

MAINE CONFERENCE

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



First Congregational Church of Kittery UCC
23 Pepperrell Road, Kittery Point, ME 03904
Website: [First Congregational Church of Kittery](http://www.kitterypointucc.org) (www.kitterypointucc.org)
Conference: MAINE Association: YORK
Conference Staff Person:
John Fiscus: jfiscus@maineucc.org

Position:

Three Quarter-time Designated Pastor

Summary Ministry Description:

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

Our Mission Statement

The First Congregational Church of Kittery United Church of Christ is a welcoming, spiritual community; anchored in love and growing in faith. It is our mission to:

- Inspire spiritual growth.
- Nurture all families.
- Embrace the wider community.

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

First Congregational Church of Kittery UCC is facing many of the same headwinds as other congregations. We have an aging population. We have decreased attendance. We operate in a society where many question religion's relevance. And yet, to paraphrase Admiral James Stockdale¹, we have unwavering faith that we will prevail as a pillar of our community and as a vessel for sharing God's love. To ensure that we are the safe, supportive, enduring community that we envision, we need to get "back to basics." If we want to set ourselves up for long-term stability and impact, then we need a minister whose strength and passion is preaching.

¹ <https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/Stockdale-Concept.html>

We are focused on the first tenet of our mission—inspiring spiritual growth. Members of the community show up and give of themselves without fail. They need to fill their own cups spiritually. If we are able to fill those cups, then we will be better positioned to fulfill our potential in the wider community. It is our hope to go from a $\frac{3}{4}$ time pastor to a full-time settled pastor. We know this will require work not only from a designated pastor but also from the congregation.

Photographs:

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



*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

1. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

(Select the expectations of the church's next pastor using the list below and following the Call Agreement Workbook. Additional goals for the pastor may also be included here. Expectations should be reasonable based upon the compensation level selected above.)

EXPECTATIONS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Worship Leadership, Preaching, Service Preparation | ☒ Maintain collegial and denominational relationships. |
| ☒ Church Administration, Newsletter, Communications, Staff Supervision (Advisory Capacity – not direct responsibility) | ☐ Mission and service involvements |
| ☒ Leadership with Church governing bodies and committees. (Advisory Capacity to start) | ☐ Other expectations: |
| ☒ Pastoral care, visitation of hospitalized, homebound, and members in care facilities. | |
| ☒ Special services (weddings, funerals, liturgical year services) | |
| ☐ Teaching – Bible Studies, adult education, confirmation, other (please provide a list of any other teaching items). | |

We anticipate 8-10 hours/month of key meetings that will allow the minister to a) communicate effectively with the staff and congregation and b) inform the Sunday experience.

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

Our goal is to kick off a virtuous cycle of spiritual and community growth. [See table] Our desire is to bring in a designated pastor at $\frac{3}{4}$ time with an explicit focus on the Sunday experience and pastoral care. The results from community surveys and meetings make it clear that these are the areas the congregation most wants to see reinforced and where the minister will have the most impact.

