

Name of Church
Orange Congregational Church

Address
205 Meeting House Ln
Orange, CT 06477

Conference:
Southern New England

Association:
New Haven

Title
Orange CC P Search

Start Date
n/a

Description
Orange CC P Search

Church Contact Information

No contact information has been added to this profile.

Listing Information

Web Presences

<https://orangecongregationalchurch.org/> *Type: Professional*

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvCBUVBNBm_Qlr8ZWw17QSw *Type: Professional*

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100071652145755> *Type: Other*

Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations

No response

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person

Name:

Margret Hofmeister

Title:

Area Conference Minister, Southwest Region

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Summary Ministry Description

Orange Congregational Church is a warm and lively community, offering extravagant welcome, service, and fellowship to all. We hope to partner with a minister who will celebrate our many gifts and talents, and help us to move collectively and individually into a deeper relationship with God and Jesus. In addition, we have been an Open and Affirming Congregation for eight years and would like our minister to guide us in developing ways to live into the fullness of what it means to be Open and Affirming and to embrace the opportunities that it can offer us to live as disciples of Jesus.

Following a season of deep reflection, prayer, and intentional discernment, about 10 years ago we had undergone a meaningful redevelopment process. This led to a renewed vision for ministry and a newly adopted governance model—streamlined, flexible, and more responsive to the needs of our faith community. With a more focused Leadership Council, designated Team Leaders, and shorter board terms, this structure empowers broader participation, lay leadership, and faithful action without long-term burdens.

We are embracing creativity and adaptability, encouraging members to lead and serve in ways that align with their gifts and passions. This includes Pop-up Ministries, like the Blanket Fairy Mission, that allow us to respond quickly and compassionately to needs within and beyond our congregation.

Now, we are seeking a minister who will walk beside us as a spiritual leader and collaborative partner—someone who will celebrate our many gifts and guide us as we grow deeper in our faith. We hope for a leader who will inspire meaningful worship, nurture relationships, support lay leadership, and help us expand our outreach in ways that reflect Christ's love.

Together, we are excited to grow spiritually, strengthen our connections with one another and the wider community, and continue our journey of faith with open hearts and open minds.

Church pictures



What we value about living in our area.

Orange offers the best of both worlds—nestled in a charming rural setting, yet conveniently located just two hours from New York City and three hours from Boston. Our town boasts an excellent school system, a vibrant and growing senior community, and a diverse range of local businesses. Residents enjoy easy access to year-round recreational opportunities including shopping, dining, music, museums, and scenic hiking trails. Orange is also home to many community activities around the year: including our own Strawberry Festival, the Orange Volunteer Firefighter Carnival, the Orange Country Fair, Fireworks for the 4th of July, the Town Christmas Tree Lighting and Lighted Tractor Parade, a weekly farmer's market and live music concerts throughout the summer.

Just a short drive away, the stunning Long Island Sound provides beautiful beaches, fishing spots, and boating adventures. Orange is also minutes from world-renowned Yale University and the Yale healthcare system, along with an incredible dining scene that features some of the country's most famous pizza spots.

Despite its growth, Orange proudly preserves its rural roots, with several working farms offering fresh produce, eggs, and meat year-round. At the same time, convenience is never far away—with plenty of supermarkets and shops, and a bustling Post Road corridor filled with both local businesses and eateries.

Current size of membership

316

Average in person attendance

80

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

Orange CC P Search

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:

Dynamic Preacher and Worship Leader

Engages and inspires the congregation through meaningful sermons and vibrant worship leadership. Fosters a deep spiritual connection and creates worship experiences that are thoughtful, relevant, and rooted in scripture.

Second:

Compassionate and Caring Presence

Brings empathy, grace, and understanding to pastoral care. Offers support and guidance to individuals and families in times of need, reflecting the love and compassion of Christ in all relationships.

Third:

Builder of Fellowship and Collaboration

Strengthens community and connection within the church. Works well with staff, congregants, and lay leaders, fostering collaboration, addressing conflict constructively, and nurturing a spirit of shared ministry.

