

Name of Church
First Congregational UCC

Address
54 S Jackson St
Janesville, WI 53548

Conference:
Wisconsin

Association:
Southwest

Title
Pastor

Start Date
May 1, 2025

Description
Pastor

Church Contact Information

(608) 752-8716 (Church Primary Phone)

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://www.janesvilleucc.org>

Type: Professional

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

Type: Professional

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

No response

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Rachel Bauman

Title:

Associate Conference Minister

Phone:

(608) 630-2992

Email:

rbauman@wcucc.org

Summary Ministry Description

We are a progressive congregation of Christ Followers who are Open and Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming. We are active in our community, working with other religious groups and organizations to meet social service needs and support social justice issues. We are committed to creation care, and we have initiated a Church of the Wild to help our congregants and others engage with God through nature. We place a high priority on music in our services, with performances each Sunday by choir, bell choir, or special music. We are seekers of truth, and we are open to new ways to be faithful to God's message. We are looking for a pastor who will inspire us with messages of God's love, and who will encourage us as we continue our social justice work. We are looking for a pastor who will engage in the Janesville community as the face of the congregation beyond the walls of our building.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

Janesville's downtown is bustling with activity. Within walking distance from the church, you'll find restaurants, coffee shops, Town Square (which hosts festivals and our Farmers' Market), a beautiful, large Public Library with evening hours, and a performing arts center. We love the experience of all four seasons in our city of parks, on hiking and biking trails, four golf courses, a botanical garden, and the Rock River. A new Children's Museum and Woodman's Center (a multi-sport Convention Center) are under construction. Janesville places a high value on education. One of our two high schools has a strong performing arts academy. We appreciate the continuing education opportunities at Blackhawk Technical College, UW Whitewater at Rock County, and Beloit College.

Janesville is a welcoming, people-friendly, medium-sized city with many opportunities and perks that go along with that. The city is small enough to know everybody, including those in city leadership. We have two hospitals and multiple clinics. The YMCA, YWCA, and Boys and Girls Club are active. Our sports fans appreciate the UW Badgers, Milwaukee Brewers and Bucks, the Green Bay Packers, the Janesville Jets (a Junior A hockey team), and the Rock Aqua Jays Water Ski Show. We are in a rural county, close to larger metropolitan areas. Janesville has a local airport, Milwaukee Airport is about an hour away, and we're 90 minutes from O'Hare International Airport.

We love Janesville and pray that you will too.

Current size of membership

182

Average in person attendance

57

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?

240

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Pastor

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

[Download compensation guidelines](#)

Scope of Work

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

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

Expectations:

Worship Leadership, Preaching, Service Preparation.
Church Administration, Newsletter, Communications, Staff Supervision.
Leadership with Church governing body and committees.
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).
Maintain collegial and denominational relationships.
Mission and service involvements.
Other expectations: please provide a list.
Maintain Regular Office Hours
Tech Savvy

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

No response

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

First:

Communicator - effective with groups and individuals, verbally, and in writing, inspiring in the pulpit and in other settings. A pastor's communication skills are also needed to interact with church staff and, if necessary, the media.

Second:

Leadership - a Leader who fosters a collaborative environment where team members work together effectively to achieve common goals and develop leaders in the congregation.

Third:

Social Skills - Possesses the self-awareness, authenticity, and adaptability to genuinely care for and work compassionately across generations.

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) | 52000 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing Allowance | 20000 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience) | 500 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Salary Basis: 72500 | | | |
| Pension/Annuity | 7280 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Social Security and Medicare Offset | 3978 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Medical/Dental Insurance | 7764 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Life Insurance | 780 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability Insurance | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Worker's Compensation | 0 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

In addition: Continuing education: \$2,000/year

Professional expenses: \$1,000/year

Community of practices: \$250 (conference expectations)

Medical/health/dental is based upon family situation: Single, single +1, family +2 children, etc

These are the base amounts for someone with no experience. Compensation package is approximately \$95,052 on the low end. The high end is with 15 yrs experience, approximate package is \$111,025

The expected living situation for our next minister.

We expect our next pastor to live in the immediate Janesville area with a housing allowance provided.

