

Name of Church

First Congregational, UCC

Address36 Main St
New Milford, CT 06776**Conference:**

Southern New England

Association:

Litchfield South

Title

Settled Pastor

Start Date

n/a

Description

Local Church Profile for First Congregational Church, New Milford's search for a settled pastor.

Church Contact Information

No contact information has been added to this profile.

Listing Information**Web Presences**<https://nmchurch.org/>

Type: Professional

<https://www.facebook.com/people/First-Congregational-Church-of-New-Milford/100066731705031/>

Type: Professional

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations*No response***UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person****Name:**

Reverend Margret Hofmeister

Title:

Area Conference Minister, Southern New England United Church of Christ

Phone:

(860) 761-7198

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Summary Ministry Description

The First Congregational Church of New Milford is a welcoming and growing Christian community, looking for a Full-Time Pastor that shares our values of growing in faith, fellowship and outreach in the community.

Founded in 1716, our church is a cornerstone of faith in the region. Rooted in the Congregationalist tradition, we embrace an inclusive and progressive Christian theology, where all are welcome - wherever you are on life's journey, to explore one's faith in a supportive and open environment.

Our Church Council is a dedicated core group of members who meet monthly to coordinate all of our operations and activities. In all aspects of our ministry, our Church strives to be a place where faith is deepened, lives are transformed, and the love of God is made visible through acts of service, worship, and community engagement.

Our Sunday Service blends traditional and contemporary elements, to create a meaningful and engaging experience for all attendees. We encourage members to serve as readers, musicians, or in various leadership roles during services. Worship focuses on thoughtful sermons, inspiring music, and communal prayer, all aimed at nurturing spiritual growth and providing guidance for living a Christ-centered life.

Beyond Sunday worship, we are deeply committed to serving the broader community. We organize a wide range of outreach initiatives, including partnerships with social services, the local food bank, homeless shelter, and various charities. Through our mission programs, we seek to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations, both locally and globally.

Our members are offered a variety of Christian education & activities for all ages, designed to deepen faith and understanding through study, discussion, and fellowship. Our Youth Programs include Sunday School, Children's Choir & Vacation Bible School. Adult Programs & activities include Choir, Bible Brews, Women's Bible Studies, & Men's Breakfast.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

People value living in New Milford, CT for its perfect balance between small-town charm and access to natural beauty. Nestled along the Housatonic River and Candlewood Lake, there are abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation. Residents appreciate the easy access to boating, fishing, hiking, and enjoying the picturesque New England landscape, which brings a sense of peace and connection to nature.

A strong sense of community is another cherished aspect of life in New Milford. The historic Town Green serves as the heart of social life, hosting events such as the annual Village Fair Days, farmers' markets, and summer concerts. These gatherings foster a close-knit community spirit where neighbors come together, celebrate local traditions, and build lasting relationships. Residents value the town's welcoming atmosphere, where people know and support each other, giving it a warm and inclusive feel despite its growing population.

While maintaining its historic charm through preserved architecture and a quaint downtown area, the town offers a variety of restaurants, shops, and services that cater to everyday needs. Families are particularly drawn to the town's highly regarded school system and safe environment, making it an ideal place to raise children. At the same time, New Milford's proximity to larger cities like Danbury and New York City ensures that residents can easily access urban amenities and job opportunities while still enjoying the peaceful lifestyle of a small town.

Current size of membership

301

Average in person attendance

100

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?

25

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Settled Pastor

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

[Download compensation guidelines](#)

Scope of Work

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

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

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

[Download scope of Work](#)

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

First:

Leadership - that is collaborative, visionary, and grounded in the needs and strengths of the congregation.

1. **Setting a Clear Vision:** Articulating a clear, inspiring vision for the church's direction and goals, providing a roadmap that helps unify and motivate the congregation.
2. **Making Thoughtful Decisions:** Collaborating with church leadership and consulting with members before making important decisions shows a balanced, inclusive approach to leadership.
3. **Supporting Church Ministries:** Actively encouraging and supporting various ministries—such as youth groups, outreach teams, and fellowship groups—demonstrates commitment to the church's growth and vitality.
4. **Communicating Openly:** Regularly updating the congregation on church matters and being transparent about challenges and goals fosters trust and keeps everyone informed.
5. **Empowering Others:** By encouraging members to take on leadership roles and acknowledging their contributions. Building a strong, engaged community where everyone feels valued.

Second:

Inspirational - inspire the congregation to grow in faith, serve others, and make a difference both within and beyond the church walls.

1. **Delivering Engaging Sermons:** Making sermons relevant and relatable, connecting scripture to everyday life, inspiring congregants to apply their faith in practical ways.
2. **Leading by Example:** Showing compassion, humility, and dedication in everyday interactions serves as a model of living faith and motivates others to act similarly.
3. **Encouraging Service and Outreach:** Inspire the church to serve New Milford and beyond, organizing impactful volunteer opportunities that align with the church's mission to help others.