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)	77625	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 77625			
Pension/Annuity	10869	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	11878	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	14652	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	1353	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	673	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	673	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

OCC benefits include:
 Parsonage with church paid utilities, maintenance, Lawn care, and snow removal
 Annuity paid by OCC equal to 14% of salary
 Full Annual premium of Health and dental insurance for plan B of UCC insurance program
 Dependents are eligible for the same with a 20% premium co-pay
 Social security and Medicare offset
 Life insurance and Disability paid by OCC
 4 weeks' vacation
 13 holidays and after 12 months service 3 family Sundays
 Accrual of 12 paid sick days per year accumulating up to 120 days
 Continuing Ed up to \$750/year
 Car mileage in fulfillment of your pastoral duties up to \$2575/year

The expected living situation for our next minister.

We have a parsonage. More information listed further in the profile.

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.

Not applicable.

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

Reimbursement for use of personal vehicle.

Cell Phone and/or Internet.

Conference and/or Association meeting registrations

Other meeting registrations (or educational requirement registrations).

Criminal background checks.

Community of Practice Participation.

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

We encouraged participation in a Community of Practice group for valuable peer support and collaboration. Within the town of Orange, the local clergy from various houses of worship meet to offer mutual support and foster interfaith relationships.

For ongoing professional development, a wide range of continuing education opportunities are available via the SNEUCC and its Center for Transformational Leadership, as well as through the New Haven Association. Also, Yale Divinity School offers programing and workshops for both clergy and lay leaders, for additional spiritual and professional growth.

Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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

We look forward to partnering with our next minister to create worship that is inspiring, meaningful, and helps us grow closer to Jesus—both as individuals and as a church community. We want services that speak to our hearts, renew our faith, and welcome new people in with open arms. We want to cultivate worship experiences that speak to a variety of ages and backgrounds, encouraging personal and communal spiritual growth.

We also hope to keep building a church that's genuinely welcoming and connected, where everyone feels they belong. We want to expand outreach efforts and partnerships both within Orange and the surrounding areas in ways that reflect Christ's love and compassion - through service, support, and meaningful relationships.

Together, we'd like to explore new ways to grow—spiritually, in numbers, and in how involved people feel. Whether it's through social media, local events, or just creating more chances for people to connect, we want to strengthen our presence and impact. Most of all, we're excited to work side-by-side with a minister who will help us live out our faith in everyday life and grow together as a church family.

Our church is already an active part of the community, but we see even more potential to strengthen those connections. Our Church-sponsored Strawberry Festival, which draws many visitors—though many attendees do not realize OCC is behind the event. We're also involved in the town's annual Holiday Festival on the Green, where we host a cookie walk and our Leadership Council offers free hot chocolate to spread cheer.

In addition, our concert series provides wonderful opportunities to bring people together through music and fellowship. These events are not only a great way to connect with the broader community, but also to deepen relationships within our own congregation.

Looking ahead, we see these local events as tools for outreach and engagement—ways to share who we are, extend hospitality, and live out our mission in welcoming ways.

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

We are seeking a minister who will inspire and motivate greater participation in the church's ministries, helping members connect their faith to action. We hope our next minister will also help strengthen and revitalize our current outreach efforts, including partnerships with Columbus House, Covenant to Care Social Workers, the Appalachian Service Project, local food banks, and the Blanket Fairy Mission.

Columbus House is a local homeless shelter serving the people of New Haven County who are experiencing homelessness. OCC has supported CH via serving dinner once a month, hosting household good drives for those entering a home and monetary donations. We are also assisting with their Emergency Family Triage Center.

Covenant to Care Social Worker - we partner with social workers in the area to provide Christmas presents via an Angel Tree as well as school supplies for children in foster care.

Appalachian Service Project - our youth and adult volunteers go on a yearly mission trip to help the less fortunate to make their homes warmer, safer and drier.

Food/Basic needs - we partner with organizations that address food insecurities, provide essential items (such as the Diaper Bank or the Fuel bank). The youth have creating blessing bags to pass out to homeless.

Blanket Fairy Mission - was originally a pop-up ministry (a ministry created to address a specific need or over a short time). This mission provides fleece blankets to children in foster care, in mental health institutions, and hospitals. The intent is to provide some comfort and warmth in scary situations.

At the same time, we are excited to work together on new initiatives that reflect our mission, values, and the evolving needs of our community. We're looking for a leader who brings both vision and heart—someone who will guide us in expanding our reach and deepening our impact, all while keeping Christ's love at the center of it all.