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

No response

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

N/A

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

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.
Cell Phone and/or Internet.
Conference and/or Association meeting registrations

Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).
Criminal background checks.
Community of Practice Participation.

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

The Conference offers Communities of Practice, periodic Authorized Minister retreats, Coaching, and seminary debt reduction grants for Authorized Ministers.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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

We hope that our next pastor will collaborate with us to:

- Explore how a progressive church can appeal to people open to a life of faith and/or seeking authentic ways to follow Jesus.
- Explore ways through worship, preaching, music, and congregational participation: to nurture us, cultivate hope, and encourage us to live out our faith, creating a better world for all.
- Build caring relationships with the community that surrounds the church.
- Work with other Rock County churches and organizations to protect the immigrants in our community from harassment.
- Develop four events a year, whether musical, educational, social, or fundraising, that bring community members into our building for something other than worship or the Community Meal.
- Increase our active support for LGBTQIA+ people in our congregation and community.

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

We envision that our next pastor will:

- Be the face of the congregation in the wider community.
- Participate in, and may take leadership of, ecumenical and community organizations in Janesville.
- Use the connections they will develop to foster greater engagement among the members and friends of the congregation within the wider community.
- Work with the congregation to find unmet needs in the community and help articulate ways we might engage the community in meeting those needs.
- Participate fully in denominational work.

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

Beyond English, Spanish is a plus.

We are seeking a pastor who will be sensitive to the diversity in the community and comfortable helping us find ways to connect with our under-resourced immediate geographic neighbors in the Fourth Ward, many of whom are Hispanic.

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

The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry are these main areas.

- Strengthening inter- and intra-personal assets
 - Respecting the dignity of all God's people
 - Understanding and ministering to stages of human development across the life span
 - Exhibiting strong moral character and personal integrity
- Working together for justice and mercy
 - Drawing on the ministry of Jesus Christ to confront injustice and oppression
 - Building relationships of mutual trust and interdependence
 - Engaging in mission and outreach
- Caring for all creation
 - Maintaining a basic understanding of mental health and wellness
 - Providing hope and healing to a hurting world
 - Nurturing care and compassion for God's creation

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.

A haven for those who have been harmed by previous church encounters.
A people who are active in social justice issues in our community.
A people who desire to serve others.
A people who are comfortable thinking outside the box.
A people who are willing to act in counter-cultural ways.
A people whose identity is wrapped up in caring for each other and others.
A people who are engaged in promoting love and justice.
A people who stay connected and current in supporting others' needs.

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

- We hosted a display of quilts, educating people about the realities of immigration and asylum seeking.
 - We had over 70 people pass through and 30 people made their own welcoming quilt squares.
- We established an immigrant welcoming group to reach out to and help protect neighbors who are living in the fear of being deported.
 - We purchased and distributed 1000 red cards into our community telling immigrants their constitutional rights.
 - We networked with other churches and community groups to offer unity and support to marginalized people.
- We initiated Church of the Wild services to invite people to find God through encounter with nature, holding three outdoor services in the School District's Arboretum over the past year.
- We sponsored an adult education program on gender identity, expression, and orientation that was open to the community.
- We received a grant for the 4th Ward Gathering Garden to supply a bench that encourages social interaction.

Congregation Reflections

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

We are a historic, downtown church in the city of Janesville that covenants to:

- gather as a worshipping congregation with a growing faith, grounded in God, shaped and inspired by Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- promote freedom of expression that reflects our varied cultures and strives to create a safe place where diversity is expressed and honored.
- be an Open and Affirming and Immigrant Welcoming congregation, encouraging all people to fully participate in the life and ministry of the church.
- join others in caring for the wider community and share in the ongoing struggle for truth, wholeness, justice, and peace.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

We are an empathetic, passionate congregation, engaged in the community, boldly affirming our values.

- We value love, welcome, acceptance, and a non-judgmental environment.
- We value music, often traditional in style, whether sung by our congregation, our Chancel Choir, played by our Handbell Choir, as well as our tower bells and other special music.
- We value a theologically and socially progressive environment, searching for spiritual and intellectual growth. We expect and appreciate a variety of perspectives and theologies.
- We value being the church. Our faith is lived out in our daily lives and our social action, advocacy, and service.
- We value having fun together while expressing joy and compassion for each other.

