



**Name of Church**

Congregational Church of South Hero, UCC

**Address**

PO Box 99  
South Hero, VT 05486

**Conference:**

Vermont

**Association:**

Champlain

**Title**

Pastor

**Start Date**

May 30, 2024

**Description**

Seeking Pastor full-time position

### Church Contact Information

No contact information has been added to this profile.

### Listing Information

#### Web Presences

<https://sherochurch.org>

Type: Professional

<https://www.facebook.com/CCSHVT/>

Type: Other

#### Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

No response

#### UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

**Name:**

Rev. Paul Sangree

**Title:**

Associate Conference Minister

**Phone:**

802-505-8727

**Email:**

psangree@vermontucc.org

## Summary Ministry Description

Our church is a close-knit community where the well-being of one another and our neighbors is our top priority. Serving our local community is the foundation of who we are, and we are committed to preserving that mission. Yet, as the landscape of Christianity and our nation continues to evolve, we recognize the need for strong leadership to help us navigate the challenges many churches are facing today. How do we remain relevant in a changing world? How do we inspire more people to join and actively engage in the church, ensuring we can continue serving our community? How do we continue to advocate for social justice in a rapidly shifting political climate?

We are looking for a dynamic, detail-oriented leader—someone unafraid to speak their mind—who can guide us with vision and determination into the next chapter of our church's journey.

We are fortunate to be using the succession model during this search process. Our current minister has been with us for 15 years and will be retiring in the fall of 2025. To ensure a smooth transition, we hope to have some overlap between our new minister and our retiring minister. This will allow the retiring minister to help the new leader get to know our community and facilitate a seamless handoff of responsibilities.

## Church pictures



## What we value about living in our area.

Our church is located in South Hero, but serves the entire county of Grand Isle and the surrounding area. Also known as "The Islands," it is a tight-knit, caring community that embodies the essence of small-town Vermont. We value our life here for the strong sense of public awareness and commitment to looking after our neighbors, ensuring that those in need are supported. Residents actively volunteer for and contribute to local groups and programs that enhance our community's attentiveness and compassion. With no chain restaurants or grocery stores, our locally owned businesses foster personal connections and a sense of belonging. Living in The Islands means knowing your neighbors and relying on each other for help. During the vibrant summer months, we welcome an influx of summer residents, campers, and day trippers, creating a lively atmosphere that invigorates our local economy. Places like Keeler Bay Variety, Two Hero's Brewery, and Snow Farm Vineyard become bustling hubs, reflecting the community's spirit. While we cherish the quieter late fall and winter, when The Islands return to us, we appreciate how the summer season supports our local businesses throughout the year, reinforcing our unique identity and sense of togetherness. Geographically well placed, about 25 minutes to Burlington and about 1 hour and 40 minutes to Montreal, with airports in both, The Islands offers the perfect balance of Vermont country and metropolitan ease.

## Current size of membership

129

## Average in person attendance

60

## Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Yes

## Choose platform type(s) and number for virtual worship.



## Video Hosting Platform

On average, how many views are received per service?

4

## Languages used in ministry

English

## Position Title

Pastor

## Position Duration

Settled

## Compensation Level

Full Time

## Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

## Link to current Conference guidelines

[Download compensation guidelines](#)

## Scope of Work

Some fields reference [The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ](#).

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the [Call Agreement Workbook](#).

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

### Organized

The ability to manage time and stay organized is crucial to the effective operation of the church. With 4 boards and an Executive Committee forming the foundation of the church's operational structure, it is essential to attend meetings regularly and maintain a clear understanding of the church's budget and financial position to ensure smooth and responsible operations. Being organized goes beyond simply handling tasks—it's about creating systems that allow those tasks to be developed and executed with a clear outcome in mind. Strong organizational skills also involve being able to anticipate needs, communicate proactively, and manage multiple projects. A successful pastor must be a self-starter who prepares and plans in advance, ensuring that office duties and ministerial responsibilities are balanced efficiently. Ultimately, time management and organization are essential in creating an environment where both spiritual and administrative duties can be handled effectively.

Second:

### Well Rounded

Our pastor must continually evaluate areas for growth, seek mentorship, and pursue continuous improvement. Flexibility is crucial, as our pastor fills various roles: spiritual leader, fiscal manager, and community guide. A solid understanding of the church's inner workings, from finances to outreach, is essential, along with the ability to guide the boards with patience and encouragement. Our pastor must adapt to unplanned changes, navigate challenges, and work independently or with teams. Lifelong learning and inclusion are key, as is the ability to adjust to new responsibilities. Our church is community-minded, with an active congregation involved in many activities and events. Our pastor must collaborate with others, mediate to reconcile, and adapt to change, strengthening our bond with the broader community.

