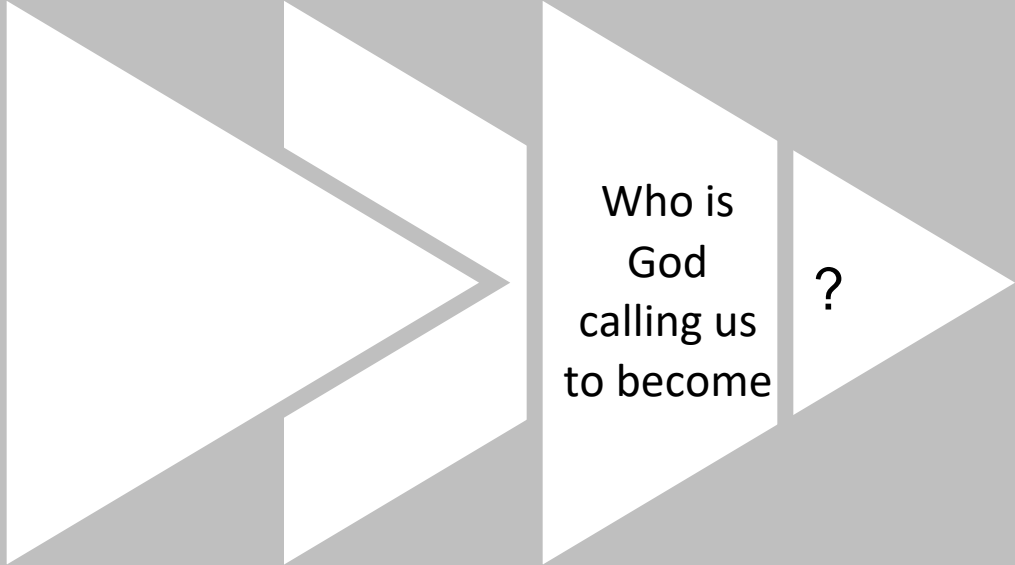


INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



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

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

The Associated Church
Owatonna, MN

Senior Minister

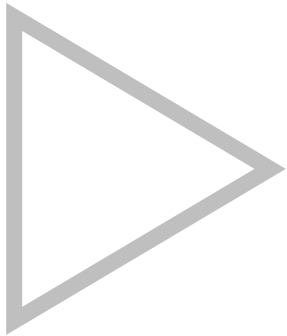
Minnesota Conference, United Church of Christ

Validation Date: 10/1/24

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE CONTENTS

- Position Posting
- Who Is God Calling Us To Become?
- Who Are We Now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?
- References
- Consent and Validation

*“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: The Associated Church

Street address: 800 Havana Road, Owatonna, MN 55060

Supplemental web links:

- www.associatedchurch.org
- www.facebook.com/associatedchurch
- www.instagram.com/associated.church
- <https://worship.associatedchurch.org/>

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

Federated relationship with the Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. Please note a version of this profile, in narrative form, was also submitted to the Presbytery. You can see that form here:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xRx3FENFJzqBeoM_jLhzZD8JXNXqYGju?usp=sharing

Conference: Minnesota Conference

Association: None - The conference acts as an association.

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

Cindy Mueller, Minister for Congregations in Transition, Minnesota Conference, UCC
cindym@uccmn.org, (763) 439-3952 (cell)

Summary Ministry Description:

The Associated Church in Owatonna, MN is seeking a full-time, settled minister to partner with us as we envision new and renewed ways of being church. We are a small, federated congregation of the UCC and PC(USA) located in a thriving town of 27,000 people and less than an hour away from the Twin Cities and other major population and cultural centers. Our church has been together more than 100 years, but we have new energy thanks to new commitments in the last few years - to be Open and Affirming/More Light and part of the Matthew 25 movement. We are still growing into this, and we are working to make sure we are organizationally equipped for a transition into a more mission-minded way of being. We hope that our new pastor will walk with us, meeting us where each individual is, and provide encouragement, pastoral care, and co-equal leadership. We hope that they will help us to better understand how our sacred traditions and stories speak to us today, and help us to effectively communicate who we are, what we believe, and how it informs the ministry and witness we have to offer. Through their partnership, we hope that we can see God’s radical love change the way we relate to one another and with our community. We pray that together we can be a visible presence and a voice to share our belief that ALL persons are welcome in the work and worship of our God.

Photographs:

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



What we value about living in our area:

We are blessed to call the community of Owatonna home. This community continues to grow and provides us with great joy, an abundance of reasons for gratitude, and new and emerging opportunities to live out God's call to mission and ministry.

Owatonna is a city of over 26,000 people located at the crossroads of Interstate-35 and U.S. Highway 14 in southern Minnesota. There is a charming, small-town feel, and a great sense of community. While Associated is largely mono-cultural, our community is more diverse.

We enjoy a strong, resilient economy and employment base. There are several large employers in the community, and many small businesses. We have private and public investment in the community as evidenced by a new high school, a community water park, and downtown renovation. There is a movie theater, a bowling alley, parks and trails, a museum/historical village, and numerous restaurants in town for recreation and leisure. The community has historically, and continues, to value the arts. We have a wonderful Public Library, an Art Center, and a community theater. Our community is committed to developing schools, athletic programs, community education, and parks and recreation that are accessible to all. We are also less than an hour away from major population centers such as the Twin Cities, Rochester, and Mankato - each with their own abundance of opportunity.

We have accessible, quality healthcare provided by the Mayo Clinic and Allina Health, and we will soon have Olmsted Medical Center, which plans to open downtown in summer, 2025. There are many churches, quite a few of which have celebrated 100 years or more in Owatonna, and there are well-established non-profits which support a variety of needs. This robust multi-church involvement and charitable commitment are woven into the fabric of the community.

Current size of membership: 130 Members

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

Position Title: Lead Minister

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

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

Compensation Level (*choose one, delete the other options listed*): Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

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

Core Competencies:

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

The Core Competencies of a settled pastor at Associated Church would be one who is caring, sensitive and sociable, and interacts well with persons of all ages within the church and in the community. Being organized, tech savvy, and a great communicator would be wonderful assets as well. As time allows, the following tasks may be included in the pastor's scope of work:

- Pastoral care in collaboration with Pastoral Care Associate and lay leadership (Friendship Ministry)
- community engagement and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God's love
- weddings and funerals for participants in the worshiping community
- availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations
- partners with the Council, Ministry Teams, and Congregation in fostering strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry
- attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership
- participate in wider church activities such as Conference and Presbytery meetings
- responsibility for supervision of staff
- ongoing study and prayer
- encourage and assist church members in deepening their spiritual practices and discovering/applying their spiritual gifts

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

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

We will follow conference guidelines in providing for a cash salary, housing allowance, and the following benefits:

- Housing allowance in accordance with Conference guidelines
- Social Security offset
- Retirement Annuity contributions
- Life & Disability Insurance
- Health & Dental Insurance including spousal and dependent coverage
- Worker's Compensation Insurance
- Four full weeks of vacation per year, including Sundays
- Paid Holiday Leave and Compensatory Time for Christmas, Easter, and any holidays on which the minister is required to work (e.g. presiding at a funeral on a federal holiday)
- Malpractice Insurance
- Criminal Background Check reimbursement
- Mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate and reimbursement for additional travel expenses (e.g., parking fees) while on church or Conference/Presbytery business.
- Continuing Education expense reimbursement of up to \$500 per year plus two full weeks, including Sundays, of Continuing Education leave time.
- Reimbursement of professional expenses, including membership dues in professional organizations, professional subscriptions, registration fees for Conference/Presbytery/ecumenical meetings, and ministry specific attire and supplies.
- Personal Time Off (e.g., sick leave and personal leave)
- Short Term Disability Leave
- Parental Leave
- Compassionate Leave, including at minimum five days per year for bereavement, weddings, graduations, or personal emergencies
- Civic Service Leave
- Sabbatical Leave available after five years of service

Benefits (*choose one*): Salary plus Benefits (see above)

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

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

The Associated Church will provide a housing allowance. The expectation of the church is that the pastor will live in Owatonna or within a 45 minute commute.

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

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

Per Minnesota Conference (UCC):

- Authorized Ministers and lay leadership are encouraged to participate in the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference (UCC) at The College of St. Benedict north of St. Cloud on the second weekend of June.
- Ministers in the Minnesota Conference are invited to participate in the annual Fall Retreat at a central location.
- Outdoor ministry opportunities are offered for youth and adults throughout the state. Some of these are for refreshment, fellowship and enrichment.
- Faith Formation (*FourThursday*) monthly events throughout the program year are offered in a hybrid format (in person at United Theological Seminary or via Zoom) for up-to-date information and resourcing in the ministry of faith formation – open to laity and clergy. With a free lunch!
- Excellent resources to Clergy in Minnesota are the seminaries in the Twin Cities – United Theological Seminary, St. Paul (a closely related UCC seminary), Luther Seminary (ELCA).
- Courses, webinars are provided by the conference and national setting of the UCC.
- Covenant Days are held throughout the conference to gather regional clergy for a time of fellowship, worship and learning w/the MN Conference staff.
- A lay & ordained program for continuing education – *The Damascus Project* – offers courses throughout the year.