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

We are a warm and welcoming Open and Affirming congregation. While we are predominantly white and English-speaking, our community is diverse in educational backgrounds, professions, and talents. We also represent a variety of political perspectives and faith traditions. Given this diversity, we seek a minister who is relatable, inclusive, and able to connect meaningfully with all members of our congregation.

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.

1. An engaging and impactful preacher and teacher for all generations, capable of interpreting scripture in fresh and thought-provoking ways that deepen our understanding and faith.
2. A collaborative team player who fosters strong relationships, provides and receives guidance, and actively engages the congregation in mission and outreach initiatives.
3. Possesses deep spiritual conviction, a thorough understanding and appreciation of UCC history, polity, and theology, while remaining open and sensitive to the diverse ways the Spirit is reflected in each individual.
4. Capable of leading with clarity and purpose, ensuring we stay focused on our goals, while empowering the church to remain faithful, reflective, and open to growth

Our vision going forward is to call a settled minister who writes and delivers sermons that capture the interest and attention of the congregation by focusing on both biblical and daily life experiences and who exhibits strong interpersonal skills and authentically connects with all congregants. The minister should have the ability to sensitively perceive and prioritize the spiritual needs of our church family.

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.

God is calling us to become faithful, loving, and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ. As stated in our ONA covenant, we are called to commit ourselves to the work of ending ignorance, fear, hatred, prejudice, and discrimination against people who may be considered to be different and to treat all people with love and respect. We seek to provide a safe place that provides spiritual nurture, fellowship for all ages, and to provide service to anyone in need. We are seeking to partner with a minister who will guide us in discerning new and creative ways to fulfill this calling.

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

A challenge we have faced as a congregation is developing a common understanding of what it means to be "Open and Affirming". To embrace what it means to be "affirming" as distinguished from being "open", and to expand the scope of ONA beyond LGBTQ+ to all segments of society.

As a Congregation we have always embraced opportunities to address challenges faced by the community. We have supported various initiatives to support the unhoused. Including offering fellowship and donations of money, food, and other items. We see the need for these initiatives growing and seek to continue and expand our participation to comfort and support our community.

Congregation Reflections

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

We are an Open and Affirming congregation that worships and serves both our church family and the wider community. We believe in embodying God's love for all people, and we strive to be a place of welcome, inclusion, and belonging.

Our worship is rooted in scripture, with a strong focus on the teachings of Jesus and how they relate to life today. We value thoughtful, relevant messages that help us grow in faith, compassion, and purpose. Worship is collaborative, engaging, and often enriched by music, lay participation, and moments of reflection and celebration.

Faith formation is an important part of our life together. From Sunday School, confirmation, adult studies and women's retreats, we offer opportunities for learning at every stage of life to deepen our understanding of God, build community, and support ongoing faith journeys.

Although not racially diverse, we are spiritually diverse. We come from a wide range of religious backgrounds - with varied perspectives, traditions, and gifts. We celebrate that diversity and see it as one of the ways the Holy Spirit is alive among us—encouraging growth, deepening connection, and drawing us closer to God and each other.

Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

We believe that one of our greatest strengths is our desire and ability to work collaboratively. Our organizational structure is divided into four Teams: Faith Formation, Worship and Spirituality, Resources for Ministry, and Faith in Actions. In addition, these teams oversee various boards and committees. The laypersons who serve on the Teams, boards, and committees, look to clergy and our Faith Formation Director for guidance and collaboration in pursuing our mission of expanding knowledge and understanding of the will of God, promoting justice, and seeking peace. We also believe that one of our strengths is being a fellowship church loving our neighbors by offering welcome, companionship, and support to members and non-members alike.

We are a fellowship church, welcoming and supportive of members and non-members; following through on the ideology of "love thy neighbor".

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

Communication continues to be a challenge. We have written announcements in the bulletin and members make oral announcements at the beginning of the worship service. We have a bi-monthly newsletter, The Orange Peal, via email, to let members know what is going on. Snail mail newsletters are sent to those who don't have email. We also send out e-blasts when something comes up between newsletters or when something needs extra focus.

The Leadership Council has been sponsoring Congregation Conversations with a chosen topic each month so we can express our concerns and joys, helping to keep communication open.