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

We have identified the following growing edges.

- Building relationships with our immediate neighbors in the Fourth Ward.
- Increasing congregational participation in music and the arts.
- Deepening intergenerational relationships among congregants.
- Seeking new ways of understanding our faith.
- Exploring ways to connect with the Sacred through nature.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Worship happens in our beautiful historical sanctuary with its high ceiling, stained glass windows, and pipe organ. This space makes us feel the presence of the holy. Our worship is bookended with times of fellowship, and we joyfully pass the Peace of Christ during worship. We gather to sing, pray, and hear the scripture and sermon. Sermons relate the scripture to our daily lives and express the teachings and examples of Jesus to encourage our service in the wider world. Music in worship, the organ, the piano, the choir, the bell choir, and other special music provide a sense of calm, healing, and inspiration in a hectic and challenging world.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

In all our educational offerings we encourage questions and wrestle with difficult issues.

Our current Sunday School curriculum is about Holy Troublemakers, as developed by our Christian Ed director, who has also created numerous intergenerational activities.

Seekers, a book discussion group, engages adults in seeking new ways to explore and grow one's faith in the world. Current events are often included in their conversations. They studied the current Palestine/Israel conflict by reading "The Lemon Tree" and hosted the film "The Law and the Prophets," which drew people from our wider community. Participants gained insight into the situation and gained empathy for the Palestinians. They were moved to lobby Congress and support the Palestinian cause. They saw parallels to the ways our own country treated the indigenous people of this land.

A recent after-worship forum was on, "The Singular They." The 47 participants left with a broader understanding of gender, sexual identity, and expression. A community member who attended is now participating in the Seekers group after being invited to Seekers at the event.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

We have four Ministries, (standing committees): Outreach, Education, Finance, and Membership. We have a Consistory that acts as our board of directors. Members of committees are nominated and approved at the church's annual meeting. Other subcommittees and task forces are formed to meet specific needs, for example, Worship, Parish Care, and Community Meal. Decisions are communicated through the minutes of each committee (distributed through email), through a monthly newsletter, and by announcements in worship services.

Committees and Consistory meet once a month for 1-1.5 hours each. The minister is expected to attend the monthly Consistory Meeting, may attend any meeting that they choose, and may be invited by one of the committees.

When it comes to decision-making, 4 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...

In times of crisis (as when Covid occurred), the president of the congregation and the pastor brought recommendations to the Consistory to finalize actions that were necessary for the safety of the congregation.

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

[🔗 Constitution 2016.pdf](#)

[🔗 2024 Annual Report of the Interim Minister.docx](#)

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: | 182 |
| NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS: | 42 |
| TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE): | 224 |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

| TIME | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| MORE THAN 10 YEARS: | 41% |
| LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS: | 21% |
| LESS THAN 5 YEARS: | 38% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

| AGE | NUMBER |
|-------|--------|
| 0-11 | 8 |
| 12-17 | 12 |
| 18-24 | 19 |
| 25-34 | 11 |
| 35-44 | 14 |
| 45-54 | 17 |
| 55-64 | 14 |
| 65-74 | 46 |
| 75+ | 41 |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

| HOUSEHOLD TYPE | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35: | 3% |
| HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS: | 30% |
| SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65: | 9% |
| JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS: | 42% |
| SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65: | 16% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

| EDUCATION LEVEL | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------|------------|
| HIGH SCHOOL: | 19% |
| COLLEGE: | 32% |
| GRADUATE SCHOOL: | 40% |
| SPECIALTY TRAINING: | 2% |
| OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL: | 7% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

| EMPLOYMENT TYPE | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED: | 26% |
| ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED: | 58% |
| ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED: | 16% |

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

We have a wide range of occupations.

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

We are predominantly White of European descent.

What diversity means in our context?

We are primarily white middle-class people of European descent. We have a wide range of theological perspectives, including former Catholics, Evangelicals, and Lutherans. We have a diversity of sexual orientation and identity.

We have children with a wide range of ages and abilities in Sunday School. Our class size is currently small enough that we can work with parents to accommodate the specific needs of children.