4. **Supporting Personal Growth:** Encourage members to deepen their faith, discover their gifts, and pursue their callings.
5. **Casting a Vision for the Future:** Sharing a hopeful vision for the church's future—such as new outreach initiatives, community partnerships, or youth programs—uniting and energizing the congregation to work toward a shared goal.

Third:

Respectful - how they carry themselves, treat others and members of the community

1. **Listening to Congregants:** Taking the time to hear people's concerns, joys, and feedback shows care for each individual's unique perspective and builds trust.
 2. **Honoring Traditions:** By respecting the church's history and cherished practices, the pastor acknowledges the congregation's heritage while balancing it with fresh ideas.
 3. **Being Present in the Community:** Participating in local events and building relationships with New Milford organizations demonstrates respect for the church's role within the broader community.
 4. **Maintaining Confidentiality:** Respecting the privacy of those who seek pastoral care is essential in building a safe and supportive environment.
 5. **Encouraging Lay Leadership:** Empowering members to take active roles in worship and church activities shows respect for their talents and contributions.
- Through these actions, the pastor fosters a respectful, welcoming, and compassionate church atmosphere.

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)	75000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 75000			
Pension/Annuity	10500	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	5737	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	11128	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	1125	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input 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.

We are offering a total \$100,000 Package for our new Full-Time Pastor. This compensation can be divided as our new pastor prefers, for example:

Pastor Salary: \$75,000.00
 Pastor Housing Allowance: Included in Salary Basis
 Pastor Medical/Dental Insurance B: \$11,128.00
 Pension/Annuity (14%): \$10,500.00
 Self-Employment Tax Offset (7.65%): \$5,737.50
 Life/Disability Insurance (1.5%): \$1,125.00

Pastor Total Salary Package w/ Benefits: \$103,490

The Housing Allowance is to live in, or nearby the Town of New Milford. We would like our minister to be involved in the New Milford Community, as long as he/she finds a living situation close enough to do this, we do not have expectations as to where he/she lives.

In addition to the Salary Package, we will also include the following Professional Expense Benefits:

- \$1,000 Annually for Pastors Professional Expenses for: Wider Church Participation Cost of Association/Conference Meetings, & Clergy Community of Practice Registration Fee
- Study/Continuing Education Leave - Up to 2 Weeks annually
- \$500 for Pastors Transportation
- Civil Service Leave - Jury Duty (minus Per Diem)
- Background Check Reimbursement - \$180
- Stipend to cover a percentage of Cell Phone cost

Personal Benefits also Included:

- Regular Days Off - 2 Days Per Week
- Vacation/PTO - 4 Weeks Annually accrued monthly during the first year of service
- Paid Holidays
- Sabbatical Leave - 12 Weeks Paid sabbatical every 5 Years
- Family Leave - 12 Weeks Paid
- Sick leave - 1 Day per month - maximum accrual of 30 days
- Personal Leave - Up to 5 days per incident not to exceed 10 days per 12 months of service
- Reimbursement for Moving Expenses - Up to \$10,000

The expected living situation for our next minister.

Living nearby with a housing allowance as part of a total compensation; We would like our minister to be involved in the New Milford community. As long as he/she is close enough to do this, we do not have expectations as to where he/she lives.

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.)

No

Our Parsonage was sold on 2/16/2021 for \$385,000 for the purpose of strengthening our long-term financials to hire a full-time pastor.

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

Not Applicable, we are looking to hire a full-time pastor for the First Congregational Church of New Milford.

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.

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

Peer support is available through Litchfield South ministries - a group of local pastors who meet on a monthly to coordinate on a professional and personal level. Professional support is available through our Area Conference Minister Margret Hoffmeister with the UCC.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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

There are several ministry goals that we would like our next pastor to achieve in collaboration with the congregation as a part of our strategic plan. These goals provide a framework that allows the congregation to grow spiritually, build meaningful connections, and extend its impact in the community and beyond.

1. **Spiritual Growth and Discipleship:** To deepen the congregation's spiritual life through regular worship services, Bible studies, and small group ministries. Helping members grow in their faith, understand scripture more fully, and apply Christian principles in their daily lives.
2. **Community Engagement and Outreach:** The church is a known presence in New Milford for actively participating in community events and hosting outreach programs. Goals might include organizing regular community service projects, partnering with local nonprofits, or providing resources for families in need.
3. **Youth and Family Ministry Development:** Aid in the creation of youth programs, family-oriented activities, and intergenerational events that support spiritual growth and fellowship for all ages.
4. **Fostering Inclusivity and Belonging:** Becoming an Open & Affirming Church - a welcoming place for everyone, regardless of background, creating a culture of inclusivity where newcomers feel comfortable and long-time members feel valued.
5. **Mission and Service Expansion:** Broaden the church's impact through mission work, whether local, regional, or global. Increasing participation in mission trips, building relationships with international ministries, or raising funds to support various mission initiatives.
6. **Supporting Working Adults in Faith:** Provide guidance for integrating faith with professional life and helping members carry their beliefs into the workplace and make a difference in their fields.
7. **Sustainable Church Growth:** Focus on attracting new members and ensuring long-term sustainability through outreach, meaningful worship experiences, and effective communication of the church's values and vision.

