities for exploration of diverse ideas in a “Welcome All” environment
- Encouraging youth, adults, and families to participate in “hands on” mission work with SCC neighbors and beyond



### **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.**

Southport Congregational Church (SCC) is a warm, welcoming, open and inclusive community of people who want to encourage and cultivate the abundance of love, life, comfort, peace, health, joy and meaning that God desires for us all. As a church family, we welcome and value each person as an individual created in God’s image. We unite to share our faith and sense of wonder, joys and sorrows, hopes and dreams, love and support, in the manner of Jesus Christ.

We are a congregation filled with people who are compassionate, faithful, generous and loving. We are dedicated to living out God's purposes here on earth and following Jesus' words to " ...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...and love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:34-40).

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

- Culture – Loving and caring spirit, collaborative and respectful, supportive and curious. The culture respects differences and is open to change. “Family” is highly valued both in one’s personal life and as an SCC congregant
- Financial Stability – SCC is financially stable as the result of rigorous management practices and professional attention from congregants, the minister and staff. This is critical to the future health, growth and longevity of our Church
- Lay Leadership – The depth and breadth of SCC’s lay leadership and its willingness to generously share their knowledge and their time is a hallmark of SCC
- SCC’s Membership – A multigenerational blend of ethnicity, race, gender, education, and work experience

- Youth - SCC is devoted to nurturing a strong faith and spiritual experience for its youth. It addresses the needs of the youth, specifically by age. Our youth are active participants and speak lovingly about their friendships and spiritual growth.
- Organizational and Business Acumen - The ministers, office, staff and committees work efficiently, collaboratively and effectively.

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

At SCC we worship together at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary and offer both in-person and a live stream service to remain spiritually connected. During the Summer, an 8:15 a.m. service is also offered at Sasco Beach in addition to the 10 a.m. service in the Sanctuary. The Sacrament of Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month.

The **key** tenants of a worship service include:

- Call to Worship - A member of the Board of Deacons welcomes the congregation with the Call to Worship, Prayer of Invocation and Lord's Prayer. Sharing the responsibility of worship between laity and clergy highlights how the spiritual helm of the church is guided by both its ministers and members.
- Music - At SCC, we value and lift up music at every service. From the traditional to the modern, from classical to folk, the music that can be heard in our church is as varied as its congregation and may be performed by our Senior, Teen, Junior, Cherub, or Handbell choir. Additional special music is incorporated into many worship services throughout the year.
- Children's Worship Experience - Participating in the worship of the larger church family is an important aspect of a child's religious education. Southport Congregational Church invites children to participate in the opening parts of the Sunday services with their parents and then proceed to Sunday School immediately following the Children's sermon.
- Sermon - Primarily given by the Ministerial staff with occasional Lay Leader participation, each message uniquely resonates. With an emphasis on teaching and learning, as opposed to preaching, the message centers on scripture and ways in which the teachings of Christ can be incorporated into our lives. Past sermons are posted weekly on our website <https://www.southportucc.org/sermonss>.



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

The mission statement of the Board of Christian Education is equipping individuals for life. SCC's educational programs provide congregants of all ages with the tools and a faith foundation to help them navigate life with love, grace, compassion and wisdom. Our educational programs focus on continual learning and offers a variety of topics and venues:

- Church School - At SCC, Sunday School provides a strong foundation for children ages K-12 to develop their connection to God as they explore and grow in a loving, faith-based community. Children ages K-5 participate in the Chapel and students grades 6-8 proceed directly to the Youth room. Lessons are tailored to be age appropriate.
- Middle School Youth Group - SCC recognizes that middle School can be a challenging time as our youth navigate the transition from childhood to adolescence. They talk about current events and how their faith is relevant, and they also participate in hands-on mission work.
- Confirmation - Our 9th graders participate in classes from September to May led by the Associate Minister. During the confirmation process, the students take a deep dive into their Christian heritage and scripture. They learn about the significance of each part of the worship service, and they lead the 8 a.m. Easter Service at Sasco Beach. Guided by the question "What does my Faith mean to me?", each Confirmand writes a Faith Statement that they share with the Congregation.

- High School Youth Group - High School Youth Group is a time to “unplug” from all the stressors of adolescence and deepen relationships with God, our Associate Minister, and peers. Scripture organically weaves its way into each meeting as the teens co-create the discussion. Through opportunities for reflection and service high schoolers are encouraged to continue their faith journey.
- Men’s Discussion Group - On Thursday mornings, men are invited to join our Senior Minister to discuss the connection between our faith and our life through the Bible, current events and spirituality.
- Women’s Discussion Group - On Thursdays mornings, women from the church and our community are invited to join our Associate Minister to discuss the connection between our faith and our life through the Bible, current events and spirituality.
- Second Hours - Second hours are hosted several times during the year and typically occur on Sundays after worship. They are led by ministers, members, and guests and are structured to be interactive to promote conversation and exploration.
- Bible Study - Bible study sessions run for a series of weeks covering a specific topic from either the Old or New Testament books. These “courses” are commonly led by one of the ministers or student ministers/seminarians and promote engagement and interactive discussion.

**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?**

Decisions are made by each committee and/or board with a final decision determined by the Church Council. When decisions need to be made quickly, the minister connects with the chair people of the boards and moderator of the church. An example would be during the pandemic where the landscape was changing weekly regarding worship. By-laws are attached for more detail of organizational structure.

