

LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE

(SHORT FORM)

Community United Church of Christ, Fresno

5550 N Fresno St

Fresno CA 93710

Designated Term Pastor

Northern California Nevada Conference, UCC

Sequoia Association

- Validation Date:

Church Contact Information

(559) 435-2690 (Church office, Mon-Thurs., 9am-2pm)

office@communityucc.com

www.communityucc-fresno.org

Listing Information

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person:

Rev. Dr. Davena L. Creer-Jones, Conference Minister

Email: davena@ncncucc.org

Phone: (510) 359-7208

Tuesday-Friday, 8-5

MeLinda LaViene, CMA

Email: melinda@ncncucc.org

Phone: (510) 247-8990

Office Hours Monday-Friday, 8-5

What do we value about living in our area?

We value our location In the Central Valley of California, halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and within a couple of hours of the Sierra Nevada mountains and the Pacific coast. We also value our culturally diverse population, the vibrant arts community, and mild winters.

Current size of membership:

126 (85-90 active participants)

Average in person attendance:

58

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

Our in-person worship services are viewable live on Facebook, and afterwards on YouTube.

Languages used in ministry:

English

Position Title:

Designated Term Minister

Position Duration:

Serve five (5) years, at which time a mutually agreed upon decision to terminate or continue as Settled Pastor.

Compensation Level

½ Time (approximately 20-22 hours/week)

\$51,789, which will vary based on experience and education. This amount does not include health insurance, which is to be determined. Sabbatical and professional development time will be negotiated.

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Scope of Work

- Worship leadership, in collaboration with the Worship Planning team and musicians, preaching, offering prayers, and service preparation, etc.

- Faith formation and vitality through prayer, small study groups, and service; identifying helpful resources and opportunities and helping lay persons take advantage of them.
- Pastoral care, in collaboration with lay people (at least to those who are sick, elderly, or grieving)
- Spiritual guidance to individuals and families navigating life transitions. Encourage theological reflection and spiritual growth across all age groups, and in all they do.
- Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills to lead, teach, and preach better
- Participate in church council meetings and strategic planning sessions. Communicate regularly with leadership regarding congregational needs and progress
- Weddings and funerals for participants in the worshipping community
- Serve as resource for the work of the church, including the Mixed-Use process
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings as time permits
- Focus on the designated tasks for the designated purpose in this season of the congregation's life
- Guide specific tasks to which the congregation is committed, such as those related to the Mixed-Use project or congregational revitalization
- The nature of a designated-term is for five years, with goals and progress to be assessed near but before the end of that time, November 2030.
- By written agreement, upon conclusion of the designated-term, it may become a settled pastoral position

Compensation and Support

Total Base Salary, half-time position: \$ 51,789

(Determined by Conference guidelines. Pastoral candidate will determine their Housing Allowance portion of the Total Base Salary.)

Social Security Offset: \$ 3962

Total Direct Compensation: \$ 55,751

Customary Benefit:

- Minister and family health plan

Standard Benefits:

- Retirement Annuity 14%
- Life and Disability Insurance 1.5 %

- Criminal Background Check reimbursement

Entitlements:

- Days off: 4
- Annual Leave: 25 working days
- Holidays: 12: Govt holidays, plus 3 floating (Good Friday, Easter, Christmas)
- Lifelong Learning Leave: One week/year
- Sick Leave: 12 working days per 12 months

Professional Expenses:

- Mobile Phone reimbursement, \$50/month
- Professional expense account, mileage reimbursement, Wider Church participation, etc.

Who is God Calling Us to Become?

God is calling us to downsize our physical footprint and upsize our community outreach...and we are acting on this. We have defined our vision and as of September 2025 we are looking for a developer to implement a “Mixed-Use” change to our land—apartments, worship/community space, and retail. (For more details, see the Historical Information section.)

11-Year Report

The 11-Year Report is no longer available, according to our Conference office. The Yearbook Reports from 2023 and 2024 reflect steady membership, finances, and congregational engagement.

Congregation Demographics

Description of those who participate in your church.

Number of active members: 81

Number of active non-members: 6

Total of church participants: 87

Are these numbers estimates? No

Describe the total participation of the church.

Membership 5 years ago: 187

Membership 10 years ago: 166

Weekly adult education attendance, if any: 15

Youth ministry attendance, if any: 5-10

Are these numbers estimates? No

Percentage of total active participants who have been in the church:

More than 10 years: 62%

Less than 10, more than 5 years: 19%

Less than 5 years: 19%

Are these numbers estimates? No

Number of total participants by age:

0-11 11

12-17 5

18-24 6

25-34 5

35-44 13

45-54 8

55-64 9

65-74 28

75+ 14

Are these numbers estimates: yes

Staff and Volunteer Leadership

List of all current staff, and whether paid staff or volunteer:

Position	Who Guides the work	Compensation	Length of time for current person
Church Administrator	Exec Team, Pastor	Yes, 20 hrs/wk	32 yrs
Bookkeeper	Treasurer	Yes, 8 hrs/wk	9 yrs
Nursery Care	Faith Education	Yes, 2 hrs/wk	4 yrs
Music Coordinators (2)	Worshipping, Pastor	Yes, 2-4 hrs/wk	11 yrs; 3 months
Sound tech, screen (4)	Worship Planning	no, volunteers	5 yrs; 1 yr; 1 yr; 2 mo
Church Council	Congregation	no, volunteers	

Reflection: What does this information reflect about our congregation’s overall ministry?

