

Name of Church
Saugatuck Congregational UCC

Address
245 Post Rd. E
Westport, CT 06880

Conference:
Southern New England

Association:
Fairfield West

Title
Pastor

Start Date
n/a

Description
Saugatuck P Search

Church Contact Information

No contact information has been added to this profile.

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://saugatuckchurch.org/> *Type: Other*

<https://www.facebook.com/saugatuckchurch> *Type: Other*

<https://www.youtube.com/@SaugatuckCongregationalChurch> *Type: Other*

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

N/A

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Rev. Margret Hofmeister

Title:

Area Conference Minister, Southwest Region

Phone:

860-761-7198

Email:

hofmeisterm@sneucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

Saugatuck Congregational Church (SCC) is a vibrant community of people who gather to worship, learn, work, and play together. Our doors, congregation, and communion table are open to all. We strive to be a community of Christ, welcoming all people, learning to love and serve God and neighbor. We believe that God loves everyone unconditionally and is present with and through us. SCC is an Open & Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. We are seeking a full-time pastor to join our community of faith and practice who will inspire, challenge, and work with us to manifest SCC's vision of an unwaveringly loving God. We believe God calls us to extravagant inclusivity, mission-driven service, spiritual growth, intergenerational community, and responsible stewardship. We value excellent preaching and seek someone skilled at interpreting the Bible in engaging, thought-provoking, and accessible ways. We hope for a partner and guide in advancing our work toward environmental, racial, and social justice, including standing up against all forms of discrimination. Our ideal candidate will be warm and approachable, with interests and passions, who treasures and seeks out connection, and takes and gives feedback with an open heart. Our next pastor should value transparency, be curious, and embrace growth, recognizing we are all on a journey that's better when shared. SCC is known for our inclusive, welcoming environment, our love for children that extends beyond our congregation to include the broader Fairfield community, our passion for social and environmental justice, our celebration of music and fine arts, and our active engagement in missions.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

SCC is located in Westport, CT (pop.~27,000), 50 miles northeast of New York City on Long Island Sound. We value our beautiful town setting, with its beaches and riverfronts, multiple parks and preserves, and hiking. A truly four-season location, we enjoy beautiful New England fall foliage, nearby skiing and winter sports, resplendent springs and proximity to multiple arboretums and botanical gardens, and sailing, swimming, kayaking, and biking in the summers. Our public schools are consistently ranked among the top not only in Connecticut, but in the nation. New York City is easily accessible by train and offers endless activities. Closer to home, we have a thriving restaurant scene, a wealth of visual, theatrical, and musical art offerings, and a world-class public library which was awarded a 5-star rating by the Library Journal Index.

Current size of membership

180

Average in person attendance

50

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?

30

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

<https://www.sneucc.org/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:

- **Excellent Preaching:** A nurturing spiritual leader able to preach inspiring sermons, cultivate an abundance mindset, and guide us in our faith journey

Second:

- **Community Builder:** A warm, friendly, and fun leader with a deep understanding of congregational dynamics who will promote transparency and wholehearted communication to strengthen and grow our community

Third:

- **Intergenerational Faith Formation:** A dynamic teacher with a deep passion for engaging with and nurturing the spiritual development of children, youth, and the young at heart through meaningful relationships, creative programming, integrated service and mission activities, collaboration with volunteers, oversight of our Christian Education & Faith Formation Director, leadership of Confirmation, and active discipleship

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)	100000	<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)	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 100000			
Pension/Annuity	18200	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	10328	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	1950	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Our package, including benefits, is \$150,000-\$175,000, based on a target cash salary of \$90,000-\$100,000. We have budgeted for all benefits and contributions recommended by the UCC.

We offer a 3 month sabbatical every 5 years

The expected living situation for our next minister.

Parsonage preferred. Housing allowance may be negotiable in special circumstances

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

If not living in the parsonage, a residence within 10-15 miles is preferred.

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

N/A

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).

Criminal background checks.

