

INTRODUCING THE NEW LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



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

Rachel Hackenberg

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Fort Worth, TX

Senior Minister

South Central Conference, North Texas Association

XX/XX/XXXX [Validation Date]

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

1. First Congregational UCC of Fort Worth
4201 Trail Lake Dr
Fort Worth, TX 76109
817-923-2990
www.firstcongregationalfortworth.org

Conference: South Central Conference

Association: North Texas Association

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person: Stacey Silvey (Business Manager)
830-313-5855 Ext. 1
office@sccucc.org

2. Summary Ministry Description:

In a short paragraph, reflect on where your church is going and what it might look like when you get there. What do you need to get there? Who are you seeking to join you on this part of your church's faith journey?

First Congregational Church of Fort Worth is an active and vibrant community, dedicated to developing and living out the teachings of progressive Christian faith throughout Tarrant County. The COVID pandemic was the most significant challenge our church has ever faced. We did so with abundant grace and thoughtful discernment by the lay and ministerial leadership of the church. During COVID, we took bold actions in creating a new online worship experience and renovating our Sanctuary and welcoming spaces. First Congregational is grateful to have survived, and we are benefitting from those actions as we have begun to grow and thrive again as a community.

First Congregational's external goals include being a force of God's liberating love in our work in LGBTQIA+ rights, reproductive rights and care, racial equality, and economic and housing equality. Our congregation's internal community goals are to strengthen the relationships and connections within our church with emphasis on improving pastoral care, fostering new member integration, strengthening educational opportunities, and sustaining the vitality of our small groups.

We have many generous pledges and varied revenue streams, but need to work on our long-term fiscal stability. As one of our lay leaders says, "we are a million dollar operation on a \$350,000 budget." We remain committed to creatively finding new ways to sustainably support our bold proclamation of an inclusive Christianity in Fort Worth and beyond.

We are grateful for the skillful and loving support of our Interim Minister. With their help, as of the writing of this profile, we have:

- Conducted a comprehensive survey of the congregation to help guide the work of the Search Committee and the Cabinet (governing board).
- Held small group discernment meetings focused on capturing the priorities of the church
- Restructured our fiscal, leadership, and reporting year (now July 1 to June 30) to decrease organizational stress and better support goal setting.
- Updated our constitution and by-laws to better reflect our community's inclusive vision and structure
- Received the research and reports of four task forces (staffing, budget, revenue and growth, and safety) to help craft bold and creative solutions being implemented in 2024.

We are looking for a brave, progressive preacher and pastor who is committed to creativity, innovation, and risk-taking in both the worship and work of our congregation. We are eager to share ministry and leadership together to continue our long-term proclamation of progressive Christian faith and God's liberating love.

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

As the nation's 12th largest city, Fort Worth boasts a diverse cultural and social landscape, from award-winning museums to a nationally recognized zoo, legendary rodeo, and a plethora of live theater and music performances. Often nicknamed "Cowtown," the city is a blend of historical and cultural richness. Fort Worth's dedication to celebrating its diversity through events such as the Pride Parade, Juneteenth, Concerts in the Garden, Mayfest, and the Main Street Arts Festival aligns with our church's commitment to inclusivity and social justice.

Proximity to Texas Christian University (TCU) and Brite Divinity School enriches our community with academic and cultural events, contributing to the youthful and lively atmosphere. Local parks, elementary schools, and friendly neighborhoods make our area a warm, welcoming home for families and individuals alike.

5. Current size of membership: 263

6. Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): None

7. Position Title: Senior Minister

8. 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

9. Compensation Level (*choose one, delete the other options listed*):

Full Time

10. 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)

1. 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.)

- **Sensitive to the Needs of the People:** The next minister should possess a deep sensitivity to the congregation's diverse needs, promoting an inclusive and compassionate environment. This includes understanding and addressing the spiritual, emotional, and practical concerns of church members, ensuring everyone feels heard, supported, and valued.
- **Friendly and Welcoming to All:** It is crucial for the next minister to be approachable and hospitable, creating an atmosphere where new and existing members feel warmly welcomed. This involves fostering open communication, being accessible, and encouraging a sense of community and belonging among the congregation.
- **Progressive Voice with Excellent Communication Skills:** The future minister should articulate progressive theological perspectives in a way that resonates with and engages the congregation. This involves clear, inspiring, and thought-provoking preaching and teaching that challenges and encourages the church community to reflect on their faith and actions in the context of contemporary issues.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

1. **Salary Basis (from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/Housing Allowance):** Range of \$75,000 to \$80,000 based on candidate experience. The Salary Basis may be divided between “cash salary” and “housing allowance.”
2. **Benefits (choose one):** Full UCC Benefits, including a pension contribution and health insurance.
3. **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)?**

Living nearby with a housing allowance (included in Salary Basis).

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

The Senior Minister would be expected to keep office hours for meetings and staff support needs at least 2 days per week for a minimum of 3 hours each day, but this is negotiable with the Cabinet (governing board of the church).

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

We intend to nurture a mutually supportive ministry relationship. To that end, the church will offer an annual leave plan, inclusive of Sundays, of 4 weeks vacation. In addition, the church will offer the week following Easter and the week following Christmas as “spiritual respite” that does not count against the annual leave plan. The church will also offer the following Sabbatical leave plan:

- Two months after the completion of three years service, and
- Three months after the completion of eight years service, and
- Three months every 5 years thereafter.