Our church communicates through various forms:

- Annual Congregational meeting in February to determine budget, elect new board and committee members, provide status of how we are doing
- Special all church meetings will be convened with advanced notice
- Monthly newsletter emailed and mailed
- Weekly email blasts
- Email blasts for immediate information (death of a congregant or friend, reminder of activity, etc)
- Monthly meetings as listed below

Meeting Group	Frequency/Duration
Staff	1x per week/ 2 hours
Council	1x per month/ 1.5 hours
Trustees	1x per month/ 1.5 hours
Deacon	1x per month/ 1.5 hours
Mission	1x per month/ 1.5 hours
Christian Education	1x per month/ 1.5 hours
Other (Fellowship, Preschool, Music, Buildings and Grounds)	not more than 1x per month (or as needed) for approx. 1 hour

### **3b. 11-YEAR REPORT**

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

[\*Southern New England 11 Year Report\*](#)

### 3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Number of active members:	755	
Number of active non-members:	145	√
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	900	√

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
More than 10 years:	59%	√
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	24%	√
Less than 5 years:	17%	√

Number of total participants by age: Includes MEMBERS only, we don't have birthdates for our Active Non-Members

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)
59	69	82	103	75	95	93	90	94	√

Percentage of adults in various household types:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Single adults under 35:	25%	√
Households with minors:	27%	√
Single adults age 35-65:	3%	√
Joint households with no minors:	66%	√
Single adults over 65:	6%	√



Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
High school:	100%	✓
College:	98%	✓
Graduate School:	62%	✓
Specialty Training:	32%	✓
Other (please specify):	—	

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Adults who are employed:	55%	✓
Adults who are retired:	20%	✓
Adults who are not fully employed:	25%	✓

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

The working adults in our congregation are employed in a wide range of positions such as finance, law, healthcare, teachers, engineers, retail and service industry professionals.

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

Our ethnic makeup is broad-based, as evidenced by our tradition at World Communion Sunday when members of the congregation share a greeting in their cultural language. These have included Hindi, Hungarian, Yoruba, German, French, Italian, Russian, and Ukrainian. Our racial makeup is predominately white.

**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)?**

We offer a welcoming environment with an ongoing commitment to diversity. Throughout the years, we have collectively reaffirmed our church's long-standing tradition of welcoming and embracing all people, regardless of their background, identity, or orientation. Our history is rich with inclusivity, and we have always strived to be a place where everyone feels valued and loved.

### **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? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	110	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Seminarian, Lay Leaders
Baptisms <i>(number last year)</i>	13	Senior Minister, Associate Minister
Children's Groups or Classes	35	Associate Minister, Board of Christian Education (Lay Leaders)
Christmas Eve Service 5pm	427/ In Person 58/ Livestream	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Music, Deacons
Christmas Eve Service 10pm	193/ In Person 45/ Livestream	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Music, Deacons
Easter Service / 10 am Sanctuary	500/ In person 55/ Livestream	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Music, Deacons
Easter Service / 8am Beach	145/ In Person	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Director of Music, Deacons
Church-wide Meals / 8 Events	200 unique individuals, many came to more than one event	Deacons, Fellowship Committee, Board of Christian Ed

Choirs and Music Groups	Sr/ 24, Jr/14 Teen/ 3, Cherub/ 10 Handbell/ 10	Director of Music, Youth Choir Director, Assistant Youth Choir Director, Music Committee
Church-based Bible Study	60	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Seminararian
Communion ( <i>served how often?</i> )	Once a month	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Deacons
Community Meals	220 monthly 44 Bi-annually	Mission Outreach Board, Youth Group w/Associate Minister, Lay Persons
Confirmation ( <i>number confirmed last year</i> )	5	Associate Minister, Deacons
Drama or Dance Program	Musical/45 kids Pageant/50 kids	Youth Choir Director, Assistant Youth Choir Director, Lay Persons
Funerals (number last year)	6/Members 7/Non-members	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Deacons
Intergenerational Groups	We encourage intergenerational participation in all our activities when appropriate	Senior Minister, Associate Minister
Outdoor Worship @ <i>Sasco Beach / 8am (July/Aug)</i>	68	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Deacons
Prayer or Meditation Groups / 3	30	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Seminararian, Invited guests
Public Advocacy Work	50+	Senior and Associate Minister, Lay Leaders, Community Partners
Retreats	Deacons Retreat /14 Women's Retreat/ 30	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Lay Leaders
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	30	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Seminararian
Weddings ( <i>number last year</i> )	5	Senior Minister, Associate Minister

Worship (time slot: 10 am)	119	Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Deacons, Music Director
Worship 8am Sasco Beach (July/Aug)	See above Outdoor Worship	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	-	
Youth Groups or Classes	Youth Group/28 Confirmation/ varies 5-25	Associate Minister

*Additional comments:*

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

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? (3 or 4 or No)	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? (Y or N)
Rev. Paul Whitmore	3 way	Southport Congregational	Senior Minister	N
Rev. Laura Whitmore	3 way	Southport Congregational	Associate Minister	N
Rev. Julieanne Porras-Center	4 way	Somos Watsonville, CA	Organizing Pastor	N