- A local Ministerial Association in Owatonna for community clergy across denominations
- Support of conference staff and committee on ministry

Per Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area (PTCA):

- PTCA Meetings - Stated Meetings of the Presbytery consists of the teaching elder members of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area and ruling elders who are commissioners. The purpose of the Stated Meetings is to oversee the mission and governance of the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area. The PTCA gathers in stated meetings at least twice and normally holds up to five meetings per year, and whenever called into special session. These meetings at various churches are currently held in person or by Zoom.
- The Presbytery office is located at 2115 Cliff Drive, Eagan, MN 55122. The website includes updates and Emerge newsletters, Email is office@ptcaweb.org. Current Stated Clerk is John Curtiss.
- The Presbytery offers ministerial retreats as announced for participation at Clearwater Forest Campground or some other location.
- The PTCA is a part of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, one of 14 Synods in the United States. Its website can be found under its name. Its offices are located at 2115 Cliff Drive, Eagan, MN 55122. The website offers programs which partner with individual Presbyteries across Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, North and South Dakota and Iowa.

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

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

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

We anticipate our settled pastor will collaborate with our congregation and Ministry Teams in developing specific, measurable goals in accordance with our Vision and Mission as given by God. Presently, we believe that we are called to be a “Warm & Welcoming Place to Meet God” and to “Respond to the God we meet in Jesus with faithful discipleship expressed through deeper worship, richer nurture, and greater service.” This sense of call is further outlined in our

Covenant of Welcome, our commitment to be Open and Affirming, and through our burgeoning community partnerships.

We are learning that the definition of our goals and responsibility for their execution lies, under God's sight, within our teams, within our congregation as a whole, and within both denominations' networks. We envision that our settled pastor will apply their gifts and unique skills to all areas of our shared ministry, helping us to grow into this reality. We also hope our pastor has a strong sense of working with the Holy Spirit in discerning spiritual gifts and helping members and friends of Associated Church to faithfully use their gifts in leadership, mission, and ministry.

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

There are many in need of food, clothing, or friendly contact with another person in Owatonna. We are currently involved, as a congregation, in supporting a number of local charitable organizations, and we have begun to engage with other non-profit groups on community social issues. Our new pastor will be able to encourage our congregation to become more engaged in addressing current issues within our community. The congregation of The Associated Church is small, but it is also mighty. We feel called to respond when a need arises. Outside of our walls, our new pastor will help us in meeting these needs. We envision that they will extend a hand in service and friendship to fellow clergy and to local civic and non-profit organizations in the community. As time allows, they might choose to serve on local task groups, boards, or community-wide committees. These interactions within our congregation and in the wider community will help to lay the groundwork for the love of God to spread to all who need reassurance of God's unwavering love for each of us. We hope that together we can be a visible presence and a voice to share our belief that ALL persons are welcome in the work and worship of our God.

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

Associated is largely mono-cultural, but our community, Owatonna, is more diverse. There is a moderately sized and growing Muslim population, primarily of Somali descent. There is also a sizable Hispanic population. We hope that our next minister will be able to help the church foster realistic and appropriate relationships with these members of our broader community. Another, perhaps more significant capacity for our next minister is the ability to communicate clearly and respectfully across political boundaries. Many of Associated's members, but not all,

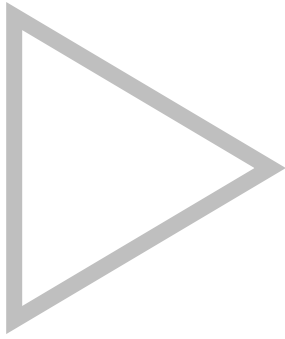
tend to align with more liberal or progressive ideas and actions. Owatonna as a whole, however, leans much more conservatively with respect to social and cultural issues.

As a church, we have become members of the Open & Affirming Coalition, More Light Presbyterians, and PC(USA)'s Matthew 25 movement in recent years. We have encountered some friction and hostility from the wider community. There is also unease from some within the congregation about taking a more activist role as we seek to live out God's mission for us. Our next minister needs to be able to both cast a prophetic, justice-minded vision and ground it firmly in scripture and in our faith universal. They will need to empower and encourage interested members and church organizations to be active and visible advocates and allies, but also to respect and care for the needs of those who cannot or who do not feel called to that work. Our mission statement claims that we desire to have "faithful discipleship, expressed through deeper worship, richer nurture, and greater service." We hope that our next minister can help us live into this mission in a balanced, faithful way.

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.

The Associated Church is in a liminal time. We are no longer the large status church of our past, nor are we the children, youth, and family hub that we were until shortly before the pandemic. We have just begun to wrestle with the organizational and human shortcomings of our long history. We have also begun to seek ways to be more visible and more present for and within our community. With this in mind, we feel called to seek, by God's blessing, a pastor who has strengths in Building Transformational Leadership Skills, Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets, Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions, and Working Together for Justice and Mercy.

We believe that our minister needs to be able to help empower and encourage the church for its ministry, and to help us realize what and where God is calling us to be. We also hope that they will have strong organizational and communication skills, with a mind for corporate structure and a heart for the people who fill it. Our minister needs to be able to be a leader, a partner, a celebrant, a teacher, and a fellow traveler. We hope they will help us to better understand our sacred traditions and stories, both from the pulpit and in our work. We hope they will help us to effectively communicate who we are, what we believe, and how it informs the work and witness we provide. Through their partnership, we hope that we can see God's radical love change the way we relate to one another and with our community.



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?

God is calling us to become a congregation that welcomes ALL - those who are new to their faith journey, those who have left, whether by choice or circumstance or through hurt caused by the Church and those claiming to represent Christ, and also those who have long sought continued growth and faith through their love of God. We also feel called to be a present witness in the community, sharing God’s radical love and welcome when few churches are willing to be open, affirming, and justice-minded. We do not know what this future looks like, but we want to be God’s hands and feet and voice. We want to say “Here I am, Lord. I will go, Lord.”

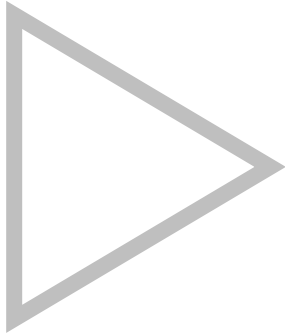
Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

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

In this past year, we have sought to live into our Open and Affirming/More Light commitment by continuing to develop specific activities and involvement with those of the LGBTQ+ community. We have partnered with a local advocacy group, Rainbowatonna, to host social experiences for youth and families. We have supported and participated in Pride events within our community, and several members work closely with Rainbowatonna in planning these and networking with local police, community education, and park and recreation to ensure a safe physical environment for all events. We feel called to continue and expand on the work of welcoming and affirming all of God’s children.

Our church has not developed a multi-year strategic plan, but we would like to. We have begun moving in that direction. We are in early discussion about what that would look like and how we might approach developing an annual strategic plan. In the recent past we have defined our calendar and activities based on our budget development and through the work of siloed ministry teams. We hope to reset by asking our ministry teams to begin a process of stating goals and then defining our activities and budget accordingly.

3. WHO ARE WE NOW?



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

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

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

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

Associated Church’s most recent statement of commitment is demonstrated in our becoming a Matthew 25 congregation and the development of a Covenant of Welcome, culminating in joining the Open and Affirming coalition and More Light Presbyterians. We do not have a single, codified set of beliefs. Rather, we value diversity in theology while sharing a love of God and neighbor. There is a range of belief within the congregation from across many mainline denominations and Catholicism, as well as through the creedal traditions of the PC(USA) and congregational stream of the UCC. We believe that the Holy Spirit works through this diversity to strengthen God’s work in and through us. We hope that the statements below shed further light on our life of faith. You can also explore our website, www.associatedchurch.org, to learn more about us and even watch past worship services.

Our Covenant of Welcome

As our still-speaking God has shown abundant love for us, we believe that we, in turn, must strive to be a witness to the world by showing love and compassion to all.

Associated Church aspires to be a vibrant community of faith united in an extraordinary God. We strive for all who gather here to learn, grow, and serve together in hope, love, and joy. Believing that each of us is created in God's image, we celebrate people of all generations, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations, economic circumstances, physical, cognitive or emotional abilities, education, or spiritual and religious traditions.

Through the love of Christ, we openly invite all people to grow and participate in every aspect of the life of our congregation including sacraments, celebrations, and leadership at all levels including ordination. As part of our ministries and mission, we seek to grow together in a safe and nurturing community of faith.

We believe that love is in three parts: loving God; loving your neighbor; and loving yourself. We seek to create a community that embraces those in need of healing, reflection, and reconciliation. We strive to demonstrate in all ways that no matter who you are, or where you are on your faith journey, you are welcome here.

Bedrock Beliefs

Shared theology most expressed among our members.

- Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, and head of the church.
- God is our sovereign creator and ruler who calls us as partners in the stewardship of all creation.
- The Holy Spirit is God's presence within and among us to strengthen and comfort.
- Scripture is the unique and authoritative witness to God for guidance and instruction.
- The church is the community of forgiven and redeemed believers, gathered, led and empowered through the Spirit to be the living body of Christ.
- Worship, prayer, study and service are the disciplines of the church to fulfill its mission.

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

Associated Church members have a strong sense of belonging and willingly help each other out in times of trouble. Members and groups get support and encouragement when trying something new. Everyone is encouraged to discover their gifts for ministry and service. All willing

members have an equal opportunity to hold key leadership positions. Through past experiences, our church is now more open about including members and church leaders when important information needs to be shared and decisions made.