Sabbatical should be taken at times that will minimize the impact on the congregation, usually the summer months, and must be approved by the Cabinet with sufficient notice to make appropriate plans for the time away. Sabbatical should be a period of spiritual renewal and study by the minister and is not to be used for seeking a new position. The minister is required to continue their service to the congregation for three times the amount of time taken as Sabbatical, or still be expected to reimburse the church the prorated portion of their Salary Basis.

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

UCC ministers in Fort Worth have the support of The North Texas Association (NTA) as well as the South Central Conference (SCC) of the United Church of Christ. Currently, the SCC has a conference-wide Zoom meeting for ministers. Monthly, the NTA holds a Zoom meeting for all clergy.

Several members of the church have served on both the NTA & SCC leadership teams. Currently, Reverend Betsy Stirbens (FCC member) serves as the NTA Minister. FCC also has several retired ministers who worship weekly with the community. First Congregational has strong ministerial ties with another local UCC church as well as local DOC churches.

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

Not applicable. The position is full time.

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

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

- **Strengthen Community Outreach and Social Justice Initiatives:** Align the church's efforts with its strong inclination towards social justice and community service. Activities could include community service projects, local outreach events, and support for food banks and financial giving. The next minister would help guide and deepen these commitments, turning passions into tangible outreach efforts that grow the church and impact the community.
- **Deepen Congregational Connections and Pastoral Care:** Work to preserve the church by strengthening relationships within the congregation. This includes improving pastoral care, increasing church-wide events, integrating new members into the community, and maintaining consistent quality in programming and small group activities. The minister would play a pivotal role in building a more cohesive, supportive community, and staff development.
- **Organizational and Structural Realignment:** Sustain the church by reviewing and updating its structure and procedures to better serve the current needs and future direction of the congregation. Develop a five-year plan to eliminate dependency on savings for budget shortfalls and reassess the church's constitution, policies, and procedures. The next minister would facilitate these changes, ensuring they reflect the congregation's current and anticipated needs, enhancing the church's capacity to fulfill its mission and ministry goals effectively.

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

The minister should be familiar with the church's ties to the community and the ways it interacts and cooperates with that community. This involves re-evaluating and potentially revitalizing previous outreach efforts and finding new ways to serve the community effectively.

Additionally, the next minister should work on building and strengthening the church's relationships with local non-profits, community organizations, and other religious groups. These

efforts should align with the congregation's passions and capabilities, such as LGBTQIA+ rights, racial inequality, economic and housing inequality, and reproductive rights. This involves not only preaching and advocacy but also direct action.

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

FCC is primarily a white bodied, English speaking congregation with substantial diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity. The congregation prefers a candidate who has been actively involved in anti-racism and diversity training. The church recognizes the importance of being led by someone who can guide and inspire the congregation in these efforts, reflecting a shared commitment to justice and equality. The church welcomes and encourages candidates from the LGBTQIA+ community and from non-white backgrounds. This underscores the congregation's desire to reflect the diversity of God's creation within its leadership and membership.

4. 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 four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that the next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry are:

- **Building Transformational Leadership Skills:** The new minister will foster leadership within the congregation, guiding members to actively participate in shaping the church's future missions and outreach, especially in areas reflecting the church's commitment to diversity and justice.
- **Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions:** The minister will interpret biblical stories and Christian traditions in ways that are relevant to contemporary issues, inspiring the congregation with progressive theology and dynamic, engaging preaching that connects across generations.
- **Working Together for Justice and Mercy:** By focusing on social justice issues like LGBTQIA+ rights, racial and economic inequalities, and reproductive rights, the minister will lead the congregation in discussions and actions that confront injustice and oppression, fostering a community that practices radical hospitality and inclusive outreach.
- **Participating in Theological Praxis:** The minister will uphold our church's ongoing commitment to and development of progressive theology. They should enrich our understanding of Christian and non-Christian sacred sources by considering historical and cultural contexts. The congregation encourages theological boldness from the pulpit.

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)

1. Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

God is calling First Congregational Church to become a congregation that:

- Acts as a beacon of progressive Christian faith, hope, and love, especially in a community that may lean more towards conservative views. This includes being vocal and active in matters of social justice, inclusivity, and showing God's radical love to all.

- Embodies the gospel of Jesus Christ through both bold and gentle acts of social justice and care, aiming to make a significant impact within Tarrant County and beyond, serving as a strong voice and presence for the marginalized and defenseless.
- Commits to being exemplary stewards of their resources and infrastructure, leveraging them to support local nonprofits and initiatives aligned with their progressive values and to facilitate the growth of their congregation, both in numbers and in spiritual and cultural diversity.
- Pursues continuous evolution in their religious practice and understanding, challenging traditional perceptions of faith and fostering an inclusive environment welcoming to anyone seeking a relationship with God and their community, irrespective of background or belief system.

2. 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?

First Congregational Church is called to meet new challenges and opportunities through several key initiatives:

- **Renovation and Inclusivity:** The church's renovations aim to create a more welcoming and inclusive space for worship and community engagement, transforming physical spaces into hubs for spiritual growth and connection, embodying the church's progressive values.
- **Financial Stewardship:** Emphasizing financial health and sustainability, the church is exploring new revenue streams and optimizing building usage, ensuring the longevity of its mission and ministries.
- **Community Integration:** Post-pandemic, the church seeks to integrate new members fully, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose through diverse programs and activities that reflect its values.
- **Outreach and Social Justice:** Reinvigorating its commitment to outreach and social justice, the church aims to address critical issues and advocate for marginalized communities, leveraging its resources for a broader impact.