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

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
Associate Minister	Yes	Full time	Senior Minister	25 years
Director of Administration	Yes	Full time	Ministers, Trustees	7 months
Bookkeeper	No	Part time	Director of Admin., Trustees	3 years
Church Secretary	No	Full time	Ministers	4 years
Communications Specialist	No	Part time	Associate Minister	1 year
Facilities & Grounds Manager	Yes	Part time	Ministers	2 years
Custodial Staff/3	No	Part time	Facilities & Grounds Dir.	varied
Senior Choir Director	Yes	Part time	Ministers, Music Committee	31 years
Youth Choir Director	No	Part time	Ministers, Music Committee	14 years
Assistant Youth Choir Director	No	Part time	Ministers, Music Committee	24 years
Preschool Director	Yes	Full time	Preschool Board, Trustees	6 years
Preschool Teachers / 11	No	Part time	Preschool Director	Varied
Rooms With A View Director	No	Part time	Board of Trustees	5 years
Investment Administrator	No	Part time	Trustees, Investment Committee	30 years

## **REFLECTION**

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

Southport Congregational is a vibrant church community. We utilize the many talents and resources of our members to enrich our own lives as well as to make a difference in our surrounding community.

### 3e. CHURCH FINANCES

#### Current annual income (Based off of 2023 Actuals)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	<b>\$758k (Pledge +Plate)</b>
Endowment Proceeds ( <i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i> )	<b>\$220k (Unrestricted &amp; Music Fund Income)</b>
Endowment Draw ( <i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i> )	<b>\$100k (To Establish the Capital Budget Fund)</b>
Fundraising Events	<b>\$ 202k - \$90k (Carousel), \$42k (RWAV), \$70k (Preschool)</b>
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	<b><i>\$There is giving to restricted funds, but SCC does not show them in the operating P/L. The amounts are found in the Other Income/Expense report (not in the Annual Report)</i></b>
Grants	<b>\$ 0</b>
Rentals of Church Building	<b>\$17k</b>
Rentals of Church Parsonage	<b>\$ 0</b>
Support from Related Organizations ( <i>e.g. Women’s Group</i> )	<b>\$ 0</b>
Transfers from Special Accounts	<b>\$ 0</b>
<i>Unrestricted Income/Gifts</i>	<b>\$5k</b>
<i>Prior Year Pledges</i>	<b>\$13k</b>
<i>Pending Covid Employee Tax Credit</i>	<b>\$108k</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,423k</b>

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

**\$1,423k (Includes \$100k for establishing Capital Budget)**

*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.*

### SCC FINANCIALS – HISTORICAL & 2024 BUDGET

(\$)	2020 ACTUAL	2021 ACTUAL	2022 ACTUAL	2023 BUDGET	2023 ACTUAL	2024 BUDGET
<b>Revenues</b>						
Cash Plate	41,371	56,206	56,319	50,000	49,494	50,000
Current Pledge	652,786	730,281	659,067	700,000	708,698	720,000
RWAV	21,819	75,000	80,000	80,000	42,000	60,000
Rental Income	2,796	34,692	27,682	11,000	16,177	17,000
Carousel	20,000	50,000	85,000	80,000	90,000	85,000
Preschool Program	63,200	63,200	63,200	70,000	70,000	80,000
Prior Year Pledge	14,125	14,444	6,875	15,000	12,900	10,000
Unrestricted Fund Income for Ops	170,000	170,000	170,000	194,000	206,838	210,166
Unrestricted Fund Income for Capital Projects	-	-	-	-	100,000	52,541
Music Fund Interest	28,188	15,000	15,275	12,970	12,970	12,970
Unrestricted Income/Gifts	40,578	1,908	2,052	15,000	5,537	12,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,054,863</b>	<b>1,210,731</b>	<b>1,165,470</b>	<b>1,227,970</b>	<b>1,314,614</b>	<b>1,309,677</b>
<b>Expenses</b>						
Board of Deacons	243,058	260,675	266,566	289,816	269,905	276,274
Music Committee	86,235	96,069	96,503	93,914	98,410	97,312
Board of Christian Education	10,463	5,701	10,339	18,150	11,693	16,400
Mission Outreach Board	75,746	80,527	80,500	105,500	105,500	105,500
Board of Trustees	661,256	582,170	593,822	600,284	611,344	594,887
Building & Grounds Committee	174,794	309,114	247,680	220,826	225,789	210,529
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>1,251,552</b>	<b>1,334,256</b>	<b>1,295,410</b>	<b>1,328,490</b>	<b>1,322,641</b>	<b>1,300,901</b>
Capital Project Allocation					100,000	52,541
<b>Operating Non Budgeted Income/Loss</b>	<b>(196,690)</b>	<b>(123,525)</b>	<b>(129,940)</b>	<b>(100,520)</b>	<b>(108,027)</b>	<b>(43,766)</b>
<b>Other Income/Expenses</b>						
Covid PPP Grants	157,500	194,782	-	-	-	-
Covid Employee Retention Tax Credit Reserve	-	-	-	100,520	108,027	43,766
Additional Transfer from Unrestricted Reserves	39,190	-	58,683	-	-	-
Reserve from Prior Year Unbudgeted Profits	-	-	71,257	-	-	-
<b>Total Non Budgeted Income/Loss</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>71,257</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**Additional budget details available on request.**



# BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023

\$	December 31, 2022	December 31, 2023	Change
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Bank Accounts</b>			
Chase Checking	-	107,427	107,427
M&T Checking	548,763	30,526	(518,237)
Peoples Money Mkt	5,173	5,174	1
Deposits in Transit	155,688	12,493	(143,195)
RWAV Checking Account	88,837	113,949	25,112
Carousel Checking Account	39,084	78,549	39,465
Designated Accounts	23,650	23,657	7
Petty Cash	125	274	149
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>861,319</b>	<b>372,049</b>	<b>(596,698)</b>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>			
A/R General	4,906	13,644	8,738
A/R Memorial Garden	696	19,077	18,381
A/R Music Fund	30,275	43,245	12,970
A/R Unrestricted Endowment	715,792	619,908	(95,884)
A/R RWAV	81,868	99,924	18,056
A/R Carousel	34,039	66,189	32,150
A/R Preschool	35,552	46,115	10,563
A/R Scholarship Fund	4,007	14,341	10,334
Undeposited Funds		102,620	102,620
Venmo		1,928	1,928
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<b>907,135</b>	<b>1,026,989</b>	<b>(45,462)</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,768,454</b>	<b>1,399,038</b>	<b>(642,159)</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>			
Prepaid Expenses	-	-	-
SCC Scholarship Fund Checking	-	-	-
Vanguard Religious Pen. Trust	420,760	508,936	88,176
Provident Mortgage Religious Pen. Trust	205,133	252,572	
Vanguard Minister's Housing	-	-	-
Vanguard Memorial Garden	23,103	27,982	4,879
Vanguard Music Fund	239,646	290,756	51,110
Vanguard Unrestricted Fund	3,985,062	4,540,899	555,837
Provident Mortgage Religious Pen. Trust	687,689	1,296,611	608,922
Vanguard Jake Panus RS Scholarship	98,889	119,687	20,798
Vanguard SCC Employee Scholarship	5,665	6,857	1,192
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>5,665,947</b>	<b>7,044,300</b>	<b>1,330,914</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>7,434,401</b>	<b>8,443,338</b>	<b>688,755</b>

<b>BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023</b>			
<b>\$</b>	<b>December 31, 2022</b>	<b>December 31, 2023</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>LIABILITIES, RESERVES &amp; FUNDS</b>			
<b>Liabilities, Reserves and Trusts</b>			
<b>Accounts Payable</b>			
A/P Unrestricted Reserves	117,480	36,539	(80,941)
Accounts Payable	-	32,241	32,241
A/P Memorial Garden	-	2,000	2,000
A/P Scholarship Fund	-	35,000	35,000
A/P Ministry of Music Fund	50,000	56,265	6,265
A/P General	-	-	-
<b>Total A/P</b>	<b>167,480</b>	<b>162,045</b>	<b>(5,435)</b>
<b>Reserves</b>			
RWAV	88,837	113,949	25,112
Memorial Gifts	13,176	14,676	1,500
Covid EDIL #1	149,900	149,900	-
Covid EDIL #2	325,000	325,000	-
Masonry Repointing Project Reserve	209,333	3,894	(205,439)
Flower/Decoration Reserve	10,631	4,794	(5,837)
Pledges Fulfilled Prior to Stewardship Cal Year	262,126	243,930	(18,196)
Minister Discretionary Mission Fund	20,522	22,499	1,977
Minister Discretionary Fund	20,386	18,891	(1,495)
Acts of Kindness Fund #1	25,696	8,687	(17,009)
Acts of Kindness Fund \$2	41,530	32,399	(9,131)
Youth Mental Health	13,728	16,478	2,750
Church School Collection	1,248	1,250	2
Youth Mission Fund	44,215	(1,224)	(45,439)
Special Mission Collections	12,765	10,106	(2,659)
Mission Designated Giving Reserve	25,509	31,153	5,644
Shepherd's Scholarship Reserve	30,158	20,158	(10,000)
Jake Panus RST Scholarship Reserve	16,068	16,398	330
Save SCC/ UI Defense Fund	-	12,877	12,877
Capital Budget Reserve	-	20,607	20,607
Prior Year Unbudgeted Surplus Reserve	-	-	-
In Our Own Backyard Reserves	-	-	-
Colin Comey Angel Fund	25,017	25,019	2
Red Shirt Table Reserve	120,270	103,337	(16,933)
RST Village Improvements	61,000	48,500	(12,500)

Carousel Reserve	39,085	78,549	39,464
Other Reserves	11,445	(6,641)	(18,086)
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>1,567,645</b>	<b>1,315,186</b>	<b>(252,459)</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Reserves</b>	<b>1,735,125</b>	<b>1,477,231</b>	<b>(257,894)</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023</b>			
<b>\$</b>	<b>December 31, 2022</b>	<b>December 31, 2023</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Trusts &amp; Special Funds</b>			
Minister's Housing Fund	-	-	-
Memorial Garden Fund	23,104	27,982	4,878
Ministry of Music Fund	239,646	290,756	51,110
Unrestricted Fund	4,672,750	5,837,509	1,164,759
Jake Panus RST Scholarship Fund	98,889	119,687	20,798
SCC Employee Scholarship Fund	5,665	6,857	1,192
Religious Pension Plan	625,893	761,508	135,615
<b>Total Trust &amp; Funds</b>	<b>5,665,947</b>	<b>7,044,300</b>	<b>1,378,353</b>
<b>Total Liabilities, Reserves &amp; Trusts</b>	<b>7,401,072</b>	<b>8,521,531</b>	<b>1,120,459</b>
<b>Non Budgeted Income/(Loss)</b>			
Accumulated Non budgeted Income/(Loss)	33,329	33,329	-
Adjusting Entry	-	(3,495)	(3,495)
Non Budgeted Income/(Loss)	-	(108,027)	(108,027)
<b>Total Non Budgeted Income / (Loss)</b>	<b>33,329</b>	<b>(78,193)</b>	<b>(111,523)</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES, RESERVES &amp; FUNDS</b>	<b>7,434,401</b>	<b>8,443,338</b>	<b>1,008,936</b>