Third:

### Strong Interpersonal Skills

Clear communication, both in speaking and listening, is essential for our pastor, as it enables our minister to build and strengthen relationships within the congregation and the broader community. Our pastor must listen attentively and compassionately, engaging with people both inside and outside the church family, fostering a sense of connection and understanding. Effective communication

also includes the ability to lead, motivate, and maintain flexibility and empathy in all interactions. Our pastor should possess excellent verbal and written communication skills, emotional intelligence, and the ability to connect with others on a personal level. By valuing and developing individual relationships, our pastor can better empathize with others, actively listening to understand their perspectives. This not only strengthens the bond within the congregation but also helps deliver sermons with enthusiasm and care, sending people out with a positive attitude.

## Compensation and Support

The salary basis comes from the [Call Agreement Workbook](#), equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE (IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	41280	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	800	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 42080			
Pension/Annuity	8200	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	5313	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.

These numbers are based on our conference guidelines for a first year pastor. Per Vermont UCC Conference guidelines we will be using the Call Agreement Workbook to work out final details of the compensation package. There is also an automobile allowance included of \$1500 a year. Medical, dental, disability, and insurance are all negotiated.

There is no housing allowance because the church owns a parsonage and it would be our preference that our minister lives in the parsonage. This could be negotiated, but would not be recommended based on the housing market and inventory in our community currently.

The expected living situation for our next minister.

Living in the parsonage

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

Yes

How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.

Not Applicable.

Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.  
Cell Phone and/or Internet.  
Conference and/or Association meeting registrations  
Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).

Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.

- Vermont Conference weekly clergy support zoom call
- Annual convocation get away for clergy
- Monthly clergy luncheons in the Champlain Conference
- Peer group support group for young clergy

## Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

The ministry goals for our next pastor will focus on collaboration with the congregation to achieve a thriving, sustainable church community. Key objectives will include ensuring financial sustainability through strategic stewardship and resource management, helping the congregation build a strong foundation for long-term financial health. The minister will also work to organize and strengthen leadership structures, empowering lay leaders and volunteers to take on key roles within the church. Community outreach will be a central priority, with efforts aimed at deepening our engagement and expanding our impact in the surrounding area. Finally, the minister will focus on fostering growth in membership, attendance, and active participation, creating an inclusive and welcoming environment that invites individuals to grow in their faith and become more involved in the life of the church. Together with the congregation, the minister will guide us toward a vibrant, mission-driven future.

How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

Given the nature of our community, our minister plays a vital role in serving not only our congregation but the broader community as well. Our church already has a significant impact that resonates throughout the area, and it is essential for us that our next minister continues to nurture this outreach while helping to expand our efforts in supporting and caring for our neighbors.

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

Both our congregation and community are mainly an English speaking. We currently have one attendee for whom English is not their first language and English is actually a challenge. They still attend and interact even with the language barrier.

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

The four "Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministry" that resonated most with our church were "Caring for All Creation," "Participating in Theological Praxis," "Working Together for Justice and Mercy," and "Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets." When we examined these Marks, each one seemed to align perfectly with the identity of our church and congregation. A minister who embodies these qualities and leads with them as a guide would help us continue the important work we are already doing while expanding our outreach. Caring for All Creation emphasizes nurturing compassion for God's creation, promoting mental health, and encouraging self-care and life balance. It also stresses the importance of spiritual and pastoral care, responsible stewardship, and offering hope to a hurting world. Participating in Theological Praxis involves integrating theological reflection into ministry, ensuring it informs teaching, preaching, and leadership. It also emphasizes alignment with the UCC Manual on Ministry, ecumenical and interfaith collaboration, and embodying the UCC Ministerial Code. Working Together for Justice and Mercy calls us to follow Christ's example in addressing injustice and oppression, practicing radical hospitality, and confronting bias within the Church. It encourages mission, outreach, and building relationships of mutual trust. Lastly, Strengthening Inter- and Intra-Personal Assets focuses on developing a healthy sense of self, living in covenantal accountability with God and the Church, upholding integrity, and respecting the dignity of all people. It also emphasizes understanding human development and cultivating excellent communication skills in ministry. Together, these Marks provide a holistic framework for ministry that resonates deeply with our church's values and vision.

## Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

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"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 God is calling us to become as a congregation.

God is calling our congregation to unconditionally support each other in our walk with Christ through Biblical teaching, personal reflection and community outreach. This includes encouraging community actions that foster spiritual growth and connection. We are being called to enhance our outreach and to be a symbol of hope and respite during times of crisis. We continue to be called to serve

our neighbors and community in meaningful ways that help to better their lives while we also find ways to encourage those we serve to explore joining us regardless of where they are on their faith journey. With God's help and guidance, we are called to not only grow our numbers but also to remain a relevant, indispensable part of our local community and by doing so help ensure our wider faith can weather the turmoil that many churches are currently facing.

How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

Our church is addressing emerging challenges and opportunities by focusing on our community's evolving needs and the generational shift within our congregation. We are committed to building on the solid foundation established by past leaders, recognizing that viability means enhancing our church's offerings.

In order to remain relevant we will need to explore different initiatives. Some of the following has already been started while others are growing edges for our congregation:

**Accessibility and Technology:** We are investing in improvements such as online streaming, upgraded sound systems, and better accessibility for those with mobility challenges. These enhancements ensure we can reach both those who prefer worshiping from home and those who struggle to attend in person.

**Community Engagement:** Our church serves as a vital community hub through programs like CIDER and Food for Thought. These initiatives not only assist those in need but also attract attendees who may not regularly participate in church. We are exploring new ways to invite these individuals into our faith community.

**Navigating Diversity:** We recognize the challenges posed by diverse interpretations of faith. We emphasize the importance of honest discussions, striving to create an environment where all voices are valued, reflecting our commitment to the core principles of Christianity.

**Pastoral Transition:** As we navigate this transition, we view it as an opportunity for renewal. A new pastor can connect with the broader community, attract new members, and revitalize our congregation.

Through these efforts, we aim to foster a vibrant church community that meets our members' needs and serves as a beacon of hope for those around us, believing that embracing these challenges will strengthen our faith and service.

## Congregation Reflections

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We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

Our congregation's life of faith is embodying the belief that theology without action and everyday commitment is not truly reflective of God's greater message. God is often described as the embodiment of our faith, the one true God, evident in how we care for each other, our neighbors, and the world around us. We are a church that values service to others just as much as we value our Sunday morning services.

Our church has an informal, "family-like" atmosphere that makes our members and regular attendees feel at home regardless of their faith background. Among our membership we have a wide variety of faith backgrounds which lends itself to rich discussion and learning opportunities.

Our faith extends well beyond Sunday services, and we grow together through worship, fellowship, and mutual respect. We support each other's viewpoints and pray together, enriching our collective journey in faith.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

While we are a small church, we have many strengths. Our congregation is made up of people who come together to support each other and make a meaningful impact in our local community and the wider world around us. We are generous with our donations of money, items, or time and talents for various causes, embodying our commitment to faith through action. This community is characterized by a hands-on approach to faith, often focusing on service over contemplation. If you look around our church family you will find many "Marthas," but perhaps not as many "Marys."

A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

We have several growing edges that, with reflection, could help strengthen our congregation. One pressing concern is that our membership is aging, and new, young families are not joining to fill the void. The younger families who became part of our community 10-12 years ago helped populate the Sunday School, but many of those children recently completed Confirmation, and Sunday School has significantly shrunk. Additionally, we face a stark lack of diversity within our church. While Vermont as a whole has limited racial diversity, our congregation's homogeneity extends deeper, as we see very few low-income families attending. Although we work hard to serve community members in need through initiatives like summer food programs, gas cards to help people get to work, and fuel assistance during the colder months, those who benefit from these services do not attend our church. There has been little exploration into why this disconnect exists, and addressing it could be key to fostering a more inclusive and vibrant community.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.





Worship at our church primarily takes place in the Sanctuary, with occasional services in Fellowship Hall for events like "breakfast church," where small group discussions led by Deacons occur over breakfast. Our one-hour service includes music, announcements, prayer, children's time, scripture readings, a sermon, collection, hymns, and a closing benediction, followed by fellowship for socializing and welcoming visitors. Services are casual, and our children feel comfortable in the space, embraced by members even if it gets a bit noisy. During the school year, they attend Sunday School after the children's message. Baptism involves family and the congregation, reinforcing community support. Good preaching connects scripture to everyday life, often with humor and sometimes in a conversational format with a lector, though active participation has met with mixed responses. Music is vital, featuring our choir, bell choir, and special musicians seasonally. Overall, our church blends meaningful traditions with an inviting atmosphere, enhanced by seasonal flowers and quilts that add comfort to our beautiful New England setting.