Another great strength of our church is our desire to be community driven. We have a long history of service, both in the giving of time/talent and financially. Many community organizations first started as ideas held by Associated Church members and supported by the work of the church. Over time, mission, service, and justice have remained at the core of our calling. We continually look for new ways to answer this call.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

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

We meet in Worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. With the exception of annual outdoor services, worship takes place in the church sanctuary. Our sanctuary can seat 280 people, though our average worship attendance is around 40. Our services can generally be described as traditional, are mostly built around the revised common lectionary, and involve both ordained and lay leadership. One big component of our services is music. Congregational singing is essential to our worship. We sing 3-4 hymns each week, accompanied by piano and organ. We also have a choir that sings three times each month, with the exception of the summer months. We do try to include more contemporary and varied styles of music when possible, though we have few instrumentalists capable of playing the style. Another important element of our worship is a time of prayers and concerns where attendees can share aloud with the congregation.

We follow a reformed order of worship. The focus of the service is on the scripture and sermon, as well as on sacraments such as communion, for which we share an open table. In response to a recent congregational survey, members described a good sermon as one that is challenging and thought provoking, Biblically based and illustrated, spiritually moving and inspirational, and sets forth various sides of an issue without advocating one position as the only Christian position. While that is central to the service, every element, from the prayers to the sermon to the music, is designed to thread together in a cohesive tapestry of faith. A recent baptism, our first in many years, was a very joyful sacrament of God's grace and forgiveness and a good (albeit slightly longer than usual) example of this. Many family members and friends were in attendance at that day's service, and the love was palpable.

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

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

Associated has education at the core of its ministry. One element of our mission statement is to provide “richer nurture.” Historically, even as recently as the years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic, programs for children (Birth - 5th grade) and youth (6th - 12th grade) were the primary means of expressing this nurture. Despite a strong nostalgia and desire to see these programs return, this is not currently the case. This was not our only expression of faith formation, however. There has been, and continues to be, a committed core of people within the church who desire lifelong educational opportunities. We have regular Sunday morning programming called Conversations in Faith, for which as many as one-third of those attending worship have stayed to discuss the intersections of faith, society, and daily life. We have also begun to host Community Conversations, programs which bring in local leaders and speakers for an evening of discussion about matters important to the whole community (e.g., book banning, racism, and the opioid epidemic). These have been well attended by those from outside of our faith community. Members continue to learn and grow in their faith through these programs, as well as through sermons, service work, justice, and fellowship. Our hope is that we can continue to faithfully provide educational opportunities for all of our members - children, youth, and adults - and to expand them where and when God leads.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

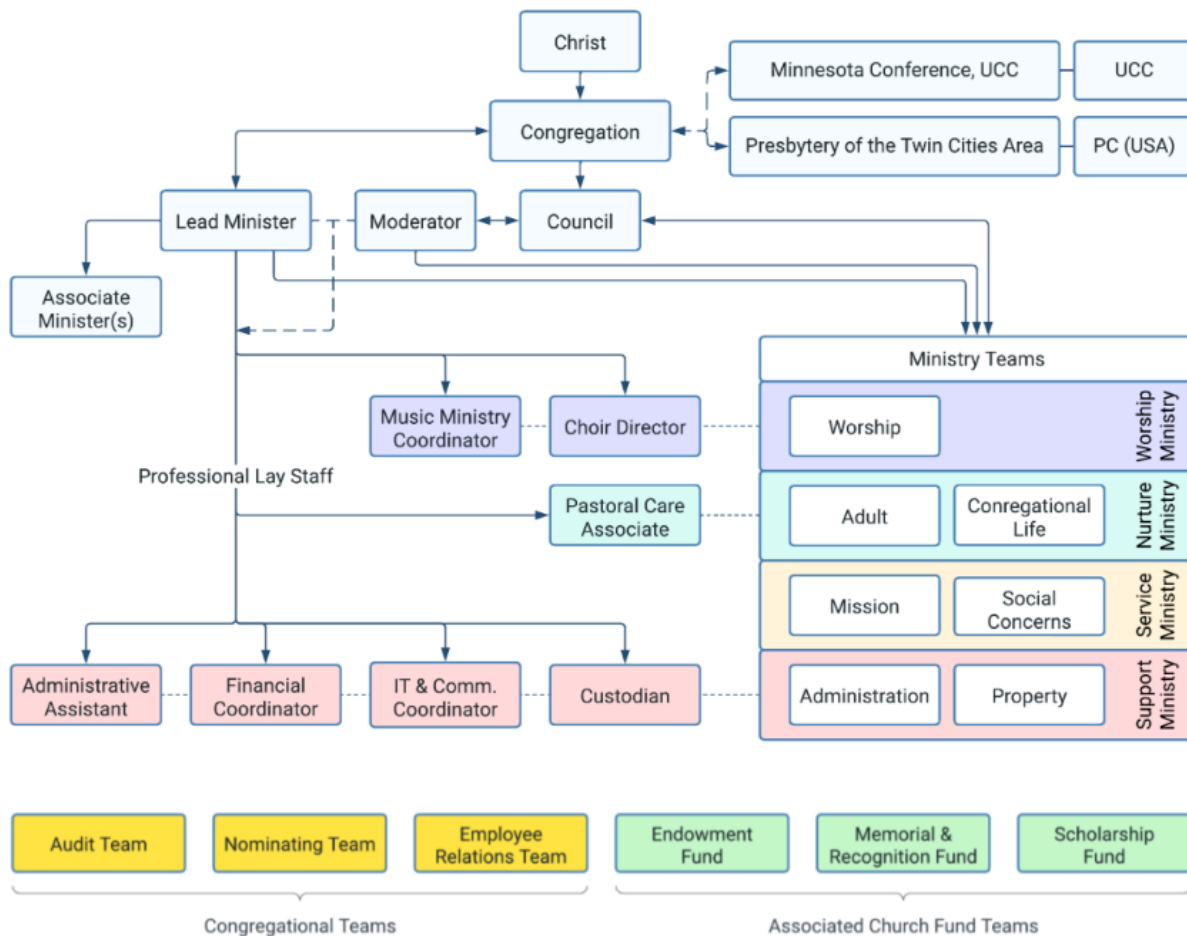
For example, how are decisions communicated in your church? How are teams or committees organized? Where does your church struggle for vision?

- **When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings 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?**
- **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/No]**

Associated Church is a unique blending of polity from both the congregational and Presbyterian traditions. We believe that it is important to involve as many people as possible, each with their own spiritual gifts and interests, to lead the congregation in its ministry. The congregation, through its bylaws, has delegated most decision making to a Church Council (i.e., Session), and certain Congregational and Fund Teams. The Council in turn, with the congregation’s assent, has further delegated authority to various Ministry Teams aligned with our mission and vision. The specific teams have varied in the 20+ years we have used this system. Most are long-

standing, but one is new in the last couple of years (Social Concerns Ministry Team) as a response to our Open & Affirming/More Light covenant. See our organizational chart below for a clearer picture of this system. The form and function of our organizational system, as well as job descriptions and policy, are outlined in further detail in our Bylaws and Administrative Manual.

Each team in the church meets as often as is needed to carry out their portion of our shared mission. For most, this involves a monthly meeting of 1-2 hours. Others meet less frequently. Often, when quick action has been required, decisions are made by the Council. However, the church has struggled to effectively maintain internal communication between Ministry Teams, as well as with staff. In addition, the Council was envisioned to serve as a spiritual leader, visioning group, and goal planning body, but it has largely failed to live up to this call, spending most of its time on other business matters such as personnel, policy, and finance. On the whole, this system has served us well, but it has also failed to meet our needs at times. We have recently spent time trying to reform things to some extent, and hope to continue doing so when we are on solid footing after a new minister has settled in.



Members of the Congregational Teams (defined in the Bylaws) and Associated Church Fund Teams are selected by the current Nominating Team. Persons nominated to serve must then be elected by the Congregation, or in the case of the Employee Relations Team, appointed by the Council.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

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



Church#: 361280

Assoc: 434 Schedule: 0 Associated Church Owatonna MN 55060

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2013	214	75	31	6	0	0	12	132	-138
2014	209	97	29	6	0	0	11	0	-5
2015	209	97	29	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	193	113	33	5	0	12	14	19	-16
2017	165	95	65	4	0	2	9	25	-28
2018	165	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	165	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020	165	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021	165	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	165	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	165	95	65	0	0	0	0	0	0

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2013	\$184,983	\$245,279	\$0	\$5,589	\$5,589	\$1,050	\$6,639	0.00	\$436,901	\$158,059
2014	\$184,455	\$170,265	\$2,857	\$9,669	\$12,526	\$708	\$13,234	1.55	\$367,954	\$156,992
2015	\$184,455	\$0	\$0	\$12,600	\$12,600	\$0	\$12,600	0.00	\$197,055	\$0
2016	\$175,565	\$182,340	\$1,003	\$16,936	\$17,939	\$1,115	\$19,054	0.57	\$376,959	\$122,782
2017	\$179,798	\$175,469	\$0	\$10,372	\$10,372	\$1,648	\$12,020	0.00	\$191,818	\$107,631
2018	\$179,798	\$0	\$4,043	\$1,574	\$5,617	\$0	\$5,617	2.25	\$185,415	\$0
2019	\$179,798	\$0	\$0	\$1,989	\$1,989	\$0	\$1,989	0.00	\$181,787	\$0
2020	\$179,798	\$0	\$3,033	\$3,493	\$6,526	\$0	\$6,526	1.69	\$186,324	\$0
2021	\$179,798	\$0	\$0	\$2,234	\$2,234	\$0	\$2,234	0.00	\$182,032	\$0
2022	\$179,798	\$0	\$2,809	\$0	\$2,809	\$0	\$2,809	1.56	\$182,607	\$0
2023	\$179,798	\$0	\$5,000	\$581	\$5,581	\$0	\$5,581	2.78	\$185,379	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2018-2023	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.64	-0.02
2013-2023	-22.90	26.67	109.68	-100.00	-100.00	-2.80	-0.14	-57.57

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

Note: These figures are inaccurate due to a lack of reporting resulting from changes in administrative and pastoral staffing.