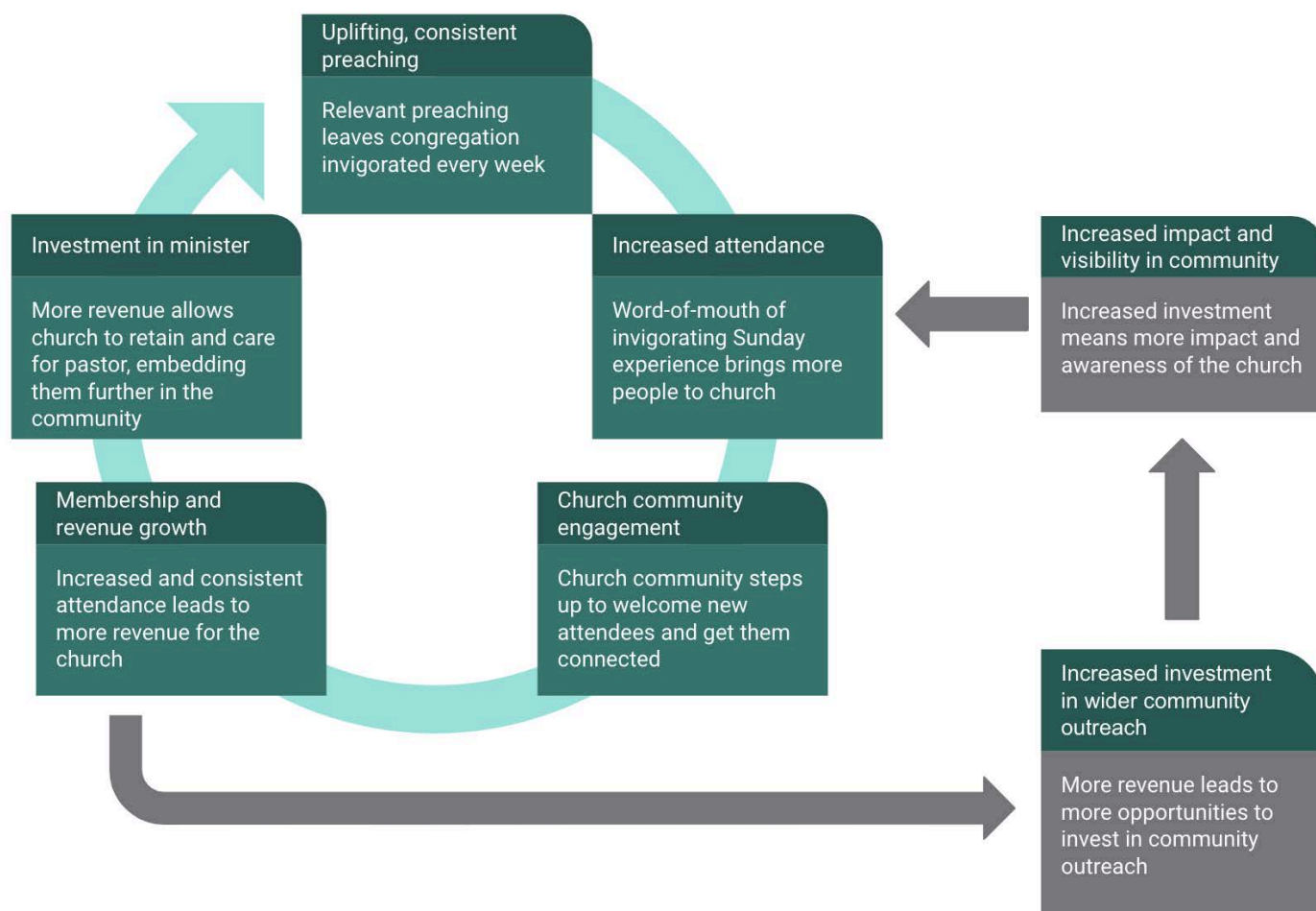


Table: This table describes the virtuous cycle we want to ignite. It all starts with good, consistent preaching. If we get that right, then the other areas begin to fall into place. We expect the designated pastor to focus on the first box of preaching.

An uplifting sermon for this community is one that makes religion relevant to everyday life. It's a sermon that makes the congregation pause and reflect. It's a sermon that brings the text to life for our

modern world. It's a sermon that focuses on our mission of inspiring spiritual growth. It's a sermon that fills our cups. (It's a sermon that motivates parents to pack their kids in a car every Sunday and schlep them to church because the parents find meaning and connection.) We do not expect a comedian to entertain or a cheerleader to hype. Rather, we want to sense passion and sincerity coursing through our spirits and refreshing our souls.

The church community will continue to step up to support the community's needs and other outreach. The congregation is also committing to support with the nuts and bolts of communication. We have used this interim time to shore up our processes and bylaws, which will allow the new minister to focus on religion. We hope this back-to-basics approach will allow us to build on success and extend our reach and impact over time.

While the main focus of our new pastor should be on the Sunday experience, we recognize that the congregation still craves pastoral support during life's most intense and trying moments. The minister that God calls to us will be able to be present in those times when faith is most needed.

We are looking for someone who will grow with us. Someone who is curious, emotionally intelligent, and eager will do well. We do not expect perfection. We hope to create a safe space for the new minister to hone their craft, deliver their message, and build lasting spiritual relationships.