#### The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Our church offers programs for all ages, starting with a nursery staffed by caring individuals, allowing parents to leave their young children in a safe, engaging environment during Sunday service. For children from Kindergarten through 8th grade, we provide Sunday School, currently serving 6th grade and below in a one-room schoolhouse format. Although we once offered three separate classes, declining attendance has led us to this unified approach in recent years. Once children age out of Sunday School, they transition to the youth group and confirmation class. The Board of Christian Education is exploring interest in youth programming that includes collaboration with other youth groups off the island. Our youth play a vital role in church life, participating in coffee hour, contributing to services, decorating for Christmas, and overseeing the sunrise service on Easter. They can also take on leadership roles on boards.

For adults, we host discussion groups throughout the year, including book clubs and seasonal series like Lenten and Advent. Additionally, a weekly Zoom group meets with the pastor to discuss the upcoming week's lectionary.

#### How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our church operates with four boards: Trustees, Deacons, Christian Education, and Missions. Each board meets monthly to manage different aspects of church life. The Executive Board, composed of a member from each board, the Moderator, and the Treasurer, provides guidance. All board meetings are open to congregants, though attendance is rare. We hold an annual meeting and several interim meetings to update the congregation and communication about church activities typically occurs through a weekly newsletter and announcements before worship.

Decisions are made by the boards and the Executive Committee. For major decisions, we notify the congregation, facilitate discussions, and conduct votes. Developing a vision for the church can be challenging, relying on member input, financial stability, and the minister's perspective. Currently, our church functions well, with committees and the minister collaborating to support our community. However, we sometimes struggle with organization; as members leave boards, valuable information can be lost.

Our bylaws have undergone several revisions, thanks to a governance task force that consulted the congregation.

#### When it comes to decision-making, 30 hours are spent in meetings per month.

##### Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

During the initial COVID lockdown, our congregation rallied to adapt. Lacking live video capabilities, we uploaded recorded services to YouTube for congregants to watch at their convenience. Every Sunday, we held Zoom discussions and fellowship time, which became vital connection points. We routinely had 20-40 participants. Easter 2021, we organized an outdoor service. Congregants brought chairs, and with the windows open, we heard music as the choir performed while socially distanced. Despite the cold, it was our first in-person gathering after a year of isolation, making it truly meaningful. Our pastor also held conversations with local guests, recorded and shared on YouTube. As the weather changed, the group moved inside to record abbreviated services featuring music and a virtual choir, which were also published on YouTube. We owe this effort to the Board of Deacons, in particular the chair of the board at that time, and our pastor.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

[CCSH Bylaws 2021 12-15-21.pdf](#)

[2023 annual report.pdf](#)

#### 11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

[Download 11-Year Report](#)



## Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	129
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	20
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	149

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	80%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	4%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	16%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	9
12-17	9
18-24	3
25-34	0
35-44	10
45-54	9
55-64	13
65-74	31
75+	16

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	2%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	14%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	2%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	64%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	18%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes



## Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	8%
COLLEGE:	48%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	38%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	6%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

## Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	26%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	60%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	14%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

## The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

**Note on data:**Data was collected through a survey. The response rate was low. Due to the small size of our congregation, we were able to brainstorm more accurate figures for age. As a result, the employment and education numbers only reflect individuals who completed surveys, rather than being proportionate to the broader demographics.

Occupations: Again, this list is not based on survey results, it is merely examples of professions among our membership:

Electrician  
Medical  
Property Management  
Building Renovation  
Dental Hygienist  
Teacher  
Artist  
Local Business Owners  
Retail  
Municipal  
Engineer  
Military  
Farmer

## The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.

Our congregation is overwhelmingly white. We have one family who adopted 2 boys from Ethiopia. When looking at our county's demographics this is representative of what the wider county looks like. Our community does see an influx of migrate workers in the growing season, but when the demographics of permanent residents is examined we do not have much racial or ethnic diversity.