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

We hope that our next minister will help us provide a more loving welcome for all of God's children into the full life, mission and fellowship into our church, and to share God's love with all people and to better serve our local and global communities. This would include:

1. **Community Service Initiatives:** The pastor may organize or support events like food drives, clothing donations, and volunteer projects that directly address community needs. Encouraging members to participate in these efforts can create a lasting impact in New Milford.
2. **Partnerships with Local Organizations:** Working with nearby nonprofits, shelters, and service agencies, the pastor can help the church contribute resources and volunteer support to enhance the work already being done locally.
3. **Faith in Action Programs:** Through sermons and faith-based initiatives, the pastor can encourage congregants to act on their beliefs by serving others, promoting justice, and addressing social issues. Programs may focus on supporting vulnerable populations, like the elderly or low-income families.
4. **Mission Work and Outreach Programs:** The church may organize mission trips or outreach programs in which members can participate, helping them to serve beyond the New Milford area. This outreach is often part of a larger denominational effort or in collaboration with global charities.
5. **Workplace Integration:** Given the varied occupations of working adults in the congregation, the pastor might also inspire members to integrate their faith and values into their professional lives, making a broader impact through their everyday roles.

These actions, driven by the pastor's vision and encouragement, help foster a sense of purpose that extends the congregation's impact into the surrounding community and beyond.

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

English language requirement, and sensitivity toward social issues and marginalized groups. Our church has been involved with refugee resettlement and has recently become Open and Affirming. Our next pastor will need to help bring our congregation into the discussion and work, while balancing the attitudes and opinions people may bring with them in this polarizing time.

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.

Four Areas of Excellence we would like our next minister to display from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry

1. Building Transformational Leadership Skills

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.
- Strategically creating the future of God's Church
- Witnessing in the public square to God's redeeming power.
- Performing necessary and appropriate administrative tasks.
- Working collaboratively with intercultural awareness and sensitivity
- Encouraging leadership development of self and others through continuing education and lifelong leadership

2. Engaging Sacred Stories and Traditions

- Exhibiting knowledge, understanding, and continuing study of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament
- Maturing in effective proclamation and preaching Understanding the history of the Christian Church, from biblical times forward
- Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness
- Leading faith formation effectively across generations

- Holding the Holy with integrity especially as represented in the Sacraments
3. Exhibiting a Spiritual Foundation and Ongoing Spiritual Practice
- Loving God, following Jesus Christ, & being guided by the Holy Spirit, living a life of discipleship
 - Praying actively and nurturing spiritual practices
 - Being called to ordained ministry by God and the Church
 - Continuing discernment of one's call in community
 - Understanding the power of the Holy Spirit at work through the elements of Christian worship to nurture faith
 - Exhibiting a commitment to lifelong spiritual development and faithful personal stewardship
4. Caring For All Creation
- Nurturing care & compassion for God's creation
 - Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health & wellness
 - Practicing self-care and life balance
 - Providing hope & healing to a hurting world
 - Attending to one's own spiritual & pastoral care, including engagement in supervision as appropriate
 - Stewarding the resources of the Church

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 have had a long history of making an impact on the community through many outreach programs that address hunger, young mothers, refugee resettlement and the homeless. We know that New Milford is a growing, youthful and ever-changing community and that our outreach may need to expand and grow to meet their needs.

We believe that as a congregation, God is calling us to honor and continue our history, share God's love with more people, and serve both the local and global community. Using our strategic plan to magnify our community outreach, we have started more day programs for seniors, youth programs, and assisting in re-settling more refugee families.

Our Vision

We are a spiritually and financially healthy, growing church, enabling our members to provide a loving welcome for all of God's children into the full life, mission and leadership of the First Congregational Church of New Milford

Our Mission:

To love God and our neighbors "with all of our hearts, souls and minds"; and to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God."