Despite all of these methods of communication, members continue to feel like they are not aware of what is going on in the church.

It is our hope that a new minister might help us in this area to either communicate the message clearer or understand why members feel out of the loop. A new minister will have fresh eyes and a guiding heart. Perhaps a new survey to find out if it's a lack of participation, trust or mode of communication. We hope the new minister can help make the congregation feel like there is more transparency and they are part of the decision-making process.

What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

Worship takes place every Sunday at 10:00 AM (9:00 AM during the summer months) in our beautiful sanctuary. Our services offer a thoughtful blend of tradition, scripture, music, and reflection—centered on how God's word speaks to our lives today.

A typical service includes:

- Warm welcome from our minister and announcements
- *Call to Worship* and readings led by lay volunteers
- Children's message then children are invited to attend Church School
- Sermon rooted in scripture and relevant to daily life
- Prayers, offerings, and uplifting music

Music is an integral part of worship. We sing from both the *Pilgrim Hymnal* and the *New Century Hymnal*. Our Senior Choir offers anthems every Sunday (except during the summer), and our Handbell Choir shares special music once a month.

Communion is on the first Sunday of the month. Children begin in Church School and then rejoin the congregation in the sanctuary to participate in Communion.

Smaller, special worship services during seasons of Advent and Lent are held in the chapel.

Services are livestreamed and available for later viewing on our YouTube channel.

After most services, all are invited to coffee hour —a time to connect, share, and build community.

The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

Currently our Faith Formation director leads Art of Scripture once a week and is attended by 8 or so people regularly. Lectio Divina is offered most Wednesday evenings. A book discussion group meets once a month.

Our children meet for church school most Sundays during the school year. Post Confirmation youth meet with our Faith Formation Director who offers a combination of education and related fun activities for them.

The youth group has Freeze Out each year to learn about homelessness and raise funds or supplies for Columbus House. They also have various projects and fund raisers for their mission trip in the summer.

How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Our Congregation is organized into four Teams, the Team Leaders of each are responsible for various Boards and Committees within their purview. 1) Worship and Spirituality Team: responsible for the Board of Deacons and the Board of Music Ministry; 2) Resources of Ministry Team: responsible for the Board of Trustees, the Board of Christian Stewardship, and the Staff-Personnel Committee; 3) Faith in Action Team: responsible for Outreach Initiatives and the Board of Christian Service and Outreach; and 4) Faith Formation Team: responsible for the Board of Faith Formation and the Open and Affirming Committee.

Boards meet monthly and decide what they need to do for the church and each other. Reports are made to the Leadership Council, which is made up of the moderator, assistant moderator (who becomes the next moderator) each serving one year in each position. The secretary and team leaders make up the rest of the council. Lay members may attend these meetings if they wish. The minister and Faith Formation Director attend Leadership meetings as ex-officio members. Meetings usually last about an hour.

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...

Covid: Our last settled minister started her ministry with us the last Sunday in October 2019 and was immediately busy with Advent and Christmas. She was installed March 8, 2020, which was the last time we met in person until June of 2021. During this time, we had pre-recorded on-line worship, zoom fellowship and board meetings. Deacons called church members regularly to be sure everyone was okay.

A committee was formed of lay leaders and our minister to determine when we could return to in person worship. Outside, in person worship began in June 2021 with a sound system set up by our technical crew and bring your own lawn chairs. Indoor worship began again in August 2021 with limited speakers, no singing, blocked off pews for distancing and masks required. Restrictions were lifted October 24, 2021 and singing was again enjoyed.

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

[occ_bylaws_2020_revised-0150032.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:	289
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	27
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	316

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	65%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	25%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	17
12-17	13
18-24	20
25-34	20
35-44	21
45-54	30
55-64	41
65-74	41
75+	72

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

No

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	2%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	25%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	6%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	55%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	12%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	19%
COLLEGE:	27%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	33%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	5%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL: Education data not recorded - info based on 2022 Census of CT data for an estimate	16%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	60%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	30%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	10%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

Occupation data is not recorded in our church membership database. However, 71% of our active church participants reside in Orange. Therefore, to estimate members' occupations, we would look at the 2022 Census of Orange, CT data. The most common employment sectors for those who live in Orange are Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, and Retail Trade. The most common job groups are Management, Education, Instruction, library, and sales-related occupations.