There was a time in our history when the church was down to one single member, and the church survived. We do not fear the changes and challenges that we are facing—quite the opposite—because they have allowed us to find clarity in purpose and vision. We hope our next pastor will share that vision of inspiring spiritual growth.

2. SUPPORT AND COMPENSATION

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

If your church has a parsonage:

Street / City / State / Zip: 23 Pepperrell Road, Kittery Point, Maine 03906

Finished square footage: 1792 sq. ft.

Number of Bedrooms, Number of Bathrooms: 4 bedrooms, 1-½ baths

Available for minister residence: Yes

Expected minister residence: Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances: The parsonage was built in 1910 and has been well maintained by our trustees. The home is a two-story structure. A new stove and refrigerator in 2022. A washer, dryer, and dishwasher are included.

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs: Trustees

Describe all buildings owned by the church:

Our campus includes a Sanctuary built in 1730, a Parsonage built in 1910 and a Parish House built in 1729 with several additions over the years.

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

The Sanctuary and the Parish House.

State any incentives (*e.g. school debt reduction, retention bonus after a certain number of years in position or Sabbatical after 5 or 7 years*):

To be negotiated at the point of becoming a settled pastor.

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

Peer and professional support opportunities include informal connections between pastors in the Seacoast area, an annual York Association UCC gathering, occasional clergy gatherings and cohort support groups offered through the Maine Conference UCC. The area clergy gatherings, both UCC and ecumenical dissolved during COVID though could reconnect with new leadership. There are multiple opportunities for engagement in Association, Conference, and Maine Council of Church ministries.

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

We expect the church needs to come first. We respect that the minister may choose to supplement their income. At the same time, the financial package and scope of work should ensure that the minister is able to focus on the needs of the church.

- Salary \$70,000, which includes benefits and negotiated vacation time. (The Finance Committee will negotiate specific benefits with the candidate to meet their needs). The goal is to move toward a full-time settled pastor at the end of the designation period. At that point, we would renegotiate the salary and benefits.
- Housing Allowance: A parsonage is included, with all utilities paid. The expectation is that the minister will live in the parsonage.

- Three quarter-time requirements/schedules to be negotiated. We aim to prioritize Sunday preaching (we currently have an 8:00 a.m. and a 10:00 a.m. service) along with key pastoral care needs.

In the past, we have always adhered to the UCC recommended guidelines for pastor compensation. This is not possible at this time. We will endeavor to make this a reality again when we have a full-time settled pastor.

3. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

Our church is located in a seacoast area with demographic paradoxes—the well-to-do with picturesque coastal homes, locals whose families have been here for generations, a transient military population thanks to the naval shipyard, blue-collar civilian workers, and folks who struggle to make ends meet as the cost of living increases. We are called to serve this community and welcome all. We are called to fulfill the tenets of our mission – inspire spiritual growth, nurture all families, embrace the wider community – in an area that could easily be divided along demographic lines. Our mission is about unifying our community through love and God’s grace, and we seek to do that every day.

- A congregation who consistently works collaboratively in a supportive and safe environment, sharing spiritually and faithfully of ourselves.
- A church that is willing to develop and or modify as needed a system promoting effective communication between minister, congregation, and community.
- A congregation that values all the gifts we bring to the church seeing who we are and not what we can produce or achieve.
- A church community creating lasting relationships and friendships.
- A diverse, open, and affirming church supporting intergenerational worship and activities.

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

For example, describe two experiments your congregation has initiated or engaged in the past year, what were the results and where do you see your next steps?

Our church is known for our annual Christmas Fair and Blueberry Festival. The monies from these two fairs has allowed us to support our local nonprofits, as well as, provide extra money for our church. We have provided meals and food to local organizations helping to support local Seacoast residents. Our church has supported local businesses during times of need and helped to raise funds to aid their employees.

Our church has served Kittery by providing meals and food to local organizations. This tradition has been around for many years and continues to be a positive way to serve our community.

