

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Kennebunkport, [Maine](#)

Search for Settled Pastor—Half Time

Maine Conference of UCC – Schedule 2 York Association of UCC

September 16, 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)*

POSITION POSTING

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WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: First Congregational Church of Kennebunkport

Street address: 141 North Street, Kennebunkport, Maine 04046

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

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships): We welcome all to our church. Congregants participate in community groups and outreach to support members of neighboring churches. We share time in support of varied faith educational endeavors including the United Church of Christ, Bahai, and Baptist religions.

Conference: Maine Conference of the UCC

Association: York Association

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

Rev. John Fiscus, Associate Conference Minister

207-622-3100

jfiscus@maineucc.org



First Congregational Church of Kennebunkport is a small church located in a rural area of Kennebunkport, Maine. We value community and the individual connections made here. We are seeking a half-time settled pastor to walk with us on our faith journey. Our ideal candidate will be someone who can provide spiritual leadership through Bible-based sermons that relate the

scriptures to our daily lives, helping us to live them as Jesus intended. We prefer sermons that are meaningful and connected to the many difficult issues of our times. The candidate of our choice will be sensitive to congregational needs, be able to work successfully with church leadership and volunteers, aid us in spiritual growth, and lead us into a solid future. We don't expect him or her to have all of the answers, but rather to share in our joys as well as our sorrows, to question with us when understanding escapes us, and to grow together as an integral part of our faith family. We are seeking a pastor to guide from beside rather than in front; embracing the true congregational spirit.

What we value about living in our area: *This link from the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Arundel Chamber of Commerce is an excellent presentation on the best reasons to live here. It says more than we can possibly include in this short paragraph. <https://gokennebunks.com/live/> To put it into one sentence, the quality of life we enjoy is exceptional. We are surrounded by beauty, in a safe community with friendly people and a pace that you will find much less frenetic than many other areas. It's Maine ~ The Way Life Should Be.*



Current size of membership: *Our church membership is 30. What we lack in numbers we make up in passion; we are a small but determined congregation. Our very active lay leaders and committed members participate regularly in church services, activities and missions.*

Position Title: *We are seeking a half-time 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: *½ Time*

Half-time salary includes the housing allowance, plus benefits

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

SCOPE OF WORK

Core Competencies:

We seek a minister who is sensitive to the congregation's needs and those of the greater community, someone who is outgoing and willing to become involved in the community and be a recognized presence. The pastor should be both passionate and compassionate about their ministry and their congregation. We need someone who is comfortable working hand in hand with our lay leaders in all aspects of the church's life and livelihood. We find that patience and a good sense of humor are always appreciated!

COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance): Half time range: \$23,127 with 1-4 years of experience to \$27,125 with 13-16 years of experience

Benefits: Salary includes Optional Benefits

- 4 weeks paid vacation (including four weekends) after six months of service*
- The week following Christmas Eve may be taken off*
- After five years of service, a sabbatical leave of three consecutive months will be available for additional study*
- Ability to allocate percentages to UCC benefits (Retirement Annuity, Life and Disability Insurance, Health and Dental), maximum 10% of total annual salary*
- Social Security: 7.65% of salary basis*

What is the expected living situation for your next minister? We do not have a parsonage; thus the compensation is salary including a housing allowance.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister. We would like the settled pastor to be a part of our local area and involved in the wider community, but we understand local housing challenges.

State any incentives: The pastor's performance will be reviewed for a merit increase annually, and we are prepared to offer one Sunday off per quarter, schedule to be agreed upon.

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference: The York Association of the Maine Conference UCC and a Local Clergy Group meet periodically during the year. While we understand there may be a need for additional employment, we expect a half-time commitment of 20-25 hours per week on average, with the understanding that some weeks will be more, and some less. Our position is a true part-time position, not a full-time position that is paid as if it were part-time. We are blessed to have strong lay leadership and a Visitation Director already in place.

WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Like many small churches today, we need to grow our membership. We expect our pastor to tend to the needs of those already on the rolls, as well as to our “parish”. Many of our past successes have been the result of an active collaboration between the pastor and the congregation.

We want to continue our existing ministries and take on new opportunities as they arise. We would like to expand our visibility in the wider community and see our pastor being here to share the word of God, as well as helping us to grow in spirituality, love and understanding.

We are looking for a pastor with a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship and self-care. We see this person as empowering the church to be faithful to God’s call, reflective of Christ’s mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit. We need him or her to help us in providing hope and healing to a hurting world. Above all, we expect this person to be of strong moral character and integrity.