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

Ethnicity/Racial information is not recorded in our church membership database. However, 71% of our active church participants reside in Orange. Therefore, to estimate ethnic diversity, we would look to the 2022 Census of Orange, CT data, which records 81.7% White (non-Hispanic), 8.81% Asian, 4.32% Black/African American, 1.53% two or more races, and 1.5% White (Hispanic). This breakdown reflects the racial makeup of our congregation.

What diversity means in our context?

We are a 95% white congregation that is an Open and Affirming intergenerational congregation. We seek to extend God's extravagant welcome to people of every race, class, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, marital status, economic circumstances, and physical, emotional, or mental ability. You belong with us no matter who you are or where you are on life's 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)	7	Planned by lay leaders or DFF
Baptisms (number last year)	4	Minister and Deacons
Children's Groups or Classes	19	Church School Coordinator
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	200	Minister and DFF Sunrise service planned by Youth Group under supervision of DFF, Easter service is planned by Minister
Church-wide Meals	75	DFF, CS&O, Leadership, lay leaders - Opening picnic, Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinners are larger events, smaller meals (open to all but fewer attend) are Lenten soup suppers, Easter and Thanksgiving dinners (sign ups)
Choirs and Music Groups	40	Music Director plans musical program for senior choir (~20 members) and bell choir (~13 members). The junior choir director plans the music for the 7 members of the junior choir
Church-based Bible Study	5	DFF
Communion (served how often?)	50	Deacons serve the first Sunday of the month, planned by the Board of Deacons with the Minister
Community Meals	90	Lay leaders in conjunction with the Board of Christian Service and Outreach
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	8	Minister, DFF, Board of Deacons and several lay leaders
Drama or Dance Program	0	n/a
Funerals (number last year)	16	Minister
Intergenerational Groups	20	Lay leaders
Outdoor Worship	75	Youth Group with assistance from DFF & lay leaders -Easter sunrise service
Prayer or Meditation Groups	25	Lay leader organizes Prayer line
Public Advocacy Work	15	Mostly by Christian Service & Outreach (CS&O) Board
Retreats	30	DFF - Women's retreat and confirmation retreat
Weddings (number last year)	2	Minister
Worship (digital / online / livestream)	90	Live stream is available during the worship service, recording is available by You Tube after the service
Young Adult Groups or Classes	0	N/A

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Youth Groups or Classes	10	DFF and lay leadership - Youth Group
Other	0	N/A

Worship Times

No Response

Additional comments:

Adult Classes - Art of Scripture and Praying the Bible planned by DFF, Book club planned by lay leaders

Sunrise Easter Service - planned by Youth Group assisted by DFF

Churchwide meals - Opening picnic, Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinners, smaller meals are Lenten soup suppers

Community meals - Once a month at Columbus House (local homeless shelter)

Intergenerational Groups - Youth Group mission trip with adult advisors, Strawberry Festival planning committee, Blanket Fairy Mission work groups

Advocacy - Blanket Fairy Mission, Angel Tree, Backpack drive, food drives, Columbus House support

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
N/A	none	N/A	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

N/A

List of all current staff:

No Response

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

Our congregation reflects a welcoming, multigenerational community committed to connection, service, and spiritual growth. The diversity in our demographics and activities shows a balance of tradition and openness to change. We actively engage in faith formation, care ministries, and outreach, demonstrating a desire to live out Christ's love both within the church and in the broader community.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	297675
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	105000
Fundraising Events	16864
Rentals of Church Building	4850
Total	424389

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

490685

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?

31

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

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Percentage of the operating budget.

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

No response

Total amount of loan debt:

No response

Reason for debt:

We have no debt.

Are capital and other payments current?

No

Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

Not applicable

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

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

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

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

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

N/A

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

2300000

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

At the annual meeting, a portion of the endowment is earmarked for use drawn upon as needed.

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

4.2% in FY 2024, there was a zero percent draw in 2020.

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

A portion of the endowment is earmarked for use at the annual meeting each year and drawn upon as needed.