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) | 14 | Lay Leader |
| Baptisms (number last year) | 2 | Pastor |
| Children's Groups or Classes | 5 | Director of Education |
| Christmas Eve and Easter Worship | 288 | 170/118 Pastor, Musicians, Director of Education |
| Choirs and Music Groups | 22 | Music Director |
| Communion (served how often?) | 57 | Monthly, Pastor |
| Community Meals | 135 | Monthly, Lay Led |
| Funerals (number last year) | 8 | Pastor |
| Intergenerational Groups | 25 | Director of Education |
| Outdoor Worship | 12 | Lay Leader |
| Retreats | 4 | Director of Education |

Worship Times

| WORSHIP (TIME SLOT): | ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE | WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 10 AM | 57 | Pastor and Musicians |

Additional comments:

Children begin in Sunday worship and leave for Sunday school after the Children's Moment.
Seekers, an adult book study group, meets weekly with 14 participants and is growing.

Church of the Wild, our outdoor worship, meets 4-6 times a year with an average of 12 participants and is growing.

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 |
|--------------|--------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Bob Gross | 3 | Local Church | Interim Pastor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Debi Cox | none | Local Church | MID/Director of Education | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Neil Deupree | none | Local Church | Church Member | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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

No response

List of all current staff:

| STAFF POSITION | HEAD OF STAFF | COMPENSATION | SUPERVISED BY | LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Church Secretary | No | part | Pastor | 12 |
| Director of Education | No | part | Pastor | 2 |
| Music Director | No | part | Pastor | 1 |
| Organist | No | part | Pastor | 1 |
| Bookkeeper | No | part | Treasurer/Pastor | 5 |
| AV Technician | No | part | Pastor | 2 |
| Custodian | No | part | Pastor | 5 |
| Nursery Coordinator | No | part | Director of Christian Education | 2 |

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

We're a small congregation that does a lot. We value music in our worship and we value the education of our children. First Congregational Church greatly values our staff, both paid and volunteer. They are a very important part of our church's ministry.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

| SOURCE | AMOUNT |
|--|--------|
| Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving | 177640 |
| Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return) | 35000 |
| Fundraising Events | 1763 |
| Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose | 103 |
| Rentals of Church Building | 25408 |
| Miscellaneous Income | 3634 |
| Total | 243548 |

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

280890

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?

No response

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

No

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

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
One Great Hour of Sharing
Strengthen the Church
Neighbors in Need
Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

OCWM is budgeted each year and we have met the annual goals set by the Conference.

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.

There are no capital campaigns underway or projected.

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

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

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

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

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

No response

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

208611

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

Budgeted amounts are withdrawn as needed

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

No response

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

Withdrawals from our endowments are only from interest to meet the operating expenses.

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

Because we only draw interest, the endowment will last indefinitely.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

No response

Other Assets

There are other endowed funds for educational scholarships.

Reserves (savings):

150000

Investments (other than endowment):

No response

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Description of all buildings owned by the church:

Main historic building and attached office (1875), and educational wing (1950s).

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

none

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
Interior access to different floors for wheelchair users or others with mobility aids (elevator, chair lift, ramps)
Access to child care spaces for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids
Listening devices in the sanctuary, or wireless technology to connect to hearing aids

Large print bulletins
Wheelchair access in bathrooms
Handrails on all stairs
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

All areas are wheelchair accessible except for the choir loft, balcony, and chancel. Currently, we are not using the chancel. All chancel activity happens on the sanctuary floor, which is accessible.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

The Finance Ministry develops and monitors our annual budget which is approved by the congregation. Two volunteer Income Bookkeepers count money to be deposited weekly; an employed part-time bookkeeper records deposits, pays bills, keeps financial records, and communicates regularly with the church treasurer. The Treasurer oversees the Bookkeeper and approves/signs all checks. Finance and Consistory must approve expenses outside of the budget.

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

We take our budget and finances seriously, making sure we include socially responsible practices, such as monthly requests for congregation to donate to nonprofits. This is part of our regular stewardship, practicing our Christianity with integrity.