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)

Very simply, we are called to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Our spirits are often moved by events of the world around us and we convert that concern into active worship and community action.

- We have supported and encouraged interns from the Chaplaincy Institute of Maine. Tina Civetta is a graduate of ChiME and serves as Visitation Director supported by others in the church. She provides visitations to church members and friends. Her service supplements and complements what our pastor is able to provide within the half-time schedule.*
- In 2023, Tina facilitated a six-week discussion of *The Book of Forgiving* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his daughter Reverend Mpho A. Tutu. It served to bond church members in new and rewarding ways. Far-reaching conversations and observations gave participants much to consider. She makes daily connections through Poetry of Rumi and the need for the art of forgiveness on the world stage.*
- In fall 2024, Civitta will give a give a class on “Legacy Letters”. She will discuss the impact, comfort, joy and benefits the letters provide within families and the community.*
- Our Bean Suppers provide a true meeting place for people living in our area. Though they may not attend regular services, they come here monthly to share food and conversation.*
- We were so moved by Amanda Gorman’s poem at President Biden’s 2020 inauguration that we developed a service of HOPE.*

. In addition to focused programs, First Church routinely supports our community.

- *Food Pantries: food, clothing, bedding and small furnishings have been donated to families in need or ones relocating to our area.*
- *Struggling Families: Collections of items are held and distributed to help others struggling within our community.*
- *To Community Outreach Services: First Church helps area families in need through COS.*
- *Special Needs: The First Church Deacons' Fund is used to supplement smaller requests.*

WHO ARE WE NOW?

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

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation's life of faith.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Love God, Grow Together, Reach the World.

As a community of Christ-followers, we endeavor to be a healthy, vital congregation, continually growing in three essential dynamics of spiritual life and relationship. These aspects of church life must be kept in balance and flowing in a unifying stream.

- *A vital relationship with God – growing in our worship of God and in our faith in Jesus Christ. Without God, we're just another human organization.*
- *A close relationship with each other – growing into a deeper fellowship of faith and in a closer bond of love, in mutual belonging and partnership in the body of Christ's church. Without this bond, we're fragmented into individual pieces.*
- *A fruitful relationship with the world – growing in our outreach to the people and the needs of our immediate community and in mission to all peoples around the world. Without this incarnational presence in the world around us, we're irrelevant.*

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- *We are a congregation that cares about one another.*
- *Our greatest strength is that we show up for one another, in good times and in bad.*

- *We understand that our connections and service to one another, the church and the community around us, is what keeps us tethered to our FAITH.*
- *Our sense of mission and devotion to God is strong because we stay together spiritually.*
- *We need to dream big, for only our doubts will limit us.*

We need a minister to help us keep dreaming!

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers. To look at our weekly bulletin is to feel perfectly what our worship service is like. It is warm, inviting, easy to follow, rich of content, filled with music, scripture reflection, meaningful message, calm of spirit and prayer, and leaves one feeling full of an hour well spent in the fellowship of others. It is followed by coffee hour and friendship.

We typically follow the liturgical calendar, and worship is based upon the lectionary readings. Sermons are interpretive and relate the Bible readings to present day life and how we are being called to love and serve God. We strive to follow the examples set by Jesus and appreciate messages from the pulpit that are conversational, relatable, personal, reassuring and challenging. Familiar hymns are interspersed with contemporary music. This time of worship allows us to explore timely, relevant topics and to see the world through the eyes of a fellow parishioner. "Ministers, All the Congregation," refers to the time when there was no called minister at our church (1922-1947); these words ring true even today. When the minister is away, lay persons step in. These services are a mix of traditional methods and forward-thinking practices. Volunteers read selected scripture from the pulpit regularly.



Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church. As Tina Civetta is a recent graduate of ChiME, she keeps a favorite Rumi quote in mind throughout her day. "Wherever you are, and whatever you do, be in love". She has a passion for working with people, creating connections within the community. Visiting congregants, distributing clothing, household necessities and food to families in need and offering educational programs, she recognizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of faith, love and spirit within the hearts and souls of people. A ChiME intern offered programs of Bible Study for congregational members. These discussions offered intimacy, empathy and insight for each other and our faith. The topics including: "How We Pray," "Angels Among Us," and "Forgiveness" led to personal discussions

and reflections. Our individual faith journeys are always enhanced when we gather; it is time well spent.