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	130	
Number of active non-members:	4 + 13 baptized children of active members	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	147	

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

Survey info		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	92.43%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	7.58%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	<1%	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
6	9	10	4	4	4	13	33	62	

Percentage of adults in various household types:

Survey info		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:	6%	Yes
Households with minors:	10%	Yes
Single adults age 35-65:	6%	Yes
Joint households with no minors:	55%	Yes
Single adults over 65:	23%	Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

Survey info		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>

High school:	8.33%	Yes
College:	28.33%	Yes
Graduate School:	43.33%	Yes
Specialty Training:	18.33%	Yes
Other (please specify):	1.67%	Yes, less than high school.

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

Survey info		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	18.33%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	73.33%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	8.33%	Yes

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

The majority of members (~62%) are or were employed in professional occupations including teachers, doctors, clergy, social workers, accountants, lawyers, etc. Others are or were employed in insurance/sales/real-estate (~10%), office and clerical work (~12%), trades/construction/manufacturing (~6%), or self-employed (10%). Those still working include teachers, sales workers, manufacturing, real-estate, etc.

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

Our church is mono-cultural. Greater than 99% of our membership is white. Over 86% of members are middle class (earning \$50,000 or more annually). Members’ ethnic heritages range from Anglo-Saxon to Scandinavian to Germanic to Czech/Eastern European. Diversity within our congregation is not related to ethnic heritage or racial make-up. There is some diversity in denominational identity and background. Only 18.97% of members were raised in the United Church of Christ. Another 29% were raised Presbyterian. Of our current membership, 17.24% were raised Catholic, 13.79% were raised Lutheran, and 10.34% were raised Methodist. There is a breadth of theological conviction. We are also members of the Open & Affirming Coalition and More Light Presbyterians, but have few members who openly identify as LGBTQ+.

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

In March of 2019, the Council held a lay leadership retreat. One of the things to come out of this retreat was a desire to learn more about what it would mean for The Associated Church to declare support and acceptance of the LGBTQ+ population.

A work group was soon commissioned to lead the congregation in a period of education and discernment about becoming an Open and Affirming and More Light church, denominational designations for churches that publicly affirm and welcome LGBTQpersons into their life and worship.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in leadership slowed this exploratory process, the work continued, and on November 20, 2022, the congregation approved a resolution to adopt a Covenant of Welcome. The resolution passed with a 95% majority. Soon after, The Associated Church applied for and was officially recognized as Open and Affirming by the United Church of Christ and More Light by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

We have not looked at the Welcoming Diversity Inventory as a congregation, but we would be open to exploring it and holding more conversation in future.

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	18	Conversations in faith: lay leaders with pastoral input
Baptisms (<i>number last year</i>)	1	Pastor
Children’s Groups or Classes	25	Compassion Camp (VBS): lay leaders

Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	50	Worship Ministry Team including Pastor, music director, CRE, and lay leaders
Church-wide Meals	25	Lenten Soup Suppers and Chili Supper, Compassion Camp, Java, Juice and Joy (35 weekly)
Choirs and Music Groups	14	Singers, musicians, director, others
Church-based Bible Study	none since COVID	Pastor and lay leaders
Communion (<i>served how often?</i>)	First Sunday Monthly, 46	Pastor, Council Members, inactive Elders
Community Meals	175	Night to Unite
Confirmation (<i>number confirmed last year</i>)	0	Pastor and Lay Leaders
Drama or Dance Program	0	Worship Ministry Team and Music Staff
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	5	Pastor, Musicians, Lay volunteer, AV Staff/Volunteers
Intergenerational Groups		Ministry Teams
Outdoor Worship	32	Pastor, Worship Ministry Team, Musicians, Staff/Volunteers
Prayer or Meditation Groups	10	Worship Ministry Team
Public Advocacy Work	50	Volunteers
Retreats	N/A	Pastor and Ministry Teams
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	N/A	Pastor and Lay Leaders
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	0	Pastor, Music Staff, AV Staff, Property Ministry Team
Worship (time slot: 9:30 a.m.)	~41	Pastor, Worship Ministry Team, Music Staff, AV Staff

Worship (time slot: _____)	N/A	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	Pastor and Lay Leaders
Youth Groups or Classes	0	Pastor and Lay Leaders
Other	N/A	

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)
Jim Oberg	No	Supply Preaching	N/A	Y
Walter John Boris	No	Not Applicable	N/A	Y
Patricia Postlewaite	No	Congregational	Parish Associate (Pastoral Care) - Commissioned Ruling Elder	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:

There are currently two retired ministers who hold membership or active non-membership in the church. Rev. Jim Oberg is a retired minister of the Evangelical Covenant Church. For over a decade (2008-2019), Rev. Oberg served as our Parish Associate, led programming for older members, and volunteered in planning and leading mission/service ministry. While Rev. Oberg is not a member, he remains active in the life of the church as a volunteer and congregant. He does not currently hold an official role with the church. The second retired minister to hold

membership is Rev. Walter John Boris, who served a number of roles, including as Conference Minister for the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Boris has never held a pastoral role with Associated Church, but has volunteered service on the Administration Ministry Team which primarily deals with church finances. Both Rev. Oberg and Rev. Boris have provided occasional pulpit supply in the absence of a settled/interim pastor.

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
Administrative Assistant		Part Time	Lead Minister	2
Financial Coordinator		Part Time	Lead Minister	1
IT & Communications Coordinator		Part Time	Lead Minister	3
Music Ministry Coordinator		Part Time	Lead Minister	13
Choir Director		Part Time	Lead Minister	33
Custodian		Part Time	Lead Minister	2
Pastoral Care Associate		Volunteer	Lead Minister	5

Note: The Lead Minister serves as head of staff.

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

Many of our members are involved in multiple aspects of the church’s ministry, from choir to serving on the Church Council or Ministry Teams to missions and events that reach into the community. Whether directly involved in planning or leadership, members pitch in to help with the upcoming events of another team. We are flexible, available, and resourceful. We lean into the opportunities for engaging in faithful mission and ministry within our community, responding to the ever-present call of the Spirit and with gratitude for the resources and stewardship of the congregation and those who walked the Way of Jesus before us.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving(including non-estimated giving and denominational support)	\$247,446
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$200,127.93
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$0
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$0
Grants	\$0
Rentals of Church Building	\$200
Rentals of Church Parsonage	N/A
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women’s Group</i>)	\$0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$0
Other (specify): Undesignated Memorial Gifts	\$150,000
Other (specify):	\$0
TOTAL	\$597,773.93

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year: 2024): \$332,100

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.

Note that while there is a projected deficit in the below budget, a portion of this is expected to be covered by funds drawn from endowment proceeds. Additional funds are available in reserve savings to cover budgetary shortfalls.