**Additional Financial Statements available upon request.**

## SCC CAPITAL BUDGET AND TIMING

	Capex Spend Year	
	2023	2024
<b>CAPEX BEGINNING BALANCE</b>	0	21,121
1.0% of Endowment (~\$5M+/Year)	NA	52,542
Additional Funding as approved	100,000	0
Budgeted Extraordinary Repairs in Annual Plan	19,000	0
Capex budgeted in Trustees	5,000	0
<b>AVAILABLE CAPEX</b>	<b>124,000</b>	<b>73,663</b>
<b>CHURCH CAPITAL PROJECT LIST</b>		
<b>Computers &amp; AV</b>		
- Assoc Min and DOA Laptops	(8,249)	
<b>Infrastructure (HVAC &amp; Electrical)</b>		
- Replacement of FH Cove lights	(6,417)	
- Replace Main Office Lights		(6,000)
- Replacement of 3 hot water heaters	(7,875)	
- Replace 3 of 4 air handler blower motors above library and PS	(2,811)	
- Replace or refurbish 1 blowers or compressors each year	(4,894)	
- New light under Port co`chere		\$10,000 estimate for 2025+
<b>Construction</b>		
- Replace/repair O/S Kitchen Staircase		(25,000)
- New portable sign for weekly events (attached to current main sign)		(2,000)
- AV Booth/Repair wall holes from AV install		\$20,000 estimate for 2025+
- Repair FH Ceiling	(1,830)	
- Install flood doors at Carousel and both YR entrances		
- Interior stone pointing and build out of Carousel front storage area	(4,450)	
- Refurbish pulley windows in FH, repair broken panes	(1,830)	
- Fix leaky window and add humidifier to Blower Room in basement		(3,500)
- Finish processing room in Carousel (under kitchen)		(7,000)
<b>Furniture, Floors, Décor</b>		
- Replace/Reupolster Library Chairs & Couches	(17,626)	
- Replace Back office Carpet		(11,000)
- Replace Youth Room Carpet	(4,799)	
- Sand and Refinish FH Floor		
- Reframing of Narthex 10 Commandments Needlepoint	(921)	
- Folding Tables	(627)	
<b>Landscaping</b>		
- Replace bluestone on wall outside main office		
- Upgrade landscape on borders or back parking lot		
<b>PARSONAGE CAPITAL PROJECT LIST</b>		
- Repair and paint west side of Parsonage	(24,341)	
- Replace Living Room Carpet		(10,000)
- Replace Kitchen Oven	(3,749)	
- Replace Cental A/C	(12,460)	
- Address porch door step (rebuild or wall off)		
- <b>Annual EDIL payment</b> (starting in 2024 for 30 yrs)	-	(8,000)
<b>Total Capex</b>	<b>(102,879)</b>	<b>(72,500)</b>
<b>Carry Forward Balance</b>	<b>21,121</b>	<b>1,163</b>

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

**\$406k (Senior + Associate ministers, Parsonage) / \$1,300k (2024 expenses) = 31%**

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

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

**Yes\_\_** Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)

**No\_\_** One Great Hour of Sharing

**No\_\_** Strengthen the Church

**No\_\_** Neighbors in Need

**Yes\_\_** Christmas Fund

*In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage? (recommended 10%)* **It's a flat amount of \$12,360**

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: **\$475k**

Reason for debt: **Covid EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loan)**

Are capital and other payments current? **Yes (payments start in Sep 2024)**

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. **None**

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2014-2016	<b>Windows of Opportunity Campaign - Repair Sanctuary Stained Glass Windows, Build Storage Barn, Parsonage Repairs</b>	<b>\$1.3M</b>	<b>\$1.5M</b>	<b>All projects completed; \$200k in excess funds used to increase the endowment.</b>

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.

### Endowment

Does your church have an endowment?	<b>Yes</b>
What is the market value of the assets?	<b>\$5.24M</b>
Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?	<b>Regularly for Operations (4-5%) and under certain circumstances</b>
What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)	<b>4-5% (same as past 5 years)</b>
Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:	<b>4-5%, equaling between \$200-\$220k/year</b>
At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?	<b>Perpetuity</b>

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

### Other Assets

Reserves (savings): ~ **\$150-\$400k at any one time in the Church Checking Account**

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

## Parsonage

Does your church have a parsonage?	<b>Yes</b>
Fair market rental value of the parsonage:	<b>\$1.461M (Town Appraisal) need to FMV</b>
How is the parsonage used?	<b>Minister Housing</b>
Street / City / State / Zip:	<b>612 Pequot Ave, Southport, CT 0689</b>
Finished square footage:	<b>4,719 sq. ft (Living Area)</b>
Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms:	<b>6 bedrooms, 4.5 Bathrooms</b>
Assessed real estate value:	<b>\$1.025M (Town Assessment)</b>
Available for minister residence: Y/N	<b>Y</b>
Condition of structure, systems and appliances	<b>Excellent</b>
Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs	<b>Trustees</b> <i>(B&amp;G is a committee of Trustees)</i>

### **Describe all buildings owned by the church:**

The Church Proper, Parsonage, Bunk House for Mission Volunteers in Hermosa, SD

### **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.)**

Church Proper - all except the 2nd Floor of the Education Wing, The Dias, and the Balcony. Parsonage - Not handicap accessible; Bunk House - Is handicap accessible.