Community of Practice Participation.

Other:

No response

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

Community of Practice groups; continuing education/professional development programs offered through the SNEUCC and its Center for Transformational Leadership; programs offered by the Fairfield West Association

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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

We envision our next minister helping us to live out the ministry goals reflected in our mission statement:

A Community of Christ
Welcoming All People and
Learning to Love and Serve
God and Neighbor

We are continually learning how to be in community with each other, address conflict productively, build trust, challenge scarcity mindsets, and hold each other accountable. We called a wonderful Interim Pastor in January 2024 who has helped us tackle some long-standing habits that no longer served us. We need to continue that work. We also face challenges not specific to Saugatuck, such as an ongoing gradual decline in membership, with a related decline in overall pledge volume, accelerated by the dislocations of Covid and disconnection epidemic of our digital age. Young people, children, and families are increasingly overscheduled and overburdened, often leaving lay leadership to a generation facing burn out. At the same time, Westport and surrounding towns have experienced a demographic shift, with many newcomers arriving from New York City during the pandemic. Within a 5-mile radius, housing values and rents have increased, as have the number of townhouses and multifamily units. The largest increases in age distribution have been at the 22-25, 30-39, and 70+ year old populations, widely divergent groups. Although this area is predominantly white, we have seen increases in Black (+24%), Hispanic (+32%), and Multi-racial (+119%) diversity, and we benefit from a higher percentage of foreign-born inhabitants than the national average (21% vs 11%). We seek a pastor who, while respecting traditions, is also willing to ask how we might change to better serve each other and our neighbors. This requires creativity, empathy, active listening, courage to try and fail, and the interpersonal skills to bring others along.

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

At Saugatuck, we are proud of our efforts to support solutions for the homeless, practice Open and Affirming values, and pursue racial justice. Our foundation of beliefs is strong and grounded in Christian messages. We see our society's divisions and isolation from each other and from God as critical to address and an opportunity to expand our impact. We are also mindful of the environment and know we can do more. We welcome our next pastor's fresh perspective on where we are and where we can go.

We are actively engaged in multiple community outreach efforts which we want to continue while also finding new ways to energize the congregation around missions. We have had strong partnerships with Sustainable Westport, Westport Museum, the Westport-Weston Interfaith Council, Homes with Hope, Pivot Ministries, TEAM Westport, Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Open Door Shelter, Person to Person, McGivney Camperships, the Westport Senior Center, and other organizations. From the Boy Scouts to the Y's Men, a group for retirees, we embrace an intergenerational approach to our facilities use. We open our doors to multiple local groups, including dozens of 12-step groups, a preschool, performing and visual arts ensembles, and Abilis, which provides support and services for individuals with disabilities. Through our Music Director, we have provided multiple concerts free of charge to the community. A recent notable event was a special concert featuring Violins of Hope, instruments rescued from the Holocaust. We also hosted a moving Kristallnacht Commemoration featuring an eyewitness account.

Our annual youth group Mission Trips draw in teenagers and young adults far beyond our congregation for meaningful service. Recent destinations have included Vermont and Seattle, where we helped communities recover from flood devastation. In the past, we've journeyed to Cuba, Arizona, Maine, Denver, among others, changing not just others' lives but our own.

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

Within the town of Westport, SCC stands out for its commitment to inclusivity. Our next minister will need to be culturally aware, open hearted, celebrate differences, and affirm our faith that God welcomes us all, no matter who we love, where we're from, what we're struggling with, or where we are on life's journey. Specifically, our ideal candidate will have engaged in racial justice training and embrace open and affirming practice.

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.

- Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice
- Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions
- Caring for All Creation
- Working Together for Justice and Mercy

Our next minister will collaborate with the congregation to strengthen our internal bonds by supporting leadership transparency and personal responsibility – with no member being given any more power or influence than any other. A minister who listens, genuinely cares about us, and is able to communicate sometimes difficult truths with compassion will be most effective. We welcome new ideas and practices from our minister for addressing the loneliness that so many people are experiencing – within and outside the church. Our next minister must be committed to racial, social and environmental justice. Through inspiring sermons and participation in small groups and meetings, our minister will guide and challenge us to consider who is “our neighbor” as we seek to meet the needs of the community inside and outside of our walls.

Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

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

Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

We are being called by God to be a community for all people where individuals of all backgrounds and identities can come together and continue their spiritual growth journey. We strive to be a community where all feel loved and respected. There is space for joyful worship, for fun and laughter, sorrow and tears and righteous anger that can lead to positive action. The Church seeks to demonstrate its support of the local area with the meaningful use of our facilities for service opportunities and social outreach. Our missions engage with the local communities to support various needs and increase the Church's visibility.

We are a community that is open to change, willing to try new things while supporting and respecting each other. We are focused on Faith formation through offerings such as Bible study, and engaging in opportunities for social and environmental justice. Our children and youth play an active role in the life of the Church. There is a commitment to education for youth and adults.

We find ways to feed our spirits and engage the community in novel ways, including Drum Circles, Movement class, and Tai Ji. We have a well attended and delicious Fellowship hour every week after service, with rotating responsibilities for hosting among the Boards and Committees. We also love to spend time together at retreats, building connection and enjoying each other's company. We have annual Men's, Women's, and All Ages retreats at Silver Lake.

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

Led by our interim Pastor, this past June the Church celebrated its first Pride Day event on the front lawn of the Church, inviting the entire community. We advertised with a large banner at the church facing a prominent town street and spray painted 6 chairs in the colors of the rainbow to emphasize there is a seat for everyone. We also advertised on social media and through word of mouth. The event was held after worship, with multiple volunteers from the congregation providing music, food, crafts, and games for all ages. It was well attended, and the feedback was positive. The local TV station also reported on the event. This celebration was not only a concrete example of our mission towards being an open and affirming community but was designed to include non-church members and increase our visibility.

This past September the Church held a Blessing of the Animals service on the front lawn after Sunday Worship. The Pastor conducted a short service on the lawn and then individually blessed dozens of animals (including children's stuffed animals). Again, the event was advertised to the entire community and was well attended by both Church and non-Church members. There were games, activities for children, and a food truck, and several pet adoption agencies were invited and participated. The event was fun and successful and once again brought people (and pets) who are not members to the Church. We were thrilled to have at least 2 adoptions occur as a result!

Given the success of these events, we plan to hold them again as well as explore other ways to support our missions, bring our broader community together and expand it to include newcomers, and increase our visibility to our neighbors.

Congregation Reflections

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

Our church covenant states, "We the members of Saugatuck Congregational Church acknowledge and celebrate the tangible presence of God in our lives as revealed in Jesus Christ. We recognize that loving faithfulness to God is best manifested in our loving faithfulness to one another and our earth. Therefore, we covenant with God and each other to strive to follow Christ's way, walking with our brothers and sisters in faithfulness to Christ's command to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We accept as our responsibility the worship of God, the witness and fellowship of this faith community and the task of life-long education in the faith. We claim as our mission the promotion of justice, peace and human dignity in both word and deed. In all these things we bind ourselves to follow the Holy Spirit as revealed in the scriptures, in tradition and in our own experience." In worship, God is described with both male and female language, and we most frequently refer to God as love. The Holy Spirit is part of this love that connects us with God and with one another.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

SCC is truly a loving, welcoming, and inclusive community that embraces everyone, young and old, who walks through the door. We open our doors to multiple 12-step and other community groups. The congregation creates a feeling of belonging and acceptance. We like to be together - in worship, on retreats, at Fellowship Hour, at the summer Clam Bake, Sunday Concerts, small group dinners. We are questioning, willing to challenge and be challenged, and engaged in discerning our path forward. We are eager to explore new and relevant ways to serve, including environmental, social, and racial justice. We have an excellent music ministry that engages our youth and opens our doors to the broader community for musical events. Our physical assets include a beautiful, historic building centrally located in town with ample outdoor space for events.