First Congregational Church is called to harness its renovations and financial strategies to foster a more welcoming, sustainable, and action-oriented community, deeply committed to its mission and core values of inclusivity, stewardship, and justice.

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

1. 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?

The life of faith at First Congregational Church is an evolving journey, marked by a commitment to inclusivity, social justice, and community service. It is a faith that looks both inward to the spiritual growth and wholeness of the individual and also outward to the broader community and the world. We strive to embody the extravagant love, justice, and radical hospitality taught by Jesus and other inspirational figures.

We embrace a progressive theology that encourages a modern and inclusive interpretation of religious teachings, moving beyond traditional orthodoxy. Our understanding of the Bible and sacred teachings is enriched by acknowledging the historical and cultural contexts, which help in crafting a faith that is relevant to contemporary issues and challenges.

Our approach to faith is transformative: we actively seek to deconstruct doctrines of harm and reconstruct faith practices that emphasize the innate worth of every individual.

2. Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

First Congregational Church exhibits several notable strengths and positive qualities that distinguish its ministry:

- **Cohesiveness and Resilience:** The congregation has demonstrated remarkable cohesiveness and resilience, navigating through the challenges of the pandemic and the transition of a beloved pastor. This resilience underscores a strong communal spirit and a shared commitment to support one another through varying circumstances.
- **Theological Progressiveness:** The church stands out for its very progressive theological stance, welcoming a diverse range of denominational backgrounds and encouraging an open exploration of faith. This progressive approach fosters an inclusive environment where questions are welcomed and diverse beliefs are respected.
- **Diverse Music and Worship:** The congregation benefits from talented musicians and a variety of musical styles in a single integrated worship experience that engages people from all walks of life. A band and bell choir add depth and diversity to the church's worship services.
- **Welcoming and Hospitable Spirit:** The church lives out the UCC's welcoming statement with genuine hospitality, embracing all individuals regardless of their background or where they are on their life's journey. This creates a warm and inclusive atmosphere for members and visitors alike.
- **Adaptability and Online Presence:** During the pandemic, the church has effectively transitioned to a strong online presence, ensuring that worship and community engagement continued beyond physical barriers. This has not only sustained but also grown the congregation during challenging times.
- **Community Service and Small Group Engagement:** The church actively puts its faith into action through various community service initiatives, such as Room at the Inn and 4Saints Food Pantry programs. Additionally, the existence of active small groups fosters a sense of community and personal growth among members.

These qualities collectively highlight First Congregational Church's dedication to fostering a supportive and vital community that is deeply committed to living out its progressive faith through worship, service, and hospitality.

3. 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?

When First Congregational Church gathers for worship, the experience is all-embracing and reflective of the congregation's diverse spiritual backgrounds and progressive theology. Worship is held in a sanctuary with movable seating, balancing traditional and casual elements, where music plays a central role in enhancing the communal experience and supporting the sermon's message.

The structure of the worship service includes three main parts: youth and children's time, prayers of the people, and the sermon, with music incorporated into each segment.

The music, as both an offering and opportunity for participation, is supported by a number of instruments including: organ, piano, violin, guitars, drums, and handbells. Song selections include a broad range of genres from traditional hymns to Lady Gaga woven into a single service. This variety ensures that the music supports the day's theme and appeals to a broad spectrum of tastes, reinforcing the church's commitment to diversity.

Special services throughout the liturgical year, such as Pride Sunday, Outdoor Worship, and Animal Blessing Sunday, and themes in Advent and Lent underscore the church's dedication to celebrating and honoring different aspects of the community's life and faith. Celebration, while sometimes a little irreverent, is a key aspect of our worship life at FCC.

Good preaching at First Congregational Church is characterized by challenging conventional theologies and encouraging congregants to expand their understanding of the kin-dom of God. The congregation appreciates non-manuscripted preaching that provides tools for de/reconstruction of literal interpretations of scripture/beliefs and brings in elements from other faith traditions. Preaching from the lectionary is not necessary, and unconventional themes and interpretations are encouraged.

4. 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?

Our children and teens are grade-separated into Adventure Village (K-5th grade) and Youth (6th-12th). Across all ages, we strive to create a safe and loving environment where everyone knows their sacred value. Post-Covid, we've integrated the "Joyful Path" curriculum and we hope to introduce Our Whole Lives. These programs are supported by a much beloved Children & Youth Director. (As described elsewhere, our Youth summer programming includes service and learning trips and other fun activities.)

In addition to numerous small groups, we hold an Adult Chat on Sundays that is often tied to a theme from worship. Our Interim Minister has twice presented a four-part "Tuesday Talk" series related to a worship theme (Transforming Trauma [Lent 2024] and Queering the Bible [June 2024]).

With our proximity to Brite Divinity School we have often been a teaching congregation for Student Ministers. This has also greatly enriched our church when they support our adult education programs under our pastor's guidance. These programs are held Sundays following the worship service and include a variety of formats such as lectures, small group discussions, Q&A sessions, and open forums to foster active participation.

5. 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?