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

At the current rate of draw the endowment will last forever

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

The rate of earnings in the endowment was much higher than the rate of withdrawal

Other Assets

\$30,000 in bank account

Reserves (savings):*No response***Investments (other than endowment):***No response***Does the church have a parsonage?**

Yes

Fair market rental value of the parsonage:*No response***How is the parsonage used?**

Minister (and family)'s private living quarters.

Street

Meeting House Lane

City

Orange

State

CT

Zip

6477

Finished square footage:

2660

Number of Bedrooms:

4

Number of Bathrooms:

2

Assessed real estate value:

622900

Available for minister residence?

Yes

Expected minister residence?

Yes

Condition of structure, systems and appliances

The parsonage is proactively maintained in very good to excellent condition. New appliances in the kitchen, recently new central air and heating system. New paint. New security lights. Landscaping and snow removal and all utilities are paid by the church.

Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs

Board of Trustees

Parsonage pictures**Description of all buildings owned by the church:**

The sanctuary is a typical New England Colonial style with a large steeple/belltower - circa 1810.

Included in the sanctuary is a magnificent Odell pipe organ that was built for us in 2011.

Connected to the sanctuary is the administrative/office wing reconstructed circa 2000

Adjacent is the attached wing circa 1950's that includes a Chapel and education facilities with a Church owned nursery school on the ground floor.

The parsonage is a 4 bedroom 1.5 bath neo-colonial with attached garage built in 1953 and is situated on almost 1 acre of land, overlooking the Town Green.

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

Not applicable

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance
Accessible parking spaces
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
Closed-captioning on sanctuary screen and/or livestream
Wheelchair access in bathrooms
"Quiet room" with worship viewing and listening availability
Handrails on all stairs

Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)
Curb cuts

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

The elevator provides access to all floors in the church but there is no wheelchair access to the pulpit or altar.
The parsonage is not wheelchair accessible.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

Each Sunday at the end of the service:

- 2 Trustees (on a rotating schedule) count the offering, sign off and place it in a safe
- Bookkeeper – record it and makes the bank deposit on Monday

Certain bills require a signoff before payment.

Treasurer is in weekly contact with the bookkeeper.

Trustees meet monthly with the Treasurer to review past month's transactions

Trustees monitor the endowment account.

Treasurer also reports on the budget to the Leadership council each month

Annually, year-end budget is reviewed at the Church Annual meeting and a proposed budget for the new year is voted upon.

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

The Orange Congregational Church is well managed, debt free, and despite reduced membership compared to a decade ago, is still able to foster programs for all ages as well as providing outreach to a variety of charitable organizations.

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

Over the past decade, our congregation has experienced meaningful transition. After Rev. Stoddon King's 27 years of service, Rev. Suzanne Wagner led a five-year season of redevelopment, during which we became an Open and Affirming congregation—a designation we proudly uphold.

Rev. Jennifer Campbell began her ministry in 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic closed our building, yet our community's spiritual connection remained strong. She resigned in 2023, followed briefly by Rev. Nada Sellers. We are now served by Bridge Minister Rev. James Simpson, after ten months without consistent pastoral leadership.

Through these changes, we've come to know ourselves as a resilient, faithful community, grounded in shared leadership, mutual care, and a deep commitment to worship, mission, and spiritual growth.

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

In an effort to foster deeper communication and community engagement, the Leadership Council initiated monthly congregational meetings. These gatherings provide an open forum for dialogue on a variety of topics relevant to church life and the broader world. At times, guest speakers are invited to share perspectives that encourage thoughtful reflection and learning. Most recently, we welcomed Faisal Saleh, Executive Director of the Palestine Museum US in Woodbridge, Connecticut. He offered a powerful presentation on the museum's mission to educate the public about Palestinian culture and history through the arts, while also sharing insight into the human experience of the Palestinian people and the challenges they face in today's society. These ongoing conversations reflect our congregation's commitment to being informed, compassionate, and engaged with the world around us.

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.

Like all faith communities, OCC includes individuals with diverse perspectives—on church traditions, theology, and social issues. We recognize that disagreement is natural and strive to engage conflict with grace and respectful dialogue. We value open, honest conversation where differing views are shared and heard with care, fostering spiritual growth. We also acknowledge that complex topics can be challenging and are seeking guidance to strengthen our skills in holding respectful, helpful dialogue.