Our commitment to our youth and children is a strength. There is nowhere near enough space provided below to answer that question fully. We'd be happy to share more - just ask!

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

Like any institution made up of diverse people with diverse opinions, communication is always an area of intentional focus and opportunity. We are working on strengthening trust within the congregation and among lay leaders as we evolve our governance to be more transparent and collaborative. Along those lines, broadening leadership engagement and strengthening capability are high priorities. We have a strong history of missions, and we would value a minister who can help ensure we are keeping that heart for service energized, responsive, inclusive, and relevant.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Worship takes place in our beautiful, historic sanctuary, and it is based on the lectionary text for that week. It involves a large amount of participation from our youth and children and is filled with joy. In one Pentecost worship, we had 16 red beach balls being thrown throughout the sanctuary. In one of our recent baptisms, the five year old and the minister ended up speaking about baptism as he was being baptized. For preaching, we value good story telling, a strong examination of scripture, and ways to apply it to our lives and to work for justice in the world.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

SCC's faith formation program is based on the guiding principles of loving God, loving neighbor, and knowing God as love. Church school is a K-12 one-room-schoolhouse format. We teach the Bible stories, always grounded in our understanding of God as Love. Confirmation class is biennial. The curriculum follows 6 core themes outlined by the UCC. We pair elders as mentors with each confirmand, creating long-lasting intergenerational bonds. Class structure encourages self-reflection and active listening. We see confirmation not as a culmination, but as a step on a journey of a lifetime.

We organize annual Mission Trips. Days are spent working. Evenings, we gather to share where we saw God or love in others or ourselves. Our high school Youth Group meets weekly.

Youth leaders are nominated for Boards, and we provide many worship leadership opportunities, e.g. skit-sermons (Story Tent) and music ministry. A teen delivered a personal sermon in December. "Growing Up Saugatuck" means active and celebrated participation in the life of the church.

Adult programming includes a pastor-led Bible study and a lay-facilitated Zoom class called VOICES, where we listen to and discuss an audio book.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

We are governed by a Council comprised of officers and representatives from Elected Boards. Our By-Laws outline the structure and goals of each group. The Officers and Elected Boards include a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, Trustees, Deacons, Christian Ed, Missions, Welcome & Membership, Community Life, and Stewardship. We have two elected Members-at-Large with voting rights. We have committees for Leadership Development, Personnel, and Pastoral Support. There are ministry teams dedicated to the Arts, Music, and Environmental Justice. Council meets monthly to receive Board updates and vote on relevant matters. Leadership Development is responsible for preparing slates and ensuring appropriate term limits. Decisions are communicated in Council and cascaded by Board Chairs; in bulletins, newsletters, and email; and in person through announcements or special meetings. We are working to strengthen governance, communication, and lay leader capabilities. By-Laws revision is part of this effort. We are excited to partner with our next pastor to continue the important work of continually discerning who we are, who our neighbors are, and who God is calling us to be.

When it comes to decision-making, 7 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...

On November 21, 2011, a devastating fire broke out, leaving no part of the church undamaged by fire, water, or smoke. This crisis called on the strength and resolve of the entire church.

At the time, we were in transition, with an Interim Pastor concluding his term. He left on the night of the fire for a previously scheduled commitment and was released by mutual decision. As of Nov. 22, SCC was without a pastor or a church.

Leadership acted immediately. We held a community rally on the Great Lawn, and the town came. Our Moderator, Deacons, and Trustees worked together on triage, including relocating the Thanksgiving Community Feast, scheduled in 4 days, and arranging a short-term space for Sunday worship.

Trustees rented office space and set up a Building Committee. They managed the insurance process, construction bids, and 2-year construction. We raised over \$2MM through a Rebuilding Capital Campaign.

Meanwhile, the Pastoral Search was still active. We had identified a potential candidate and reengaged her. Rev. Alison B. Patton joined us early in 2012.