Our Programs

- Christian Education
- Vacation Bible School
- Participation in the New Milford Homeless Shelter
- Hunger Initiatives: Souperbowl of Caring, Camella's Cupboard, New Milford Food Bank
- Baby Bundles - A program we run for the town providing diapers & baby needs
- Refugee Resettlement - We helped create the New Milford Refugee Resettlement group in 2016
- Scholarship Fund - College Scholarships available to anyone
- Lunch & Learn

Our Ministry

- Bell Choir
- Children's Choir
- Senior Choir
- Care and Concern
- Christmas Concert for the community
- Parish Visitors and Drivers
- Meal Chain
- Condolence Receptions
- Men's Breakfast
- Women's Gatherings
- Chapel Stitchers (Prayer Shawls)
- Scholarship Committee
- Bible Studies

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

Strategic Plan

We have a multi-year strategic plan developed by our Church Council, with key strategies and an action plan focused on resolving our structure & process issues to efficiently grow our congregation & community outreach beyond 2025.

6 Emerging Strategies from Initial Strategic Plan work:

- **Resolve** structure and process issues to reduce confusion and conflict, and to streamline effectiveness
- **Implement** an expanded collaborative approach with the community service providers and other churches to enable better member understanding and better mission
- **Leverage** digital tools to better communicate with the community and with members
- **Create** more non-Sunday events, both small and large, to bring people inside our space, to generate awareness and member unity in shared projects

- **Explore** new ways to generate funding, and to make it easier for the church to receive funds
- **Establish** role in community for LGBTQ+ and hunger awareness and issue resolution

We experimented with the following two elements, and they have not only been successful, but they helped us better understand the needs of our congregation. As a result, we have found our congregation is hungry to learn more about the Bible, and the opportunity in growing our programs for participation during the day.

Bible Study Options

We have tried a "Bible and Brews" scripture study where we meet in a local bar or brewery for discussion. People liked the idea of combining learning with a social event. We also have had several mid-day Bible study sessions, and a traditional Bible study, led by the pastor on Thursday nights. The participation was steady, but during busy parts of the church year, it gets difficult to have more than one nightly activity.

Lunch and Learn

We have held a series of programs with great participation during lunch time, with a mix of potluck and bring your own sandwich for a meal. The program is every 4-6 weeks, has one speaker, ranging from: sharing travel stories, to nature experts, to local politicians.

Congregation Reflections

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

Traditionally, when a new member(s) is received into the congregation, the individual(s) and the congregation covenant with one another with these words:

Covenant for New Members:

"We confess our faith in God, our heavenly Creator, and our reverent love for Jesus Christ, our Savior and our willingness to be guided by the Holy Spirit. We promise, as members of this Church, to walk together as Christians, obedient to the teachings of the Holy Scripture, and to participate in the government, worship, stewardship or mission of this church. This we do for the glory of God, for the good of our neighbors and for the mutual growth in Christian grace, seeking to do all in faith, fellowship and service, in the spirit of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen."

Welcome of the Congregation

"We then, the members of this Church, welcome you with joy into our communion and fellowship. We pledge to you our sympathy, our help and our prayers that you may evermore increase in the knowledge of God. God grant that loving and being loved, serving and being served, blessing and being blessed, we may be prepared while we dwell on earth for the perfect fellowship of those above."

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

The greatest strength of this congregation is the power of focus, one can look at the past 300 years, or the last 30 years - when this congregation sets a goal, and clearly communicates it, we will achieve it 100% of the time. It could be a fundraiser, a capital campaign, or getting volunteers for the town social services programs. The formula stays the same - clear goal, clear communication, and it will happen.

Another positive quality of our congregation is its deep connection to the welfare of the New Milford community and our commitment to supporting the many outreach programs in town including the local food bank, homeless shelter and programs for children in need.

Our children's program has long been one of the strongest ministries in the church. Our annual Vacation Bible School filled to capacity each summer with 60+ participants, with many of the children and youth leaders coming from outside our church.

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

Here are the top items we identified areas to strengthen during our Strategic Plan work:

1. **Communication** - Internal & External, Using Social-Media and Technology to increase our community engagement.
2. **Faith Development** - To deepen the congregation's life of faith in applying Christian principals in daily life.
3. **Core Projects & Mission Trips** - Develop more projects/events, broaden our mission work.
4. **Stewardship** - Use our best practices to manage, care and increase our resources given to the church by members & donors.
5. **Volunteer Burnout & Scope of Work** - Inspiring all congregation members to participate in activities/volunteer work

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Each week at Sunday worship, we gather to hear God's word, learn from the sermon, and express our faith through prayer, music and fellowship. We appreciate an inspirational, spiritual sermon, with occasional humor connecting it to daily life. Our choir, organist & traditional hymns are performed weekly, and member participation throughout the service draws us closer to God and one another. Communion is held the first Sunday of each month, with everyone welcome to participate.

Children are also included in the service for Acolyte and the Offering collection, then exit after the second hymn for Sunday School held at the Parish House. Baptisms are also a part of our services, with members of the congregation every newly baptized child and adult with a spirit of Christian love. New Members are also joyfully welcomed into the congregation during our Sunday services.