We as a congregation have opened our doors to the community by offering game nights, activities following Sunday services, and programs to bring people in. First Congregational is the oldest church in continuous operation in Maine. During the Summer we offer tours of our sanctuary - which has brought in many travelers just passing by as well as local folks. The reality of our church's financial situation has brought many members and friends back together to work in keeping this church community active.

4. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

- We are guided by God
- As Congregationalists, we are a group where strength comes from our sermons.
- Unwavering faith in our future
- An inclusive and welcoming congregation
 - Hopeful and Kind
 - Caring and Accepting
- Loyal to our church community and church goals
- Supportive of our greater community
- Committed
 - Energy and interest in continuing to grow
 - Commitment to musical integration
 - Membership that is willing to participate in the social activities of the church
 - Membership with ingenuity and creativity
 - Independent and self-governing

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

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

We worship in our 1730 sanctuary and base worship on scripture and the UCC lectionary year. We currently have two services most weeks: 8 AM and 10 AM. The 8 AM service is abbreviated, with no music, and approximately 30 minutes in length. The 10 AM service is family-friendly with music and lasts approximately one hour. Both services are available via YouTube Livestream.

Everyone coming to service is greeted by a door deacon and provided with a church bulletin. Service begins with the ringing of the bell in the tower, the lighting of the candles, and a reading of our mission statement. A call to worship and then a passing of the peace occurs, welcoming all. The sanctuary is filled with an energy of togetherness and a need for spirituality to refresh the soul. Music from the choir and organist is also a large part of our service. Children receive a short message on the goodness of God, prior to heading to Sunday school.

Following the sermon and benediction, service ends with a musical composition from our music director. The congregation remains seated during this time. The minister and a door deacon are also at the door to greet each person who has attended the service. Oftentimes a card is available for members of the congregation to sign which will then be sent to a member who is ill or in convalescence. A convivial coffee hour follows in the Parish House.

Good preaching for our church is relevant, uplifting, reflective, concise, and grounded in scripture.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

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

Our church is organized according to our bylaws. Decisions are communicated through congregational meetings, our weekly “Mooring” e-newsletter, and emails. Occasionally, decisions are announced at the beginning of service.

The COVID pandemic and minister turnover affected the dynamics of who we are as a congregation. With work and direction from our interim ministers, we as a congregation have been working to identify our strengths and weaknesses. The interim ministers also helped us update our bylaws and ways of working. We are now in a better position to focus on the spiritual growth that drives our mission.

When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?

8 - 10 hours/month

Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

The moving and resignation of our called minister in 2022 was a crisis that needed quick resolution. The Church Council scheduled emergency meetings for discussion and action. We also reached out to the Maine UCC for guidance. We followed the guidelines to fulfill our contractual obligations with the previous minister, establish pulpit supply, bring in bridge ministers, and kick off the interim search process.

Can you provide the next minister with a copy of bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance? [Yes/No]

Yes

5. CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP, BUDGET & LEADERSHIP

Current Membership: ____163____

Membership 5 years ago: _219_____

Average Weekly Worship Attendance: _50_____

Participating in Weekly Adult Education: ____5-8_____

Participating in Youth Ministries: ____3-4_____

Current Year Annual Church Budget: \$__259,222_____

Current Year Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM): \$____\$5697__

Pledging Units: ____59_____ Average Annual Pledge Amount: \$__ \$4394

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

What is the church's current indebtedness?

Total amount of loan debt: \$0

Reason for debt?

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget.

We are discussing a capital campaign to raise funds to support capital improvements.

Complete the following chart. List all current staff, including ministers. (Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill.)

Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Ministers	Yes	$\frac{3}{4}$ time	Council	2 Years
Church Coordinator		$\frac{1}{2}$ time	Ministers	8 Years
Sexton		$< \frac{1}{4}$ Time	Ministers	3 Years

6. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

Historical note: William Whipple was born in Kittery in the year 1730 and baptized in our church. He was a Revolutionary General and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He is buried in our cemetery located across the road from our church.

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

During our interim ministers' time here, we have fine-tuned our bylaws, personnel policy, and child safety policy. We have clarified our process for managing the documentation so that we can easily reference and access our information.