SCC became known as a "Church Without Walls" and a community of dedicated members and staff who rose to the challenge when tested.

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

🔗 [SCC Bylaws 2011-10-30 for profile.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:	180
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	25
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	205

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	75%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	15%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	10
12-17	10
18-24	10
25-34	5
35-44	15
45-54	35
55-64	40
65-74	45
75+	30

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	0%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	0%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	0%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	0%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	5%
COLLEGE:	40%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	50%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	5%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	0%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	0%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Our congregation is generally highly educated and represents a wide swath of professions, including lawyers, small business owners, technology specialists, HR professionals, insurance and financial services, teachers, general management, development, real estate, healthcare, sales & marketing, acting, etc.

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

In a town that is predominantly white, our congregation reflects a fair amount of diversity. We have a significant Asian American presence as well as a higher than average percentage of congregants born outside of the US. We have a small but active number of Black, Hispanic, and Native American members. We also celebrate the diversity of experience, family structures, job status and experience, sexual orientation, religious backgrounds, abilities, gifts, and interests within our wonderful church family.

What diversity means in our context?

See above.

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

Yes

Comment after the exercise:

We had a Racial Justice training in 2020 and are planning another one this year as part of Leadership Development.

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)	25	Lay leaders, Pastor
Baptisms (number last year)	4	Pastor, Deacons
Children's Groups or Classes	10	CE & Faith Formation Director, lay leaders
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	330	Pastor, Music Director, Deacons, Lay Leaders, CE Director
Church-wide Meals	35	Lay leaders, Office & Communications Manager
Choirs and Music Groups	10	Music Director
Church-based Bible Study	10	Pastor
Communion (served how often?)	50	Pastor, Deacons, monthly
Community Meals	20	Lay leaders
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	7	Lay leaders, Mentors, Pastor, CE Director
Drama or Dance Program	13	Lay leaders, CE Director
Funerals (number last year)	10	Pastor, Deacons, Music Director
Intergenerational Groups	50	Lay leaders, Pastor
Outdoor Worship	50	Pastor, Deacons, Music Director
Prayer or Meditation Groups	10	Pastor, Lay leaders
Retreats	60	Lay leaders
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	40	Pastor, AV volunteers
Youth Groups or Classes	10	Lay leaders
Other	25	Mission Trip


Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10:00	50	

Additional comments:

Our Music Director organizes a wonderful Concert series that's open to the public. We average 50-60 attendees in person and many more online. The Winter Choral Concert had 217 viewers.

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
Willie Salmond	none	N/A	N/A	

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

Willie is a member and congregant. He provides pulpit supply and oversight of Communion or other rites requiring ordained leadership when necessary.

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Office & Communications Manager	No	part	Pastor	1+ years
Bookkeeper	No	part	Pastor, Treasurer	8+ years
Christian Education & Faith Formation Director	No	part	Pastor	<1 year
Music Director	No	part	Pastor	3+ years
Song Leaders (3)	No	part	Music Director	1-3 years
AV Operators	No	vol		2-3 years

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

We have a strong core presence of middle-aged and senior participants but opportunity to identify ways to invite in more young adults and families. We may want to consider different kinds of worship given that Sunday mornings seem increasingly usurped by sports or other activities. On the other hand, our events are well attended, and we are a "community center" in many ways. We have experience being a "church without walls;" how can we build on this to provide community, acceptance, and nourishment to our neighbors on a more consistent basis?

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	250000
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	120000
Fundraising Events	5000
Rentals of Church Building	104000
Total	479000

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

574000

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.

No response

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

25

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)

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Percentage of operating budget.

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

No response

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

We do not have any debt

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

N/A

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.

N/A

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

2750000

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

As needed up to 5% of avg portfolio value

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

5% of average value of portfolio over last 5 years

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

None

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

With zero increase in portfolio value and no contributions, approximately 20 years.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

No response

Other Assets

No response

Reserves (savings):

575000

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:

No response

How is the parsonage used?