As an Open and Affirming congregation, we are committed to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals. We value this deeply while also working to ensure all members feel seen, supported, and included. We seek leadership that will help us grow in communicating across differences with love, respect, and faith.

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

The most recent major conflict our church navigated centered around our identity as an Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. While we were proud to hold this designation, it became clear during Rev. Nada Sellers' short-term ministry that not all congregants fully understood what ONA meant or how it should be lived out in the life of the church. This led to some tension and discomfort, particularly around issues of inclusion and language. Through intentional, open dialogue—including listening sessions, educational opportunities, and respectful conversation—we were able to foster greater understanding. This process strengthened our community, deepened our commitment to inclusion, and helped us grow in holding differing views with grace and respect.

Ministerial History:

No response

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

Over the years, we have been blessed with some very fine ministers. In addition to differing personalities each individual has provided a wealth of different points of view. Our church has learned that we are a strong, resilient and caring community of active and dedicated members, ready to welcome and assist our new minister.

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.

Monetary/service/advocacy:

Financial: We are a 5 for 5 church. Local donations include Orange Fuel Bank, Food2Kids, & nOURish Bridgeport.

Youth Group: Our youth annually go on a mission trip with Appalachia Service Project. The teens also host a "Freeze Out" each year - spend a night in our church and take turns in a tent outside to experience a small taste of homelessness.

Columbus House: is a homeless shelter in New Haven, is our biggest mission - serving dinner once a month. We organize a golf tournament annually to raise money for CH and other mission work.

Covenant to Care: Working with a social worker, we collect backpacks and school supplies in August and every Christmas we run an "Angel Tree" to benefit children in foster care.

Blanket Fairy Mission: Homemade blankets are made/delivered blankets to ~1200 vulnerable children.

Community: Work includes collecting food for FISH (Food In Service to the Homebound), adopt a child through Compassion International.

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

We have two delegates attend Southern New England Conference of the UCC (SNEUCC) Meeting each year and our clergy usually attend. The delegates give reports to the congregation. We currently have two delegates to the New Haven Association who attend the annual and semiannual meetings and Ecclesiastical Councils.

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

We have a church member serving on the Congregations of Orange Collaborative (COC). This is an interfaith group made up of members from the two synagogues, several of the Protestant churches, the Greek Orthodox church and the smaller Catholic church in town. The vision statement of COC states that the interfaith group will encourage participating congregations to engage in social action projects that help people in need and strengthen relationships between the members. Many activities include food drives for Food2Kids of Orange and smaller activities such as collecting the tabs off of soda cans for Ronald McDonald House.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through Just World Covenants or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.

Open and Affirming (ONA).

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

We are proud to have been an Open and Affirming Church for the past eight years. Our congregation is committed to living out the values of inclusion, accessibility, and social and economic justice, which are central to our faith and mission. We continually seek ways to deepen our engagement with these principles, striving to make our church a welcoming space for all. Looking ahead, we are hopeful that these efforts will be further integrated into the life of our congregation in the future.

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

The Town of Orange has an annual Thanksgiving Sunday Interfaith Service in which Orange Congregational Church participates. The Clergy from the different faith communities in town plan and participate in this service. The other faith communities include 2 synagogues, a Catholic Church, a Greek Orthodox Church, a local Muslim mosque, and an Episcopalian Church. The service rotates to a different house of worship each year and the clergy rotate who will deliver the sermon and who will do different readings. The choirs of each house of worship come together to provide some of the music in a joint effort as well.

The clergy also meet frequently for fellowship and to discuss any pressing issues that may affect one or all of the faith communities. This support group has been in place for over 20 years.

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

In our Church Covenant, we affirm our mission to “proclaim the gospel to all people... laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human fellowship.” Each month, members of the Ministry Team, along with various boards, teams, and committees, sponsor activities that offer spiritual reflection and Bible study, education on current issues, and opportunities for fellowship and outreach. Recent examples include preparations for our annual Strawberry Festival, Lenten programming with midweek worship and soup suppers, a weekly book discussion, guest speakers from Jewish and Palestinian communities promoting understanding, and the ongoing “Blanket Fairy Mission,” which provides hundreds of blankets for children in foster care.