		2024 Working Budget		2023 Actuals		Over (Under) 2023 Budget		2024 Working Budget		Change in 2023 Actual to 2024 Working Budget	
		2022 Actual	2023 Working Budget	2023 Actuals	2023 Actuals	2023 Budget	2023 Budget	2024 Working Budget	2024 Working Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Working Budget
Administrative Operating		\$ 136,717.20	\$ (30,300.00)	\$ 179,201.63	\$ 209,501.63	\$ 209,501.63	\$ (26,600.00)	\$ (205,801.63)	\$ (205,801.63)	\$ 3,868.10	\$ (202,317.16)
Nurture & Worship		\$ (425.50)	\$ 7,900.00	\$ (6,568.10)	\$ (14,468.10)	\$ (14,468.10)	\$ (2,700.00)	\$ (2,700.00)	\$ (2,700.00)	\$ 3,868.10	\$ (383.63)
Service & Outreach		\$ 511.48	\$ -	\$ 383.63	\$ 383.63	\$ 383.63	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (383.63)	\$ -
Total		\$ 136,803.18	\$ (22,400.00)	\$ 173,017.16	\$ 195,417.16	\$ 195,417.16	\$ (29,300.00)	\$ (202,317.16)	\$ (202,317.16)	\$ (202,317.16)	\$ (202,317.16)
Administrative Operating Budget											
Income											
Estimated Giving/Pledges		\$ 148,114.28	\$ 130,000.00	\$ 158,702.92	\$ 28,702.92	\$ 28,702.92	\$ 145,000.00	\$ (13,702.92)	\$ (13,702.92)	\$ 14,35	\$ (150,000.00)
Prepaid Pledges		\$ -	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Denom Support/Pledges		\$ 2,310.00	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 1,442.06	\$ (757.94)	\$ (757.94)	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 357.94	\$ 357.94	\$ -	\$ -
Prepaid Denom Support/Pledges		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Non-Estimated Giving		\$ 30,436.91	\$ 39,000.00	\$ 81,515.33	\$ 42,515.33	\$ 42,515.33	\$ 40,000.00	\$ (41,515.33)	\$ (41,515.33)	\$ -	\$ -
Loose Cash Offerings		\$ 1,444.55	\$ 100.00	\$ 785.65	\$ 685.65	\$ 685.65	\$ 800.00	\$ 114.35	\$ 114.35	\$ -	\$ -
Building Use		\$ 1,113.33	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Misc Income		\$ 3,173.86	\$ 100.00	\$ 7,214.20	\$ 7,114.20	\$ 7,114.20	\$ 7,000.00	\$ (114.20)	\$ (114.20)	\$ -	\$ -
Special Gifts		\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ -	\$ (150,000.00)	\$ (150,000.00)	\$ -	\$ -
Grants & PPP Loan		\$ 120,759.53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Offering Total		\$ 307,352.46	\$ 176,600.00	\$ 404,860.16	\$ 228,260.16	\$ 228,260.16	\$ 201,800.00	\$ (203,060.16)	\$ (203,060.16)	\$ (203,060.16)	\$ (203,060.16)
Expenses											
Administrative MT		\$ 14,485.35	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 12,348.07	\$ 4,348.07	\$ 4,348.07	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (2,348.07)	\$ (2,348.07)	\$ 6,066.33	\$ (6,066.33)
Communications		\$ 7,878.76	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 4,933.67	\$ (3,566.33)	\$ (3,566.33)	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 6,066.33	\$ 6,066.33	\$ -	\$ -
Denominational Support(Council)		\$ 154.50	\$ 7,400.00	\$ 11,644.86	\$ 4,244.86	\$ 4,244.86	\$ 7,400.00	\$ (4,244.86)	\$ (4,244.86)	\$ -	\$ -
Personnel		\$ 132,115.38	\$ 218,000.00	\$ 198,625.63	\$ (19,374.37)	\$ (19,374.37)	\$ 232,000.00	\$ 33,374.37	\$ 33,374.37	\$ -	\$ -
Property MT		\$ 80,543.27	\$ 56,000.00	\$ 79,106.30	\$ 23,106.30	\$ 23,106.30	\$ 56,000.00	\$ (23,106.30)	\$ (23,106.30)	\$ -	\$ -
Administrative Operating Total		\$ 235,177.26	\$ 297,900.00	\$ 306,658.53	\$ 8,758.53	\$ 8,758.53	\$ 316,400.00	\$ 9,741.47	\$ 9,741.47	\$ (23,106.30)	\$ (23,106.30)
Subtotal		\$ 72,175.20	\$ (121,300.00)	\$ 98,201.63	\$ 219,501.63	\$ 219,501.63	\$ (114,600.00)	\$ (212,801.63)	\$ (212,801.63)	\$ (212,801.63)	\$ (212,801.63)
Possible Fund Endowment		\$ 64,542.00	\$ 64,000.00	\$ 64,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 64,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Reserved Donations from Estate		\$ -	\$ 27,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ 24,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Admin Operating Balance Funded(Unfunded)		\$ 136,717.20	\$ (30,300.00)	\$ 179,201.63	\$ 209,501.63	\$ 209,501.63	\$ (26,600.00)	\$ (205,801.63)	\$ (205,801.63)	\$ (205,801.63)	\$ (205,801.63)
Nurture & Worship Budget											
From Budget:											
Adult/Youth MT		\$ 1,784.10	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Children/Youth MT		\$ 15.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,700.00	\$ (800.00)	\$ (800.00)	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 800.00	\$ -	\$ -
Congregational Life MT		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Friendship MT		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Worship MT		\$ 1,955.24	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 1,056.53	\$ (943.47)	\$ (943.47)	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 943.47	\$ 943.47	\$ -	\$ -
Directed Donations											
Adult/Youth MT		\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,441.77	\$ (1,058.23)	\$ (1,058.23)	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 358.23	\$ 358.23	\$ -	\$ -
Children/Youth MT		\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ 81.50	\$ (418.50)	\$ (418.50)	\$ 500.00	\$ 418.50	\$ 418.50	\$ -	\$ -

	2022 Actual	2023 Working Budget	2023 Actuals	Over (Under) Budget	2023	2024 Working Budget	Change in 2023 Actual to 2024 Working Budget
Congregational Life MT	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 250.00	\$ (750.00)	\$ (750.00)	\$ 500.00	\$ 250.00
Flowers (Worship)	\$ 415.82	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 856.53	\$ (143.47)	\$ (143.47)	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 143.47
Total Income	\$ 4,170.16	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 5,386.33	\$ (4,113.67)		\$ 8,300.00	\$ 2,913.67
Expenses							
Adult/Membership MT	\$ 533.79	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 405.13	\$ (594.87)	\$ (594.87)	\$ 600.00	\$ 194.87
Children/Youth MT	\$ 4,821.34	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,729.61	\$ (270.39)	\$ (270.39)	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 270.39
Congregational Life MT	\$ 26.37	\$ 700.00	\$ -	\$ (700.00)	\$ (700.00)	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Flowers (Worship)	\$ 436.55	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,107.07	\$ 107.07	\$ 107.07	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (107.07)
Scholarship MT	\$ 7,440.00	\$ 7,400.00	\$ 9,004.10	\$ 1,604.10	\$ 1,604.10	\$ 7,400.00	\$ (1,604.10)
Worship MT	\$ 4,472.61	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 11,708.52	\$ 10,208.52	\$ 10,208.52	\$ 11,500.00	\$ (208.52)
Nurture & Worship Total	\$ 17,730.66	\$ 14,600.00	\$ 24,954.43	\$ 10,354.43		\$ 24,000.00	\$ (954.43)
Subtotal	\$ (13,560.50)	\$ (5,100.00)	\$ (19,568.10)	\$ (14,468.10)		\$ (15,700.00)	\$ 3,868.10
Possible Fund/Endowment	\$ 13,135.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ -		\$ 13,000.00	\$ -
Nurture & Worship Balance Funded/(Unfunded)	\$ (425.50)	\$ 7,900.00	\$ (6,568.10)	\$ (14,468.10)		\$ (2,700.00)	\$ 3,868.10
Service & Outreach Budget							
From Budget:							
Denominational Mission Gifts	\$ 250.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 300.00	\$ -
Local Mission Gifts	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 2,143.58	\$ 943.58	\$ 943.58	\$ 1,200.00	\$ (943.58)
From Other Funds (Endowment)							
Denominational Mission Gifts	\$ 1,522.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500.00	\$ -
Local Mission Gifts	\$ -	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,400.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,400.00	\$ -
Emergency Funds/Mission	\$ -	\$ 900.00	\$ 900.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 900.00	\$ -
Dedicated Donations							
Denominational Mission Gifts	\$ 2,483.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,552.41	\$ 52.41	\$ 52.41	\$ 1,500.00	\$ (52.41)
Local Mission Gifts	\$ 3,080.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,761.51	\$ 2,261.51	\$ 2,261.51	\$ 500.00	\$ (2,261.51)
Other	\$ 1,318.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 425.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 200.00	\$ (225.00)
Total Income	\$ 9,853.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 9,982.50	\$ 3,482.50		\$ 6,500.00	\$ (3,482.50)
Expenses:							
Denominational Mission Gifts	\$ 1,859.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 3,475.00	\$ (525.00)	\$ (525.00)	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 525.00
Local Mission Gifts	\$ 5,136.55	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,800.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ (1,800.00)
Other	\$ 2,345.97	\$ 500.00	\$ 2,323.87	\$ 1,823.87	\$ 1,823.87	\$ 500.00	\$ (1,823.87)
Total Expenses	\$ 9,341.52	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 9,598.87	\$ 3,098.87		\$ 6,500.00	\$ (3,098.87)
Service & Outreach Balance Funded/(Unfunded)	\$ 511.48	\$ -	\$ 383.63	\$ 383.63		\$ -	\$ (383.63)

Includes \$10K for Transition/Pastor Call expenses

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 32%

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

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

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

One Great Hour of Sharing

Pentecost/Strengthen the Church

Peace/Neighbors in Need

Christmas Joy/Christmas Fund

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

The Associated Church is a federated congregation, reporting a portion of its membership to the United Church of Christ and a portion to the Presbyterian Church (USA). Each denomination requests a per capita dollar amount annually, which supports their respective mission and administrative costs. Since both denominations request a different per capita amount, it is the policy of The Associated Church to be equal in its financial support of each. Members are asked to pledge an annual amount, in addition to their general pledged giving, to cover this denominational support. Any unpledged balance is typically covered by an operating reserve fund in the endowment.

The Associated Church will calculate the amount of denominational support it pays by taking the higher of the two per capita dollar amounts requested, one amount from each denomination, and paying that higher amount for each Active Member on a per member basis as reported separately to each denomination. Typically, the PC(USA) requests a higher amount in per capita dues than the Minnesota Conference. Therefore, the amount paid to the UCC will cover first the per capita amount requested by the UCC, and then the balance between that amount and the amount requested by the Presbytery will go toward OCWM.

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$290,794.64

Reason for debt: Mortgage: \$3,977.47/month (\$290,794.64 total)

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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: None

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

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe: None

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

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

Does your church have an endowment? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? Approximately \$5,250,000 as of May 31, 2024.

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

Funds are drawn regularly to pay for certain expenses, including mortgage payments, and as needed to pay for programs or other requested expenses. The largest fund in the endowment is the Capital Fund which offsets virtually all expenses in connection with maintenance and improvement of the church building. A congregational fund team manages the endowment funds and approves requests in alignment with the designated purpose of each fund as determined by the original donors.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? The spending policy currently permits spending 4.55% of the three-year rolling average of funds as determined on December 31 of each year.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: The mortgage loan in connection with the 2012 improvement of the sanctuary remodel and north addition (Children/Youth room) is paid by the endowment fund. Payments amount to \$3,764.00 per month. This draw does not touch the principal of the funds.