Pastor's residence

Street

245 Post Road E

City

Westport

State

CT

Zip

6880

Finished square footage:

No response

Number of Bedrooms:

4

Number of Bathrooms:

2

Assessed real estate value:

No response

Available for minister residence?

Yes

Expected minister residence?

Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

Good condition with ongoing maintenance

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Trustees

Parsonage pictures



Description of all buildings owned by the church:

Sanctuary building and parsonage. Please note the parsonage is legally restricted to church/ minister use. As such, we cannot calculate "fair market value."

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

N/A

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids
Large print bulletins
Closed-captioning on sanctuary screen and/or livestream
Wheelchair access in bathrooms
"Quiet room" with worship viewing and listening availability
Handrails on all stairs
Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)

Curb cuts
Accessible bathroom on each floor

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

See above.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

We have a Treasurer, a Chair of Trustees, and a Bookkeeper. The payment of large bills is authorized by the Trustees and executed by the Bookkeeper. The payment of reimbursements or other bills is done through a check request form. Our Board of Trustees is responsible for budget, endowment, and financial issues. Our Board of Stewardship is responsible for anything having to do with pledging and giving to the church. The Treasurer and Pastor are ex-officio nonvoting members of Trustees. Our By Laws call for an audit every 3 years; we are currently in the process of completing one.

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

Saugatuck is fortunate to have a healthy endowment which allows us to fund aspects like a wonderful music program and an effective online presence. Nevertheless, we are constrained by a shrinking and aging member base. New growth will be important to enable us to maintain our current levels of programming and missions.

Historical Information

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

SCC was founded in 1832. An early champion of diversity, we founded Saugatuck Nursery School in 1968 explicitly to foster racial peace. The same year, the church voted to accept women Deacons. The church has thrived despite challenges, deepening our commitment to loving God and neighbor.

- **The Fire** - see above
- **Open & Affirming** - In 2007, following 3 years of intensive study and dialogue, SCC voted to become an ONA church.
- **Hoskins Era & Social, Racial, & Environmental Justice Work**

Ted Hoskins served as Pastor from 1971-1993 and transformed the church's mission, building our reputation for bringing God's Word to life through service. Rev. Hoskins was a founder of the Interfaith Housing Assoc and established the Thanksgiving Feast, a major town event for years. More recently, Rev. Patton embraced and expanded this work through leadership in the Interfaith Clergy Council, visibly supporting communities of color through our Black Lives Matter banner, and facilitating a Racial Justice Workshop.

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

Like many churches, SCC faced significant challenges during COVID. Our response was flexible, creative, and effective. We were agile, constantly testing, learning, and evolving. Initially, services were prerecorded by our Pastor. Other programming was revised to stay aligned with changing CDC guidelines. We used Zoom for church meetings, confirmation class, children's time, and virtual fellowship. Later, we moved to livestreaming and worshipping outdoors with distancing. When we went back inside, we practiced social distancing, wore masks, and didn't sing. Passing the peace was a wave.

The goal was to stay connected. We instituted Sunday Sunset Walks. The fresh air and community was a bright spot. This new way of operating enabled us to reconnect with members who had moved away and others unable to come in person. When we returned to the sanctuary, we didn't want to lose them. We invested in an excellent AV system to communicate with our congregation and the wider community.

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.

The congregation aspires to address conflict with love, assuming positive intent, in a way that moves us all forward with accountability and grace. In the past, a lack of trust, scarcity mentality, and fear of forces beyond our control have led to obstruction and manipulation or avoidance and disengagement. Although we have By-Laws, we grew out of practice in operating by them, leading to situations where a small number of people made decisions and took actions outside of their scope of responsibility, including asking our prior Pastor to resign. In some ways, this was a shock to the system that led to healthy reflection, recommitment to our values, and greater transparency. We called an interim specifically skilled in helping to work through conflict resolution. In parallel, we are revising the By-Laws, seeking broader input to produce a working set of guidelines we all are knowledgeable of, buy into, and pledge to operate by.