Historical Information

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

Our church was founded in 1845. Our membership included many Abolitionists. Social justice is in our DNA. There were years when that was less evident. In 2007 we became Open and Affirming, and most recently, we have become an Immigrant Welcoming church. During the pandemic, we followed the CDC guidelines such as online worship, Zoom meetings and when we returned we practiced safe distancing, and provided masks and hand sanitizer. Given the current state of our social/political climate, we can't remain quiet.

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

During a time of increasing xenophobia in our nation, we chose to become an Immigrant Welcoming Church.

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.

We value open and honest discussions to establish trust. When conflicts arise we do our best to talk it through to consensus.

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

There was a time when we made a couple of large expenditures, funded primarily by designated gifts. One was to remodel a space to create our Spiritual Arts Center. Another was the replacement of two historic windows in our sanctuary. Some considered those decisions frivolous, and a lack of clear transparency led them to distrust the church leaders' money management. Conflict arose when the leadership wanted to consolidate our investments from multiple investments into the Wisconsin Foundation, UCC. We worked through the conflict with intentional conversations. Unfortunately, some members decided to leave the congregation.

The eventual outcome was that we did shift our investments to the Wisconsin Foundation, which provides much more transparent reporting. At our most recent Annual Meeting, the congregation's reception of a clear and concise report by our Treasurer was received with multiple rounds of applause. We've learned, adapted, and moved on.

Ministerial History:

Name: Tanya Sadagopan

Years of service: 9

UCC Standing

Name: Wesley Bixby

Years of service: 8

UCC Standing

Name: Gary Stillwell

Years of service: 9

UCC Standing

Name: Curtis Anderson

Years of service: 11

UCC Standing

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

Our relationship with previous pastors has taught us that we tend to defer too easily and need to "step up," establish ownership, and take responsibility for our part in the life and ministry of the congregation. We now see ourselves as partners in ministry with our pastor.

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

Yes

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

Yes

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?

Yes

Community Vision

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

Members of the church are active in the civic community reaching out to their elected representatives, providing leadership through serving as representatives to various community organizations, and providing resources to achieve our shared mission.

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

Members of our congregation and pastor have served on Southwest Association and Wisconsin Conference committees and as delegates to the Conference's Annual Meeting and General Synod. We currently have a member of the congregation serving on the Conference Immigration Working Group. Our last pastor participated in a Community of Practice, was on the Catalyst Team, and was a General Synod delegate. Our current interim pastor participates in a Community of Practice, is on the Conference Board of Directors, and serves on his Association's Department of Church and Ministry. We have hosted the Southwest Association Annual Meeting. This year, our high school and college youth participated in the Winter Soulstice retreat offered jointly by the Wisconsin Conference and the Daycholah Center, UCCI.

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

Within Wisconsin, the community organization is known as The Wisdom Network. We are not engaged with JOB (Justice Overcoming Borders), the nearest chapter in Beloit.

Our congregation supports ECHO (Everyone Cooperating to Help Others), providing food, shelter, and other help; Rock County Pride, supporting their annual event and other activities; and YWCA, supporting their Refugee Services. The congregation is also a supporting member of Janesville's Diversity Action Team, and several individuals are active participants in their racial justice and awareness activities.

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 are known as "The Rainbow Church." Someone new to the congregation noted that she had her husband drive around the block several times so that she could read our "Be the Church" banner. When she was done, she decided we were the church for her.

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

To a large extent, ecumenical and interfaith activities tapered off due to COVID. Since then, our activities have been limited to our support for ECHO, Gifts Homeless Men's Shelter, the YWCA, and the CROP Walk. Our Community meal is coordinated with meals provided by other congregations so that they are spread out throughout the month. Our interaction with First Christian Church (DOC) led some of its members to join our congregation when their church closed. In 2021, we accepted a challenge from the Wisconsin Council of Churches to furnish and equip a three-bedroom apartment for an Afghan refugee family. We worked with two local Lutheran churches, the Dawah Center, and another UCC congregation. Our music ministry participated in two ecumenical fundraisers for local charities. We hosted a Handbell Concert with three other churches.

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

We expect that everything the pastor is working on supports the mission of the church.

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.