The loss of our pastor following the pandemic. This loss was the beginning of difficult times for our congregation. It was as if we had lost our sense of purpose. Through the course of a bridge minister and now, an interim minister we have a better understanding of who we are. It is not unusual to see previous ministers revisit our church during events or serve as pulpit supply. Our former ministers have come back to preach due to the fond memories of serving our congregation.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

For example, what is an example of a recent conflict and something your congregation learned from it? Describe an occasion when your church experienced conflict without being able to resolve it well. Does your church have policies, protocols or structures for dealing with conflict?)

We have strong, creative, passionate leaders in the congregation who are willing to take charge and get things done. This occasionally leads to wires getting crossed or folks feeling out of the loop. We operate from the assumption that everyone has good intentions for the church and the community. We recognize that we need to have clearer ways to share information.

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

Pastor’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Rev Jill Staples	1989-2001	yes
Rev Jack Lynes - Interim	2001-2003	yes
Rev Dr Jeffery Gallager	2003-2014	yes
Rev Linda Hirst - Interim	2014-2015	yes
Rev Brian Gruhn	2015-2021	yes
Revs Mark & Ivy Ferrin - Bridge	11/2022-4/2023	yes
Rev Dr Mark & Rev Cheryl Stewart - Interim	6/2023 - Present	yes

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

Y/N/Ask us [Yes](#)

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Y/N/Ask us [Yes](#)

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

Y/N/Ask us [Yes](#)

We have mainly had great relationships with our pastors. The most recent settled pastor is the only instance in 30 years where we had a strained relationship. We “walk the walk” when it comes to taking care of the ministers called to serve our church. This comes in the form of being extremely supportive of continuing education and supporting their families through life’s ups and downs. For example, a previous settled pastor completed his PhD and wrote a book while serving the church.

7. COMMUNITY VISION

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

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

Several of our members are leaders and involved in local nonprofits - Footprints Food Pantry, Fuel & More, End 68 Hours of Hunger, and Fabulous Find. Our Fellowship group donates yearly to local nonprofits - Fair Tide, Kittery Holiday Baskets, Seacoast Fridge, Maine Seacoast Missions, Meals on Wheels, National MS Society, Parkinson’s Walk, Baltimore Boys Chorus, Youth Organist Collaborative, Pilgrim Lodge Scholarships, and local high school scholarships. Our church is also known for serving communal dinners for all and supporting local businesses when the need arises. We also open our doors to two AA groups and the Trekkers (an organization to bring youth from rural Maine to visit colleges).

Note: The Deacons’ fund also contributes yearly to Table of Plenty, Fair Tide, Fuel and More, End 68 Hours of Hunger, Foot Prints, and Kittery Holiday Baskets.

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

Our church has three members who attended the Maine Conference's Annual meeting along with our interim ministers in 2023. Attending the conference provided the group with the opportunity to vote on the Maine Conference budget, along with a vote for officers and the Board. It also allowed for discussion on the struggles and wins with other church representatives and to bring back strategies these churches have implemented to enhance their organization.

In the fall of 2022, four members attended the Small Churches workshop led by Rev. Marissa Laviola.

We have a member on Maine's Conference's Anti-Racism Resource Team.

Our Faith and Fun Ministry team went to Washington D.C. to hand out healing cranes to legislators and collaborated with the National UCC office prior to heading to the Capitol.

Our congregation has been supportive of the Maine UCC's summer camp - Pilgrim Lodge - we have had church members work as camp nurse and camp counselor when our youth attended. We have also had a member be a volunteer counselor for the Faith Foundations youth camp in June 2023.

In 2021 and 2022, our council chair and chair of our Pastoral Relations Committee worked closely with the Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright, for guidance following our minister's resignation and the need for a bridge minister. Rev. Fuller-Wright met with our leadership on Behavioral Covenants and Interim Ministry. She visited our church in December of 2022 to preach and to meet with the congregation post-service.

We have a member who is a Minister in Discernment and is very involved in the York Association and Maine conference. She is currently the Vice-Moderator for the York Association, hosts monthly meetings and attends the York Association Committee on Ministry's monthly meetings. She is also working closely with the Maine Associate Council Minister, Rev. John Fiscus.