We seek to affirm that God is one.

And we are ONE with God.

All are welcomed.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month? *Like other churches, Covid prompted us to streamline our organizational structure and alter our meeting schedule. Required meeting time now averages less than two hours per month.*
- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished? *Email and a telephone tree works best in an emergency or a call for action.*
- 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, a copy of our Bylaws and latest Annual Report will be provided to the new pastor.*

Our weekly Words of Welcome sum up our approach to diversity of every kind:

LEADER: We welcome all in the name of Jesus the Christ.

ALL: We welcome the young and elderly, visitors and members, friends and families, rich and poor, able and disabled. We welcome all to this church in the name of Christ Jesus our Savior.

REFLECTION

Our congregation is predominantly older. Therefore, we must tend to their needs as well as to attract new residents and active adults to our church in order to remain viable. Most of our members participate wholeheartedly in the fellowship and mission work of our church.

CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual expenses: \$78,262 *Budget Attached*

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2015	Ober Hall Roof	\$5,000	\$7,475	Result exceeded expectations

2016	Organ Restoration	\$45,000	\$52,000	Great success
2016	Sanctuary Windows	\$5,000	\$5,000	Goal met
2017	Granite Steps at back	\$3,500	\$3,500	Goal met
2018	Sanctuary Roof and Heating System	\$25,000	\$6,200	Project completed using endowment funds
2019	Sound System, Sign, and Sanctuary Windows	\$15,000	\$8,535	Project completed using endowment funds
2022	Granite Steps at front			Project completed using endowment funds

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2024-25	Doors, ramp, etc.	\$20,000	\$	ngoing

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign. *Our capital campaigns have become a testament to the will of this small but mighty congregation. Though we've had financial success with our various campaign drives, the spiritual energy, volunteerism, and connections with each other have been the real accomplishments. There is such a sense of purpose among our parishioners.*

Does your church have an endowment? *Yes*

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances *As needed. Limited to 4% maximum per year.*

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? *We have set a restriction of 4% per year to keep our fund intact, at or above \$300,000.*

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: *Accurately stated.*

Other Assets

Does your church have a parsonage? *No*

Describe all buildings owned by the church: *Land Value \$ 175,800 Building: \$436,300 Circa 1842 Historic Building – New England Meetinghouse 4000 Square Feet*

Sanctuary Seats 125 people

Ober Hall was added in 1951 with a social hall and kitchen and can seat 60.

In 1990, a Pastor's Study and 2 Sunday School rooms were added.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (*worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.*) *There is an access ramp to the fellowship hall which allows wheelchair access to the sanctuary and facilities.*

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?*)

Using limited funds from our endowment, we remain debt free and able to meet our financial obligations. Our most significant recent budget change was our shift back to a Half Time minister in order to stop drawing down on our endowment account. The annual budget is drawn up by the Executive Board each year, based on the previous year's expenses and projections for the needs for the coming year. The budget is voted on by the Congregation at our annual budget meeting at the end of June, to take effect on July 1st of each year.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years. *First Congregational Church of Kennebunkport, Maine came into existence in 1730 at the insistence of colonial Massachusetts that every town have a church and meeting house. The congregation has persevered through numerous struggles in the ensuing 294 years.*

- 1. An attempt to create a new parish or move the existing one to convenience those living some distance from the church's Cape Porpoise location gained momentum at the conclusion of the final French and Indian War in 1760, but a satisfactory compromise could not be reached. The meeting house was deliberately burned in 1763 to force the issue. The decision to build it in its present location did little to mollify many residents of the town, however.*
- 2. In the early 19th century, the village 1.5 miles from our church, became the economic center of town and was home to the majority of the church's parishioners as shipping and shipbuilding brought wealth to the community. The 1824 dedication of a second meeting house in the village caused much difficulty and division within the congregation and eventually lead to a schism in the church. On Jan. 10, 1838 South Congregational Church was officially separated from the original church. The original meeting house was disassembled in 1841 and a smaller sanctuary reassembled in its place to accommodate a smaller and practical congregation. That sanctuary stands today.*
- 3. In 1920 it was voted to close the church due to a diminished membership. In the 1940's it was decided to reopen the church by those who, having received their first Christian instruction within its walls, wished their children to experience Christ in that sanctuary as well. These*

young families had little more to work with than faith and desire. They opened the doors, dusted off the pews and hung a sign outside proclaiming "Ministers: All the Congregation."