It is up to the pastor to determine the balance of their time between ministry with the congregation and beyond, and report that to the Consistory monthly.

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.

A trend is an increase in rental occupied housing the closer to our church. Our neighborhood schools are more in need of clothing, food and enhancement to their education.

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.

The surrounding area has lower income and educational level than the members of the congregation. The economic divide is growing wider.

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

In addition to our Community Meal, we work through partnership organizations that offer social services and support to the community. Members of the church attend the Fourth Ward Neighborhood Action Team.

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

We are the "Rainbow Church," progressive, inclusive, historical, and active in social justice issues. #LoveandJusticeChurch

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

They feel welcome and are invited to participate in church activities, without being a member. They like that we are "Open and Affirming", do community service, "walk the walk" vs "talk the talk." One couple that has been active and not yet joined the church commented that they were members of another church for 12 years, and some people still didn't know who they were. They came here and were welcomed and remembered by name.

References



☒ Stacey Parke

Completed: Monday, Apr 7, 2025

I am the CEO of Orion Family Services. We are a community mental health agency and a CHHSM ministry of the UCC. We lease office space from the church.

Primary Email Address: sparke@orionfamilyservices.org

Business: 608-270-2511 x15

Reference Response

Over the several years we have shared space with the church we have found them to be responsive partners. Whether this has involved attention to our offices or parking area to enhance our use, a need for more space to support our growth or requests to host the entire agency in fellowship hall to accommodate a staff training event. They have always tried to accommodate us and support those who we serve when our guests intersect with church staff.

While we mostly intersect with staff, we have had a few opportunities to speak to the congregation during a worship service. We felt welcome and affirmed! We always welcome these chances to engage with the larger congregation.

The church community cares deeply about the community around them and works tirelessly to be a place of welcome and acceptance to all who enter their doors.



☒ Jessica Locher

Completed: Friday, Apr 4, 2025

First Congregational UCC is a member of ECHO's Board of Directors & the owner of the land we lease to operate our programming; ECHO owns the building.

Primary Email Address: jlocher@echojanesville.org

Business: 608-754-5333

Reference Response

We have had a great working relationship with open communication over the many years we have leased property from 1st Cong UCC. The pastors and members have also been supporters of our mission which is dedicated to meeting housing, food and other basic human needs and addressing the barriers to self-sufficiency. ECHO seeks to help people help themselves through its programs and services, not readily available through other sources, and to assist them in utilizing other existing services and

programs in the community. ECHO does not impose any theological or political value system upon those served. It exists through the generosity of others in the community. Congregations help us, so do many individuals, businesses, school and community groups, foundations, and social service agencies. 1st Cong UCC has had 1- 2 members from 1st Cong UCC on our board of directors since the 1970's.



☒ Tammy DeGarmo

Completed: 6 days ago

I am the Executive Director of Project 16:49, a local nonprofit organization supported by First Congregational UCC and its congregation.

Primary Email Address: tdegarmo@project1649.org

Business: 6083145501

Reference Response

Project 16:49 is grateful to have First Congregational UCC as a valuable community partner in addressing youth homelessness and ensuring youth have access to safe housing options and essential services & support. The church has supported our mission through various means since our inception in 2012. This includes financial contributions, donation of needed items to our program, and outreach/educational opportunities. We regularly are invited to speak at a service to share our youth's stories and the impact of our work, thus ensuring members are aware of our services and can refer to us if they encounter a youth in need. We also appreciate that any of our youth who attend a service or event always feel welcome and safe. The church also is a strong supporter of Rock River Charter School, which serves many homeless/at-risk students - often collecting food and other items to be distributed.

Closing Prayer

God, the Mother and Father of us all, we seek to embody your love and justice. Guide us as we strive to be a beacon of hope and compassion, a diverse network of people working for peace, justice, and creation care. Empower us by your Holy Spirit so we may remain hopeful and inspire others as we serve, share your love, and nurture our congregation and the wider community. In Christ, the all-encompassing embodiment of love, we pray. Amen

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.

The Search Committee, the Consistory, the Interim Pastor, and members of the congregation through small group Cottage Meetings and a survey contributed to this document.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

The Church Constitution has recently been revised; however, it has not yet been approved by the congregation.