The church organizational structure consists of four committees (Christian Education, Christian Service, Trustees, and Deacons) and a Cabinet comprised of a moderator, moderator-elect, treasurer, secretary, and representatives from each committee. The Cabinet is the governing and oversight board of the congregation outside of Congregational Meetings.

During COVID, the Cabinet paused the committees and limited the leadership team to just the Cabinet with each leader seeking wider church support as needed. We continue to discern and integrate new and best practices that we learned during that time.

In June 2024, we substantially amended our Constitution and Bylaws to accomplish several goals. We changed our fiscal, leadership, and reporting year to July 1 to June 30. We shifted from one prescribed congregational meeting to two: Budget & Leadership (spring) and the Annual Meeting (August). This reduces the stress on the church organization by not having annual meetings and reports due during the Christmas season. In addition, this new reporting calendar will more closely align to our program year, which begins in September.

The Senior Minister is the primary support staff to the moderator, moderator-elect, the Cabinet, the Trustees, and the Deacons. A job description for the Senior Minister, updated Constitution and Bylaws, organizational chart, and recent Annual Report are available upon request.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

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

[FCC 11 Year Report](#)

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	257	
Number of active non-members:	6	
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	263	

2. Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	33%	based on congregational survey (~92 respondents)
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	36%	based on congregational survey (~92 respondents)
Less than 5 years:	31%	based on congregational survey (~92 respondents)

Number of total participants by age:

0-17	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
15	5	10	18	17	18	19	Ages 18-70+ were based on congregational survey; Under 18 is estimated

Gender Identity	FCC Percentage
Cis Woman	62%
Cis Man	27%
Transgender Woman	1%
Transgender Man	2%
Non-Binary	1%
Agender/I don't identify with any gender	0%
Prefer not to state	1%
Something else	5%

*based on congregational survey with 92 respondents to this question

Sexual Orientation	FCC Percentage
Heterosexual/straight	60%
Gay or lesbian	16%
Bi- or Pan-sexual	14%
Prefer not to state	7%
Something else (please specify)	3%

*based on congregational survey with 92 respondents to this question

3. Percentage of adults in various household types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adult household with no minor(s)	15%	based on congregational survey
Single adult household with minor(s)	2%	based on congregational survey
Joint household with no minor(s)	53%	based on congregational survey
Joint household with minor(s)	24%	based on congregational survey

4. Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	9%	based on congregational survey
College:	45%	based on congregational survey
Graduate School:	34%	based on congregational survey
Specialty Training:	5%	based on congregational survey, includes trade school
Other (please specify):	9%	based on congregational survey

5. Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:	55%	based on congregational survey
Adults who are retired:	34%	based on congregational survey
Adults who are not fully employed:	12%	based on congregational survey, may include 5 minors

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

Occupation	FCC Percentage
Educational Instruction and Library	33%
Management	13%
Clergy	8%
Community and Social Service	5%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5%
Homemaker	4%
Computer and Mathematical	4%
Healthcare Support	4%
Office and Administrative Support	4%
Sales and Related	3%
Legal	3%

*based on congregational survey with 92 respondents to this question.

7. 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?

Race/Ethnicity	FCC Percentage
White	93%
Black or African American	1%
Hispanic or Latino	13%
Asian or Asian American	3%
Prefer not to state	2%

*based on congregational survey with 104 respondents to this question. respondents may selected multiple categories

8. 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 2008, FCC became an official Open and Affirming congregation, and in 2014, the church called Rev. Lee Ann Bryce, an openly lesbian minister. Additionally, our current interim is openly gay and gender queer. (See question 4b1 for the church demographics.) While we pride ourselves on this diversity, we acknowledge the need to better represent and integrate black and Hispanic members within our church family. With this intention in mind, FCC held a Racist Anonymous program in May 2019 which was well attended.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

1. 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: Book Club	10-12	1 lay leader
Adult Groups: Heart to Heart (social, women)	12-15	1 lay leader
Adult Groups: First Coffee	2-4	1-2 lay leaders
Adult Groups: Soul Sisters (social, intergenerational, women)	10-20	1-5 lay leaders
Adult Group: Young & Spirited (young adult group)	8	2 lay leaders
Adult Group: Chair Yoga	5	1 lay leader
Adult Group: Cultivating Mindfulness (meditation)	7-8	1 lay leader
Educational: Adult Chat	8-15	2 lay leaders (Christian Ed Committee)

Educational: Adventure Village (children)	4-8	1 staff; 1 lay leader
Educational: Youth Group	4-8	1 staff; 1 lay leader
Baptisms	2 baptism (since 2023)	2 pastors, 8 lay leaders (Deacons)
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	130	2 pastors, 1 (Worship Director)
Church-wide Meals	80	Variable; lay people, usually a committee
Music Groups: Vocalists, Instruments (guitars, violin, drums, pianist)	5	1 staff (Music Director)
Music Groups: Bell choir	12	being re-evaluated in Aug. 2024 due to Bell Choir Director moving in June 2024
Communion	1/month	pastor, 8 lay leaders (Deacons)
Community Meals (seasonal)	20	Church members serve people experiencing homelessness through Room in the Inn
Confirmation	0 last year	In previous years, pastor
Drama: Christmas Play/Video	20	4+ lay leaders/staff
Funerals	1 last year	2 pastors, 1 lay leader (musician)
Outdoor Worship	82	2 pastors, 1 lay leader/staff (Worship Director)
Prayer Partners (email group)	73	1 lay leader
Public Advocacy Work	variable	lay leaders (Christian Service Committee))
Retreats		In previous years, lay leaders
Weddings	0 last year	In previous years, 2 pastors + staff (musicians)
Worship (time slot:10 am Sunday)	82	1 pastor, 1 Worship Director
Other		