During Covid, our members attended Zoom meetings. It offered an opportunity for discussion of issues and concerns many had during this time, Covid closures, and how to deal with conflict resolutions.

8. REFERENCES

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

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

REFERENCE 1

Linda Hirst

Position: Interim Minister Madbury UCC

Relationship to the congregation: Interim minister 2014-2015

(207)475-8284

lbhirst@comcast.net

REFERENCE 2

David Stensland

207-752-7751

david@redmaplehomedesign.com

David is a local designer who has supported the church with decor for events. He is also active in the church bell choir.

REFERENCE 3

Galen Beale

(207-703-0374) riverland2@aol.com

Galen Beale is a long-time friend of many members of the congregation. She has volunteered and worked at our major events, as well as working with the Communications Committee, as one of a group that worked with the nonprofit Partners for Sacred Places.

PROMPTS FOR REFERENCES

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

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

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

Anything else you wish to share.

9. CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we embark on this search for our new pastor, we humbly ask for your guidance and wisdom to lead our committee. Grant us discernment to identify the individual who aligns with your vision for our church, possessing strong spiritual leadership, a compassionate heart, and a dedication to your Word. May we work together in unity, listening to your voice above all else, and ultimately choose the shepherd you have prepared for our flock. In Jesus' name, Amen.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

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

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

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

Our group consisted of a Financial secretary, Deacons, Music committee member, Family Fun and Faith committee member and longtime members, and a friend of the church.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

There is a lot of stored-up energy that is ready for release. We have spent the past several years doing the hard work of clarifying what is important. We want to focus on the first tenet of our mission of inspiring spiritual growth.

Signed:

Karen Brown
Co-Chair, Pastoral Search Committee

Signature: Karen V Brown
Karen V Brown (Feb 4, 2025 13:46 EST)

Date: Feb 4, 2025

William Smart
Co-Chair, Pastoral Search Committee

Signature: William C Smart
William C Smart (Feb 4, 2025 14:33 EST)

Date: Feb 4, 2025

Committee Members:

Karen Brown, Co-Chair
William Smart, Co-Chair
Morgan McCurdy, Chaplain
Christine Leonard, Scribe
David Bradstreet, Committee Member
Heather Dorgan, Committee Member
Cathy Wyeth, Committee Member

VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE

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

Staff Comment:

Signature:

Name / Title:

Email:

Phone:

Date:

Reference from Linda Hirst

Position: Interim Minister Madbury UCC

Relationship to the congregation: Interim minister 2014-2015

(207)475-8284

lbhirst@comcast.net

I had the pleasure of serving as interim minister for Kittery Point UCC from 2014-2015 and before and after I have worked with their different pastors serving together in the York Association of the Maine Conference UCC. The congregation loves their church and has been and continues to be involved in bringing music, programs of interest, special worship services, youth events and other activities to its members and the community.

Their strength is their passion, their hopefulness, the wonderful leadership and willingness to volunteer and try anything once! As the church at large finds it necessary to move out into the community, I think Kittery Point UCC will be challenged to do the same (as we all know, this does not come easily). But with their current interim leadership and the right settled pastor I believe they will wholeheartedly embrace a new path forward.

My significant experience with the congregation was spent at a Reaching New People Workshop with leaders, coming up with ideas to move beyond the church building and to create relationships with people outside the church. While we didn't get a lot of traction, we came up with some great ideas. The congregation is always willing to try new things when it comes to ministry and sharing the good news!

Reference from David Stensland

Hello, I'm David, a Kittery Point resident since 2004. I'm pleased to provide a glowing reference for the First Congregational Church of Kittery. Although I'm not a member, I have volunteered since 2013 in various roles including:

1. Christmas Fair: crafting and displaying items for sale in the holiday fundraiser, creating interior/exterior floorplans, designing signage, decorating, and advising during committee meetings.
2. Blueberry Festival: creating signage, baking pies, and advising in committee meetings.
3. Faith & Fun Ministry: decorating and setting up for contra dance fundraisers.
4. Bell Choir member (when I inquired if a non-member could join, I was enthusiastically welcomed with open arms!)