At CUCC we aim to uplift all members of our congregation both in leadership and ministry roles. There are several support systems in place to help aid in this effort, ranging from our devoted Church Administration to our Church Council. For example, our Church Administrator has been the only staff person who works on-site during the week, Mon.-Thurs. She communicates with the pastor (our last pastor worked mostly remotely, one day on-site), the congregation (during office hours), the renters, and the contract evening janitorial service. She responds to building issues, such as plumbing problems, HVAC malfunctions, etc. reporting to and communicating with the Moderator and Executive Team on church matters. Additionally, we also have a bookkeeper who makes sure staff and bills are paid, taxes filed, etc. Beyond technical duties, we also have a Pastoral Relations Team that meets as needed upon the pastor’s request to help with supporting their work.

With these roles, CUCC centers its ministry on advocacy for the marginalized, social justice, community connectivity and political awareness, keeping God at the center of everything we do, but our ministry does not end at the pastoral level. Beyond our pastor, within our congregation are many individuals who willingly preach messages they feel called to when able. This means when breaks occur for our pastor, there are people who can get plugged in, leaving no scrambling for pulpit-fill.

We also rent our two buildings seven days a week, to local missional organizations who need space. Thus, being a responsive landlord has evolved into being part of our ministry, as our dependency on rental income has increased.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income sources (as of FY ending June 30, 2025):

Congregation: \$145,589	Estimates of Giving, loose offerings
Faith Education: \$5,000	Planned transfer from FE’s Restricted Acct, to cover part of Administrator
From renters \$42,306	Head Start preschool, Sat. afternoon church, Yoga Center, AA groups, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. graduate chapter.
From fundraisers \$3,981	various teams, committees offer drawings throughout the year
Total	\$196,876

Current Annual Expenses (for most recent fiscal year):

\$206,164

Most recent church budget, for current year, and Annual Treasurer’s Report for previous year:

[Budget Adopted 2025-26](#)

[Treasurer's Report run 6-16-25 for Annual Report](#)

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

No

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

We pay \$100 a month to OCWM when we pay our monthly bills.

Total amount of loan debt:

\$0

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

Does the church currently have any endowments? What are the values?

General Memorial Fund	\$46,124
Pitman Scholarship	\$18,715
Donaldson Music Fund	\$26,020
Ministrare Fund	\$33,532
Bettenhausen Christian Ed Fund	\$203,998
Long Term Fund	\$2,249
Kitchen Fund	\$9,000
Total	\$339,637

Capital Campaigns

No capital campaigns are planned currently, due to potential changes to property if the Mixed-Use project goes forward.

Does the church have a parsonage?

No

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Property (parking lot, office, meeting rooms, social hall) is flat, except for the sanctuary. The sanctuary entrance and narthex are ground level, but there is a gradual slope down to the front. Three steps go up to the chancel, which is at ground level. The Chancel can be accessed through the office.

We have a large accessible, non-gender bathroom, besides the traditional girls and boys bathrooms.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

Almost all our property is accessible to wheelchairs, except for the movement from the chancel to the base of the seating area of the sanctuary.

Historical Information

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

Our previous minister had a vision of how our church could help our community and help sustain our church’s financial future. So, in June 2023, CUCC voted to move towards converting our property from “church” use to apartments/church/retail – “Mixed Use” – with a land-lease agreement from a future developer. An active committee has been working with a professional urban consultant to shape the proposal/concept into a document called an RFP. In October 2025, the RFP was sent to developers for bid. If a developer can be found, then in time (probably about 2-3 years) our church buildings will be dismantled and new buildings will be constructed. At that time our worship will need to be temporarily moved, office relocated, and storage found, etc. However, if no developer is interested, then CUCC will need to discern our next steps.

In 2007, Zion Congregational Church in Fresno closed their doors, and joined with us, College Community Congregational Church. In 2015, we changed our name to Community United Church of Christ, to better reflect the merger.

In 1998, our church voted to become Open and Affirming. We became a Just Peace church in 2016. In June 2022, we adopted the WISE Covenant and in October 2025, we received WISE certification.

Ministerial History (past 30 years)

Julia Penner-Zook	2020-2025
Ara Guekguezian, Interim	2018-2020
Christopher Breedlove	2011-2018

Robin Carlson, Commissioned	
Minister, Faith Education	2012-2022
Karen O'Connell, Interim	2011-2011
Diane Christopherson, Interim	2009-2011
David Schlicher	2004-2009
Lucretia Parks, Interim	2001-2004
Marcia Free	2000-2001
Robert Baker, Interim	1998-1999
Gail McDougale, Co-Pastor	1987-1998
David H Brown, Co-Pastor	1986-1997

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

Yes

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

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

No

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

Community Vision

Describe how the relationships and activities of our congregation have extended outward in service and advocacy.