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

We encourage and support our minister's participation in wider church activities such as interfaith services, Clergy Association meetings, homebound parishioners visits, the Strawberry Festival, Southern New England Conference of the UCC (SNEUCC) and New Haven Association activities and other church functions, to the degree possible while maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

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.

Our congregation reflects the broader trends of our community with high levels of education, stable employment, and strong incomes.

The Town of Orange has an aging population, leading to a growing demand for healthcare and senior services. At the same time, the town fosters a family-friendly atmosphere, attracting younger families with its community events such as the Volunteer Firemen's Carnival, Country Fair, and the Holiday Festival, featuring a lighted tractor parade. Our church proudly contributes by sponsoring the Strawberry Festival.

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 demographics of our congregation closely align with those of the nearby community of Woodbridge. However, they differ from those of our more urban neighboring communities, such as West Haven and Milford, which exhibit varying levels of education, employment, and income, as well as a greater prevalence of non-traditional family structures. The same distinction applies to New Haven, a community with which our church maintains a connection.

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

As our congregation and some of the community are an aging population, much of the ministry is geared to this demographic. There is an opportunity to engage with our younger demographics.

Our church is situated in a suburban-rural town just 10 minutes from New Haven, a vibrant urban center. Much of our outreach activities have been focused on the urban center - focusing on Homelessness and food insecurities. There are opportunities within our own town to support our neighbors better through the Orange Fuel Bank and Food2Kids programs.

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

The Orange Congregational Church has been a cornerstone of the town since its founding. Centrally located, the Church and the Town Green—largely owned by the Church—serve as key gathering points for the community. Community leaders note that OCC actively participates in local traditions, including the interfaith service and holiday tree lighting festivities. Additionally, it organizes significant fundraisers like the annual Strawberry Festival, which brings together the broader town community. Because of central location - Youth Group activities are visible - Freeze Out, Tag Sale, car washes.

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

People have various reasons for joining our church, the primary reason has been word of mouth. Others come because of our outreach work, some the music, some because of the church school and some for adult education.

Those who choose to stay with us often share that the strong sense of community within our church is key. One new member recounted how a simple invitation to help make jam for the Strawberry Festival made her realize she truly belonged. While she had felt welcomed during church services, being included in a cherished tradition gave her a deep sense of connection and belonging.

References



☑ Annette & David Rubelmann

Completed: Sunday, Apr 20, 2025

i joined OCC in 1993. I was an active member until I moved to North Carolina in 2019. I continue to be a member, although I am no longer active.

Primary Email Address: Nettenet438@gmail.com

Personal Cell: 2032158843

Reference Response

I was raised in the Jewish tradition—my father was Jewish and my Methodist mother held on to her faith. I often felt spiritually in-between, though my parents nurtured my belief in God. After their passing in 1993, I longed for a faith community. Living in Orange, where my husband grew up and was confirmed at OCC, I met with Rev. Stoddon King and soon joined the church. I was warmly welcomed, despite my different background, and became part of the family. I even hosted a Passover seder for 65 members with a local rabbi—it was unforgettable! Over 30+ years, I sang in choirs, served on boards and committees, and helped with events like the Strawberry Festival. OCC lived its motto: "No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." Moving to NC was bittersweet. We still support OCC, but I've yet to find another church that compares.

■ Sheree DiMario

Contacted: Monday, Mar 31, 2025

Primary Email Address: sdimario@columbushouse.org

Office: 2034014400 ext 138

Reference Response

No response



■ Suzanne Wagner

Contacted: Wednesday, Apr 16, 2025

Email Address: swagner5@yahoo.com

Personal: (203) 545-6562

Mobile Phone: 203-545-6562

Reference Response

No response

Closing Prayer

Loving God, send your Holy Spirit to be among us as we seek a minister who will guide us on our individual and collective paths to become joyful disciples of Jesus Christ and as we work to transform our world into the Kingdom of God. 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 OCC search committee was formed from nominations from the general congregation and approved by Leadership Council. The search committee includes an interdisciplinary group of people from all aspects of life and activities within the church to be a good cross-representation of the membership. The Committee solicited information via a survey as well as through several Congregational Conversations. The committee was assisted in obtaining some of the information via the Boards of Deacons, Christian Service and Outreach and the Trustees.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

No response