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

SCC is financially healthy due to the diligence of our boards, committees, members, and ministers, who have created a solid financial foundation from which all worship, programming, mission, and educational programs flow.

### **3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

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

Our church was founded in 1843 and we have been shaped by those who have come before us. A timeline of key historical church moments are illustrated on the following page:





## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

- 1843** ▶ Southport Congregational Church officially organized and dedicated
- 1844** ▶ Rev. Samuel John Mills Merwin installed as 1st Senior Minister
- 1876** ▶ Completion and dedication of new stone Church
- 1901** ▶ Church membership is 191 people
- 1915** ▶ Rev. W.H. Holman resigns after 38 years of service
- 1926** ▶ Bulkley Parsonage, our current Parsonage, was gifted to the Church
- 1943** ▶ Church celebrates its 100th anniversary; 397 members
- 1958** ▶ Completion and dedication of Chapel, Church School Wing and Library
- 1969** ▶ Rev. Loring S. Ensign installed as 11th Senior Minister
- 1994** ▶ Rev. Paul D. Whitmore installed as 12th Senior Minister
- 2006** ▶ Rev. Laura Whitmore hired as Associated Minister & Rev. Sharon Blackburn as Pastoral Associate Minister
- 2014** ▶ Church membership exceeds 650 people
- 2018** ▶ Church membership reaches 750
- 2020** ▶ On March 15 the Church building was closed for 25 months due to the COVID -19 pandemic; programs and worship continued virtually
- 2023** ▶ Southport Congregational Church celebrates 180 year anniversary

The most significant event to impact our church over the last 10 years was the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the advent of COVID-19 our Church had recently increased church staffing, streamlined internal processes, planned for technical upgrades, expanded preschool programs and purchased a building in South Dakota to support our mission work on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. We were poised to jump into the decade of 2020 with enthusiasm, innovation and momentum.

At SCC we were resilient and redefined growth. We maintained our strong sense of community and connection in a climate of forced separation. We immediately implemented a system to live-stream worship services, a goal we had in place for ourselves pre-pandemic. Worship services, complete with music, continued each Sunday. The efforts from our ministers, church staff, church boards, and members to preserve and serve our congregation during this unprecedented time were extraordinary.

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

Since the pandemic, we offer worship services both in-person and via live-stream. Our concept of “church attendance” was redefined and technological offerings allow us to stay connected.

Another change made was to increase staffing and streamline organizational processes. With membership reaching 750, this growth yielded increasing responsibilities and commitments on our ministers and staff members. As a result, we expanded our church administrative support to include three new positions, Director of Administration, Communication Specialist, and Facilities and Grounds Manager. In addition, we upgraded our financial and computer systems. We also reviewed and revised by-laws to ensure they remained relevant to our current needs and organizational structure.

**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?)*

Southport Congregation navigates disagreement with love and mutual respect. Due to this approach, we are graced with very little conflict. We strive to ensure all individuals feel seen and heard and as a result “conflicts” are resolved peacefully and positively.

One topic which was navigated in this manner occurred in 2014, when SCC performed its first of many same-gender marriages. Prior to that, we spent months talking with the congregation and meeting with individuals, to discuss any possible issues that someone might have. With the same intentional care and love that we approach everything, the church was fully supportive of declaring ourselves welcoming and inclusive.

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

**SENIOR MINISTER**

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. P.D. Whitmore (1994 - present)	30	Y
Rev. L.S. Ensign (1969-1994)	25	Y
Rev. E.W.W. Lewis (1963-69)	3	Y
Rev. E.B. Chaney (1953-63)	10	Y

**ASSOCIATE MINISTER**

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Laura Whitmore (2003-present)	21	Y
Rev. Sharon Blackburn (2006-2014)	8	Y
Rev. Sharon Alberson (2003-2005)	2	Y
Rev. Jonathan Wortman (2001-2002)	1	Y

## STUDENT MINISTER/SEMINARIAN

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Dave Stuart (2023 - present)	1.5	Y
Julianne Center (2020-2023)	3	Y
Ali Kralovec-Kirchherr (2019-2021)	3	Y

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

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

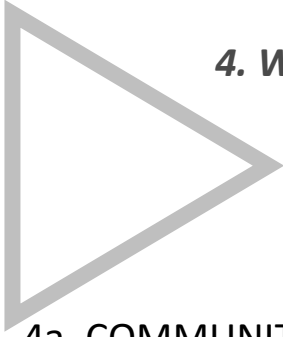
Y/N/Ask us: NO

**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



#### **4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?**

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

##### **4a. COMMUNITY VISION**

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

Southport Congregational Church is dedicated to extending its love and care beyond the Church walls to its neighbors enabling them to fulfill their missions to the best of their abilities. Currently we provide financial and non-financial programmatic assistance to 20 agencies who share SCC’s values and are concerned with the well- being of a broad range of individuals and families with varying needs. Examples include: under-resourced Bridgeport children grades kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade; children throughout CT with language-based learning disabilities and ADHD; homeless veterans; victims of intimate partner violence; ex-offenders; those struggling with literacy proficiency; immigrants adjusting to a new life; the poverty stricken; and those struggling with food insecurity.

Our programmatic support reflects the diversity of our neighbors’ needs including: providing clothing for adults and children; food at holidays and periodically throughout the year; helping those with mental health issues; educational enrichment for children and adults; physical comfort for the homeless and for those seeking community resources.

In addition to these opportunities, Annual Grants and “Special Financial Support” are provided as needed.

Throughout the year we highlight our Mission Outreach agencies in several ways. Our annual Mission Sunday service honors our Mission partners and builds bridges of understanding and gratitude.

Each month *The Mission Spotlight* article in the Church’s newsletter highlights the exceptional work of one of our agencies. Several members of the congregation share their time and knowledge as volunteers at our agencies, a mutually rewarding experience.

Lastly, our mission outreach extends beyond our local and state borders. Periodically we provide fundraising consultation, hands-on-project support, and meals and activities for children at Red Shirt Table on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota. Every year SCC’s youth and families volunteer on the reservation, a life changing experience for them and the Red Shirt Table children.

To maximize the impact of our Mission Outreach program our dedicated Mission Board evaluates the needs of our agencies and seeks new opportunities to extend our love and care to better the lives of our neighbors near and far.

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

SCC's Senior Minister, Associate Minister and selected lay delegates from the congregation, represent the Church at major UCC events throughout the year, including the Fairfield East Association Annual Meetings, Ecclesiastical Councils, Ordinations and other events as they arise. Our clergy meet, on a regular basis, with the Fairfield Clergy Group, keeping in close relationship with clergy from all denominations in our town, which bolsters the inclusive and wider mission of our church.

**Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives.**

We remain wholeheartedly committed to being a church that is known for its warm and welcoming environment, as well as our inclusive approach to serving our community. We are steadfast in our commitment to accessibility for all who are looking to live their lives as God has intended for them and for spiritual guidance and fellowship. SCC embraces the importance of immigrant justice evidenced by its support of CIRI (the Connecticut Institute for Immigrants and Refugees), providing financial support and cribs and baby supplies for newly arrived families. Mental health, especially of our youth, is at the forefront of concerns for our congregation. We have created a network of mental health professionals who are on call for us and who have committed to seeing anyone we refer within 24 hours. We have also established a mental health fund which provides immediate financial aid to anyone in need of seeing a mental health professional. SCC's ministers are also available to assist members with mental health challenges, providing compassion and guidance, as appropriate.

In alignment with our commitment to inclusivity, our church community includes LGBTQ individuals in key leadership roles. Our Youth Choir Director, Director of Communications, several Board Members, and the Chair of our major fundraiser are all members of the LGBTQ community. Their contributions have been invaluable, and their presence has enriched our church life in countless ways. Our church has a history of performing same-gender marriages, and we make it a priority to engage our youth group in yearly discussions about gender identity and inclusivity.

We consider ourselves to be Open and Affirming in practice and are in the process of becoming an officially designated ONA Congregation through the UCC's ONA Coalition process.

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

Our church has participated in many interfaith services in Fairfield, including prayer services when the war in the Ukraine began, interfaith services commemorating the attacks on 9-11, interfaith Thanksgiving Services, and the Blessing of the Fleet in Southport Harbor. In addition, through our work with the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, an organization we supported both financially and with volunteers, we participated in many events. Every summer we offer 8:15 a.m. worship services on Sasco Hill Beach, which are open to the town and beyond. Around 200 people attend each Sunday. Most recently, we have worked to support our local Temples during political and social unrest.

**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.**

We are 100% committed to the values we included in our Mission Statement and believe that you can find evidence of our living out that statement throughout this profile.

**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?**

Our clergy are well-known and well-respected in our community and serve and have-served in many leadership positions throughout their ministry here in Southport. Although the church has no stated expectation of the amount of time our clergy need to spend engaging in activities on behalf of the church, they have been leaders in important causes, as the need has arisen. Whether it is protecting the historical nature and environmental health of Southport in our fight against United Illuminating's monopole project, protection of Pequot land in town, or serving as members, or leaders, of various boards (Operation Hope, Simply Smiles, Positive Directions, Council of Churches, to name a few), our clergy represent our church in all issues that are relevant and important to our congregation.

## **4b. AREA OVERVIEW**

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

While the ARDA data is useful, we have found that it does not fully reflect the most current trends since it was collected pre-Covid. For instance, there are many new residents who relocated from NYC to Southport during the pandemic who are seeking a connection with the community and a welcoming place of worship. Our existing neighbors are also looking for new ways to engage after being isolated. This is an opportunity for SCC to reach out to our community and invite them to join us for a service and experience what we are all about.

**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?**

The data shows that 75% of the residents in Fairfield hold at least a bachelor's degree and 63% earn \$125,000 or more per year. It also shows that 65% of our population are married, with or without children. Single parents make up 4% of the population.

In contrast, our neighboring city has 17% of its residents living in poverty and another 5% living near it. The number of people who hold at least a bachelor's degree is 25%, while 18% earn \$125,000 or more per year. The percentage of people married with, or without children is 40%. Single parents make up 13% of the population.

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

The Church congregation's life of faith reaches beyond its walls, caring for and supporting our community and selected neighbors outside the immediate area, in ways that meet their specific needs. Currently the Church has 20 mutually rewarding partnerships, many long standing, with non-profit agencies/ organizations who serve adults, children, and family agencies and benefit from the Church's financial aid and non-financial programmatic support. All but five are located in Bridgeport, which is within seven miles of SCC, and a city that is 66% racially and ethnically diverse, with a child poverty rate of 34%. The needs of Bridgeport's population are great and the requests for support of all kinds from our existing agencies, and new ones, are ever increasing.