In our quest to fulfill the congregation's mission to respect all human persons and to continue to advocate and fight for justice and equality for all, members of the Mission and Social Justice (MSJ) Team are in the forefront for the congregation in planning and implementing several initiatives. Among them are the following.

Systemic Racism

With a goal to promote better understanding about race and racism, and to facilitate dialogues where we listen mindfully to one another and to our stories, beginning in 2018, we engaged the congregation in a number of activities. These included small group discussions with guided questions designed to elicit an examination of challenges presented by racism, and to propose actions in which the congregation could engage to alleviate if not eliminate those challenges.

In 2021, members of MSJ and the pastors participated in the UCC Northern California Nevada Conference conversations on racism.

Members of community groups and city officials were invited to meet with the congregation virtually and in person. These included the President of the Fresno chapter of the NAACP (2021), representatives of the Islamic Cultural Center (2021), and a Fresno City Councilman (2022). These conversations aided in erasing many of the stereotypes of various groups and raised awareness of the relationship between Fresno's police and their treatment of people of color.

Ongoing ministry with the LGBTQ+ community.

Community United Church of Christ has long been a visible and vocal presence for love and inclusion in the Fresno community. We take seriously our call to extend God's unconditional welcome beyond our church walls.

One of the most vibrant expressions of this is our ongoing ministry with the LGBTQ+ community.

Each year, we proudly march in the Fresno Pride Parade, walking side by side with our LGBTQ+ siblings to witness publicly that God's love knows no bounds. At the Pride Festival, our booth is a place of hospitality and hope, where visitors can ask questions, share their stories, and experience what it means to be truly welcomed by an Open and Affirming congregation.

Beyond public events, we strive to provide a spiritual home for those who have been wounded or excluded by the church. Within our sanctuary, LGBTQ+ individuals and families can safely explore their relationship with God, worship authentically, and rediscover a sense of belonging. Many have shared that Community UCC has helped them reconnect not only with their faith, but with themselves.

Support for a Syrian Refugee Family

We worked with Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries (FIRM) to identify a second Syrian refugee family, in Fresno for whom we provided some support, beginning in 2018. Some team members, the Interim Pastor and members of the congregation visited the family regularly and provided assistance placing the daughters in school and attending to other identified needs. Furniture was provided by members of the congregation, and the family was invited, and participated in some activities, including speaking to the congregation. This was made into a moving video which told the story of the family.

Team members stayed in close contact with the family and kept us abreast of their activities and needs. Money raised for a special offering went to help defray the cost of the oldest daughter's books when she began college.

We helped the family move into better living facilities, and members of the MSJ team continued to tutor the second youngest child and intervened with the Fresno Unified School District to provide better learning environments for two of the children. In 2022, when the father obtained a job, and the family indicated that they were ready to be on their own, we discontinued our support.

Serving the Underserved

We continue to implement our goal of providing service to underserved populations by contributing to food and housing, assisting with funding, and providing volunteers. Activities include serving at Poverello House, collecting food for the food pantry, collecting toiletries for women inmates and special offerings which provide funding for transportation for homeless persons. In addition, donations of personal care items were made to the women of Naomi House, a shelter for women and children (2021).

We have developed a relationship with Robinson Elementary School near us, holding clothing and school supply drives and buying gifts for some children at Christmas. In addition, some members of the Team and other members of the congregation who have received training serve as literacy mentors at Robinson Elementary School.

WISE

In our journey to become a WISE congregation, a WISE Committee was formed and worked with members of the UCC Mental Health Network.

We educated ourselves about the broad spectrum of mental illness and other disorders. Toward that end, in 2022, the WISE Committee conducted book discussions of the book *Blessed are the Crazy*. It also made four videos of members of the congregation giving their perspectives on mental illness. In 2022, working in concert with Worship Planning, several short videos were added to the end of the Sunday service. In several of her sermons, the Pastor addressed the issues involved.

This education continued with testimonials of congregation members sharing their struggles with mental illness, and a clinical psychologist providing clinical perspectives.

As we continued our education, in 2022, ten members of our congregation participated in a full day training on Mental Health First Aid with Susan Bechara of Comprehensive Behavioral Services and are now certified in Mental Health First Aid USA. We plan to offer this training to a larger number of congregants in 2026.

Care for our Environment

CUCC demonstrated environmental awareness by installing the first rooftop solar panels on a church in Fresno and later by removing our front lawn and installing xeriscape landscaping.

What are the partnerships (Just World Covenants) our congregation has formally adopted?

Open and Affirming

WISE congregation

Just Peace

References

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Closing Prayer

Holy one, let this Profile speak to a pastor who feels a call to serve our small but vibrant congregation. We confess we don't listen enough for your whispers of spirit. Guide us as we step in faith into our future and out to our community.

Statement of Consent

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?
Treasurer, Moderator, Council members, Members of the Pastor Search Committee.
2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile: none