## What diversity means in our context?

Religious backgrounds among our members is where the majority of our diversity lies. While we have a few "Cradle UCCers," our congregation is made up of individuals who were raised in different traditions or were "un-churched." This mix of experiences adds richness to our church community and our discussions and interactions with each other. We also have members who may not yet be sure of their beliefs or are questioning their beliefs, but are drawn to our church for the opportunity to explore their faith and engage in a community that actively serves and cares for its neighbors.

Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future

No

## Participation and Staffing

### Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	10	Pastor, Christian Education
Baptisms (number last year)	5	Pastor
Children's Groups or Classes	10	Christian Education
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	110	Pastor, Deacons
Church-wide Meals	100	committee/board planning meal
Choirs and Music Groups	25	organist, choir director, music committee
Church-based Bible Study	8	Pastor, Deacons
Communion (served how often?)	1	Deacons - served 1st Sunday of each month
Community Meals	0	not offering at this time
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	8	Christian Education
Drama or Dance Program	0	NA
Funerals (number last year)	3	Pastor
Intergenerational Groups	0	NA
Outdoor Worship	0	NA
Prayer or Meditation Groups	0	NA
Public Advocacy Work	0	NA
Retreats	0	past retreats have been Board Retreats and organized by the that Board
Weddings (number last year)	1	Pastor
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	3	Deacons - this is relatively new so attendance is small
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	Not Currently, but run by Christian Education
Youth Groups or Classes	0	Not Currently, but run by Christian Education

### Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
9:30am	60	Pastor

### Additional comments:

Before COVID, we had a thriving monthly Community Supper, mostly attended by non-church members. It was halted due to COVID, and turnover and lack of volunteers have prevented its restart.

There is no current youth group due to the local school structure. The Islands only have schools through 8th grade, after which students attend different high schools. Youth are confirmed in 8th grade and then choose their level of church participation. We currently have no youth of confirmation age; the oldest group is in 5th grade.

List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Cordelia Burpee	none	Settled	Head Minister	<input type="checkbox"/>

Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

Our church is blessed with several retired ministers who maintain active membership. Each has chosen their level of involvement beyond attending services on Sundays. Some serve as occasional pulpit supply, others act as advocates for our settled minister—assisting with pastoral care, financial matters, etc.—and one is offering guidance to our search committee. As we conduct this search with our current minister still in place, we have sought the expertise of one of our ministerial members to address questions that are best handled outside the scope of our current minister's responsibilities.

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Church Secretary	Minister	full	Minister, Executive Board	21 years
Minister	Minister	full	Executive Board	15 years

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

As mentioned, racial and ethnic diversity in our county is limited, with socioeconomic status being the primary form of diversity. While our community includes a wide range of income levels, this is not reflected in our congregation. Although we support lower-income neighbors through programs like Food for Thought and the Food Shelf, we have not seen significant participation in Sunday services. We hope to explore ways to invite those we serve to join our church family and nourish both their bodies and souls.

## Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	206602
Fundraising Events	4002
Rentals of Church Building	6040
Transfers from special accouts	1995
Draw from Fidelity	10000
Total	228639

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

233468

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.

[Download church budget](#)

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

34

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  
Strengthen the Church  
Neighbors in Need  
Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

OCWM is part of the Missions Budget, which is 10% of the church's operating budget. Each year, boards submit budget proposals to the Stewardship Committee, which coordinates and presents the overall budget. Church members are encouraged to contribute financially or in other ways. Basic Support for OCWM comes from pledge income, with nearly half of the Missions Budget allocated to OCWM. The rest supports local and global missions.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

5

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

not applicable

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

## Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

Not Applicable

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

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

Does your church have an endowment?

No

Other Assets

Fidelity Account, Savings (restricted and unrestricted funds)

Reserves (savings):

236959



Investments (other than endowment):

201400

Does the church have a parsonage?

Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

400000

How is the parsonage used?

ministerial residence

Street

364 Rt 2

City

South Hero

State

VT

Zip

5486

Finished square footage:

1800

Number of Bedrooms:

3

Number of Bathrooms:

1

Assessed real estate value:

220000

Available for minister residence?

Yes

Expected minister residence?

Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

good - undergoing refurb

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Trustees

## Parsonage pictures



## Description of all buildings owned by the church:

Our New England-style church has a bright sanctuary with large windows. The chancel can be rearranged for different uses. Doors behind the chancel lead to offices and classrooms. Downstairs, accessible via stairs from the narthex or office, are Fellowship Hall, the nursery, and kitchen. There are 4 single-stall bathrooms throughout. The parsonage, ½ mile away, is a 3-bed, 1.5-bath ranch with a small office, unfinished basement, attached garage, and large backyard. Laundry is in the basement. This building is being updated.

## Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

Not applicable

## Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance  
Accessible parking spaces  
Large print bulletins

Wheelchair access in bathrooms  
Handrails on all stairs  
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)

## Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

We are working to improve accessibility, including exploring adding an elevator. Currently, members using mobility aids enter through the front ramp and main door, and to access Fellowship Hall, they must exit and use the ramp and side driveway. Improvements made include handicap-accessible bathrooms, a meeting space off Fellowship Hall, and a reconfigured kitchen that now functions as an open, usable space. During worship, large print bulletins are available, and a microphone is passed when congregants are speaking. Streaming of the service is also available.

## Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Please see attached By-Laws (too many characters to include here)  
Article VI - Officers, Boards, and Committees, Section 6: Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

**Reflection:** After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:



We recognize the need to carefully examine our budgeting and savings strategies to better prepare for future expenses. The Search Committee feels that there may be a lack of full understanding within the congregation regarding our financial situation. While we excel in taking action and generously sharing our talents, we require leadership and guidance to develop a clear, long-term plan for ensuring the financial health and sustainability of our church.

## Historical Information

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Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

The most significant event in our church's history is the fire that destroyed the building in 1976. Few members remain to recount this pivotal moment, but the fire has become a defining part of our church's history. The aftermath, marked by the community's united effort to rebuild, reinforced our role as a cornerstone of South Hero and The Islands.

Another major milestone was adopting "Open and Affirming" status around 25 years ago. This decision, made through focused study and discussion, led to the creation of an inclusive statement that, while causing some membership loss, is now widely accepted and expected.

The most significant event in the past decade was COVID-19, which severely impacted attendance and growth. Restrictions led to our children growing up without new ones joining, reducing our Sunday school and youth group from 3-4 classes to just one. Additionally, habits shifted during COVID, causing reduced attendance even with available programs.

A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

COVID-19 was the most significant change we have navigated recently. Some practices implemented to keep people connected during lockdown have proven beneficial even as we have returned to normal. For instance, online discussion groups continue to thrive. However, prior to COVID, we were already facing aging demographics and many of our younger members did not return in the same capacity post-lockdown. This is making it increasingly challenging to find enough volunteers. Consequently, some tasks previously handled by church members have transitioned to paid positions, which has led to a noticeable loss of camaraderie among the congregation.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Due to the church's polity, disagreements are addressed either through the Executive Board or by the entire church body. We have faced minor conflicts over issues such as flag placement, the positioning and use of the large Bible on the communion table, how to and what to serve for communion, celebrating national holidays, and the dissolution of the Women's Fellowship. Fortunately, these issues have been resolved with minimal tension among most members. While this approach fosters thorough dialogue, it sometimes results in a lack of tangible outcomes, particularly with non-urgent matters (where to keep the forks or content for the website). For more significant issues, we rely on both our ability to have a civil, honest discussion and our governance structure, using voting if necessary to reach a resolution.

The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

The church was offered a chance to rebuild its wastewater system through a proposal from a gas station near church property, which would have benefited the church financially but encumbered its property permanently. Despite the potential savings, the proposal faced significant opposition from the congregation. Concerns included the environmental impact, the proximity to a neighbor, and the ethical implications of partnering with a corporation. Additionally, some feared that supporting a large chain could harm locally owned businesses. In the end, the church voted to decline the offer. This experience highlighted the need for mutual respect in differing opinions and eventually led to revisions in the church's bylaws for clearer procedural authority.

## Ministerial History:

*Name:* Rev. Richard Crocker

*Years of service:* 8

*Name:* Anne Hancock (Interim)

*Years of service:* 1

*Name:* Rev. Margaret Flad

*Years of service:* 5

*Name:* Mary Beth Hutchinson (Interim)

*Years of service:* 1

*Name:* Rev. Timothy Forrester

*Years of service:* 7

*Name:* Skip Macauley (Interim)

*Years of service:* 2

*Name:* Rev. Cordelia Burpee

*Years of service:* 15

**UCC Standing**

## What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

Our church needs a leader who can guide us in building a thriving congregation, enabling us to continue offering services and resources for our community, while fostering strong, supportive relationships within our church family.