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

1. Gracious & Welcoming: Their motto, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey... you are welcome here," resonates with me every time I interact with members. Their actions and words demonstrate a genuine care for me, for one another, and for the wider community.
2. Service to Each Other: Living their values, they approach their service with great intention, providing the congregation with stability and resilience. While they are indeed a close-knit group, they embody both closeness and inclusivity, taking responsibility for one another and generously sharing their time and resources.
3. Enthusiastic & Engaged: There's a palpable "roll up our sleeves" and "can-do" spirit when it comes to tackling projects, envisioning improvements, and making things happen.
4. Commitment to Community: They are attentive to the needs of the broader community. Although I may not know all the details of their efforts, my experience volunteering at events indicates a strong motivation for outreach and engagement. It's also common to see members involved in various community organizations and charities outside of church.
5. Commitment to Social Justice: Their dedication to tolerance, support, visibility, and care for society's vulnerable & marginalized members aligns with their community service. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I feel a reassuring sense of "we've got your back."
6. Stewardship of Historic Buildings: There is a real love of place, of gratitude & respect for the physical spaces they steward, and of pride in the church's history within the community.

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

1. As with many groups, there are certain areas where embracing change can be difficult.

2. Like many small congregations, membership growth seems to go slow. Leadership and highly active volunteers need to be mindful of potential burnout. Committees need fresh perspectives and new people coming in to help keep things moving forward.
3. The church contributes to the community in ways that sometimes go unnoticed or unpublicized. For example, there could be more promotion of how the funds raised from events are used locally. This not only gives recognition to the church's efforts but may also inspire more of the community to become involved and support events.

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

Last summer, my mother visited from out of state and wanted to attend church, so we went to a Sunday service at First Congregational. I had only attended a few services (Christmas Eve once or twice and a few times playing in the bell choir). Having spent three weeks traveling together from South Dakota to Maine, and being connected to many church members through social media, it was a pleasant surprise when Pastor Marc said during prayers and announcements, "And we're so glad to have our friend David here with his mother, and grateful they've been safe in their travels across the country! Welcome back!" This made me feel especially valued as a non-member, as they really treated me like one of their own.

Anything else you wish to share.

In three words, I would describe this congregation as unique, uplifting, and welcoming!

I would be glad to discuss any further thoughts if needed.

Thank you,

David Stensland

Reference from Galen Beale
Email: Riverland2@aol.com
Telephone: 207-703-0374

1. Describe some areas of strength in this church's ministry.

Kittery's UCC church is made up of a creative, hardworking, committed group of people. They continue a long tradition of strong female leadership which has held them together over the years and is an important support for the church, both by volunteer work and monetary contributions. They are kind to one another and know how to work collaboratively. They take seriously their commitment to the care and maintenance of their historic buildings.

Kittery Point is a small, tight knit community which is supportive of the church. While there are several other churches nearby, they seem to cooperate well with each other. The church has reached out to local social services, the Kittery Naval Yard, and to the town and has built a reputation as a place to gather and enjoy a meal or to stage an event. The membership of the church is well connected, has fingers in many pies, and has the ability to make things happen. It is impressive.

The current membership tries hard to visit and support those who are no longer able to attend church, which is touching to witness, and this should continue to be an important focus.

2. Describe some areas for improvement in this church's ministry.

Like many churches, Kittery Point UCC is struggling to attract younger members. While not the only reason for a declining membership, the trend seems irreversible unless the church can be more open and welcoming to new ideas, and less opaque in its decision making. Struggling now to fill all the necessary positions in the church, it may be helpful to work on how to downsize while still supporting those loyal members who can no longer participate in the work.

3. Describe a significant experience you have had with this church's ministry.

I was drawn into the church when I first arrived in Kittery, attracted by the intelligent and fun group of women of the Fellowship. Following their lead, I have worked at various fundraising events for the church and have grown to truly appreciate this group. I participated in the training offered by Saving Sacred Spaces which focused on the underlying preparations for a capital campaign, and worked on implementing these suggestions with the congregation.