Additional comments:

2. 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)
Peter Nichols	3; UCC	Congregation	Sr. Minister	Y
John Will	3; UCC	Congregation	Sr. Minister	Y
Kathy Bowser	3; UCC	Congregation	Sr. Minister	Y
Loren Baxter	3; ABCUSA	Congregation	Minister	Y
Janelle Nail	No; SBC	Congregation	Minister	Y
Russell Dalton	No; ABCUSA	Congregation	Minister	Y
Tammy Valentine	4; UCC	Hospital	Chaplain	N
Betsy Stirbens	4; UCC	Hospital	Chaplain	N

3. 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: None

4. 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
Laurie Simmons; Accompanist	No	Part Time	Worship Music Director	4 years
Joel Penrod; Worship Music Director	Yes (music staff)	Part Time (unpaid)	Pastor	13 years
Holly Ferguson; Youth & Children Director	No	Part Time	Pastor	1 year

5. REFLECTION

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

First Congregational Church of Fort Worth is an energized faith community dedicating our time to intentional activities that enrich the lives of our church and broader neighborhood. We honor our historical roots and change to meet contemporary challenges. The COVID pandemic and recent pastoral transition revealed that we are cohesive and resilient. The renovations and improvements made to the church's physical space reflect a concrete commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, aligning with the church's mission to be welcoming to all.

Our variety in worship styles moves beyond the binary of "traditional" and "contemporary." Our educational opportunities support a broad range of spiritual needs and preferences, fostering a many types of spiritual growth. The church's emphasis on social justice, diversity, and inclusivity is evident in its support for queer rights, reproductive rights, and racial and economic equality. We nurture head, heart, and hand in compassion and service to others.

We have changed and hope to further evolve and implement leadership structures that support right-sizing our mission priorities. We are fiscally stable and aware of our long-term vulnerabilities. We look forward to partnering with creative pastoral leadership as we continue our brave and audacious embodiment of progressive Christianity on our campus and in the world.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 207,077
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$ 2,704
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	\$112,936
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$ n/a
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$ 0
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$ 7,547
Other (): Miscellaneous Income (local gas well royalties, temporary construction easement)	\$
Other (): utilities reimbursement, building maintenance reimbursement	\$
TOTAL	\$ 330,264

2. Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$349,749

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.

2024-2025 Budget

3. Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage? 34%

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

5. 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*)

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

☐ _Y_ One Great Hour of Sharing

☐ _Y_ Strengthen the Church

☐ _Y_ Neighbors in Need

☐ _Y_ Christmas Fund

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

Christian Service has voted to designate \$10,000, distributed monthly, from the benevolence fund.

7. What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$284,087

Reason for debt: building renovation and capital improvements

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

8. 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.

Ended June 2022

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

Years	Purpose	Goal	Result	Impact
2018-20	renovate 70-year-old building and property	\$431,580	\$340,286	Upgrade to sanctuary, audio-video, new flooring, driveway and parking lot, and expand lobby

10. If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe: none

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

Mission of the Capital Campaign (2018-2020)

The capital campaign aimed to raise funds to modernize First Congregational's facilities to better serve current needs, allow for growth, and prepare for the future. Key improvements included modernizing the sanctuary's seating, lighting, and audio/visual systems; upgrading the church's electrical service; enhancing accessibility with a new entrance and handicap parking; enlarging and refurbishing the lobby and family room; and updating heating, ventilation, and electrical systems throughout the building.

Details of Improvements

The sanctuary was extensively renovated with flexible seating, new carpeting, paint, lighting, and a rebuilt chancel to enhance audio and visual experiences, including live streaming. The main electrical panel was upgraded, and new wiring installed. The entrance garden was redesigned with a new wheelchair ramp and drought-resistant plants. The lobby was opened up to create a bright, welcoming space. Heating and ventilation systems were replaced with more efficient units, and new flooring was laid throughout.

12. Does your church have an endowment? Yes. The church holds a Permanent Fund through United Church Funds to receive bequests in the form of large financial gifts and estates.

13. What is the market value of the assets? The current value of the endowment is \$270,395

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

As needed, the Permanent Fund is drawn annually for budget and benevolence support. We strive to at least keep the opening balance of \$240,000 as principal.

15. What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? Up to 10% of balance each year as determined by Cabinet annually.

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

FCC has drawn against our endowment for the last five years. Per policy guidelines, funds that are drawn must be allocated in the following ways: loan debt retirement (55%), income at Trustees' recommendation (20%), outreach (15%), and South Central Conference (10%).

17. At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? In perpetuity

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

Other Assets

Reserves (savings): \$97,148

18. Investments (other than endowment): \$318,463 (\$58,616 of which is in designated committee funds)

19. Does your church have a parsonage? No

20. Describe all buildings owned by the church:

First Congregational Church is about 8 miles southwest of downtown Fort Worth. The church is two miles south of the TCU campus in the Westcliff neighborhood. This is one of the more affluent neighborhoods in Fort Worth; however, most of the congregants do not come from the neighboring community. Within a two mile radius there are economically and racially diverse neighborhoods.