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? The policies that have been established are intended to keep the endowment funded in perpetuity.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: Many of the funds were donated with the specification that principal be retained and that only the income would be available for the specified use. Because the investments have both potential appreciation (and depreciation) as well as generating current income, the policies were designed to permit spending less than the annual income to safeguard the principal.

Other Assets

Investments (other than endowment): Reserves (savings): \$43,000.00 with Presbytery in connection with the outstanding building loan.

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

The church owns a single, 26,536 sq. ft. church building. The building was built in 1962 and added on to in 2011. The building includes a single story with an unfinished basement. There is a 280 seat sanctuary, three mid to large size gathering spaces, ten classrooms (currently used for various purposes including storage, a nursery, a choir room, and a preschool), a non-commercial kitchen, an office lobby, office conference room, six offices (four in the main office and two on the north-end of the building), and a variety of closet spaces.

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: None

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

The East and Northwest entrances include automatic, handicap accessible doors. All interior spaces, except for bathrooms in the educational hallway, are accessible once inside, however

they do not have automatic doors. The chancel is accessible, but the pulpit is at a fixed height. The church will work with candidates to ensure reasonable accommodations are met.

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?

Our mission is to respond to the God we meet in Jesus with faithful discipleship expressed through deeper worship, richer nurture and greater service. Our vision is to be a warm and welcoming place to meet God. In reviewing our financial assets and disbursements we find that we remain committed to honoring the intent of our donors with endowment funds. Secondly, we strive to meet day to day operational budget obligations. We have been blessed with multiple large, one-time gifts that have allowed us to meet these obligations. We are committed to funding a full-time pastor and adequate support staff, as well as funding the activities of the various ministry teams, where our mission is defined in our actions. Here again, it is important to identify the goals for fulfilling our mission and vision first, then defining the activity, then the financial obligation we hope to achieve clarity in all aspects.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

The Associated Church was created by a federation of the Congregational and the Presbyterian Churches in Owatonna, each founded individually in 1857. This joining of congregational ministry began with a trial period in 1915, but it soon resulted in a permanent and lasting bond in 1918. Together, these churches found a commonality in theology and mission, despite differences in denominational polity. In the over one century since, the church has continued to hold a strong, dual-denominational identity and has often alternated between the two denominations when calling pastors. In recent years, although our size has grown smaller, our faith has not diminished. Moreover, our sense of mission and vision continue to grow.

From the 1950s until the 1990s, Associated Church was a large, status church in Owatonna. We had more than 1,000 active members at any given time. In 1996, after several years of conflict, UCC Pastor John Linde (1985-1996) left his position and the denomination to begin another, more evangelical, non-denominational congregation in Owatonna. Many members of the

Associated Church followed him to this congregation, some even splitting their time between congregations. That new church was around until this former pastor retired. Since that time, the Associated Church has steadily decreased in size. And, while it was almost 30 years ago, the hurt of this period is still present for some in the congregation.

Another significant event in our history was in 2015 when the congregation called, by a majority vote, the Rev. Coqui Conkey, a UCC minister, who was in a same-sex marriage to another, retired UCC pastor. Pastor Coqui served at Associated Church until December of 2021. Unfortunately, the congregation was split on the direction she envisioned for Associated Church. Some thrived, while others felt left behind. In the end, Pastor Coqui resigned when these concerns had festered and were raised through inappropriate channels outside of the accepted leadership structure of the church.

Lastly, Covid-19 impacted Associated Church heavily by making worship possible from home through live streaming. The pandemic forced some upgrades in technical services to facilitate worship from home, but as is true in other churches, quite a number of usual attenders did not return when in-person worship became the norm again. Services still are live streamed and archived on our website. One joyous event during the pandemic occurred as a result of a connection through our pastor's spouse, who was serving in a short term, interim capacity at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Duluth. Despite hundreds of miles between us, our two churches partnered to share worship services with lay leaders, organists, and pastors participating from isolated locations. It was a good, positive experience.

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

In the fall of 2019, a Welcoming Work Group was commissioned to begin exploring what it would mean for The Associated Church to become a member of the Open & Affirming Coalition of the UCC and the More Light Presbyterians. This work continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and the team began to craft a "Covenant of Welcome," declaring support for and affirmation of LGBTQIA+ persons, in early 2022. In November of that year, The members of Associated Church voted to approve this covenant and become a part of the Open & Affirming Coalition of the UCC and More Light congregations of the PC(USA).

When an ecumenical, community worship service was offered the following year, including denominational representatives and openly LGBTQIA+ participants, the church and council members received emails, letters, and visits of condemnation, including from another church within the community and by a government official whose actions made local and national news. In response, we issued a community-wide statement reiterating our commitment and our theological foundations, and we reviewed and strengthened our communications policies. We remain dedicated to the spirit of welcome and affirmation that we believe God has called us into,

and a permanent Social Concerns Ministry Team was created to facilitate living into this commitment.

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.

Resolving conflict has historically not been a strong component of Associated Church's practice. While there has been some recognition within the church that we struggle with handling conflict, efforts to address the issue have been few and produced short term results at best. No lasting changes in our culture of communication have come about. The resignation of our most recent pastor is an example of this struggle. Her departure came as a surprise to many, including most in church leadership roles. Despite our dual-denominational history, we have often failed to reach out to the Presbytery or Conference for support, perhaps because we have also struggled to balance our denominational identities, resulting in inconsistent denominational involvement. We have tried to make better use of these resources during this interim period and in supplying the pulpit when the intentional interim pastor was unavailable because of short-term disability.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. John Linde (Senior Minister)	1985 - 1996	Y
Rev. Scott Keehn (Associate Minister)	1989 - 1997	N (PCUSA)
Rev. Teresa Roos (Associate Minister)	1991 - 1994	N (PCUSA)
Rev. David Droog (Interim)	1998 - 2000	N (PCUSA)
Rev. Dr. Ronald Wilson	2000 - 2013	N (PCUSA)
Rev. Jim Oberg (Parish Associate)	2008 - 2019	N
Rev. Katherine Gibson Christensen (Interim)	2013 - 2015	Y
Rev. Coqui Conkey	2015 - 2021	Y
Rev. Howard (Skip) Smith (Parish Associate)	2019 - 2020	N (PCUSA)
Pat Postlewaite, Commissioned Ruling Elder (Parish Associate)	2019 - Present	N

Rev. Elizabeth Terrill (Intentional Interim)	2022 - Present	Y
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Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

Until quite recently, Associated Church relied heavily on its ministers to set the church’s vision, solve its problems, coordinate staff, and lead programming. Many longtime members continue to look fondly to the past - to particular ministers who served Associated in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s - and desire a return to a model of friendly but assertive servant leadership. However, this desire is colored by times in the years since in which there was dissatisfaction and dysfunction within the church. There was a particularly fractious period in the mid-1990s, when a pastor who had served nearly a decade suddenly came to envision a more evangelical church. He implemented new programs disconnected from the existing congregation and was accused by several individuals of spiritual abuse. Ultimately, he was forced to resign and started his own church in town, pulling many members from Associated. Around the same time, and not unrelated to those events, the church membership fell by almost half and we went from a staff of three, full-time ordained ministers to a solo pastor. The church’s expectations were not adjusted accordingly.

The next minister was called right at the turn of the millennium, and he had a firm hand, reshaping the church’s organizational structure. However, his long tenure was marked by frequent changes in professional lay staff and what some perceived as favoritism in terms of programs and leadership. It has only been in the decade since his retirement that Associated has started to consider who we are without pastoral leadership, though we have had a rocky road of it. The next pastor called was controversial because she was lesbian and because she had a more activist, social justice focus than the church was used to in its pastoral leadership. Many members favored this shift in direction, and others did not. There was disagreement, often unspoken, that festered over time. Late in the COVID-19 pandemic, a small group of church leaders, without Council or the Congregation’s knowledge, approached her with concerns and it was suggested - without plan - in the course of their conversation that she should consider resigning. She did resign a short time later before others in leadership were fully aware of what had happened.

What we have learned through these years is that we need to develop a strong vision for ourselves as a church, one not set by the minister. Likewise, we need to learn what it means to partner with a pastor in our ministry, rather than rely only on their leadership to set our direction and goals. We also need to have systems in place to support our pastor and address concerns before they become too difficult to handle. We have come a long way in this process over the

last three years. We have felt called to a new and renewed ministry within Owatonna, one that meets the needs of current members, but is also more welcoming, more justice oriented, and more community driven. We acknowledge that we do not have everything figured out, but we are committed to working with the person that God calls to partner with us in building a solid foundation for our shared ministry.

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

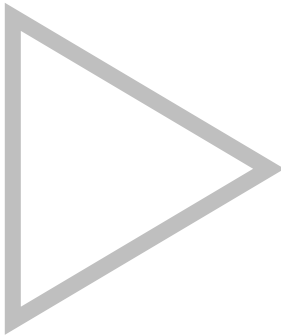
Y/N/Ask us

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us

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

Y/N/Ask us



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

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

As a community of faith, we respond together to God’s call to relationship, to be in covenant with God as well as with one another. Responding to God’s desire for us to seek justice and love mercy, we encourage and equip one another for service and ministry within the Owatonna area and beyond.