Note: We have never terminated a minister, but Rev. Timothy Forrester left under pressure. There was a petition circulated for his removal, but after members talked with him he made the choice to leave on his own for the good of the church. There was no specific event that lead to this, but rather many small issues accumulated and lead to his decision to leave.

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

Yes

## Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

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

No

## Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

## Community Vision

### How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.

Our community's relationships showcase a strong commitment to service and outreach through various programs. Our church works with organizations such as:

**Food for Thought:** Initiated by a member who saw the need for summer food support, this program feeds families from Island towns with locally grown produce and grocery staples. Each child also receives curated books to nourish their minds during summer. Grocery cards are given for school breaks.

**Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources:** CIDER offers meals, rides, and accessibility support, including building ramps for those in need.

**Welcome Home:** This project supplies essentials baskets for newly housed individuals in Grand Isle and Franklin Counties.

**Dismas House:** Monthly, our congregation provides dinner for residents recently released from prison, fostering connections through shared meals.

**CROP Walk:** Raises funds for local food insecurity programs and broader CROP initiatives.

Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.

We actively engage in the UCC offerings throughout the year and take pride in our "5 for 5" involvement. Our Missions Board participates in Zoom calls with UCC leadership during regional crises, such as the recent July '24 floods. In response, we collaborated with NEKO, an organization that provided direct flood relief, allowing us to make a significant donation to their efforts. Additionally, we send representatives to the annual UCC Conference, where two church members and the pastor attend and report back to the congregation. When active, our youth group also gathers with other congregational youth groups, fostering connections and shared experiences.

How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.

Our congregation is deeply committed to seasonal traditions, engaging with initiatives like Crop Walk, the Salvation Army, and the Grand Isle Food Pantry. Over the years, we have participated in mission trips across the country, including efforts in Mississippi for Hurricane Katrina recovery, Tennessee and New York/New Jersey for flood and hurricane damage, and various locations in Vermont for assistance after Tropical Storm Irene. Our pastor and a dedicated committee have also improved the food shelf serving the Champlain Islands, which began in the North Hero pastor's basement, moved to the Grand Isle Methodist Church, and is now located in the St. Joseph's Church basement. This initiative, once run by just a few volunteers, has expanded to involve all local churches, with increased volunteer support and extended hours. In addition to food assistance, we are able to offer gas cards for people in need so they can get to and from appointments or work when finances get tight.

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, through [Just World Covenants](#) or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Open and Affirming (ONA).

What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.

We are unfamiliar with all of these designation with the exception of Open and Affirming which was adopted by our congregation about 25 years ago. We consider ourselves a community church and pride ourselves on the work we do to better our community and help our neighbors. Working toward any of these designations would be a growing edge for our church and we hope our new minister will help us explore these options.

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

On mission trips, we frequently collaborated with other denominations, including the Methodists, and have held combined services with the Catholic and Jewish communities in the Islands. One highlight is the ecumenical Thanksgiving service, where pastors from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds plan the service together, drawing a well-attended crowd from all faiths. Pre-COVID, we hosted free dinner meals open to the entire community, regardless of faith. Additionally, we organized Turkey and Chicken Pie Suppers to raise funds, welcoming both local and regional participants from diverse backgrounds. These efforts have fallen by the wayside due to lack of volunteers to organize and run the suppers.

How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.

We are a proactive congregation committed to meaningful action. While our mission statement emphasizes that we "proclaim the gospel," our approach focuses on outreach and support rather than traditional evangelism. Our members engage in service to assist those in need, reflecting our core values. Although we dedicate considerable time to meetings, this is essential for our governance as a UCC congregational church run by its members. This structured approach ensures that our church operates effectively and can provide the necessary outreach and assistance when and where it is most needed.

The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.

Pastors often undertake more responsibilities than members realize, attending board meetings, officiating funerals and baptisms, visiting the sick, and preparing Sunday services and messages. Additionally, our pastor leads Christian education for adults through book studies and discussions. An additional challenge for our community is our pastor is also our neighbor. Some members believe the pastor should maintain a strictly professional relationship with congregants, while others have formed deep and meaningful friendships with our current pastor. Balancing these roles can be difficult, as living in the community while serving in this capacity often blurs the lines.

## The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

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ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

Due to the geography of our county and the limitations of the search tool, this data is presented in two sections. While we serve all of Grand Isle County, the data was gathered separately for South Hero and Grand Isle, and for North Hero, Alburgh, and Isle La Motte. Each search is displayed in its own tab on the uploaded Excel sheet. Socioeconomic status is the primary form of diversity in our county, but this is not strongly reflected in our congregation. This shows we have an opportunity to minister to the people we serve in the community beyond helping ensure they are physically fed.