The original church was built in 1950 and is a two story structure. The main level includes the sanctuary, adjoining family room, chapel, and a newly renovated lobby. There is also a pastor's office, copy/store room, mechanical room as well as a church office, choir room, and nursery.

An addition added to the church in the 1960s. The addition includes a 2000 sq foot social hall with a stage and full kitchen, and a large gathering room previously used for adult education but currently being used by various small groups. Half of the addition is currently rented to a Montessori School and includes an office, 5 classrooms and a large fenced playground.

On the second floor are rooms that are currently in use for Adventure Village (K-5th grade), Youth Room (6-12th grade) and office space for the Children & Youth Director. Also on the second floor is the control room (balcony to the sanctuary) for lighting, sound and equipment used to stream worship.

The campus includes an 80 space parking lot and 2800 sq foot Ken Davis Hall. This hall was originally built as a fellowship hall/basketball court. The space is now rented in its entirety to an art school. The tenant sublets part of this space to a non-profit that provides free teaching materials to area schools and teachers.

The church and the addition total about 12,000 square feet. Much of the 7 acres is open land with mature Live Oaks.

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

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

The parking lot has sufficient handicap spaces immediately in front of the building with a new ramp leading directly to the front entrance. The open gathering area is very accessible leading into the worship space with designated spaces for wheelchairs next to moveable chairs. The chancel area and balcony areas are not accessible to wheelchairs. The downstairs bathrooms and fellowship spaces are wheelchair accessible. There is no elevator to the second floor where the youth and children spaces are.

23. 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?

First Congregational Church's financial and asset management reflects a community committed to our missional priorities incarnated in worship, education and service. Those priorities include:

- **Live our values** by focusing on the justice and outreach initiatives our congregation is passionate about and willing to support. The church's active participation in local and broader missions, including "5 for 5" giving and other outreach initiatives, highlights its commitment to social justice and community service, reflecting a congregation actively living out its faith and values.
- **Deepening the bonds community** by strengthening our relationships and connections with each other. This is demonstrated in our commitment to supporting small groups, education and varied church gathering
- **Strengthen our church** by aligning our structure and procedures to work better for the needs of our congregation. Our budget demonstrates our dedication to our staff and our staffing roles support our commitment to families and children, progressive blended worship, and acts of justice and service in the community. Facing challenges such as reliance on endowment funds, the church's 2023 Stewardship Campaign seeks to lessen dependence on one-time income sources through strategic financial planning.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. 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.

- Acquisition of St. John's UCC in 1998
- Creation of "Adventure Village" Children's program and Contemporary Worship Service in 2002
- Vote to be an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation in 2008
- Combination of the traditional and contemporary services into one blended service in 2018
- Church closure due to the pandemic, and the creation of online services (2020).
- During the time the church was closed, renovation of several key church spaces moved forward including the outside landscaping & accessibility ramp, expansion of the narthex/gathering area, and sanctuary including new chairs, flooring, and audio/visual equipment.

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

Our church went through three significant changes in the last few years: COVID pandemic, church renovations, and then a pastoral transition to a new ministry.

In March of 2020, the COVID pandemic required that the church create a new virtual worship experience and eliminate in-person worship and meetings until September 2021. The church created a safety & masking policy guided by the CDC and local health department recommendations.

During the pandemic closure, the church was substantially renovated. When we returned to in-person worship even our sanctuary didn't look the same.

In 2022, our beloved pastor shared that she accepted a call to another church. During this challenging time, the community came together, providing each other with the strength and compassion needed to maintain the church's unity and cohesiveness. This transition period spurred the congregation to take increased ownership over various aspects of church life, leading to a more energetic and engaged faith community.

In response to the loss, First Congregational Church successfully called upon a capable and loving interim pastor to assist in the healing process. This action facilitated the congregation's recovery and helped stabilize church life as we continue to navigate a period of vulnerability and change.

3. Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict. *For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?*

At First Congregational Church, we maintain a culture of mutual respect and kindness, essential values that guide us even through conflicts. Our method for resolving disagreements emphasizes listening attentively and ensuring all parties involved have the chance to voice their perspectives. We highly value clear and accurate information, which is essential before any significant decisions are made. This can mean delaying discussions to allow adequate time for all necessary information and facts to be collected and analyzed.

In resolving conflicts, we aim for compromises whenever possible, though we recognize that it's not always feasible to meet everyone's needs fully. When consensus is elusive, our priority shifts to what benefits the entirety of the church community, rather than the desires of any single individual or subgroup. Our decisions are made after careful evaluation of all opinions, informed by relevant data, and aim to reach an agreement that respects our church's mission and progressive ethos.

A notable example of this process in action was the debate over using endowment funds to cover operating budget shortfalls. This issue sparked considerable discussion within our community. In line with our conflict resolution principles, we formed task forces to address the financial challenges comprehensively. These groups were charged with rightsizing the budget, reassessing our current rental contracts, and identifying new revenue sources. This approach allowed us to navigate the conflict constructively, ensuring decisions were made that reflected our commitment to stewardship, transparency, and the long-term sustainability of our church community.

Through these actions, we demonstrate our dedication to resolving conflicts in a manner that upholds our shared values and strengthens our communal bonds, guided by contemplation and a commitment to our collective well-being.

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

Staff member's name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev. Lee Ann Bryce	9.5 years	Yes
Katherine Godby (Associate & then Interim)	5 years	Yes
Dave Barber	10 years	Yes
Ralph Nichols	24 years	Yes

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

First Congregational Church has cultivated a deeply progressive ethos, valuing inclusive theology and diverse perspectives on scripture and spiritual expression. The church's commitment extends beyond traditional boundaries, actively incorporating voices historically marginalized in theological discourse, notably from women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

This inclusive approach is mirrored in the collaborative work between ministerial and lay leaders, fostering a communal spirit where governance and church activities are shared responsibilities. Through the challenges of the pandemic and our interim period we have discovered new and dynamic leadership among our members. We seek a settled pastor who will work together with us to achieve our churches missional priorities of growing, preserving, and sustaining our church as well as fostering continued growth in lay leadership. The church community actively embodies their faith through various channels such as committees, small groups, and social activism, reflecting a collective dedication to justice and service.

Guided by their leaders, the congregation has learned the value of open expression and authenticity, fostering an environment where differing opinions are respected. This culture of open dialogue, underpinned by mutual respect and kindness, highlights the church's commitment to maintaining a loving community even amidst disagreement. Through these practices,

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

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

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

4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

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

a. COMMUNITY VISION

b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

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

Our congregation embodies our mission priorities in several ways. We collaborate with South Hills Christian Church and other local congregations on the Room in the Inn program, offering shelter and meals to the homeless during the hottest and coldest months of the year. Additionally, members of the congregation substantially volunteer at a local food bank, 4Saints & Friends.

Each year, the church has participated in various ways in Dallas / Fort Worth area LGBT+ pride events including creating large floats and walking groups in the parade and leading the children's events at the Pride Picnics.

In 2023, our youth and adult leaders participated in a service-learning trip in New Mexico with Be the Neighbor. In 2024, the youth will again participate with Be the Neighbor on a trip to Bentonville, Arkansas, with a focus on economic justice.

Recently, the church began supporting LGBT+ Saves, a queer youth support organization, with volunteers, event space, and donations. In the past, church members have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, Refugee Resettlement, and National Alliance on Mental Illness Walk (NAMI).

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

We are consistent in our 5 for 5 special offerings and are one of the highest contributors to OCWM in the South Central Conference.

FCC has many lay leaders and retired ministers within our community that have extensive experience serving UCC churches and/or associate & conference committees. Both clergy and lay delegates from our congregation are actively encouraged to participate in the meetings of the North Texas Association and the South Central

Conference and our involvement is regularly shared in worship and via our weekly newsletter. We hosted the Fall NTA meeting in 2022.

We have supported several students and candidates through ordination or other professional ministry processes.

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

4. 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?

Based on the church's mission priorities, First Congregational Church is interested in working towards statements of witness including Border and Immigration Justice, Inter-cultural/Multi-racial dialogue, Just Peace, and reproductive rights.

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

The congregation's openness extends to sharing its building with diverse groups, embodying its commitment to interfaith dialogue and community support. This includes hosting Cultivating Mindfulness, a meditation group in the tradition of Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh; Dharma Recovery, which applies Buddhist principles to addiction recovery; Unity of Fort Worth; and Makom Shelanu Congregation, an Open and Affirming Jewish community. These relationships and activities showcase First Congregational Church's dedication to service, advocacy, and interfaith cooperation.

Further reflecting our commitment to interfaith engagement, our interim pastor participated in the 2023 Fort Worth Interfaith Pride service and we will host the service in 2024.

6. 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.

FCC's historic mission statement, as found in Article II of our constitution, is "Believing in God's presence, the members of the First Congregational Church join together to uphold these purposes: to be UNITED in our diversity, to GROW in spiritual understanding, to AWAKEN in ourselves and others Christ's expectations, to SERVE the needs of our Congregation, community, and world, and to EXPERIENCE and SHARE the power of love."

For over a decade, every week in Worship we affirm with the UCC: "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." This is our core statement of faith and mission; it's the words on our signs driving in and the compass point for our theological expression. We hope that this Profile demonstrates how we strive to and actually live into these core statements.

7. 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?

The Search Committee has identified 4 areas where the Senior Minister should allocate 80% of their time:

- Sermon Preparation & Delivery
 - Scripture selection, reading scripture commentaries & outside source material, prayerful discernment of topics, outline/manuscript writing, practice & delivery during worship, writing sermon teasers for "The Comma," our weekly newsletter.
- Worship Preparation and Leadership
 - Recurring planning meetings, setting weekly worship order, coordinating guest speakers/ preachers, presiding over communion and additional liturgical elements.
- Pastoral Care

- Visitation of homebound, sick/recovering, or grieving at their homes or care facilities.
- Individual spiritual counseling with people in the church.
- Contacting visitors or inactive congregants via phone calls, email, letter, etc.
- Church Administration
 - Staff supervision, Cabinet/Sr Leader Meetings, Annual Meeting support, Annual Reports, and consulting on Stewardship Campaigns.

In a recent all-church survey, the congregation indicated the remaining ~20% of the Pastor's time should be allocated to attending church-wide justice and outreach work and events.

4b. MISSION InSite

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

According to 2020 U.S. Census data, the ZIP code 76109, located in Fort Worth, Texas, exhibits a diverse and well-educated population with a mix of ages and income levels. According to recent statistics:

- The population totals 25,658 people with a balanced gender distribution, 54% female and 46% male.
- The area is predominantly White (75%), with other significant representations including Hispanic (10%), Asian (6%), and African American (5%) communities.
- In terms of education, the community is highly educated, with 30% holding master's degrees or higher and 42% possessing bachelor's degrees. This is significantly higher than national averages.