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

See above.

Ministerial History:

Name: Theodore G. Hoskins

Years of service: 23

UCC Standing

Name: R. Alan Johnson & Martha E. McMane

Years of service: 4

UCC Standing

Name: John Danner, Ph.D

Years of service: 9

UCC Standing

Name: Alison J. Buttrick Patton

Years of service: 11

UCC Standing

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

We responded to the events that caused our last pastor's departure by committing to transparency, reflection, and community healing. As a congregation, we have work to do to create an environment where the Pastor, Lay Leaders, and congregation are true co-workers in the great job of doing God's work. We recognize that our Pastor is neither CEO nor staff, but a cherished partner and guide on our shared faith journey. It's our joint responsibility to engage honestly with each other, give and receive feedback, learn from and forgive mistakes, assume positive intentions, and collaborate.

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.

SCC has a long history of supporting local mission partners: Homes with Hope, Open Door Shelter, Person-to-Person, Pivot Ministries, Saugatuck Nursery School, and Positive Directions. We provide meals monthly for the local homeless shelter. Our fall coat collection has become year round along with our food collections for the local shelter pantry. Through our Angel Tree Program, we provide gifts to Clasp Homes, Pivot Ministries, the Dept of Children & Family Services.

We are strong advocates for inclusive community and anti-discrimination. We have participated in town protests against sexism and racism, including proudly hanging a Black Lives Matter banner. We hosted a celebration for Pride Day on our front lawn. Our youth travel annually to areas impacted by climate disasters to provide service and support. We host an annual Blessing of the Animals where we invite rescue groups to support pet adoption.

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

SCC has an extensive history of participation in activities concerning the United Church of Christ. Our former pastor, Rev. Patton, served on the Racial Justice Task Force of the former Connecticut Conference, the Board of the Southern New England Conference and as a delegate to national UCC synod meetings. Conference ministers and staff have preached at SCC and led workshops, and we have enjoyed Silver Lake retreats.

SCC always has two delegates who attend the annual meetings of the SNE Conference and report back to the congregation. Two lay members have served at different times as chair of the Fairfield West's Committee on Church and Ministry. One of those lay members is now serving on the Advisory Council of Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School, and Andover Newton faculty and students have preached at SCC.

SCC's endowment fund is managed by United Church Funds. Their investment guidelines were very important to the Church's trustees in making the decision to use UC Funds.

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

We are active in the Westport community and frequently partner with the Interfaith Council, the Clergy Council of Westport & Weston, TEAM Westport, the Westport Library, Sustainable Westport, Westport League of Women Voters, Westport schools, and the Westport Museum on relevant issues, events, and initiatives.

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.

Environmental Justice/ Green Church

Generally open and would seek a pastor to advise and recommend.

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

We are heavily involved in ecumenical and interfaith activities. We participate in the Interfaith Council in Westport, and joined with local synagogues in justice related services this fall. We also participate in ecumenical Good Friday services, beach services, and Easter sunrise service on the beach. The summer beach services are organized jointly by 4 local churches. Each Church, including SCC, hosts two services over the course of the summer. Services are open to anyone and usually attract between 125-250 people. Saugatuck provides the sound system. Occasionally baptisms are performed in the Sound.

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

Our mission statement is:

A Community of Christ

Welcoming all People

Learning to Serve God and Neighbor

This is a well-crafted mission statement that accurately and succinctly reflects our church's values and the time spent living those values.

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.

We have had a history of ministers who are very involved in community ministry and in wider church ministry. We are very supportive of this work and proud to have a minister who is also deeply engaged with the community and the denomination. We do expect that some of the minister's time will be invested in community ministry and wider church activities, and we are very supportive of this in our expectations of the minister's time.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

No response

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

- Multifamily homes have increased, depicting a shift in the economic landscape, with wealthier residents or developers moving in
- A majority moved from within the state, possibly drawn to our schools and infrastructure
- New renters were in the highest rent bracket, and owners were in the highest housing value bracket.
- Families with children and single parents have declined while young couples have increased
- Recent graduates, young families, and retired families have increased
- Multi-racial, Hispanic and Pacific Islander representation has grown; Native American and White population have declined

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.