Members of Associated Church have served, both together and individually, in service activities within the community and occasionally with wider reach. Several members volunteer in monthly rotation with other churches to deliver Meals on Wheels. We also make fifth Sunday offerings to support various non-profit organizations such as the Hospitality House (a shelter for men), Rachel’s Light (a shelter for women and children), and Community Pathways which

provides food and clothing for many Steele County residents in-need. Our Mission Ministry Team has led the church in contributing gifts for Toys for Tots, Adopt-a-Family, and Angel Tree at Christmas time, as well as in making donations to individuals who are in need. Through committed members, we have organized to host multiple Red Cross Blood Drives each year, and we regularly have members assisting the Hospitality House with building repairs and painting needs. We also participate periodically in the SERRV program and for many years now, have elected to purchase our Sunday morning coffee through Equal Exchange to support living wages for coffee growers.

Our Social Concerns Ministry Team, a relatively recently formed group, has also sought to engage with the community. They have sponsored three community forums to address local and national concerns, one on the topic of book banning, one on the intersections of racism and Christianity, and another on the epidemic of opioid addiction. All were very successful and more are planned. This team also partners to support the work of Rainbowatonna, advocating for our LGBTQ+ neighbors with social activities and the annual Pride events.

For the past several years, one joint event that our Ministry Teams have collaborated on, has been Night to Unite, (aka. National Night Out), a statewide event to build and foster community bonds between citizens, businesses, and public safety organizations. We participate by throwing a big party on the church grounds the first Tuesday every August. Neighbors in the area and wider community are invited to enjoy food, fellowship, games, music, and visits by the Fire & Police Departments. There is no cost and no offering is taken.

Individual members further volunteer with community service groups and non-profit organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Kiwanis reading programs, Lions Club, and Exchange Club. Several members have been recognized with the Rotary Harris award and Exchange Club Book of Golden Deeds recognition. Members were instrumental in forming a local chapter of Habitat for Humanity after completing several mission trips to areas hit by storms and floods including hurricane and tornado-hit areas of the Gulf Coast and southern Minnesota.

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

The Associated Church has not been strongly connected, apart from organizationally, to the wider United Church of Christ or Presbyterian Church (USA). We have internally elected representatives to both denominations, who attend either the UCC's Annual Meeting or regular Presbytery meetings, but little trickles back into the congregation. The Lead Minister has often had the most direct connection with the denominations, sharing news and inviting participation

in Conference/Presbytery activities, but this has often been unbalanced in favor of the denomination in which the minister was ordained. Individual members have also had some connections, serving at various times as delegates to General Synods, sitting on Committees, or attending Conference/Presbytery events. In part, this disconnect is due to our location. Most Conference/Presbytery programs and events are centered in the Twin Cities metro. It has also partly been due to our desire to balance denominational ties without giving too much attention to either denomination. Most members are generally satisfied with how our denominational ties are expressed, but there is a considerable number who would like to be more connected.

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

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A) | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <i>More Light Presbyterians & Matthew 25</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I'M) | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Just Peace | |

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

In the last couple of years, The Associated Church has become an Open and Affirming church, as well as a member of the More Light Presbyterians (a PCUSA counterpart to ONA). This witness was voiced following a lengthy discernment process ending with congregational vote to adopt a Covenant of Welcome. We also had previously adopted the PC (USA)'s Matthew 25 designation. These statements speak to our faith, and to how it lives and moves within the leading of the Holy Spirit. In declaring ourselves Open and Affirming/More Light, we have sought to share a more explicit welcome and love for All in our community, especially our LGBTQ+ siblings, in a way that no other church in Owatonna has. These designations also guide the work of some of our Ministry Teams. We are still learning how to live into this witness, but we are open to one day exploring further ways to welcome and love our neighbors and our world.

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

Associated has a history of participating in local ecumenical activities, though there has been little attention to this in the past several years. Much of our ecumenical participation was in shared worship services at Thanksgiving and Good Friday, in which we provided occasional hosting, preaching, and music. There were often combined choirs as well. However, over time, the groups/individuals planning these events have ceased. For many years, the Lead Minister at Associated Church was a primary leader in these events, through the local ministerial association. Other churches have closed, and with heightened tribalism within the community and culture, churches have found it harder to cooperate. This has proven more so for us since becoming Open & Affirming/More Light. We were able to organize an ecumenical Pride service, but it was a one time event. We do have strong relationships with members and leaders from a couple of other churches (ELCA and Episcopal). With regard to interfaith activities, we have almost no interaction. There was an effort before the pandemic to create dialogue with the local Islamic organization, and members spent time at their Mosque learning, but this was short-lived.

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.

The mission of The Associated Church is to respond to the God we meet in Jesus with faithful discipleship expressed through Deeper Worship, Richer Nurture, and Greater Service. To address these areas we have Ministry Teams, Fund Teams, and Congregational Teams who are called to lead or support these areas of ministry. Approximately 44.5% of members and active non-members are involved in one or two teams, 8% are involved in three, and 12% are involved in four or more teams. Around 25% of the congregation is not formally involved with these teams, but may still volunteer for specific needs. The time spent in gathering and governance has been consistent with previous years (pre-dating COVID). As the size of our congregation has diminished, the workload for our participating members has increased. This has resulted in some participants feeling a heavy burden, yet many remain committed to our efforts. The time spent going out into the community has increased as we have seen new and renewed energy in our commitment to Pride/LGBTQ+ advocacy and for family/neighborhood oriented events.

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 pastor will be a warm and loving person who relates to people as an ordinary human being, is compassionate, and is a good listener. This makes our pastor a person able to connect with most everyone when sharing the Gospel and providing pastoral care - whether that person is connected with Associated Church or within the broader community. While providing support and leadership for the programs and ministries of our local church is paramount, we hope that our pastor will use their professional judgment to remain connected with the wider denominations (both UCC and PCUSA) and be present in the community.

Community concerns and involvement will be a fit for our pastor, especially when staying current regarding social concerns. This may include participating in community activities and programs, serving on local boards or commissions, and collaborating with other local religious groups. Other areas the pastor might support, as time allows, include visiting homebound persons, visiting with persons in the hospital, supporting the global mission of the church, and taking an active role in denominational activities at the regional or national level.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

Over the next ten years, predictions based on recent trends in the neighborhood around Associated Church show a stable population, moderate decline in school aged children, and (somewhat) less average income. The population is expected to remain predominantly white and the households closely split between blue and white collar careers. This stability will provide for continued opportunities for outreach to and inclusion of our neighbors in children, youth, family, and mission programs.

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 congregation is highly educated. Of those who responded to our congregational survey, 28% of respondents hold an Associate or Bachelor's degree and another 43% have completed graduate or postgraduate degrees and training. This is approximately twice as high as for the surrounding area. Over half of the people in our nearby area, and wider community, have not completed college education. Our congregation is also older than the community. Over 80% of our congregation is age 65 or over, while the average age of the surrounding community is around 40 years old.

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

The percentage of individuals/families participating in church have diminished considerably. The Associated Church does not currently have children and youth programming. We continue to offer family events for our neighbors and wider community. We are also working towards offering multigenerational activities, events, and faith formation opportunities to meet the changing needs of our community. We hope to engage in more intentional ministry that continues to do this.

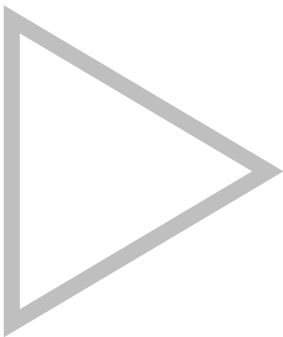
What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

When speaking to community leaders, we have heard that our church is known for our efforts to become an LGBTQ+ affirming church (Open and Affirming/More Light). Our visibility and community ministries have increased in this effort. We are generally considered theologically progressive, though there is a diverse array of theological beliefs within the congregation. We are also recognized by local non-profit groups as generous towards the needs of the community and involved in collaborating with varied community partners rather than creating new, isolated programs.

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

Most recently we have heard a 14 year old tell her mother a worship service was “as sweet as fresh baked cookies.” A member’s sister, visiting the church from out of town, described the congregation as “welcoming and friendly”. Another young woman told her mother our community was like a “warm hug”. Others have expressed that they are drawn to our theology and the feeling of community they have found here. We pray that we can live up to their impressions.

5. REFERENCES



Name up to three people who have agreed to serve as phone and written references. Advise the three references: “The contact information you provide may be shared publicly. Please use

contact information that you feel comfortable giving to candidates so they can reach you with their questions.”

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

See references on the following pages.

REFERENCE 1

Rev. Karl Korbel / Retired Clergy / ELCA
(507) 451-4896 / karl55060@yahoo.com / Friend of the Congregation

REFERENCE 2

Dr. Carol Winter, MD / Retired Physician
(507) 456-9301 / cjean1020@gmail.com / Former Member

REFERENCE 3

Nathan Black / Hospital Chaplain, President of Rainbowatonna (LGBTQ+ advocacy group)
(612) 385-0378 / nathanmichaelblack@gmail.com / Mission Partner

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

Describe some areas of strength in this church’s ministry.

Describe some areas for improvement in this church’s ministry.

Describe a significant experience you have had of this church’s ministry.

Anything else you wish to share.

Reference 1

Rev. Karl Korbel / Retired Clergy / ELCA
(507) 451-4896 / karl55060@yahoo.com / Friend of the Congregation

2 July, 2024

LETTER - Re. Associated Church in Owatonna, in the time of Interim.

Impressions when visiting Associated Church:

On a typical Sunday Morning, with just 2 or 3 exceptions, the congregation is composed of people over 55 years of age. There are up to 40 people present, eight or nine of them robed, in the choir. In addition to the pastor, there is a lay Worship Leader, and that task is covered by one of a number of members. The Service includes a large number of Liturgical actions, generally selected to support the theme of the day.