- The unemployment rate stands at a relatively low 3.6%, with an overall poverty rate of 12%.
- The median household income is estimated at \$99,102, which is above the national median, while the median individual income is \$47,748.
- The area has a mix of family types and household sizes, with an average household size of 2.4 people and an average family size of 3 people.

Housing and lifestyle data:

- There are 9,878 occupied housing units, with a significant proportion of these being renter-occupied.
- The median property value in ZIP code 76109 is \$600,300, indicating a relatively affluent area.
- Vehicle availability is high among households, supporting a suburban lifestyle.

Overall, the demographic and socioeconomic data for ZIP code 76109 point to a prosperous, diverse, and well-educated community with a good balance between family-oriented and individual living spaces.

2. 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?

Comparing the demographic information from the All Church Survey for First Congregational Church (FCC) with the demographic data for zip code 76109 from external sources reveals some interesting contrasts and similarities:

Length of Attendance (FCC Survey vs. Community Stability)

- At FCC, 33% of respondents have been attending for more than 10 years, indicating a strong core of long-term members. This agrees with the broader 76109 community demographics which suggest a diverse and stable community with a mix of long-term and transient residents due to the presence of colleges and universities.

Age Distribution

- Both FCC attendees and the 76109 community demonstrate a broad spread across age groups. Roughly 50% of members at FCC are less than 50 years old. The 76109 area does have a significant population in the 18-24 years category, likely due to nearby colleges.

Household Type

- FCC attendees primarily come from joint households without minors (53%) and single adult households without minors (15%). This contrasts with the 76109 area, where there is a variety of household types but no specific data is available for direct comparison.

Education Level

- Both FCC attendees and the 76109 community show high education levels, but the church attendees have a higher proportion of individuals with Master's or PhD degrees (33%) compared to the 76109 community (26% with master's degree or higher).

Employment Status

- At FCC, 54% of respondents are employed, and 34% are retired. The wider 76109 community has a lower unemployment rate (4%) but we do not have specific data on employment versus retirement.

Race/Ethnicity

- FCC is predominantly White (93%), which contrasts with the 76109 ZIP code, which is 75% White. The church has less racial diversity compared to its surrounding community.

Gender and Sexual Orientation

- The FCC congregation shows diversity in gender and sexual orientation, with a notable representation of cis women (62%) and members of the LGBTQ+ community (30%). This information provides insight into the inclusive nature of the church but we do not have a direct comparison to the broader 76109 community demographics.

Household Income and Property Values

- There's no direct data on FCC attendees' income or property values for a direct comparison. However, the ZIP code 76109 has a median household income of \$99,102, which suggests a relatively affluent community.

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

First Congregational Church is more of a destination church with people who are intentionally seeking a church like ours rather than simply a neighborhood community church. While we have some members from the surrounding neighborhood, a majority of members drive from medium and long distances to attend worship and small group gatherings. Historically, the church has hosted 4th of July parade events and neighborhood open social gatherings. Our “community” extends more to “spiritual refugees” looking for an alternate, progressive voice; a voice that extends its message of God’s inclusivity to the marginalized.

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

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

Visitors overwhelmingly find First Congregational Church through internet searches on keywords such as “progressive”, “gay friendly”, and “inclusive”. Visitors transition to engaging with the wider community most often as a result of our greeters connecting them to the Youth & Children Director, small group leaders, and/or inviting them to Adult Chat after worship. The gathering time before worship with snacks and open mingling also allows for visitors to get to know members within the congregation.

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.

REFERENCE 1

Name: Sharon Herrera;

Position: Founder and Executive Director of LGBTQIA+ Saves

Relationship with FCC: Youth Program that FCC supports with volunteers and finances

Telephone: 817-726-1898 ; Email: sharon.herrera@lgbtqsaves.org

REFERENCE 2

Name: Rev. Dottie Cook

Position: Sr. Minister at South Hills Christian Church

Relationship with FCC: church partner for Room in the Inn ministry

Telephone: 817-832-0263; Email: minister@shccfw.org

REFERENCE 3

Name: Rev. Allison Lanza

Position: Director of Be the Neighbor

Relationship with FCC: Youth program that FCC uses for Youth service trips

Telephone: 817-913-6925 ; Email: allison@betheneighbor.org

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.

6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

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

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

For over a decade, every week in worship we affirm with the UCC: “No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.” This is our core statement of faith and mission; it’s the words on our signs driving in and the compass point for our theological expression. We hope that this Profile repeatedly demonstrates how we strive to and actually live into these core statements.

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 a 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.)*

Search & Call Committee:

- Vanessa Adia (co-chairperson)
- Rich Barfield
- Rev. Kathy Bowser
- Lisa Day
- Tracy Hanna
- Karla Lott
- Rev. Peter Nichols
- Joel Penrod (co-chairperson)
- Sandy Smith

Intentional Interim Sr. Minister: The Rev. Dr. Shannon Michael Pater, Psy.D.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: None

Signed:

_____ Vanessa Adia Committee Co-Chair	XX/XX/XXXX	_____ Joel Penrod Committee Co-Chair	XX/XX/XXXX
---	------------	--	------------

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

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

Staff Comment:

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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

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