While the population breakdown in Westport is similar to the broader Fairfield county, we see significant differences:

- Race & ethnicity: While Fairfield county has a much broader spread of different race and ethnicity, Westport is more skewed towards White. This is indicative of the congregation as well, which presents an opportunity for the church to expand to reach out to other races and ethnicities.
- Education: The Westport population, like our congregation, has a significantly higher percentage of tertiary education relative to Fairfield County.

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

COVID and other changes require us to think differently:

- Cultural Sensitivity: Recent pastors have led by being inclusive and fighting injustice; this is an ongoing priority
- Relationships: We want to create spaces where different people can come together in authentic relationship
- Beyond the Walls: We seek to engage with and serve diverse populations
- Common Ground: All Christians are united in the Body of Christ, who commands us to love all people
- Welcome All: We strive to be a place where people from all backgrounds feel welcomed and accepted and engage in ongoing DEI training

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

SCC is a beacon of history, community, and spirituality. With our central location and inclusive ethos, we are a place of worship and a hub of community engagement. We are known for social support and outreach, from the 12-step programs we host to our racial, social, and environmental justice efforts. We embrace interfaith partnerships, stand up for our beliefs and against discrimination. We collaborate locally to provide assistance to those in need. From food drives and homeless outreach to educational and conservation initiatives, we are deeply committed to making a positive impact.

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

New people comment on the warmth, welcome, embrace of families, excellent music, and inspiring preaching. From a new member: *I'm proud to be a member of a Church that believes Social Justice and Jesus are inseparable, that love is a God-given right, and that God loves every single one of us. I know I will leave our pastor's sermons wiser than when I walked in and that the congregation is as eager as I am to learn, grow, and try to be the best versions of ourselves on this one planet we have. I treasure how this church pours love onto each other in so many small and significant ways.*

References



☒ Kari Nicewander

Completed: 4 days ago

I have served as the Interim Minister at Saugatuck Congregational Church since January 1, 2024.

Personal Cell: (860) 913-3583

Mobile Phone: 860-913-3583

Reference Response

Saugatuck is a vibrant, vital church, committed to love and justice. It is a delight to be there every Sunday morning, as the children and youth come forward with big smiles on their faces. It is pure joy to sing along with the incredibly talented musicians in the congregation. It is an absolute pleasure to deeply know the caring, committed, loving human beings in the church. It is a deep privilege to be able to preach the sermons I feel called to preach, to be vulnerable and honest, to be challenging and reflective, to make mistakes and to learn, and to know that the congregation will respond with grace, love, and commitment. Church members are very open about the struggles that they faced, and there is broad participation in the process of learning and healing. This is a church with incredible members, wonderful programming, an excellent staff, and a beautiful, exciting future!

☒ Ramin Ganeshram Executive Director, Westport Museum, Community Leader

Contacted: 3 days ago

Reference Response Work Phone: (203) 222-1424

No response

☒ Rabbi Michael Friedman

Contacted: 3 days ago

Church Primary Phone: 2032271293

Reference Response

No response

Closing Prayer

Psalm 51: 10-12 *Create in me a clean heart, Oh God, and put a new and right spirit in me.*

Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

God, guide us with your Holy Spirit to attract and find a new pastor. Create a welcoming and loving environment for this new partnership. Keep us open in our choice. Help us to be supportive to new direction and experience. Please give us a willing spirit and trust you completely.

In Jesus' 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.

Search Committee, relevant Boards and Committees, Interim Pastor. In addition, much of the data was drawn from all-church profile and vision meetings.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

We have a traditional job description we would like to provide to any interested candidate.