After Sunday service, the congregation gathers in Fellowship Hall for coffee hour & refreshments. There is a warm spirit of family & friendship, making every effort to welcome newcomers. Following worship, we use what we learned to put our faith into action in the community.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

The core faith formation program in our church is our CE work on Sunday's, and Vacation Bible School during the summer. Both programs look for older youth to be involved as helpers and teachers. We historically have not had a lot of Adult Education, but that has changed in the past two years, with a great response to our Bible Study Programs including Bible Brews, Coffee House Ministry, and Women's Bible Study.

The idea of a comprehensive approach to faith formation from children to adults has been identified in our strategic plan discussions. Our vision is to provide a family friendly atmosphere, where children and families can grow in faith, to serve God and provide service to our community.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our congregation is organized into 5 ministries including:

- **Christian Education Ministry** - Christian Education Director, and people focused on faith formation for all ages. This group supports our weekly Sunday School, Youth Group, Confirmation Class, Various Bible Study Options, Christmas Pageant, and our popular Vacation Bible School
- **Worship Ministry** - Pastor, Board of Deacons, the Music Team, the Usher Team, Audio-Visual Team, and members focused on improving our Meetinghouse and ability to provide the best worship experience
- **Outreach Ministry** - Involved with local, national and global outreach, sub-divided into Social Concerns & Missions, Baby Bundles, and the A. Russell Ayre Scholarship Fund
- **Growth & Congregation Care** - Attracting, welcoming and integrating new members, and providing fellowship opportunities for everyone.
- **Church Management Ministry** - Church staff and others charged with the management of the Church's buildings and grounds, budget process, financial management, investments, technology platform, database management, and overall communication platform.

Each ministry operates independently, has its own committees, and reports to Church Council once per month.

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...

The best example of our church managing a crisis was dealing with the Church Roof Repair. The damage initially occurred during the winter of 2010-2011, when there was a record snowfall creating excessive weight on the church roof resulting in the failure of a truss.

In response to the crisis, two committees were established - "The Meetinghouse Restoration Committee" to plan the repairs, and the "Raise The Roof Committee" to raise the financial support required to accomplish the repairs. Members and friends of the church worked tirelessly to fundraise through direct pledges, dinners, auctions, and many other fund-raising events.

We researched every possible grant available, applied for, and received a Connecticut Historical Restoration Grant of \$100,000 bringing our total raised to over \$600,000. From start to finish, the entire church membership was involved in some capacity to see the project through over the 8 years from the time the damage was discovered to the completion of the repairs.

This by far is the best example of how our congregation can focus our efforts to obtain our goals 100% of the time, no matter how difficult it may seem.

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

[FCCNM Constitution 2021 revised 12-11-2022 - with addl documents revised 6-18-2023 \(1\).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:	194
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	107
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	301

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	70%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	18%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	12%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	20
12-17	10
18-24	10
25-34	10
35-44	15
45-54	25
55-64	75
65-74	60
75+	90

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	2%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	40%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	12%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	26%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	20%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	12%
COLLEGE:	49%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	36%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	3%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	60%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	25%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	15%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

The working adults who attend the First Congregational Church of New Milford represent a broad range of occupations. Many are professionals in fields such as education, healthcare, business, law, and social services, while others work in local government, retail, and trades. The congregation includes small business owners, artists, and those in technology and finance sectors, reflecting the diverse professional backgrounds found within the greater New Milford community. This variety of occupations enriches the church community and contributes to its dynamic, multifaceted character

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

Our congregation is predominantly White/Caucasian, consistent with the population of New Milford, but it also includes members of other racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian families. While our church embraces diversity and strives to be welcoming and inclusive to all, the overall racial and ethnic makeup tends to reflect the largely homogenous nature of the region. However, our church is committed to being a space where people of all heritages and backgrounds feel welcomed and valued in worship, service, and fellowship.

What diversity means in our context?

The members of our church come from a variety of religious backgrounds, reflecting our inclusive and welcoming nature. Many congregants were raised in Protestant traditions, such as Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist denominations. Others come from Catholic or Episcopal backgrounds, while some members have little or no formal religious upbringing and are exploring Christianity for the first time. This diversity enriches the congregation's shared worship, discussions, and fellowship, fostering a community where all are encouraged to deepen their faith and spiritual journey.