Time is provided at the beginning of the service for announcements. Members line up and take their turn at a microphone if they have an announcement, and usually introduce themselves by name and with a comment which identifies them with the committee or other entity for which they are sharing information.

At another point in The Service, just before the major prayers of the day, people are invited to share their "Joys and Sorrows." A member brings the microphone to the people who wish to share something.

Although the announcements and Joys and Sorrows take time, there is definitely a sense of community, even intimacy, present.

The Service is usually well integrated, lessons, music, sermon, prayers, supporting a theme. My observation is that the theme is not usually the theme suggested by the Revised Common Lectionary.

And, a thought: Is the sense of community, maybe intimacy, mentioned above, something that a visitor, or seeker, might find to like a walled community which might be hard to enter?

Following Worship. Nearly everyone stays for conversation and treats in the Fellowship room. Here, visitors, who choose to stay, are welcomed and well received.

Adult Faith Formation. Meaningful conversation and sharing takes place on most Sunday mornings, following Worship and Fellowship. A planning team (maybe just one person?) selects excellent, vital materials, printed or video, for presentation and discussion. The participants are truly involved.

Included in the strengths of Associated membership is an openness to all people, and to contemporary issues and concerns. The congregation has provided a series of evening programs dealing with difficult societal issues. (Examples - Book Banning. Teen Age Mental Health Issues) The public is invited, and there is reasonably good response.

Neighborhood Outreach: The congregation reaches out to the neighborhood with informal events for children and/or families. There is usually a very positive response, but no evidence of further involvement.

Dilemma: We have here an older congregation that is very attentive to contemporary concerns and issues, that is Biblically and theologically well based, and seems to be stuck.

Magic Moment - The mysterious arrival of a fine young organist, who quickly became part of the team.

My Connection. I am a retired E.L.C.A. Pastor. I have preached at Associated at least 4 times earlier in their Interim. And I spend a lot of time with one of their very involved members.

Peace. Sincerely



Karl Korbelt

Ph. 507- 451- 4896

515 Lincoln Ave.
Owatonna, Mn 55060

Reference 2

Dr. Carol Winter, MD, Retired Physician
(507) 456-9301 | cjean1020@gmail.com | Former Member

Hello,

As a former member of the Associated Church in Owatonna, Minnesota I'm happy to write a letter of recommendation for the congregation. My husband and I lived in Owatonna for over thirty years. Although we had both been raised in the Methodist Church we felt the warmth of the congregation at Associated as we searched for a church home. We felt very welcome and liked the fact that many members had migrated there from other church traditions.

Here are several strengths of Associated:

- It is both a head and heart church. The members tend to be highly educated and enjoy learning more about a Christianity and other faiths. At the same time, there is recognition and acceptance of the mystery of faith to move us in ways we cannot explain.
- Associated is, to the best of my knowledge, the only 'liberal' church in the area. I believe the congregation has moved past 'tolerance and acceptance' to 'love and welcome' of all people.
- The church building is widely used by multiple groups in the community.
- The congregation is engaged in social and environmental justice.

The most meaningful experience for me at Associated was during a sermon on forgiveness. Although that particular pastor was not a gifted preacher, something he said connected with me and I was able to forgive several people who had made part of my life quite challenging.

The challenges the church faces are similar to those of many mainline Protestant congregations, primarily that the membership is aging and money is tight. I do not know whether a youth program exists there now as I retired and moved four years ago. At the time I left the office manager was working almost full time, but refused pay. That is not sustainable. If the church still has a substantial endowment then I recommend the congregation carefully considers changing the rules on how the funds are used. At one time endowment funds were used to pay the salaries of youth program leaders and that probably should have continued. If needed, endowment funds could also help pay for other staff.

These are unvarnished comments from a former member who would like to see Associated thrive.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Winter
Grand Marais, Minnesota

Reference 3

**Nathan Black, Hospital Chaplain, President of Rainbowatonna (LGBTQ+ advocacy org.)
(612) 385-0378 | nathanmichaelblack@gmail.com | Mission Partner**

My Reflections on Associated Church

I first came across Associated Church in 2021 after having moved to Owatonna to take a Hospice Chaplain position in the area. I was anxious about moving to a small town/rural area due to concerns for racism and homophobia. I was also hopeful, because this is Minnesota, after all. I have had a lot of experience in community organizing around fighting poverty, racism, and homophobia in the past and I began assessing the state of the Owatonna community. I found that Owatonna seemed to be an idyllic, friendly, encapsulation of Americana. Lots of good people, good schools, strong businesses, beautiful parks, clean streets, and active churches.

However, it doesn't take too long for this idyllic pastoral image to fade a bit, especially when considering the experience of those on the margins of society, people who are not white, Christian, cisgender and heterosexual... people who are struggling with poverty or experiencing homelessness, etc.

I learned that Owatonna had never had any public LGBTQ+ events or organizations. Then I learned about the local history of racism, from the huge KKK rally Owatonna hosted in the 1920s to more recent incidents at the high school targeting Somali students. I knew that if I were going to live here, I would want to make Owatonna a better place. I decided to focus on LGBTQ+ organizing. I reached out to all the ELCA churches, the United Methodist church, and to Associated Church. Most of the churches and pastors told me they hadn't done anything for their LGBTQ+ members nor had they started any processes of becoming Open & Affirming/Reconciling in Christ/etc.

Except for Associated. I was eventually connected with a small group of long-time members, leaders, and families who were beginning conversations and processes to help Associated become Open & Affirming. I met with them a few times, provided support to their work, and was inspired by the love and faithfulness that so clearly guided them. They really didn't need much help from me and were successful at guiding the congregation to their "Yes!" vote.

In my assessment Associated made the far too common mistake of hiring an out lesbian pastor before they did the work to become Open & Affirming. I observed the hurt, stress and other impacts of this deficiency on that pastor and the church at the time. So many churches feel they are progressive enough, educated enough, have healed enough, have transformed enough from their racist/homophobic/etc. sins of the past, that they can skip the hard work of unlearning, repenting, learning, healing, and growing so that they can be safe and healthy communities for

all people. That is hard work to do as individuals and much harder as a community, but Associated rose to the challenge and embraced the journey of the Open & Affirming process.

During their process, they welcomed me to preach multiple times. They began supporting the fledgling LGBTQ+ organization I had started, Rainbowatonna, by offering meeting space, financial support, and ultimately several members and leaders at Associated even became Rainbowatonna board members. Today, we are an official 501c3 and have put on big annual pride events, family events, supported the GSAs, etc.

Associated has even hosted the annual Pride Worship Services and were on the receiving end of phone, online, and even in-person harassment. But those difficulties didn't make them afraid, they became even bolder. To this day, I believe they are the only church in town with a big, beautiful pride flag flying high.

I believe Associated represents the best of Owatonna. Wonderful people. People who have embraced the Gospel. People who are not just willing, but who are dedicated to transforming and to becoming more like Christ, even if that means facing mistakes and shortcomings. People are experiencing the joy and sometimes the challenges of being a bold witness to God's inclusive love.

There are many leaders at Associated. People take real ownership of their ministry areas, their tasks, and projects. I am sure there are many "growing edges" in the family system at Associated, as there would be anywhere. But I think there is a very high degree of integrity, self-awareness, love for each other, and a very strong desire to have Associated make a difference in Owatonna. These values will help pull individuals and the church along in the journey of making those rough edges smooth.

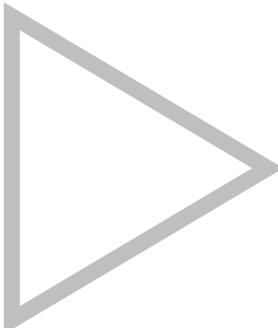
I believe Associated needs a pastor that will continue the work of creating a healthy and safe community, setting and honoring boundaries, building empowered leadership teams, and teaching people how to become disciples who can make disciples. They need a pastor who is filled with a joyful Gospel hope, someone who can encourage them to get out in the community and be all that God has called them to be.

Please let me know how I can support you as you discern a call to Associated Church.

In God's Peace,

Nathan Black

*Candidate for Holy Orders in The Episcopal Church in Minnesota
Chaplain, Mayo Clinic*



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Anniversary Hymn (vocal)

Words by Nancy Lacina and Sue Leithold-Bowcock

Music composed by Benjamin Lacina

Voice

This hymn was written and composed in 2007 by members of Associated Church for the 150th Anniversary of the founding of our two parent churches, those which later merged into the single congregation we know today.

We recently pulled this hymn out to sing together again, and we realized that it speaks deeply to the kind of church and to the kind of people that we feel called to be. We put together a video of our congregation singing and playing along with the song.

We hope it speaks to you as it does for us . . .



Scan the QR code to listen or go to www.associatedchurch.org/benediction

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

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

A Transition Team was formed to write the profile. This group consisted of five church members who are involved in various Ministry Teams and volunteer roles within the church. The Intentional Interim Pastor assisted this group in developing the profile. Additional information, particularly regarding the financial elements of the profile, were written with data requested from our Administration Ministry Team and our Endowment Fund Team. A series of congregational events and a survey (Hartford Pastoral Search Survey) were also used to solicit input from the wider congregation.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: None

Signed:

Ted Bowcock, Mona Edgar, Jerry Ganfield, Noah Moore, Jean O'Malley-Laursen, and Rev. Elizabeth Terrill (interim) - Associated Church Transition Team, September 12, 2024

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: *Cindy Mueller*

Name / Title: Minister for Congregations in Transition

Email: cindym@uccmn.org

Phone: 763/439-3952 (cell)

Date: October 1, 2024

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