Those words echo down to us today. We hold bean suppers, plant sales and bible studies. We prepare for service, repair the sanctuary and take the pulpit on occasion. Our predecessors managed to maintain the presence of God in this place through determination, hard work and an abiding faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide them. We are determined to carry on that work with the same spirit of Faith, Prayer and Perseverance present within us.

The covid-19 pandemic caused us to re-examine what we were doing and how we were doing it. Our minister of almost two years quickly shifted to recorded services posted to our website, zoom meetings for social and business purposes, and then shocked us all when she decided to retire in July. Our former committee structure collapsed, and the executive committee took the reins for an indeterminate period of time.

- Weekly phone calls by volunteers to the membership, monthly newsletters, drive-by birthday celebrations, and other methods of keeping our church alive for its members were instituted during this time of enforced separation.*
- We established a monthly rotation of four guest ministers preaching to a camera in an empty sanctuary. The services were placed on our website.*
- We eventually placed chairs in the back yard and preached from the porch.*
- ZOOM social gatherings were offered.*

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past. Like probably all other churches, Covid 19 created tremendous challenge and a necessary pivot.

- We are grateful for the time and talents of our guest ministers. Each showed a love of God and an admiration for the grit and determination of First Church. Our Easter greetings to each other (seen in the last few minutes of this link) https://youtu.be/7MiyOP4e_EE?t=2910s speak volumes of the depth of our connections, the void in our lives created by not gathering to worship, and the underlying faith to know that God walks with us still. We felt an urgency to look out for each other in new and innovative ways.*
- Our remote Tenebrae service presented on ZOOM, allowed people with mobility issues, those who don't drive after dark, and even those who were out of town to participate. It was a powerful and meaningful presentation and is available at: https://youtu.be/3zq-dQW_TuU Special thanks to Katherine Mayfield for the musical score and Rev. Allison Curry for her words of welcome, explanation of Tenebrae, and dramatic closing.*
- Music director Barbara Berry wanted to participate in the service aspect of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday with a program of African American music. First Church has offered many live musical presentations, but virtual? Plans quickly coalesced to share a picture book about Martin Luther King interspersed with music. The result had many of us singing for days!*

The pandemic and our response to it was an opportunity to come together in our separate places to share our fears, faith, hopes, strength and prayers with one another. We believe God blessed us with a renewed faith in Him and with each other.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict. *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?)* We had an unfortunate conflict arise between a previous minister and a previous music director. It was hurtful and created division within our congregation because of people taking sides. We should have reached out to the York Association or the Maine Conference UCC much sooner. Impartial mediation was necessary, but the problem became worse when a more timely attempt at resolution may have been less painful for the entire congregation. (It was never completely resolved because the assistance from the York Association essentially ended when Covid hit.)

The Bylaws specify the role of the Moderator, whose responsibility it is to make every effort to ensure that conflicts within the congregation are resolved.

The 3-person Pastoral Relations Committee was in place prior to Covid and will be reinstated when a settled pastor is hired to facilitate a positive, creative relationship between the Pastor, staff, and members of the Church family, addressing any issues that may arise that would impact the effectiveness of their ministry. This is the primary vehicle for Church Members to air any concerns about the Pastor in a constructive and confidential manner. The key is honest communication and compromise, as well as mutual respect.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Alfred Gagnon	3	Yes
Rev. Charlotte Bell	1.75	Yes
Rev. Paula Norbert	1.5	Yes
Rev. Derek White	5	Yes
Rev. Bonnie Steinroder	5	Yes
Rev. David Wigley	5	Yes
Rev. Pat Adams	5	Yes
Rev. Bob Howes	32	Yes

Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership: *Each person has helped us to grow in faith and knowledge, and to become stronger and more unified. Training for the Pastoral Relations Committee would be helpful, and we should seek professional assistance when mediation is needed. Our lay leadership and our congregation as a whole has become stronger and embodies the true congregational spirit. We are seeking someone to walk in cooperation with us rather than to direct from the front.*

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination? *No*

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation? *Yes, Rev. Brian Gruhn of the York Association met with us to help mediate a situation between the pastor and the music director noted earlier. Unfortunately, the pandemic hit and all potential progress was lost; there was no real resolve.*

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

WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

COMMUNITY VISION

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

- *We have provided a Music Ministry for our community and beyond.*
- *Tina Civetta's role as Visitation Director reaches the wider community*
- *Community Outreach Services and local food pantry*
- *Our involvement in several other community programs changed because of Covid. This presents a unique opportunity for the new pastor to propose new missions.*

Describe your congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting). *We are members of and participate in the York Association of the UCC. We are a Schedule 2 member of the Maine Conference of UCC and have periodically attended their annual meeting.*

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

churches in ecumenical community worship services. The pastor also attends (monthly) local clergy gatherings. While we have had no pastor, the executive committee developed a special service devoted to "The Hill We Climb", Amanda Gorman's poem of HOPE used at President Biden's inauguration. It has already been presented in one church and offered to others.