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

No

Participation and Staffing

Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	25	Lay Leaders
Children's Groups or Classes	15	CE Director, Lay leader
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	260	Pastor, Choir Director, Deacons
Church-wide Meals	60	CE Director, Lay Leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	30	Choir Director, Bell Choir Director
Church-based Bible Study	8	Lay Leaders
Communion (served how often?)	100	Pastor, Deacons
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	3	Pastor, CE Director, Lay Leaders
Funerals (number last year)	4	Pastor, Deacons
Weddings (number last year)	3	Pastor
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	110	Pastor, Choir Director, Deacons
Young Adult Groups or Classes	8	Lay Leader
Youth Groups or Classes	20	CE Director, Lay Leaders

Worship Times

No Response

Additional comments:

No response

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
Virnette Hamilton	none	None	No official role	
Patricia Nicholas	none	None	No official role	

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

One of our members who is a retired pastor, is in regular contact with the LGBTQ+ community leaders, and helps with the Pride Picnic and the Trans Day of Remembrance service each year.

List of all current staff:

No Response

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

After reviewing the demographics and activities of the congregation, it reflects an overall ministry with dedicated members actively working toward growing the congregation further and meeting the needs of our growing community.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	164609
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	58348
Fundraising Events	925
Rentals of Church Building	60135
Total	284017

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

275796

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download church budget](#)

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

26

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

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

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
One Great Hour of Sharing

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

During the most recent fiscal year, our church contributed to:

- Our Church's Wider Mission
- One Great Hour of Sharing

Our contributions are taken directly from our collection and sent straight to the UCC.

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

No response

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

No response

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

In spring of 2024, a windstorm damaged the structure of the church's steeple. Upon further inspection, additional damage was found in the steeple from birds. We expect to begin repairs on the church steeple in the next few months, to be completed by Conlon Engineering who performed the initial inspection.

The expected costs for the steeple repair are approximately \$25,000 - including:

- Repairing the windstorm damage: \$1,500

- Removing all bird droppings: \$6,200
- Bird remediation & preventative measures: \$8,950
- Engineering evaluation of steeple: \$6,000
- Supplemental Aerial lift: \$1,000
- Contingency: \$2,000

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2020	Church Roof Repair	500000	622000	\$100,000 Connecticut Historical Restoration Grant - To Repair & Renovate the Church Building
2022	Lift Replacement	50000	50000	\$20,000 Harcourt Foundation Grant - To Regain Access to Fellowship Hall for those unable to use the stairs

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
2024	Steeple Repair	25000	0	
0		0	0	

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

The prominent mission components involved in our current capital campaign include firstly contacting the State of Connecticut's Historical Foundations for a Grant to assist with the Steeple Repair. Additionally, we are also working on a fundraiser with the congregation to meet any additional costs for repair.

*No photos available regarding Steeple Repair

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

1921766

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

The Endowment Fund's growth and income are used for our operating budget

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

We use the UCC's Total Return Spending Policy. The rate of draw percentage for 2023 was 4.5%, in-line with our 2019 draw percentage at 4.5%

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

The past 5 years, we have been using the UCC's Total Return Spending Policy to calculate how much can be taken out annually, and make withdrawals monthly to cover expenses

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

We use the UCC's Total Return Spending Policy to make sure our Endowment Fund's current rate of draw (4.5%) will last more than 25+ years.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

These estimates were calculated using the UCC's Total Return Spending Policy & Endowment Asset Value

Other Assets

In addition to the Church and Parish House Buildings, we have a Benevolence Fund, Book of Remembrance CD, Maintenance Fund, Flower Fund & Scholarship Fund

Reserves (savings):

22972

Investments (other than endowment):

206295

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

The First Congregational Church is housed in a beautiful and historic Greek Revival building, built in 1833, located on the Town Green. The Sanctuary is a beautifully designed space featuring high ceilings, traditional wooden pews, and stunning stained-glass windows that filter in colorful light, with a centrally located altar, framed by a classic pulpit.

Adjacent to the sanctuary, the Parish House is a vital extension of the church's ministry, providing meeting rooms, classrooms, and gathering spaces for various community activities, events and outreach programs.

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

Our church owns both the Church Building & the Parish House and does not use any non-owned buildings or rent additional space.

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

Large print bulletins

"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

Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

The Church Sanctuary has a wheelchair ramp, and our Lift Elevator also gives wheelchair access to Fellowship Hall - downstairs below the Sanctuary. The main floor of the Parish House is also Wheelchair accessible with a ramp, however the basement is not.

We also practice Safe Church UCC's guidelines to ensure the safety of all church members and visitors. The primary focus being to create a safe and protected environment within the church community, particularly for children and vulnerable individuals, by actively preventing abuse and providing procedures to address concerns if they arise.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Our Treasurer - Jill Coolbeth - Authorizes Payment of Bills for the church

Our Financial Secretary - Katie McKay

Our Finance Committee - Handles budget reports, profit/loss calculations for the church

- Susan Chapin - Chairman
- Dave Elmore
- Katie McKay
- Ken Papp
- John Wittmann

Our Investments Committee - Handles management & placement of church investments

- Dave Elmore - Chairman
- Susan Chapin
- John Case
- Ken Papp

Stewardship & Fundraising Committee - Handles stewardship & raising funds for the church

- John Case - Chairman
- Mike Curley

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

The finances and assets of the First Congregational Church of New Milford, CT are allocated to reflect our congregation's commitment to long-term sustainability, and good stewardship of resources. We have further strengthened our balance sheet to firmly accommodate a Full-Time Pastor, showing our focus on investing in leadership for future spiritual, congregational, and financial growth in our mission to serve God, the community and future generations.