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



Church#: 281180

Assoc: 344

Schedule: 0 First Congregational UCC

Kittery Point

ME 03905

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2013	281	111	60	0	11	1	5	0	7
2014	206	116	60	0	0	0	4	71	-75
2015	206	95	60	8	4	0	3	0	0
2016	218	88	0	0	0	5	4	0	1
2017	219	90	30	0	0	4	3	0	1
2018	225	86	30	9	0	0	3	0	6
2019	244	83	30	0	22	0	3	0	20
2020	233	87	30	0	0	2	11	0	-9
2021	202	COVID	30	0	0	0	4	0	0
2022	168	53	30	6	0	0	2	45	-39
2023	163	50	28	0	0	0	7	0	-7

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES & OFFERING S
2013	\$51,610	\$0	\$7,590	\$5,135	\$12,725	\$0	\$12,725	14.71	\$64,335	\$130,529
2014	\$168,580	\$5,575	\$5,197	\$1,034	\$6,231	\$10,609	\$16,840	3.08	\$190,995	\$146,761
2015	\$157,594	\$0	\$8,017	\$1,163	\$9,180	\$0	\$9,180	4.76	\$177,760	\$164,223
2016	\$143,311	\$0	\$6,617	\$4,055	\$10,672	\$0	\$10,672	4.62	\$153,983	\$167,424
2017	\$157,462	\$32,536	\$9,121	\$24,665	\$33,786	\$6,780	\$40,566	5.79	\$198,028	\$168,825
2018	\$168,504	\$0	\$9,513	\$1,235	\$10,748	\$0	\$10,748	6.04	\$168,210	\$182,766
2019	\$212,708	\$0	\$10,094	\$1,024	\$11,118	\$0	\$11,118	6.41	\$168,580	\$208,336
2020	\$200,821	\$0	\$10,853	\$0	\$10,853	\$0	\$10,853	6.89	\$168,315	\$202,107
2021	\$190,271	\$0	\$5,600	\$182	\$5,782	\$0	\$5,782	3.56	\$163,244	\$207,976
2022	\$286,169	\$0	\$10,972	\$911	\$11,883	\$0	\$11,883	6.97	\$169,345	\$286,412
2023	\$228,801	\$0	\$4,433	\$1,789	\$6,222	\$23,113	\$29,335	1.94	\$258,136	\$199,678

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2018-2023	-27.55	-41.88.	-6.67	0.00	0.00	35.78	-42.11	53.46

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

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



2013-2023	-41.99	-54.95	-53.33	-100.00	40.00	343.33	-51.10	301.24
-----------	--------	--------	--------	---------	-------	--------	--------	--------

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

Church Profile- First Congregational Church of Kittery UCC FINAL 2.4.25

Final Audit Report

2025-02-04

Created:	2025-02-04
By:	Christine Leonard (crleonar@gmail.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAApMA8BfIYGPxov34OEclveMTK-uhLulix

"Church Profile- First Congregational Church of Kittery UCC FINAL 2.4.25" History

-  Document created by Christine Leonard (crleonar@gmail.com)
2025-02-04 - 2:42:45 PM GMT- IP address: 73.100.61.153
-  Document emailed to brown4256@gmail.com for signature
2025-02-04 - 2:43:23 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by brown4256@gmail.com
2025-02-04 - 4:11:08 PM GMT- IP address: 172.226.144.43
-  Signer brown4256@gmail.com entered name at signing as Karen V Brown
2025-02-04 - 6:46:27 PM GMT- IP address: 75.68.83.201
-  Document e-signed by Karen V Brown (brown4256@gmail.com)
Signature Date: 2025-02-04 - 6:46:29 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 75.68.83.201
-  Document emailed to wjsmart@aol.com for signature
2025-02-04 - 6:46:31 PM GMT
-  Email viewed by wjsmart@aol.com
2025-02-04 - 6:49:17 PM GMT- IP address: 209.73.183.26
-  Signer wjsmart@aol.com entered name at signing as William C Smart
2025-02-04 - 7:33:18 PM GMT- IP address: 216.212.87.175
-  Document e-signed by William C Smart (wjsmart@aol.com)
Signature Date: 2025-02-04 - 7:33:20 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 216.212.87.175
-  Agreement completed.
2025-02-04 - 7:33:20 PM GMT