<https://youtu.be/iUmz4q16bwQ>

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. As discussed earlier, our Statement of Purpose is: Love God, Grow Together, Reach the World. There is always more of God's work to be done, but we are currently limited by our small number of active members. We look forward to our pastor's enthusiasm fueling our mission work and toward achieving much more in the coming years.

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? We want the pastor to be involved in the wider community as well as in our congregation's needs and our programs. We recognize the challenges of part-time ministry. In the past, we suffered when the pastor did too much because of unclear expectations and poor balance of the pastor's personal priorities compared to those of the congregation. Active lay leaders and volunteers can manage many of the less professional responsibilities.

MISSION InSite

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects? Our demographics mirror the surrounding community. Kennebunkport is very much becoming a retirement and vacation community, filled with second homes and seasonal occupants.

How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not? Our missions are catering to the wider community, the aging population and the lesser among us who need more of a helping hand.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for? Many are drawn to our church for the concerts, bean suppers, and plant/yard sales.

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved? We hear repeatedly from visitors and neighbors how impressed they are with the friendliness of this church.

REFERENCES

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

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

REFERENCE 1

Rev. Alfred Gagnon / Pastor / Setting
(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

REFERENCE 2

Rev. Allison Curry (Flaherty)/ Past Intern and Retired Pastor / Setting
(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

REFERENCE 3

Terrie Shearer / Intern / Setting
(Telephone / Email / Relationship to the Congregation)

CLOSING THOUGHTS

CLOSING PRAYER

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee: In conclusion, we at First Congregational Church cherish our rich history. Officially organized as a church in 1730, we prospered, then declined such that in 1923 we closed because of very low attendance. However, between 1923 and 1947, faithful families continued to hold Sunday School classes and brought in preachers for occasional Sunday worship services. Officially reopening in 1947, all church activities resumed with renewed enthusiasm. As a small, unified church, we now look back on our 294 years of history. We know we are resilient and look forward to the future. The minister who answers our call will help us to grow in number, in faith, and to expand our ministry into the wider community.

“Gracious accompanying God, the One in whom we live and move and have our being, give us a vision of the times of our lives, the new situations in which we live out our faith in Jesus. May we ask anew what it means to be the Church in our time, our place. And as we work to call a new pastor to our congregation, may we welcome according to your Spirit the one you are sending to us to lead us into the new days ahead. Amen.”

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile? *(for example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.)* *The Search and the Executive Committees have contributed to the contents.*
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: *It is our hope that in reading this profile you have gained a sense of our congregation and feel compelled to get to know us better. Here you will find that a warm welcome, loving hearts and joyful celebration are everyday occurrences. We have much to share.*

Signed: *Carol G. Cook*, Moderator

Carol G. Cook / Moderator / September 16, 2024

Reference One

Reference for First Congregational Church of Kennebunkport

The strength of this church community is remarkable. Their determination and resilience in these challenging times has been inspiring to observe. Like many organizations there is a core group of people that do the bulk of the work but at First Church this group is amazing. This community lifts each other up and is extremely supportive. And I have noticed that the congregation, though it may be on the smaller side, is mighty and truly rallies and shows up when needed. Although the demographic of the congregation is primarily older people I consider that a strength. The members have a history with one another and I sense how much they truly care for one another.

I am not a member of this congregation but it has been an honor and a privilege to observe the true spirit of Christianity that shines through in this community. They have faced many challenges and they have persevered and have never given up. It is a real testimony to the executive committee and the congregation. Many all inclusive activities are offered to the community which promotes fellowship. Although my association with this church has been recent the incredible history that is evident and the amount of love they have for one another is, again, a privilege to observe.

Areas of improvement is a bit of a challenge. I would say the lack of Sunday school for adults and children would be an area to focus on BUT there are not a lot of children in the community. And with the price of real estate in Kennebunkport it is not likely to attract young families with children. There were community outreach programs with bean suppers and music programs prior to the pandemic. The bean suppers have continued although modified and hopefully after the pandemic more community outreach can resume.

I have observed so many long term and special relationships within the church community. And even though I was a total newcomer as an intern I was made to feel welcome and did NOT feel like an outsider. Again, this community, as old and established as it is, is VERY open and affirming and welcoming to newcomers. I was impressed with how the congregation responded to the call for help with receptions after funerals. There are so many beautiful back stories. I almost wish there was a scribe of sorts to record some of these stories and history. Participating in the services renewed my belief in the value of coming together on a regular basis to worship and experience the loving fellowship of a like minded Christ centered community.

Rev. Terrie Wyatt Shearer

Wyatt.Terrie@gmail.com

508-397-1500

September 13, 2024

Reference Two:

REFERENCE FOR THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF KENNEBUNKPORT

I have served as the part-time pastor of the First Congregational Church of Kennebunkport for almost three years, from February of 2022 to December of 2024, and it was the highlight of my 36-year career as a parish minister.

I call this church a “small but mighty congregation.” It has a group of loving, hardworking lay people who are committed to assisting the minister and supporting their faith community in any way they can. When I met with the search committee that ultimately voted to present me to the congregation as their candidate, one of the things I was told was that they were looking for a pastor to walk beside them and inspire them to do ministry rather than walk ahead of them and do their ministry for them. And that is precisely what the church members and I did during our 34 months together. We were united in the work of making God’s love known to others and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with them.

The members of the First Congregational Church of Kennebunkport recognize that they will probably never grow to be a 500 member church (although it isn’t beyond God’s power to make that happen, and with God in the equation we should never say never), but what they lack in size they make up for in spades with some of the most dedicated lay people I have ever worked with. The minister who is called here will find him or herself blessed, as I was, to share a mutual ministry with a wonderful group of people who care deeply about their church, their pastor, and their service to God.

Fred Gagnon

Reference Three

Reference for First Congregational Church, Kennebunkport, Maine

I was privileged to serve my seminary internship at First Church in 2012/2013; a wonderful experience. The congregation immediately made me feel like part of the church family and I was treated as such, being asked to chair a committee to call a new minister of music and tasked with the Christmas pageant both of which were great experiences.

This is a very close community of folks joined in faith and they definitely look out for one another as well as others less fortunate in their community. If someone is missing for a Sunday or certainly for two Sundays, they receive a caring call.

Their lay leadership is among the strongest, if not absolutely the strongest I have seen in a church. Like many smaller and older churches today they are not financially strong and in 2014 made the decision to call a half-time pastor which meant they needed to be more involved which they have done. There is no paid secretary or sexton and in the absence of a settled pastor they make sure the phone messages are collected, that the interim pastor or a member of the Council are alerted if anyone needs pastoral care, the bulletins are printed and any other items are handled.

The Covid-19 pandemic stretched them thin, but I was so proud to be a part of the church they have become. They organized services, including a Celebration of Life for a couple who were long time, hardworking, members, outdoors in the courtyard in the summer of 2020, and moved entirely to Facebook live as the weather grew colder. As restrictions eased, they began hybrid services using precautions such as Plexiglas, masks and social distancing along with Facebook live and posting services on the web site.

The pandemic made everything more difficult, but they were able to have the annual plant sale and yard sale both years and even converted their baked bean and chop suey suppers to curbside pick-up. They are definitely a can-do congregation grounded in faith.

Fast forward seven years and First Church asked me to come back and help out when their pastor retired in June 2020 which I agreed to do two Sundays a month and also provide pastoral care. I truly wished I were younger and felt I could apply for the settled pastor position. I feel certain that the person called to be the settled pastor will be very blessed as she/he ministers to this congregation.

As far as areas for improvement in the church's ministry are concerned, I believe they could benefit greatly by having a called pastor who is adept at involving the community in church activities and getting the church involved in community activities. They could definitely benefit from adding some younger, even middle-aged folks to the mix. I would like to suggest that joining

the UCC and becoming more involved in the York Association and the UCC would be beneficial, but I am acutely aware of the limitations of many of the folks due to age.

My seminary internship was most definitely a significant experience of this church's ministry and my ministry as well. Even as I served them in 2020 and 2021, they ministered to me. They strengthened my faith with their love.

Peace and blessings,

Rev. Allison Curry – allisoncurry43@gmail.com – 207-730-3287

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment: All points Verified

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:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

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