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

Here are a few of the significant happenings in the history of our church:

The First Congregational Church of New Milford has a rich history overlapping with the town itself.

1. Roger Sherman was a Deacon as our church and is the only Founding Father who signed the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederations and the U.S. Constitution.
2. Tri-Centennial Celebration - In 2016, we celebrated our 300th anniversary, a remarkable milestone that included special services, historical displays, and events to honor our role in the community for three centuries.
3. Raise the Roof campaign where the entire congregation got involved in the process from planning, to raising the funds and capital campaigns for the repair.

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

On February 16th, 2021, we sold our Parsonage for \$385,000 with the purpose of using the proceeds to strengthen our financials and fully commit to our long-term objective of hiring a full-time pastor. The \$385,000 proceeds from the Parsonage sale were placed in a new Parsonage Fund Investment Account that has since increased in value to \$470,999 as of 9-10-24.

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 past few years have required the congregation to be more involved in running the church with our Pastor, which can inevitably lead to more conflict between committees and individuals. When it comes to conflict in our Church, we first try to find a resolution for the betterment of the Church & Congregation through respectful communication and understanding. Some conflicts can be resolved by using the "Decision Making Flow Chart" in our Constitution to determine if an issue needs to be presented to Church Council, or even a vote from the Congregation. We have identified that we have an overall need to become better at conflict resolution and have also approved the use of Holy Manners in our meetings to enable better dialogue.

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

The most recent major conflict through which our Church navigated was having our pastor of 28 years retire and then having the COVID crisis begin 18 months later. Then, after finding a New Settled Pastor right before the COVID crisis of 2020, the newly hired Pastor had to resign due to unexpected personal health issues. All of these events highlight the church's resilience, commitment to service, and lasting impact on both the local community and broader historical landscape of Connecticut.

Ministerial History:

No response

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

In our 308-year history, we are proud of having only 16 ministers with an average 20-year tenure. We have learned that our Church can consistently maintain a healthy and productive working relationship between the Congregation and its Ministers.

The past few years has required the congregation to be more involved in running the church, and that can inevitably lead to conflict between committees and individuals. Our congregation has made great progress with conflict management, and have adopted Holy Manners principles.

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

No

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.

The relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in the community through the following Ministries:

Christian Education Ministry

- Vacation Bible School is open to anyone in the community, and we have a large portion of the attendees that are not church members

Worship Ministry

- Bell Choir & Children's Choir open to anyone in the community
- Our Annual Christmas Concert has become a tradition in our town

Outreach Ministry

- Established The A. Russel Ayre Scholarship Fund, offering college scholarships to anyone in the community
- Partnered with Camilla's Cupboard to feed the needy, and have a Blessing Box in front of the church
- Partnered with New Milford Social Services to help with the local food bank; and co-host the annual Walk-A-Mile food drive

Congregational Growth & Care Ministry

- Our Chapel Stitchers provide hand-made shawls that can be blessed if requested
- Bring gifts to residents of the Candlewood Valley Nursing Home, and Chestnut Grove Assisted Living Center for Christmas

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

Our congregation participates through the United Church of Christ through:

1. Church World Service
 2. Silver Lake - we participate in retreats, and also have ministers come here to talk about it
- Work Weekend - members of the Church go to Silver Lake to do cleaning and repairs
3. Litchfield South Association (For Ministers of 16 local churches)
 4. Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ - Includes 600 churches in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.
- Also working with SNEUCC Task Force on Immigration and Refugee Issues

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

We have several church members organizing events in our community.

- Our CE Director coordinates with the Town of New Milford to frequently participate in community events on the Green.
- Our Social Concerns Chair is connected to the town Social Services, and is frequently approached to ask for our congregation to help on projects.
- One of our members is a retired pastor, and is in regular contact with the LGBTQ+ community leaders, and we help with the Pride Picnic and the Trans Day of Remembrance service each year.
- We have two members that are in regular contact with our Homeless Shelter and the town organizers that manage the logistics.

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).

Immigrant Welcoming.

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

We voted to become an Open and Affirming Church in May of 2022. We have been working to increase our community presence and awareness with a steady approach. We want to continue down this road, with the goal of being widely known that wherever you are on life or faith's journey, you are welcome here.

Our church is actively involved in the work of New Milford Refugee Resettlement. This organization was formed in 2016, and has successfully resettled 3 families, with a new family arriving October 21, 2024. We have past and current members in positions of leadership, and our church has been very generous with cash donations & household goods, providing rides and tutoring. We are currently providing space for our last refugee family to use for pottery storage as he develops his pottery business.