**How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.**

In terms of racial and ethnic diversity our church membership reflects our wider community. Socioeconomic status is the primary form of diversity in our county, but this is not greatly reflected in our membership.

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

As noted earlier, racial and ethnic diversity is limited in our county, with the main diversity being in socioeconomic status. Our community includes a broad range of income levels, but this is not reflected in our congregation. While we support lower-income neighbors through programs like Food for Thought and the Food Shelf, we have not seen much participation in Sunday services. We are eager to explore ways to invite those we serve to become part of our church family, so we can nourish both their bodies and their spirits.

**What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.**

Community leaders regard our church as an organization dedicated to caring for our neighbors. Our church building serves as a hub for a wide range of community organizations and plays a vital role in the area. We are also fortunate to count many of our community leaders among our members, and we are deeply grateful for this. Their involvement strengthens our ability to make a meaningful impact and extend support to those in need.

**What new people in the church say when asked what got them involved.**

The vast majority of our members share that they became involved because of the warm welcome they received on their first visit. When asked why they chose our church, their stories are strikingly similar. They recall being greeted with genuine enthusiasm, and when they returned for a second visit, they were pleasantly surprised to find that people remembered their names and were truly glad to see them back.

## References



☒ Robin Way

Completed: Monday, Dec 9, 2024

As Executive Director of a community based non-profit organization based in South Hero, I partnered with the church to provide services to elders.

Personal: 8023382195

### Reference Response

I served as Executive Director of Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (CIDER) from 2002 through 2022. Our mission was (is) to provide services and resources that would enable elders and persons with disabilities to live independently and with dignity in the small rural towns of Grand Isle County.

Since our incorporation in 1993, the Church both as an organization and as individuals has played a critical role in CIDER's ability to support the Islands community. Our senior meal site and home delivered meals program has been based out of the Church since 1995 and many if not most of our large group of volunteers were (are) members of the Church. When CIDER needed space for a foot clinic, an exercise program, a meeting, or needed to borrow chairs or tables, the Church ALWAYS stepped up. Members participate in and lead critical CIDER programs

A community of wonderful people.

RSW



☒ Alisha Utter

Completed: Sunday, Jan 5, 2025

I am an Islands resident/South Hero business owner and while I am not a member of the Church, I attend services with some frequency.

Business: 8459430866

### Reference Response



The SHCC has housed many orgs doing grassroots work, from community suppers to the winter farmers' market. On the Islands, there are few spaces where community can come together and it speaks to the inclusive nature of the SHCC that it is embraced as a space connecting neighbors.

The SHCC is tremendously welcoming - a direct reflection of the warmth of congregation/leadership. The sermons cultivate kindness/goodness in self/community; they challenge me to broaden care, amplify love, and deepen reflection. The connectiveness is apparent throughout each service - from the unified singing to the joyful coffee hour.

Rev. Burpee is a radiant leader that manifests positivity and hope through her word/actions. She is rooted, open, and accessible with a humorous/humble spirit. I hope the next reverend continues to meet people where they are at and foster a space of peace/safety/inclusivity.



■ Susan Waring

Contacted: yesterday

**Reference Response**

*No response*

## Closing Prayer

Gracious God, As we conclude this search, we lift up in prayer the person whom You are preparing to lead our church in the days ahead. We ask that You be with them, guiding their heart, mind, and spirit as they discern their call to serve this community. May they lead with compassion, integrity, and joy, inspiring us to grow in faith and service. Surround them with peace and strength, and empower them to speak Your truth with grace. As a congregation, help us to receive them with open hearts, ready to walk alongside them in this sacred journey. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

## Statement of Consent

### 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.*

This profile was compiled and created by the South Hero Congregational Church Search Committee. The committee members were chosen and approved by the members of the church. The members of the search committee are:

Marguerite Althoff (Nursery)

Skip Brown

Tim Bryan (Missions)

Aimee Cochran (Deacons)

Susan Davis (Stewardship Committee)

Bob Krebs

Aleks Lee (Youth Representative)

Carolyn McCray (Christian Ed)

### 2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We would like potential candidates to know that we do have 3 references. There was a technical issue for the final reference. The church office has a copy of the reference and it will be shared once the search committee and candidates are in contact.