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

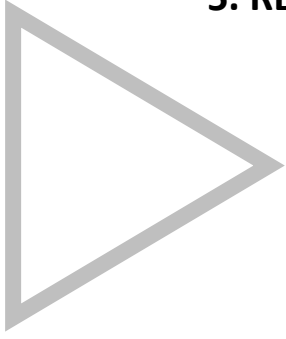
In addition to being recognized for our mission work, SCC is known for always lending a hand or leading the cause in all types of community events. Most notably, our ministers are very involved in opposing a utility company project that would be detrimental to our town as well as our neighboring city. Our church also helps organize events such as the annual Blessing of the Fleet, Christmas caroling in downtown Southport, and we provide meals for local community groups in need.



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

Many new members say they started coming to services when they were searching for a new faith community. Most share that it was the moving, insightful and relatable sermons that inspired them to return often and eventually join our congregation. People also comment that they would like to join our church community because they see that our members are connected to one another and seek to put their faith into action.

## 5. REFERENCES



### REFERENCE:

#### **Julie Mombello, Co-Founder, Adam J. Lewis Academy in Bridgeport, CT**

Adam J. Lewis Academy is an independent, private PreK3 through 8th grade day school providing an innovative and rigorous academic educational opportunity for promising students in Bridgeport, regardless of income or circumstance.

(203)-333-2211

[julie@ajlacademy.org](mailto:julie@ajlacademy.org)

Adam J Lewis Academy is one of the twenty-plus “mission partners” (non-profit organizations) annually supported by the Southport Congregational Church. We have been supporters of this organization, with financial gifts as well as food and supplies, since its inception in 2011.

### REFERENCE:

#### **Sarah Drummond, Founding Dean, Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT**

Andover Newton is the oldest graduate school in the nation and formally affiliated with Yale Divinity School in 2017. ANS provides specific programs for those exploring or living into congregational ministry.

203-436-9954

[sarah.drummond@yale.edu](mailto:sarah.drummond@yale.edu)

Based on Sarah’s recommendations and guidance, over the past six years, three ANS students have served with us as student ministers. Our current ministers are also graduates of Andover Newton.

### REFERENCE

#### **Donna Jackson, Executive Director, Emerge, Inc. located in Stratford, CT**

The mission of Emerge is to inspire women and children, who are homeless survivors of domestic violence and to transform their lives by providing safe housing and support services.

(203)-556-2686

[emergeinc@optonline.net](mailto:emergeinc@optonline.net)

Emerge, Inc. is one of the twenty-plus “mission partners” (non-profit organizations) annually supported by the Southport Congregational Church. We have been financial and hands-on partners since its inception in 1996.

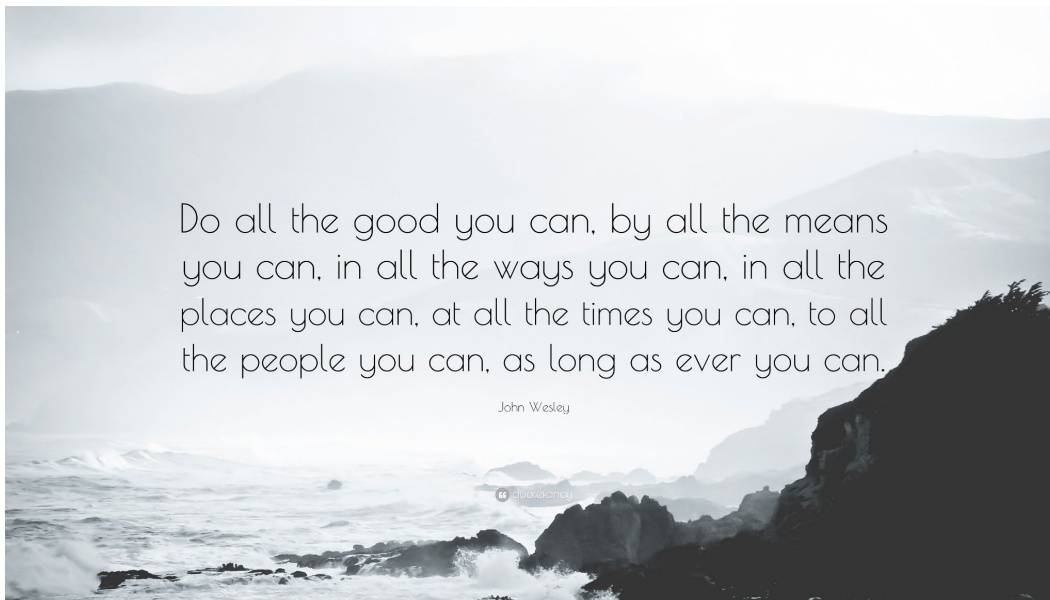
## 6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

### 6a. CLOSING PRAYER

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*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:*



## 6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending 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?

The Senior Minister Search Committee

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

Signed:

Name / Title / Date:

Tamberlyn Chapman, Senior Minister Search Committee Co-Chairperson, 8/1/2024

Paul Doocy, Senior minister Search Committee Co-Chairperson, 8/1/2024

## 6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Rev. Margret Hofmeister*

Name / Title: Rev. Margret Hofmeister, Area Conference Minister, Southwest Region

Email: [hofmeistem@sneucc.org](mailto:hofmeistem@sneucc.org)

Phone: 860-761-7198

Date: August 1, 2024

**UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST**



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

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