In the future, we would like to participate in WISE, Economic Justice, Faithful and Welcoming, as they all seem like an easy fit for our congregation.

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

Our congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities include our Good Friday Ecumenical Service, Transgender Day of Remembrance, and hosting New Milford's Homeless Shelter once per year.

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

We are 100% committed to our mission statement, and the activities we engage in. We spent an entire year discussing and evaluating how we are engaging in our mission statement, and in developing an aligned vision. This work combined with a SWOT analysis, enabled us to come up with a strategic plan that we are now beginning to implement. The strategic plan we created will enable our ability to keep our work focused on the mission and vision statement.

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.

Our congregation has been comfortable overall with the engagement of the pastor in the community and the wider church. We have not had a strategic plan in place for a long time, so there were not specific expectations shared with the pastor. All of our ministries are self-supporting, however we are looking for our minister's mutual support and understanding of their operations.

The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

ARDA/MI File

[Download ARDA/MI File](#)

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

Based on the ARDA report in the New Milford CT area, we see an opportunity to Capitalize on our growing population, and residential diversity. We also found a trend that 43% of adults over the age of 25 in our area have obtained a bachelor's degree or better.

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.

Our congregation's internal demographics are mostly in line with our adjacent neighborhoods, as well as other neighborhoods with which our church connects. The surrounding towns have an average household income 15% higher than New Milford.

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

We have found that 15% of the town of New Milford is over 65. Our congregation is skewed much more than that, similar to many UCC churches. We feel there is an opportunity to capture a younger demographic, while being mindful to the needs of our older congregants. In the past year, we hired a new Christian Education Director to build out our youth programs and activities including our recently established Children's Choir.

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

When speaking with community leaders, our church is known for:

- Having a huge presence on the Town Green, where residents regularly gather for community events
- The Sanctuary is a historical landmark, and centerpiece of most images used in reference to New Milford, with the steeple rising high above the Green serving as a beacon for worship and community gatherings
- Our willingness to partner with other churches and with the town
- Our Vacation Bible School
- Our Outreach Programs including work with Camella's Cupboard, Social Services, and the A. Russell Ayer Scholarship Fund

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

When asked, new people get involved with our church for the welcoming, inclusive atmosphere, and our deep sense of community - where individuals and families of all backgrounds can connect spiritually, grow in their faith, and find meaningful relationships with others.

Many are drawn to our church for the strong emphasis on social outreach, vibrant fellowship activities, and Sunday School/Educational programs, providing a supportive environment where people feel valued and encouraged to engage with their faith and make a positive impact on the wider community.

References



☒ Ivana Butera

Completed: Friday, Oct 25, 2024

Good morning, My name is Ivana Butera, Director for New Milford Social Services. We assist those most vulnerable to financial crisis in our town.

Business: 8603556079

Reference Response

Our work to assist those in need can sometimes be a daunting mission and one that cannot be fully realized without the support of our community partners. One of those vital partners is the First Congregational Church of New Milford. For decades they have offered unconditional support such as a nightly safehaven for our unhoused residents during cold months and food, holiday gifts and other basic needs to local families, disabled and seniors, as well as volunteering to help ensure safe administering of our programs. One of our most cherished joint endeavors is Walk a Mile for a Meal. They co-sponsor this popular food-raising event with us. This event brings together many local groups from the high schools, scouts, civic and faith communities to help our local food bank and stand up to take action against hunger in our community. We cherish their partnership and compassion.

☒ Art Hopkins

Completed: Monday, Nov 4, 2024

President of the New Milford Community Homeless Shelter

Business: 2032402132

Reference Response

Congregational Church

☒ Angela Chastain



Completed: Wednesday, Oct 30, 2024

I am the founder and executive director of Camella's Cupboard Food Pantry. In this capacity I have worked with members for the past several years.

Personal: 765-404-2509

Reference Response

I can be contacted via email at angela@angelachastain.com or on my cell at 765-404-2509.

Closing Prayer

Holy God, we are reminded in Proverbs 16:1-3 that "by committing our work to the Lord, your plans will be established." Help us to follow your plan toward the person most able to lead us by engaging our minds through preaching your word, igniting our hearts for mission and bringing us closer together as a compassionate community of faith in an ever-changing world. We pray in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. 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.

The following are the individuals in the church that contributed to our Local Church Profile:

Pastoral Search Team Members:

- Corey Johnson
- Bonnie Westerberg
- Katie McKay
- Paul Mayer
- Holly Meissner
- Margaret Wittmann

Dan Martin - Church Council Chair

Susan Chapin - Finance Committee Chair

John Wittman - Church Grounds Chair

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: